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YOUR GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST



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- **FRAGRANCE OF ROSES:** The Appeal of Taif Season
 - **SACM** Why Saudi Scholars Choose Singapore
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CONTENTS



At the Helm

- 2 H.M. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud**
The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
- 3 H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud**
Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
- 5 Dr. Ibrahim Bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf**
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Interview

- 7 Towards New Horizons in Saudi Society**
HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Singapore
- 11 More Can Be Done Together**
Senior Minister HE Tharman Shanmugaratnam

Events

- 10 KSA on the World Stage**
- 16 Bilateral visits, events and activities**

Cover Story

- 20 Saudi Entertainment Industry Empowered by Vision 2030**

Investment

- 22 WOF 2019 - Why Invest in Saudi Arabia?**
- 24 SAGIA - High Speed to Spur Investment**
- 26 Aramco - Expanding Refining Business in Asia**
- 27 Rotary Engineering in Saudi Arabia**
- 28 Saudi Global Ports Welcome World Largest Container**

Culture & Education

- 20 SACM Diary: Increasing Educational Opportunities Top Priority**
- 37 Meetings to Foster Collaboration**
- 38 Clinical Scholars Give Thumbs Up for Studies in Singapore**

Society

- 40 Aramco Singapore Active in Care for Community Programs**
- 43 Saudi Women: Playing Key Role in Kingdom's Transformation**

Pilgrimage

- 40 Hj Mohd Alami Musa: MUIS Making a Difference on Many Levels**
- 46 Another Successful Year for Hajj**
- 47 To Mecca: Kampong Glam and the Hajj Industry**
- 48 Tri-Ways First Class Services with Valued Customers**

Tourism

- 50 Taif & Souda Seasons: Fun & Festival Cheer**

Saudi Arabia

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST

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H.M. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques



Commemorating the **89**th NATIONAL DAY of the KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



H.R.H. Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud
Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister
and Defense Minister



Commemorating the 89th NATIONAL DAY of the KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf
The Foreign Minister of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Commemorating the 89th NATIONAL DAY of the KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Happy Saudi National Day

23 September, 2019



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للموانئ القيادة والشعب بمناسبة
اليوم الوطني 89

Happy 89th National Day
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Greetings from
Saudi Global Ports Company

الشركة السعودية العالمية للموانئ
SAUDI GLOBAL PORTS CO.



Towards **New Horizons** in Saudi Society

HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore shares his thoughts with Mrs Nomita Dhar, the Editor-in-Chief of Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East about what lies ahead in Saudi economy, and society

Significant increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) has been reported; any updates on the latest?

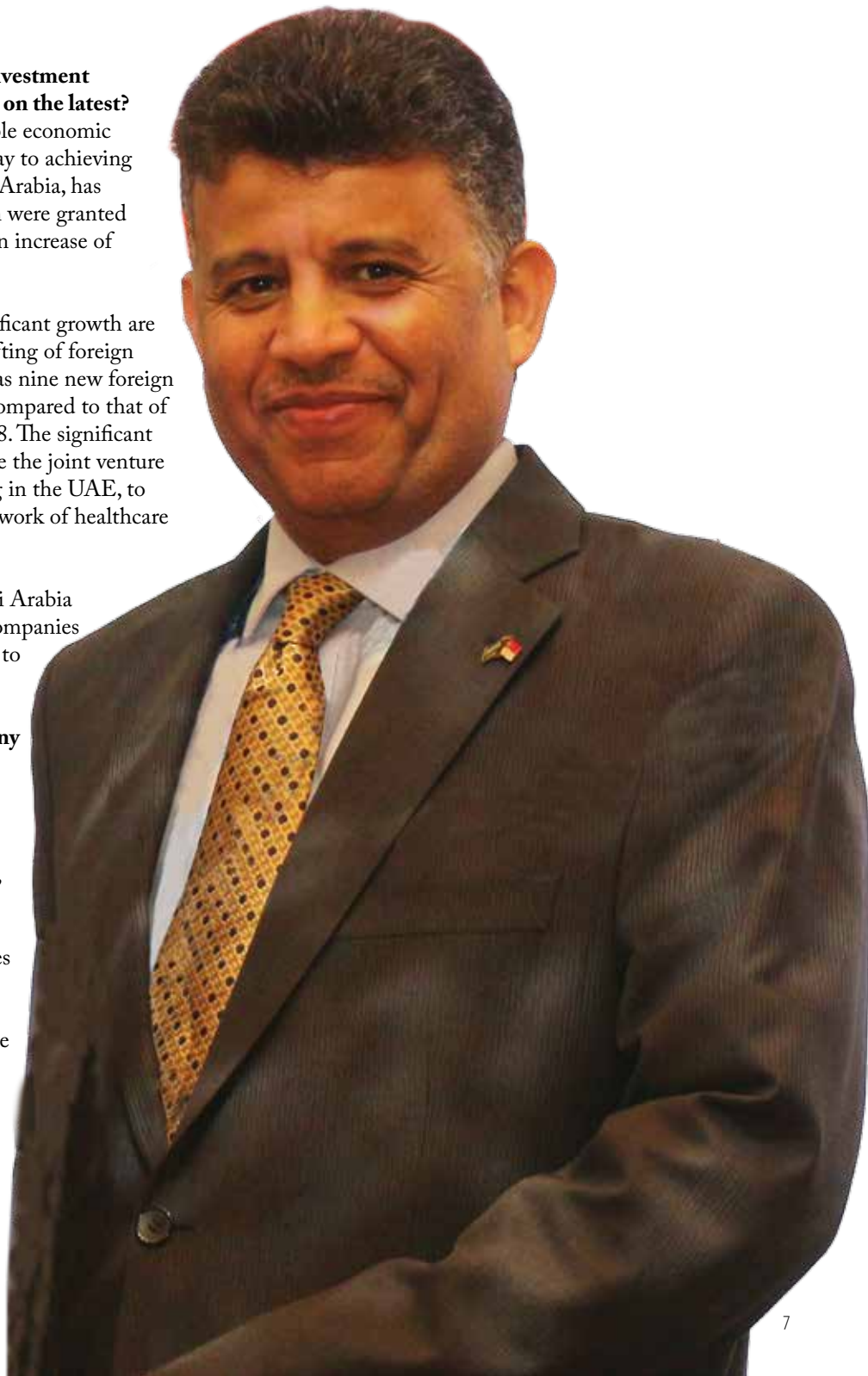
The Kingdom is witnessing a remarkable economic transformation. An important step on the way to achieving this new trajectory of development in Saudi Arabia, has been the 267 new foreign investments which were granted licenses during the first quarter of 2019 — an increase of 70% compared to the same period in 2018.

