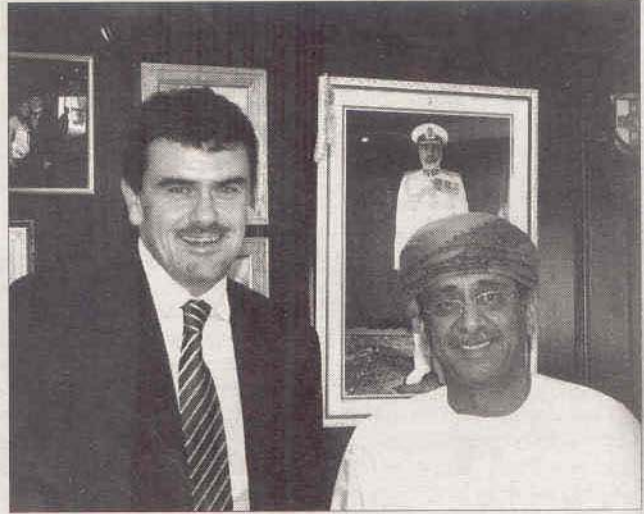


Two Omanis in the race for ME Entrepreneur of the Year Award



TOP PLAYERS: Philip Stanton, managing partner of Ernst & Young Oman, congratulating Samir Fancy, chairman of Renaissance Services; and Maqbool Al Saleh, chairman of OHI.

Times News Service

MUSCAT — Two Omanis have been nominated as finalists for the Ernst & Young Middle East Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2007.

The two finalists from Oman, selected from a long list of leading entrepreneurs from ten countries across the region, now join a total of 20 finalists to participate in the Middle East Entrepreneur of the Year celebratory weekend to be held in Dubai from February 21-23.

Samir Fancy, chairman of Renaissance Services and Maqbool Al Saleh, chairman of Oman Holdings International (OHI) have been announced by Ernst & Young as finalists for the Entrepreneur of the Year awards programme, which recognises outstanding entrepreneurs on a regional and global level who are building and leading dynamic, growing businesses.

The Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year programme was launched in the Middle East region only this year.

The World Entrepreneur of

the Year event to be held in Monte Carlo in May 2008 and will involve over 50 other national Entrepreneurs from around the globe. One representative will be chosen from the list of finalists to represent the Middle East at the 2008 World Entrepreneur of the Year event.

During the three-day event in Dubai in February the finalists will have the opportunity to present their success story to a panel of independent distinguished judges. Awards are given to entrepreneurs who have demonstrated excellence and extraordinary success in such areas as: Financial performance; Entrepreneurial spirit; Strategic direction; National or global impact; Innovation and Personal integrity/influence.

The entrepreneurs will receive awards at a gala dinner and awards ceremony on the evening of February 23, during which an overall nominated leading entrepreneur will be announced to represent the Middle East finalists at the World Entrepreneur of the Year award ceremony to be held in Monte Carlo in May 2008.

Reacting to the news of being selected as a finalist from such a distinguished list of applicants, Samir Fancy, the chairman of Renaissance Services SAOG, said: "All my life I have passionately believed in all that I did. I was perhaps blessed with an extra dose of courage. But the single minded focus all this created never made life easy."

"Although I feel that whatever I achieved was beyond simple wealth creation, you never stop questioning yourself. But then a moment like now arrives and you expect to feel euphoric. But if the truth be told, I have only felt humbled and gratified," Fancy said.

Maqbool Al Saleh said: "While I must confess to personal delight at having been awarded the recognition implicit in being selected among the best 20, as well as a sense of having been picked by a group of wise and enlightened outsiders, I would be less than honest if I do not admit a desire and hope to go up even higher. I feel like a mountain climber who has reached the base camp and is bracing to attempt to reach the summit.

Saleh added: "As in all contests, every nominee knows that there can be only one winner, but if he does not have the ambition to reach the top, he should not even be in the competition. And yes, I am hoping that I will have a chance to go to the next stage, and the exhilaration that it will no doubt bring."

Ernst & Young also announced that Lloyds TSB, International Private Banking is the sponsor of the programme this year.