

Saudi Arabia

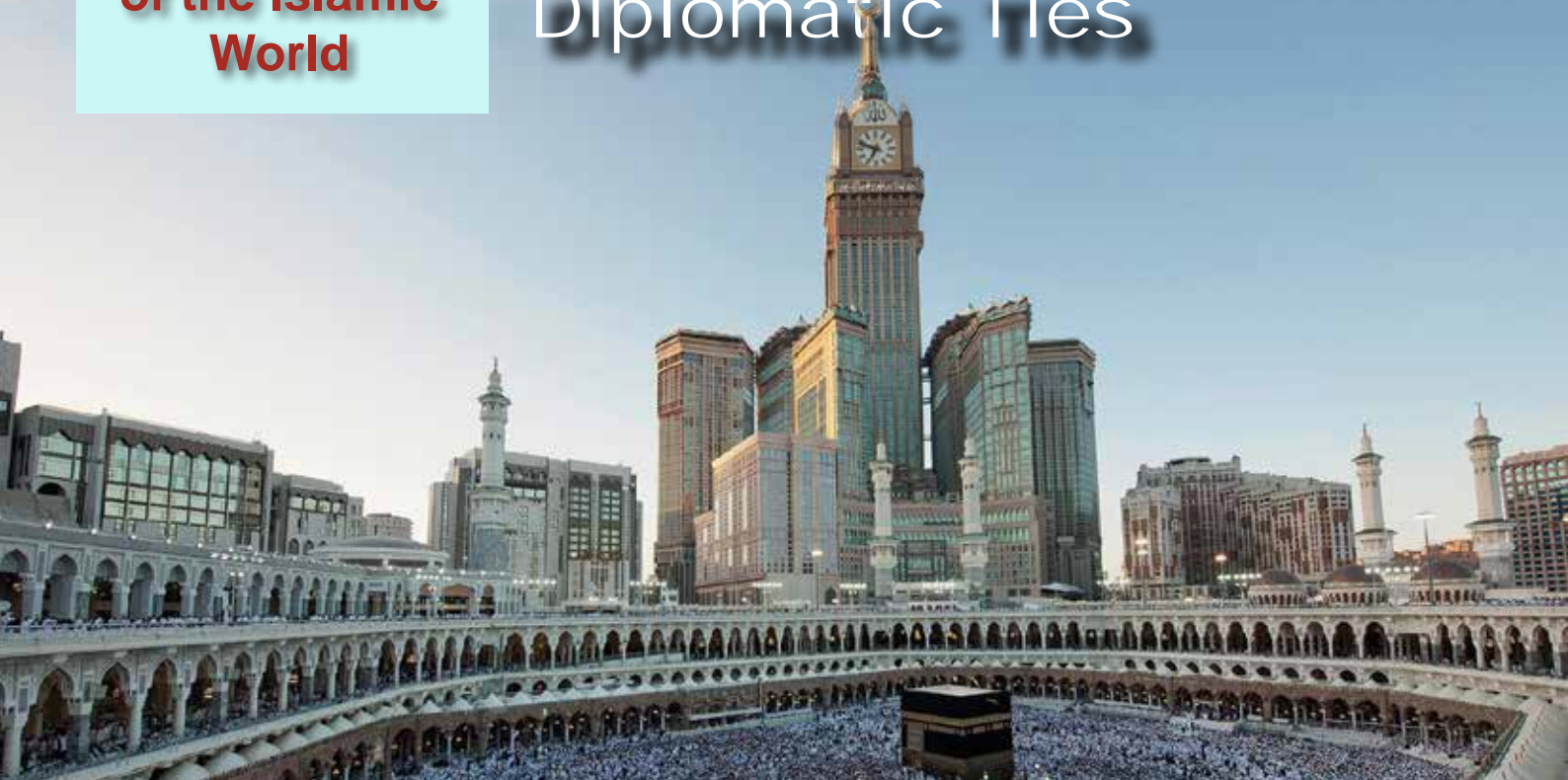
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Minister of Foreign Affairs

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On the Occasion of 87th National Day and the
40th Anniversary of Bilateral Ties between Saudi Arabia
and Republic of Singapore

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*Congratulations & Best Wishes
to the People and
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
on their 87th National Day*



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Celebrating with the Nation 87th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



*H.M. King Salman bin
Abdulaziz Al Saud*

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

*Congratulations and Best Wishes to
the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
on their 87th National Day*



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Celebrating with the Nation
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**Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister
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Celebrating with the Nation
87th National Day of
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



H.E. Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir
Minister of Foreign Affairs



40TH ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating 40 years of bilateral ties
between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
and the Republic of Singapore



HH Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud
Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi
Arabia with Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balkrishnan
at the Shangri La Dialogue 2017



H.E. Ambassador Saad Saleh Alsaleh's

MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE



ON September 23, 2017, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia celebrates its 87th National Day. In addition, this year marks the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the friendly Republic of Singapore.

The time has come to think of many major leaps forward for bilateral relations after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Singapore have strengthened their ties with an increasingly important association in many fields, leading to the growth of economic and investment relations between them. The time has come also to focus on our close cooperation in order to advance our common interests, drawing on the strong and lasting ties between our friendly peoples.

The year 2017 and the coming years represent indeed an excellent opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the past 40 years in the relations between the two countries and achieve a new path for a brighter future. In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has presented its Vision 2030 as a new way forward in developing many economic and investment sectors in which Singapore can participate in order to push our relations to higher levels. I can assure you that some projects are already underway and will be nurtured with all sincerity and I am confident that we will be happy with the results of our joint work as we enter the next phase of our relationship for the coming years.



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FORWARD FROM THE PUBLISHER

Embracing the winds of change

Each year the world appears to be getting smaller and smaller as nations reach out to each other about common interests and common concerns with a spectrum of alliances driven by economics, commerce, cultural exchanges, environmental and health matters and people-to-people interactions, at the highest level of governance.

Embracing the winds of change to mould the architectural framework of a new tomorrow Vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia articulates the charting of a new direction for the Kingdom's socio-economic game plan, as it veers away from its oil-centric persuasions. Global alliances now take on a fresh mandate as the Kingdom takes into cognizance the offerings of the larger Asia region, where the Republic of Singapore has been a major partner in its development and growth plans for the past 40 years—the anniversary celebrations of their bilateral relations which are presently underway between the two countries.



A multi-cultural hotspot with a large Islamic populace the Republic of Singapore has been a staunch supporter of Saudi Arabia's agenda for furthering technology, tourism, education and knowledge-based economy. Singapore has a pivotal role to play in this alliance as a gateway to ASEAN countries and the larger Asian region for Saudi goods and services. A primary oil trading hub for Asia, Singapore has for long fostered its ties in the region considered to be the next big economy in the global scenario.

History and heritage are a potent combination for propelling fresh charters in a nation's agenda for growth and development. These cultural roots have a direct impact on the country's populace and how it envisions the future for coming generations. Today, its natural cautionary measures — and the compelling forces of the modern world — are being melded into a seamless whole in the engine that is to drive the Kingdom to its new goals. And this is where its alliances with the likes of a supportive Singapore will be an invaluable tool for facing the many challenges in today's global pursuits for a brighter future.

As both nations step into the beginning of a new era of co-operation and collaborations on many fronts the regard and respect they have for each other will stand them in good stead for the coming years.

Mrs Nomita Dhar
Publisher & Editor in Chief

ROYAL ATTENTION: ASIA & SECURITY

Some of the main highlights this past year includes King Salman visit to Asia and launch of anti-terrorism initiative with US President Trump

February to March 2017 The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, accompanied by a massive entourage of senior princes, religious leaders, ministers and military officials went on a month-long tour of Asia that took him to Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and China to strengthen ties with a region the Kingdom sees as an increasingly valuable economic partner.

(Clockwise from top right): ○ Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak attend signing four memorandums of understanding between the two countries ○ Indonesia's President Joko Widodo and Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdul Aziz hold hands after their meeting at the presidential palace in Bogor, West Java province ○ Chinese President Xi Jinping Receives Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and attends conclusion ceremony of Roads of Arabia Expo ○ Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques holds official talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe



Photos courtesy of Saudi Press Agency

20 to 21 May 2107 The eyes of the world looked towards Riyadh as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques welcomed delegates from 55 countries that included the USA where President Donald Trump attended a packed political and cultural programme of activities; first to a US-Saudi Summit followed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - US Summit.

King Salman and President Trump met in a series of bilateral meetings where they re-affirmed the long-standing friendship and close economic, political, security and cultural ties. Both leaders then inaugurated the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (GCEII) to counter and prevent the spread of extremist ideology through promoting moderation, compassion and supporting the dissemination of positive dialogue.

The 2-day programme ended with the Riyadh Forum on Countering Extremism & Fighting Terrorism at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies.



Saudi Press Agency

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Receives Leaders and Heads of Delegations of the States Prticipating in the Arab-Islamic-US Summit

Saudi Press Agency / EPA



King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia and President Donald Trump take part in a group photo at the opening session of the Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017.



Saudi Press Agency / EPA

President Donald Trump, Melania Trump, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi open the World Center for Countering Extremist Ideology in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017.



GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW CROWN PRINCE

Recently named Crown Prince, the son of King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Prince Mohammed bin Salman is poised to serve as the new successor to the world's biggest oil exporting nation

PRINCE Mohammed bin Salman is the Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister, and will maintain his post as Minister of Defense. Born on 31st August 1985, Prince Mohammed, the son of King Salman, received his education at Riyadh schools where he ranked among the top 10 students in his class. He received his bachelor's degree in law from King Saud University (KSU), where he graduated second in his class. The Prince gained international experience in corporate governance and international finance. He began his political career as a consultant to the Experts Commission under the Saudi Cabinet.

He was appointed special adviser to then-Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz on 15th December 2009, who was at the

time the Governor of Riyadh province, and was also a special adviser to the chairman of the board for the King Abdul Aziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darah), and then became supervisor of the Crown Prince's office.

In March 2013, by royal decree, Prince Mohammed was appointed head of the Crown Prince's court with the rank of Minister and special adviser to then-Crown Prince Salman. On 25 April 2014, he was appointed as a State Minister and member of the Cabinet. His long history of philanthropic initiatives earned him many awards. In 2011, he established the Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Foundation (MiSK), which enables young Saudis to learn, develop and progress in the fields of business, literature, culture,

science and technology, and sociology. Following the demise of King Abdullah in 2015, King Salman ascended to the throne and appointed Prince Mohammed as Deputy Crown Prince, Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense. He has also served as chief of the Royal Court, and chairs the powerful Council for Economic and Development Affairs. Last year, the prince moved into what he described as his most important role: Transforming the Kingdom's economy and reducing its dependence on oil revenues.

On 25 April 2016, the Saudi government unveiled Vision 2030, including a series of developmental, economic and social programmes. The same day, Al Arabiya News Channel aired an exclusive interview with Prince Mohammed. During the interview, the Crown Prince pledged to



(Above left photo): Taken in April 2017 Saudi King Salman (right) and then Defense Minister and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman wave as they leave the hall after talks with the British prime minister, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (Source: Saudi Press Agency). (Above right photo): In May, meeting President Donald Trump. (Below): The Crown Prince chairing a Cabinet session in Riyadh this year.

end the Saudi economy's dependence on oil revenues by 2020. Prince Mohammed also discussed measures to lift subsidies on the Kingdom's wealthy citizens and assist the country's poor. The measures, as part of Vision 2030, will be implemented on everyone, "including princes and government ministers," Prince Mohammed said. "This is a promise."

In an interview with prominent news outlet Bloomberg earlier in April 2016, Prince Mohammed discussed the Kingdom's soon-to-be unveiled National Transformation Plan (NTP) 2020, part of Vision 2030. At the time, he told Bloomberg that the Kingdom would dramatically expand its Public Investment Fund, a sovereign wealth fund, to reach around US\$2 trillion

in assets. The sale of around 5 per cent of Saudi Aramco's shares would be placed into the fund, he added. "What is left now is to diversify investments," he said. "So, within 20 years, we will be an economy or state that doesn't depend mainly on oil." In a second, even longer interview with Bloomberg later that month, Prince Mohammed further expanded on his plans to transform the Kingdom's economy.

The interview also highlighted the prince's personal life — his long hours, fluency in English, love of reading books by Sun Tzu and Winston Churchill, and his choice to have just one wife. The crown prince has represented King Salman abroad, traveling to Beijing, Moscow and Washington, where he met President Donald Trump in March.

In an interview with Al Arabiya, former US President Barack Obama described him as "extremely knowledgeable, very smart" and "wise beyond his years." Last year, Prince Mohammed visited Silicon Valley to sell his vision of market-oriented reforms and a transformation of the Kingdom's economy and society. In recent years, Prince Mohammed has become the government's face of reform, modernization and change. In the Kingdom, where around 60 percent of the population is under 30, the young crown prince is widely seen as an icon in the push toward socio-economic reforms.

Above profile first appeared in ArabNews.com



LOOKING FORWARD TO GREATER ENGAGEMENT



Photo: Singapore Ministry of Culture & Information

HE Ambassador Saad Saleh Al Saleh with Singapore's President Tony Tan Keng Yam at the Presentation of Credentials ceremony on 1st June 2017 at the Istana

The new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh shares his thoughts and plans on the occasion of the Kingdom's 87th National Day and the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore with Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East Editor in Chief Nomita Dhar

1. Singapore and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoy friendly bilateral ties and this year celebrate 40 years of diplomatic ties, which milestones do you think in the last four decades exemplifies or are important highlights of this relationship? And what can bring the two nations even closer together?

Relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore continue to be strong and are shaping along very satisfactorily. The two nations are cooperating in many areas of development and progress including trade, investment, finance, customs, business, security, water resources, the environment, transport, education and health. In fact one of the important highlights of this bonding was the signing of the General Agreement on Cooperation by the two nations. It has helped strengthen the already close bilateral relations between the Kingdom and Singapore. The unveiling of the Kingdom's

Vision 2030 early last year has also opened up fresh avenues for dialogue, trade, investment, partnerships and employment opportunities. The growing importance of the Asian region in the economic reform programme of the Saudi government has been also registered by the recent tour of High Royal Highness King Salman.

2. During your tenure are there specific programmes you want to promote? What would be the main thrust of the work you envisage in the beginning as well as the long term of your ambassadorship?

I think there are quite a few areas of common interest that can be of mutual benefit to both our countries. I plan to promote them very strongly during my time here as part of my objective to help strengthen relations between our two countries. I will be implementing them with the support of official visits of senior representatives in the sectors

that we are looking to promote such as education, healthcare, investment in infrastructure and of course trade between the two nations. I would also like closer interaction on the cultural front so that societal bonds are also nurtured. Singapore has always been a melting pot full of cultural richness and this is something which can be developed further in future.

3. Since your arrival in Singapore, how do you feel about your interaction with people here in Singapore – in government, civil society and with organisations here?

The people of Singapore are very warm and friendly and extremely hospitable. Since things are very organised and systems very streamlined here, it's very easy for us to get things done efficiently and also speedily when dealing with the government and other official bodies we need to come into contact in our work. I am really very impressed by

this approach as it enhances the productivity of the government as well as its people. I also find the people here work very hard and are very disciplined. I believe that is how in one generation Singapore has transformed itself into such an economic powerhouse and stayed united as a nation in the eyes of the world.

4. With the launch of VISION 2030, it sounds as if Saudi Arabia is open for business and investments, which areas do you think Singapore can benefit from participating in this massive development programme?

The Vision 2030 agenda addresses the socio-economic future not only for now but also for coming generations in Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom has taken serious steps to diversify from its oil-centric sectors, and the result of these measures are already taking shape and attracting foreign investors from countries such as Singapore. Saudi Arabia is Singapore's most important trading partner in the Middle East, but offers even more advantages and opportunities to further enhance its business with the new thrust on agri-business under the Kingdom's diversification plans.

Water and waste water management is another key area for both nations to explore collaborations. Then there's Singapore's maritime expertise which can tap opportunities in the Saudi port infrastructure plans. There are the new Economic Cities which have enormous construction works, transportation, and IT needs, all of which Singapore is much accomplished.

All these areas are ideal for partnerships between the public and private sectors to develop infrastructure services and facilities and would go a long way towards bringing down operating costs in the Kingdom as well as reducing



Rapport and greater engagement (top): HE Ambassador Saad Saleh Al Saleh with Singapore Minister for Communications & Information and Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs and Cyber Security Dr Yaacob Ibrahim and (above) together seeing pilgrims off to Hajj at Changi Airport

public debt. There's banking and financial services and tourism and healthcare which have been opened up for foreign collaborations in the new reform programme. With the Kingdom opening up the field of education to the private sector, this would suit Singapore very well to come in as it is world-renowned for its education programmes that are not just for students but also for teachers' training. There were also opportunities for PPP projects in setting up schools and colleges and even in construction.

