

Three construction heads make Indian Power list

Three businessmen with links to the construction industry have made the top 10 in this year's Arabian Business GCC's 100 most powerful Indians list.

P Mohamed Ali, vice chairman of Galfar, was the highest placed on the list – at number five. EMKE Group managing director Yusuffali MA topped the list, ahead of Landmark Group chairman Micky Jagtiani (2); GEMS chairman Sunny Varkey (3) and Standard Chartered Bank CEO V Shankar (4).

Oman-based Ali is the founder of Galfar Engineering and Contracting Company, and is one of the Gulf's most prominent entrepreneurs.

Since its establishment in conjunction with Sheikh Salem Said Al Fannah Al Araiimi, Ali has turned the small construction company into a regional market leader, listed on the Muscat Securities Market.

Today, the company is the single largest private sector employer in Oman and has activities spanning a wide range of sectors including construction and oil and gas.

Outside of his business interests, Ali is the founder of the Oman Petroleum Alliance and the former vice chairman of the state-backed Omanisation Joint Committee. Overseas, he helps run companies in Qatar, India and Dubai. His charitable works include founding the PM Foundation, which promotes education in rural Indian communities, and being chief patron of the Talikulam Vikas Trust.

Syed Salahuddin, managing director at ETA Ascon & Star Group, was seventh on the list.

Set up in 1973, ETA is a joint venture between Dubai's Al Ghurair Investments and Indian businessmen BS Abdul Rahman and Syed Salahuddin.

Primarily a contracting firm in the UAE, with expertise ranging from civil construction to electro mechanical, elevator engineering and facilities management, the firm has completed projects in excess of \$1.36bn.

Salahuddin now oversees around 75,000 employees in 21 countries and his leadership has been highlighted with an award for Outstanding Asian Contribution to Middle East Development at the Asian Business Awards Middle East.

Kerala-born PNC Menon also made the top 10, with ninth spot.

Menon migrated to Oman in 1976, and started an interior decorating business with a partner. After spotting an opportunity in real estate in India, he established Sobha Developers in 1995, named after his wife.

Today, the firm is one of the largest and only backward integrated real estate players in India. In 2006, Menon listed the company's shares on the Bombay Stock Exchange, which saw him propelled into the international spotlight and listed on the Forbes Rich List for the first time.

With more than 35 years of experience in the field of construction and real estate development, Menon has remained the firm's chairman, while his wife sits on the board his son, Ravi, an engineer from Purdue University, is vice chairman.

As of March 2011, Sobha Developers had completed 71 residential projects and currently has 23 residential projects underway. Some of the firm's landmark clients include Infosys, Taj Group, Dell, HP and Bosch.