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**IN CELEBRATION OF
GROWTH, PROGRESS
AND PROSPERITY OF
THE KINGDOM OF
SAUDI ARABIA**

Saudi Arabia

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST



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Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
- 07 HRH Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence
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*Congratulations & Best Wishes
to the People and
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
on their 84th National Day*



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**CELEBRATING WITH THE NATION
84TH NATIONAL DAY OF
THE ROYAL KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA**



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

**CUSTODIAN OF THE
TWO HOLY MOSQUES**

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND
THE CITIZENS OF SAUDI ARABIA ON THEIR

84th National Day Celebrations



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the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
on their 84th National Day*



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SECOND DEPUTY PREMIER

أطيب الأمنيات
اليوم الوطني

BEST WISHES

SABIC congratulates all Saudi Arabian
people on their National Day

23rd September 2014



**CELEBRATING WITH THE NATION
84TH NATIONAL DAY OF
THE ROYAL KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA**



**HRH PRINCE
SAUD AL-FAISAL
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**MINISTER OF
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84TH NATIONAL DAY OF
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**HRH PRINCE
ABDUL AZIZ
BIN ABDULLAH
AL-SAUD
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER**



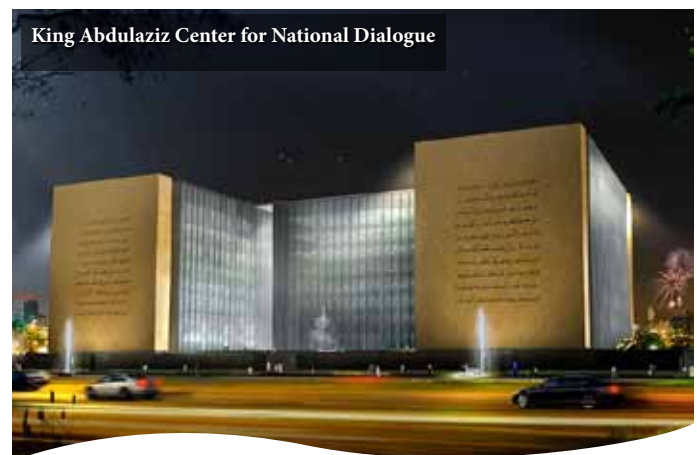
TOWARDS GREATER UNITY

The National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, celebrated on September 23, has succeeded in broadening the concept of unification over the years

Once again, Saudi nationals will celebrate the unification of their great country by the late King Abdul Aziz ibn Abdulrahman out of disparate sheikdoms. In addition to rejoicing in this achievement, many Saudis have come to realise that the Kingdom's National Day has also acquired several other facets such as the coming together of the minds and hearts of the Saudi people.

It was Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah who fine-tuned the definition of unification as an operating philosophy. It was during his reign that the Kingdom embarked upon various reforms for the harmonious functioning of the government with the participation of citizens and non-government organisations (NGOs) at various levels as well as liberalisation of the national economy.

As the National Day gained more prominence over the years, a growing number of cities have also laid out more elaborate celebration plans. Festivities have been getting more colourful to attract the masses. The labour ministry also pitched in by declaring it a holiday for all public and private sector employees. Last year, fireworks in Riyadh lit up the sky, while all the streets in the capital were decorated with flags, lights and artificial flowers. The Eastern Province, the hub of the Kingdom's oil resources, observed the National Day in 2012 with a parade that brought together bikers, musicians and sportsmen -- an unusually colourful sight in the Kingdom.



This spirit of patriotism has been largely infused and invigorated by King Abdullah over the past few years. An extension of this concept at the social level saw the launch of the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue (KACND), which engages in dialogue between various sections of the Saudi society for a better understanding of each other's point of view. KACND took this concept a step further when a new study prepared by it recently revealed that 35 per cent of Saudis believe that non-Saudi residents do not have difficulties adapting to the local customs and traditions. The study also disclosed that 45 per cent of Saudis say they treat foreign residents with respect, honesty and fairness. According to the survey which covered some 700 respondents from all over the Kingdom, 54 per cent of Saudis also believe in the diversity of foreign nationals living and working within the Saudi

community, as such interaction is overall beneficial. Around 75 per cent of the respondents indicated their willingness to collaborate with non-Saudis in the market place, especially in promoting sales and general trade.

Not only this, King Abdullah has introduced reforms in almost all sectors. He introduced a number of economic reforms aimed at reducing the country's reliance on oil revenue and encouraging foreign investment and privatisation. Today, the Kingdom is one of a few fast-growing countries in the world with a relatively high per capita income. He is also credited with taking giant steps for women emancipation by nominating women to the Shoura Council.

Another landmark decision aimed at strengthening the foundation of the Saudi society was empowerment of women through the ballot box. In an interview with Bikya Masr, Egypt's independent TV channel, a member of the royal family spelt out her views on the royal announcement allowing women to hold office in the municipal councils and also vote in the next civic elections due in 2015. She was taking part in a panel discussion "Voices for Change in the MENA" moderated by former American President Bill Clinton.

Lauding King Abdullah's announcement, the princess said, "While King Abdul Aziz laid the foundation of the Kingdom's unification, his worthy successors down to King Abdullah strengthened it brick-by-brick through enlightened leadership."

However, it is now for the Saudi youth as well to forge ahead as the torch-bearers of unification by strengthening the foundation through hard work and dedication to progress via education geared to market and professional needs.

King Abdullah, supported by Crown Prince Salman, has initiated a range of major economic, social, education, health, and infrastructure projects that have brought about remarkable changes throughout the Kingdom. They include the launch of four mega economic cities, the creation of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology and the Princess Nourah bint Abdul Rahman University for Girls, projects to expand the two holy mosques, provide more amenities to Hajj pilgrims, and other welfare measures. He also approved a historic revamping of the Kingdom's judicial system and enactment of laws to formalise the succession process.

On the industrialisation front, King Abdullah has left no stone unturned in launching a sort of industrial renaissance. The Saudi government through the Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDE) has disbursed 3566 loans worth SR107 billion for setting up industrial projects across the country. At the same time, he



Shoura Council



King Abdullah University of Science and Technology

has given a new boost to commercial activity and trade. The revenues of the General Organization of Ports, also called Ports Authority, exceeded SR4 billion last year, indicating an increase of over SR800 million a year before. On the global level, Saudi Arabia under King Abdullah has been playing a pivotal role in different spheres. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) have distributed financial assistance amounting to SR80 billion to the countries of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. This is in addition to charity funding and institutional support provided by the Kingdom-based organisations to poor countries and their institutions on a regular basis. Riyadh also provides diplomatic, moral and material support to its neighbours, and tenders assistance through multilateral channels like the OPEC Fund.

In fact, King Abdullah's participation in international diplomacy reflects the Kingdom's leadership role in support of Arab and Islamic issues and also for the achievement of world peace, stability and security. The king's inter-faith initiative that calls for regular interaction among people and leaders of all faiths and religions has been lauded by one and all across the globe. Thus, the bonds of unity being forged internally and externally herald the dawn of a new era in unification. It does not supplant it, but rather adopts a holistic approach to the achievement of the Kingdom's major national goal.

AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

H.E. Mr Mansour Al Mazmoumi, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Singapore on the occasion of 84th National Day lauds the visionary leadership of King Abdullah, the Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques and the thriving bilateral relations



It is my honour and privilege to celebrate the National Day of Saudi Arabia commemorating the unification of the Kingdom here in Singapore. Under the leadership of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, our Kingdom has made tremendous progress in many areas and contributed towards the progress and prosperity of the people. With special focus on the Kingdom's educational and technological advancement and women's empowerment, his visionary decisions in sectors such as real estate development, social insurance, housing, unemployment, have contributed greatly to Saudi Arabia's present status.

Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is largely based on the principles of Islam and the fundamentals of our foreign policy are good – friendly relations with neighbours, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and condemnation and rejection of international terrorism.

Saudi Arabia and Singapore share excellent bilateral and economic ties. This year saw cooperation on the government to government level, with high-level visits to the Kingdom by Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan, Minister for Communications and Information and Minister in charge of Muslim Affairs Dr Yaacob Ibrahim and Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs Masagos Zulkifli.

With King Abdullah at the helm, the Kingdom has also been very active on the cultural level. In June and July 2014, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Singapore presented Rhythms of the Land – an educational show about the Kingdom.

In line with King Abdullah's "Going East" strategy, the Saudi-Singapore relationship has grown from strength to strength. Saudi Arabia is Singapore's largest trading partner in the Middle East, with bilateral trade more than doubling from about \$10 billion in 2005 to well over \$23 billion in 2012.

The people of both nations have also grown closer. From only 7,000 Saudi nationals visiting Singapore in 2007, there were more than 18,000 in 2012. There is a strong Saudi student community in Singapore undertaking post-graduate studies mainly in engineering, law and in medicine. There was also a programme by the Singapore's Ministry of Education to train over 3,000 Saudi school principals. More recently, the

Kingdom made headlines around the world when it announced plans to liberalise its stock market for foreign investment by 2015 as it has one of the best performing economies among G-20 countries in recent years.