5. One particular sector that has benefitted Singapore is the medical services sector. How has the medical sector opened up in Saudi Arabia and how Singapore companies can take part and benefit from this?

As you know Saudi Arabia provides free healthcare to its people. It is time now for us to reach out and get additional support from the private sector in many fields of medicine, so

that our people can benefit. These can be in the form of PPP projects to close this widening gap. This is also open to pharma companies and Singapore has a good reputation in both areas. There are plenty of opportunities for investors to tap, be it in hospitals, medical centres, clinics or manufacture of pharmaceuticals.

6. Recently, for the first time you were involved with the departure of a large group of Singapore pilgrims for Hajj. Please share your experience about the warm send-off given to the pilgrims.

Singapore has a significant Muslim population size, and it was my pleasure to help organise arrangements for a smooth Hajj for those pilgrims who went this year. Hajj as you know is a very important for Muslims and we will do everything we can to help our brothers here in Singapore to realize their lifetime goal of visiting the two most sacred sites of Islam.

7. The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission has been engaged in students exchange programmes and promotion of Arab culture, would you be adding other items or dimensions of Saudi cultural life to be introduced here or support collaboration with Singaporeans e.g. visiting cultural groups, musical presentations, exposure to Saudi literature etc.

SACM plays a very important role in encouraging interactions between the host country where its offices are located and the Kingdom. It fosters better understanding and people-to-people ties, which is very important for bilateral relations as well. Apart from our student exchange initiatives we would like to organise events where the people of both countries can get to know each other's culture in an informal way as well. For example, the *iftars* (break fast meal gathering) held during the holy month of Ramadan

“The Kingdom has been quite successful in its foray into global markets for investors since the decline in oil prices made us rethink our economic strategy and put us firmly on the path of diversification.”



HE Ambassador Saad bin Saleh AlSaleh participated together with Minister Dr Yaacob Ibrahim in the pre-departure briefing organised by the Singapore Pilgrimage Mission to its pilgrims who intend to perform Hajj this year to raise awareness of the procedures and means to enable them to perform Hajj safely.

have been very well attended in a spirit of warmth and mutual respect.

8. Is it correct to say that Saudi Arabia is also looking for investments abroad and have plans to tap the foreign capital markets - are there plans for any listing in the Singapore or regional bourses?

The Kingdom has been quite successful in its foray into global markets for investors since the decline in oil prices made us rethink our economic strategy and put us firmly on the path of diversification. King Salman in his Asia tour earlier this year had a very heartening response from the countries he visited.

The planned listing of Aramco is tentatively scheduled for next year (2018) of up to 5 per cent of the company to raise \$100B in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and one or more overseas locations. This is expected to be the world's biggest initial public offer (IPO). In February this year our Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said the company was evaluating concurrent listings on more than one exchange.

9 Regarding the massive mega economic cities (e.g. KAEC, JEC) and free economic zones being built;

what is the current status & progress of these projects and how Singapore companies can actively participate in their development? And your advice on the question –are the conditions for setting up / doing business getting better / easier / safer in Saudi Arabia?

Things are progressing well in these projects. Recently in May King Abdullah Port took part in the sixth edition of Sea Asia 2017, organised here as part of Singapore Maritime Week. It's the first time the Saudi port participated in something like this in the Asian market and it happened around the time His Royal Highness King Salman was on his Asian tour. Abdullah Port's most important features are its strategic location, its presence in King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), its close proximity to King Abdullah Economic City's Industrial Valley and Haramain High-Speed Rail station as well as Makkah, Madinah and Jeddah. The KAEC project includes a deep-sea port, a 55 square-kilometer logistics hub, a sports and recreation center and more than 6,500 residential properties and Singapore has elicited a high level of interest in its progress.

Things are quite streamlined in terms of administration or paperwork

when it comes to doing business in Saudi Arabia and the government has assured investors about the safety of their investments. There are quite a few examples of successful involvement by Singapore organisations in Saudi Arabia such as Singapore International Ports Company (PSA), which built and operates a new container terminal in the King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam. Another Singaporean company built oil storage tanks in Jubail Industrial City. Changi Airports International also manages operations services at King Fahad International Airport in Dammam.

Food solutions and gateway services provider SATS has also become the first foreign cargo handler to be awarded a cargo handling licence in Saudi Arabia with a greenfield investment to date at S\$40 million at the cargo terminal in Dammam's King Fahd International Airport (KFIA), through its subsidiary SATS Saudi Arabia LLC. An MoU was signed between SWCC and Hydrochem (the Saudi subsidiary of Singapore-based Hyflux) during the recent Saudi Water and Environment Forum to build three seawater reverse-osmosis desalination plants in the cities of Duba, Wajh, and Al Haql.

Frasers Hospitality Group, the hospitality arm of real estate company Frasers Centrepoint, is looking to also enter the Saudi Arabian market for the first time with properties in Jeddah, Khobar and Riyadh. In Singapore global aviation software provider on Cloud and Mobile Ramco Systems signed a 5-year agreement with Saudi Rotorcraft Support Company (SRSC) to offer software support for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) operations for civilian and military helicopters in Saudi Arabia.



“Things are quite streamlined in terms of administration or paperwork when it comes to doing business in Saudi Arabia and the government has assured investors about the safety of their investments. There are quite a few examples of successful involvement by Singapore organisations in Saudi Arabia.”



A busy start to 2017 as (top row) Saudi Arabia participates in the Shangri La Dialogue with HH Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud in discussions with Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan. (Clockwise from above): Ambassador Saad Saleh Al-Saleh visiting Singapore civic and business organisations such as (pictured right) the Singapore Manufacturers Federation and (below) receiving guests at the Saudi Arabian Embassy



MINISTER YAACOB: EXPLORE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT

Singapore's Minister for Communications and Information, Minister-in-charge of Cyber Security and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs feels that this year is a good opportunity to further deepening existing areas of cooperation and explore new areas of cooperation for mutual benefit.



Before leaving for Hajj, Minister Yaacob Ibrahim and Ambassador Saad Al-Saleh were at Changi Airport to bid farewell and hajj mabrur to the 340 pilgrims leaving that day (24th August 2017)

Please share your thoughts on the depth and strength of bilateral relations between Singapore and Saudi Arabia after 40 years of diplomatic ties.

The excellent ties between Singapore and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have come a long way since 1977. Our relations have grown from strength to strength over the past 40 years. As we celebrate this historic milestone, it is a good opportunity to look at further deepening existing areas of cooperation and to explore new areas of cooperation for mutual benefit.

Besides regular high-level exchanges and close people-to-people ties, we have strong cooperation on the economic front. KSA was Singapore's second largest trading partner in the Middle East and 19th largest trading partner in the world in 2016. Bilateral trade between KSA and Singapore amounted to S\$12.313 billion in 2016 which

comprised S\$11.3 billion of imports and S\$1.1 billion of exports.

Going forward, I am confident that the successful implementation of KSA's Vision 2030 reform plan will provide even more opportunities for Singapore companies as the Kingdom seeks to diversify its economy. In addition, economic cooperation would be further boosted once the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA), which was ratified in September 2013, is fully implemented. For example, we look forward to KSA's recognition of the Singapore Muis Halal Standards (SMHS) which would facilitate trade in food products between our countries.

Both sides currently also cooperate in many other areas such as labour, education and internal security through exchanges and study visits. I would also

look forward to any opportunities for both sides to work together in the ICT field in the near future.

Both Singapore and Saudi Arabia are strategically located in ASEAN and Middle East respectively. How can they leverage on bringing more opportunities for each other and the respective regions?

I believe the answer to this lies in fully realising the GSFTA's potential. Unlike other typical FTAs in which bilateral trade occur between two specific countries, the GSFTA is between Singapore and all six GCC countries and is a milestone in our economic partnership with the GCC. The GSFTA benefits both business and consumers by creating a freer and greater access for goods and services, promote bilateral investments, and enhance collaboration in areas such as trade facilitation and technical regulations. In this way, the GSFTA is an important

We are grateful for being able to work closely with such gracious and thoughtful hosts, who always put the safety and welfare of the pilgrims as their topmost priority.

stepping stone in the GCC's engagement of ASEAN and could even pave the way for a region-to-region trade deal between ASEAN and GCC. Singapore is a useful gateway to ASEAN as well as key Asian growth engines like China and India. The GSFTA will strengthen the GCC companies' ability to leverage on Singapore as a base to tap the growing commercial opportunities in the region. Similarly, I would encourage our companies to look to KSA as a gateway to the GCC and the wider Middle East region.



Minister Yaacob with Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, HE Dr Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benten at the Kingdom's Hajj Ministry. The Singapore Minister said, "Thankful to the Kingdom's Hajj Ministry for their professionalism and warm hospitality in hosting our pilgrims throughout the years. Our journey to the Holy Lands would not be possible without their great efforts in ensuring the safety and comfort of all pilgrims."

Hajj/Umrah pilgrimage is a major area of engagement between Singapore and the Kingdom. As the Minister in-charge of Muslim Affairs, you led the Singapore delegation to the Annual Hajj Ministerial Meeting in Saudi Arabia early this year. Would you share your experience?

As the Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, I lead the Singapore Delegation to KSA every year to attend the Hajj Ministerial meeting. I appreciate the annual meeting with our Saudi hosts, who has always been very gracious. At this annual meeting, we discuss the preparations for Hajj and the necessary arrangements for our Hajj pilgrims. The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis) then follows up with the Saudi Hajj Ministry and other relevant agencies, such as the Muassasah in-charge of South East Asia Pilgrims, Medinah Adilla, Naqabah the Ministry of Health, Saudi Food and Drug Authorities and the United Agents Office to arrange for the various needs of the Singaporean pilgrims during the Hajj.

On that note, I have been conveying Singapore's request for the Hajj Ministry to revise Singapore's Hajj quota to match Singapore's growing Muslim population, so that those who can fulfil the 5th

pillar of Islam, are able to do so. This year, I am very happy that our official quota has been increased from 680 to 800 places. On behalf of the Singapore Government and the Singapore Muslim community, I would like to congratulate and thank KSA for overseeing the tremendous infrastructure developments and improvements to ensure that the Guests of Allah would be able to perform their Hajj with ease and comfort. We are grateful for being able to work closely with such gracious and thoughtful hosts, who always put the safety and welfare of the pilgrims as their topmost priority.

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 essentially is the Kingdom opening up to the world and diversifying its economy from oil into other sectors. Is the Singapore Government considering closer cooperation and planning to take part/invest in any specific areas of this visionary programme?

As Saudi Arabia embarks on its Vision 2030 roadmap, I hope that Singapore and Saudi Arabia continue to foster deeper and closer economic linkages.

For Saudi Arabian companies and financial institutions which are thinking of expanding into Asia, I encourage them to come to Singapore, it is a hub where

they can tap onto our networks and ecosystem to further their internationalisation efforts. Saudi Arabia's companies will also have the opportunity to link up with over 30,000 international companies that have chosen Singapore as their base for global and regional expansion.

On our part, we are also happy to work with the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Singapore to promote economic opportunities in KSA to Singapore companies and international companies based in Singapore. Several sectors where we see opportunities are oil and

gas, urban development, smart cities, education & training, consumer services, and hospitality.

Singapore companies have been active in KSA. For example, Changi Airports International has successfully managed the Dammam Airport since 2008 and has recently been awarded the concession for the Jeddah airport. Singapore hospitality chain Ascott holds multiple properties across KSA, with more in the pipeline. It is examples like these that I hope will interest more Singapore companies to consider the opportunities that will arise from the implementation of Vision 2030.

There are many aspects of Muslim life in Singapore influenced by religion including Arabic food, travel, clothes, studies etc. Are there any particular aspects of Arabic culture that you are impressed with that you might like to share or encourage Singaporeans to follow?

The Singapore Muslim community lives in harmony within Singapore's context of a multi-racial, multi-religious society and secular state. Throughout our history, Singapore, situated on the crossroads of the East-West trading routes has always been open to the world, bringing in people and imbibing influences from near and

Both Singapore and Saudi Arabian companies should consider taking a long term view on investments. They should also take the time to familiarise themselves with the local customs and operating environment, and exercise due diligence in identifying the right local partner.

far, and our society is the more unique for it. Indeed, the pioneers of our Arab community in Singapore today were believed to have arrived right from the start, in 1819 when modern Singapore was founded, and they have made significant contributions to our Muslim community and wider Singapore society ever since. Our nation's diversity with its many interesting traditions, cultures, and cuisines is firmly cherished. Through this, and in forming friendships with those from different cultures and religions, we can have a deeper appreciation of our rich and shared heritage, and all communities are on stronger foundations to work together for the common good.

In this regard, racial and religious harmony in Singapore must never be taken for granted and we must remain ever vigilant against any threats to our social harmony. Muis takes a keen effort in developing a progressive Muslim Community of Excellence that is resilient, inclusive, contributive, adaptive, progressive, and is committed to inter-racial and inter-faith engagement and dialogue to promote peace and harmony.

How can the two countries work together to promote world peace and religious tolerance?

This year marks the 40th anniversary of our bilateral ties. I have always received very positive feedback from our returning pilgrims, and that alone is testimony



(Top): Minister Yaacob visiting pilgrims at Arafah. (Above): Minister Yaacob visiting the Singapore clinic and medical officers from the Singapore Pilgrims Affairs Office (SPA)

to the success of the Kingdom in its sacred duty. I am pleased to note how our close interactions in the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages help to enhance the relationship between the officials and peoples of our countries. The excellent cooperation that Singapore and the KSA enjoy in this area is a good reflection of our countries' warm and longstanding ties, and I am certain that we can do more together.

Do you have any particular message to investors on both sides in order to enhance opportunities?

Both Singapore and Saudi Arabian

companies should consider taking a long term view on investments. They should also take the time to familiarise themselves with the local customs and operating environment, and exercise due diligence in identifying the right local partner.

What are some of the activities, plans in the pipeline in the near future with regards to Singapore and Saudi Arabia working together in the social, economic and political spheres?

In terms of political engagement, the inaugural MFA-to-MFA Bilateral Consultation was successfully held in Singapore in January 2016. We look forward to the next Bilateral Consultations, which would be hosted by Saudi Arabia. This is a useful platform that provides a good opportunity for the Foreign Ministries from both sides to exchange views, and explore ways to strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade) Lim Hng Kiang will undertake a bilateral visit to KSA in October 2017. During the visit, Minister Lim will participate in the inaugural Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh, which is organised under Vision 2030. Senior Minister of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Maliki Osman will also be visiting Riyadh, as well as Jeddah and the Eastern Province in early October 2017.

Congratulations & Best Wishes to the People & Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 87th National Day

PROVIDING POST OIL CRISIS & NTP VISION 2030 FOR

PRIVATE

- HRM - Human Capital Development
- Industry Cluster/ Group Capability Developing & Upgrading Project

PUBLIC

- National Workforce Skills Qualification Framework Project
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- Human Capital Transformation Project for Public

NPO

- Risk Management, Internal Controls & Internal Audit
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Training Solutions such as Professional Conversation Programme

DR MALIKI OSMAN: BUILDING ON 40 YEARS OF CLOSE FRIENDSHIP

Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr Maliki Osman shares his views on how bilateral relations between both countries have flourished in the past 40 years, and ideas on further strengthening cooperation and exploring new areas to work together



HE Dr Maliki Osman Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This year, Singapore and Saudi Arabia celebrate 40 years of diplomatic ties. How far have the relations come and in your opinion what can be expected in the next few decades in terms of cooperation and growth?

There is an Arab and Asian proverb that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The establishment of the Saudi Consulate in Singapore in the 1960s was the first step and beginning of the long journey of friendship and mutual cooperation between Singapore and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This year is particularly historic as we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

The long-standing relations are most notably marked by strong people-to-people exchanges. Singapore is a multi-religious society, with Muslims comprising 15% of our population. Our Muslim community regards KSA as an important destination in order to perform their Haj obligations. Every year, hundreds of Singaporean Muslims travel to Makkah to perform their Haj and Umrah pilgrimages. We are thankful to the Saudi Government for the gracious hospitality and care provided for them. We are deeply appreciative of His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and the Saudi Government's approval and generosity in revising Singapore's official Haj quota earlier this year from 680 to 800 places given the increase in our Muslim population. We hope that the KSA government will be able to increase our official Haj quota further to meet the aspirations of Singaporean Muslims to perform their Haj. In addition, our students are also studying in Makkah, Madinah and the

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). Such exchanges help to promote mutual understanding and further boost Singapore-KSA relations.