Among the sectors that have witnessed significant growth are education and health care, after the recent lifting of foreign ownership restrictions on these two sectors, as nine new foreign investments in education were established, compared to that of only one company in the first quarter of 2018. The significant achievements in the healthcare sector include the joint venture agreement with NMC Healthcare, operating in the UAE, to own and develop a comprehensive Saudi network of healthcare facilities with a capacity of up to 3,000 beds.

Foreign investment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will provide opportunities to international companies to transfer skills, expertise and best practices to the countries in which they operate.

Women in Saudi Arabia are tapping on many new opportunities created by the inclusive policies; what are the changes you see and could you share with us some examples?

The Vision 2030 stressed that Saudi women are an important component of our strength, and included a commitment to developing their talents, investing their energies and enabling them to have the right opportunities to build their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy. One of the goals of Vision 2030 is to increase the participation of women in the labour market and empower them through other objectives included in the vision, such as: reducing the unemployment rate, raising the contributions of small and medium enterprises in the GDP, and promoting volunteer work. In addition, Saudi women hold political, economic, social and





The then Deputy Prime Minister HE Tharman Shanmugaratnam (centre) with (2nd from left) Ambassador HE Saad Saleh and members of the Singapore delegation visit to Saudi Arabia between 19th to 21st January 2019

educational positions, as well as active participation in the Shura Council and the Saudi diplomatic corps.

Saudi Arabia transformation economically, socially and culturally is a priority; however, how is your government balancing these ambitions and ensuring it does not come at the cost of losing the essence of the Saudi values?

Vision 2030 strives for comprehensive development using the capabilities of the country to achieve a better future for its people while adhering to the pure faith and maintaining the authenticity of society and its constants based on the principles and values of Islam and the historical and cultural legacy of the Arab heritage.

Which are the new Singapore companies that have entered the Saudi market recently?

A delegation from the Council of Saudi Chambers visited Singapore recently to discuss cooperation and opportunities with Singaporean companies. We look forward to seeing a number of them entering the Saudi market soon.

What are the major engagements that have been taking place between Singapore and Saudi Arabia?

This year witnessed mutual visits between officials of the two countries at all levels. The aim of these visits was to exchange views and experiences and benefit from the experiences of the two countries.

HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman met HE Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam in Riyadh last February; both sides reviewed bilateral relations and discussed the promising opportunities to develop cooperation between the two sides in various fields, especially those related to the economic aspect, and the desire of the Singaporean government to contribute to programs and projects to achieve the Kingdom's Vision 2030, in addition to exchanging views on a number of issues of common interest.

HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman also met the Prime Minister of Singapore HE Mr. Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of G20 summit in Osaka, Japan last June. The two sides exchanged talks on a number of issues of common concern, especially bilateral relations in all fields.

A delegation from the Ministry of Housing, headed by HRH Prince Saud bin Talal bin Badr, Advisor to the Minister of Housing and General Supervisor of the Ministry's Agency for Housing Support visited Singapore in September and met with HE Mr. Lawrence Wong Minister of National Development and a number of Singaporean officials in the field of housing and construction to discuss cooperation opportunities between the two countries and benefit from their experiences in this area.

Saudi Arabia's 13 billion ICT plan has been much talked about; how can Singapore companies participate in these opportunities?

The ICT's five-year strategy plan will expand the Kingdom's digital capabilities in ICT, allowing the sector to pursue optimal growth in future projects as part of Vision 2030's economic reforms and to help the sector keep pace with national requirements and global developments, and also to attract more foreign technology investment; the level of Saudi manpower in the sector will be raised to 50 percent by 2030. It also aims to promote and create opportunities for women and boost foreign investment in the sector.

During the Smart Nation Summit held in Singapore last June, Deputy Minister of Communications and Information Technology HE Haytham Al-Ohali said that the Kingdom is investing about one billion US dollars to support the artificial intelligence sector with a focus on startups research and skills development and the continuation of digital capacity building programs for national cadres, and support for greater investment in innovation and technology entrepreneurship.

These measures will open the door for the Singaporean companies to look for opportunities in these projects and create more investment and cooperation between the two countries.

The visit of The Crown Prince to Singapore has been on the cards, any dates, updates?

During the meeting between HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman the Prime Minister of Singapore HE Mr. Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of G20 summit in Osaka, Japan last June, HE renewed an invitation to the Crown Prince to visit Singapore. We hope to see the visit takes place soon.

How many pilgrims from Singapore visited this year? Also please brief us on the opening up of new tourism attractions in the Kingdom?

The official quota of Singapore pilgrims is 900. We at the embassy always support requests to increase this number. We look forward to achieving this annually as Singapore's pilgrims are very well organized.

On the other hand, the Saudi seasons are aimed to open new tourism attractions into one of the most important tourist destinations in the world and to enjoy the many colors of major events and unique tourist experiences throughout the year in most of the cities and regions of the Kingdom, where they can discover the heritage of Saudi Arabia and its unique culture, and the charm of its beauty through the varied seasons.

The visa facilities at the embassy have been outsourced, please share more information on this?

This year, Saudi embassies abroad began issuing E-visas for those



Interviewer Ms Nomita Dhar with the ever hospitable Ambassador Saad Saleh at his office

wishing to perform Umrah and Hajj; this is done by submitting the visa application on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. E-visas are also granted to those wishing to attend Saudi seasons events.

Which part of Saudi Arabia do you hail from and what would you like people of Singapore to know about that part?

I was born in Riyadh but my father is from the city of Huray-mala, a small city located about 80 kilometers north of Riyadh. It is an old town famous with its landscapes and a natural valley where the environment is largely preserved.

Which are your favorite places and activities in Singapore?

There are several places to visit, even if I visit once, I want to visit again. I cannot name the places I prefer because most places in Singapore are beautiful and wonderful.

Which are the opportunities and in what sectors can Singaporean's participate in?

Under the Vision 2030 projects, Singaporean companies and investors can participate into these projects, especially in the fields of education, technology, communications, tourism and health sectors.

KSA on the World Stage

Saudi Arabia called for three summits during Ramadhan to tackle several issues of international concern. The Crown Prince also attended the G20 Summit and met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of the Summit in Osaka

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted three summits in Mecca last Ramadan 2019: the **Gulf Cooperation Council Summit**, the **Arab Summit** and the **Summit of Islamic Countries**. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz called for these three summits to discuss a number of issues, most notably the Palestinian issue, combating terrorism and violent extremism, Islamophobia and the humanitarian situation in the Islamic world.

G20 Summit Osaka, Japan

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense at the recent Summit in Osaka, Japan. The Kingdom's young leadership, represented by HRH, has been able to face regional and international challenges with confidence and steadfastness. Restructuring of most government sectors has been initiated in order to increase their effectiveness in achieving the Kingdom's Vision 2030. This appreciation and respect for the Kingdom, and appreciation of its position as a prestigious global economic power increases the approval of the leaders of the 20 major countries for the Kingdom's presidency of the next summit 2020, in Riyadh.