The Embassy's presence in Singapore has enhanced and promoted business relationships in several sectors including the oil and gas industry, increasing import and export of products and commodities and exchange in education, new technology, agriculture and fishery. We are working with the business community in Singapore to create a strong networking system between the two countries promoting investment on both sides.

Saudi companies can benefit from all the advantages that Singapore has to offer to foreign companies relocating to the country. Singapore and Saudi Arabia signed a Double Taxation Agreement (DTA) in 2011.

Saudi Arabia has had one of the best performing economies of the G-20 countries in recent years and according to IMF report has played a positive role in the global economy by stabilising oil markets. The Kingdom's economy grew by 5.1 per cent last year and is expected to continue at 4 per cent this year, according to IMF.

We invite more Singaporean companies to visit and do business with Saudi Arabia. Both our countries are growing rapidly and have tremendous scope to leverage on each other's strengths.



DATA SHEET

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and home to Islam's two holiest shrines in Mecca and Medina. The King's official title is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

Saudi Arabia is the largest state in Western Asia by land area, and constitutes the bulk of the Arabian Peninsula.

Saudi Arabia traces its roots back to the earliest civilisations of the Arabian Peninsula. Over the centuries, the peninsula has played an important role in history, as an ancient trade centre and as the birthplace of Islam, one of the world's major monotheistic religions. The modern Kingdom was founded by King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud in 1932 after a 30-year campaign to unify most of the Arabian Peninsula. One of his male descendants rules the country today, as required by the country's 1992 Basic Law.

In a few short decades, the Kingdom has turned itself from a desert nation to a modern, sophisticated state and a major player in the international arena.



GEOGRAPHY

Capital: Riyadh

Area: 2,149,690 sq km

Population: 26,939,583 (CIA: July 2013 est.)

Birth Rate: 19.01 births/1,000 population (CIA: 2013 est.)

Ethnic groups: Arab 90%, Afro-Asian 10%

Overview of Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia is bordered by the Red Sea from the West, Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait from the North, the Arabian Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, and United Emirates from the East, and Yemen and Oman from the South.

Climate: Continental weather: Summer: very hot, Winter: cold

ECONOMY

Currency: Saudi Riyal

Natural Resources: Petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, copper

GDP (PPP): \$921.7 billion (CIA: 2012 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$31,800 (CIA: 2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 6.8% (CIA: 2012 est.)

GDP Composition: Agriculture: 1.9%; Industry: 64.8%; Services: 33.3% (CIA: 2012 est.)

Labour Force: 8.012 million

Investment (gross fixed): 26.6% of GDP (CIA: 2013 est.)

Industrial production growth rate: 7.1% (2012 est.)

GENERAL

Main cities: Riyadh (The capital), Makkah, Al Madinah, Jeddah, Dammam, Dhahran, and ArAr

Urban population: 82.3% of total population (CIA: 2011)

Language: Arabic; English widely spoken in urban areas

National Day: 23 September (1932 A.D)

Government: Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state based on principles prescribed by the Qur'an (Islam's Holy Book) and the Shari'ah (Islamic law); Provincial Council System, Consultative Council (Majlis Al-Shura), and Council of Ministers.

Symbol: Two crossed curved swords which symbolise strength and justice. A palm tree on the top symbolises prosperity.

Timing: GMT + 3:00

Judicial law: The constitution of Saudi Arabia is Quran and Sunnah, all legislative regulations have been derived from these two sources. The regime in Saudi Arabia is a monarchy system.

Calendar: Saudi Arabia follows the Muslims Hijrah calendar.

Holidays: Closure of all offices and schools on Eid Al-Fitr, the feast of the breaking of the fast, from the evening of the 25th day of Ramadan through the fifth day of Shawwal; Eid Al-Adha, the culmination of the Hajj, from the fifth through 15th day of Dhu Al-Hajjah; and September 23, National Day.

DEEPENING THE MULTI-FACETED RELATIONSHIP

A friendship spanning several centuries, Saudi and Singapore come closer with bilateral visits and FTAs



SMS Masagos meeting with Chairman of the Commission on Tourism and Antiquities HRH Prince Sultan Bin Salman (Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore)

Their friendship started way back in the 9th century and is still going strong. Singapore and Saudi Arabia have a rich shared history that began when Arabian traders travelling along the Maritime Silk Road to trade with China stopped at the island's port. The long friendship is also evident in the Arab influence that is deeply entrenched in the city's landscape that includes places such as Arab Street, Aljunied Road, Muscat Street etc as well as in culture, art and cuisine. Since then, the close bond has grown both in scope and depth when in 2004, Singapore's then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong revitalised the engagement after a series of visits and agreements. Today, high level ministerial visits are the norm between the two nations and trading partners. In this issue, we bring to you highlights of recent bilateral engagements and ministerial visits.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

On September 1, 2013, Singapore entered into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) comprising five other countries along with Saudi Arabia that will further enhance economic and trading relations. The Gulf Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA) is a comprehensive agreement that enables trade of goods, services, investment, rules of origin, customs procedures, government procurement, electronic commerce and economic cooperation. Being one of the first non-Middle East countries to have a FTA with GCC, Singapore has now signed a second FTA after the Singapore Jordan FTA in 2004. Furthermore, in a boost to trade in Halal products, GCC countries including Saudi Arabia are committed to recognise the Island city's Halal standards as similar to domestic Halal standards.

According to Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, "The GSFTA coming into force will bring the strong bilateral and economic ties between Singapore and the six GCC economies to a new level. Already, there are many Singapore and GCC companies actively pursuing opportunities and partnerships with each other. The GSFTA will further enhance Singapore's role as a Gateway City by connecting the two large regions of Asia and the Middle East and North Africa."

With the FTA in force, approximately S\$3.98 billion worth of Singapore goods will qualify for immediate tariff-free treatment, while S\$49.1 million worth of Singapore goods will qualify after 2018. GSTFA will benefit sectors such as telecommunications, electrical and electronic equipment, petrochemicals, jewellery, machinery and iron and steel-related industries. Singapore will grant zero-tariff treatment on all GCC imports with immediate effect.

Singapore remains the fifth largest trading partner for Gulf countries and accounts for nearly 35 per cent of oil imports. Bilateral trade with the GCC reached a record high of S\$68.6 billion in 2012, an increase of 62 per cent since 2007. Singapore companies have invested over S\$20.8 billion of projects in the GCC states, some of which are mega projects worth more than S\$1 billion each.

SMS MASAGOS' SIX-DAY VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs Masagos Zulkifli visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from November 19-24, 2013. The visit was part of Singapore's broader effort to deepen engagements with GCC. Accompanied by officials from MFA, SMS Masagos travelled to Riyadh, Jeddah and Madinah. On the first leg of his journey from November 19-20 to Riyadh, he met Saudi leaders and senior dignitaries including Chairman of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities HRH Prince Sultan Bin Salman, Governor of Riyadh HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar and HRH Deputy Governor of Riyadh Prince Turki Bin Abdullah.

He further met his counterparts in Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Saudi Ministry of Interior including Deputy Foreign Minister HRH Prince Abdulaziz Bin Abdullah. During the meeting both ministers reaffirmed the flourishing bilateral relations



SMS Masagos meeting with Saudi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs HRH Prince Abdulaziz Bin Abdullah at his palace in Riyadh on 20 November 2013 (Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore)

between the nations and agreed to explore areas for further cooperation, including youth exchanges. SMS Masagos was also briefed by Prince Sultan Bin Salman on Saudi initiatives to nurture the country's rich and colourful history.

The minister and his officials also met several provincial Governors such as Governor of Riyadh HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar, Governor of Madinah HRH Prince Faisal Bin Salman and Governor of Jeddah HRH Prince Mishaal Bin Majid Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud during his visit to Jeddah on November 21. From Jeddah, SMS Masagos travelled to Makkah and Madinah on the following day and had separate discussions with Singaporean students studying in the two cities.

GOODWILL EXCHANGES

SAUDI ARABIA TO SINGAPORE

- **Jan 2013:** Vice Minister of Labour, Dr Mofrej Bin Saad Al Haqbani visited Singapore.
- **7 - 10 Apr 2013:** Minister of Transport, Dr Jubara Al Sureisry, visited Singapore at the invitation of Singapore Minister for Transport, Lui Tuck Yew. They discussed transport co-operation and issues of mutual interest. Dr Jubara later visited a government agency, the Land Transport Authority (LTA), and local transport operators such as SMRT and SBS Transit. Dr Jubara was also the distinguished speaker at the Sea Asia Global Forum on April 9, which was part of the Singapore Maritime Week.
- **28 - 31 May 2013:** His Royal Highness Prince Turki Al-Faisal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud graced the Middle East Institute's annual conference in Singapore to give a keynote address to the participants. Prince Turki also visited SABIC Singapore, the local branch of one of the world's major manufacturers of chemicals, fertilizers, plastics and metals.

SINGAPORE TO SAUDI ARABIA

- **Feb 2013:** Minister for Communications and Information and Minister in charge of Muslim Affairs Dr Yaacob Ibrahim visited Jeddah.
- **16 - 18 Mar 2013:** Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and National Development Lee Yi Shyan attended the Jeddah Economic Forum. Mr Lee was one of the invited speakers and shared with his Saudi counterparts and delegates from other nations, views on sustainable, competitive cities.
- **30 Mar 2013:** Lawrence Anderson was appointed as Singapore's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Mr Anderson's most recent appointment was as Director Special Duties in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and concurrently as Diplomat-in-Residence at the Civil

Service College (February 2011 to February 2013). He previously served as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia (2004 to 2007).