Both sides have also maintained regular high-level exchanges. For instance, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Masagos Zulkifli made a working visit to KSA in February. Minister for Communications and Information and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Dr Yaacob Ibrahim led this year's Haj delegation to KSA. We are keen to step up such exchanges this year given the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. In this regard, I am planning to visit KSA again in early-October, while Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade) Lim Hng Kiang will be visiting Riyadh in late-October to attend the Future Investment Initiative forum. Similarly, we hope to welcome His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to Singapore soon. We also understand that Minister of Health HE Tawfiq Al Rabiah is keen to visit Singapore, tentatively in November 2017.

Economic cooperation is an important part of our bilateral relations. KSA was Singapore's second largest trading partner in the Middle East and 19th largest trading partner in the world in 2016, with bilateral trade amounting to S\$12.313 billion. There is an established track record of cooperation between Singapore and KSA across a broad spectrum of industries such as transport and logistics, urban and industrial infrastructure development, environmental engineering, and oil

The immediate priority for both Singapore and the GCC would be to increase awareness of the GSFTA amongst investors to allow them to take advantage of its various benefits, as well as to ensure that it is fully implemented.

and gas infrastructure. For example, in the field of transportation and logistics, Changi Airports International (CAI) has been working hand in hand with their Saudi counterparts at the King Fahd International Airport (KFIA) in Dammam. In May 2017, CAI was also selected as the operator of the new King Abdulaziz International Airport (KAIA) in Jeddah for a term of 20 years. Another successful venture involves PSA International which is operating the second container terminal at the King Abdul Aziz Port in partnership with the Public Investment Fund and the Saudi Ports Authority.



Call on Governor of Riyadh His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Al Saud on 22nd February 2016

As KSA's bold Vision 2030 reform plan is slowly being implemented under the leadership of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, I believe that this would open up new opportunities in the Saudi market for our companies. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA) is also expected to help deepen economic engagement. We look forward to the full implementation of the GSFTA which will open up new opportunities for companies on both sides.

At the political level, we have also successfully held the inaugural Bilateral Political Consultation between the two Foreign Ministries in Singapore in January 2016 to exchange ideas on deepening bilateral cooperation. We look forward to the next Consultations, which would be hosted by KSA.

As part of Singapore's efforts to strengthen its engagement with the Middle East, you visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

earlier this year. Would you brief us on your visit?

Although I made my first official visit to KSA in February 2016, I had actually visited Makkah and Madinah with my family several times; in December 2006 to perform my Haj, and March 2008 and December 2015 to perform Umrah. During my 2015 Umrah trip, I took the opportunity to meet Governor of Makkah His Royal Highness Prince Khaled Al Faisal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Governor of Madinah His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

In February 2016, I had met with Minister of Islamic Affairs His Excellency Saleh Bin Abdulaziz Al Sheikh, Governor of Riyadh His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Al Saud, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Nizar Obaid Madani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance His Excellency Dr Sulaiman Al Turki, and Director of Research at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS)

Dr Saud Al Sarhan. We reaffirmed the excellent bilateral ties and discussed ways to strengthen the bilateral cooperation, as well as common challenges faced by both countries such as combating extremism. I also had the pleasure of meeting GCC Secretary-General His Excellency Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani, where we exchanged views on regional issues.

I also took the opportunity to meet Singaporeans working in Riyadh, to stay in touch and update them on developments back home.

During your visit you had separate meetings with Minister of Islamic Affairs

Saleh Bin Abdulaziz Al Sheikh, Governor of Riyadh Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Al Saud, and Minister of State of Foreign Affairs Nizar Obaid Madani. How was your discussion?

I enjoyed the frank exchange of views I had with Islamic Affairs Minister His Excellency Al Sheikh. We discussed the challenges posed by radicalisation of Muslim youths in both Southeast Asia and the Middle East, and the need to promote a more moderate narrative of Islam. We agreed that the threat of extremism affected all countries and a joint effort was needed in order to combat this threat successfully. Riyadh Governor His Royal Highness Prince Faisal updated me about the developments in Riyadh and we both looked forward to further broaden cooperation between our two countries. I also had a useful exchange of views with Minister of State of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Dr Madani. Besides acknowledging the excellent relations between both Foreign Ministries, we also spoke about developments in the region and the challenges posed by extremism.

You also had separate meetings with Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Dr Sulaiman Al Turki and Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani. What is the status of the much talked about GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA)?

We spoke about the importance of enhancing economic cooperation, and we also reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring the full implementation of the GSFTA.



HE Dr Maliki Osman meeting the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council His Excellency Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani on 22 February 2016

The GSFTA is an indication of the high value we place upon our trade relations with the GCC, including KSA. It was a milestone for Singapore as it was the first such agreement signed by the GCC with a non-Middle East country and provided the confidence to Singapore companies that the GCC was open for business. Bilateral investment between Singapore and the GCC has since increased by 12.8% between 2013 and 2015 and we have seen more Singapore companies expressing interest in the GCC market in a variety of sectors from infrastructure, energy to consumer products. The immediate priority for both Singapore and the GCC would be to increase awareness of the GSFTA amongst investors to allow them to take advantage of its various benefits, as well as to ensure that it is fully implemented.

Singapore has been attending the Manama Dialogue since its inception in 2004 and over the years there has been a strong participation at the Shangri-La Dialogue from the Middle East. In your opinion, how do these interactions and multilateral fora contribute towards the peace and stability at large?

Dialogue is important and useful in developing shared perspectives on security threats and finding constructive solutions. The Asia Pacific region faces a range of evolving security challenges, and the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) is a valuable platform for leaders from the region and elsewhere to discuss these challenges candidly. The challenges that we face in the Asia Pacific are not exclusive to our region. Key issues discussed at the SLD, such as the global threat of extremism,

are transnational issues which require international cooperation to tackle them. The SLD allows us to engage in frank and constructive dialogues with defence and security officials from the Asia Pacific, Middle East and elsewhere. The Manama Dialogue has also established itself as a leading platform for officials to discuss security issues in the region and we value the insights it provides on the concerns of the GCC countries. I have attended the Manama Dialogue several times and have found the interactions and exchanges with my counterparts in the region very enriching and mutually beneficial.

Singapore and Saudi Arabia remain strong trading partners. Peace and stability is essential for this trend to continue. How can the two countries work together towards a more peaceful world, given the state of global challenges?

Ensuring peace and stability is essential to long-term development and prosperity. In turn, rising prosperity can foster peace and stability. Peace, stability and prosperity have a symbiotic relationship. In today's world where transnational challenges such as extremism and terrorism breed instability, countries need to work together to address these challenges in the spirit of solidarity.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the complementarities shared by Singapore and KSA in countering extremism. We welcome the various efforts by KSA to combat the threat of extremism and terrorism. It is important to tackle extremism at its psychological and ideological roots. KSA's war of ideas strives to instil the concept of moderation

and tolerance, and undermine any justification for extremism and terrorism. I recall reading that during a conference of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in July 2016, His Majesty King Salman had called on Saudi youth to take the initiative to counter extremists' online activity with their own responses by arguing against strident interpretations of Islam and play their part in fighting extremism across the internet and social media.

Singapore too has adopted a multi-pronged approach, by building resilience and maintaining social cohesion within our multi-racial and multi-religious society. Proactive and preventive measures are taken by our Mufti and organisations such as the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) to counter extremist propaganda and rehabilitate individuals who have been radicalised.

Singapore will continue to undertake counter-extremism and counter-terrorism cooperation with our international partners, including KSA, and do our part to stop the spread of extremism and terrorism.

Saudi Arabia holds a strategic position in the Middle East and so does Singapore in ASEAN. Could you share with us any existing programmes that are in place to share information and developmental experience to leverage on each other's strength to enhance opportunities?

ASEAN and the Middle East, specifically GCC, economies have become increasingly intertwined and we can expect the economic cooperation to expand. As gateways to our respective regions, Singapore and KSA are natural partners in this journey.

While KSA enjoys a fair abundance of natural resources, Singapore does not. However, both our people are industrious and entrepreneurial and eager to learn and gain knowledge. Both countries have been actively cooperating on developing our human resources as we understand that we can learn much from each other as we work towards developing our two countries. There have been numerous exchanges and

study visits, spanning diverse fields such as labour, education, health, internal security, justice and investment. We are happy to continue sharing our developmental experience in areas which may be relevant to KSA.

In your opinion, what are the other areas of cooperation that the two countries can work on?

As KSA implements reforms in various sectors and transitions to a diversified economy under its Vision 2030 plan, I am confident that new opportunities to work together would emerge. For instance, our healthcare companies are keen to be involved in KSA's plans to privatise its healthcare sector. We have also seen more cooperation in the fields of logistics/ airport management, as well as in the water sector. Changi Airports International was recently awarded the contract to operate the new King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, while a number of

powerhouse, we welcome Saudi banks to deepen their presence in Singapore and more financial institutions such as sovereign wealth funds, family offices, private equities and venture capitalists to tap into Singapore's established financial network to expand their portfolio into the fastest growing region of the world, Southeast Asia. Similarly, we hope Saudi companies will leverage on Singapore's logistical connectivity, innovative technologies and deep talent pool as a launch point to internationalise. To date, over 30,000 international companies have chosen Singapore as their base for global/ regional expansion.

The trade and cultural ties between the two countries go a long way. Places like Arab Street are a great testament to this. Many people of Arab origin have contributed in the growth of Singapore. In recent times students from Saudi Arabia have been studying here in many of Singapore's

associated with the Kampong Glam area where road names such as Arab Street, Baghdad Street, Bussorah Street and Muscat Street are a reminder of the links with Arabia. Today, the Arabs form a small but significant community in Singapore, most of whom originated from the Hadhramaut region in Yemen. The 2010 census records 8,419 Arabs in Singapore, although the number could be as high as 10,000 as they are deeply integrated with the Malay community. Where opportune, we should educate our youths on these historical connections and the cultural exchanges between Singapore and KSA over the centuries.

Both Singapore and KSA understand the importance of education. Notably, National Institute of Education International (NIEI) previously worked with Tatweer for Education on a two week train-the-trainer leadership programme

“While KSA enjoys a fair abundance of natural resources, Singapore does not. However, both our people are industrious and entrepreneurial and eager to learn and gain knowledge. Both countries have been actively cooperating on developing our human resources as we understand that we can learn much from each other as we work towards developing our two countries.”

agreements were recently concluded to facilitate water cooperation, including the construction of three desalination plants in Dubai, Al Wajh, and Haql by Hyflux.

There are some Saudi companies with regional headquarters in Singapore. What other companies or collaborations would you invite to set up in Singapore?

Singapore is currently home to several Saudi companies, primarily in the oil and gas sector, as well as petrochemicals sector. To date, there are over 300 companies from the Middle East which are based in Singapore. We hope to continue to attract companies in the various commodities sectors such as energy, metals and minerals, and agriculture, leveraging on Singapore's comprehensive ecosystem as well as the opportunity to be embedded in the network of global energy players who are based in Singapore. Singapore also serves as a gateway to the rest of Asia for these companies.

As KSA embarks on its Vision 2030 plan to become a global investment

reputed universities. How do you think cooperation in education and culture can be enhanced?

Arab traders brought Islam from the Muslim heartlands of the Arabian Peninsula to the island archipelagos of Southeast Asia. Some sank their roots in Southeast Asia. The first Arabs were believed to have arrived in Singapore in 1819. In the late 19th century to mid-20th century, Singapore was the staging post for the Haj pilgrimage from Southeast Asia to Makkah. Many pilgrim ships from the period 1870 to 1972 recorded Singapore as their port of departure. During the colonial times, the Arabs played prominent roles in the retail wholesale and production trades, the Muslim pilgrimage industry and real estate development. Due to their wealth and influence, the Arabs were actively involved in charitable and social welfare work within the Muslim community in Singapore. Various streets in Singapore are named after prominent Arabs, including Aljunied Road, Alkaff Avenue and Syed Alwi Road. The Singapore Arabs are also

for principals. As of 2015, 480 school supervisors and principals had been trained under these programmes. These trainers in turn would have imparted what they learnt to some 3,000 school principals back home. In addition, the King Abdullah Scholarship Programme (KASP) was established for Saudi students to study at Singapore's autonomous universities (AUs), while there is also an existing arrangement for Saudi Aramco scholars to do their undergraduate studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS). In October 2016, Minister of Education His Excellency Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Issa visited Singapore to learn more about Singapore's education system, in particular our teacher training and recruitment policies. With the increased emphasis on education, our companies and training institutes should explore how both sides could work together to better equip the next generation with much needed skill sets for the future economy..

MINISTER MASAGOS: MORE COOPERATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT & WATER SECTOR

HE Masagos Zulkifli, Minister of Environment and Water Resources reaffirms the state of bilateral ties and plans ahead for projects involving the Kingdom's water resources and environment



HE Masagos Zulkifli (left) with Governor of Riyadh HRH Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Al Saud exploring closer cooperation

1. Your Excellency, earlier this year you visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to enhance ties in the areas of environment and water cooperation. Please share with us the experience?

Singapore and Saudi Arabia share warm and long-standing ties. Our positive state of bilateral relations can be attributed to regular exchanges and good people-to-people ties. I have made numerous visits to the Kingdom, including for Haj and Umrah. My most recent visit was in February this year to Riyadh and Jeddah. It was a fruitful and productive trip and my first as Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. We had a good opportunity to enhance our bilateral relations and advance our environmental cooperation.

During my trip, we explored the possibility of a Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) on environment protection and water resource management with the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA). Discussions on the MoU are progressing well and I hope it can be signed soon. This MoU will help to facilitate government-to-government cooperation in the environmental field and strengthen bilateral ties.

2. What are the opportunities emerging in the areas of environmental and water cooperation between the two countries?

2017 celebrates the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Saudi Arabia. In actual fact, our relations go back even further as the Saudi Consulate was first established in Singapore in the 1960s. We already have strong and substantive relations but there are more opportunities and areas where we can collaborate. With

both our countries facing the challenges of water scarcity, sharing expertise in desalination and the recycling of water is a key area for cooperation. This is on top of areas such as environmental management and addressing climate change, where we are working together.

3. During your visit you also spoke at the Saudi Water and Environment Forum (SWEF) and witnessed the signing ceremony between Hyflux and Saudi Water Conversion Corporation for the new Sea Water Reverse Osmosis Plants and Water Transmission Systems projects. How is the progress on these projects?

At the Saudi Water and Environment Forum (SWEF), I witnessed the signing of the MoU between the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) and Hydrochem (the Saudi subsidiary of Singapore-based Hyflux), which calls

“With both our countries facing the challenges of water scarcity, sharing expertise in desalination and the recycling of water is a key area for cooperation. This is on top of areas such as environmental management and addressing climate change, where we are working together.”

for Hyflux to build three seawater reverse-osmosis desalination plants in Dubai, Al Wajh, and Haql. I understand that construction of all three projects will begin shortly.

4. Investors traditionally look at the most popular entry points like Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam. However, Singapore's new projects are in AlWajh, Dubai and Haql. What is your reading of the opportunities beyond the traditional entry points?

It is encouraging that Singapore's new projects are in Al Wajh, Dubai and Haql. The success of companies making headway in non-traditional entry points shows the breadth of opportunities available in Saudi Arabia. As urbanisation picks up pace and smaller cities grow, opportunities for the environment and water industry will increase. There will be greater demands for good drinking water and for effective wastewater treatment, and also for solid waste management.

5. During your visit, you met Riyadh Governor Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Al Saud and the Saudi Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman Al Fadhli. Could you share with us the highlights of your discussions?

I had the pleasure of meeting and engaging Riyadh Governor HRH Prince Faisal Bin Bandar Al Saud and Minister of the Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman Al Fadhli. We discussed cooperation in water and environment. I noted that more technical cooperation can be achieved with Saudi Arabia, especially in the fields of water research and development. Singapore has a thriving cluster of 180 local and international water companies spanning the entire water value chain. The companies range from upstream component makers like membrane suppliers to downstream engineering, procurement and construction players.



HE Masagos Zulkifli witnesses an MoU signing between Saline Water Conversion Corp (SWCC) and Hydrochem (the Saudi subsidiary of Singapore-based Hyflux) at the Saudi Water & Environment Forum (SWEF) in February 2017

Singapore also has a vibrant water research eco-system of more than 20 research centres undertaking projects in various domains like membranes, biomimicry and low-energy desalination. We encourage Saudi companies to set up their headquarters and R&D centres in Singapore to leverage on our facilities, connectivity and strong talent base to expand their business in the region. In addition to research and technological collaboration, there are also many potential business projects that Singapore and Saudi Arabia companies can explore.

