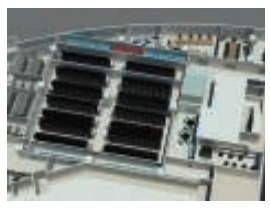
3 Nation

Pact inked to boost e-Transformation projects, SMEs



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Oman Post into e-commerce

Diversification strategy to see more product launches soon

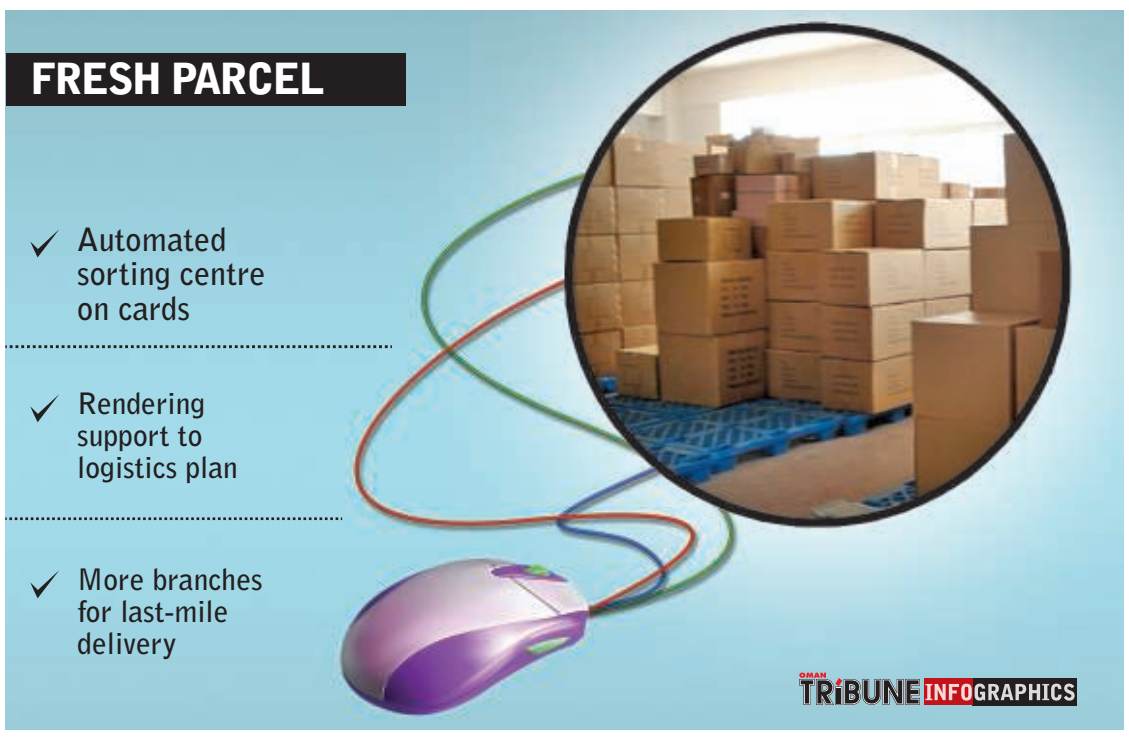
JETA PILLAI
MUSCAT

OMAN POST, AS PART of its diversification strategy and shedding the tag of being just a point for sending and receiving letters, is to launch its e-commerce service in November as part of National Day celebrations.

Estimates put e-commerce figures for the Sultanate currently at $600 million per annum and this is expected to touch $900 million in 2020, even if there is no new strategy by the public and private sector.

Oman Post CEO Abdulmalik Al Balushi told *Oman Tribune* recently that apart from e-commerce, there would be more product launches in November and still more in 2018.

"The future holds great potential for Oman Post and we are going to be in sync with what is happening around us, whether it is from a logistics or e-commerce point of view. There are a lot of products that are going to come," said Al Balushi.



Oman Post is going through a transformation and e-commerce requires cheap deliveries, technology, automation, sorting sensors and upscaling of staff capabilities. "We are already in the process of establishing an automated sorting centre. Its huge capacity of 6,000 items per hour will help the country attract volumes. That project will end by next year. That is at the cornerstone of our strategy. We are strengthening the delivery part, sorting part and extending our arm to digital," he said.

Currently, 80 per cent of its revenues come from posts, said Al Balushi, adding that "the strategy is to reduce dependence on posts and increase dependency on parcels and other services. More revenue would come from service to third parties, hopefully remittances, but mainly e-commerce and parcels". This year revenues had grown by 30 per cent so far with most of it coming from post and postal services.

Oman Post will also contribute to growth in the e-commerce ecosystem with its functioning infrastructure, including branches and vehicles which can be used for last mile delivery by firms. It already has 82 branches and more can be added, while postal items are moving across the GCC states.

It was last week that Oman Post launched 'Send service', which enables the user to send and receive material from anywhere within the governorate of Muscat, to start with, by using GPS and without a permanent postal address. Three more products would be launched by the end of the year, Al Balushi added.