SM Tharman: More Can Be Done Together



SM Tharman on his meeting with HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman in January: "I believe that HRH and his team see great value for both countries to do more together."

Singapore's Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, HE Tharman Shanmugaratnam visited Saudi Arabia in January to discuss bilateral ties with HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and made another trip in July where he met Saudi ministers and had a dialogue with senior bankers and officials hosted by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority. Mrs Nomita Dhar, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East, asked about bilateral ties, how Singapore can contribute to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and the opportunities ahead

Senior Minister Tharman, you visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia twice this year, in January and July. Could you share with us the purpose of your visits and what was discussed?

My two visits to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were most constructive, and build on the warm and longstanding relationship between Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

We already have meaningful cooperation on several fronts, including education, urban planning, the Hajj pilgrimage, and security. Our economies complement each other very well. Singapore is a

small nation, but our niche strengths are relevant to Saudi Arabia's ambitious plans to transform its economy. We also have a high degree of respect for each other. These features of our relationship set the basis for deeper ties in the years to come.

It builds on a well-diversified trading relationship between Saudi Arabia and Singapore. Further, over 50 leading Saudi companies, including Saudi Aramco, SABIC and financial institutions, base their regional offices in Singapore. Many Singapore companies also operate in Saudi Arabia, including PSA

“My call on HRH gave me a strong sense of HRH’s ambition and plans to take the Kingdom forward in the next decade. HRH’s conviction in Vision 2030, and his energy in shaping and driving this agenda, is immediately evident. He has also assigned very capable Ministers and Mayors to lead this effort and rallied different agencies towards a common goal.”

International’s collaboration with the Public Investment Fund on Saudi Global Ports in Dammam. However, there is much more we can do together.

My two trips enabled me to call on HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and meet senior members of his team, to discuss a wide range of issues from economic development to education and how we can take our bilateral relationship to a new level. We discussed several areas where Singapore can work together with Saudi Arabia, to contribute towards the realisation of the Kingdom’s 2030 Vision.

We are optimistic about moving to this higher level of cooperation and partnership, and look forward to President Halimah Yacob’s State Visit to Saudi Arabia in November 2019.

We are sure that our readers are especially interested about your call on HRH Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Could you tell us more about it?

My call on HRH gave me a strong sense of HRH’s ambition and plans to take the Kingdom forward in the next decade. HRH’s conviction in Vision 2030, and his energy in shaping and driving this agenda, is immediately evident. He has also assigned very capable Ministers and Mayors to lead this effort, and rallied different agencies towards a common goal.

In your view, how can Singapore contribute to this ambitious Vision 2030 agenda and other efforts to grow the Kingdom’s economy?

There will be many opportunities for Singapore to contribute to this Vision. We have experience in areas that would be of interest to Saudi Arabia, including urban solutions, infrastructure development, tourism and skilling the workforce.



Senior Minister Tharman called on officials at the Saudi G20 Secretariat. Saudi Arabia will be the

One recent, positive development is that SAGIA is reopening its Singapore office. This will help increase investments from Singapore, and the region, into Saudi Arabia.

I believe that HRH and his team see great value for both countries to do more together. HRH had further discussed these possibilities with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Osaka, and we are looking into how we can follow up on specific areas of economic collaboration.

Which are the specific sectors where you see the most scope for greater cooperation in the near to medium term?

There is a lot of potential in various sectors – let me give three examples:

■ **Logistics.** Singapore is keen to do more with Saudi Arabia under its National Industrial Development and Logistics Programme, which aims to transform the Kingdom into a global logistics hub. In addition to PSA International’s involvement in Saudi Global Ports, SATS has built and is operating an



host of the G20 Summit 2020 in Riyadh. (Photo: Saudi G20 Secretariat)

airside cargo terminal, also in Dammam. We look forward to further opportunities in the Kingdom for our logistics firms to apply their capabilities within.

■ **Environmental resilience.** Singapore and Saudi Arabia are both working hard to tackle the common challenges of climate change, water stresses, waste recycling and ensuring highly liveable cities. PUB, our national water agency, and Saudi Arabia's Saline Water Conversion Corporation already enjoy good cooperation in the area of desalination technologies through an MOU they signed in 2017. Our governments are also enhancing cooperation in water resource management, environmental protection and resource efficiency.

■ **FinTech.** I met SAMA Governor Ahmed Al Kholifey during both my visits to Saudi Arabia, and we are keen to see how we can strengthen collaboration on FinTech, which is a priority for both countries. If harnessed well, FinTech can enhance inclusion of underserved communities, including in the broader regions around us, and unlock their economic potential. MAS has worked with various stakeholders,

including the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation and the ASEAN Bankers Association to launch the API Exchange (APIX) in November 2018 to help drive financial inclusion. APIX is a not-for-profit online global marketplace and industry sandbox to facilitate collaboration between financial institutions and FinTech companies. We welcome Saudi Arabia to participate in and collaborate on the APIX initiative. We also





Ambassador Saad Saleh with SM Tharman in Riyadh on his first trip to Saudi Arabia this year

“The Saudi economy is enjoying reasonable growth, especially with rising domestic consumption and confidence among Saudi SMEs. There are still many opportunities available in the country, as well as the region.”

look forward to continued participation from Saudi Arabia at the Singapore FinTech Festival.

Specifically in the areas of education and tourism – Saudi Arabia has bold plans in these two sectors – will the Singapore government be planning to participate or initiate any plans to help develop these areas?

Singapore certainly stands ready to work with Saudi Arabia in these important areas.

Education is clearly the foundation for national success. Our collaboration at the tertiary level has progressed well. Prof Shih Choon Fong, who was formerly President of NUS, served as the Founding President of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). Former President Tony Tan was a very active member of the KAUST board. We welcome Saudi students, including Saudi Aramco scholars, to study in our universities. There are also a number of MOUs on cooperation between our universities, and many more coming up.

When I met Education Minister Hamad Al Sheikh in January, we also discussed the possibility of further cooperation in basic education. We would be happy to share our experiences and learn from each other on areas such as teacher training, testing and assessments, and equipping students for the modern and rapidly changing needs of the economy.

On **tourism**, we want to do more. Saudi Arabia’s tourism sector is fast-growing, and has great potential yet as Saudi Arabia taps into rich historical and cultural heritage, and organises more large-scale sporting and entertainment events like FIA Formula E and the Jeddah Music Festival. The introduction of e-Visas for foreigners will help spur visitors. I discussed some of the tourism infrastructure opportunities with Commerce and Investment Minister Dr Majid Al Qasabi when we met in January. We will be keen to follow up, to share our experiences in tourism and work together on areas of mutual interest.

A part of Saudi Arabia’s growth strategy is to encourage its companies to internationalise and find new business opportunities around the world. How can Singapore assist Saudi companies in growing their businesses in the region?

