



H E Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Finance, inaugurates the expo (Muscat Daily)

Oman minerals and mining expo begins

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The second edition of Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference began on Monday at the Oman Convention Exhibition Centre under the auspices of H E Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Finance.

The three-day exhibition is being organised by Omanexpo. The opening ceremony was graced by a number of government and embassy officials, as well as top executives from mining companies in Oman.

At the conference, Eng Hilal al

Busaidi, CEO, Public Authority for Mining, made the opening remarks. The keynote speech was delivered by Abdulsattar al Murshidi, chairman, Oman Mining Company. Dr Mehdi Karbasian, deputy minister and chairman of the board, Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization, also delivered a speech.

Eng Busaidi said the government is making efforts to diversify sources of national income in different sectors to support Oman's economy.

"Our role is to support these efforts through the mining sector development and attracting in-

vestment for economic diversification. Given the importance of this sector, Royal Decree 49/2014 established the Public Authority for Mining. The mining sector is one of the five sectors in the ninth five-year plan (2016-20)."

He added that Oman has good quality minerals that can make it an economic power.

The exhibition has attracted 51 companies - up from 37 in 2015. The two-day conference features a line-up of 26 local and international speakers representing various segments and companies from the mining sector. Among them are Dean Cun-

ningham, CEO, Kunooz Oman Holding; Ali al Wily, CEO, Oman Mining Company; Jesse Damsky, chief commercial officer, Port of Salalah; Marc Evertse, executive commercial manager, Sohar Port and Free Zone; Reggy Vermeulen, CEO, Port of Duqm; and Mohammed al Shabibi, CEO, Gulf Mining Group.

The topics that are being discussed include 'Investing in Oman's Mining Sector', 'Mining and Related Infrastructure Development', 'Technology Solutions for the Mining Industry', 'Project Opportunities', 'Human Resource Development & HSE in the Mining Sector'.

Sultanate may become minerals export hub



KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, JAN 16

Oman has the potential to become a “minerals export hub” in the region, according to experts attending Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference here.

“Oman has the potential to become a minerals hub within a short span of time if all concerted efforts of the country bear fruit,” said Ravi, MD, Bedrock Mineral Resources Consulting (BMRC).

According to him, Oman is blessed with huge mineral deposits (both metallic and non-metallic), copper, limestone, gypsum, silicon metal, dolomite, etc. “Reports reveal Oman has about 950 million tonnes of gypsum reserves and 500 million tonnes of dolomite deposits.”

Oman has a vast wealth of industrial rocks, minerals and metals. Some of its natural resources include — besides petroleum and natural gas — copper, asbestos, limestone, chromium and gypsum, he said.

In an attempt to accelerate mining activity in Oman, the country formed the Public Authority for Mining some years ago.



Duqm is known for its industrial minerals and salt, while fertilisers such as potash are found some 500 km from central Oman. Thamrait is known for gypsum and Salalah for limestone. Shuwaimya is known for limestone, gypsum and dolomite, while Sohar is rich in copper gold, Gabbro and limestone, said the experts.

Port of Salalah, a major gateway for the export of minerals and other natural deposits, transported 8,576,415 tonnes of limestone and gypsum last year compared with 8,604,408 tonnes in 2015. Of this, gypsum constituted for six million tonnes and limestone three million tonnes.

In 2011, Oman exported 2,896,249 tonnes of limestone, gypsum and other minerals.

“India and Thailand are the biggest users of Omani gypsum and limestone,” said Mohammed al Mashani, GM- Corporate Communications at the Port of Salalah. “For 2017, we have been receiving bulk orders from different corners,” he added.

With a highly favourable royalty charged by the government and assured global investment from Canada, India and other Gulf countries, Oman’s minerals sector will continue to grow significantly in the coming years, they added.

Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition from today

MUSCAT: Oman, dubbed as 'the gateway for potential investors in mining sector', is all geared up to host a high-profile Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference from January 16-18, 2017 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The expo, that aims to be a business platform for the rapidly growing mining sector, is expected to attract around 65 companies from more than 15 countries including Oman, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Germany, India, US, South Africa, Chile, Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, Singapore, Ghana, Italy, and others.