I also shared with them the common concerns which Singapore and Saudi Arabia face in dealing with the challenges of water scarcity, and that both Singapore and Saudi Arabia need to actively look for ways to make desalination more energy-efficient in order to keep water affordable and accessible to all.

6. Do you see any potential for a joint initiative between Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) and Saudi Water and Environment Forum (SWEF)?

The Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) and Saudi Water and Environment Forum (SWEF) share the same purpose of bringing together business leaders and decision makers from around the world to explore new technological innovations and opportunities in the field

of environment and water. At the last SWEF from 12 to 14 February 2017, I had the honour of delivering one of the keynote speeches and was glad to see Singapore companies such as Hyflux actively participating and exchanging best practices. We look forward to welcoming friends from SWCC, Saudi government officials and water utility professionals to the SIWW 2018, which will be held from 8 to 12 July in Singapore. It will be an excellent opportunity to strengthen connections and build new partnerships.

7. How can our universities and research institutions work together in sharing experience in the fields of water and environment?

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) and its Water Desalination and Reuse Centre has very solid capabilities. In Singapore, we have the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU); both are well-recognised for their work in the water sector, especially on desalination. There is good potential for collaboration on innovative desalination technologies and other related areas.

8. On environmental issues, how do you think the two countries can work together?

We can share our approaches and best practices for regulating and managing the environment. We can also look at how our industry capabilities and solutions can be adapted to support our environmental and water management regimes.

To catalyse cooperation, we must keep up the momentum of people-to-people exchanges. Singapore welcomes senior Saudi Arabian officials and senior executives from the private sector to

BILATERAL TIES

participate in the Clean Environment Leaders Summit and Clean Environment Regulators Roundtable to share best practices in environmental management. These events are under the CleanEnviro Summit Singapore (CESS), which is held alongside the SIWW. We also welcome industry leaders and policy makers to join us at the CESS, where environmental issues and collaboration will be discussed by stakeholders from all over the region. The next CESS will be held from 8 to 12 July 2018.

9. What is the kind of exchange that is currently taking place in the fields of desalination technologies and how do we step up cooperation?

At the SIWW Spotlight event in July, Singapore's National Water Agency, PUB, signed an MoU with SWCC. This MoU will deepen our collaboration on water utilities and for knowledge sharing and capability building in water supply, R&D and innovation. More broadly, the MoU will enhance cooperation and

relations between our two governments. Both parties are also keen to look at innovative technologies that can reduce the energy footprint of desalination. We hope to leverage on the MoU to promote staff exchange, gain insights into partner utilities' issues, share experiences, and resolve common water challenges.

10. The Saudi Arabian government is working on many diversification initiatives under the ambit of Vision 2030. How can Singapore contribute and participate in these initiatives?

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is a bold and dynamic plan to reform the country and bolster the Saudi economy for the post-oil era. Steady progress has been made in implementing the key reform plans. Singapore is happy to share its experiences with Saudi Arabia. However, we are mindful that given the differences between Singapore and Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom would need to adapt what is relevant according to its unique circumstances. Economic relations

between Singapore and Saudi Arabia are robust; the Kingdom is Singapore's second largest trading partner in the Middle East. Many Singapore companies are interested in the Saudi market, especially in sectors such as transport and logistics, urban and industrial infrastructure development, environmental engineering, and oil and gas infrastructure. Hyflux's upcoming three desalination plants in the Tabuk region is one good example.

As Saudi Arabia transitions to a diversified and investment-driven economy under Vision 2030, Singapore companies will look for new opportunities in sectors such as water and environment, tourism, healthcare and hospitality. Singapore companies also have an added advantage of reaping the benefits of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which was ratified in September 2013. This was a landmark agreement as the GCC's first FTA with a country outside the Middle East.



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SAUDI ARABIA & MUIS: CLOSE COOPERATION IN ISLAMIC AFFAIRS

Haji Abdul Razak bin Hassan Maricar, the Chief Executive of Muis, speaks about the Council's ties with Saudi Arabia especially in Hajj and Halal Certification matters



(Above): In February Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim (3rd from left), together with Hj Abdul Razak Maricar met representatives from the Ministry of Hajj & Umrah to discuss on hajj arrangements for Singapore pilgrims this year.

THE Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, or Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Muis), is a Statutory Board set up by an Act of Parliament to manage the socio-religious affairs of the Singapore Muslim community. This ranges from building and management of mosques, collection and distribution of zakat, management of waqf, development and management of madrasah and Islamic education, management of hajj and halal and providing the religious leadership needed by Muslims in all the key areas of Muslim life.

One of the areas under Muis' purview is halal certification. Halal Standards are developed by the respective certification bodies in individual countries. While there is no International Halal standard, Muis is working with several certification bodies globally and Singapore Muis' Halal mark is well recognised internationally, including under the Gulf



Hj Abdul Razak Maricar

Cooperation Council-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. This is very useful in facilitating the export of halal products to the Middle East. Muis is currently working with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for mutual recognition of our Halal Marks.

Muis has a good relationship with the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia, and His Excellency the Ambassador is a frequent guest at our events, ranging from iftar in Ramadan to Muis organised events such as conferences and seminars. Of course, Muis has the deepest and most impactful collaboration with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the area of the management of Hajj.

As the Hajj authority in Singapore, Muis oversees all aspects of the administration of Hajj for Singaporean pilgrims. Muis has a very close partnership and collaboration with the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Singapore in particular with His Excellency the Ambassador and we are very pleased with all the assistance given on visa approvals and administrative processes for pilgrims and the liaison needed with the relevant authorities in the Saudi Kingdom.

Muis appoints the Singapore Pilgrims' Affairs Office (SPA0) to look after the



Saudi Arabia Ambassador Saad Saleh Al Saleh accompany Minister of Muslim Affairs Dr Yaacob Ibrahim and Haj Abdul Razak Maricar to see off one of this year's groups of pilgrims from Changi Airport

welfare and needs of Singapore pilgrims during the duration of the Hajj. The SPAO coordinates with the Hajj agencies (Muassasah, Medinah Adilla and respective Maktabas) for services required by the pilgrims. The SPAO, with the approval of the Saudi Ministry of Health, also provides basic medical clinic services for the pilgrims. Those who require special medical attention would be referred to medical centres provided by the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Muis works closely with its appointed travel agencies to plan and prepare a comprehensive programme to facilitate the pilgrimage to the Holy Lands. Besides the religious knowledge required to perform the Hajj, the programme includes pre-departure and familiarisation briefings to the pilgrims in areas such as procedural requirements, transportation arrangements, as well as facilities and services provided for the

Hajj by the Royal Kingdom upon their arrival. Pilgrims will also be advised on the arrangements for their health, safety, security and welfare during their stay in the Holy Lands. With this information, the pilgrims know what to expect throughout the pilgrimage, Insha Allah.

This year we are greeted with the happy news that the Hajj Ministry has increased our official quota from 680 to 800, to reflect the growing Muslim population in Singapore. We are also honoured to be graced by the presence of His Excellency Ambassador Saad Saleh Al Saleh who was present at the airport to send off a delegation of our pilgrims, together with our Minister in Charge of Muslim Affairs, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Head of this year's Hajj delegation. Singapore pilgrims look forward to the improved facilities in the Holy Lands, which will help them immerse themselves in the profound experience of the Hajj, a journey of a lifetime.

“Singapore Muis’ Halal mark is well recognised internationally, including under the Gulf Cooperation Council-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. This is very useful in facilitating the export of halal products to the Middle East. Muis is currently working with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for mutual recognition of our Halal marks.”

Congratulations and Best Wishes to the people and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 87th National Day

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BUILDING ON ANNIVERSARY'S MOMENTUM IN TARGET SECTORS

As Singapore and Saudi Arabia celebrate their Ruby Jubilee of bilateral relations, Mr G. Jayakrishnan, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore's Group Director for Middle East and Africa speak on how IE Singapore seeks to deepen economic ties to build on this positive momentum.



Mr G. Jayakrishnan

MAJOR Saudi Arabian companies such as Saudi Aramco and SABIC have already set up in Singapore to cater to the growing demand of petrochemical and oil-based products in Southeast Asia, capitalising on the availability of trade financing, risk management solutions, world-class logistics and access to leading insurance companies. At the same time, over 40 Singapore companies are present in Saudi Arabia, tapping the strong growth of the region and contributing to its development. Augmenting this is the GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA), which boosts trade and economic ties between Saudi Arabia and Singapore. Singapore is the first non-Middle Eastern country to enter into an FTA with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In 2016, Saudi Arabia was Singapore's 2nd largest trading partner in the Middle East.

Strong Presence in Education and Training

Singapore has a strong presence in Saudi Arabia in the fields of education and training. For example, the King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Public Education Development Project (Tatweer) partnered Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE) to train about 3,000 Saudi Arabian school principals in educational management and leadership. Singapore company Rotary Arabia is also working with the Kingdom's Technical Vocation Training Corporation to train and develop technical skills and capabilities of the Saudi Arabian workforce.

Urban Development and Smart Cities

In addition, Singapore companies such as CrimsonLogic, Meinhardt, ST Engineering and Surbana Jurong are active in urban and industrial infrastructure development, environment, engineering, oil & gas, transport & logistics, and information and communication technology (ICT). Singapore has also established itself as one of the world models for 'smart cities'. Saudi Arabian companies can leverage Singapore's world class infrastructure to testbed innovative smart city solutions.

Services Sector

IE Singapore sees significant opportunities for Saudi Arabia to partner Singapore in services sectors such as healthcare and education. Singapore is keen to participate in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 to diversify itself from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy so as to create more jobs for its young and growing population.

Energy

Saudi Arabia's trade with Singapore is largely in the oil sector. The Kingdom is the largest producer and exporter of petroleum liquids in the world. In 2012, about 54% of Saudi Arabia's crude oil exports went to East Asia. Singapore is the leading oil hub in Asia and among the top three export refining centres in the world. Today, Singapore is the

Singapore is also increasingly looking at the development of renewable energy such as liquefied natural gas (LNG). Saudi Arabia's new initiatives to grow alternative energy sources and source for the latest energy optimising technologies resonate well with Singapore's capabilities

largest manufacturer of jack-up rigs and commands 70% of the global market share. It also has 70% of the global market share for the conversion of Floating Production Storage Offloading units. Singapore and Saudi Arabia can complement one another in oil & gas, ship building and seaport development.

Singapore is also increasingly looking at the development of renewable energy such as liquefied natural gas (LNG). Saudi Arabia's new initiatives to grow alternative energy sources and source for the latest energy optimising technologies resonate well with Singapore's capabilities.

More about IE Singapore

IE Singapore is the government agency that promotes international trade and partners Singapore companies to go global. Trade has always been the backbone of Singapore's economy. In addition to promoting the export of goods and services, IE Singapore attracts and anchors global commodities traders to establish their global or Asian home base in Singapore. Today, Singapore is a thriving trading hub with a complete ecosystem for the energy, agri-commodities and metals & minerals trading clusters. Renowned worldwide for their dedication to quality and innovation, Singapore-based companies make ideal business partners. With IE Singapore's network in Saudi Arabia, the agency connects Saudi Arabian businesses with relevant Singapore-based companies by keeping companies abreast of the latest business trends and opportunities in Asia, and identifying and forging relationships with Singapore-based partners that have a pan-Asian or global presence.

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PRIORITISING LONG TERM ENGAGEMENTS

Mr Shamsheer Zaman, the new Chairman for the Middle East Business Group, Singapore Business Federation (SBF), and also the Managing Director for Linkers (Far East) Pte Ltd elaborates on the role of SBF and its experience with the Saudi Arabia Market.

SAUDI Arabia is one of the first GCC countries to establish their embassy in Singapore, reflecting the good diplomatic relationship between our two countries. Bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Singapore began in November 1977, where we always enjoy a stable, multi-elements, religious and good economic relationship.

Saudi Arabia has always regarded Singapore as an important economic partner, as signified by the signing of the GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA) on 15 December 2008.

Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national petroleum and natural gas company, has its regional office in Singapore since December 2014. The city-state serves as an excellent gateway to expand the company's business presence into the Asia Pacific. SABIC, a global leader in diversified chemicals, also established their regional office here in 1991.

Partnerships

Leading Singapore companies such as Hyflux and Tee Yih Jia Group have also established their business presence in Saudi Arabia. For example, the Singapore-based company, Tee Yih Jia Group has made good headway into Saudi Arabia. They are in a partnership with Binzagr Group, one of Saudi Arabia's leading food distribution companies. As part of this partnership, Tee Yih Jia was invited to jointly set up a production base with Binzagr Group in Saudi Arabia to cater to its growing market in September 2011.

Water treatment firm, Hyflux signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 12 February 2017 with Saline Water



Mr Shamsheer Zaman

Conversion (SWCC) to develop three seawater reverse osmosis desalination plants in Saudi Arabia. Under the terms of the MoU, SWCC will design, build, supply, test and commission the plants in Duba, Wajh and Haql, along the Red Sea coast in the western region of the country.

Since the beginning of the bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore, both countries have collectively made huge strides in their economic engagements. The signing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA) on 15 December 2008 was an important milestone as Singapore is the first country outside of the Middle East to conclude an FTA with the GCC (comprising Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain and Oman). The GSFTA has also encouraged a greater recognition of Singapore's Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Muis) Halal standards in the six GCC countries.

Singapore Business Federation has been at the forefront of creating opportunities

between the business communities on both sides, some of the highlights of its interactions worth mentioning.

Saudi Arabia First

Historically, since the formation of SBF in 2003, Saudi Arabia has been one of the first few countries that we engaged with in a substantial way. SBF sent our very first business delegation to Saudi Arabia in 2006, following the visit to Singapore of His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In recent years, SBF has organised a business mission to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2014 to coincide with the visit of the then Singapore Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Mr Lee Yi Shyan.

SBF is currently exploring the possibility of working with Aramco Representative office in Singapore to facilitate oil and gas companies from both Singapore and Saudi Arabia to expand their business activities into new geographic locations and diversify these engagements beyond its petroleum operations.

In alignment with KSA Vision 2030 to grow and diversify the Saudi economy, SBF has been a strong advocate to promote Saudi as an investment and business destination among the Singapore companies in the power generation, oil and gas, infrastructure, heavy industries, water and waste management sectors. Saudi Arabia is diversifying its economy and has new growth plans in place, based on Vision 2030, SBF is helping Singapore businesses plan to tap on these opportunities. As a business body

SBF has been a strong advocate in promoting the sectors of opportunities in oil and gas, infrastructure, building and construction, healthcare, waste and water management, power generation, education and tourism in Saudi Arabia to Singapore companies.

we are highlighting the areas we would recommend Singapore companies to look at, while investing in Saudi Arabia.

Vision 2030 Opportunities

Saudi Arabia's diversification strategies will open up new business opportunities in oil and gas, education and human capital development, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), building and construction, water and power, healthcare, transport and logistics sectors.

The Saudi government has announced plans to fund large scale infrastructure projects aimed at attracting foreign and private investment. Many of these projects will be run on a public-private-partnership (PPP) basis, and will involve the privatisation of existing government entities. This initiative opens up new opportunities for Singapore companies in the infrastructure, building and construction, water and power, power generation sectors.

For example, Napier Healthcare, a leading Singapore healthcare technology and services provider, entered into a strategic partnership with M Group on 23 April 2014 to bring Healthcare Information Technology solutions to healthcare providers in Saudi Arabia. This collaboration authorizes M Group to market and distribute Napier's healthcare solutions in Saudi Arabia. SBF works jointly with International Enterprise Singapore to bring these opportunities to the Singapore-based companies.

Taking into consideration the KSA Vision 2030 and its diversification strategies, SBF has been a strong advocate in promoting the sectors of opportunities in oil and gas, infrastructure, building and construction, healthcare, waste and water management, power generation, education and tourism in Saudi Arabia to Singapore companies.

Saudi Financial Sector

Another growth area which Singapore companies could consider is Saudi Arabia's financial services sector. Singapore financial companies could leverage on the city-state's reputation as a financing centre to attract Saudi companies to use the Singapore financial hub as a gateway to tap into new sources of financial service development expertise.

How SBF Can Help Saudi Companies

In answer to how SBF can help Saudi companies interested in expanding into Singapore and also penetrate into the ASEAN market, it is worthwhile pointing out that Singapore, being the global financial and logistics hub in ASEAN and blessed with an extensive and comprehensive network of free trade agreements in Asia, unparalleled connectivity and infrastructures paves the way for better market access and trade flows for both local and international companies. Singapore's extensive trade links provide companies with greater market connectivity through the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers. This positions Singapore as an attractive hub for international companies such as Aramco and Sabic to establish their regional office and use Singapore as a springboard to venture into Greater Asia.