Singapore is well-regarded for its ease of doing business, and we want to help Saudi companies see the potential of operating in Singapore,

as a convenient, competitive and pro-business location from which to access opportunities across the ASEAN market, which has a combined GDP of US\$2.5 trillion, and the rest of Asia-Pacific.

Saudi Aramco and SABIC are two such companies that hub their regional businesses and operations through Singapore. They have been leveraging Singapore’s trade linkages in the region, as well as its infrastructure and ecosystems. Saudi Aramco’s trading arm, Aramco Trading Company, has established its first overseas office in Singapore to perform principal trading activities, while SABIC has set up a plastics compounding plant in Singapore, which export to the countries in the region.

Our economic agencies would be happy to see how we can facilitate Saudi companies’ plans to expand their footprints in the Asian region and take advantage of its growth.

Saudi Arabia is also going through many cultural changes, what was your observation during your visit?

I have yet to gain an in-depth feel for the social and cultural changes taking place in Saudi Arabia. However, the Saudi Arabians I have met express much confidence in the changes.

SAMA organised a dialogue for you to meet senior bankers during your July visit. Could you tell us more about it?

Overall, the bankers and senior officials I met with were cognisant of the risks posed by the mounting uncertainties in the global environment, but remained cautiously optimistic about the domestic economy.

The Saudi economy is enjoying reasonable growth, especially with rising domestic consumption and confidence among Saudi SMEs. There are still many opportunities available in the country, as well as the region. However, there are headwinds blowing from outside Saudi Arabia. We had a thoughtful exchange on some of them, including the trade war, slowing growth in Asia, and risks in the international financial system. I was very impressed with the quality of the discussions we had on these topics.

You have met officials from the Saudi G20 Secretariat on several occasions this year. Can you share your impressions of Saudi Arabia’s preparations for its G20 Presidency next year?

My observation is that Saudi Arabia has been very well-organised and has prepared early and comprehensively for its G20 Presidency. The Saudi G20 Secretariat has been engaging in consultations with a large and diverse group of stakeholders, including Singapore.

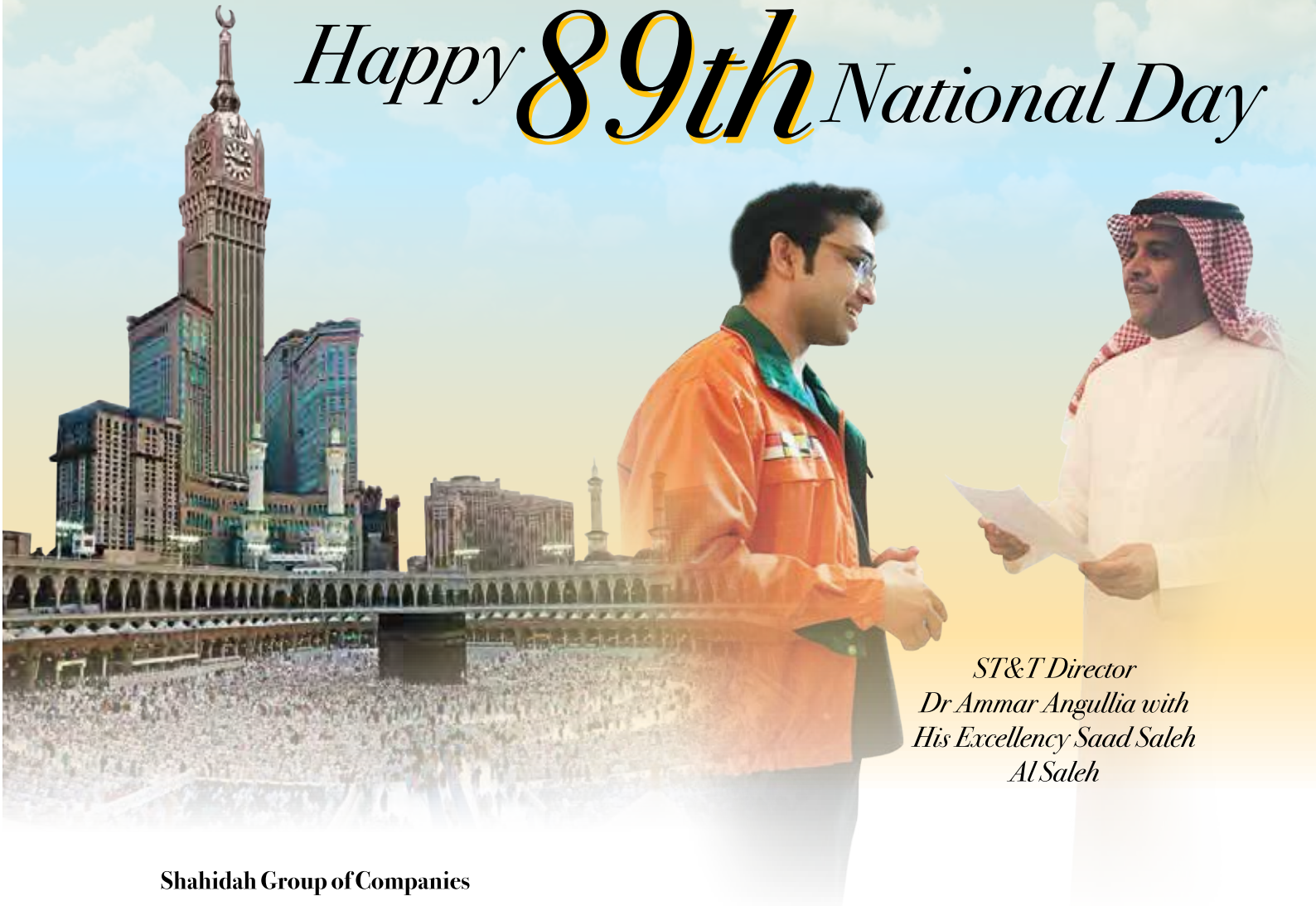
Based on my conversations with members of the Secretariat so far, the agenda for the Saudi G20 Presidency will be forward-looking and impactful. It will have special relevance for the developing and emerging countries, which I believe is appropriate.

In the current global environment, the G20 will continue to be an important platform to deal with significant global issues, including on the range of global commons. Singapore would be happy to contribute actively to G20-2020 if we have the opportunity to do so.



