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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION BY THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA IN MALAYSIA



CONGRATULATIONS



HIS MAJESTY
KING ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD
THE CUSTODIAN OF THE TWO HOLY MOSQUES



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
CROWN PRINCE SALMAN BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND THE CITIZENS OF SAUDI ARABIA ON THEIR
82ND NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS
ON
23 SEPTEMBER 2012

Warmest Regards From The Board Of Directors And Management Of



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Opportunity
SAUDI ARABIA
in Malaysia



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CELEBRATING WITH THE KINGDOM

82ND NATIONAL DAY



KING ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD
CUSTODIAN OF THE TWO HOLY MOSQUES

CELEBRATING WITH THE KINGDOM

82ND NATIONAL DAY



**HRH CROWN PRINCE SALMAN BIN
ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD**
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

CELEBRATING WITH THE KINGDOM

82ND NATIONAL DAY



**HRH PRINCE SAUD AL-FAISAL BIN
ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD**
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CELEBRATING WITH THE KINGDOM

82ND NATIONAL DAY



HRH PRINCE AHMED BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD
MINISTER OF INTERIOR

REMEMBERING PRINCE SULTAN

(1930-2011)



Born in the Saudi capital of Riyadh, Prince Sultan is one of the founders of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Prince Sultan, who was internationally known for his great statesmanship and philanthropy, was the Kingdom's Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector-General, when he passed away on October 22, 2011.

He was a great statesman with a sharp political acumen, who could handle difficult situations without losing his calm. A source of strength to his people, Prince Sultan took keen interest in the progress and welfare of the citizens of the Kingdom. He undertook many reforms for the country and was one of the main architects of modern Saudi Arabia. As the Defence Minister, his strong will and strategy won many battles and made Saudi Arabia a strong nation.

He was also a passionate philanthropist, who built charitable institutions to serve various educational, healthcare and humanitarian activities.

MALAYSIA PAYS TRIBUTE

Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato' Sri Mohammed Najib Tun Razak conveyed his deepest condolences to King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, on the sad demise of Crown Prince Sultan.

The Prime Minister in his condolence message to King Abdullah said that the demise of the Crown Prince was a great loss not only for the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but also to the World of Islam, which lost a great leader.

PM Najib said that throughout his life, Prince Sultan answered the higher call of duty, to serve his people and his country. In his message the PM said, "He earned the love and respect of his fellow countrymen and the Islamic Ummah for his integrity, simplicity, dedication and reforms. Our thoughts and prayers are with Your Majesty and the immediate family members and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

The Prime Minister flew to Riyadh to personally offer his condolences to the King and his family. Hundreds of royal family members, world leaders and diplomats offered their condolences to the family.



**"Our thoughts and prayers are with
Your Majesty and the immediate
family members and the people of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia"**

- Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohammed Najib Tun Razak

REMEMBERING PRINCE NAIF

(1934-2012)



Prince Naif Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, who was both Saudi Arabia's Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, passed away in a hospital in Geneva, on June 16, 2012.

The former Crown Prince was a pillar of strength and security not only for Saudi Arabia, but for the entire Middle East. He was a combination of strength, dynamism and compassion. Under his leadership, Saudi Arabia was always the most stable and secure nation, even in the midst of turbulence in the Middle East. He took tough stances and adopted security strategies and agreements not only for the security of the Arab world but also for global peace. The world felt safe with Prince Naif at the helm of security.

As the Minister of Interior, the Prince will always be remembered for his courageous fight against terrorism in Saudi Arabia. That the country is now totally free from the extremist menace is because of his policies. He was also an ocean of compassion; this was evident in his programmes for the families of security personnel and for extremists, who had surrendered.

Prince Naif's passing away is a great loss to world security.

MALAYSIA PAYS TRIBUTE

Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohammed Najib Tun Razak conveyed his deepest condolences and sympathy to King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia on the demise of Crown Prince Naif Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

In his condolence message, on June 16, 2012, to King Abdullah, PM Najib said the demise of the Crown Prince was a great loss not only for the people of Saudi Arabia but also for the region, including Malaysia and the Muslim Ummah.

The Malaysian PM said, "It is with deep sorrow and grief that I learned of the passing away of one of the most respected and dynamic leaders of Saudi Arabia, Prince Nayef. He will be remembered as a great leader, who devoted his life to the service of his people and his country and earned the love and respect of his fellow countrymen and the Islamic Ummah for the prosperity and development of the Kingdom."

PM Najib said Malaysia would continue to build on Prince Naif's dedication and contributions in strengthening relations between the two brotherly countries.

"At this hour of national grief and sorrow, on behalf of the



government and the people of Malaysia, I would like to convey my deepest condolences and sympathy to Your Majesty and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and the rest of the family members, as well as with the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We pray to Allah, the Almighty, to grant eternal peace and forgiveness to his soul, and place him in *Al-Jannah* (heaven)."

Congratulations



His Majesty

**KING ABDULLAH BIN
ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD**

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosque

Members of the Royal Family
and the **Citizens of Saudi Arabia**
on their 82nd National Day Celebrations
on 23 September 2012



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THE KINGDOM'S NEW CROWN PRINCE

The world has hailed the King's choice of Prince Salman as the next Crown Prince



At an informal meeting in Riyadh with Prince Salman, a few years ago, a group of students from Harvard University had a lot of questions about Saudi Arabia and its culture. Crown Prince Salman astounded the students with his vast knowledge in all spheres such as religion, democracy, terrorism, women's freedom and the Shoura. He patiently addressed all the issues and even quoted from history, to clear their views about the Kingdom.

The incident, quoted in an article by Badr Alkhorayef of Asharq Al-Awsat, is a proof why King Abdullah chose Prince Salman as the Crown Prince after the demise of Prince Naif, in June, this year.

The Crown Prince has been referred to as one of the rare Arabs with in-depth knowledge of all aspects of Saudi Arabia, its people, the various tribes, regions and even families. He is the son of King Abdul Aziz, the founder of the Kingdom, and the eighth crown prince. He is one of the most popular personalities in the Arab world; an active politician, who has travelled widely and dealt with many issues. The Prince, who resembles his father King Abdul Aziz, in stature and appearance, is also highly respected among all the tribes of the Kingdom. His appointment as the Crown Prince has sent out a strong message to the

world about the country's stability and continuity.

PRINCE OF THE TRIBES

Prince Salman was born in Riyadh on December 31, 1935, and received his education at the Prince's School in Riyadh. His religious and academic education helped to shape his cultural personality.

He is well-advised in political affairs and global trends, and a great authority on the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab world.

He served as Deputy Governor of Riyadh from March 1954 to April 1955 and then as Governor of Riyadh from April 1955 to December 1960 and again from February 1963, until he became the Defence Minister. During his service as Governor, the Prince succeeded in converting the city from a mid-sized town to a major

urban metropolis, fit enough to be the capital of the world's largest oil exporter.

He is Chairman of the Riyadh Charity Foundation for Sciences, which runs Prince Sultan Private University and the Prince Salman Oasis of Sciences, and also Chairman of King Fahd National Library and King Abdulaziz Foundation. The Prince is a driving force for charitable activities in the Kingdom and abroad.

A PRAGMATIST

Prince Salman's wide experience as the Governor of Riyadh has given him deep insight that is a boon for the Kingdom. In his 49 years of governance, Prince Salman has transformed Riyadh into a prosperous city. As a Governor and as the Defence Minister, the Prince established his reputation as a 'pragmatist' for his decision-making skills and keen observation of situations. He is also known as a devout Muslim, who would not compromise on his religious principles for pragmatic reasons.

The Crown Prince will continue to hold the Defence Ministry portfolio, but will also take on the duties of the Deputy Prime Minister, to assist King Abdullah in his rule and his care of the Two Holy Mosques. The Kingdom is indeed fortunate to have Prince Salman as the Crown Prince, who with his visionary approach will help the Kingdom to continue on its growth path.

MULTIFACETED PRINCE

- Prince Salman entered public life as the Acting Mayor of Riyadh in 1954 and was later Riyadh Mayor from 1955-1960
- He was the Governor of Riyadh from 1962 to 2011 – a position that was earlier held by Prince Sultan and Prince Naif as well
- Under Prince Salman's rule, Riyadh expanded from a mid-size town of 90,000 and an urban area of 17 square miles to a metropolis with a population of 5 million, distributed over 700 miles and 150 districts
- Riyadh now has 23 hospitals, several universities and colleges, more than 2,000 schools, 30 public libraries and 1,264 industrial plants
- He launched the Prince Salman Charity Society to assist charitable organisations in the province
- He established the Prince Salman Housing Charity Society that builds houses for the less-privileged and also helps to improve their standard of living



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Congratulations



*to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud
and members of the Royal Family and the people of Saudi Arabia
on their 82nd National Day Celebrations on 23rd September 2012*



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FORGING STRONGER SAUDI-MALAYSIA RELATIONS

Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Malaysia H.E. Fahad A. H. Al-Rashid speaks to Editor-in-Chief Ms Nomita Dhar on his commitment towards strengthening the ties between the countries across all spheres

Welcome to Malaysia! As this is your new assignment, how do you plan to promote Saudi Arabia in Malaysia?

Thank you for the interview and I would like to wish a Happy Hari Raya to everybody. We are proud to be in this hospitable country, which has had a long history of good relationship with the Arabs in general, and the sons of the Arabian Peninsula in particular.

I am happy to say that the relations between the Kingdom and Malaysia have always been excellent in light of the political will of the leadership of the two countries and their sincere desire to upgrade the relations to higher levels. The two countries share a strong religious and cultural similarity that has been a major bonding factor. It is this religious similarity that triggered the start of diplomatic relations between the two countries back in the 1960s.

The relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are based on the foundations of mutual respect and understanding. The two countries have

worked to develop this relationship across all fields, and at all levels.

The political relations between the both countries have seen a great deal of achievement since the beginning. For instance, Malaysia played a significant role in the establishment of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1969. Thereafter, the relations grew stronger with the Royal visit of His Majesty King Faisal Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud — may Allah bless him — to Malaysia in the summer of 1970.

The Third Millennium has witnessed remarkable development in the bilateral relations and high-level communication between the two countries. The visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud to Malaysia in January 2006 boosted the bilateral relations in various fields, and also opened new horizons of cooperation.

I will strive, *insya Allah* (Allah willing), to develop these relations further. I do not intend to focus in a particular area, but rather across all political, economic, cultural and security areas, to achieve

the aspirations of the political leadership and of the people of the two countries. This will be done by working to hold purposeful bilateral meetings.