Singapore can partner with Saudi Arabia to play a role in helping Saudi Arabia achieve its goal of economic diversification beyond the oil and gas sectors, for example, in education and human capital development, Information and Communication Technology, building and construction, water and power, healthcare, transport and logistics.

Transparent Legal Framework

The city-state, from its position as a global financial centre, can partner Saudi Arabia to export capital to invest in the ASEAN region. Singapore offers investors direct

access to a plethora of regional and global investment opportunities. Singapore's robust and transparent legal framework coupled with its economic and political stability provides the ideal location for Saudi companies to tap into asset investment opportunities in the region.

SBF can also facilitate Saudi companies in establishing their business presence in Singapore, and use the country as the regional hub for doing business in Greater Asia.

The GCC-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA), the first ever FTA in force between the GCC countries and a non-Middle East country, was signed on 15 December 2008 and came into effect on 1 September 2013. This agreement is pivotal to strengthening ties and economic engagements between Singapore and the GCC countries comprising Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

The GSFTA presents an excellent opportunity for Saudi Arabia and other GCC companies to use Singapore as a base to expand into Greater Asia. Saudi companies under GSFTA can enjoy preferential access to Singapore, covering trade in goods, trade in services, investments, rules of origin, customs procedures, government procurement, electronic commerce and economic cooperation. Saudi companies can tap onto Singapore's multi trade pact to export to the rest of the ASEAN region.

Interested in Saudi Arabia?

SBF organises various conferences, seminars and business missions for the Middle East market. If you would like to obtain more information on the upcoming Middle East activities, you can contact SBF secretariat team at email address: market.amea@sbf.org.sg



SINGAPORE'S LEADING MANUFACTURING FEDERATION EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE IN KSA'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMF) recognise how Saudi Arabia's stable economic and political climate makes it a very attractive market for Singapore investors



Mr Douglas Foo BBM,
President of the Singapore Manufacturing Federation

LET me extend my heartiest wishes to the Government and People of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of their 87th National Day!

Bilateral relation between Singapore and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been going from strength to strength since the 1970s. Many Singapore enterprises such as food manufacturers, retailers and logistics companies have developed various businesses in Saudi Arabia. Today, Singapore-based investors are one of the most active Asian investors in Saudi Arabia and the State remains one of our largest trading partners in the Middle East.

The Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) is delighted to help contribute to the building of the excellent ties between the two nations. As a leading Federation representing Singapore's manufacturing sector,

SMF is committed to encourage our 3,000 over member-companies to seek markets abroad and with the stable economic and political climate, Saudi Arabia is an extremely attractive market for Singapore investors.

SMF is also an authorized agency in Singapore of the Singapore Customs to issue Certificates for Origin to all countries. I would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation to the Saudi Arabia Customs authority for their recognition of SMF's authorization to issue trade documents to Saudi Arabia.

I believe the relations between Singapore and Saudi Arabia will continue to advance in the coming years. I take this opportunity to wish the King of Saudi Arabia and his government and people continued good health, progress and prosperity.

“SMF is also an authorized agency in Singapore of the Singapore Customs to issue Certificates for Origin to all countries. I would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation to the Saudi Arabia Customs authority for their recognition of SMF's authorization to issue trade documents to Saudi Arabia.”

OLIVIA LUM ON HYFLUX & ITS MIDDLE EAST EXPERIENCE

A Singapore company that is making waves – offering resource management and infrastructure solutions on a global scale. Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle, East asks its CEO what makes Hyflux unique and her thoughts on doing business with Saudi Arabia



*(Above): Olivia Lum, CEO of Hyflux Ltd.
(Top): Hyflux secured Singapore's second and largest seawater desalination project that incorporated an on-site 411 MW combined cycle power plant*

Hyflux is playing a great role by providing specialized solutions to ease the water needs of the world, please share with us, how it all began.

While working at Glaxo Pharmaceutical, I saw how companies faced challenges treating the wastewater from their production processes. It occurred to me that these were problems that needed business solutions and these problems would only get worse due to rising urbanisation and industrialisation.

Seeing this as an opportunity, I left Glaxo to start Hydrochem, the precursor to Hyflux Ltd in 1989. It was a small start-up company with just two employees and traded in water treatment system during which, the company acquired knowledge of membrane installation, and we eventually went on to produce the first-generation of Kristal® hollow-fibre ultrafiltration membranes that are now installed in some of the world's largest membrane-based desalination plants.

Hyflux's dream is to improve and transform people's lives through sustainable technology and constant innovation. As water treatment specialists, we are distinctive in our ability to address the challenges at every point of the entire water value chain. We are one of the pioneers in membrane-based water recycling and desalination solutions in Singapore, with landmark projects such as Singapore's first NEWater plant and Singapore's first and second seawater reverse osmosis desalination plants. Globally, we have also built some of the world's largest seawater reverse osmosis desalination plants in Algeria and China.

Over the years, Hyflux's role has evolved from a pure water-play into a leading sustainable solutions provider focusing on water, energy and waste-to-energy. Hyflux is currently constructing the TuasOne waste-to-energy project in Singapore, which when completed, will be the largest waste-to-energy plant in

“Saudi Arabia is very progressive in the desalination space and the opportunity to work on projects in the Kingdom have been critical in deepening our capabilities in addressing the water needs in the region.”

Singapore with capacity to process 3600 tonnes of waste and generate 120MW of electricity per day. The synergies between water, power and waste provide for a sustainable, integrated approach to urban development.

Recently Hyflux received the Letter of Award to develop three desalination plants in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; could you tell us about this project?

Hyflux is honoured to be given the opportunity to design, build, supply, test and commission three seawater reverse osmosis desalination plants in Duba, Wajh and Haql. The desalination plants, valued at a combined estimate of SAR 687 million (approx. USD\$180 million), will each have a designed capacity of 16,000 m³/day. The plants will employ reverse osmosis membrane technologies to treat the seawater into water suitable for potable use.

How has your experience working with Saudi Arabian market been so far and what growth potential do you see for your company?

We have made steady progress in the Saudi Arabian market in recent years with projects for the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) and industrial players such as Snamprogetti Saudi Arabia, a subsidiary of Saipem. (see box story on this page). In 2016, Hyflux augmented the Yanbu Desalination Plant by adding 30,000 m³ of water per day as well as supplied a seawater reverse osmosis and sulphate removal facilities package in Khurais, on top of the above mentioned project with SWCC to design and



Singapore's Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Masagos Zulkifli visited the Saudi Water & Environment Forum in Riyadh where he also witnessed the signing of an MoU (pictured above) between Saudi Arabia's Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) and Hydrochem (the Saudi subsidiary of Singapore-based Hyflux). The agreement calls for Hyflux to build three seawater reverse osmosis desalination plants in Duba, Wajh, and Al Haql. Their expertise includes membrane-based desalination and integration of wastewater treatment, water reclamation and industrial water supply into a closed loop.

build three 16,000 m³/day seawater reverse osmosis desalination plants in Duba, Wajh and Haql. The projects undertaken have further strengthened our market knowledge and track record in the KSA.

Saudi Arabia is very progressive in the desalination space and the opportunity to work on projects in the Kingdom have been critical in deepening our capabilities in addressing the water needs in the region. With the ongoing privatisation programme in the Saudi water sector as well as the current push for renewable energy, we see strong potential for Hyflux to add value to Saudi Arabia in offering sustainable environmental solutions in this market going forward. We are keen to grow our presence in the kingdom and have been actively pursuing opportunities to offer our desalination and renewable energy solutions.

Please share with us your impression of the Kingdom on your recent visit?

The Kingdom is progressing at a very fast pace, especially in the area of infrastructure development. Aligned with Vision 2030, the government has also put in place reforms through the National Transformation Program. This provides an opportunity for foreign players, like Hyflux, to expand our presence in the Kingdom in the infrastructural areas of water and renewable energy.

What is your advice to other investors keen on the Saudi market?

It is imperative to understand Saudi etiquette when conducting business in Saudi Arabia, such as strictly observing ranks and statuses as well as to address associates

with their appropriate titles in all social and business occasions. Business in Saudi Arabia is very much based on personal references hence, establishing trust between business partners is key and investors must deliver on their word to maintain trust. Saudis prefer face-to-face meetings when conducting business discussions and investors keen on the Saudi market must allow time for the business counterparts to evaluate the source of a proposal as much as the content as well as understand that Saudis implicitly mistrust associates who attempt in pressuring them.

In addition, foreigners should recognise that Saudis place great emphasis on hospitality. Armed with the above knowledge, investors should be comfortable in the Saudi Arabian business environment.

TRADE: SAUDI ARABIA & SINGAPORE RENEW IMPETUS FOR BRIGHTER PROSPECTS

Khalid S. Halawani, the Saudi Arabian Commercial Counselor provides a concise sketch of trade and activities undertaken the past year to boost economic bilateral relations



Khalid S. Halawani, Saudi Commercial Counselor of the Saudi Commercial Office for ASEAN & Pacific Region, is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

THE Republic of Singapore and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have for 40 years now shared long and mutually beneficial bilateral relations, powered by cooperation in many sectors that are at the heart of their socio-economic deliberations. Both countries step into a new era of collaborations and co-operation that are aimed at growth and development to an even better and brighter future for their people.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Singapore have established solid ties based on trust and respect since the establishment of bilateral relations 40 years ago. The relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore are excellent and have been growing exponentially over the years. Visits of high-level officials between the two countries, exchanged in recent years have served to heighten this strong bond.

Direction of Saudi Economy

Saudi Arabia and Singapore cooperate on many fronts—including trade, investment, finance, customs, business, security, water resources, the environment, transport, education and health. The signing of the General Agreement on Cooperation by the two nations have also helped strengthen close bilateral relations between the Kingdom and Singapore in areas such as trade, investment, technical cooperation, tourism and exchange between SMEs and infrastructure. With the direction of the Saudi economy towards diversification and opening up new opportunities for friend countries there are even more opportunities for these relations to grow.

The Saudi-Singapore Business Council (SSBC) was established in 2006 to boost bilateral trade and investment relations

between the two countries. Additionally there is also a highly fruitful cooperation between the two countries in the field of education, In 2013, the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore signed a MOU with Saudi Arabia's Education Development Company to develop the level of school leaders in Saudi Arabia; thousands of school principals have attended training programs at the National Institute of Education in Singapore over the last few years.

Saudi Arabia and Singapore signed agreement of avoidance of double taxation (DTA)—effective from July 2011. This agreement has been pivotal in encouraging and facilitating cross-border trade and investment between the two countries even further.

Commercial and Economic Relations

Trade is one of the most important pillars of the bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore. Saudi Arabia is considered a major trading partner with Singapore in the Middle East region. Singapore has been the first country outside the Middle East to enter into a free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which will continue to have a major impact on Singapore's economic partnership with Saudi Arabia and the GCC.

The volume of traded between the two counties in 2016 is 8.62 USD billions. But there is no room for complacency in this very important collaboration between the two countries...which reaches way beyond the economic framework of both countries.

Volume of Trade between Saudi Arabia and Singapore

Year	Export	Import	Balance of Trade
2010	10114.93	597.87	9517.07
2011	16106.13	668.27	15437.87
2012	14288.53	1078.40	13210.13
2013	11700.27	1637.87	10026.40
2014	12479.00	1393.00	11086.00
2015	7772	780.00	6992.00

Figures in US\$. Source: Dept. of Statistic- Saudi Arabia

There is still a need to do more to enhance business opportunities in both countries; Singaporean companies have a modest presence in Saudi Arabia but are working apace to increase their footprint in the Kingdom. We have many successful examples of trade cooperation, such as that of the Singapore International

Ports Company (PSA), which built and operated a new container terminal in the King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam. Another Singaporean company built oil storage tanks in Jubail Industrial City. Changi International Airports also manages operations services at King Fahad International Airport in Dammam.

Saudi Commercial Counsellor Visits Singapore

A series of important meetings were scheduled for Saudi Commercial Counsellor Mr Khalid during his recent visit to Singapore between 21 and 23 August 2017. It was a hectic programme for Mr Khalid as he met up with Singapore's leading lights in the city-states Trade and Industry sector.

A meeting was set up between the Saudi Commercial Counsellor Mr. Khalid S Halawani and Mr. Kashnan Dara, Senior Assistant Director – South Asia & Middle East Emerging Markets Division, Important issues taken up when the two met included: the difficulties the Saudi business face getting a visa to Singapore. The forthcoming visit of his Excellency the Singapore Minister of Trade and Industry to Saudi Arabia from 24 to 26 Oct 2017 and the manner in which trade relations between the two countries may be further enhanced.

The Saudi Commercial Counsellor also had a meeting with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF). This was important from the point of view of getting to meet Ms Emmeline

Director of the Global Business Group and using it as an opportunity to review the features of the Saudi vision 2030, and highlight the opportunities and facilities granted by Saudi Arabia to investors. The Saudi Commercial Counsellor also met with International Enterprise Singapore (IE).

He was able to meet Mr Mohd Senior Manager, Middles East and Africa group and learned from Mr. Nordin that the Singaporean companies have great interest in working in the Saudi market, given the fact that already there are a number of Singaporean companies who have joint ventures in the Kingdom—amongst them the likes of CAI in Jeddah and HIFLUX with its project in Yanbu. Discussions also took place on the importance of reactivation of the Saudi Singapore Business Council which has been quite dormant for some time now. An agreement was reached on the need for cooperation to enhance trade and investment relations between the two countries. In addition to all these activities the Saudi Commercial Counsellor also visited and met Singapore Business Federation and the offices of SABIC and Aramco.

“We have many successful examples of trade cooperation, such as that of the Singapore International Ports Company (PSA), which built and operated a new container terminal in the King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam. Another Singaporean company built oil storage tanks in Jubail Industrial City. Changi International Airports also manages operations services at King Fahad International Airport in Dammam.”

A WORD FROM THE CULTURAL ATTACHÉ, PROF ABDULLAH MOHAMMED AL-DHELAAN



HE Saad Saleh Al Saleh (left) with Prof. Abdullah Mohammed Al-Dhelaan during his visit to SACM

I feel honoured to be appointed the Cultural Attaché to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Singapore and am especially heartened to get to know the new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore, His Excellency Saad Saleh Al Saleh, and to receive his warm support towards me and the work of SACM. His Excellency took time to visit SACM and its staff on 14 August 2017 in spite of his busy schedule. His show of support and encouragement to me and all of my SACM team is deeply appreciated and I look forward to establishing a great relationship with him and fellow colleagues at the Saudi Embassy.

I am also excited by the prospect of making new friends in government, educational and research institutions here and seeking out collaborative initiatives in support of Saudi Arabia's long-term educational plan and research cooperation. I also hope to get to know the staff of SACM better and work with them to achieve the objectives of SACM under the auspices of the Saudi Ministry of Education in support of Saudi scholars in Singapore.

"Afaq" is a long-term educational plan approved by a Royal Decree. Under this plan, human resource investment to drive the knowledge-based economy as envisioned by the Saudi government under Vision 2030 takes centre stage. The Saudi Ministry of Education administers the King's scholarship programme which supports study in many disciplines in medicine and medical sciences, engineering, computer science and computer engineering, nanotechnology, etc. My first priority is to facilitate the admission of a higher number of Saudi scholars to Singapore universities to

pursue their Bachelor, Master or PhD degrees to benefit from the high standards of education here.

Apart from administering scholarships, SACM also represents all Saudi government agencies' interest towards educational and research collaboration with Singapore institutions. Thus my second priority is to understand the Singapore educational and academic, research and training ecosystem better so as to promote areas for cooperation.

Like any organisation, the staff of SACM are important to drive its mission. My third priority is to support and lend them greater visibility as managers in their respective fields. The face of SACM must be that of its staff and I believe that greater prominence about the roles of SACM and its staff can be achieved. Ultimately, the welfare and well-being of our Saudi scholars and their dependents must not be forgotten. These form an important facet of our work and I hope to bring the Saudi community and friends together for greater interaction through events and activities.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr Aiman M Momenah, former Cultural Attaché who returned to Saudi Arabia in December 2016, and to Mr Zaher Alshehri, who served as Acting Cultural Attaché during the interim period before the commencement of my appointment, for building new relations for and furthering the core mission of SACM.

Prof. Abdullah Mohammed Al-Dhelaan – Brief Biography

Since obtaining his PhD in Computer Science from the College of Engineering, Oregon State University in 1989, Prof. Al-Dhelaan has established his career in academia and public office in service to the government of Saudi Arabia.