Shahidah Group wishes
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Happy 89th National Day



*ST&T Director
Dr Ammar Angullia with
His Excellency Saad Saleh
Al Saleh*

Shahidah Group of Companies



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Saudi Arabia-Singapore Events Pictorial Roundup

2nd MAY 2019 Ambassador and **HE Dr Vivian Balakrishnan**, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs during 13th Forum of VIVA Foundation



8th MAR 2019 **HE Dr Fahad bin Abdullah Al Mubarak** Minister of State, Member of the Council of Ministers, Secretary-General of the G20 Saudi Arabia Secretariat met with **HE Heng Swee Keat** Minister for Finance of Singapore together with an official delegation as well as the Ambassador. HE Dr. Fahad also met with **HE Tharman Shanmugaratnam** (the then Deputy Prime Minister & Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies of Singapore) and presently Senior Minister



27th FEB 2019 Ambassador held a dinner banquet for **HE Ahmed Al-Hakbani**, the Governor of General Customs Authority, during his visit to Singapore



8th MAR 2019 **MUIS** held a luncheon for Ambassador and members of Saudi Embassy in appreciation of the distinguished relations between MUIS & Embassy (*see this issue page 44*)



15th APR 2019 Ambassador met with Ambassador at Large Prof Tommy Koh at Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs who is also the author of several books including *The Tommy Koh Reader*



14th APR 2019 Ambassador attended the opening of (Arabs in Singapore) Exhibition under the patronage of Singapore President HE Mdm. Halimah Yacob



7th MAY 2019 Ambassador held Iftar Ramadan banquet in the presence of HE Minister for Environment and Water Resources, Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs in Singapore and a number of officials, diplomats, Saudi citizens and the Muslim community in Singapore.



10 APR 2019 Ambassador and His Excellency Dr. Mohamad Maliki bin Osman, the Chief Minister of State at the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are launching at the Embassy headquarters the distribution of dates offered by the Kingdom to Singapore.



3rd APR 2019 Ambassador attended Singapore Muslim Festival organized by Jamiyah Singapore



5th JUN 2019 Eid al-Fitr prayer at Sultan Mosque in the presence of President Halimah Yacob, Minister Masagos Zulkifli and officials in Singapore



Best Wishes to the People and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 89th National Day



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EVENTS

12th JUL 2019 The Ambassador at the annual reception at the Istana for heads of diplomatic missions accredited in Singapore.



30th JUL 2019 The Ambassador and HE Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore with Colonel Mushbab Al Qahtani and Colonel Saud Al Saleh during the opening of the Military Leadership Course at RSIS Institute of International Studies in Singapore.



27th JUN 2019 The Ambassador attended the Muhammadiyah Association of Singapore Aidilfitri Dinner as the Guest of Honour.



8th JUL 2019 The Ambassador at the Singapore Inter-Racial, Inter-Religious Harmony Nite Dinner 2019, where he joined the President of Singapore, Mrs. Halima Yacob, supporting the dinner ceremony celebrating the harmony between ethnicities and religions.



7th JUL 2019 The Ambassador had a wonderful opportunity to experience and join the joyous festivities of a wedding here between the children of Mr & Mrs Mohd Fazul Jiffry, who is a well-known figure in Singapore's muslim travel market, with Mr & Mrs Mohd Zoumy.



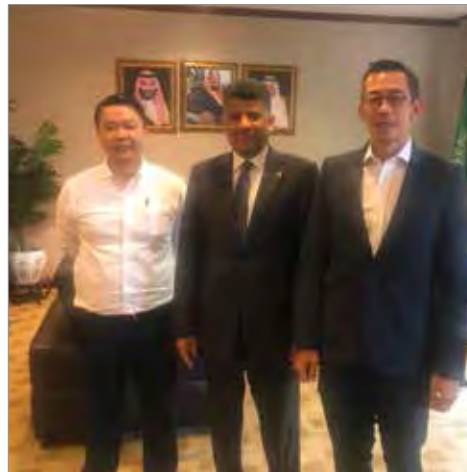
11th JUL 2019 The Ambassador receives several Saudi Arabian university delegations participating in the 2019 Singapore Science Journey and held a dinner for them.



8th AUG 2019 Saudi Arabia is now a signatory of the Singapore Convention on Mediation. The delegation for the signing ceremony was headed by HE Bader Al-Haddab, Saudi Arabia Deputy Minister of Technical Affairs in the Ministry of Commerce and Investment.



5th SEP 2019 HRH Prince Saud bin Talal bin Badr, Advisor to the Minister of Housing and General Supervisor of the Ministry's Agency for Housing Support, was Head of the Kingdom's Delegation to the World Environmental Building Week (IBEW) where together with the Ambassador they received Singapore's National Development Minister, HE Mr Lawrence Wong at the Kingdom's Pavilion. Minister Wong inaugurated the opening of the IBEW.



26th AUG 2019 Mr Wan Chee Foong, the Regional CEO & Head Group Business Development at PSA International Pte Ltd and Edward Tah, the CEO of Saudi Global Ports called on the Ambassador to discuss the latest updates and developments in Saudi Global Ports (*see page 28*).

AT&S Group wishes the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Happy

89th

National Day

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Saudi Entertainment Industry Empowered by Vision 2030

Important steps in improving the quality of life, boosting tourism, diversifying the Saudi economy and creating employment for its youth

One of the great highlights of Saudi Arabia's entertainment calendar, fuelled by the Kingdom's agenda to become among the top 10 global entertainment destinations and in the top four in Asia, was the recently held and very successful "Jeddah Season: Sea & Culture Festival" in the city of Jeddah, from June 8-July 18, 2019. Veering away slowly from its ultra-conservative approach in this field, and in order to create a vibrant society the Kingdom authorities have tasked the General Entertainment Authority to organize, develop, and lead the entertainment sector to provide exciting entertainment options and tailored experiences to the needs of people from all walks of life around Saudi Arabia.

Plans are afoot to invest billions of dollars in the Saudi entertainment industry and bring home a slew of Western entertainment options in order also to stem the flow of at least a quarter of the \$20 billion currently spent overseas annually by Saudis travelling to distant shores in search of entertainment, because of the lack of, or small pickings, at home.

Pivotal to the new thinking and easing of social strictures has been the impetus created by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, who was instrumental in the launch of Vision 2030, and went on to lift the ban on women driving, cinemas and public concerts —and contained the reach of the religious police amongst other liberal policies— all aimed at improving the quality of life, boosting tourism, diversifying the Saudi economy and creating employment for its youth.

While launching the 2019 entertainment calendar, Chairman of the General Entertainment Authority (GEA) Turki Al-Sheikh, spoke of the numerous events being planned for the coming year; these would include car races, magic shows and theatrical performances. Addressing an audience filled with princes, ministers, Arab celebrities and some Muslim clerics and others, the Chairman said: "I hope national companies, banks, businessmen, artists and all sectors put their hands together. There are golden opportunities." he further pointed out that: "This is a big door for tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of jobs and for tens of billions if not hundreds of billions of riyals."