Both Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are Islamic states. How is this common feature helping the two countries to connect with each other on different levels?

As I mentioned, the similarities between the two countries are large and diverse, ranging from spiritual, religious, cultural, political, economic, to development issues. The Government of Malaysia and the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have always concurred and agreed with each other on Arab, Islamic and international issues.

In addition, Malaysia is active at Islamic and international platforms, and even recently held some ministerial conferences and political seminars. Malaysia has actively participated in many Islamic conferences and meetings to address many of the issues in the Islamic, regional and international scenes, as well as counter-terrorism issues.

Like Saudi Arabia, Malaysia too believes in the principles of moderation and tolerance. It has supported the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah — may Allah bless him — to set up the King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna, which will promote dialogue among all civilisations, cultures and followers of all religions. Through dialogue, the Center aims to spread love and the spirit of tolerance, brotherhood and cooperation for the welfare of people across the world — and this is Allah's message to the mankind.

I hope that the similarities between the two countries continue in the future. I also hope that this cordiality will reflect

through signing of more agreements of mutual cooperation in favour of the people of the two countries.

With Asia booming, how is Saudi Arabia planning to leverage on this growth through Malaysia?

There is no doubt that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is considering to tap into the prosperity and the growth of the ASEAN region in general, and Malaysia in particular. For this, the Kingdom wishes to take advantage of the vast expertise of its bilateral partner, Malaysia.

The official visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud to Malaysia in early 2006 opened a new era of relations between the both countries. The royal visit helped to strengthen the bilateral relations in the economic and trade sectors and also spurred many ministerial and official visits between the countries. Many economic delegations have also exchanged visits since then and are continuing to this day.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are taking great efforts to achieve greater cooperation in various fields, and a number of mechanisms have been set up to achieve this goal.

How is the tourist inflow from Saudi Arabia to Malaysia? How many tourists visited Malaysia in the last one year?

A large number of Saudis visit Malaysia every year, and this reflects the high level of comfort Saudis experience when they visit Malaysia. The similarity in religion, the convergence of cultures and the wonderful hospitality by Malaysian brothers make the Saudis feel as if Malaysia is their second home.

In addition to this, Saudi tourists enjoy visiting Malaysia for its numerous attractions. These high tourist numbers have enhanced the mutual understanding between Saudis and Malaysians — which is important for the development of people-to-people and cultural relations between the two countries.

According to a statement by Minister of Tourism for Malaysia Dr. Ng Yen Yen, the number of Saudi tourists who visited Malaysia has increased by more than 50 per cent in 2012 compared to the corresponding period in 2011. Newly married couples and families comprise most of this tourist population and they prefer to visit Malaysia for the social and religious similarities it shares with Saudi Arabia.

There are indications that the number of Saudi arrivals in Malaysia will increase in the future in light of the political situation in other Arab countries. Also, the Malaysian Government has undertaken a number of efforts to develop its tourist destinations.

What concerns do you have in regard to the safety and comfort of Arabs visiting Malaysia? How are you planning to tackle them?

Malaysia, in general, is a safe country, and the Malaysian people are pleasant, hospitable and open to all cultures. However, tourists, especially those from the Gulf countries, have become a target for thieves. The number of theft cases has increased in recent years, especially thefts of women's purses and handbags. In this regard, I would like to advise tourists, especially women, not to wear jewellery or carry cash, and instead use credit cards for shopping. Apart from this, Malaysia is a safe and beautiful country and there are no major crimes.

The Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam and millions of pilgrims visit for Hajj and Umrah. Kindly tell us what goes behind the scenes to make it what it is?

It has always been the Government of Saudi Arabia's priority to ensure that all pilgrims have a comfortable experience during the Hajj season. The Kingdom also sets up a commission every year to work on the deficiencies to be avoided in the next season. Amazed by this perfection, many countries and management institutes have approached the Kingdom to learn about

crowd management, security measures, and other facilities that are being provided to large numbers every year.

Every year, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques personally supervises all the arrangements. The Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam, and the Kingdom has considered the comfort of the Hajj pilgrims as its primary duty.

At the organisational level, the Kingdom recruits thousands of trained manpower to take care of the pilgrims' arrangements right from their arrival to their departure. It begins with estimating the crowd size for the year; thereafter, the organisers work on the navigation routes, the accommodation arrangements for pilgrims, setting up of temporary visa offices, the regulatory processes at airports and also arrangements for the pilgrims' departure.

The Kingdom has also been implementing mega infrastructure projects to improve the experience every year. In recent years, the Kingdom developed the Jamarat area in Mina to accommodate bigger crowds and also laid the Mashayer train route to help pilgrims move from one place to another.

Most recently, the King has undertaken the largest expansion project in the history of the Two Holy Mosques.

Islamic banking is taking deeper roots in the world now. What are the Kingdom's contributions in making Islamic banking popular in Malaysia?

The Islamic banking industry has made remarkable progress since the establishment of the first Islamic bank in the Kingdom. Initially, there were doubts as to how successful the system would be. However, today a number of major world banks are striving to provide Islamic financial services. According to the experts' forecast for 2020, the size of Islamic financial assets will reach US\$40 trillion from US\$1 trillion in 2012.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has played a significant role in the development of Islamic finance, as a

majority of the population in the Kingdom supports Islamic banking funding.

Tell us about the trade and investment scenario between the two countries. Which sectors of Saudi Arabia would you like to promote in Malaysia?

The trade and investment cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia has seen a remarkable development, which has reflected in the index of trade exchange between the two countries. The volume of trade exchange between Saudi Arabia and Malaysia in 2010 was SR10.88 billion (US\$2.9 billion) — an increase of approximately 40 per cent compared to 2005. The investments between the two countries in 2009-10 reached more than SR300 million (US\$79 million). Most of these investments were in service-related sectors. The Kingdom is currently in the midst of increasing the number of industrial projects, and infrastructure projects in the country.

What are the opportunities available for Malaysian companies to leverage on the growth areas in Saudi Arabia?

As I mentioned, projects related to the development of infrastructure offer the best opportunities for Malaysian companies, which are looking forward to expand their businesses in the rapidly growing areas of the Kingdom.

How would you rate the performance and growth prospects of the Saudi Arabian economy considering the Europe crisis?

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not affected by the global financial crisis, due to the fiscal and monetary policies implemented by the Saudi Government, represented by the Ministry of Finance and the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency. These policies protected the country's financial system from the repercussions of the crisis. Most banking transactions in Saudi Arabia are in accordance with the Islamic law, and Saudi Arabia has the

largest Islamic funds in the world. This has enhanced the image of Islamic banking in the world.

What are the cultural events that you are planning to organise? What cultural events can Malaysia look forward to experience?

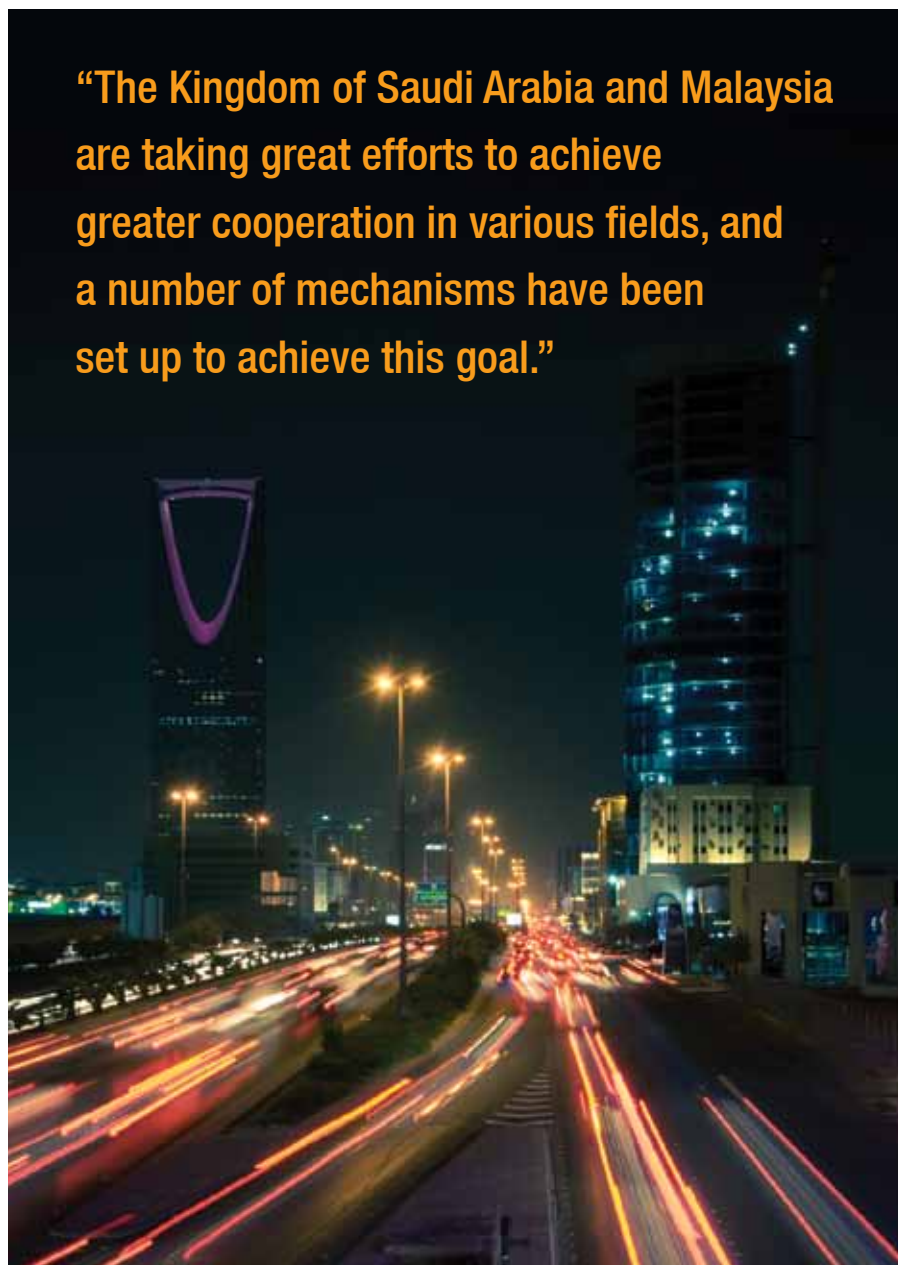
Among the cultural events that Malaysians can look forward to is the (GCC) week in the first week of November. The event will showcase the cultural activities and heritage of the GCC countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in addition to events associated

with the celebration of National Day. We promise Malaysians a lot of events in the coming days.