Oman, the second largest country in the GCC region with an excellent geology of minerals, wants to map itself as a country that intends to diversify its investments into non-oil mineral resources.

Spanning an area of 2,580 sq metres the expo is a good opportunity to

government and non-government organisations; mineral resources organisations; mining and exploration equipment companies; consultants; marble and granite companies; building material companies; chromite technology and processing organisations; non — metallic rocks extraction and processing units; IT, communication, data processing and transmission; explosives and blasting devices; mining engineering, erection and construction services; geological surveyors; surveying instruments, metals and metallurgical equipment and testing and processing laboratories to showcase their products and services.

The Oman mining conference will have the opening remarks by Eng Hilal al Busaidy, Chief Executive Officer, and Public Authority for Mining (PAM) followed by keynote address by Abdulsattar al Murshidi, Chairman, Oman Mining Company.

One-Stop-Shop for new mining licenses in Oman

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JAN 16

Oman's Public Authority for Mining (PAM) is formulating a new mining exploration and development strategy, underpinned by a Single Window System for the issuance of new licenses, to help unleash the potential of the country's prodigious mineral resources, according to a top official.

Eng Hilal al Busaidi, Chief Executive Officer, said the Single Window System will allow interested investors to apply for investment-ready blocks or concessions for development, with all of the required permits already in place.

"We are preparing a general strategy for the mining sector that will identify targets and milestones for the development of this industry over the

UNLEASHING GROWTH: General strategy for mining sector development under formulation

long-term," said Eng Al Busaidi. "Our expectation from all of the data available so far is that Oman has a lot of minerals — metallic and non-metallic — but additional appraisal is necessary in order to attract investment in development activities. This is the broad objective of the strategy."

Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the Oman Minerals & Mining Exhibition and Conference, which began at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre yesterday, the CEO also stressed that efforts are under

way to roll out the proposed One Stop Shop for new mining licences during the course of 2017.

Based on a single window system for the processing of new mining permits, he said the One Stop Shop exemplifies efforts by the Authority to do things a "bit differently" in the way how licences are issued going forward. Contrary to the current practice that requires licence-holders themselves to apply for environmental and other permits from various government agencies before they can

TURN TO P15

One-Stop-Shop for new mining licenses in Oman



Export of minerals from Duqm Port.

FROM P13

get the green light to start their mining activities, the new approach places the responsibility of obtaining these permits on the shoulders of the Authority itself.

Investors will be awarded pre-approved blocks that can be developed from the get go, he explained.

Commenting on plans for the introduction of the long-awaited revised mining law, Eng Al Busaidi said: "The draft has been progressed very satisfactorily, with all of the parties concerned having reviewed it. It is now before the Council of Ministers before it can be sent to the Majlis for their feedback."

Asked about efforts to develop a rail network primarily dedicated to the transportation of minerals from site to Duqm Port, the CEO stated: "Although we have very good infrastructure in terms of roads and ports, some mineral deposits are located in areas

that currently lack logistics. One of the means to transport these resources to the nearest port is by rail. We are discussing with Oman Rail the possibility of a rail section linking Shuwaymiyah and Manji (where some of the mineral resources are located) with Duqm Port."

Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, presided over the opening of the 3-day exhibition and conference, which has been organised by well-known events management firm Oman Expo.

Also presenting on the first day were top officials representing Oman Mining Company, Oman Oil Company, Minerals Development Oman (under formation), Maadin Enterprises, ahlibank, Port of Salalah, Port of Duqm, Sohar Port and Freezone, Oman Shipping Company, Bedrock Mineral Resource Consulting and Rockwell Automation.

Plans to unveil single window clearance for mining projects

A E JAMES

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MUSCAT: A one-stop-shop facility for investors applying for a mining licence is under the consideration of the Public Authority for Mining (PAM). The proposed facility will become a part of the new mining law. The move is expected to check any delay and hassles faced by the investors, including foreign ones, in developing mines in the country.

