

Oman : Hiring Expats easier now

Muscat: The process to legally hire foreign employees became easier in Oman in 2019 compared to 2018, according to the Global Competitiveness Report released by the World Economic Forum.

According to the report, Oman was given a score of 4.0 out of 7 in "Ease of Hiring Foreign Labour", giving the Sultanate an overall score of 49.9 and placing Oman in the 83 position in countries on the list in terms of hiring foreign workers.

Oman got score of 3.9 in 2018 in the same report, and a cumulative score of 47.9, wherein it was placed 90th worldwide.

Among all the countries listed in the world, Albania has highlighted as the nation where it was the easiest to hire foreign labour.



UAE private sector adds 40,000 new jobs in Q2

The UAE's private sector created 40,000 new jobs during the second quarter (Q2) of 2019, excluding jobs in free zones, reflecting the activity of the labour market supported by positive developments in the national economy.

The national economy posted a year-on-year growth of 2.2 per cent at fixed prices in the second quarter of this year, according to the UAE Central Bank.

The private sector is continuing to create new job opportunities, increasing the total number of its workers to 5.1 million workers in the second quarter of 2019, compared to 5.06 million workers in the first quarter.

The number of new jobs added to the UAE's labour market in 2018

reached 137,000, according to statistics from the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization, which were included in an audit reports



issued by the UAE Central Bank.

Based on documented figures, economic activity since the start of the year contributed a 1 per cent increase in private sector

employment in the second quarter of 2019, compared to a 0.1 per cent rise in the previous quarter.

The rise in employment during the second quarter of this year is the outcome of an upsurge in real estate and other sectors, which include agriculture, mining, hotels, restaurants, brokerage, education and health.

The value of the real estate sector and other mentioned sectors rose year-on-year in the second quarter of 2019 by around 5 per cent and 8.2 per cent, respectively, compared to 4.4 per cent and 4.9 per cent in the first

quarter.

The construction and real estate sectors employ 45.7 per cent of the UAE's workforce. – TradeArabia News Service

US says it did not approve Turkey's Syria offensive



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has denied the US gave Turkey a "green light" for its offensive in Syria.

MrPompeo defended President Donald Trump's widely criticised decision to withdraw US troops from the northern border area.

Turkey on Wednesday launched an assault on territory held by Kurdish-led forces - key allies of the US in the region.

President RecepTayyipErdogan said the aim was to "prevent the creation of a terror corridor" on the border.

Turkey said its plan was to create a "safe zone" cleared of Kurdish militias which will also house Syrian refugees.

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- Previous experience in Gulf will be preferred

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UN in the red, staff salaries at risk

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations has an overall annual operating budget of several billion dollars, covering everything from humanitarian work to disarmament, but right now, it's just trying to make sure its employees get paid after this month. How did the world body end up more than \$200 million in the red? The answer: Member states who have not paid their expected contributions, including the United States. On Tuesday, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned of the "worst cash crisis facing the United Nations in nearly a decade."

He cautioned the UN "runs the

risk of depleting its liquidity reserves by the end of the month and defaulting on payments to staff and vendors." Several



member states are behind in their dues payments. The UN will not publicly identify those countries, but sources told AFP the main culprits are the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Iran. In all, 64 countries owe

money to the UN. Also on the list of budget delinquents are Venezuela, North Korea, South Korea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The last country to have paid up is war-racked Syria, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Tuesday at his daily press conference. In a letter sent Monday to the 37,000 employees at the UN secretariat, which was obtained by AFP, Guterres said the UN had a deficit of \$230 million as of the end of September. On Tuesday, he indicated that if the world body had not taken the initiative to cut spending since the start of the year, the hole would

have been even bigger in October – possibly \$600 million – and could have affected last month's General Assembly attended by world leaders.

Travel cuts

In his statement on Tuesday, Guterres thanked the 129 member states who have paid up "and urged those who have not paid to do so urgently and in full." To limit expenditures from now until year's end, the UN chief has raised the possibility of postponing conferences and meetings, limiting all but essential official travel, and reducing services.

A UN official speaking on

condition of anonymity said Guterres had raised the budget issues with member states as early as this past spring, asking them to pay up, but they refused. Not including what it pays for peacekeeping operations, the UN's operating budget for 2018-2019 is close to \$5.4 billion, with the United States contributing 22 percent. The portion still owed? Nearly \$1.4 billion. Washington is also the largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping tab. President Donald Trump's administration has taken a hard line on UN funding, cutting contributions and pushing for cost-saving reforms. - AFP

Dubai's new low-cost virtual license to draw foreign businesses, freelancers

The Dubai government is keen to attract more investments in its innovative and consultancy sectors, and the recently launched virtual license will result in a more simplified business environment for foreign investors and entrepreneurs, according to global consultancy PwC Middle East.

"Those eligible to apply for virtual licenses will benefit from a simple, fast and low-cost solution to conduct business in the UAE, without the need to reside in the country," Darren Harris, Legal Services Leader at PwC Legal Middle East told Zawya.

"Ongoing benefits include the ability to manage the business online, including the digital execution and submission of documents," he said. "In addition, all businesses operating under a virtual license will get access to DubaiStore.com, an online marketplace for the promotion of products and services with online shoppers and interested customers."

The initial setup fees will be in the range of \$250, and licenses will need to be renewed on an annual basis.

The license covers 21 services

in three business sectors: computer programming, design, and services related to printing and advertising. (See Appendix below)



To obtain the license, there are four primary conditions that an applicant must satisfy as part of the eligibility assessment.