As this is your first visit to Malaysia, what message do you have for Arabs settled in Malaysia?

I have visited Malaysia earlier, so this is not my first visit. My message to the Arabs in Malaysia is this: I think all Arabs in Malaysia should come together to form an organisation to bring all the Arabs together. I wish that such a centre is soon created, since Arabs are among the first outsiders to immigrate to Malaysia.

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are taking great efforts to achieve greater cooperation in various fields, and a number of mechanisms have been set up to achieve this goal.”



TOGETHER ON THE GROWTH PATH

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia have been close allies for many years, with their alliance going back nearly to the 15th Century. As both countries undergo fast transition, the equations of this friendship are only getting multiplied with every passing year

Both the countries have a history of strong bilateral relations going back to the 15th Century – strengthened by the shared bond of the Ummah or the Islamic brotherhood. The solidarity and friendship between the two nations is evident through the increasing cultural, social and educational exchanges that have taken place in the last one year.

The Saudi Arabia-Malaysia relations are undergoing a transition to climb on to a higher level with closer ties, stronger bilateral trade and more people-to-people exchanges. This positive evolution, which was triggered by the visit of King Abdullah, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to Malaysia in 2006, has already seen many developments such as formation of new business alliances, rise in student exchange programmes, new agreements and more frequent bilateral visits at the ministerial level.

UNITED IN VISION

Saudi Arabia and Malaysia share the same religious beliefs and are categorised as peripheral states or 'Muslim-Islamic states'. Due to this, they also share similar socio-economic backgrounds, which has been a crucial factor behind the strong and close ties between the two countries.

Having a common social and religious structure has facilitated people-to-people exchanges. For instance, Malaysia

has been one of the topmost destinations for Arab travellers and students over the years. In 2011, according to Tourism Malaysia office in Dubai, Saudi Arabia was top among the Gulf visitors with 87,693 tourists.

The similarities in economic and trade backgrounds, the prevailing spirit of Islam and the position of Saudi Arabia as the gateway to the entire Middle East and the Gulf, have prompted Malaysian investors to invest in Saudi Arabia's competitive environment. The two countries have constantly worked towards increasing the volume of bilateral trade. The total trade has increased by over 38 per cent within one year – from US\$1.923 billion in 2009 to US\$2.896 billion in 2010. The countries also signed a security pact in 2011, to share intelligence and jointly combat terrorism, which has further deepened the cordial relations.

On the social front, Malaysia has always been a friend to Saudi Arabia in times of happiness and grief. The Malaysian Prime Minister visited the Kingdom on the sudden demise of both the Crown Princes, to give his personal condolences to the family.

The relationship between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia is one of deep friendship that has grown over the past many years. With the two countries surging on the path of growth, new avenues of co-operation have opened up, leading to further strengthening of the bonds.



PM NAJIB VISITS SAUDI ARABIA FOR ISLAMIC SUMMIT

Malaysia's Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak led the Malaysian delegation to the fourth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference that was hosted by King Abdullah Abdul Aziz Al-Saud from August 14 to 15, 2012, in the holy city of Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

PM Najib was accompanied by his wife, Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Binti Mansor, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tan Sri Mohd Radzi Abdul Rahman, and officials from the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques had invited all the 57 leaders of the member states of the Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation (OIC), for the summit to discuss various issues confronting the Muslim world. Apart from this, the summit aimed to restore cohesion in the Muslim Ummah, to promote Islamic solidarity and to fight against all sources of strife and discord.

The two-day conference was attended by leaders and heads of state of the OIC countries, which represent the collective voice of the Muslim world and aims to safeguard and protect the world interests and promote international peace among all communities in the world.

The Malaysian PM delivered a



statement on Malaysia's stand on the issues that were discussed at the conference.

He thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for taking the initiative in organising the extraordinary session. He praised the King's farsightedness in bringing the Muslim leaders together on a common platform, to resolve the situations in various Muslim countries.

MALAYSIA'S DEPUTY MINISTER VISITS SAUDI ARABIA



Dato' Haji Fadillah Yusof, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia, went on a working visit to Saudi Arabia in April 2012. He signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Halal Standards

with the Government of Saudi Arabia.

During this visit, he also met Malaysian students in Saudi Arabia. The 'Majlis Ramah Mesra,' which was held on April 16, 2012, addressed the latest developments in Malaysia

and the achievements in the fields of science and technology that has resulted from the close co-operation between the two countries. He also outlined his vision and expectations from scientific research and technological development in the

future. During the meeting — which was attended by the Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Prof. Dato' Syed Omar Al Saggaf — the Deputy Minister also spoke about the importance of education for Malaysia to reach the status of a developed nation.

He spent time talking to the students from the University Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud and University King Saud and listened to their views. At the end of the meeting, the Deputy Minister thanked the Malaysian Embassy and Ambassador Syed Omar for the warm hospitality extended to him during this visit.

A FRIEND OF THE KINGDOM

Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Razak visited Saudi Arabia to pay his last respects to Crown Prince Naif Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, who died on June 16, 2012. The PM was accompanied by his wife Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Binti Mansor and the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Dato' Sri Jamil Khir Baharom. The Prime Minister met Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud to convey his condolences on behalf of the country and the people.

Earlier, the Prime Minister had also visited the Kingdom to condole the passing away of the then Crown Prince Sultan, in October 2011.



MALAYSIA, SAUDI ARABIA INK AGREEMENT ON STANDARDISATION

The Governments of Malaysia and Saudi Arabia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on April 16, 2012, to standardise processes and procedures. The MoU is expected to further strengthen the ties between the two countries, as mutually agreed standards for goods and services will facilitate further trade, by reducing the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

Madam Fadilah Baharin, the Director General of Department of Standards, Malaysia, and His Excellency Dr Nabil A. Molla, the Governor of SASO, Saudi Arabia, signed on behalf of the governments of both countries. Present at this high-level occasion were Dato' Haji Fadilah Bin Haji Yusof, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and

Innovation, Malaysia, Prof. Dato' Syed Omar Al Saggaf, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Malaysia, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Bin Ali, Chairman of Malaysian Standards and Accreditation Council, and Mr Ahmed Abbas Al-left, Director General, International Cooperation Department, SASO.

The MoU aims to promote mutual understanding on development of standards, and sharing of information and experience especially on standardisation activities and Halal.



Both countries are members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and hence the MoU further accentuates the role of each country in standardisation activities. The collaborative efforts by both countries stand to strengthen their role in matters of mutual international interest.

KINGDOM TO COLLABORATE WITH MALAYSIA IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on December 16, 2011, to forge bilateral co-operation in the area of science and technology, for the next five years. The MoU was signed by Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dato' Haji Fadillah Yusof and Vice President of King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST),

H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Swailem. With the signing of the MoU, a Malaysia-Saudi Arabia Joint Committee on Science and Technology has been planned, to identify and facilitate collaborative projects between Malaysian and Saudi Arabian research institutes.

These collaborations will include joint research, exchange of scientists, joint conferences and common utilisation of scientific equipment.

Mr Yusof said that the Ministry's agencies and institutions of higher learning were keen to collaborate with their respective Saudi Arabian counterparts. Project proposals in the areas of information and communications technology, renewable energy and standardisation, have been included.





A NEW ERA FOR BILATERAL TRADE

Saudi Arabia and Malaysia have decided to capitalise on their common beliefs and backgrounds to explore new bilateral avenues this year

Saudi Arabia and Malaysia have decided to boost bilateral trade by taking up aggressive measures to increase trade volume and investments. Malaysia's International Trade and Industry Minister, Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, met Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry, Saudi Arabia, Mr Mohamed Al Khatiri, in Geneva. Mr Al Khatiri said that there were many opportunities for Malaysian companies to do business in Saudi Arabia, especially in the construction sector, as a result of the implementation of the government's extensive development programme.

In 2010, Malaysia's total trade with Saudi Arabia increased by 38 per cent over the previous year; it became US\$2.896 billion from US\$1.923 billion. From January to October 2011, total trade reached US\$3.454 billion compared to US\$2.205 billion, in the corresponding period in 2010. Mr Mustapa also proposed the creation of a Joint Economic and Trade Committee with Saudi Arabia, to bring bilateral trade and economic relations to a higher level. This move was also endorsed by the Saudi Government.

LOOKING FORWARD IN 2012

The Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) has

predicted that the trade between the two countries is likely to see a significant growth in 2012. Saudi Arabia's development strategy has a holistic perspective – speedy growth of the economy and raising the living standards of the citizens. With this view in mind, the government budget in 2012 is the biggest ever at US\$184 billion.

After the seminar on 'Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – The Emerging Market for Malaysian Companies' in January 2012, Matrade's Trade Commissioner to Saudi Arabia, Mr Amran Yem, said that Malaysian investors should tap into the high-demand sectors such as construction, food and beverages, oil, gas and petrochemicals, healthcare, automobile, and products and services catering to the Muslim community such as Halal foods, Islamic banking and other financial services.

On March 28, 2012, Malaysian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Prof. Datuk Syed Omar Al Saggaf, chaired a meeting at the Malaysian Embassy in Riyadh. A number of Arab businessmen were present at this meeting, which focussed on Malaysia's effort to boost economic relations with Saudi Arabia.

Trade between the two counties has followed an upward curve over the years. However, a number of opportunities in

the Kingdom are still waiting to be tapped. Saudi Arabia has always been an attractive investment destination for Malaysia. Time has come for the two developing economies to join hands, make timely collaborations and explore these avenues.

EXISTING TRADE

- Saudi Arabia exports petroleum, mineral products, chemical products and plastic products to Malaysia
- Saudi Arabia imports electrical machines, equipment and tools, transport equipment and spare parts and food products from Malaysia

FUTURE TRADE

- Opportunity sectors for Malaysian investors include agriculture, with Saudi Arabia offering a huge consumer market for tropical fruits, vegetables and bio fuel
- Other high-potential sectors include Halal foods, automobiles, construction and building material
- Services sector includes Islamic banking and educational institutes



KING ABDULLAH HOSTS ISLAMIC SUMMIT IN MECCA

World praises King Abdullah for his initiative to hold emergency Islamic Solidarity Summit on August 14-16, 2012, to unite the Islamic world and promote global peace

The night of August 14, 2012, will be remembered by Muslims as a blessed night. Muslims across the world congregated at Mecca, as two major occasions coincided. It was the night preceding Ramadan, one of the most holy nights for Muslims, and also the day when heads of all the Muslim states gathered for the two-day extraordinary session of the Islamic Solidarity Summit, aimed at achieving unity and solidarity of the Islamic world.