- **19 - 20 Nov 2013:** During his introductory visit to the Kingdom, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs Masagos Zulkifli met Saudi leaders and senior officials in Riyadh including Chairman of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities HRH Prince Sultan Bin Salman, Governor of Riyadh HRH Prince Khalid Bin Bandar and HRH Deputy Governor of Riyadh Prince Turki Bin Abdullah. The Singaporean minister then went on to visit Makkah and Medinah, where he met other Saudi leaders and Governors as well as the Singaporean community in Saudi Arabia.
- **23 - 27 Nov 2013:** The Singapore Business Federation (SBF) headed to Riyadh and Jeddah for the Saudi-Singapore Business Council (SSBC) meeting. SBF convened with its Saudi partner, the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CSCCI), and discussed initiatives to increase trade and investment between Saudi Arabia and Singapore.
- **Feb 2013:** Visit by Minister for Communications and Information and Minister in charge of Muslim Affairs Dr Yaacob Ibrahim to Jeddah.
- **3 - 9 May 2014:** With the GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreement in place, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) headed to Saudi Arabia and Oman on a business mission led by Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Senior Minister for Trade and Industry. The business delegation visited the Saudi commercial capitals of Riyadh and Jeddah. While in Riyadh, Mr Lee co-chaired the 1st Meeting of the GSFTA Joint Committee, which was set up to ensure the smooth implementation of the GSFTA, with Dr Hamad Al-Bazai, Coordinator-General of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) FTA Negotiations.



THE VIBRANT HERITAGE OF SAUDI ARABIA UNVEILED

Singaporeans discovered the exotic history, rich culture and inspirational spirit of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at a memorable exhibition held recently

Aptly titled Rhythms of the Land, this educational show about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia presented by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in the National Library in June and July 2014, was a resounding success, having attracted more than 13,180 visitors.

Guests of Honour at its official opening on June 6 were His Excellency Mansour A M Almazmoumi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore, Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary, Singapore's Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport, and

Dr Salim Almalik, Advisor and General Supervisor of the General Department for International Cooperation of Saudi Arabia. Also present were senior officials from the education ministries of the two countries, the Arab diplomatic corps, and representatives of the Singapore government. Guests included well-known intellectuals and business people of both nations, Saudi nationals working or studying here, students of Singapore's Islamic schools and representatives of Islamic institutions and societies here, as well as prominent citizens and members of the media.

It was the perfect opportunity for visitors to discover the attractions of Saudi

Arabia and it also opened the doors of cultural exchange between Singapore and the Kingdom, by creating a thought-provoking experience. Beginning with historical tales, Singaporeans learned how warring tribes of Bedouins across the Arabian Peninsula were unified into one nation that is known today as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Sections within the exhibition then illustrated the beauty and inspiring spirit of Islam through age-old scriptures and art pieces. Among the highlights were traditional costumes from various parts of Saudi Arabia as well as replica models of the Two Holy Mosques. Then, there was the immersion in authentic

cultural experiences in a traditional souk (marketplace) and a Saudi home setting. Visitors also learned of the Islamic world's many accomplishments, especially in science, medicine and education and found out how it all came together in one of the most progressive countries in the world.

SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The Islamic Golden Age, spanning the 8th to the 15th centuries, saw many great advances. Islamic scholars set out on a quest to collect as much knowledge as possible. Arab scholars then built on this knowledge obtained from the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans to make breakthroughs



and advances in engineering, navigation, architecture, mathematics and medicine along with the invention of items now commonly found in households everywhere. For example, it was the Egyptian physicist Alhazen, born in 965, who laid the foundation of the modern understanding of optics. He also invented camera obscura, an optical device that projects an image of its surroundings onto a screen. The origins of coffee, toothbrushes and perfume can also be traced all the way back to the Islamic Golden Age.

PIONEERS OF MEDICINE

The technique of inoculation was devised in the Muslim world and then introduced to Europe through Turkey in 1724. Children there were vaccinated to prevent the deadly smallpox at least 50 years before the West discovered it. Arabic medicine also made significant contributions in pharmacology, discovering and cataloguing thousands of new drugs. The term 'drug' is Arabic. New drugs introduced by the Arabs include benzoin, laudanum, senna and alcohol which they used as an antiseptic.

HOSPITALS – AN ISLAMIC INNOVATION

The major contribution of the Islamic Age in the field of medicine was the establishment of hospitals. There is evidence that these hospitals were in existence by the 8th century and they were soon widespread across the Islamic

world funded by the charitable donations known as Zakat tax. In addition to treating the sick in the hospital, physicians and midwives would make house visits especially to residents in poor rural areas. Some hospitals provided specialised services such as taking care of lepers or the disabled and the infirm.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD

Educational and intellectual activity was the norm during the Golden Islamic Age. It was an Arab mathematician who invented algebra. Today, much of the world uses Arabic numerals and the number "0" was used first by early Arab scholars as an integral part of mathematical equations.



The Arabs also came up with tertiary education as early as the 11th century with the opening of Nizamiyah universities of Neshapur and Baghdad. The universities taught almost all sciences and arts, but mostly relied on theoretical teaching. As there were no fees, Islamic education provided equal opportunities to the rich and the poor to acquire the highest education available. Students were also provided with free boarding, lodging and even with books.

SPIRITUAL CALLIGRAPHY

As the splendid exhibits of the Rhythms of the Land exhibition demonstrate, Muslim calligraphers consider it an act of piety to copy the Koran and to make the script as beautiful as



possible. Their talents have raised the art of calligraphy to heights of refinement seldom achieved elsewhere. As the shapes of Arabic letters are essentially abstract, geometric, two-dimensional and rhythmic, quotations from the Koran are used decoratively on metal-work, pottery and textiles, carved in wood, marble, stucco and ivory, and applied to the walls, domes and minarets of mosques.

But the quotations are more than decoration. They act as reminders of the Word of God. And although the calligraphy is often so elaborate that it can hardly be read, it suggests to the pious Muslim a well-known text or familiar phrase, letting his memory and imagination fill in the rest.

Many visitors were entranced by the exhibits in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Rhythms of the Land exhibition. Secondary school student Vincent Ong found it to be a very memorable exhibition. The 14-year-old said that it offered him an excellent opportunity to experience the rich culture and understand the history, art and language of this very prosperous yet little-known country.



SINGAPORE EMPOWERED OUR CAREER SKILLS

Saudi Arabian students and trainees highly recommend Singapore's education and training capabilities

DR KAMAL AHMED ZOGHBY



Presently a deputy medical director and a consultant vascular-endovascular surgeon at King Fahad Hospital in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, Dr Zoghby underwent training while on a Vascular Surgery Fellowship at the National University Hospital and Singapore General Hospital

"My training in Singapore was a very important turning point in my career. The Republic is the best place for a person seeking a high standard of education and training. In the early days of my fellowship attachment, I used to work late and on my days off just to earn the trust of my professors. My advice to undergraduates and postgraduates is that if you are willing to work hard, go study or train in Singapore. It will really benefit your career."

DR. AHMED GHAZI



A consultant doctor at the Maternity and Children's Hospital in Jeddah, Dr Ghazi is on a Gynaecologic-Oncology Fellowship at the National University Hospital

"I really appreciate the hands-on training, the way I am treated, and the self-confidence I am acquiring in Singapore. I have learned to respect time and to realise that every second counts. I have also seen the benefits of being systematic and organised. My advice to Saudi nationals seeking an overseas education is to head to the place where you can benefit most and not to those places with only glowing and shiny names. Go to countries like Singapore where you can assume the responsibilities and start practicing sooner rather than later."

DR NAHLAH SAMIR ARAB



Currently a King Abdullah Scholarship Programme scholar, Dr Arab is on a Colorectal Surgery Fellowship at the National University Hospital

"Nearing the end of my General Surgery Residency, I started looking for a suitable fellowship programme. It was very competitive so I looked to Asia instead of the popular Western countries. However, places including Korea, China and Japan require proficiency in their language. Further searching led me to Singapore, which offers educational qualifications in the English language that are recognised worldwide. However, I found it difficult in the beginning to be accepted as I am the first female doctor from the Middle East to join the colorectal department at the hospital. Nevertheless, I managed to prove myself and the department decided to hire me for another year to allow me to further improve my skills. I recommend studying in Singapore for all levels, including sub-specialty training."

MR MOHAMMED NURI ALABDULMUHSIN



A field engineer in one of the world's largest oilfield services companies in Saudi Arabia, Mr Alabdulmuhsin graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering from the Nanyang Technological University.

"The first thing I remember is how green, clean and organised Singapore is. Life outside the classroom was also interesting. There were many entertainment options. The thing I appreciate the most is the study skills I have gained. I learnt to self-study, how to conduct research properly, and how to be an effective team player. These skills have helped me to further my career because these days more employers are looking for people whom can work independently as well as function in a team. In addition, they want people with great communication skills, which I have also gained during my studies in Singapore."