In keeping with its overall agenda for the Kingdom's entertainment industry, the festivities at Jeddah, held under the auspices of the



(Top): Before and (above): After. The keys to the magic kingdom in the amusement parks category was awarded to world leading US theme park operator Six Flags at Qiddiya

GEA featured a series of theatrical performances and comedy shows and culinary experiences which would go a long way in boosting the city's tourism. The GEA said that through the events it "reaffirms its constant endeavor to meet the expectations with various tastes and preferences, provide an exceptional experience for visitors of the "Jeddah Season" and to enhance the Kingdom's position within the entertainment sector."

"Jeddah Season: Sea & Culture" was to be "set across five unique destinations that collectively highlight Jeddah's essence of sea and culture, showcasing both historic and modern attractions for everyone to explore and enjoy the city like a local," as described by its website, to add to the allure of the entertainment line-up ahead of the festival. Destinations included Obhor, the city's stretch of alluring beaches, historic Jeddah, Al-Hamra, an ancient city, now an acclaimed UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Corniche - the highest fountain in the world, the sports venue - al-Johara, and the Waterfront with its great line-up of restaurants, cafes, and shops and trendy boutiques.



Live performances

Amongst the number of musical concerts held during the festival, the most popular featured prominent Arab stars such as Ahlam, Mohammed Abdu, Amr Diab, and Nancy Ajram. Also slated to take place at the Jeddah Waterfront was a comedy show organized by XJed and presented by the "Laugh Factory," one of the most well-known comedy clubs based in Los Angeles.

World-famous restaurants

Thronged visitors turned up to enjoy a host of exciting culinary experiences at some of the world's top restaurants also participating in the festival— amongst them the famous Nusr-Et Steakhouse, Signor Sassi, Joel Robuchon, Catch, COYA, Nobu, Gaia, Scalini, and Zuma – and many more.



There is also variety: Korean boy band BTS is slated to perform in Riyadh in October 2019

In order to create a vibrant society the Kingdom has tasked the General Entertainment Authority to organize, develop, and lead the entertainment sector to provide exciting entertainment options, and tailored experiences to the needs of people from all walks of life around Saudi Arabia



Six Flags Qiddiya will have Record-Setting Rides

On 26th August 2019 the Qiddiya Investment Company (QIC) unveiled the design for Six Flags Qiddiya, one of the key entertainment facilities in a new city that is being built just outside Riyadh, and is destined to become the Kingdom's capital of entertainment, sports and the arts. "Our vision is to make Six Flags Qiddiya a theme park that delivers all the thrills and excitement that audiences from all over the world have come to expect from the Six Flags brand, and to elevate those experiences with authentic themes connected to the location," said Michael Reininger, Chief Executive Officer of QIC. Six Flags Qiddiya will cover 32 hectares (79 acres) and feature 28 rides and attractions across the six lands: The City of Thrills, Discovery Springs, Steam Town, Twilight Gardens, Valley of Fortune and Grand Exposition. Six Flags Qiddiya will be one of the key entertainment features in Qiddiya's first phase when it opens in 2023. (Photos: www.qiddiya.com)

Art Exhibition

The Ministry of culture lent its support and sponsorship to the Saudi Art Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to artistic development, to help launch the well-attended art exhibition titled [21,39] - PUBLIC/PRIVATE as part of "Jeddah Season". As pointed out by the Saudi Art Council, the exhibition "explores links between individuals, public and private realms and the urban dynamics of city life."

Laser Show and Fireworks

Thrilling activities also planned during Jeddah Season were fireworks, a flame fountain, a laser show at the Waterfront, as well as an outdoor light festival in Al-Hamra, the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Job Opportunities

The "Jeddah Season: Sea & Culture" was an excellent platform for a range of employment and volunteering opportunities for 20,000 Saudis in order to provide them with experience, according to SPA.

World Opportunities Forum 2019

Saudi Arabia: Investing in a Golden Future



Saudi Arabia, which represents the biggest market in the Middle East region, has been pivotal in creating great opportunities for investors, businessmen and entrepreneurs for the global community, with the strengthening of its economic agenda of diversification under aegis of Vision 2030

The World Opportunities Forum 2019 (WOF) was privileged to hear of a range of exciting options from representatives of Saudi Arabia's government as well as its business and investment bodies. The following are some of the key messages from the Middle East panel that was led by the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Singapore HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh and panel members from Saudi Aramco, SAGIA and a Singapore company that is active in infrastructure and logistics projects in the Middle East, the Meinhardt Group. They also answered questions from potential investors based on the panel's theme: "Vision 2030 & the Next Steps for Investors."

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Singapore

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Singapore, HE Saad Saleh Al Saleh, spoke highly of the excellent relations that Saudi Arabia and Singapore have enjoyed well before they even established diplomatic relations back in 1977. Ever since the two countries have engagements on many levels which have all contributed to the strengthening of the relationship between the government and the people of the two nations. HE touched upon the Kingdom's Vision 2030 which initiated economic diversification from its oil-centric pursuits to avoid being held hostage to the vagaries of the global oil market. He reflected upon the need for extensive structural reforms to change the economic mobility in the Kingdom's public sector and to draw a progressive vision for the future for the country, a vibrant society, a thriving economy and ambitious nation. Saudis, he said, have high regard for Singapore's progress and that its successful projects have always inspired them. "We believe that Singapore's contributions will add more success to our economy and will help to achieve that diversity. He shared a message from HRH Mohammad bin Salman



bin Abdulaziz Al Saud who pointed out that the region was strong, thriving and stable and that Saudi Arabia provides opportunities for all. The Crown Prince's message included an invitation that said: "We welcome qualified individuals from all over the world; we respect those who have come to join our journey and our success."

Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) Mr Abdullah Al-Harbi

"I have come especially from Riyadh to tell you that we are more than ever open to the world," were the opening remarks of Mr Abdullah, who shared the news of the many opportunities in Saudi Arabia open to investors and businessmen here, in line with the Kingdom's economic agenda

of Vision 2030, launched in 2016. The agenda of Vision 2030 is to diversify the economy and to expand economic competitiveness. Keeping in view the goals of the Vision 2030 and that Saudi Arabia was the biggest market in the region Mr Abdullah pointed out that: "We cannot achieve this Vision without the participation of, and full and complete partnership with the private sector...so this vision is a joint vision between the government and the private sector." Mr Abdullah also highlighted the slew of reforms (380) for the Ease of Doing Business under the aegis of the Regulation Reform Committee which has been set up to engage with the private sector. To improve the business climate in the Kingdom inputs have been taken from various quarters. He said INVEST SAUDI has been set up to help investors understand what are the opportunities available through the Vision 2030 program. The Central Investment Authority, a promotion agency has been tasked with attracting diversified investment into the country and serve as an advocate for investors he said.