“Going forward, we will be having a different approach to offer opportunities to investors by allocating blocks and finalising ourselves all the permits required to be issued by the various ministries. These will then be offered to the investors,” said Hilal Al Busaidi, chief executive officer of the Public Authority for Mining (PAM).

It is a single window clearance system and the investors will receive the block ready to start mining activity. In 2017, the PAM will be able to introduce a major part of the single window clearance system. **Talking to journalists on**



- Times file picture

the sidelines of the Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference, Al Busaidi said it is illegal to transfer a mining licence in the country. “We have to legalise the transfer of licences and it is already included in the new law.” However, the first licence holder has to achieve 40 per cent of project execution and then seek an approval from the Public Authority for Mining to become eligible for transferring the licence.

Al Busaidi said the PAM has issued 500 licences to private sec-

tor players for all types of minerals, which include permanent and temporary licenses.

He said the prices of minerals dropped as in case of any other commodity in 2015 and 2016. “But we hope that as oil prices recover this year, the mining sector will also flourish.”

“Our expectations from the data available so far are that Oman has a lot of minerals, both metallic and non-metallic, and both need a bit of discovery and appraisal activity.”

Mining and mineral forum to discuss several vital issues

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A major conference and exhibition on minerals and mining sector — Oman Minerals and Mining Conference and Exhibition — will begin on Monday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The three-day event is organised by Oman Expo and Awtad Geological Consulting, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Mining (PAM).

The conference aims to attract international companies operating in the mining sector with a view to showcase experience and expertise owned by

these companies, inviting the participants from financial, investment, trade and regulatory sectors at the local and international levels share ideas and proposals, as well as the development of sustainable investment programmes that will develop the mining sector in the Sultanate and support its economy.

New technologies


The conference also aims to serve as a venue to introduce and discuss new technologies being used to uncover significant mineral deposits throughout Oman, best practices, emerging opportunities, present case studies and ad-


dress issues and challenges facing the sector.


The conference will discuss many topics of interest to the Sultanate, which include mining sector's role in the contribution to the development of national economy, unlocking value in mineral resources development to enhance project economics, expediting the development of mining in Oman and funding issues.

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'Mining sector has big potential for hiring'

Oman is attempting to diversify its economy and shift focus to non-oil sources of revenue

SHRUTHI NAIR
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MUSCAT: Oman could be the epicentre for minerals and metals in the entire region, according to the CEO of Oman's leading mining company.

"With a place like Salalah, we are the epicentre for India, Australasia and the African East coast. These are all areas where there is a strong demand for these commodities," Dean Cunningham, CEO of Kunooz Oman Holding said in an exclusive interview to Times TV.

Underlining his belief that the sector could create job opportunities for thousands of people in the Sultanate, he pointed out that



Eng Hilal Al Busaidi from the Public Authority for Mining.

his company would be recruiting more people if granted more licences.

"During the construction phases and feasibility studies, recruitment will increase. As far as the newer projects are concerned, we will certainly be looking at bringing in more human capital," he added.

The Public Authority for Mining also recognises the potential that mining industry has with regards to recruitment.

"Our mandate is to improve the mining sector in different ways. It includes generating revenue for the government and creating jobs for the Omanis," said Eng Hilal Al



Dean Cunningham, CEO of Kunooz Oman Holding.

Busaidi from the Public Authority for Mining. "The sector also has a huge potential for hiring and we do have a lot of opportunities.

"The chain ranges from excavation itself to transporting to creating an added value. This entire chain creates jobs."

According to Dean Cunningham, if the Sultanate is able to boost investment and growth in the mining sector consistently for the next couple of decades, the industry could prove to be an asset in terms of urbanisation and infrastructure. Pointing to the need for a long term growth strategy, he said, "For the next 20 to 30 years, if Oman does this correctly and



puts a lot of thought into the process and positions itself properly, we can take advantage of that in urbanization and infrastructure."

Currently, the state, in its attempt to diversify its economy and shift focus to non-oil sources of revenue, has been emphasising the need to boost growth and investment in the mining sector.