KFUPM Students visit the Singapore National Library, 2014

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAUDI ARABIAN CULTURAL MISSION

Cultural Attaché Dr Aiman Mohammad Momenah sheds light on the vision, mission and activities of the cultural mission in Singapore

What are the activities of the cultural office?

When the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) was first opened in Singapore in 2008, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) was its main focus. Established in 2005, KASP is still the largest government scholarship programme in the world and over the years, more than 130,000 students have graduated from prestigious universities located in 46 countries in Europe, America, Africa and Asia, including Singapore. KASP's scholars share their religious, cultural and national values with the local people. These scholars then graduate and return to the Kingdom with their experiences, dreams and aspirations. "For them to know the world and for the world to know them"; this is King Abdullah's vision for the scholars of the KASP.

We are also continuously looking to build better platforms to enhance educational exchange relations. For example, we actively facilitate the "Study Trip for Engagement EnRichment (STEER) - Middle East Programme", which is a collaboration between NUS and Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Higher Education. The latest STEER Middle East Programme included a four-day visit to Dammam, Dhahran and Jubail by 20 National University of Singapore (NUS) students.

Correspondingly in March 2013, 22 faculty members and



World Arabic Day 2013

undergraduates from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) came here for a study tour. We also recently organised a visit by the president and the senior management team of Tabuk University to universities and polytechnics here.

We also promote Saudi culture by hosting exhibitions and showcasing our history and culture in World Community Day organised by Temasek Polytechnic and participating in cultural fringe activities at institutions such as NUS and British Council.



We are also in close contact with research centres in local universities as well as A*STAR (Agency for Science, Technology and Research) to explore possibilities of research collaboration and academic exchange opportunities

WHAT HAS BEEN THE RESPONSE FROM SINGAPOREANS AND SAUDI CITIZENS STUDYING HERE?

Many Singaporeans appreciate our efforts to portray the beauty and richness of Saudi Arabian history and tradition and some repeatedly praised what they have seen, and said how these events contributed to their knowledge of the Kingdom. The Saudi scholars here also look forward to such activities. Their participation as volunteers at these events enrich their scholarship experience as they meet people with different cultural backgrounds.

WHAT OTHER FACILITIES ARE PROVIDED AND WHO CAN AVAIL THEM?

We also provide educational certificate verification services for people who have obtained work or educational attachment offers in the Kingdom.

SACM also offers advice to Saudi nationals who are interested in furthering their education in Singapore or obtaining specialised training in professional fields or sub-specialisation in medicine. This covers consultancy, correspondence and admission application. It also extends to advising the accepted candidates and their family members regarding travel and visa arrangements to come to Singapore.

WHAT WAS THE LATEST ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN BY YOU IN SINGAPORE TO PROMOTE SAUDI ARABIAN CULTURE?

The latest activity was our first-ever “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Rhythms of the Land” exhibition highlighting the history, religion,

and culture of Saudi Arabia. Prior to that, we have also set up an entire collection of books on Saudi Arabia in the National Library in 2013 and 2014, and created events like World Arabic Language Day and took part in Global Community Day 2013.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF SAUDI ARABIAN CULTURE?

One very important tenet in Saudi culture is that family comes ‘First, Last and Always’. Saudi Arabia is home to the most honoured Bedouins - the camel herders. They were known for their legendary tribal kinship. Family always comes first, as blood is considered thicker than water. Furthermore, the best way to survive the demanding, severe isolation of the desert is cooperation, adaption and family cohesion. The tribe is thus a union of extended families. It provides economic security and protection to its members who live and wander together. It also serves as a source of social identity and support. Today, we can see the same values applying in the modern family in the Kingdom. The peace and security offered by a stable family is greatly valued and seen as essential for the spiritual growth of its members.

Moreover, within a tribe, one must behave in a way that shows hospitality, sincerity and loyalty to others in order to attain respect and responsibility. Coupled with these values is the need to be free, to possess the strength to stand alone, and to show a sense of pride and boldness. According to an old Bedouin saying, “A real man stands alone and fears nothing. He is like a falcon. A falcon flies alone.” Another important aspect of Saudi culture is being honest and polite. They also prefer not to talk negatively about others.

Back to the first point, the typical Saudi expressions embody their strong faith in Allaah, where nary a sentence or conversation gets uttered without referring to God. Insyaa-Allaah (God willing), HayyaakaAllaah (God blesses you), and Allaah yukrimak (may God grant you honour) colour even the most brief of exchanges.

ARE THERE ANY FUTURE ACTIVITIES TO BE PROMOTED BY THE CULTURAL OFFICE?

We have plans for many more exhibitions in Singapore, all dedicated to sharing our nation's stories. We are also actively seeking out opportunities to participate in Singapore universities and polytechnics’ international days and cultural events. In addition, we also look forward to engaging Singaporeans at the Singapore Book Fair, Global Community Day, and United Nations’ World Arabic Day, to name a few. The dates, venue and details will be announced in due time.



SAUDI ARABIA ROLLS OUT THE RED CARPET

Key policy changes have opened the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to foreign business as the country tries to diversify the economy beyond oil

News in July 2014 of the planned opening of Saudi Arabia's stock market to direct investment by foreign financial institutions was the talk of the town in leading financial centres throughout the globe. The Saudi market regulator, the Capital Market Authority (CMA), had said that the market will be open to eligible foreign financial institutions to invest in listed shares during the first half of 2015.

The Saudi bourse is the biggest among the Arab countries and the second biggest in the world, next to China, that is closed to direct foreign investment. Its opening was eagerly awaited because of the country's strong economy. This is expected to grow at a robust 4.6 per cent this year. Adding to its appeal is the presence of several blue-chip firms such as Saudi Basic Industries, one of the world's largest petrochemical groups, and National Commercial Bank, the largest bank by asset in the Arab world. After comparing foreign involvement in the much smaller stock market of Dubai, analysts expect an inflow of more than US\$50 billion into the Saudi bourse when it is open to direct foreign investment.

As early as in 2008, the Kingdom started permitting foreign investors indirect access to the market. Foreigners were then only allowed to buy Saudi stocks through derivatives, investment funds or swaps involving international banks and a small number of exchange-traded funds. These were tedious and expensive options and analysts put foreign ownership at present at no more than 5 per cent of the market. The Saudi authorities had remained very patient in opening the market further apparently because of fears of introducing volatility into the bourse.

Saudi's stocks are worth more than the combined value of the three open markets of Egypt, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Expectations of a bonanza are also running high in Saudi Arabia. According to news reports, its market index surged 3 per cent in a day when news of the planned opening was announced, bringing its gains so far this year to more than 17 per cent. Some analysts say the country could adopt a system similar to China's qualified foreign institutional investor scheme, which effectively allows investments within preset limits.

“The opening of the Saudi market, capitalised at about US\$530 billion, is one of the most keenly awaited economic reforms in the world’s biggest oil exporter. The bourse would be one of the world’s last major exchanges to begin welcoming foreign money.”

The Straits Times - July 23, 2014

The Saudi authorities want to open their economy to create jobs and diversify the economy. Reforms started years ago and included easing rules on business partnerships and allowing for limited foreign participation in the stock market. In addition to these financial reforms, there were developments that made Saudis more aware of the world around them and vice versa.

A 2013 article from ArabianBusiness.com headlined “Wider world opened to Saudis studying abroad” tells the story of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP). The Saudi government invests a hefty US\$2.4 billion in KASP each year, and this provides full funding for both undergraduate and graduate studies abroad. Half of these students are in the United States and now form the third-largest group of foreign students, after Chinese and Indians.

CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS ON THE RISE

KASP’s stated goal is to prepare Saudi nationals to replace expatriate workers in better-paid technical jobs in the kingdom and reducing unemployment. But there is a secondary aim of developing a more open society as the scholarships ensured young Saudis got to know the world and for the world to know them. The plan appears to be working. When Saudi women at Marshall University in West Virginia held a session explaining why they wore headscarves, the first meeting was so crowded the organisers had to arrange for additional sessions.

SAUDI WOMEN ARE NOW MORE EDUCATED AND PRODUCTIVE

According to figures from the World Bank, the ratio of girls to boys attending primary and secondary schools in Saudi Arabia is 102, which ranks it among countries in Europe and Singapore. As result of increased enrolment in secondary and higher education, as well as programmes like KASP, more women in the Gulf region have become employable and economically active by

joining the labour force. Women over the age of 15 made up 52 per cent of the workforce in Qatar in 2010, 44 per cent in the UAE, 43 per cent in Kuwait, 39 per cent in Bahrain, 28 per cent in Oman and 17 per cent in Saudi Arabia.

THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Another development that will redefine Saudi Arabia is the subway under construction in Riyadh that officials hope will relieve traffic congestion and help revive public life in the capital city. The Riyadh Metro will start off with six lines -- both overground and underground -- spanning a total of 176 kilometers. Its construction is the biggest project of its kind in the world and set to cost US\$23 billion. To be completed in 2019, the metro is intended to also tackle Riyadh’s rapid population growth which has more than doubled since 1990 to 5.3 million and the increasing problem of pollution.

In the near future, the policy changes combined with the developments that are shaping the Saudi Arabia of tomorrow will certainly power the Kingdom to the front ranks in the international arena and boost its economic and cultural prowess.