Nader Al-Arfaj, MD of Aramco Singapore

Nader Al-Arfaj, MD of Aramco Singapore which is affiliated with Saudi Aramco, briefly provided a profile of Saudi Aramco and the business opportunities offered by one of the world's leading integrated energy and chemicals company. In 2018, Saudi Aramco produced 13.6 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil equivalent which includes 10.3 million bpd of crude oil and a gross refining capacity of 4.9 million bpd. Saudi Aramco has a long established presence in the Asia Pacific area and is a key player in the oil and chemical market. Mr Arfaj also introduced Aramco's **In Kingdom Total Value Add (IKTVA)** Program. It's an integral part of Saudi Aramco's procurement process, and companies wishing to tender their products and/or services to Saudi Aramco will need to comply with IKTVA requirements. Mr Arfaj said it embodies Saudi Arabia's vision to enable a globally competitive Saudian industrial base and this is in support and alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 and that, **"It is designed and positioned to change how Saudi Aramco engages with suppliers** so we can work in a new way for success. The target by 2021 is to achieve 70% local content in Saudi Arabia, create thousands of jobs and increase exports by 30%." There is an IKTVA formula for Aramco to assess companies based on their spend and key activities, e.g. for localised goods and services, salaries paid to Saudi and locals, training and development of Saudis and locals, spend on development on local suppliers."

WOF 2019 NOTE The inaugural edition of the World Opportunities Forum saw 18 countries represented by their ambassadors, present the latest on business opportunities, policies, and next steps for investments. They presented information sessions on one platform to CEOs, SMEs, entrepreneurs and investors. This reflects the event's objective of using Singapore as a hub to 'create, connect and cross invest'. The WOF is organised by Sun Media Pte Ltd and supported by Enterprise Singapore, the Singapore Manufacturing Federation and the Singapore Business Federation. For more info visit:

www.sunmediaonline.com

Panel Members



HE Saad Saleh I. Alsaleb, Amb of Saudi Arabia



Mr Abdullah B. Al-Harbi, Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships in the General Investment Authority (SAGIA)



Mr Nader Al-Arfaj, Managing Director Aramco Asia Singapore



Mr Omar Shabzad, Group Chief Executive Officer Meinhardt Group



Mr Saleh Alkhudhair, Sector's Initiative Development Supervisor, Small & Medium Enterprises General Authority



Panel Moderator Mr Syed Mobamad H B A Alsagoff, Middle East Specialist and Partner Yamako Pacific and IConsilium Pte Ltd



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SAGIA

High Speed to Spur Investment

Saudi Arabia General Investment Authority (SAGIA) streamlines business licensing process

THE efforts of the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) to make it easier for businesses to be established have begun to pay off as figures show a 70 percent increase in business registrations when compared to same first quarter in 2018.

According to SAGIA, it has issued an average rate of four new foreign investor licences per day! This was stated in a special report by the Authority published in the spring of 2019 and said the streamlining is to “promote a competitive business environment in the Kingdom.”

In practical terms the time taken to process a business licence in Saudi Arabia has been reduced by more than 90 percent in the hope it will spur further investment in the Kingdom – from 53 to 4 hours. About 17 licences were granted during the first two weeks after the streamlined process was implemented. This, said the Authority, was thanks to three initiatives: restructuring the processes, reducing the required documents, training and qualifying cadres.

Restrictions Lifted

The leading growth sectors include education and healthcare, following the recent lifting of foreign ownership restrictions in these industries. During Q1 2019, nine new education-related companies were established, compared to just one in Q1 2018.

SAGIA has a broad mandate on all matters relating to foreign investments in industry, services, agriculture, and contracting in the Kingdom. It will license projects under the new Foreign Investment Act, which allows for 100 percent foreign ownership in some sectors. Other incentives include lower minimum capital requirements and no restriction on repatriation of capital; the ability for foreign investors to sponsor foreign employees; and tax incentives if the company is registered in certain economic cities in less-developed provinces.



Governor of SAGIA, Mr Ibrahim Al-Omar (right) called on Mr Peter Ong, Chairman of Enterprise Singapore when he was last here

A joint venture with UAE-based NMC Healthcare was established to acquire and develop a pan-Saudi network of health care facilities with a capacity of up to 3,000 beds and total investments up to SAR 6 billion (\$1.6 billion) over the next five years.

Other sectors that saw strong growth in Q1 of this year include the construction industry, which saw 39 new foreign investors receive business licenses, compared to only 22 in Q1 2018.

There was also strong growth from long-standing and strategically important Saudi partners such as the US and the UK.

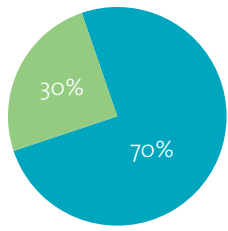
Commenting on the reforms Ibrahim Al-Omar, Governor of SAGIA, said: “Guided by Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, our country is undergoing a remarkable economic transformation. The continued prosperity of the Kingdom depends on sparking innovation, attracting foreign investors and empowering the private sector. The positive growth numbers that we have seen in the first quarter of 2019 represents a significant milestone on the road to 2030.”



New foreign investor licenses in Q1 2019:

+70%
vs Q1 2018

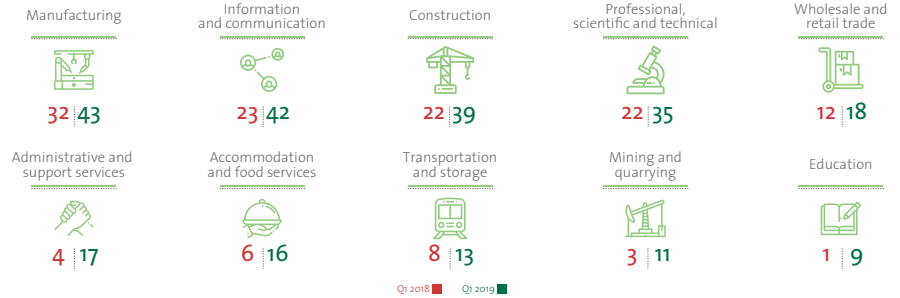




Of which:

- 70% full foreign ownership
- 30% joint venture partnerships with local investors

Top Sectors



Foreign Investor Licenses - Quarterly (2016-2019)



Foreign Entrepreneur Licenses - Quarterly (2017-2019)



Largest Component of Vision 2030 Launched in January

The National Industrial Development and Logistics Program (NIDLP) was launched in January and is the largest of the 12 Vision 2030 Realisation Programs that is driving the implementation of the blueprint to develop the kingdom's economy away from oil that is expected to stimulate US\$453 billion worth of investments by 2030.

The key sectors under the NIDLP are Industry, energy, Mining and Logistics. The main KPIs is the targeted US\$320 billion contribution to the country's GDP and creation of 1.6 million new jobs.

There have been already 37 agreements signed worth US\$53 billion and an additional 29 agreements worth US\$960 million have been announced. To date, an estimated US\$165 billion worth of total investments have already been signed under the NIDLP.



