



## 570 new graduates pass out from Sohar University

SOHAR — The Sohar University yesterday celebrated the graduation of new batch.

The number of graduates of the ninth batch stood at 570 with degrees of bachelor, and advanced diploma in various disciplines.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Shaikh Saif bin Mohammed al Shabibi, Housing Minister, in the presence of a number of directors-general, Chairman of the University's Board, Chairman of Trustees Council, representatives of Queensland University in Australia and parents of the students. Shaikh Saif affirmed that

this occasion will remain in the minds of everybody as it coincides with celebrations of the Sultanate's 40th Glorious National Day.

He expressed his deep appreciation for those in charge of Sohar University and all higher education institutions for the efforts in preparing the graduates and to join the labour market.

Shaikh Saif praised the Higher Education Ministry's role in supporting such national institutions to reach the standard of regional and international institutions.

Dr Abood bin Hamad al Sawafi, Vice-Chancellor of Sohar University, in his speech highlighted the achievements accomplished by Sohar University in all fields during the first 10 years of the university, pointing out that the university was the first private university in the Sultanate.

Dr Al Sawafi said that progress was noticeable in research and industrial co-operation field, which the university is the first to adopt. The chief guest honoured the top graduates with bachelor degrees in various disciplines and presented students with certificates and gifts.

On her participation Hiba al Rahbi said "I am very pleased and honoured to participate in this event which is for a noble and humanitarian cause. Many people are not aware how dangerous diabetes is on human health and on society at large. I am happy to pledge my support and help draw attention towards Diabetes and its ill effects. I want people to understand

## Celebrities to take part in Beat Diabetes Walkathon tomorrow

By A Staff Reporter

MUSCAT — The Beat Diabetes Walkathon under the auspices of the Ministry of Health to be held tomorrow is evoking good response from all the corners of the society.

High achievers from Oman including Khairid Sulaiman al Siyabi, the first Omani to conquer Mount Everest, Saleh al Jabri, Captain of *Jewel of Muscat*, Nizar al Shanfari, a Champion Rally Driver, Hiba al Rahbi from the Royal Cavalry, and Oman's budding tennis player Sara al Balushi will be taking the Landmark Group initiated Beat Diabetes Walk and will be lending support for the cause.

The registration for the walk is free and is now open across Oman at any of the Centrepoint, Home Centre, Max and Emax outlets. The registered participants will be given t-shirts and caps on the venue before the walk. The walkathon will start at 7 am from Centrepoint Ruwi.

The "Beat Diabetes" campaign is designed in the wake of the shocking worldwide and regional statistics about the killer disease. Globally, diabetes is growing at an alarming rate and each year, over seven million people develop diabetes and the condition kills almost four million people annually — in other words, an average of one person every 10 seconds.

Over 300 million people are living with diabetes worldwide and the number is predicted to reach 430 million by 2025. The World Diabetes Day celebrated on 14 November is a global event that unites millions of people in over 160 countries to raise awareness of diabetes. Statistics of the condition in the Gulf region is even more alarming.

## First Roso, Geneva orchestra it venture held at Al Bustan

By Ali Ahmed al Riyami

MUSCAT — The inaugural performance by the Geneva International Orchestra and their joint performance with the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra (Roso), took place at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel's Oman Auditorium, yesterday.

Dominique Follmi, former President of the Government of Geneva and the current President of the Geneva International Orchestra, in a prior interview with the *Observer*, noted, the concert is being held as part of Oman's 40th National Day celebrations and that it reciprocates Roso's participation at the 3-month Geneva Festival held in July 2009 — in which the Sultanate of Oman was the especially invited guest of honour nation.

He said, Roso had performed at the festival's inaugural concert, which had attracted a very large audience and from which Follmi came to know about Oman and its symphony orchestra. Indeed, he added, it was this that has led up to the orchestral performance here.



DOMINIQUE FOLLMI

Giving his comments about the Geneva International Orchestra, the President noted, it has been put together for the first time especially for this concert; the purpose being to bring together the best musicians from Geneva for this cultural, goodwill, collaboration with Roso and Oman.

In this regard, he said, combining the two orchestras for the concert's finale was not a difficult proposition, as professional musicians have no difficulty in performing together. The only minor obstacle was to arrange joint rehearsals and this is why they came a few days earlier in order to allow for this.

Commenting on the contrast of switching from politics to orchestral music, Follmi, said, having completed his political term he was able to devote more time to the orchestra, which will be performing its first major event, although others have already been scheduled for the future. The President concluded by stating that he is very happy to be performing here in the Sultanate, adding that, the fact that the two orchestras are going to play together is very interesting. Although the two orchestras are culturally from different worlds, it shows that music is a universal language and through music particular ties of friendship can be made, added Follmi.

Further, he said his overriding hope is that this will not be a one-time event and that these ties of friendship will be embodied in the future by other events and return visits. The concert programme began with an Overture of Tancredi opera, by G Rossini, then the Concerto for two pianos, by F Poulenc, followed by the Italian Symphony, by F Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and finally with the March Number 1 from Pomp and Circumstance, by Sir E Elgar, with Roso.

## Omani teachers build new partnerships with UK schools

By A Staff Reporter

MUSCAT — New international school partnerships that give students in Oman and the UK the opportunity to learn from each other about their respective cultures are being formed under the British Council's global Connecting Classrooms programme.

Teachers from schools based in Wales in the UK visited Oman from October 23 to 26, 2010 and had the chance to meet teachers from their

tential new partner schools in Oman.

The fourth new Omani schools participating in the programme are Alsheikh Kalaf bin Sinan Cycle 2 (Al-Batnah South Educational Region), Asma bint al Namaan School Cycle 2 (Al Batnah South Educational Region), Al Khuwair Cycle 2 (Muscat Governorate), and Shamsa al Khalili Cycle 2 (Muscat Governorate).

During the four-day contact seminar held the teachers finalised their new partnerships and developed a joint curriculum project for their students to

take forward. The new schools joining the programme will form 'cluster' partnerships between groups of 7 schools. This will give the schools more scope to work on projects they are particularly interested in.

Discussion sessions gave the teachers the opportunity to build understanding of the cultural differences between them and their different education systems. The teachers joined a class during a visit from Al Batnah Educational Region, Bader al Kubra Basic Education and Al Ibdah Basic Education.

There are now more than 200 schools in the Middle East and the UK operating in partnerships since "Connecting Classrooms" was introduced into the Middle East in 2006, with plans to increase that number by a further 180 over the next two years. 22 of the current participating schools are based in Oman.

Connecting Classrooms aims to improve trust and understanding between students living in different societies, by linking schools around the world with schools in the UK.

