

STEPPING TOWARDS ARAB PEACE

Foreign Ministry affirms support for all efforts made for resumption of Syria's active role in the Arab world

Muscat - The sultanate has welcomed an accord between Bahrain and Qatar on resuming diplomatic relations, following the Bahrain-Qatar Follow-up Committee's second meeting held at the Gulf Cooperation Council Secretariat General in Riyadh.

Oman has also welcomed the resumption of talks between Syria and Saudi Arabia, a step that will likely contribute to the return of Syria to the Arab fold.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Thursday, Oman said that the Bahrain-Qatar accord will lend support to cooperation among brethren and consolidate the GCC joint action in a manner that generates gains for all in the region.

On the Syria-Saudi development, Oman welcomed the communiqué issued at the end of the visit of Dr Faisal al Miqdad, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Syria, to Saudi Arabia.

In a statement on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry said that Oman affirms its support for all efforts made for the resumption of Syria's active role in the Arab world.

It also expressed its support for reaching a political solution to the crisis in Syria that preserves the country's territorial unity, security and stability, supports Syrian state institutions assuming control over all of the republic's lands in a manner that achieves security and stability in the region, as well as the welfare and prosperity of the brotherly people of Syria.



A Yemeni prisoner is carried by medics upon his arrival at Sanaa airport on Friday (AFP)

Prisoners from Saudi fly to Yemen on Day 2 of swap

Abha, Saudi Arabia - Scores of prisoners of war, including Saudis, were freed on Saturday as part of a cross-border exchange between a Saudi-led military coalition and Yemen's Iran-backed Huthis, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

The flights connecting Saudi Arabia and Huthi-held territory in Yemen were part of a multi-day transfer involving nearly 900 detainees that comes amid peace talks which have raised hopes for an end to Yemen's eight-year-old war.

The first flight of the day took off from the southern Saudi city of Abha before 9am (0600 GMT), headed for Yemen's Huthi-held capital Sanaa with 120 Yemeni prisoners, ICRC public affairs and media adviser Jessica Moussan said.

It was followed by a flight from Sanaa carrying 20 former detainees, among them 16

Saudis and three Sudanese. Sudan is part of the Saudi-led coalition and has provided ground troops for the fighting.

In addition, 100 Huthis were due to be flown on three flights to Sanaa from Mokha on the Red Sea coast, a town held by Yemen's coalition-backed government.

An AFP journalist in Abha said at least three buses brought the prisoners onto the tarmac at Abha airport, which has previously come under attack from Huthi drones and missiles.

Wheelchairs were positioned near the buses to take some of the prisoners to the plane.

On Friday, 318 prisoners were transported on four flights between government-controlled Aden and Sanaa, reuniting with their families ahead of next week's holiday of Eid al Fitr.

The total number of prisoners of war on both sides is unknown. AFP

Path to peace?

Analysts say that eight years after mobilising a coalition to crush the Huthis, the Saudis are looking to wind down their military engagement.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who was a 29-year-old

defence minister when the war began, has since become the kingdom's de facto ruler and is keen to focus on his sweeping Vision 2030 domestic reform agenda.

The Saudi exit strategy appears to have taken new impetus from a landmark rapprochement

deal announced with Iran last month.

The China-brokered agreement calls for the Middle East heavyweights to fully restore diplomatic ties following a seven-year rupture, and has the potential to remake regional ties.

Saudi Arabia is also pushing for the reintegration into the Arab League of Iran ally Syria, more than a decade after its suspension over President Bashar al Assad's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

Agencies

Meeting held in Jeddah to find a solution to Syria crisis

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Oman participated in a ministerial consultative meeting of foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, in Jeddah on Friday.

Diplomats meeting in Jeddah agreed that the Arab world must play a leading role in efforts to broker a solution to Syria's war, following talks aimed at easing Damascus's isolation.

They stressed the "importance of having an Arab leadership role in efforts to end the crisis", according to a statement released by the Saudi foreign



ministry early on Saturday.

They also discussed "the necessary mechanisms for this role" and agreed to intensify "consultations among Arab countries to

ensure the success of these efforts".