INVESTING FOR SAUDI'S FUTURE

Saudi Arabia has unveiled a \$228 billion budget for 2014. The spending plan continues the country's expansionary path with additional outlays for education, health and infrastructure. The increased government spending - the sixth budget since the global financial crisis - comes despite the fall in oil revenue



Government expenditure rose in 2013 to \$247 billion, an increase of 15 per cent over the previous year. Though spending exceeded the budgeted outlay by about 13 per cent, the economy did not heat up. Inflation was under control at around three per cent (3.35 per cent), only slightly over the 2012 level of 2.9 per cent.

Actual revenue in 2013 exceeded the budget estimate by a massive 34 per cent. However, the government statement reveals a substantial drop in oil revenue from the previous year. While oil revenue touched a high of \$1,140 billion in 2012, it has declined to \$1,017 billion in 2013, a drop of about 11 per cent.

Even so, government finances remain in good shape, since the Kingdom has a healthy public reserve fund of about

\$700 billion. At the same time, there are indications of a slowdown in oil revenue that caused a nine per cent drop in government revenue during 2013. Public expenditure surged by eight per cent, with analysts point out that if the trend continues well into the future, the prospect of a budget deficit cannot be ruled out.

The 11 per cent drop in oil revenue was accompanied by a healthy 14 per cent increase in revenue from non-oil sources, which now account for about 10 per cent of government income. Those sources have to be developed further to guard against future deficits due to fluctuations in oil prices. There are three possible avenues for tapping non-oil revenues in the Kingdom.

The first contributor to government revenue is domestic tourism. Prince Sultan bin Salman, President of Saudi

Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA), disclosed at the 5th G-20 Tourism Ministerial Summit in London that Saudi Arabia's domestic flights for local tourists soared to 33 million in 2012, directly or indirectly giving employment to over a million people.

During a panel discussion on "How to bridge the gap between tourism and aviation" held at Excel Exhibition Centre in London, Prince Sultan told the participants that the Kingdom has seen a dramatic increase in domestic tourism. He cited SCTA statistics, according to which there are 18.6 million tourist departures and 14.3 million arrival flights, including 7.2 million Hajj and Umrah trips. Together, they show that Saudi Arabia is an attractive tourist hub as well as a destination for vast numbers of pilgrims.

Looking at the macro picture, in 2013 Saudi Arabia registered a record GDP of \$745 billion, by far the largest GCC and Arab economy. This made it the 19th biggest economy in the world, ahead of Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Iran.

However, due to the drop in oil revenue in 2013, there was a modest two per cent growth in the GDP compared to double-digit growth rates in the past. Looking at the GDP components, there was a decline of around four per cent in 2013, while the non-oil sector grew by over nine per cent during the period. The way forward to buck the downtrend lies in promoting the education sector thereby creating job opportunities for the Saudi youth.

INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

The TTC, an institution of higher learning of the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation of Saudi Arabia (TVTC), has blazed a new trail in this direction by being the only teacher training institution of its kind in the Gulf for vocational teachers. TTC, which is run by the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), has introduced a college academic program based on German vocational training methods.

PROJECT PROGRESS

Over the past eight years (2006-2013), Saudi Arabia has spent over \$1.36 trillion in its general budgets, besides billions allocated for special programs. It is planning to spend another \$228 billion during 2014. During those years, it launched thousands of projects. In 2013 alone,



the Ministry of Finance reviewed 2,330 projects valued at \$48 billion.

WOMEN AT THE JOB MARKET

In the case of Saudi women, their main hurdle had to do with cultural barriers. As a result the rate of unemployment

among them rose by 2.3 per cent in 2012, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Labor. In 2011, there were around 302,000 unemployed Saudi women, while the figure grew to 358,000 in 2012. However, employment prospects for women will improve in the future.

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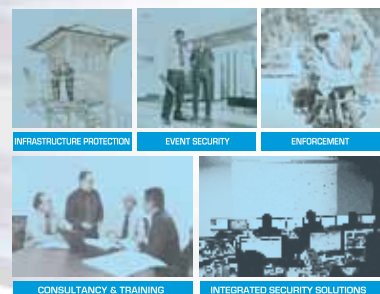
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SAUDI ARABIA – THE LARGEST PRODUCER OF DESALINATED WATER

Its Saline Water Conversion Corporation supplied one billion cubic meters of desalinated water last year and is poised to set new records



Desalination is big business in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In April 2014, the US\$7.2 billion Ras al-Khair desalination plant on the Arabian Gulf started production. Once its first phase is completed, it will be the world's biggest desalination facility with a production capacity of 1.025 million cubic meters of drinking water per day. The desert country is already the largest producer of desalinated water, and had attracted foreign investors including Veolia Environment and Suez Environment – both from France. Yet, the Kingdom is increasing desalination production to meet the requirements of its energy industry and its growing population of 30 million people. In 2013, Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) announced plans to construct a major desalination plant in Rabigh along the shore of the Red Sea with a capacity of 600,000 cubic meters of

potable water a day. This project will be completed in four years.

In Saudi Arabia, creating desalinated water goes hand in hand with environment protection. In 2013, SWCC delivered one billion cubic meters of desalinated water. It was an astonishing amount but more importantly, there was hardly any environmental impact. As Dr Abdulrahman M. Al-Ibrahim, SWCC's governor, said in an interview last year, "We perform multiple procedures so as not to intervene with the eco-system next to the plant. We do this at SWCC and in any saline water industrial facility. For example, one standard procedure is to withdraw up to ten times the amount of water that you intend to desalinate, and discharge the extra with the brine to reduce the effect of high temperature or high salinity. We also measure the temperature of the intake and the

discharged brine to make sure we protect the ecosystem next to the plant."

Operational excellence is another strategic goal for SWCC which includes expanding its portfolio of energies to include solar, photovoltaic, thermal, wind, geothermal, and other renewable energies. The first solar desalination plant in Al-Khafji started with producing 30,000 cubic metres per day of desalinated water and is operated by photovoltaic cells with a reverse osmosis (RO) desalination system. The King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) was the leader of this programme, and SWCC partnered with KACST to build, manage and maintain the plant. Now, SWCC is exploring the use of other technologies such as Tri-hybrid. One of its plants in the west of the Kingdom partially uses Multi-Effect Distillation (MED). Another is an RO plant with Nano-Filtration (NF) and other means. SWCC is devoting extensive research and development efforts to finding the right technologies to adapt to the renewable energies available locally.

One R&D project involved the Water Re-use Promotion Center of Japan and Sasakura Company to develop a fully integrated NF/SWRO/MED tri-hybrid system. This desalination system enabled SWCC to reduce significantly the water production cost per unit and several patents had already been registered in Saudi Arabia, Japan and China.

Capacity and productivity have also

increased. Recently, SWCC launched the new Jeddah RO-3 plant that operates on reverse osmosis. Built on a site where a thermal plant was in operation since the late 1970s, the new plant's output is 240,000 cubic meters of desalinated water or six times more than the old plant. Also in the past, multiple international companies were hired to operate the plants and produce the water. Now, Saudi workers perform 91 per cent of all operations as trained engineers, technicians and managers who are able to diagnose and fix problems effectively and efficiently.

In the view of Saudi desalination experts, the two dominant factors in the selection of technology are energy consumption and reliability. For instance, while membrane technology will be able to attain higher energy efficiency, it may need other devices to make it more reliable. If there was a red tide, or an algae bloom, or any other contamination of the seawater, such as

a high silt density index (SDI), the plant would have to be shut down to preserve the membrane. Alternatively, there must be pre-treatment facilities to clean the water before it passes through the membrane. On the other hand, although thermal is very expensive and utilizes maybe two or three times as much energy as membrane technology, it may

tolerate any water. If the cost of energy is more important, then it should receive more weight. If reliability is more of an issue, then it should be the key factor. This level-headed approach presents excellent opportunities for investors and companies with the appropriate technologies and expertise to make their mark in Saudi Arabia.



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SERVING SAUDI ARABIA

The world's leading designer and builder of offshore oil rigs, Keppel Offshore & Marine (Keppel O&M) has continually strengthened its ties with one of the world's largest producers of oil, Saudi Arabia, undertaking several milestone projects for the country in recent years

In 2012, Keppel FELS – Keppel O&M's rigbuilding arm in Singapore – completed a KFELS Super B Class jackup drilling rig customised for Saudi Arabia's national oil company Saudi Aramco. The rig, SAR 202, was delivered on time, on budget and with a perfect safety record.

At the naming ceremony held in Singapore on September 29, 2012, Mr Mohammad Al-Hattab, Manager, Department Head, Southern Area Oil Drilling Department, Saudi Aramco said, "We are pleased to receive this state-of-the-art jackup rig which will contribute significantly to our offshore drilling programme. Keppel FELS has proven to be an excellent partner for us and we definitely look forward to having more projects with them."

Mr Wong Kok Seng, Managing Director of Keppel O&M(Offshore) and Keppel FELS, added, "The KFELS Super B Class is a cost-effective and highly capable design ideally suited to meet the needs of the Middle East. The excellent completion of this rig is a demonstration of our ability to deliver value through leading edge technology

as well as operational excellence. We are honoured to be able to play a part in Saudi Arabia's extensive offshore industry and look forward to support them as they grow their fleet of high specification offshore rigs."