The Holy Kaaba and the Grand Mosque were bathed in bright lights while the giant Clock Tower glowed in green. As the muezzin called for prayers at Isha, the world leaders gathered at the Al-Safa Palace, repeated 'Allah-o-Akbar' after him. The summit was truly an extraordinary initiative by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah, who invited heads of state, kings and leaders of 57 member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), to find solutions to issues faced by them.

Turkey's Mr Abdullah Gul, Egypt's Mr Muhammad Mursi, Jordan's King Abdallah, Iran's Mr Mahmoud Ahemdinejad, Qatar's Mr Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Yemen's Mr Abdo Rabbi Mansour Hadi, Palestine's Mr Mahmoud Abbas, Malaysia's Dato' Sri Najib Razak, Sudan's Mr Omar Bashir, Afghanistan's Mr Hamid Karzai, Tunisia's Mr Moncef Al-Marzouki, Pakistan's Mr Asif Ali Zardari, Bangladesh's Mr Mohammad Zillur Rahman, and others gathered in Mecca to discuss, plan and implement a policy that focused on finding denominators that are common to Muslims all over the world.

The King personally received the visitors inside the Al-Safa Palace in a display of traditional Saudi hospitality.

KING INAUGURATES THE SUMMIT

King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz inaugurated the summit in Mecca on August 14, 2012, in the presence of kings, presidents, prime ministers and heads of delegations from a number of Islamic countries. The summit started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, and was followed by the King's address to the audience. The King welcomed the leaders and called upon them to tackle the problems of the Muslim world in a unified fashion. "The Islamic nation is currently living in a state of sedition and disunity that has led to bloodshed of its people in this holy month in many parts of our Islamic world, ignoring God's verse that 'Persecution is worse than slaughter,'" he stated. He also said that the ideal solution to these issues will be possible through solidarity, tolerance and moderation and also through standing together in the protection of Islam and unity of the Muslim world. He said, "If we observe justice, we can conquer injustice, if we practice moderation, we can conquer extremism and if we reject dispersion, we can keep our unity, strength and determination, God willing."

To work towards these goals, he suggested the establishment of a dialogue center among Islamic sects, centred at Riyadh. Members would be selected from those present in the summit, on the recommendation of the Secretariat General and the Ministerial Council. The King also issued a directive to build a permanent OIC headquarters, which was a gift from the King to the Islamic world. Secretary General of OIC, Ihsan Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, thanked the King hoping that 'this summit will be a means to overcome the risks and dangers facing the Muslim world.' The inaugural session was followed by a closed-door meeting.

The Saudi delegation comprised of host of dignitaries such as Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, Prince Miteb Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Interior Minister Prince, Ahmad Bin Abdul Aziz, Chief of General Intelligence, Prince Bandar Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz and others.

THE FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

The Summit issued the final communiqué on August 16, 2012, after a two-day deliberation. Participants stressed on the establishment of 'practical programs in political, educational, economic and social fields,' to enable Muslims to positively associate with one another, undertake joint actions, and reject political discord and sectarian strife.

In the political sphere, the communiqué addressed the situation in Palestine, Syria, Mali and Sahel region, Myanmar, and stressed on the need to preserve unity, sovereignty and called for provision of humanitarian aid to these countries. On the issue of reform, the communiqué stressed that the change must come from within the Muslim world and should centre on the development of scientific advances and the achievement of national unity and equality. Addressing the problem of extremism, the summit condemned all forms of immoderation and deviant thought, as contradictory to the Islamic values of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, and pluralism. It took a firm stand against terrorism and praised the efforts made by the Government of Saudi Arabia in the establishment of the International Counter-terrorism Centre and the King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud International Centre for Dialogue. In the economic and social sphere, the communiqué welcomed the



increase in trade between OIC member states, and advocated considering the possibility of establishing free trade zones. It stressed the importance of co-operation in the fight against poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and disease, as well as in efforts to achieve industrial development and food security.

A clearly defined plan for the advancement of science, technology and innovation and higher education, including progress in 'the peaceful use of technology for sustainable development,' was also recommended. Finally, the communiqué called for supporting development in Africa, reaffirming its commitment towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals within OIC states.

WORLD APPLAUDS THE KING

According to news reports, world leaders have applauded the King's timely initiative and the constructive steps taken by him. World-renowned Islamic thinker, Abdullah Omar Naseef, praised the King's commitment towards the Ummah and said that the summit showed his deep concern toward Islamic issues. Mr Mohammad Al-Aziz Ibn Ashour, Director General of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), said the summit was another giant step by Saudi Arabia to strengthen the unity between the Islamic nations. Jordan's Communication and Information Minister, Mr Sameeh Al-Muaita, said that the proposal is a major step that could realize the dream of uniting all Muslims. A number of Tunisian scholars, politicians and academicians also welcomed the King's proposal.

CENTRE OF UNITY

- OIC, a pan-Islamic body, was founded in 1969 with the objectives of enhancing and consolidating the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Islamic states and safeguarding their common interests
- OIC was established by a decision taken at the historic summit, held in Rabat, Morocco, on September 25, 1969
- Regular summits are held at intervals of three years, with provision to hold extraordinary summit in situations of emergency
- Over the last 40 years, the membership has grown to 57 states, with a permanent secretariat in Jeddah
- After the first Morocco Summit in 1969, 11 more summits have been held
- Since 1969, four extraordinary summits have been called; the last two were initiated by King Abdullah in the holy city of Mecca

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Congratulations

His Majesty

KING ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosque

His Royal Highness

CROWN PRINCE SALMAN BIN ABDUL AZIZ

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence

Members of the Royal Family
and the Citizens of Saudi Arabia on their
82nd National Day Celebrations
on 23 September 2012



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SAUDI ARABIA AND MALAYSIA CO-OPERATE IN WORLD TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES

Mr Ahmad Khairudin Ilias, President of the Saudi Arabia Malaysia Friendship Society and Saudi Arabia Malaysia Business Council, details the various initiatives that have been undertaken to further strengthen the close ties between the two countries

The recent Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Emergency Summit in Mecca, reaffirms King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud's great wisdom and leadership in a Muslim world faced with unprecedented challenges. As Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah not only expressed deep

concerns about Muslim unity and the general state of Muslim affairs worldwide but also demonstrated that His Majesty is an action-oriented leader.

The announcement for setting up of an International Dialogue Centre, in Riyadh, for religious sects is a clear example of his

Malaysia, as a long standing supporter of the Kingdom's initiatives in world and Muslim affairs, also welcomes the great reformation efforts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – from economic and social spheres to education

farsightedness and leadership.

With King Abdullah at the helm of affairs in Saudi Arabia, the country has emerged as an enlightened world leader, by promoting peaceful solutions to complex regional and global, political and economic issues. We, the Malaysia Saudi Arabia Friendship Society (MSAFS) and the Malaysia Saudi Arabia Business Council (MSABC), would like to take this opportunity – on the 82nd National Day Anniversary – to express our greatest admiration and commendation for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah. This outstanding initiative has established him as a true leader of the present day Muslim world.

We believe that the bold initiatives launched by him will have a great positive impact among the world's Muslim population and in correcting the negative perception of Islam among non-Muslims, not only in Europe and the West but also in the Far East.

Malaysia, as a long standing supporter of the Kingdom's initiatives in world and Muslim affairs, also welcomes the great reformation efforts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – from economic and social spheres to education. Malaysia, in a similar effort under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak, is aggressively pursuing its Government Transformation Program (GTP) and Economic Transformation Program (ETP), in its aim to grow into a high-income nation by the year 2020.

In both nations, these reforms have been appreciated and accepted by the people; however, the full impact of these initiatives will be felt only over time. It is a unique achievement that this advancement in education, economy and technology is taking place along with the proud preservation of the universal Islamic cultural heritage.

We believe that successful initiatives, such as these, can be shared between the two countries and can become models of progressive and practical solutions to issues faced not only by the Muslim Ummah but also the world and mankind.

The MSAFS and MSABC subscribe to these national agendas and have factored it in its planned activities for the future. We firmly believe that strategic but action-oriented programmes will go a long way in enhancing mutually benefiting relations between our countries.

Malaysia can be a true Asia-Pacific base and gateway for Saudi investments not only in trade, economy and education but also new tourism opportunities such as medical tourism and hospitality. Malaysia has also positioned itself as a hub for Islamic banking and finance and for advanced research in science, technology and innovation.

With this vision in mind, we have plans for several notable events.



Mr Ahmad Khairuddin Bin Ilias

On top of the list is the first Saudi Arabia-Malaysia Economic Forum in Kuala Lumpur that will bring together government leaders and industry captains, to meet and explore business opportunities in both countries. It is envisaged that the two-day forum would attract immense regional interest, both political and economic.

Another idea is a comprehensive exhibition on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that will enhance public knowledge and awareness of the Kingdom, its rich history and culture, as well as its pre-eminent status in the world's economy, the Middle-East and global Islamic affairs.

A deeper appreciation of the Kingdom is vital to welcome the Kingdom's presence and positive role in the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, if an International Dialogue Center for religious sects of the Far East is set up in Kuala Lumpur, it would be an appropriate complement to the existing centre in Vienna, Austria and the imminent one in Riyadh. It will be further proof that both countries can co-operate productively in the promotion of Islam and its intrinsic teachings such as tolerance, intellectual enlightenment and love for humanity.

Finally, the youth of the country – future leaders in any nation – have to be taken into focus. They are now living through a new and daunting digitalised world of information and knowledge-based economy; a broadband-connected world. They face their own share of vexing challenges. Therefore, a Saudi Arabia-Malaysia Youth Festival can be organised to promote bilateral understanding and to bring cultural relationships to a new level in the context of this new world.

We wish for both our great nations the forgiveness and the best from Allah the Almighty, Most Gracious Most Merciful.

CHAMBERS OF GUIDANCE

With the motive to create a modern Saudi state, the Kingdom has established a number of chambers in different regions. These chambers work towards promoting the economic development of the country and in developing strong bilateral relations with other countries

Chambers of commerce play a significant role in the development of a region and in promoting bilateral relations. Every chamber of commerce represents the business sector and its interests in a region and work on the development of the economic environment, services provided to the region, promotion of investments and the welfare of the business community that it represents.

Here is a list of the important chambers of commerce in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



COUNCIL OF SAUDI CHAMBERS



Chairman of the Board: Eng. Abdullah S. Al-Mobty

Contact in Riyadh: 966-1-2182222

E-mail: council@saudichambers.org.sa

Website: <http://www.csc.org.sa>

The Council for Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry is the official federation for the 28 Saudi Chambers. The Council was formed by the Royal Decree of 1980 and has its head office in Riyadh. Its main objective is to look after the common interests of all the 28 chambers, represent them on local and international levels and assist in the enhancement of the private sector's role in the development of the national economy.