"Individuals interested in setting up their virtual license must be verified, reside outside the UAE, be the nationals or tax residents of approved countries, and propose to operate in one of the three business sectors,"

Harris said.

Foreign businesses planning to operate in the UAE currently require either the establishment of an appropriately licensed entity in

the UAE or a contractual arrangement between the foreign person (be it an individual or a legal person) and an appropriately licensed UAE entity, i.e. a third party, according to PwC's Harris.

"Both options offer distinct advantages and limitations from a legal, commercial and tax perspective, to name a few. A foreign business wishing to set up

a local entity is subject to several considerations, such as the legal form and jurisdiction suitable for the proposed operations, which will also determine whether the compulsory participation of a UAE national is required," he said noting the simplicity of the virtual license in contrast.

FREELANCERS

As per the UAE's current regulations, those residing in the country and working as freelancers need to obtain a freelance permit.

"One of the eligibility criteria for a freelance permit is that the freelancer must hold appropriate credentials or certificates related to their chosen field (being media, technology or education). There is no similar requirement for virtual license holders," Harris said.

"Freelance permit holders are generally subject to local entity governance requirements, including the need to maintain a UAE residency visa and registered office address, which is not applicable to virtual license holders," he said noting that virtual licenses are specifically only offered to individuals based abroad.

Like virtual licenses, freelancers can also only operate

across a limited number of sectors, and there is some overlap between the permitted activities of each, according to him.

"Businesses operating under both regimes do so as a 'sole proprietorship', rather than a 'company'. This means that there is no legal separation between the license holder and the business, which has liability implications in absence of the 'corporate veil'," he noted.

As for whether the virtual license can facilitate obtaining a visa to the UAE, AnirChatterji, PwC Middle East Immigration and Employment Leader said: "No. Currently, a virtual company license does not - and will not - automatically guarantee residency status (be that a UAE residency visa or business visitor or otherwise) to any of the company's partners, directors or employees."

"However, we understand that the Dubai Government is working on putting into place a simplified visa process for holders of a virtual company license, although the terms, conditions, criteria and timelines for such a visa is presently unclear," Chatterji added.

Oman announces plans to build \$1.4bn medical city



Oman's health ministry has announced plans to build the sultanate's first medical city over a sprawling 5-million-sq-m area in the Barka region.

The project, being developed at a cost of RO479 million (\$1.24 billion), is yet another initiative under the country's Tanfeedh programme for economic expansion, which aims to wean the country away from primarily oil-and-gas-based sources of income, reported *Times of Oman*.

The country's ambitious healthcare project, the Medical City is being built in four phases, stated the report.

The first two phases will focus on commercial operations, private medical facilities, and residential projects, while the other phases will be allocated for government use, it added.

2,000 experts to take part in Saudi Logistics Conference

About 2,000 experts specialised in the supply chain and logistics sector and several investors will attend the third Saudi Logistics Conference in Riyadh from October 13 to 15.

The three-day conference will be patronised by Minister of Transport DrNabeel Mohamed Al-Amudi at the Four Seasons Hotel.

It will witness the announcement by the Saudi Ports Authority of the largest integrated logistics zone in the kingdom, exceeding 2 million sq m in its first phase. This will contribute to strengthening the kingdom's strategic position as a hub in the trade exchange movement, especially between the three Continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The logistics zone will be a customs depository and re-export platform as part of its efforts to optimize the utilization of its advanced capacities at Saudi ports.

The conference is among the most prominent logistics events in the world and has become a reference for many decision-makers locally and internationally, said general overseer of the marketing and corporate communication department, adviser to the minister of transport and chairman of the conference supervisory committee YasserAbdulazizAl Misfer.

He said the conference aims at keeping pace with the continuous

modernisation in the supply and logistics services industry to contribute to the realisation of the objectives of Vision 2030 in making the kingdom a global logistics center that relies mainly on transport with the participation of the public and private sectors.

Al Misfer said the conference offers an important opportunity to establish economic partnerships and promising investment opportunities.

The conference is expected to receive about 7,000 visitors.

It will discuss several key topics, including "simplifying the concepts of supply chain technology and logistics services and the future of logistics in the Kingdom in the light of digital development", as well as investment in Saudi logistics projects.

It will also discuss renewable energy and supply chain issues, future logistics projects, analyses of big data and its impact on companies and organizations.

On the first day, many workshops and lectures will be held to discuss plans to transform the Kingdom into a diversified and sustainable economic system.

The session on "Integral efforts between agencies and harmony with logistical initiatives" will be addressed by each of Dr. Rumaih Mohammed Al-Rumaih, President of the Public Transport Authority; Eng. Saad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khalb, President of Saudi Ports Authority; Abdulhadi bin Ahmed Al-

Mansouri, President of the General Authority for Civil Aviation; Mr. Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al-Hakbani, Governor of the General Customs Authority; Dr. Bashar bin Khalid Al-Malik, CEO of the Saudi Railways Company (SAR). The session will be moderated by the CEO of the Industrial Valley, Eng. AymanMansi.

The second day will discuss several vital topics centered on the development of the transport industry, international challenges, and opportunities to achieve logistics services and successful trade across continents and cultures.

Also on the agenda of discussion will be the key elements of the success of the supply chain sector in the fourth industrial revolution and industrial intelligence, the telecommunications sector and its impact on the digitization of the supply chain, in addition to the methodology of educational institutions and the readiness of companies to receive new talents and skills with modern science.

The third day will address the future functions of the supply chain and how logistics will impact road transport technology.

A workshop entitled "International Land Transport System (TIR): A New Era to Facilitate Cross-Border Trade and Transport" will be held and the conference will conclude with many recommendations in the same context. – **TradeArabia News Service**