The following year, in 2013, Keppel FELS completed two KFELS B Class jackup rigs ARABDRILL 50 and ARABDRILL 60 for Arabian Drilling Company (ADC).

The rigs have been chartered by Saudi Aramco and are operating successfully in offshore Saudi Arabia.

Mr Chow Yew Yuen, Chief Executive Officer of Keppel O&M, said, "Testament to the strong confidence by ADC in us is the small project and inspection team they sent in the supervision of these projects. It speaks volumes of the trust and good teamwork Keppel FELS has built up with ADC."

Mr Mohamed Yousof Rafie, Chairman, Board of Directors, ADC said, "Together, these two high specification rigs enable us to offer Saudi Aramco productive, safe and



1. Mr Chow Yew Yuen, CEO Keppel O&M (second from left) with Mr Khaled Al-Buraik (centre, seated), VP, Drilling and Workover, Saudi Aramco celebrate the delivery of SAR 202 together with the teams from Keppel FELS and Saudi Aramco

2. Coinciding with Keppel Corporation's 45th anniversary, Keppel FELS delivered its 45th KFELS B Class jackup rig since the design was launched in 2000. The 45th rig was delivered to Saudi Arabian customer, Arabian Drilling Company, 14 days ahead of schedule, on budget and with a perfect safety record

cost-efficient drilling operations. We have been impressed with the commitment by Keppel FELS in delivering to high quality and safety standards, while ensuring our requirements were met. This is a win-win partnership we have built with Keppel that we hope to continue into the future."

A third rig for ADC, ARABDRILL 70, is currently under construction with delivery in 2015. ADC also acquired ARABDRILL 30, a KFELS B Class rig, since 2009 and the rig is operating for the Al-Khafji Joint Operations (AGOC/KGOC). Three other rigs, AOD I, AOD II and AOD III delivered to Asia Offshore Drilling in 2013 are also contracted to Saudi Aramco.

With each project, Keppel O&M builds on its growing relations with Saudi Arabia. Focused on high quality, value-added solutions, Keppel O&M continues to enhance its range of capabilities to better provide for Saudi Arabia's present and future needs.

HARNESSING R&D TO POWER THE WORLD

Saudi Aramco will leverage innovation and cutting-edge technology to meet the world's ever-increasing demand for energy



Speaking at the Offshore Northern Sea Conference and Exhibition held in Norway in September 2014, Mr Khalid A. Al-Falih, Saudi Aramco's president and chief executive officer, pointed out that the biggest challenge facing the oil and gas industry was satisfying the world's growing appetite for energy. He pointed out that global energy demand is expected to increase by more than a third from the current level and that the industry will need to churn out nearly 40 million barrels per day of new capacity over the next 20 years.

Saudi Aramco's strategy for meeting this growing demand is to invest \$40 billion a year over the next decade to keep steady the company's maximum sustained oil production capacity at its current 12 million barrels a day level, in addition to doubling its current gas production levels.

Mr Al-Falih added: "At Saudi Aramco, we have realised the major shifts in our landscape and have undertaken a transformative and comprehensive change process that leverages innovation and technology, talent, agility and resilience, and our business investments and portfolio expansion, in addition to strengthening our proactive role in the broader development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

"We are convinced that innovation and cutting-edge technology are the key strategic enablers of our current success and future competitiveness, which is why we are tripling our R&D manpower and increasing our R&D funding five-fold," he said.

By setting a company goal of becoming leaders in technological innovation in a dozen domains, Saudi Aramco is on target for

increasing its oil recovery to 70 per cent, allowing it to add more than 100 billion barrels of oil resources to its already vast output.

WORLD' BIGGEST OIL PRODUCER

Saudi Aramco manages some of the world's largest proven oil reserves, and is the world's largest producer and exporter of crude oil. It is also a major natural gas producer and a leading player in global refining and petrochemicals.

It is also the only producer with sizable spare crude oil production capacity, which plays a critical role in helping to stabilise markets and reduce volatility. Saudi Aramco's ability to make up for production shortfalls elsewhere around the world has been proven repeatedly over the years.

Year after year, new technologies help it to find new reserves. Saudi Aramco's work also includes the quest to find cleaner energy solutions to power the domestic market and for export.

PUTTING THE POWER OF THE SUN TO WORK

Saudi Aramco is piloting a number of exciting solar power projects. In collaboration with the Saudi Electricity Company and Solar Frontier, its equity partner with Showa Shell of Japan, a 500-kilowatt solar farm was installed on Farasan Island in the Red Sea.

The company's commitment to cleaner energy is also evident in its own buildings. Saudi Aramco's Al-Midra Complex in Dhahran uses solar panels that double as sunshades over its 4,500 parking spaces to generate 10 megawatts of energy. Solar panels at King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center generate 3.5 megawatts of energy. The new Saudi Aramco-built solar facility at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology will generate two megawatts of energy.

The company has also set up a solar technology park in Dhahran which hosts more than 30 different technology vendors. The objective of the solar park is to monitor and assess the development of emerging technologies and their application in the Kingdom.

Saudi Aramco is on the lookout for innovations across the whole spectrum of the energy industry. This assures that the company will remain a leading player in the decades ahead.

SAUDI ARABIA THRIVES FROM A GROWING RETAIL INDUSTRY

The retail market in Saudi Arabia has become a strong focus for the government, primarily driven by a desire to boost and maintain ongoing economic success in the country -

by Fatemah Sherif, Senior Research Analyst, Euromonitor International



The Saudi Arabian retailing market was worth SAR374 billion in 2013, 12 per cent growth from the previous year, according to Euromonitor International. A large part of this interest comes from the government's desire to diversify beyond the oil industry. This is seen as a means to reduce unemployment and increase average disposable income. Already, better living conditions and higher income levels are having a positive impact on retailing.

TOURISM DRIVES RETAILING

One key factor is tourism, primarily religious tourism, as Makkah, the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, is considered the holiest city in the religion of Islam. International arrivals increased in 2013, reaching 18 million trips, following the massive expansion of projects at the holy mosques in Makkah, which has expanded its capacity for visitors. Furthermore, the Ministry of Haj recently gave approval to 62 travel companies to offer low-cost Hajj (pilgrimage) packages, following strong demand. As a result, the programme was expanded to accommodate 41,000 pilgrims in 2014, up from 17,000 the previous year. Moreover, the Saudi Commission for

Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) is trying to drive tourism by deregulating air travel by breaking the monopoly of Saudi Arabian Airlines, inviting local and foreign airlines to operate in the country.

While religious tourism is key, domestic tourism is also receiving a boost from government, with the SCTA continually investing to promote cultural festivals such as Jenadriyah Festival, held near the city of Riyadh each year. Moreover, historical sites, such as Madain Saleh, Al Dir'iya near Riyadh, as well as hilly areas, such as Abha and Taif, are gaining popularity amongst local Saudis for visits on hot summer days. SCTA is also working with the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) to increase the number of flights to different domestic destinations, as well as to upgrading the facilities at various domestic airports. In addition, SCTA is also promoting the National Museum, housed in Riyadh, to encourage interest from locals in the history of Saudi Arabia. These developments are making Riyadh a fast growing domestic tourist destination. Furthermore, domestic business tourism is showing continued growth. This is due to growing business activities in the region, as the government seeks to attract investors on the back of the thriving Saudi economy.

Not surprisingly, this strong growth of tourist arrivals has impacted positively on retailers, where grocery retailers, especially in the cities of Makkah and Madinah, are able to pull in extra business. As a result, retailers are expanding the number of outlets, as well as introducing new formats, including convenience stores, which have also benefited from the busier lifestyles and growing youth populations in these cities. For example, in 2013 the retailer AL-Azizia Panda United Inc introduced the convenience store, Pandati.

Equally, growth in pilgrims has impacted the fashion sector. Fawaz Abdulaziz Al Hokair Co, one of the leading apparel companies that represent retail brands such as Zara, Bershka and La Senza in the Kingdom, is focusing on further retail projects, and in particular apparel retail, and has aimed to add 400 new stores across various categories on an annual basis.

SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS ALSO DRIVING DEMAND

In addition to tourism, retailing also benefits from a strong consumer base due to the country's high population, nearly 29 million, and strong economy. With two-thirds of its population dominated by those under the age of 30, Saudi Arabia is driving retail fashion and beauty trends in the region, encouraging more retailers to open. Moreover, an affluent population is also driving trends in the luxury market, since middle-aged consumers typically have high sums at their disposal. For example, the luxury department store, Rubaiyat, opened in 2014, following high demand for luxury

apparel. Furthermore, growth in consumer spending per capita has enabled well-known brands, hypermarket chains and big shopping centres to expand.