While it is one of the sectors targeted under Tanfeedh, the Public Authority for Mining recently drafted a new legislation that will see an overhaul of Oman's mining regulations. The legislation in this regard is currently being reviewed by the government.

"The new law covers several aspects to facilitate investments in the mining sector, such as extending the duration of the licenses. Secondly, the law is very transparent with obligations of the investors and the government spelt out clearly," said Eng Hilal Al Busaidi.

New mining law to be in place by June

◆ STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT

THE MUCH-AWAITED new mining law is to be promulgated by June and discussions for rail lines connecting Al Shuwaymiyah and Manji in Dhofar to Duqm port for transporting minerals are on, according to top officials of the Public Authority for Mining (PAM).

Director General of



Some areas where minerals are located can be served better by railway

Hilal Al Busaidi

Research and Geological Surveys Ali Salim Ali Al Rajahi said on the sidelines of the **Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference on Monday** that the new law would

come into being around the first half of the year.

Authority CEO HE Hilal Al Busaidi said: "We progressed very satisfactorily so far" and the draft law had been finalised by

all reviewers and was with the Council of Ministers from where it would go to the Council of Oman.

Although there were established ports and roads, some areas where minerals were located could be served better by railway and discussions to connect Al Shuwaymiyah and Manji in Dhofar to Duqm port were on, he said.

Metallic minerals found in the Sultanate include

chromite, copper, gold and silver, manganese, lead and zinc and laterite. Non-metallic minerals include, limestone, dolomite, gypsum, silica and quartzite.

A single window clearance project was being considered for investors in the mining sector.

It was preparing a general mining strategy to set targets and determine future growth, he said.



Al Jashmi at the Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference.

PAM to seek pre-approval for large tracts of land

◆ STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT

THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY for Mining (PAM) plans to get pre-approval for large areas of land for mining activity and then allot portions of it to developers through competitive bidding, said its CEO Hilal Bin Mohammed Al Busaidi on Monday.

Al Busaidi said they had “already determined large areas and made other ministries concerned for getting permits aware of these areas” and they had been advised not to allow any activity in those areas without informing PAM.

“That is the first stage. We are working on the second stage where we determine actual location, where we see indication of existence of mining and then we ask the other ministries” to give permits and then they could be offered to investors.

This is expected in months for all types of minerals, added Al Busaidi.

Export of minerals and associated products was at 650 million rials in 2015, recording a drop of 15 per cent.

51 companies attend mining exhibition

◆ STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT

FIFTY-ONE COMPANIES are participating in the second edition of Oman-expo's Oman Minerals and Mining Exhibition and Conference, which was inaugurated by Undersecretary at the Ministry of Finance HE Nasser Bin Khamis Al Jashmi on Monday at the new Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Alongside the three-day exhibition is a two-day conference where 26 local and international speakers representing various segments and companies from the mining sector will make a series of presentations.

Among them are: Dean Cunningham, CEO, Kunooz Oman Holding; Ali Al Wily, CEO, Oman Mining Company; Jesse Damsky, Chief Commercial Officer, Port of Salalah; Marc Evertse, Executive Commercial Manager, Sohar Port and Free Zone; and Reggy Vermeulen, CEO, Port of Duqm; and Mohammed Al Shabibi, CEO, Gulf Mining Group.

The topics that will be presented include: Investing in Oman's Mining Sector, Mining and Related Infrastructure Development, Technology Solutions for the Mining Industry, Project Opportunities, Human Resource Development and HSE in the Mining Sec-

tor. The conference takes place at a time when the government is working to increase the share of other sectors in Oman's GDP.

New discoveries of mineral deposits across the Sultanate and bulk exports through the ports at Sohar, Duqm and Salalah are expected.

The opening of the exhibition and conference was graced by a government officials and diplomats, as well as top executives from mining companies in Oman. Speeches were made by HE Hilal Al Busaidi, CEO, Public Authority for Mining and Abdulsattar Al Murshidi, Chairman, Oman Mining Company.

Plans to unveil single window clearance for mining projects

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- Times file picture

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