Before taking up his current position as the Cultural Attaché with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Singapore, Prof. Al-Dhelaan served as Vice Dean for Academic Affairs of the Graduate School at King Saud University (KSU) between 2014 and 2017. Prior to this, he had served from 2012 to 2014 as Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research with the College of Computer & Information Sciences (CCIS). From 2009 to 2012, he served concurrently as Chairman of the Joint PhD Programme in Computer & Information Sciences and Director of the International Collaboration Unit of CCIS. When he was appointed Assistant Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Washington D.C., America, from 2006 to 2009, he was also vested with responsibilities of E-Government Project Director and Director General of the Information and Communication Centre of the mission. Some of his earlier appointments included Director of Information Centre and Chairman of Computer Science Department of CCIS as well as Deputy

Director General of the National Information Centre of the Saudi Ministry of Interior while on secondment from KSU.

Apart from his commitments in teaching as Professor in Computer Science, serving university leadership positions and managing government and university projects leveraging on information technology for the advancement of telecommunication and management capabilities over the years, Prof. Al-Dhelaan had also contributed as editorial board member of publications such as Computer Networks published by Elsevier, International Journal of Computers and Their Applications published by the International Society for Computers and Their Applications (USA) and King Saud University Journal (Computer Division) published by KSU.

As a computer scientist, Prof. Al-Dhelaan has wide-ranging expertise in computer networks and security; mobile ad-hoc networks and sensor networks with their applications; high performance computing and parallel processing; software engineering and development; e-commerce and internet banking technologies; strategic planning, deployment and management of information systems.

SAUDI EDUCATION

MINISTER'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE



Educational Study Visit by HE Dr Ahmed M. Aleisa, Saudi Minister for Education, to the Singapore Ministry of Education and National Institute of Education last October on understanding Singapore's system in nurturing students and training teachers



Left to right: Dr Aiman M Momenah, Dr Salim M Almalik, H.E. Dr Ahmed M Aleisa, Dr Janil Puthucherry, Dr Teh Liak Woon and Mr Teo Wei Jie

DR Aiman M Momenah, former Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Singapore, had the pleasure of welcoming His Excellency Dr Ahmed M Aleisa, Minister for Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Dr Salim M Almalik, Advisor and General Supervisor of International Affairs and Minister Advisor for Health Affairs on the occasion of their visit to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore on 10 October 2016. The visit followed the acceptance of the cordial invitation extended by Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Second Minister for Defence to learn more about the Singapore education system and its institutions affirming the longstanding diplomatic ties valued by both countries.

The goal of the visit was to have a better understanding of the Singapore education system vis-à-vis its vision and

outlook in educating for the 21st century, human resource policies in the recruitment and retention of teachers, and initial teacher preparation programmes. HE Dr Aleisa met Dr Janil Puthucherry, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Communications and Information at MOE (SG) headquarters. At NIE, he was hosted by the late Prof Lee Sing Kong, who was then Nanyang Technological University Vice President (Alumni and Advancement) and NIE International (NIEI) Managing Director.

During the meetings, H.E. Dr Aleisa was presented with the Singapore experience from the policy perspective of MOE (SG) in managing development of the Singapore education system by Dr Teh Liak Woon, Director of Corporate Research Office and Principal Research Specialist (Management), and Mr Teo Wei Jie, Senior Assistant Director, Human Resource Policy. The training and development perspective of NIE in managing teacher training was presented

by Dr Alexius Chia, Assistant Dean (International and School Partnerships) of the Office of Teacher Education. H.E. Dr Aleisa was also apprised of the international efforts of NIE in promoting its training expertise by the late Prof Lee Sing Kong.

Meeting Students' Aspirations

With the goals to fulfil the aspirations of students and to support the economy, the Singapore Ministry of Education had a budget of S\$12.8 billion in fiscal year 2016 to manage an education system consisting of 366 schools, 5 autonomous universities, 5 polytechnics and an institute for technical education. Since 2012, the system is increasingly innovation driven with a student-centric and values driven focus, providing multiple pathways for learning through primary and secondary schools, junior colleges, polytechnics, a technical institute and universities in recognition of different learning needs of students. Lifelong learning to help working adults to keep up with changing demands for skills to support an evolving economy is supported through SkillsFuture. Recent policy directions include the provision of firstly, a diverse education landscape affording more pathways with options; secondly, holistic education to students; and thirdly, stronger support to disadvantaged students and educators.

Enhancing Teacher Quality

Teacher quality is central to the ministry's endeavour. To attract and retain quality teachers, systems are instituted for teacher recruitment, training and continuous professional development as well as in the provision of competitive remuneration packages and opportunities for career advancement. The NIE plays a key role in initial teacher preparation by equipping teachers with a strong

Indeed, the (MOE & NIE) presentations generated numerous questions from the Saudi delegation from the role of standardised tests in relation to holistic education seeking to reduce an over-emphasis on examination results, students to teacher ratios, promotion of teacher development and growth, teachers' educational backgrounds, to understanding the changing needs of schools to guide teacher training.

educational foundation and pedagogies for enriching learning environments. Teacher education involves the inculcation of professionalism, exposure to rigorous programmes that prepare them for professional practice adopting innovative pedagogies. H.E. Dr Aleisa was also shown an NIE collaborative classroom that facilitates learning of 21st century skills through an experiential learning environment.

Interest in Holistic Education

Indeed, the presentations generated numerous questions from the Saudi delegation from the role of standardised tests in relation to holistic education seeking to reduce an over-emphasis on examination results, students to teacher ratios, promotion of teacher development and growth, teachers' educational backgrounds, to understanding the changing needs of schools to guide teacher training. The lively discussions were informative and had given useful insights into the workings of MOE (SG), NIE and NIEI in advancing their work in education.

A lunch was specially arranged on the same day for H.E. Dr Aleisa to meet Saudi scholars in Singapore with tokens of encouragement awarded to them for making good progress in their pursuit of higher education with local educational institutions. SACM is grateful for all the support and encouragement shown by its special guests to Saudi scholars during the lunch time event.



Left to right: Dr Aiman M Momenab, Dr Salim M Almalik, H.E. Dr Ahmed M Aleisa, and the late Prof Lee Sing Kong



Guests at the lunch hosted for H.E. Dr Ahmed M Aleisa

SACM NETWORKING DINNER

SAUDI STYLE! *SACM supports educational and cultural exchanges*

Networking Dinner 2017



(Above left): Prof Andrew Wee at the podium addressing guests at the event which brought together representatives from NUS, Saudi Embassy and leading Saudi Arabian companies in Singapore, Saudi scholars and NUS students

SINCE bilateral relations were established 40 years ago, Saudi Arabia and Singapore have enjoyed a solid relationship based on mutual trust and respect. As part of the continuous efforts in bridging ties, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Singapore supports educational and cultural exchanges between institutions of higher learning. This would allow Saudi students to actively learn from different cultures to prepare for opportunities which is very important in an inter-connected world and especially relevant to Saudi Vision 2030, the country's long term blueprint to enhance and realise her people's potential.

In line with this objective, on 31 March 2017, SACM hosted Networking Dinner 2017 that also invited distinguished Professor Andrew Wee, National University of Singapore (NUS) Vice President for University and Global Relations. Specially invited guests included officials from Saudi Embassy



Saudi scholars with Singaporean and international students from NUS

and Saudi companies – Aramco, SABIC and Saudi Airlines – in addition to representatives from NUS; Saudi scholars and international students studying in NUS and other Singapore institutions; and Singaporean university students.

Mr Zaher Alshehri, then Acting Cultural Attaché of SACM in Singapore in his welcoming speech said, "Relations have gone from strength to strength and with continued efforts, these will be taken to higher levels." He also accorded his deepest appreciation to the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz

Al-Saud, the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Naif Al-Saud, and the Deputy Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud, and to the Education Minister Dr Ahmed M Aleisa together with all his deputies at the Ministry of Education for the comprehensive support granted to the Cultural Mission to carry out its objectives.

Prof Andrew Wee, in his address, shared about the ever-expanding areas of knowledge, as well as the educational and cultural collaboration between NUS and the Kingdom contributing to stronger ties. Prof Wee also spoke of the importance of tapping on innovation to ensure the success of a country and the shared outlook of both the Republic and the Kingdom in education, which is to provide more opportunities for students to venture overseas for academic endeavours. As for the Saudi scholars in NUS, Prof Wee was pleased to commend that they have progressed well in their

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SACM'S PARTICIPATION IN TEMASEK POLYTECHNIC'S GLOBAL COMMUNITY DAY



(Above, kleft): Dr Ramia Khledi presenting Arabic coffee to Dr Janil Puthucheary with Mr Zaher Alsbehri (in jacket) looking on. (Above, right): Visitors in traditional garments with Mr Rami Gommosani (fifth from left)

THE Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) in Singapore participated in Temasek Polytechnic's (TP) Global Community Day held on 7 July 2017. The event is part of the polytechnic's internationalization strategy involving staff, students from all polytechnics, and members from public and private partner organisations including foreign embassies. This year's theme was ASEAN@50 with the 50th anniversary of ASEAN's founding as its backdrop. As some of the objectives of the event in promoting networking, fostering ties and bringing diverse arts and cultures closer to the local

community resonate with the objectives of the cultural mission, SACM set up an Arabic coffee station and an activities area to bring Saudi culture and traditions closer to the visitors.

Spiced Coffee

Dr Ramia Khledi together with her husband, Mr Rami Gommosani, were on hand to prepare the coffee and serve it as a treat with dates while explaining to visitors how it is prepared with spices, the hospitality extended to guests when it is served and the benefits of the beverage when it is taken with dates. Many visitors found

its taste uniquely differently from the coffee blends that are commonly available from local cafés and coffee shops. They were pleasantly surprised by how the taste of dates blended so well with that of Arabic coffee. Some even asked if Arabic coffee can be bought in Singapore. While instant Arabic coffee blends are available, these are not sold in Singapore.

The coffee station was visited by the Guest of Honour, Dr Janil Puthucheary, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Communications and Information,

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studies. Strong ties were affirmed through an award of appreciation presented by SACM to NUS and the exchange of gifts between the Saudi Embassy and NUS.

Representing Saudi scholars in Singapore, Dr Susan Alghamdi, who is training under a Clinical Fellowship in Gynaecology Oncology with the National University Hospital said, "Singapore holds an extraordinary reputation as an epicenter for higher education, research and innovation." Her fellow colleagues and supervisors at the hospital have enriched her learning journey

enormously while independence has increased her self-confidence and improved her interpersonal skills. Ms Dana Baghabrah, sponsored by Saudi Aramco studying for her Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Engineering) degree at NUS, expressed "People from different races can, indeed, not only live but thrive together with shared interests and values regardless of race or nationality." Diversity has developed her perspectives about the world and about respect for other cultures and their customs essential for living in a multi-racial country.

Indeed, the dinner atmosphere was vibrant and energetic. Videos were shown pointing to Saudi Arabia's aspirations in education supporting its Vision 2030, and featuring cultural clips of Saudi songs and dances performed by Saudis of different ethnicities. Guests took photographs in a Bedouin tent teamed with Middle Eastern musical instruments and decorative items. It was a night to remember at the Four Seasons Hotel when guests bonded over a scrumptious dinner and networked with new friends amidst laughter and enthusiastic exchanges, strengthening resolve in building relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

invited by Temasek Polytechnic. He was received by Mr Zaher Alshehri, then Acting Cultural Attaché, and given a short presentation by Dr Ramia.

Rich Cultural Heritage

The activities area was set up under a Bedouin tent featuring middle-eastern musical instruments and traditional pots for coffee making on display. Traditional garments were provided for visitors to put on and Arabic coffee with dates to sample. By further providing complimentary books titled “Mecca: The Holy Sanctuary”, “Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi” and “Kaaba’s Kiswa (Garment)” and playing of a video on the Kingdom’s Vision 2030, SACM aimed to project a multifaceted kingdom that embraces its rich

cultural heritage and traditions steeped in religious faith and at the same time that is rapidly advancing with a resolve to reduce its dependence on oil as its main economic driver.

The area was a hive of activities when visitors tried the traditional garments for photographing, sat under the tent to feel the warmth and comfort offered by the soft silk carpet and an abundance of cushions, watched Vision 2030 with its melodic accompaniment, and sampled aromatic coffee with dates. Photograph taking



Visitors at SACM's activities area

opportunities abound to take back fond memories of a truly memorable experience.

FOND MEMORIES OF A SAUDI SCHOLAR by Mr Abdulrahman Fabad Alshimeimri



Abdulrahman Alshimeimri (fifth from left) with friends and project group mates from NUS

Right after I graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with a Master of Science in Management, I was offered a Teaching Assistant position in early 2017 by the College of Business of King Saud University in Riyadh. My life has since been a whirl of activity filled with teaching responsibilities that I fully enjoy. I am now reaping the fruits of my labours. My experiences in Singapore have broadened my perspectives and renewed a deep sense of belief in myself, God willing, to achieve what I set my heart and mind to do.

Singapore may first be remembered by many of us for its diversity in its people, convenient public transportation system, strict laws, and order in almost everything.

In fact, it has much more to offer to anyone seeking higher education here. While I generally felt welcomed be it on campus or in other social settings, more importantly, I felt extremely privileged to study in an environment where education standards are high, faculty members knowledgeable, peers motivating, and amenities conveniently available. Classes are truly global with many international students

and all are encouraged to contribute to discussions, get involved and learn. The diversity of my classmates in terms of their different national and cultural backgrounds brought new dimensions to my experiences. Through interaction with my classmates, I have grown more tolerant towards other cultures and learned the importance of living in harmony.

In addition, being away from family, I have learnt to take personal responsibility and be resilient to achieve academic success. My experience has helped me to not only gather knowledge, but also develop tenacity and enhance mindfulness that all come together to draw out the best in me. What advice

would I give to my countrymen who wish to study in Singapore? First, set goals and priorities right and focus on them. Second, acknowledge different people and cultures, and for those who might not be agreeable, stay tolerant. Third, bear in mind that the learning environment is different, and so be flexible to learn again from the start. Lastly, don't be afraid. Make the best of the golden opportunity to study in Singapore, a first world country with many firsts in its education system with a few of the best universities in Asia offering many conveniences for learning, living and travelling.

Through the King's scholarship programme, my country had given me a great study opportunity that I cherished. With my return to Saudi Arabia to teach, I aim to transfer my knowledge and experiences for the progress of my beloved country. My dream is to see my country advance to the top of the world in terms of education, culture, and happiness. It is a real privilege to be able to participate in my country's advancement. Finally, I hope the next generation of Saudis will continue to thrive at every level amidst strong competition to make Saudi Arabia a leading country adhering to the teachings of Islam.

ARAMCO LIGHTS UP LIVES

Saudi energy giant expands its presence and deepens commitment to the communities in regions where it operates



(From L to R): Mr. Said Al-Hadrami, VP, Intl Ops, Saudi Aramco (2nd from L) and Mr. Nader Al-Arfaj, MD, Aramco Asia Singapore (2nd from R) presenting the house key to the proud new homeowner in Kabil Village, Batam, Indonesia. Mr. Nader Al-Arfaj, MD, Aramco Asia S'pore (2nd from R) and Ms. Mamie Cheong, CEO, Enactus Singapore (1st from R) presenting the first prize of the Aramco-Enactus Innovative Challenge to NTU's Team Second Nature. Singapore participants with Aramco Singapore employees at the Aramco-Enactus Innovative Challenge.

SAUDI Aramco's presence in Singapore dates back to 1990 and in 1993, a representative office was set up to provide marketing services to promote the sales and develop new markets for Saudi crude oil and refined petroleum products in the far East region outside of Japan, Korea and China.

In 2014, Saudi Aramco's affiliate Aramco Asia Singapore (Aramco Singapore) was established to provide crude oil marketing, material sourcing, supply chain logistics, inspection and other engineering services as a testament of Aramco's commitment to its customers and partners in South East Asia, Indian Sub-continent and Australasia.

In May 2015, Aramco Trading set up Saudi Aramco Trading Singapore (SATS) and today, the two offices employ over 30 employees in Singapore. Over the past few years, Saudi Aramco has aggressively stepped up its investment in Asia as the region remains dominant as the company's biggest market for its crude oil and chemical products.

Besides expanding its footprint in Asia, Aramco is also focused on improving the communities in the region and has a long tradition of giving generously to charitable agencies and institutions working with the least fortunate members communities around the world. In 2016, Aramco launched the 'Aramco

-Enactus Innovative Challenge' with Enactus as part of the company's CSR initiative.

"At the heart of this citizenship programme is our core belief in protecting and preserving the environment for the future generation, and exerting positive influence on a global scale. Empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators to come up with solutions that help their communities reinforces our belief and reaffirms our commitment to Asia where we have a strong presence," said Mr. Nabil Al-Nuaim, president and CEO, Aramco Asia.