The Council works on a number of fronts; it supports national development programmes, participates with the authorities in preparing regulations and policies, enhances the business sector participation in the economic and social development, participates in improving the investment climate, and also helps to develop external economic relations and commercial partnership with friendly countries, among others.

RIYADH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



Chairman: Mr Abdulrahman Ali Al-Jeraisy

Contact: 966-1 -404-0044

Website: <http://www.riyadhchamber.com>

Since its formation in the early 60s, the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been playing a leading role in the Kingdom's national economy by supporting and encouraging the private sector. The Chamber acts as liaison between the public and private sectors. Its main objectives are to identify investment areas and opportunities inside and outside the Kingdom, disseminate business information, and develop the material and labour resources of Riyadh region.

JEDDAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



Chairman: Mr Sheikh Saleh Kamel

Contact: 966-2-651-5111

Website: www.jcci.org.sa

The Jeddah Chamber is committed to making the Jeddah Governorate a centre for attracting investment in family recreation, private education, medical care, real estate development and industrial investment. It works towards making the region a secure place for foreign investors and developing Jeddah, which is the second largest city of the region, as the main port on the Red Sea. This natural advantage is suitably leveraged by the chamber to make Jeddah a favourable destination for businessmen willing to develop their regional and international trade.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY-EASTERN PROVINCE



Chairman: Mr Abdulrahman R. Al Rashed

Contact: 966-3-857-1111

E-mail: info@chamber.org.sa

Website: <http://www.chamber.org.sa>

The Chamber, established in 1952, is devoted to the promotion of the private sector's contribution to the economy. The Dammam-based chamber has devised a number of promotional and developmental services, to provide support to the private sector initiatives in industry, trade and services. The Chamber's vision is to lead the development of Eastern Province through private sector activities and to be a unique service provider and facilitator for the business community in the Eastern Province.

JOINT BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

ARAB MALAYSIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



President: Mr Mohamad Radwan Alami

Contact in Malaysia: +60-3-5510-2462

E-mail: business@amcc.com.my

Website: www.amcc.com.my

A non-profit organisation, the AMCC started in 2011, to foster business relations between Malaysia and the Arab Region, by promoting the development of business, commerce and investments. The AMCC is committed towards the development of trade, services, education, tourism and investment between the Arab countries and Malaysia and to provide a forum for the exchange of business perspectives, experiences, knowledge and opportunities.

MALAYSIA BUSINESS COUNCIL, SAUDI ARABIA



Chairman: Mr Wan Asmadi Wan Ahmad

E-mail: mbcjeddah@gmail.com

Website: <http://mbc-ksa.blogspot.sg/>

MBC is a non-profit organisation, based in Jeddah, and was formed in 2009 to bring together Malaysian and Saudi professionals and entrepreneurs to enhance business relationship between the two countries. MBC has evolved into a business focus group with the objective of generating business opportunities for its members.

SAUDI ARABIA MALAYSIA BUSINESS COUNCIL



President: Mr Ahmad Khairuddin Ilias

Contact in Malaysia: +60-3-2693-1407

The Saudi Arabia Malaysia Business Council seeks to develop the relations between the two countries through organising mutual visits for businessmen. These visits help in creating awareness about the economic and commercial potential and in identifying the investment opportunities available in both countries.

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ISI GROUP: CATALYSTS FOR GROWTH



ISI Group is a Malaysia-based business conglomerate, which was established in 1995, with diversified business interests throughout the Middle East and South East Asian countries. Though the ISI Group started off with just property development and construction as its primary activities, it underwent a massive corporate expansion exercise in 2007 to venture into new zones including education, automotive, information technology, aviation, financial and corporate services.

ISI Corporation was formed in 1995 by its founding Executive Chairman Mr Ihsan Al-Shaikh, who single-handedly spearheaded this founding company of the ISI Group to grow and execute various medium to large-scale development projects, which includes commercial, residential and industrial real estates, throughout Malaysia.

By the new millennia, ISI had evolved into a larger group of companies, and diversified into education, banking, telecommunications, investments, oil and gas, information technology, consultancy and logistics. These ventures opened ISI Corporation to new markets and economies within the region, especially in Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and most recently Myanmar.

After the global financial crisis in 2007, ISI Corporation underwent a massive restructuring, re-focusing and re-organising exercise, which resulted in the birth of the ISI Group — a corporate conglomerate comprising of local and multi-national operations with specialised focus and expertise. The ISI Group's capability was further enhanced by the cooperation and partnerships formed with various sovereign investment funds, private equity firms and venture capital outfits from the Middle East. These partnerships and co-operation paved the way for ISI Group's other ventures and collaborations, especially with strategic Southeast Asian policy-makers, political figures and industry experts.

Today, the ISI Group comprises of more than nine companies operating from five countries, namely Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, Maldives and Cambodia, and operated by a group of professional management team, which is set to leverage the ISI Group onto the world stage. The Group is now focussed on developing new ideas, spurring new economies and creating emerging markets using unconventional trade, wisdom and ideology whilst maintaining the original values of business, which is integrity, sincerity, diligence and intelligence. With the existing network of Malaysian and International Business Partners, the ISI Group is rapidly growing to be a trusted name in the regional and international business community.

ISI GROUP OF COMPANIES:

- ISI Group Berhad (Malaysia – Investment Holding & Private Equity)
- ISI Corporation Sdn Bhd (Malaysia – Construction & Property Development)
- Integrated Smart Engineering Sdn Bhd (Malaysia – Integrated CME Engineering)
- Cosmoscape Sdn Bhd (Malaysia – Business Services)
- ISI Avionautics Sdn Bhd (Malaysia – Aviation Businesses)
- Cosmoscape MM2H Sdn Bhd (Malaysia – Consultancy Services)
- Solar Dynamics Sdn Bhd (Malaysia – Information Technology)
- Executive Touch Co. Ltd (Myanmar & Cambodia – Business Services)
- United Arab Investments Pte Ltd (Singapore – Investment Holdings)
- EuroNexus Capital Group (Maldives – Financial & Investment Services)
- EuroNexis Group Malaysia (Malaysia – Private Equity & Investments)



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KINGDOM GOES SOLAR

Faced with the threat of depleting natural resources, the Kingdom has taken up the challenge of shifting to renewable sources for meeting the entire country's energy requirement by 2032

The Kingdom is on its way to becoming the leader in renewable energy. Saudi Arabia is aiming to install around 41 gigawatt (GW) of solar power, over the next 20 years, more than any country has managed so far. At the fourth Saudi Solar Energy Forum in Riyadh, in May 2012, the Kingdom invited investors for a US\$109 billion solar energy plant. The plant, once in production, will produce solar energy equivalent to meet a third of the country's electricity requirement by 2032.

According to Mr Maher Al-Odan, a consultant at the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, the Kingdom is not only looking for solar plants but a sustainable solar energy sector that would be capable of driving the domestic energy sector of the Kingdom, in future. At the forum, it was also declared that the solar energy strategy will be implemented in 2012, so that the Kingdom saves usage of up to 520,000 barrels of oil per day for the next 20 years.

A SOLAR POWERHOUSE

Saudi Arabia has sunshine that amounts to about 7,000 watts of energy per square metre, over an average of 12 hours, every day. The Kingdom's natural advantage of 365 days of sunshine makes it one of the most suitable locations in terms of harnessing solar energy. With such a huge source of energy, freely available throughout the year, the Kingdom has the potential to be a powerhouse for renewable energy.

Deputy President of the King Abdullah City for Solar Energy (KACSE), Mr Khalid Sulaiman, speaking at the forum said that solar energy would provide more than 20 per cent of the Kingdom's power needs by 2032, whereas other alternative sources, such as wind and nuclear reactors, will provide 60 per cent of such needs. The Kingdom is capable of localising 80 per cent of solar energy potential, he added. Under the Kingdom's strategy, both the public and private sectors will be encouraged to

carry out research in solar energy to find innovative solutions.

THE ROAD SO FAR

It all began in 2010, when the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in his commitment to the environment and sustainable development of the Kingdom, launched the solar energy initiative. Within two years, the initiative has spiralled into a movement and soon the Kingdom would be in a position to be a world leader in solar energy production. Prince Turki Bin Saud Bin Muhammad, Vice President, King Abdullah Aziz City for Science and Technology, said that there was an urgent need to promote solar energy in the Kingdom and the Gulf, as these nations were planning and executing huge industrial, residential and manufacturing projects. Solar power can be a valuable resource and an addition to the energy portfolio of the Kingdom, where most of the more than 40 GW of electricity that is consumed per year is



generated by fossil fuels. Moreover, the Kingdom's population, growing at a rate of about three per cent, is also a challenge to deal with when it comes to questions of energy, he had said.

The first solar initiative was taken by the Kingdom in 2010, when solar power was used to produce desalinated water and electricity. This reduced the cost of water and electricity production by 40 per cent. The first solar-powered desalination plant was established in Al-Khafji with a capacity of 30,000 cubic meters, to serve 100,000 people. The King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KACARE) was created by a Royal order in April 2010; it had a mandate to contribute to sustainable development in the Kingdom. KACARE endeavours to meet Saudi Arabia's future electricity demand, which is projected to treble in the next 20 years, while maintaining the highest industry standards.

On October 1, 2011, the Kingdom inaugurated its first solar power plant of 500 Kilowatt on Farasan Island. The plant will save the equivalent of transferring 28,000 barrels of diesel fuel to the island annually. The plant was constructed by the Saudi Electricity Company (SEC) and Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K., a Japanese energy company, partly owned by the Saudi Arabian Oil Company.

The Kingdom entered the world of solar energy in 2010 with the initiative to produce desalinated water and electricity using solar power, reduced the cost of water and electricity production by 40 per cent

THE SAUDI SOLAR ENERGY FORUM

The Saudi Solar Energy Forum on May 8 and 9, 2012, made the world notice the Kingdom's achievements and targets in producing renewable energy. Organised by KACARE, the forum brought together experts from inside and outside the Kingdom to explore the future of solar energy. The two-day senior level forum discussed the opportunities for localising solar energy in Saudi Arabia and examined the core theme of 'Setting the Environment for Local Private Investments.' Specific focus was on manufacturing and services, and the forum was attended by over 500 delegates. It was during the forum that the renewable energy plan for 2032 was announced.