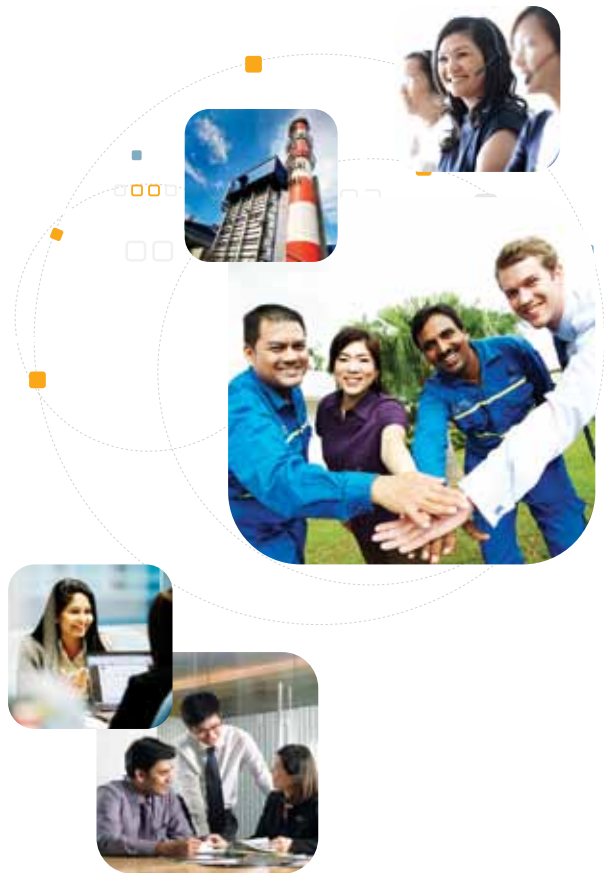
And unlike past generations, the young are better educated and more willing to accept new ideas. Young consumers are also changing their consumption habits, following various trends in urban locations, such as the growing demand for healthier alternatives and fresh food. Shopping is also a key leisure activity in the Kingdom, and part of the population's daily lifestyle. This has benefited grocery retailers, encouraging them to introduce more international brands in the country.

Apparel specialist retailers have equally benefited from the growing middle classes' appetite for status symbols. As urban consumers have better access to modern shopping formats, apparel sales are booming. And despite being a country where luxury spending is strong, there is also growing demand for affordable brands after the success of budget retailers such as Citymax/Max, which have introduced aggressive expansion plans to the country. Also, the first F&F budget retail outlet by Tesco, launched in May 2012, with local partner Fawaz Abdulaziz Alhokair Co is proving successful.

Though still niche, e-commerce is also growing in Saudi Arabia, due to the burgeoning convenience trend, with many retail chains now selling their products online. This has been assisted by Saudi Arabia's growing internet penetration, at 60 per cent in 2013. As such, the country is seeing growth in online purchases for items such as clothes and accessories. Apparel and accessories retailer Markavip's recent deal with Paypal in 2013 highlights the country's potential.

In addition to trying to increase tourism, the government is investing in housing. Key to this is the government's desire to increase home ownership among Saudi nationals, currently standing at 30 per cent. As a result, there is a residential construction boom in the Kingdom worth about US\$784 billion. This has already driven demand for furniture imports, and has encouraged several premium international furniture brands to exhibit their collections for the first time at Decofair, an annual home furnishings exhibition. Ikea also plans on expanding its number of stores over the next five years.

With the government's investment in tourism and housing, the retailing market – from grocery retailers to apparel stores – are expected to thrive with eight per cent and ten per cent constant value CAGRs respectively over 2013-2018. With upcoming projects such as Kingdom City, Jazan Economic City and King Abdullah Economic City, the retail industry can be expected to continue to boom, with more opportunities for brick and mortar establishments, as well as online retailers, to reap its rewards.



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NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

There is much happening in Saudi Arabia and here is a compilation of some of the more interesting reports

US\$80 BILLION TO DEVELOP MAKKAH



Development projects in the holy city of Makkah could cost up to SR300 billion (US\$80 billion) until completion in the years ahead. A third of this amount would be for upgrading city's facilities and for public transportation. The government will also build 260 new residential districts over the next 20 years.

According to Arab News, the city is currently working on completing projects costing SR6 billion including the fourth circular road, underpasses and overpasses, pavements, a lighting system, gardens, and sports facilities.

JEDDAH IS NOW A WORLD HERITAGE SITE



The World Heritage Committee added Jeddah to its list of World Heritage Sites in June 2014. This 2,500-year-old city was accorded this coveted status in recognition for its historical role as a port along a major Red Sea trade route as well as a gateway for Muslim pilgrims who arrived by sea to visit Makkah – the holiest Islamic site. Several archaeological studies indicate the region, now known as Jeddah, was inhabited since the Stone Age. According to other accounts, its history dates back to times before Alexander the Great who visited Jeddah between 323 and 356 BC. From the 7th century, it remained a major port for Indian Ocean trade routes and the city prospered with merchants building architecturally unique houses especially in the 19th century.

ESTIMATED US\$8.5 BILLION FROM 2 MILLION PILGRIMS



The two million Muslims expected to make a pilgrimage to Makkah in October 2014 could spend US\$8.5 billion according to a study by the Mecca Chamber of Commerce – about US\$0.25 billion more than the previous year. Overseas pilgrims would constitute 70 per cent and each arrival is expected to spend an average of 17,381 riyals or US\$4,634 on accommodation, food, gifts and phone calls while on the five-day hajj. The cost for a local worshipper is in the region of 5,000 riyals.

There is a hajj ban on Muslims from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to prevent the spread of Ebola virus.

“We have set out a strategy for the development of Makkah. Makkah is not like other cities that are developed for economic benefits... We have carried out huge projects in the city for the benefit of Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.”

Makkah Governor Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, as reported in Arab News

US\$80 MILLION DONATION TO HELP PALESTINIANS



In July 2014, Saudi Arabia provided the Palestinian Ministry of Health with US\$26.7 million to meet medicine and supply shortages. The Kingdom also donated US\$53.3 million to the Palestinian Red Crescent in Gaza. Then on August 18, King Abdullah approved a further donation of US\$1 million to support humanitarian operations of a World Food Program to feed more than 80,000 Palestinians in the West Bank. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal had announced that international donors, including Saudi Arabia, had pledged a total of US\$500 million for reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip. He revealed this during an emergency meeting in Jeddah with the Executive Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to develop recommendations to end the crisis in Gaza.

“From the cradle of revelation and the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him), I call on leaders and scholars of the Islamic nation to carry out their duty towards God Almighty, and to stand in the face of those trying to hijack Islam and present it to the world as a religion of extremism, hatred, and terrorism, and to speak the word of truth, and not fear anybody.”

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud's statement to the Arab and Islamic Nations and the International Community on August 1, 2014

SPORTING CHANCE FOR SAUDI WOMEN



Ordinary Saudi women will no longer be strangers to sports. Since 2013, the authorities have issued licences to private sports clubs for women. This was a startling change from 2006, when a woman had to register a ladies' basketball team in Jeddah as a company. Then in 2012, two Saudi women – a runner and a judoka - participated in the Olympics for the first time. In April 2014, the Shura Council requested the Education Ministry to look into the possibility of offering sporting activities to girls studying in state-run schools. The council advises the government on policies.

Congratulations
to the people
and Kingdom of
Saudi Arabia
on their
84th National Day

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PERFORMING HAJJ – A DREAM PILGRIMAGE

The pilgrimage of over 3.6 million Muslims from nearly 200 countries on this once-in-a-lifetime journey of faith, endurance and determination came to a successful end in October 2013

More than 3.6 million faithful from nearly 200 countries descended on Saudi Arabia for Hajj and it was a monumental success. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Royal Highness King Abdullah congratulated Interior Minister Prince Mohammed bin Naif for the successful organisation of that year's pilgrimage. Prince Mohammed is president of the Supreme Hajj Committee that is tasked with the overall supervision of the largest annual religious event in the world.

"All ministries, military and security establishments and law-enforcing agencies, and most important, our brave security forces deserve congratulations," the King wrote at Eid. Makkah Governor Prince Khaled Al-Faisal declared Hajj 2013 an overwhelming success in terms of health care provision, security operations and traffic plans.

"All government institutions, security forces, volunteers, pilgrim establishments and men on the ground worked as one team to ensure the success of this year's Hajj," said Prince

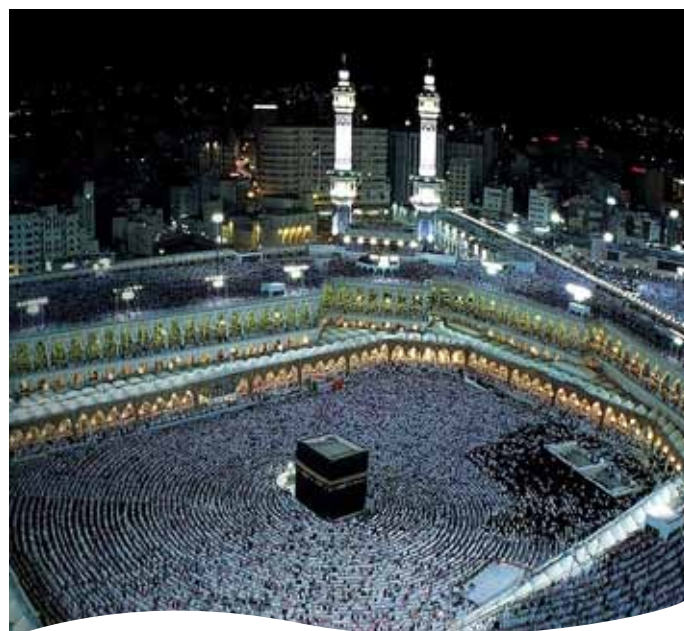
Khaled, the Governor of Makkah. He said the total number of Muslims who performed pilgrimage (Hajj) was 3,657,000.