Encouraging Innovative Solutions

Designed to help university students in five Asian countries including China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and the Philippines develop innovative solutions that address issues related to climate change, environmental sustainability and energy efficiency in their communities, the programme is being implemented from December 2016 to November 2017.

To date, 37 workshops were conducted and 2062 students from 78 institutions participated in the programme, with the total of 161 applications submitted. The undergraduate students have developed and presented their projects for judging at the local competition. Winners from the local competitions will then advance

to the "Aramco Asia Cup" Finals to be held in Beijing, China on 5 November 2017.

In Singapore, the National Finals was held on 8 September 2017. *Team Second Nature* from Nanyang Technology University was named champion and will represent Singapore to compete with other teams from China, Philippines, Malaysia and South Korea at "Aramco Asia Cup" Finals.

"Singapore has ratified the Paris Agreement and this project allows us to support government's commitment to climate action. The Aramco-Enactus Innovative Challenge aims to inspire students from a wide range of disciplines to design solutions that will address these issues and improve the lives of those in the society," said Nader Al-Arfaj, Managing Director Aramco Asia Singapore.

Habitat for Humanity

Aramco Singapore has also partnered with Habitat for Humanity Singapore. In 2016, Aramco's donation provided for the building of 15 houses in Kabil Village in Batam, Indonesia.

The Batam Build is a very meaningful project and this year, Aramco has made another donation that will enable the building of another 18 houses to provide more families with safe shelters.



ENGAGED, ENERGISED AND ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT ASIA

Janardhanan Ramanujalu, Vice President, South Asia and Australia & New Zealand, SABIC (Saudi Basic Industries Corporation) shared several insights on the country's and company's relationship with Singapore and Asia. He also Chairs the Board of SABIC Group in India and is a Director of this diversified Saudi manufacturing company, active in chemicals and intermediates, industrial polymers, fertilizers and metals

Engagement with Asia

SABIC envisaged Asia's dominance in manufacturing nearly more than 30 years ago. This led us to establish our presence in the region in the 1980s. We have steadily expanded our footprints in this region since, with over 40 offices and 10 manufacturing and compounding sites in China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand. Today, we are not just a local manufacturer but we also enable our materials to flow from worldwide sites to Asia.

Indeed, Asia has been a key pillar to SABIC and it now accounts for a significant share of the company's volume of business. It is essential for SABIC to continue maintaining a comprehensive participation in the market, namely on import, export, manufacturing, innovation and community development.

Partners in Key Asian Markets

Our commitment to Asia can be seen in new and expanding collaborations with partners in key markets. In China, for instance, SABIC and Sinopec, a state-owned petroleum and petrochemicals company have entered into a strategic agreement to jointly study opportunities for projects in both China and Saudi Arabia. This collaboration builds on our existing relations with Sinopec since 2009, where we entered into a 50-50 joint venture for a cracker to produce over 1 million metric ton of Ethylene annually through the Sinopec -SABIC- Tianjin Petrochemical Company.

We are also building on our strong partnership with the Shenhua Ningxia Coal Industry Group through an agreement to jointly develop a greenfield



Janardhanan Ramanujalu is based in New Delhi, India

Coal-to-Olefins complex in Ningxia to boost production of high value polymer derivatives.

In China, SABIC is also a strategic partner and strong supporter of major forums and events - amongst them, the BOAO Forum for Asia, a high-level platform for trade and economic dialogue between regional governments and business leaders, and Chinaplas, Asia's largest plastic and rubber trade exhibition.

Elsewhere in Asia, SABIC co-owns the US\$595 million SK Nexlene, a polyethylene plant with SK Global Chemical. The 50-50 joint venture with our South Korean partner is headquartered in Singapore. Such collaborations and partnerships have

enabled SABIC to further strengthen our presence in Asia and better meet the growing need of our customers for more advanced solutions.

Investments in India & China

Within SABIC, we have invested in two US\$100 million technology centers in Bengaluru, India and Shanghai, China, where several hundreds of scientists, engineers and technologists research and develop cutting-edge materials for tomorrow's needs. These and our advanced application development centers in Moka, Japan and Sungam, Korea are an integral piece in our strategy to be the preferred world leader in chemicals.

SABIC & Singapore

Singapore is not only an important trading and transshipment hub but also a key manufacturing hub for SABIC in Asia. The country's multiple market access frameworks and Free Trade Agreements with its regional neighbours have enabled us to gain easier access to major markets in Asia, such as China and India.

Furthermore, its accessibility to major shipping routes, connectivity to key ports in the region and its well-developed logistics and port infrastructure have been very helpful to us in maintaining timely and efficient deliveries to our customers, especially when we ship over 1 million tons of our products through and out of Singapore annually.

We have been enjoying good relations with the Singapore government since SABIC was established here in 1991. The fruitful collaborations we have with the various economic and trade agencies

Our downstream strategy, aimed at developing small and medium sized enterprises will support the Kingdom's vision in attracting greater investments in innovation, technology, manufacturing, procurement and in creating thousands of high-skilled and specialized jobs. It will also help create a culture of entrepreneurship and a more vibrant business climate overall.

(e.g. the Port Authority of Singapore and International Enterprise Singapore) over the years have allowed us to expand our business space within the region, and access proper channels to surface trade and business issues within ASEAN.

Challenge of Lower Oil Prices

Oil prices currently being low is a challenge for exporting economies. But as you may know, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has launched a major transformation project to boost its competitiveness with a comprehensive range of strategies under Saudi Vision 2030.

SABIC itself, is in its third year of transformation to become a more agile, cost-efficient and customer-focused organization. We are investing in innovation and technology, and our portfolios are adapting to SABIC's strengths and future market demand.

Among other things, Global Segment Teams have been put in place to focus on parts of the business where we can create value and increase differentiation of our portfolio. Developing a more intimate understanding of our customers' needs will continue to be one of our focus areas and key thrusts to achieve our business goals.

Improving Product Performance

We are also constantly working to improve the performance of our products, so as to achieve lighter weight and greater durability, and reduce the environmental impact of our resins across the industries we serve.

A key example of our transformation is our CO₂ capture and utilization plant, the largest in the world, which opened in 2015 at United, a SABIC affiliate in Saudi Arabia. With its capacity to purify up to 500,000 metric tons of CO₂ from the production of ethylene glycol every year (equivalent to around the amount of greenhouse emissions by nearly 53,000

homes), the plant has boosted the overall operational efficiency of the company.

With our focus on technology and the development of our people, we will be able to surmount our challenges and achieve our vision.

SABIC and Vision 2030

As a global enterprise that has its roots in Saudi Arabia, SABIC is fully committed to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and National Transformation Program. We are well placed in contributing towards the government's goals of a more diverse structure of economic development and sustainable job creation in Saudi Arabia.

Our downstream strategy, aimed at developing small and medium sized enterprises will support the Kingdom's vision in attracting greater investments in innovation, technology, manufacturing, procurement and in creating thousands of high-skilled and specialized jobs. It will also help create a culture of entrepreneurship and a more vibrant business climate overall.

Other steps in which SABIC is taking to support Vision 2030 include the development of a fully integrated crude oil-to-chemicals complex in Saudi Arabia. The complex which is being developed in partnership with Saudi Aramco will be able to process petroleum directly into chemicals, allowing substantial cost savings on intermediaries which were previously needed in turning petroleum into plastics.

As a major industrial company of Saudi Arabia, SABIC will play a critical role in supporting Vision 2030.

Active CSR Programmes

We are mindful that the success of our business depends on the sustainability of our environment and the wellness of the communities we operate in. Globally,

SABIC runs a range of CSR programmes and initiatives each year under four priority areas: Science and Technology Education, Environmental Protection, Health and Wellness, and Water and Sustainable Agriculture.

This year, in Asia, we expect to run more than a dozen programmes, contributing over 2,000 volunteer hours across countries such as China, India, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand.

In India, we have undertaken a major initiative named 'They-See-They-Learn' to promote healthcare and support students to learn better in school. The eye care initiative offers vision screening and provides spectacles and treatment to children found with correctible vision. The programme which started in 2014 has crossed the milestone of touching 100,000 students in 2017. We are now working with the local education ministry to study if this would help reduce the dropout rate of students in government schools.

SABIC has also partnered with the Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology, a premier government institution in India, to train youths in operating plastic extrusion and injection moulding machines, under a six-month residential skills development programme. The programme has since enabled hundreds of youths to gain employment in the plastic processing sector in India.

Further efforts in encouraging children and youths to continue pursuing their education are made through a global signature CSR programme, called Back-to-School which provides educational supplies to underprivileged students. The programme has touched more than 60,000 students across 16 countries, and in Asia, we have contributed over 4,500 Back-to-School kits, comprising new school bags, shoes, stationery and book

A key factor of our current success lies in our diversity of talent. In Asia, apart from our Saudi employees, who make up around one percent of our Asia workforce, you will find different Asian nationalities in each of our offices across the region.

vouchers, as well other school furniture and equipment.

Lights of Our Future is an award-winning CSR programme, which inculcates the values of saving water, energy conservation, proper waste management and reducing carbon footprint and emissions among the next generation. Using a syllabus developed in-house by SABIC employees, our volunteers share real-life examples of what governments and large corporations like SABIC have done on those issues, what was covered in the news and the consequences to our planet if we sit idly by. Since 2014, over 300 employee volunteers have dedicated more than 3000 hours to reach about 2,000 students Asia. We are in the midst of implementing the programme in other regions as well.

As a global business, we understand that our actions and vision play a foundational role in ensuring the success of future generations. As such, we are constantly

reviewing how we could expand our CSR programmes and footprints to more countries.

Role of Diversity in SABIC's Global Growth and Strategy

Even though SABIC has assets of over US\$84 billion, our Vice Chairman and CEO has emphasized that our greatest assets are our employees. We are cognizant of the fact that the achievements of our company are the results of the dedication, skills and ingenuity of our employees.

A key factor of our current success lies in our diversity of talent. In Asia, apart from our Saudi employees, who make up around one percent of our Asia workforce, you will find different Asian nationalities in each of our offices across the region.

We further promote diversity by giving employees opportunities to experience different cultures. In 2016, more than 200 SABIC employees embarked on assignments in 25 different countries.

Gender Diversity

We are also committed to gender equality and advancing women in our workforce. Currently, 9 percent of SABIC's management and leadership positions are filled by women. The SABIC Women's Network was formed to support women throughout the company in personal development, promoting women's issues in the workplace and connecting women locally and globally to build bonds and friendship.

For the continual success of our business, the skills and competency of our workforce also need to be current and relevant. That is why in 2017, we increased our budget in learning and development despite the challenging economy.

I am proud to say that these and other HR efforts and achievements have earned us the 'Top Employers Asia Pacific 2017' certification for the fourth consecutive year by the Top Employers Institute.

SABIC Corporate Profile

SABIC was founded in 1976 and began production in 1981. Today, SABIC is a global leader in diversified chemicals headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. We manufacture on a global scale in the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific. Our businesses span 50 countries with a global workforce of 35,000 employees.

SABIC's businesses are grouped into Petrochemicals, Specialties, Agri-Nutrients, and Metals.

In Asia, SABIC employs over 3,000 employees spanning over 40 office locations in Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. The company has 10 manufacturing and compounding sites in China, Japan, Korea, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and five Technology & Innovation Centers in China, India, Japan and Korea.

The company recorded net profits of US\$4.8 billion in 2016 and its total assets stood at US\$84.5 billion at the end of 2016. Among its assets are 62 world-class manufacturing and compounding plants across the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Overall production has increased from 35 million metric tons in 2001 to 72.7 million metric tons in 2016.

Fostering innovation and a spirit of ingenuity, SABIC has 12,191 global patent filings, and have significant research resources with innovation hubs in five key geographies – USA, Europe, Middle East, South East Asia and North East Asia. Over 150 new products are introduced annually in SABIC.

The Saudi Arabian Government owns 70 percent of SABIC shares with the remaining 30 percent publicly traded on the Saudi stock exchange.

CONNECTING SAUDI ARABIA AND SINGAPORE FOR 35 YEARS

While Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Singapore celebrate 40 years of bilateral ties, Saudia has acted as a connector to serve the people of the two countries.



SAUDIA started out in 1945 with a single twin-engine DC-3 (Dakota) HZ-AAX given to King Abdul Aziz as a gift by the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was followed months later with the purchase of two more DC-3s, and these formed the nucleus of what in few years later was to become one of the world's largest airlines.

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Singapore celebrate 40 years of bilateral ties, Saudia has acted as a connector to link the people of the two countries. Many followers of the faith on their pilgrimage of Hajj and Umrah, businessmen, traders etc. have used the airlines.

Saudia is serving the air route between Singapore and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for more than 35 years. The Airlines in Singapore offers great options which can be used to explore the Saudi destinations and also provide excellent connection to many European destinations like Paris, London, Madrid and others.

According to a Press Release His

Excellency Dr. Ghassan A. al-Shibl, chairman of the Board of Directors (CBD) of Saudi Airlines, affirmed that Saudia looks set to continue its corporatization plan and implement the initiatives of SV2020 aiming at modernizing the fleet, increasing seating capacity, improving operational efficiency, diversifying products, and developing services to keep pace with the changing needs of the hyper dynamic market.

Fleet Modernization

By mid of 2017, SAUDIA has 136 aircraft, including the latest and most advanced wide and narrow-bodied jets presently available: B787-9, B777-268L, B777-300ER, Airbus A320-200, Airbus A321, and Airbus A330-300. By end of 2017, Saudia will receive over 30 new aircrafts as a part to the fleet modernization project.

In April, 2017 Saudia launches the official website of "Saudia Holidays" (holidaysbysaudia.com) to builds rapport and enhance the relationship with guests. Expanded its network to

two new destinations (Multan, Pakistan & Port Sudan, Sudan) and planned to add two more destinations by end of 2017 (Mauritius, Mauritius & Trivandrum, India)

Prize Winning Airline

It is worth mentioning that Saudia had been awarded continuously for its outstanding operational achievements. Recently, Saudia awarded as most improved airlines by SKYTRAX which was held at the Paris Air Show in June 2017. At the same year, Canadian Tillywig foundation, specialized in assessing world-wide children-oriented entertaining products has recognized Saudia as Sterling Fund prize, in recognition of its child-passenger-bag-gift on its international flights.

The continues arrival of new aircrafts nearly doubling its fleet to 200 aircrafts by 2020, expanding its network with providing top-notch service to the guests are parts of Saudia's ambitious transformational plan and Strategic Vision by 2020 (SV2020).





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Sun Media heard the call from leaders in the diplomatic community who have expressed the need to have “a consolidated source of information to reach more institutions and Singaporeans to highlight the many initiatives undertaken by the embassies and high commissions in Singapore. They need to be given publicity to the many

events... that are currently not in the press.” IN Diplomacy is the first step towards fulfilling such an information gap. To be on our mailing list and to find out how it helps reach the people who matter to you, drop us a line at edit@sumediaonline.com www.indiplomacy.com



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40TH ANNIVERSARY HISTORY & HIGHLIGHTS



A look- back on the burgeoning warmth and understanding on mutually rewarding matters, both economic and political, that have been pivotal to these many years of bilateral relations between the two nations



In 1964 the Saudi King Saud Ibn Saud appointed Dato Syed Ibrahim Alsagoff (4th from left) as a Counsel General of the KSA. He is seen here with (1st & 3rd from left) the then HRH Crown Prince Faisal and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia

During SM Goh's visit in February 2005, both countries signed the General Agreement on Cooperation (GAC) that came into force in March 2006. The GAC paved the way for closer economic collaboration

SINGAPORE'S relations with the Middle East hark back to the times of the Abbasid Caliphate in the 9th century when the heavily laden sailing ships of Arabian merchant princes, plying the Maritime Silk Route to China, stopped by at this important port town of the Sumatran Srivijaya Empire.

First Counsel General

The warm and friendly relations between Saudi Arabia and modern Singapore can be traced back to 1964 when the Saudi King appointed Dato Syed Ibrahim Alsagoff as a Counsel General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Singapore. The Saudi Arabia embassy in Singapore was set up in 1977. Singapore in turn set up its Embassy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1981. It was in the year 2004, when Singaporean Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong initiated a series of official visits to the region and gave a filip to relations, which since then have become ever clos-

er. In 2006, HRH Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud made a special visit to Singapore.

Straddling a range of areas of cooperation this relationship with the Middle East has become even more substantive in both scope and depth over time, and nowhere is this more evident than Singapore's relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Both the government and the business community played a pivotal role in bringing Saudi-Singapore ties to a level where Singapore's business community could operate and compete with others in the Kingdom's growing market. The feeling was mutual as Singapore provided an important link to heighten the Kingdom's relationship with Asia.