THE KINGDOM OF TOMORROW

Prince Saud Bin Abdullah Bin Thunayan, President of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu (RCJY),

in his address during the forum, said that oil wealth would deplete one day and that it was necessary to find other sources of alternative energy. The Kingdom plans to achieve this by intensifying research on ways to produce and store renewable energy, notably solar energy. Apart from solar, KACARE is also considering different options of generating electricity from other sources such as nuclear, wind and geothermal, to meet the growing need of the Kingdom by 2032.

World investments and production in solar energy has been far lower than the rising needs. The world invested US\$136 billion in 2011 and produced 65 GW of electricity through solar energy, whereas the world need for alternative energy is increasing by two per cent every year. In such a scenario, the Kingdom has set a great example with its renewable energy plan, which proves that development is possible while maintaining sustainability.





GROWING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Saudi industrial giant SABIC's growth strategies in Asia are using innovative ways to ensure sustainable development along with socio-economic progress

Very few industries prioritise progress and environment at equal terms. The Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) is one of them.

At the recently-held Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2012, SABIC reiterated its commitment for sustainable development as its priority for socio-economic stability and growth in Asia.

SABIC's top leadership attended the Conference on 'Asia in the Changing World: Moving towards Sound and Sustainable Development,' from April 1 to 3, 2012, in China. They presented their viewpoint at this international platform.

His Highness Prince Saud Bin Abdullah Bin Thenayan Al-Saud, Chairman of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, and Chairman of SABIC; Mr Mohamed Al-Mady, Vice Chairman and CEO; Mr Abdullah Saeed Bazid, Executive Vice President, Corporate Strategy and Planning; and Mr Li Lei, Vice President for North Asia, represented the SABIC group.

Speaking on the sidelines of the BFA conference, Prince Saud said, "SABIC believes that sustainable development will ensure socio-economic stability for governments and their people, and hence, create a conducive environment for businesses to thrive. It takes a close tripartite partnership between government, enterprises and citizens to make this a reality. At SABIC, we remain committed to

creating socio-economic impact with our innovative and sustainable petrochemical materials, as well as nurturing long-term relationships with our stakeholders in Asia and the world."

SABIC has been an active participant at the BFA, where Mr Al-Mady is a member of the Board, and the company has been a four-time sponsor since 2009.

SECURING A STABLE ENERGY FUTURE

Speaking at the 'Energy and Resources: A Supply-Demand Dialogue,' keynote roundtable at the conference, Mr Al-Mady said, "The vision of attaining an energy sustainable future and achieving a long-term emission reduction goal, combined with our industrial ambitions and attainment of a high-quality life, requires significant investment and technological engagement of the highest degree."

Innovation is a key driver to securing the future of sustainable energy and SABIC is confident that Asia will become a catalyst towards long-term sustainable energy development, he said.

"We have witnessed remarkable collaborations with our partners throughout Asia in our efforts to find sustainable energy and manufacturing excellence. Our joint technological and innovative engagement and approach provide sustainable benefits for our society as a whole," Mr Al-Mady added.

SABIC'S MEASURES WIN RECOGNITION

SABIC's performance indicators of environment, health, safety, security (EHSS), including EHSS Incidence Rate (SHER) and OSHA Incidence Rate, have shown continuous improvement, making the company's performance among the top-in-class worldwide.

SABIC Vice Chairman and CEO Mr Mohamed Al-Mady told news agencies in May 2012 that he was happy to note that significant headway had been made in major initiatives such as Product Stewardship, REACH, Clean Development Mechanism, Green Chemistry, EHSS Alerts and Awareness, Training and Development, Crisis Management and Emergency Preparedness, and SABIC Integrated Enterprise Security Solution.

On the sustainability front, SABIC has launched a global sustainability inventory process, to account for last year's greenhouse gas emissions, water and energy usage and material loss.

It has also opened a 'Green Chemistry Campus' in Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands, to promote innovation in deriving green building blocks (such as chemicals and materials) from agricultural sources.



ARAMCO IS WORLD'S LARGEST OIL COMPANY

Analysts credit the company's success to CEO Mr Khalid Al-Falih and its corporate transformation

Saudi Aramco has been ranked as the No. 1 oil company in the world by leading business magazine 'Forbes' in its latest edition.

The energy company generates more than US\$1 billion a day in revenues, according to the magazine.

Saudi Aramco, the state-owned oil company of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is a fully integrated and global petroleum and chemicals enterprise, and a world leader in exploration, production, refining, distribution, shipping and marketing. The company manages the world's largest proven conventional crude oil and condensate reserves of 259.7 billion barrels.

Aramco topped the magazine's list of the world's 25 largest oil companies, which included Russia's Gazprom, Iran's National Iranian Oil Co., ExxonMobil, and PetroChina among others. According to the magazine, the ranking was based on the combined volumes of oil and natural gas that these companies produce each day.

However, this accolade comes as no surprise to Aramco and Saudi nationals. A Riyadh-based oil industry analyst said that the magazine had only confirmed what they already knew – that Aramco is the 'world's No. 1' oil company.

He credited the success of Aramco to the company's President and CEO Mr Khalid A. Al-Falih, under whose guidance Saudi Aramco "is undergoing a corporate transformation".

VISION FOR 2020

Looking beyond its present success,

Saudi Aramco aims at evolving itself from being the leading oil and gas company that it is today, into a fully integrated, truly global energy and chemicals enterprise, with extensive operations across the globe, by 2020.

Their vision for the future is best described through the company's 2020 Strategic Intent:

- Shaping the business portfolio through establishing an integrated value chain approach in our crude oil mix, further develop the Kingdom's unconventional gas resources and become a leading global chemicals and refining company
- Supporting the Kingdom in building a vibrant energy industry by promoting an energy efficient economy, developing alternative energy options, and building a technology portfolio
- Delivering an agile, flexible, and efficient organization to achieve operational excellence and world-class reliability and safety performance through improved operational efficiency, responsive decision-making and budgeting activities, insightful performance measurements and business process improvement
- Building capacity, knowledge and skills to improve processes and systems of leadership selection and development, performance evaluation, innovation and research and development, to take the lead in creating a knowledge-based Saudi economy.

Saudi Aramco has risen from level to level over the decades to be the world

No. 1 today. Explaining what makes them different from others, Mr Khalid A. Al-Falih spilled out their secret of success: "Instead of adopting a passive stance, we have always focused on proactively shaping our operating environment and enhancing our ability to excel within that environment."

REGION'S FIRST ECO-PARK

- Saudi Aramco is once again set to showcase its commitment to environmental protection by constructing the Kingdom's and the region's first mangrove Eco-Park in Ras Tanura
- The proposed Eco-Park is set to breathe fresh life into an essential component of the Kingdom's ecosystem
- The Eco-Park is part of the company's effort to plant one million mangroves over the next five years – an unprecedented number in the Kingdom's history
- The Eco-Park will cover an area of 62 square kilometres and be partially fenced and protected. Visitors will explore mangrove vegetation by strolling on a 1.5 km elevated boardwalk that takes them through the heart of the park
- The project is spearheaded by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), and the park is scheduled to open in 2014

WORLD'S LARGEST WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY



Princess Noura University, the Kingdom's first women-only university launched in 2007, is spread over a sprawling 800 hectares with a capacity for more than 50,000 students

'Noura' in Arabic means light. As King Abdullah had envisioned, the newly opened university is a beacon of light for all women in the Kingdom and the Islamic world. The first women's university in the Kingdom and the largest all-women university in the world, the SR20 billion Princess Noura Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) was started in May 2011. The King named the university after his beloved aunt, Princess Noura Bint Abdul Rahman, who was the trusted sister of the country's founder King Abdul Aziz. Historians say it was Princess Noura who had inspired King Abdul Aziz to regain the leadership of the country. It is said that she had the mind of '40 men' and great wisdom.

EXEMPLARY UNIVERSITY

The PNU, which is located 25 km east of the Saudi capital, is part of the King's ambitious plan to come up with a self-contained higher education city by 2012. Earlier known as the Riyadh University for Women, the King reinvented the university by adding a number of facilities and named it after Princess Noura.

The new campus, which was launched in 2011, covers an area of over 800 hectares — so huge that a university train

will help the students, faculty and others to move from one location to another. The fully-automated train will cover a distance of 11.5 km across the large campus. The PNU has 15 colleges; a residential area with 1,400 villas; massive hostel facilities to accommodate 12,000 students; a 700-bed hospital; a conference hall; three research centres for nanotechnology, information technology and biosciences; and a library with about five million books and journals. A sports city and a service tunnel, along the campus, are on the cards. The university will offer courses in every discipline.

The green design of the building is proof of King Abdullah's vision. The campus buildings have been designed in such a way that they use sunlight, as their primary source of light. A 40,000 square metre solar panning provides 16 per cent of power for campus heating and 18 per cent for air-conditioning. The campus also boasts of a water recycling plant capable of producing 8,000 cubic metres of water, every day, for the university green areas.



According to Finance Minister Dr Ibrahim Al-Assaf, the University has taken women's education to a 'dimension never reached before.' Presently catering to 26,000 women, the university will take in more students once the entire campus is complete. The PNU will prepare the future generations of women to participate in the building of the Kingdom.

MODERN MARVEL

The PNU was ranked in the list of the world's 100 most innovative urban infrastructure projects by global consultancy KPMG and topped the education infrastructure category. The list was part of the Infrastructure 100 World Cities report released in July 2012.

MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES SCORE BIG

Malaysia offers an easy and affordable university education for Arab students, who prefer Malaysian Universities for their quality education and a similar cultural background



In a never-before-seen turnout, 23 universities from Malaysia participated in the four-day International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education from April 17 to 20, 2012, in the Kingdom's capital city, Riyadh. More and more Arab students, today, look forward to get that extra edge in their education, explore international shores and build on their knowledge of English, the global language for all official interactions. Traditionally, Arab parents have preferred to send their children to study in the West, especially the US. However, over the years, this outlook has changed. Arabs are now increasingly considering Southeast Asian countries, where a high quality education is available at lower costs. Among them is Malaysia, a rising favourite, among students of Islamic countries as a higher-education destination.

Similar to Saudi Arabia, Malaysia is a country that is traditionally Islamic in its values and modern in its outlook and progress. Besides these cultural similarities, Malaysia offers a wide choice of quality universities that offer unlimited opportunities in research and higher education. According to Malaysia's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Mr Syed

Omar Al-Saggaf, the participation of the huge number of universities in the exhibition this year was a testimony to the high-quality of education that Malaysia offers.