The figure was reached by calculating the number of pilgrims who went to Mina to symbolically stone the devil, a Hajj requirement. Pilgrims hurled rocks at three pillars representing Satan.

The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, which must be performed at least once in a lifetime by all Muslims who are physically and financially able to do so

Prince Khaled praised Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah, Crown Prince Salman and Interior Minister Prince Mohammed bin Naif. He said, "All the rituals were carried out in a calm atmosphere and free of any political demonstrations, proving that Islam is a religion of peace, civilization and progress."

Outside the press conference venue, pilgrims echoed his words. One of them, 69-year-old Athar Mohiuddin, from Pakistan's Hyderabad, said, "With God's help and the Saudi government's excellent arrangements, we could complete all the rituals. The rituals were not really easy for me, especially because I had to push my wife in a wheelchair. We know Hajj is hardship, but now that we have done it we beseech Allah to accept it."



Mohammed Quraishi, from Agra, India, was expecting this year's pilgrimage to be difficult because of the scarcity of space at the holy sites, which were being developed. He said, "However, everything went so smoothly, we could hardly have imagined it."

Quraishi's acquaintance, Muhammad Farooq, nodded in affirmation. "We come from the city of Taj Mahal, but the real crown is here in this holy Kingdom," he added, playing on the Urdu word "Taj" which means crown.

Prince Khaled said more than 120,000 security men were mobilised to provide services for pilgrims, in addition to 10,000 vehicles, 25 civil defense helicopters, 20 further helicopters operated by 360 pilots and technicians, as well as 30,000 surveillance cameras, 100 roving security patrols, and 200 security centres. The prince added that the 2013 hajj marked a "qualitative turning point" in the organisation of the annual pilgrimage, marred in previous years by deadly fires and stampedes.

The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, which must be performed at least once in a lifetime by all Muslims who are physically and financially able to do so. One of the rituals is the stoning of the devil ritual. This is an emulation of the Prophet Abraham's stoning of the devil at the three spots where it is said Satan tried to dissuade the biblical patriarch from obeying God's order to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. After the stoning, pilgrims performed the final tawaf, or circumambulation, of the Kaaba, Islam's most important shrine, in the holy city of Makkah. Muslims believe the Kaaba – which they call the House the God – was built by Abraham 4,000 years ago.


Thousands of pilgrims were later seen loading trucks with luggage and leaving their hotels in Makkah. The majority of them make the 100-kilometer (60-mile) journey to Jeddah international airport to take nights back home. Saudi Arabia deployed a large number of troops to maintain the security of the pilgrims during the hajj. The authorities declared the Hajj a great success after it finished free of accident or disease.

There had been particular concern about the possible spread of the MERS virus, which has killed many people worldwide, some of them in the Kingdom itself. "Not a single case (of MERS) was detected during Hajj," Health Minister Abdullah al-Rabiah told reporters.

Saudi Minister of Hajj Affairs Bandar Hajjar said that his ministry has been instructed by the King to work out a 25-year plan to ensure the smooth running of the pilgrimage in the future.

Congratulations and Best Wishes
to the people and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 84th National Day

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SAUDI CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

At the heart of contemporary art in Saudi Arabia seem to be themes of identity, heritage, globalisation, all guided by thoughtful innovation. It is a zone for the tides of the inventive, creative, imaginative youths of the Kingdom. Much has been written about Contemporary Saudi Arabian Art in the global media

Although the contemporary art scene in the country has exponentially developed over the last decade, it is more popular now.

For those keen to follow the growing popularity and the events related to the art scene, Saudi Art Guide website <http://saudiartguide.com/> is the first of its kind guide to art discovery. It presents a complete guide to exhibitions and events, gallery directory, art book launches, artist talks etc. and covers Jeddah, Riyadh, Eastern Province and Abha.

These days Saudi Art is making its way to art lovers' homes and adding to their collection. Greenbox Museum of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam is one example leading this popularity. It is the first museum for contemporary art from a country that is both a cultural and economic centre for a considerable part - or parts - of the world. A private research institution and collection, it is open to the public. Jeddah Art Week (JAW) brings together the best of the contemporary arts from Saudi Arabia and beyond for a week of vibrant and unparalleled variety with all forms of visual art, from painting and sculpture, to film, photography, print and multi-media.

Besides this, the Edge of Arabia is an independent arts initiative promoting the appreciation of Contemporary Art in Saudi Arabia. It was founded in 2003 by Ahmed Matar, Stephen Stapleton and Abdunasser Gharem. Their main and original sponsor is the Abdul Latif Community group, a patron of new talents in the Kingdom (and elsewhere) for over a decade. The efforts of the Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives include an Islamic gallery in London's Victoria and Albert Museum that opened over 12 years ago and the increasingly significant Jameel Prize, an international award for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic tradition. Edge of Arabia is devoted to reaching new audiences and cultivating understanding through a range of platforms including exhibitions, publications (around eight books) and education programs targeting schools and universities.

Works of both the male and female artists are in the list of Contemporary Saudi Artists setting new trends and gaining popularity. Saudi art scene is bound to grow.



Salutations to the people and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 84th National Day



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Best Wishes to the People & the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 84th National Day



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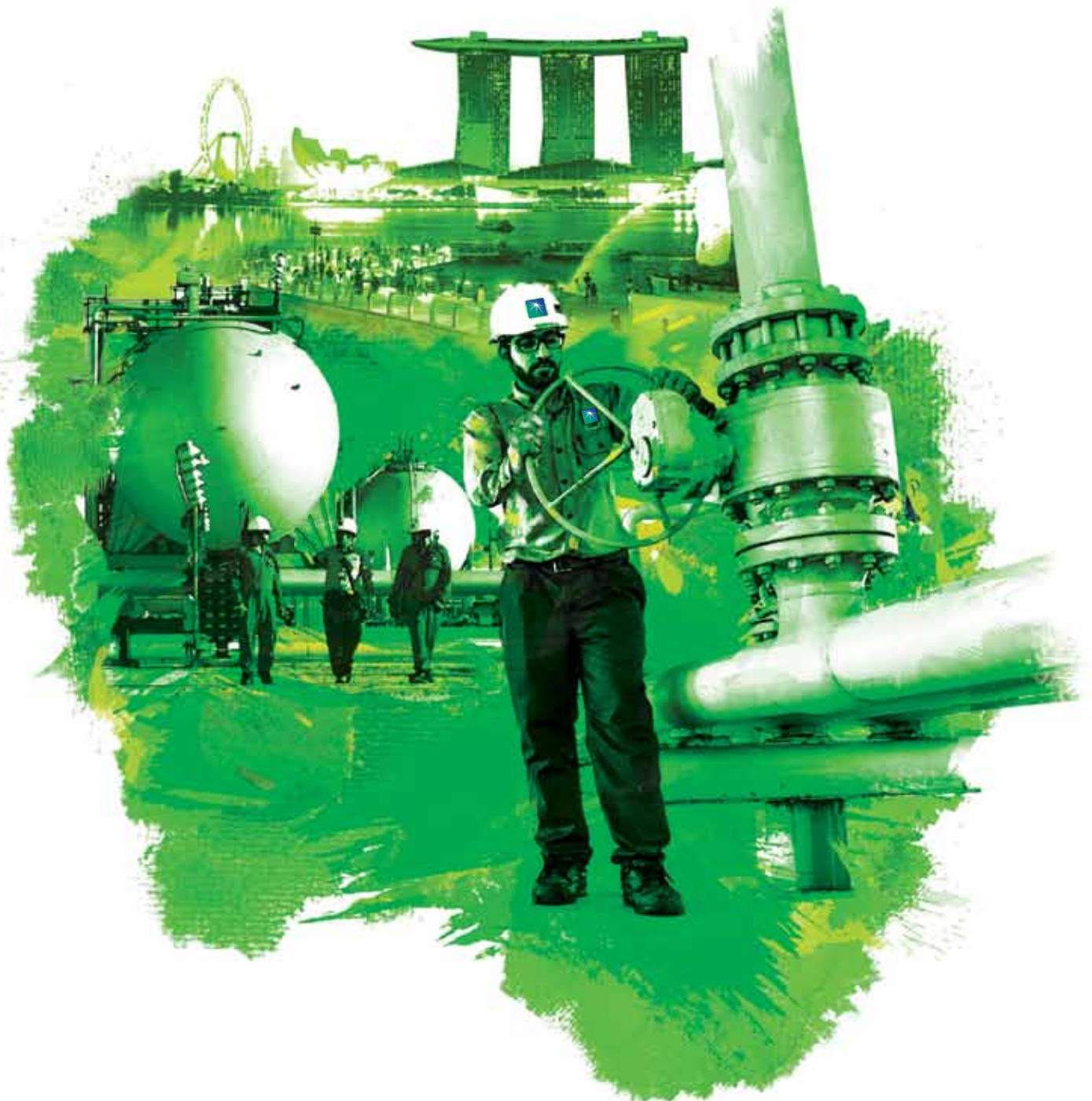
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