SM Goh Visit in 2005

During SM Goh's visit in February 2005, both countries signed the General Agreement on Cooperation (GAC) paving the way for closer economic collaboration. The GAC came into force in March 2006. "With this agreement in hand, we can now forge ahead with even closer bilateral contacts," said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the time. Responding to media people from the Kingdom on his first visit to Saudi Arabia in November 2006 he shared; "Singapore and Saudi Arabia enjoy warm and close bilateral relations. Diplomatic ties were established in 1977, and have grown significantly over the past year, with visits by Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and Deputy Prime Minister Prof S Jayakumar to Riyadh. Closer political ties have helped to strengthen our economic relations. Saudi Arabia is Singapore's largest trading partner in

Singapore was taking steps to broaden and deepen bilateral cooperation across the board. “We aim to build a long-term and comprehensive partnership between Singapore and Saudi Arabia,” said PM Lee Hsien Loong



In April 2006 – Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and HRH Crown Prince Sultan witnessed the formation of the Singapore and Saudi Arabia Joint Business Council

the Middle East. Last year, our bilateral trade increased by more than 50% to US\$10 billion. Saudi Arabia and Singapore can serve as gateways for our respective regions. Our companies are keen to tap on the many opportunities in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.” He pointed out that after the visit by Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew in March 2006, Singapore was taking steps to broaden and deepen bilateral cooperation across the board. He shared that they were identifying potential areas for mutual cooperation, including projects in the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC). “We aim to build a long-term and comprehensive partnership between Singapore and Saudi Arabia,” he said.

In April 2006 the Saudi-Singapore Business Council (SSBC) was established when the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong witnessed the signing of a MoU between the Singapore Business Federation and the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, for the establishment of a Joint Business Council. It was the first of its kind to be formed on a B2B level to boost bilateral trade and investment relations, and continues to be endorsed by the strong and cordial relationship

between the leaders of the two nations. SAGIA also set up its first overseas office in Singapore and Saudi-Singapore business and political ties were on a fast track from thereon. On the cultural front the then Saudi ambassador to the Republic of Singapore Dr. Kurdi led from the front by inviting members of several NGOs to events such as the Saudi Arabia’s National Day Celebrations and Saudi Aramco, in an effort to bring Saudi culture closer to Singaporeans. A city of migrants Singapore is warm and welcoming as many new entrants find even to this day.

In the December of 2008 Singapore’s signing of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA) was a significant milestone as it was also the first country outside of the Middle East to conclude an FTA with the GCC (comprising Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain and Oman). The GSFTA entered into force on 1 September 2013 and will be fully implemented by 2018. It will further boost the close economic ties between Singapore and Saudi Arabia as well as other GCC countries

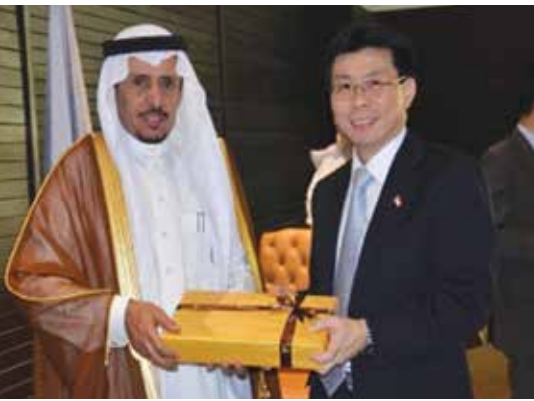
Significance of GSFTA

Highlighting the close bilateral ties between Singapore and GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, Sen-



(Top): SM Goh Chock Tong sparked the growth for more closer business ties with Saudi Arabia with his visit in 2005.

(Above): Former Saudi Arabia Ambassador Dr Mohammed Ameen Kurdi (2nd from right) hosted Singapore President SR Nathan (1st from right) and had organised several initiatives to bring Arab culture closer to Singaporeans



Minister of State for Trade and Industry and National Development Mr Lee Yi Shyan meeting Saudi business delegations: "Already there are many Singapore and GCC companies actively pursuing opportunities and partnerships with each other."

ior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and National Development, Mr Lee Yi Shyan, who was visiting Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Muscat and Oman in May 2014, along with a business delegation to promote greater economic engagement between the countries, said, "The GSFTA signifies the strong bilateral and economic ties between Singapore and the six GCC countries. Already, there are many Singapore and GCC companies actively pursuing opportunities and partnerships with each other. The GSFTA will lead to increased trade and investments over time, creating new jobs in the process."

In 2013 the bilateral trade between Singapore and Saudi Arabia was determined to worth S\$23 billion in 2013, mostly related to oil, a major import for Singapore. On the other hand non-oil industrial Saudi companies exported crude oil, petrochemicals, plastics, aluminum, minerals, electrical appliances, materials for construction. Some Saudi firms wanted Singapore as a base to

capitalize on the country's strategic position in the Asia-Pacific market.

Vision 2030 Opportunities

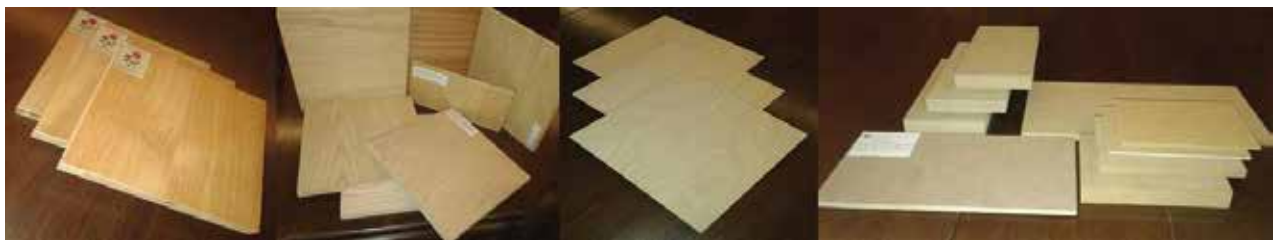
Today, Saudi Arabia is Singapore's second largest trading partner in the Middle East with bilateral trade reaching \$10 billion last year. "At the end of 2015, the total number of Saudi companies with their presence in Singapore increased to 45 from 20 in 2006," shared Ambassador Lawrence Anderson in Riyadh, on the occasion of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Singapore's national day in October 2016. He said "Singapore has a lot to offer to the Kingdom within the framework of the Saudi Vision 2030. With 2017 marking the 40th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations, there is a great interest to further strengthen Singapore-Saudi ties through various commercial opportunities presented by the Vision 2030 reforms."

The growing and improving business relations between the two nations have found their own level in many playing

Congratulations on the 87th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and 40th Anniversary of Saudi Arabia and Singapore Bilateral Ties



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fields that are increasingly relevant in today's world. On the occasion of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Yaacob Ibrahim, who was visiting the Kingdom in relation to arrangements for the Haj for the island-nations Muslim populace, urged enterprises from both countries to collaborate on developing new capabilities and opportunities—in particular in the arena of infocommunications technology (ICT) and cyber security. He shared that Singapore had invested significant effort in translating its Smart Nation vision into reality, and welcomed the opportunity to share and learn from counterparts involved in building the King Abdullah Economic City, one of Saudi Arabia's most ambitious real estate projects. Both countries, he said, have collaborated on a broad range of industries, from transportation to environmental services. He cited the example of Singaporean water treatment firm Hyflux had clinched a US\$48 million (S\$68 million) contract in 2015 to build a desalination plant in the industrial city of Yanbu.

REMEMBERING SAUDI ARABIA'S FIRST COUNSEL GENERAL IN SINGAPORE: DATO SYED IBRAHIM ALSAGOFF



(Above): Dato' Syed Ibrahim bin Omar Alsagoff. (Right): King Faisal with Singapore's former Chief Minister David Marshall



IN the area of official diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Singapore, one of the earliest connections was formed with the Alsagoffs, a leading family in Singapore's Arab community. The story started with the late Ali Ibrahim Alsagoff who was born in Mecca in 1923 and migrated to Singapore with his parents to join the branch of his family that was long established in the island republic. Ali

Ibrahim Alsagoff had become good friends with the then Crown Prince (later King) Faisal. He helped host and showed the Crown Prince around when he attended the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia 1955. As a result of this important bridge building, Ali's father the late Dato Syed Ibrahim bin Omar Alsagoff was named the first Consul General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Singapore.

Since then the family has always maintained ties with the Kingdom in their personal capacities and business connections. Whenever the opportunity presents itself the family has always actively promoted the image and advantages of the Kingdom for the Saudi Embassy here in Singapore

Special thanks to Mr Mohamad Alsagoff for the historic photos and relating the story.

**Congratulations
to the people
and Kingdom of
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on their
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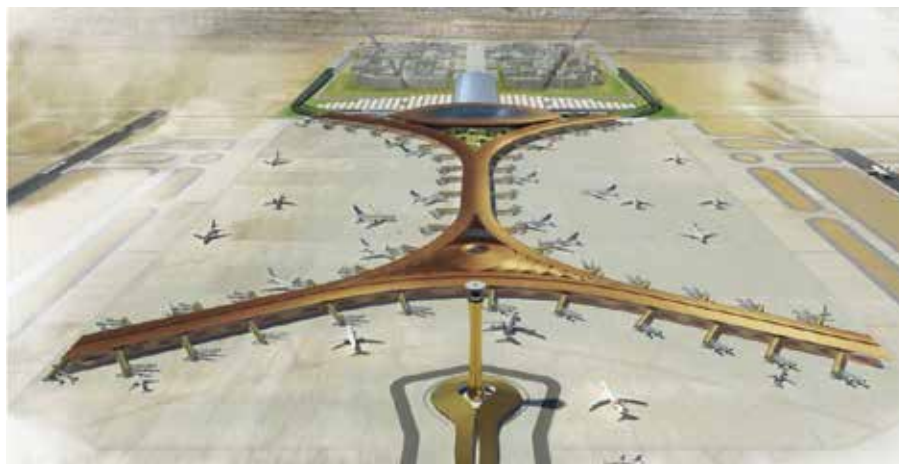




CAI WINS JEDDAH AIRPORT CONCESSION

*CAI spokesperson
Ms Teo Lay Cheng provides
more details on the project.*

*The CAI consortium
will be responsible for
the management and
development of the new
KAIA over a 20-year period*



Artist impression of the King Abdulaziz International Airport (Source: CAI)

Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International Airport (KAIA) is the busiest in Saudi Arabia – what is the current and anticipated growth of passenger volume and what are the challenges for Changi Airports International (CAI) to manage such a gateway?

KAIA in Jeddah handled a record 31 million passengers in 2016. This included business, leisure and religious travelers, and the numbers are expected to rise.

In anticipation of traffic growth, the airport is undergoing a three-stage expansion project to ultimately increase the airport's capacity to 80 million passengers per annum. The first phase involves the construction of a new state-of-the-art 720,000 square-meter passenger terminal by Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), slated for completion in 2018.

One of the challenges is the large scale of the project. The new KAIA, when operational, will have a handling capacity of 46 million passengers per annum. Key to the success of an airport of this scale is the alignment of the local experience of the existing workforce to the business objectives of the new KAIA.

The CAI consortium has been working with GACA, to get the new KAIA ready and fully operational when it opens next year. We are setting up the management team which will be responsible for the operation and development of the new KAIA.

Concurrently, we are preparing for the Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) programme for the airport. The

construction of a terminal is just the first step in setting up an airport. Before an airport can open, we need to develop the required procedures and processes and thoroughly test all facilities, systems and machinery.

The CAI consortium has been engaging stakeholders – airlines, airport partners, tenants, government authorities – to understand their requirements. We have also been preparing training and testing programmes that are specific to KAIA.

It is important that all partners, staff, systems and processes involved are prepared, trained, integrated and tested ahead of the terminal opening. The new KAIA provides an excellent opportunity to uplift the level of service. We need to ensure that all employees and airport partners are aligned in this objective, and that all guests can have a seamless experience in the new KAIA from day one of its operation.

Another challenge is to minimise the impact to the environment and local community as the air traffic grows over time. We will adopt and adhere to environmental policies that meet local and international standards to ensure that the airport expands in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

Training and development will be central to preparing the Saudi team for the transition to the new terminal, and to transform the airport. We will build a pipeline of talent that will eventually take on leadership roles and lead key functions at the new KAIA.

What are main changes to be undertaken by CAI? Will managing the airport be a total turnkey process from a new experience for end users right up to handling civil aviation matters, could you give some examples?

The concession will focus on traffic development for greater connectivity, leveraging technology to improve operational processes and uplift passenger experience, commercial development to offer travellers even more retail and F&B choices at the airport, and strengthening the cargo and other ancillary businesses.

Training and development will also form a large part of the programme to prepare the team for the transition to the new terminal, and to transform the airport into a world-class hub.

Civil aviation matters will continue to be handled by the relevant authorities.

The CAI-led consortium is designing the commercial areas to enhance the comfort and convenience of passengers, offering travellers a unique shopping and dining experience that showcases Saudi hospitality and the kingdom's rich heritage, and renowned international and local brands.

Complementing this will be a seamless passenger experience, one that leverages technology to enhance processes and service delivery to improve efficiency and productivity, while maintaining the warm Saudi hospitality at all touchpoints.

Commemorating the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
87th National Day
and
40th Anniversary of
Diplomatic Ties between
Saudi Arabia & Singapore

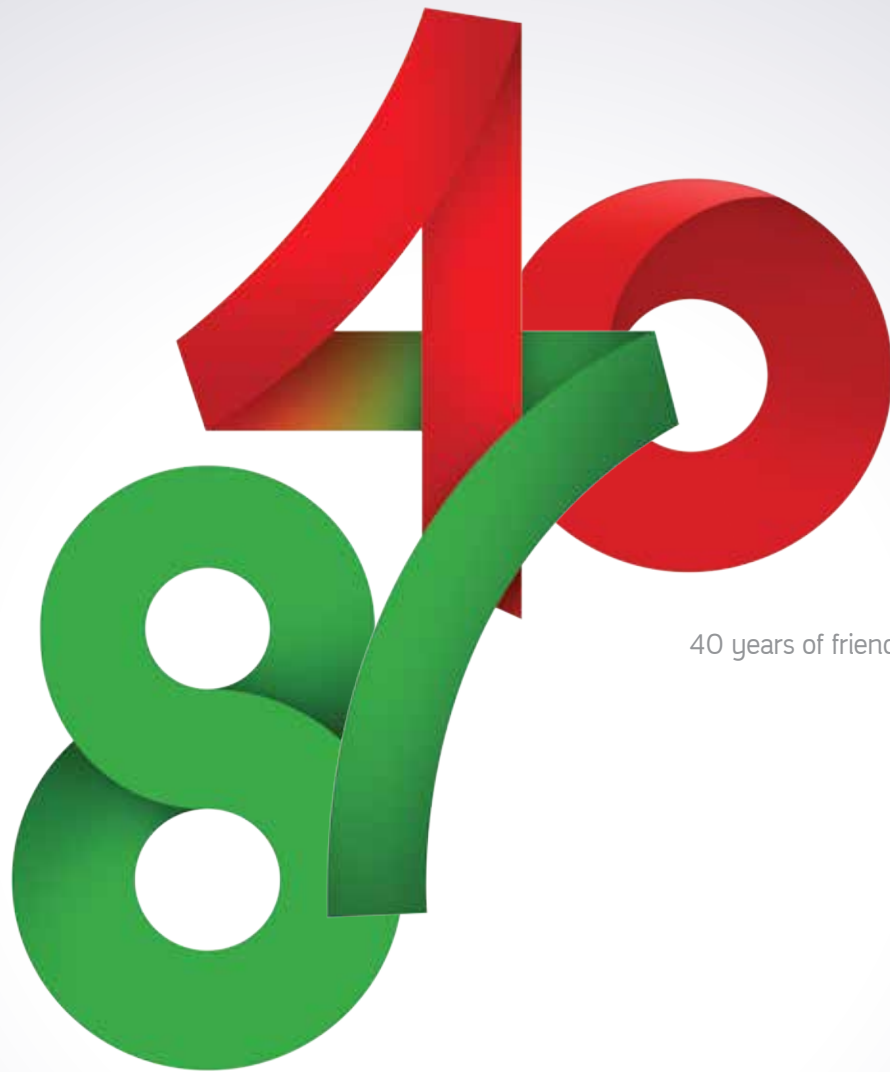


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Aramco—in collaboration with Aramco Asia Singapore—is honored to congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on its 87th National Day. This year, the Kingdom also marks 40 years of a prosperous relationship with Singapore, each nation benefiting from opportunities for growth and success. Aramco is committed to providing energy to the people of Singapore and building powerful new partnerships.

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