The number of students from the Kingdom, who are studying in Malaysia has multiplied in the last few years. Back in 2004, about 200 Arab students were studying in Malaysia; whereas now, more than 2,000 students from the Kingdom are pursuing studies in the Southeast Asian country. Apart from this, over 3,000 students are in Malaysia pursuing different courses under the King Abdullah Scholarship Programme. More than 2,000 students from the Kingdom enrol in the various universities of Malaysia every year, according to Mr Azam Shuib, the Dubai-based regional director of the

Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education for Middle East and North Africa.

He added that there are nearly 90,000 students from 150 countries studying in Malaysia's 20 public and 40 private universities. He added that Malaysia is an extremely attractive educational destination for students of all nationalities, including those from Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen and others. While some of these students are pursuing their Doctoral and Master's degrees, there are others who are taking up even short courses in subjects such as English.

THE MALAYSIAN ADVANTAGE

The major advantage of choosing a Malaysian university over others is the cost. According to Mr Azam, the education costs in Malaysia are much lower compared to other countries, especially the West. The main reason for this is that the universities charge a low tuition fee, which is the major component of the university cost.

The cost of living in Malaysia is affordable and lower when compared to countries in the West. In fact, the cost of living could be as low as US\$3,750 per



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year, said Mr Azam. Malaysia also allows foreign students to work part-time for a maximum of 20 hours, per week, to fund their studies.

English is widely spoken in Malaysia and hence foreigners find it easy to communicate and adjust in the country. For Saudi students who would like to pick up the language, Malaysia offers a good opportunity to learn. Also, foreigners do not have any problem in adjusting in the multi-cultural environment of Malaysia, where different races and religions live in peace and tolerance. Added to this is the advantage that Malaysia has hassle-free immigration procedures. A safe and politically stable country, Malaysia has a low crime-rate and a moderate tropical weather.

Arab students are competitive, talented and hold a lot of potential; no wonder they have been a cynosure of top international universities. Malaysia stands out with the fact that it offers world-class education at competitive costs. The fact that the relations between the two countries have always been cordial and peaceful only adds to the long list of advantages.

ACCOLADES FOR ARAB STUDENTS

Saudi students have won 12 awards in scientific, technical and educational fields, at both regional and international levels, in the month of May, 2012, alone.

- The Kingdom won four medals (three golds and one silver) in the Asian Young Inventors Exhibition (AYIE) 2012, organised simultaneously with the ITEX 2012 Malaysia — 23rd International Invention, Innovation and Technology Exhibition, Kuala Lumpur
- Ms Nadiya Andijani, a lecturer at the College of Arts and Internal Design in Umm Al-Qura University in Makkah, won the gold at the Korean International Exhibition for Women Inventors, held in Seoul, for inventing a lab apparatus to measure the sagging ability of cloth
- Four Saudi students made international mark in the Balkan Mathematical Olympics 2012, which was held in Antalya, Turkey, winning one silver and three bronze medals
- Ms Samar Harb Al-Harfi won a prize for being a distinguished trainee in clinical psychology at the Argosy University, US
- Saudi Arabia also won the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) 2012, for the sixth consecutive year, after a team of 22 male and female students presented 18 projects
- Director of the Division of Comprehensive Quality of the Department of Girl's Education in Ha'il, Ms Falha Al-Shammari, was awarded the top certificate for quality and distinction from the European Commission and the Swiss International Institute for Total Quality Management



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Melorita believes in the integral role of human talent in the success of organisations. Established in 1977, it has found its niche in international recruitment and the global movement of talent around the world.

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Melorita today is regarded as the biggest healthcare recruitment specialist in Malaysia that provides quality healthcare professionals to hospitals throughout the Middle East, with particular emphasis on Saudi Arabia.

With over 30 hospitals throughout Saudi Arabia, including most government hospitals, Melorita recruits nurses, doctors, allied health staff and hospital support staff. Its services cover the entire recruitment process from sourcing qualified candidates to relocating them to their new international workplace.

Melorita is an ISO 9001:2008 accredited company and also awarded the Business Superbrand status in 2006; Melorita strives to provide efficient service to its clients by continuously improving on its recruitment process. Melorita strongly believes in providing professional and value added services.



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MECCA EXPANSION PROJECT UNVEILED DURING RAMADAN

The Two Holy Mosques of Mecca and Medina are witnessing the biggest expansion project ever undertaken in history, costing about SR 80 billion. The King directed the partial opening of the project to help worshippers during the crowded season of Ramadan in 2012

For the first time, pilgrims to Islam's two holiest mosques got a glimpse of the King Abdullah Expansion Project during the Ramadan month, since the work began more than a year ago. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques had directed that the expanded area of the project be partially opened for the benefit of the pilgrims, who visited the sacred sites during the holy month. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais, head of the Presidency for the Two Holy Mosques, told *Arab News* that the capacity of the Grand Mosque had been increased to accommodate an additional 200,000 people, and that the ground floor had been opened to accommodate more visitors this year. King Abdullah has always considered the Two Holy Mosques and its pilgrims as his topmost priority, and undertook this huge project with the aim to provide a serene and relaxed atmosphere for the pilgrims.

When the Mosque opened for Ramadan, it revealed a new vision. A number of amenities have been constructed to make the pilgrimage more comfortable for the ever-increasing crowd. New courtyards have been constructed to accommodate more number of Umrah pilgrims and visitors during the holy month, while terraces, bridges and other facilities were also ready for Ramadan. Apart from this, 12,500 new toilets have been constructed, air-conditioners have been installed in the mosque's basement, 250 sprinkler fans have been set up and heat resistant marble have been laid on the mosque's courtyard. A total of 8,000 employees, including presidency officials, guides, and others had worked to implement this Ramadan plan.



THE EXPANSION PROJECT

King Abdullah laid the foundation stone in 2011 for the historic expansion, which covers 400,000 square metres to the northwest and northeast of the mosque, and increases its total capacity to more than 2.5 million pilgrims. The designs for the project have been prepared by experts from Saudi universities, who have taken into consideration the environment and high safety standards. The project will be completed in three phases.

The first phase will include construction of multi-storey buildings, within the existing northern courtyard, and a flat roof for the entire mosque structure, which would have an expanded area of about 1.1 million square metres. The new building will have a main gate along with two main minarets and two side minarets, at the corners. A prayer area with a capacity for 800,000 worshippers will be added. In the second and third phases, the eastern and western courtyards will be added to the mosque and this will increase the capacity by another 800,000, taking its full capacity to 1.6 million.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PROJECT

HARAM AREA

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah recently issued an order to expand the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, a move described as 'unprecedented.' Under the move, the central Haram area will be surrounded by new ring roads, making the area three times bigger. The area is also designed to provide increased capacity for commercial firms and facilities from the service and security sectors, which can take advantage of the increased volume of pilgrims and visitors to the mosque. More development opportunities will be created through construction of roads, setting up of public utilities and infrastructure facilities. With the completion of the expansion project, all residential areas of old Medina city will become part of the mosque complex.

CONNECTORS

Vast pathways will be created between the new multi-storey buildings, for pilgrims and worshippers to reach the mosque. The project also covers development of the Jabal Hindi area. A 1,200-metre tunnel will be constructed from the end of the expansion and will pass through Jabal Hindi, while another tunnel 1,100 meters long will be built under Jabal Madafie. An emergency 700-metre tunnel crossing the other two tunnels will be constructed from Jabal Al-Kaaba.

PUBLIC SQUARES

Public squares close to the mosque and utilities in the area will also be developed. The role of the holy mosque, as the civilian and spiritual heart of the city will be highlighted while implementing the plan. The comprehensive plans for developing the area has recommended more residential, commercial, recreational and security facilities and services to be built. The expansion work will enable smooth pedestrian movement.

TRANSPORT SYSTEM

A public transport system will be built to link the primary routes to the city's historic places, Haramain Railway and the holy mosque. Detailed engineering studies on a new ring road and new Kakiya Road, and construction of pedestrian tunnels and bridges, are also in the plan.

THE KING'S BENEVOLENCE

The King's generosity for the Two Holy Mosques has been unprecedented in terms of scale and benefits. Justice Minister, Mr Mohammed Al-Eissa, said that the initiative of expanding the area to accommodate more worshippers, particularly the expansion of the *masaa* (the running course between Safa and Marwa), would remove the hardships faced by pilgrims and enable them to perform their rites in a more relaxed and spiritual atmosphere. According to Mecca Mayor, Mr Osama Al-Bar, the new projects would boost business in Mecca and help the holy city to attract new investments worth around SR100 billion.

GRAND PLANS

At the moment, the ground floor of the Grand Mosque has an area of 98,500 square metres accommodating 167,000 worshippers; the roof has an area of 67,000 square metres accommodating 90,000 worshippers and the surrounding plaza has a total area of 235,000 square metres accommodating 450,000 worshippers. The total area of the mosque and its plaza is 400,500 square metres and can accommodate 707,000 worshippers. However, at peak times as many as a million of worshippers can be in the mosque at any one time. Once the three-phase expansion is complete, the mosque will have a total area of 1.1 million square metres with the capacity to accommodate an additional 1.6 million worshippers.

EARLIER PROJECTS

The mosque has witnessed two major expansions since the foundation of the Kingdom; the first during the time of King Abdul Aziz, in 1949, when expansion work started in July 1951 and took nine years to complete. The second one, ordered by King Fahd, started in 1984 and was completed in 1994.



MALAYSIA IS TOPMOST DESTINATION FOR ARAB TOURISTS

The Southeast Asian country is a top travel destination for Arab visitors, who are eager to explore its diversity of places, culture, food and people. Also, they do not require a visa to visit Malaysia

If you ask a group of Arabs to name their favourite travel destination in the world, a good majority of them may give the answer as 'Malaysia.'

Malaysia is a big hit with most travellers from the Kingdom these days. The numbers also prove this: In 2011, Malaysia recorded 87,693 arrivals from Saudi Arabia, the largest number from any country in West Asia to visit the Asian country.

"I am pleased to announce that as far as tourist arrivals are concerned, Saudi Arabia is top in visitor arrivals in Malaysia from West Asia. Last year (2011), Malaysia recorded 87,693 arrivals from Saudi Arabia," Malaysia's Ambassador to the Kingdom Mr Syed Omar Al-Saggaf told *Arab News* in a report dated May 18, 2012.

Records show that Arab tourists have gradually changed their tourism tastes from the traditional destinations of US, UK and other European countries to Asian countries, especially Malaysia, over the last few years. There may be a number of reasons for this change in interest, but the big reasons are that Arab tourists get more value for their money in this Southeast Asian country, besides feeling more comfortable in terms of security, food, culture, shopping, and religious needs.