Oman Post is part of Oman Global Logistics Group, which is implementing a restructuring plan to increase synergy between its various logistics businesses and help the country increase contribution of logistics sector in GDP to the targeted 14 billion rials by 2040.

Fahd, Turkey minister discuss bilateral ties

MUSCAT HH Sayyid Fahd Bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, on Sunday received Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and his accompanying delegation. Fahd reviewed the strong bilateral relations. Cavusoglu expressed Turkey's appreciation to the Sultanate under the leadership of His Majesty the Sultan for its constructive role in promoting understanding and rapprochement among nations. PAGE 2

Oman-Italy joint panel meets

MUSCAT The Omani-Italian Joint Committee held its sixth meeting on Sunday. The Omani side was chaired by HE Mohammed Bin Yousef Al Zarafi, Undersecretary at the Foreign Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs, while it was headed from the Italian side by Vincenzo Amendola, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs. PAGE 2

State Council holds youth forum

MUSCAT The State Council organised a seminar at Council of Oman, entitled "Youth and Parliamentary Awareness", in conjunction with the Sultanate's celebrations of Omani Youth Day this year under the patronage of HE Dr Yahya Bin Mahfoudh Al Mantheri, Chairman of the State Council.

PRAYER TIMING

Fajr	04:55
Sunrise	06:11
Dhohr	11:56
Asar	03:10
Maghrib	05:35
I'sha	06:46

WEATHER

MUSCAT	
MAX	MIN
31˚C	23˚C
SALALAH	
MAX	MIN
29˚C	23˚C

Colour of Oman is love

DAVID SOLOMON
MUSCAT

THIS IS NO ORDINARY love song for a country -- Oman -- that the Swiss duo Dust of Soul are performing to rapt and wonder-struck audiences at events and gatherings here.

But the circumstances under which the song 'The Colour of Oman is Love' has been composed is nothing short of a miracle at many levels.

And the soul-stirring passion with which it has been sung by Saskia Stauble 'Dusty' along with classical pianist Michael Odermatt will perhaps make it an anthem of eternal love for Oman, "the land, its people; the wind, the sea, the desert and the blue skies" as Dusty likes to put it in her bubbly, effervescent manner.

She says: "This song is a gift for the people of Oman. It belongs to this place, this land, for this land of love. I cannot explain how it all happened in one spontaneous burst of creativity. I've never done that before".

Mikey recounts that she and the pianist came to Oman for the first time on February 29. "We were coming from New York. We headed for our hotel because naturally it had been a long trip and we wanted to rest. And the next day, when we had gone out to savour the sight and sound of this wonderful country, Dusty composed the music and wrote the full lyrics of this song in 15 minutes. It seemed like something magical, because her knowledge and command of English language is not so good," Mikey told *Oman Tribune*.

Dusty picks up the narrative from here: "I really cannot explain what happened. I felt as though there was this strong, overwhelming surge of feelings and emotions within my soul, struggling to come out into the open.

"I rushed back to our hotel and was able to write the lyrics and compose the melody for 'Colour of Oman' in 15 minutes."

She adds this song that this song has the power to connect Switzerland and Oman with this amazing bridge of love and beyond this the whole of humanity".

Private push in fisheries sector

MUSCAT

THE PRIVATE SECTOR has offered to finance 90 fisheries initiatives under the Tanfeedh programme. These are expected to contribute 556 million rials to the GDP to take it to 781 million rials by 2023.

The projects identified by the fisheries labs under Tanfeedh are in processing, aquaculture and export. The private sector is willing to contribute up to 93 per cent of the project cost and the government would have to provide infrastructure.

Undersecretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries HE Dr Hamad Bin Said Al Aufi said the sector was one of the promising ones to enhance diversification. **ONA**

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Big C walkathon tomorrow

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT

AROUND 8,000 PEOPLE are expected to join the 14th annual walkathon, Oman Cancer Association's flagship event on Tuesday.

Last year 7,300 participated in the walk and this year's event at Qurum Municipal Park from 4 pm to 6 pm with the theme 'A walk for life', should have higher participation, OCA chairman and director Dr Wahid Al Kharusi said.

It is the culmination of the many 'Pink' initiatives of OCA to spread awareness about cancer. "Globally October is assigned for Breast Cancer Awareness. The campaign is known as the Pink Ribbon. OCA annually observes the October Pink Ribbon Initiative by creating awareness among the people culminating in the annual cancer walkathon," he said.

The non-governmental and non-profit organisation is registered with the Ministry of Social Development. It is the brainchild of a four-time cancer survivor Yuthar Al Rawahi who started the initiatives in 1999.

Dr Kharusi said registration was a must for the walkathon, a symbolic 2.5-km walk within the park. It is dedicated to the cancer patients, survivors and their families who need a lot of support.

"Joining the walk creates an atmosphere for those with cancers to feel they are not alone and they will experience the public support, togetherness and solidarity," he added

"We always encourage more and more children to join the walk as this will help them learn and as they grow they will appreciate cancer as an ordinary disease if diagnosed early," Dr Kharusi said.

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