The Omani delegation was headed by H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Min-

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H E SAYYID BADR AL BUSAIDI

these consultative meetings will contribute to achieving the aspirations and hopes of our peoples to build a more secure and prosperous future for our region and to support constructive pioneering Arab action," H E Sayyid Badr tweeted.

On the sidelines of the meeting, H E Sayyid Badr held separate bilateral meetings with Prince Faisal bin Farhan al Saud, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Salem Abdullah al Sabah, Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ayman al Safadi, Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Min-

ister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriate Affairs, Sameh Shoukry, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dr Fuad Hussein, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

H E Sayyid Badr tweeted that he was pleased to hold bilateral meetings with his fellow foreign ministers. "We look forward to more cooperation and coordination in order to enhance our joint efforts in addressing issues in the region and to achieve what we see in the interest of our countries and our regional and international relations."

NEWS BRIEF

INDIA REPORTS 10,753 COVID-19 CASES

New Delhi, India - A total of 10,753 new COVID-19 cases were recorded in India in a 24-hour period ending on Saturday morning, marking a marginal dip from Friday's count of 11,109 cases, as per the daily bulletin released by the Union Health Ministry.

The active caseload stands at 53,720, the health ministry said on Saturday.

The country witnessed 6,628 recoveries in that 24-hour period, which led total recoveries to 4,42,23,211, while the recovery rate currently stands at 98.69 per cent, the bulletin stated.



Japan PM resumes campaign after blast

Almost half of national workforce in private sector earns less than RO500

Our Correspondent Muscat

Almost half - 47.3 per cent - of the Omani employees in the private sector earn less than RO500, while only 12.92 per cent of workers in the public sector fall in that salary bracket.

The figures are stark when the comparison is made in the salary bracket of RO800 and more. In the government sector, the majority (57.22 per cent or 99,500) earns over RO800, while only 26.27 per cent or 74,407 earn that much in the private sector.

Similarly, over 60 per cent or 171,885 workers in the private sector earn less than RO600, while only 39,449 or 22.7 per cent of the government workforce earns that much, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information for January.

These figures are of Omani workers registered with public sector pension funds and citizens working in the private sector and insured by Public Authority for Social Insurance.

Of all the workers in the private sector, 29 per cent or 82,237 earn less than RO400, while only 9.8 per cent or 16,499



(Image for illustrative purpose)

In the public sector, the majority (57.22 per cent or 99,500) earns over RO800, while only 26.27 per cent or 74,407 earn that much in the private sector

of those in government service are paid less than RO400.


Around 30 per cent of the government workforce earns between RO1,000-RO2,000, while only 12.8 per cent of private sector employees get the same remuneration.

The data shows that the pri-

ivate sector employees more nationals (283,152) than the government sector (173,861).

In the private sector, most nationals are employed in the construction business (51,526), followed by those in the wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles (42,036), manufacturing (34,495), mining and quarrying (33,880), and administrative and support services (23,434), making the top five employment sectors.

Of the Omanis registered with PASI, 31.4 per cent or 89,025 work in Muscat governorate, followed by North Batinah (49,169), Dakhliyah (36,933), South Batinah (27,416) and Dhofar (20,599), making the top five governorates for national workforce in the private sector.



Tender Announcement

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Mada'ayn) announces the following Tender:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last date of buying	Date of submission	Type of work	Register Degree	Fee (R.O)
1/2023/PEIE/HQ-1	Consultancy Services for Feasibility Study to Develop Docking Infrastructure Facilities at Sur Industrial City	30-04-2023	15-05-2023	Consultancy Services	First	50

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted on line on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to The Chairman of Tender Committee mentioned in above tenders.

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering System.
- eTendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the eTendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: etenderhd@mtci.gov.om and +968 24402200 Note: Bid Submission will be online only.

No Document can be accepted as Manual except Original Tender Bond. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system and original needs to be deposited before Bid Opening.

Mada'ayn is not bound to accept the lowest or any other Offer and has the right to cancel these tenders and the tenderers have no right to claim for any compensations.

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