MALAYSIA'S APPEAL

Arab travellers have begun to travel more than ever before. The burgeoning economy of the Kingdom has lent a high spending power to Arabs besides a keen interest to explore the world. Since Malaysia sums up the whole of Asia in its geography and culture, the country is a top favourite destination for Arabs.

Malaysia offers Arab tourists a wide variety in destination, culture, religion and culinary tastes. The diversity in ethnic groups has made the country into a unique representation of Asia. For nature lovers, the country offers vast mountains,

exotic beaches, thick greenery, meandering rivers in destinations such as Cameron Highlands, Sabah, Sarawak, and the beaches of Langkawi; and for those looking for a modern destination, Malaysia offers sprawling cities, modern skyscrapers and the latest in transport technology in destinations such as Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

Mr Ahmad Yahaya Al Jahsyi, Tourism Malaysia Director, said in an interview to *Arab News* that over the years, Malaysia had maintained its reputation of being a premier quality and value-for-money tourist destination, adding that major cities in the country are well connected and has excellent infrastructure and amenities.

He also said that the country offers a tropical climate throughout the year, and hence Arabs can visit the country any time of the year and for long durations.

"With proper packaging and promotions, Malaysia can be marketed as a travel product for all seasons — whether you come for the islands and beaches, a city experience, cultural heritage, a gastronomical tour, or something else," he said to *Arab News*.

Another highlight for visitors from the Kingdom is that they do not require a visa to enter Malaysia for a stay of up to 90 days. Malaysian formalities are very easy to follow and Arab visitors find this an added attraction for visiting Malaysia.

Malaysia is also a top destination for medical and education tourists. Mr Al-Saggaf said that Malaysia offers world-class healthcare and state-of-the-art medical facilities at the 200-plus international standard hospitals and clinics.

He added that the good exchange rate had contributed to the growth in education tourism, thus making Malaysia a centre of research and educational excellence. "Twinning programmes with foreign universities have made it affordable for Saudi students to pursue their tertiary education in Malaysia," he said.





CURRENT PATTERNS

Honeymooners, young couples with children, families constitute the majority visitors from the Kingdom, according to a study published by the International Journal of Business and Management.

Most Arabs visited Malaysia for about five to seven days, and their favourite activities were sightseeing, exploring new and interesting places, visiting theme parks and beaches, followed by shopping and others. Arabs love their food, and this is one of the major reasons why they love visiting Malaysia. Malaysia offers a wide variety of cuisines including Arab, Malay, and general Moghul cuisines, besides Chinese, Indian and Western cuisines.

The study has noted that Arab visitors gave high importance to food hygiene, and this is something they easily found in Malaysia. Food courts and restaurants in Malaysia follow strict guidelines of the government in regard to food hygiene and services.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Besides offering high quality and value-for-money tourist experiences, Malaysia has also been undertaking successful campaigns in the Kingdom. Tourism Malaysia, airline partners, state government bodies, hotel and resort operators and local tour operators are working together to promote Malaysia aggressively in Saudi Arabia. The success of these attractive campaigns is visible in the rising tourist arrival numbers.

Malaysia offers everything a Saudi Arabian tourist looks for in his ideal tourist destination – attractive places of interest, wide variety in topography from idyllic beaches, rainforests to mountains, cultural comfort, religious affinity, courteous people, multicultural appeal, shopping avenues, and quality food options.

With such an ideal combination, Malaysia is here to stay on the Arab traveller's favourite destinations list.

REASONS WHY THE ARABS LOVE MALAYSIA

- Malaysia offers a lot of greenery and nature-rich destinations.
- Malaysia has a wide variety of nature destinations from mountains to rainforests to beaches.
- Malaysia is a family-oriented destination with excellent facilities for adults, children and also the elderly. There are a number of theme parks, while some hotels offer babysitting facilities and children's clubs
- Malaysia is culturally similar to the Kingdom in terms of religion, tradition, food and culture. This makes it easier for Arabs to feel comfortable in the country
- Malaysia is a clean country, a factor that the Arabs like
- The Government of Malaysia keeps upgrading its facilities to improve the travel experiences
- Many hotels have Arab-speaking staff at the front desk

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POPULAR TRAVEL DESTINATIONS OF MALAYSIA



KUALA LUMPUR

The capital of Malaysia offers an endless variety in entertainment, cultural diversity, shopping and eating options. Top sightseeing places include the Petronas Twin Towers, Batu Caves, Orchid Garden, the Royal Palace, and the Jamek Mosque.



GENTING HIGHLANDS

It's the one-stop entertainment destination in Malaysia that has high-end hotels, casinos and a theme park. This is the only place where one can legally gamble in Malaysia. The hill resort is located at a height of about 1,860 m.



CAMERON HIGHLANDS

Cameron Highlands is Malaysia's most extensive hill station. Visitors can enjoy the sprawling tea plantations, a cool climate, lush green scenery and waterfalls on this hill station. Jungle walks and trekking are among the favourite activities.



TAMAN NEGARA

Taman Negara is the oldest tropical rainforest in the world with huge trees, waterfalls, jungle treks and world's longest canopy walkways. Many of the world's endangered species reside in Taman Negara but rare to spot.



MOUNT KINABALU

The Lonely Planet says: "Towering above the coastal plain and what's left of the lush tropical forests of northern Borneo, Mt Kinabalu is the biggest tourist attraction in Sabah and the centrepiece of the vast 754-sq-km Kinabalu National Park."



PENANG

Penang embraces modernity while retaining its traditions and old world charm. These is reflected in its well-preserved heritage buildings which led to George Town being accorded a listing as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site.



PUTRAJAYA

The federal administrative capital of Malaysia is adjacent to Kuala Lumpur. Tourists can visit the Botanical Gardens, the Equestrian Park, admire the grand architecture of the buildings and also go on cruises on the outskirts of the city.



LANGKAWI

The Island of Langkawi is an exotic holiday destination that offers idyllic beaches with emerald blue waters, ancient rainforests and quaint villages. Langkawi is an archipelago of 99 tropical islands off the Northwestern coast of Peninsular Malaysia.



MALACCA

A vibrant city with an old-world charm that combines the architecture and cultures inherited from the Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish. Visit the city for a memorable cultural experience. The historic port city is a World Heritage Site.



**HRH Crown Prince Salman
Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud**

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence



**HM King Abdullah
Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud**

The Custodian of the Holy Mosques

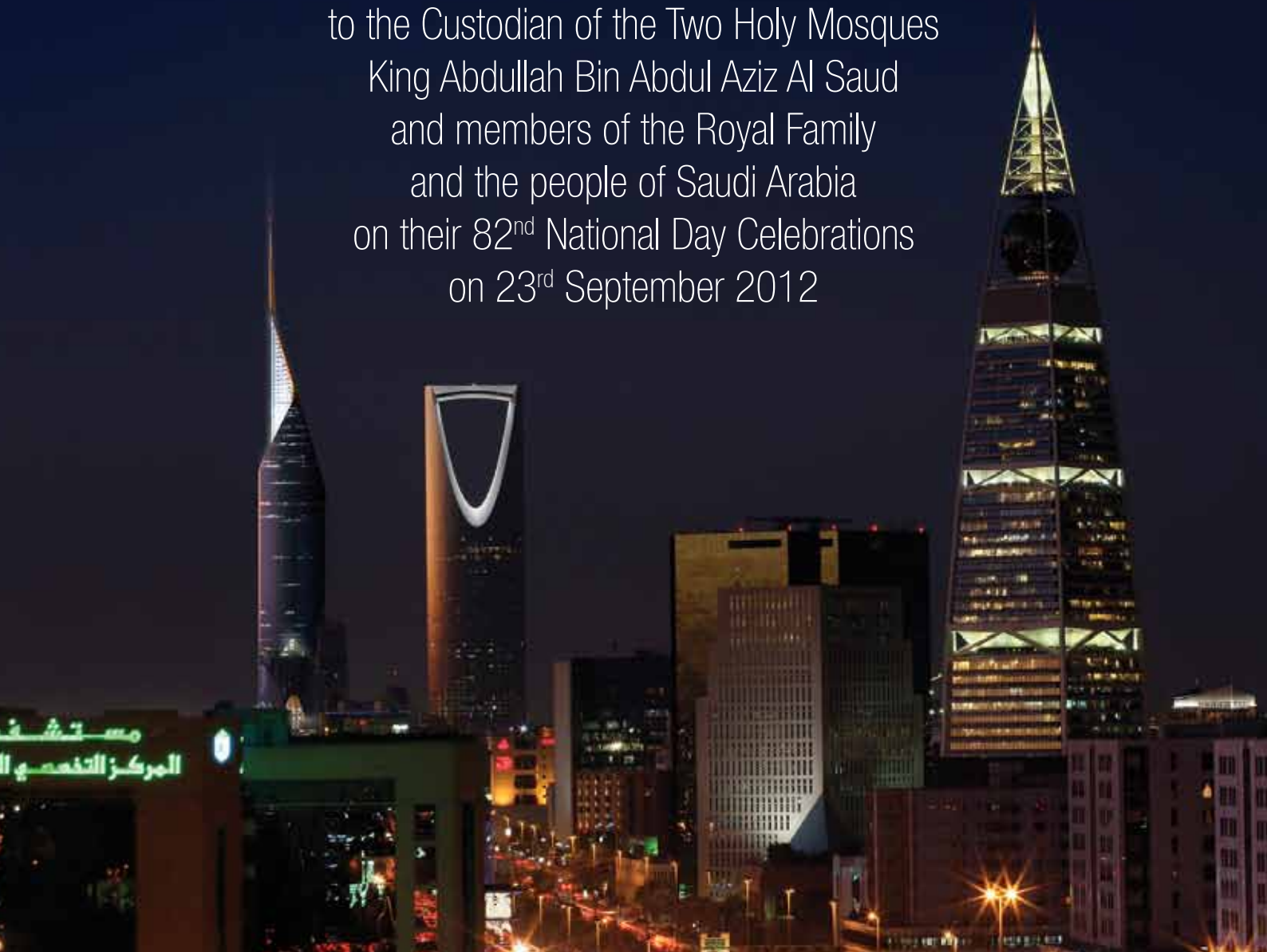


**HRH Prince Ahmed
Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud**

Interior Minister

CONGRATULATIONS

to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
and members of the Royal Family
and the people of Saudi Arabia
on their 82nd National Day Celebrations
on 23rd September 2012



جمعية الصداقة السعودية الماليزية

MALAYSIA • SAUDI ARABIA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



مجلس التجارة السعودية الماليزية

MALAYSIA • SAUDI ARABIA BUSINESS COUNCIL

Congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosque and the People of Saudi Arabia on the 82nd National Day



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