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ARAMCO Expanding Refining and Trading Business in Asia



New Singapore office is another milestone in its downstream expansion and integration in Asia

Aramco is expanding its refining business at home as well as in new markets, particularly in Asia in its quest to become the largest integrated energy firm. As part of its expansion plan, Aramco has moved to a new and bigger office in Singapore. Located at OUE Bayfront, Aramco's new office houses three business entities: **Aramco Asia Singapore**, **Aramco Trading Singapore** and **S-Oil Singapore** under one roof.

On 10th September 2019, Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Judaimi, Senior Vice President, Downstream, Saudi Aramco inaugurated the new office. The event was witnessed by Mr Ahmed Al-Subaey, Vice-President, Marketing, Sales and Supply Planning; Mr. Ibrahim Al-Buainain, President and CEO, Aramco Trading; Mr. Ziad Al-Murshed, Vice President, International Operations, and Downstream Growth and Integration; Mr. Hussain Al-Qahtani, Representative Director and CEO, S-OIL; Mr. Anwar Al-Hejazi, President, Aramco Asia; Mr. Nader Al-Arfaj, Managing Director, Aramco Asia Singapore; and Mr. Mohammad Khatir, Managing Director, Aramco Trading Singapore. It was also attended by the management of Aramco Trading, S-OIL, and Aramco affiliates and joint ventures such as ARLANXEO, PRefChem, FREP and Motiva as well as representatives from Bahri, Singapore Economic Development Board and Enterprise Singapore.

The new office underlines the importance of Singapore as a strategic location. Singapore is not only the leading oil trading hub in Asia (third largest in the world after New York and London) and among the world's top five oil refining centers, its chemicals and energy industry also ranks among the top 10 globally. Besides Aramco Asia Singapore, Aramco Trading Singapore and S-Oil Singapore, Singapore is also home to a world-leading synthetic

rubber company ARLANXEO, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Saudi Aramco. ARLANXEO has a production facility located in Jurong Island as well as a regional office in the western part of Singapore. In 2014, Aramco Asia Singapore was established to provide crude oil marketing intelligence, material sourcing, supply chain logistics, inspection and other engineering services. Since starting trading operations in 2018, Aramco Trading Singapore has expanded rapidly as part of Aramco's strategy to optimize value across the whole oil and products chain, serving its markets and customers, as well as support Saudi Aramco's expanding refining operations and petrochemical output.

Aramco First Singapore Town Hall Meeting

Over 150 employees from Saudi Aramco, Aramco Asia offices, Aramco Trading, ARLANXEO, Motiva, S-OIL and Aramco secondees in FREP and PRefChem attended Aramco's first Singapore Town Hall Meeting on 9th September 2019. At the meeting, Mr Abdulaziz Al-Judaimi shared about Aramco's downstream strategy and the focus on integration. It was a very successful event which provided employees with an update on the company's business and was an opportunity to network with colleagues from different entities.

Networking Reception in Singapore for APPEC

Aramco, Aramco Trading and S-OIL Singapore hosted a dinner reception at The Clifford Pier on 10th September in conjunction with the annual Asia Pacific Petroleum Conference (APPEC) organized by S&P Global Platts in Singapore. The reception received an overwhelming response with over 1,700 customers and business partners in attendance.

Rotary Engineering in Saudi Arabia

Rotary Tank Storage Capabilities



Following Rotary Singapore's strong presence in the Asia Pacific region, the company continues to make its mark as a leading Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) player in the Middle East oil and gas infrastructure sector.

Rotary Engineering expanded into Saudi Arabia in 2007 when it founded Rotary Engineering Saudi Arabia in the Industrial City of Jubail. Today, after more than a decade, it has built a sterling reputation based on providing quality services within safety, budget and on-time delivery with a wide spectrum of partners in the oil & gas, petroleum and construction industries.

Service Offerings

- EPC for bulk liquid storage terminal
- EPC for offsites and utilities
- Front End Engineering Design (FEED) and Detailed Engineering
- Mechanical works including piping and equipment installation
- Electrical & instrumentation works
- Maintenance of process plants and facilities
- Modules Fabrication

Rotary's clients to-date include leading companies in the Kingdom such as Saudi Aramco, SABIC and Arabtank Terminal. The company has also undertaken many key projects in the country.



Key Projects

- **ATTL-Farabi Pipeline Project** (Dec 2018 to Ongoing) for Arabtank Terminal Ltd
- **Cristal MGT Project** (2017 to 2019) for The National Titanium Dioxide Co. Ltd.
- **Shoaiba II GCC Power Plant** (2012 to 2013) for Daelim Industrial / Saudi Consolidated Electric Company
- **SATORP Package 6 - Refinery Tankfarm** (2009 to 2013) for Saudi Aramco Total Oil Refining & Petrochemical Company
- **Saudi Kayan Petrol Chemical Complex** (2008 to 2010) for Fluor Danel / Saudi Kayan



Jubail Workshop

Following facilities are available at the Jubail workshop:

- Tankage Fabrication
- Steel Structure Fabrication
- Piping Pool Fabrication
- Pressure Vessel Fabrication
- Blasting and Painting

For more information:

Rotary Engineering Saudi Arabia Co. Ltd
Rotary Arabia Co. Ltd
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Email: bdd@rotaryeng.com.sg
Website: www.rotaryeng.com/Rotary-Saudi/



Rotary's 7 hectares of yard facilities in Jubail

Saudi Global Ports

Welcome the Largest Container Vessel in KSA



The Cosco Shipping Solar, the largest container vessel ever to call at Saudi Arabia made its maiden stopover at SGP, the Kingdom's premier deep-water facility

In May 2019, King Abdul Aziz Port Dammam and Saudi Global Ports (SGP) had the privilege to play host to the largest container vessel ever to call at the Kingdom of Saudi. It was indeed a red-letter day to have that 400m x 59m COSCO Shipping Solar to make Dammam a port of call, as this massive container vessel is ranked amongst the largest container vessels in the world, with an operating capacity of 21,237 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs).

Its stopover at Dammam is in line with COSCO's Ocean Alliance's Asia - Middle East Service, which involves Dammam's connectivity to key ports in the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Singapore and China. Her maiden voyage into SGP totaled a volume exceeding 10,000 TEUs.

Engineer Walid Faris Al Faris, Director General of King Abdul Aziz Port Dammam, expressed his utmost pleasure by extending his thanks to all involved in the smooth berthing and successful operations on the vessel. He confided: "The achievement of this milestone demonstrates to the shipping community King Abdul Aziz Port's excellent capabilities to handle large container vessels."

Mr Abdulla Al Zamil, SGP Chairman and representative Board Director for the Public Investment Fund (PIF), also hailed the

arrival of the vessel and shared that: "COSCO's choice of SGP as its port of call at the Upper Arabian Gulf for one of the world's largest vessels is one of the many industry recognitions of SGP's service and capabilities. As PIF's strategic partner towards the development of the Kingdom's capabilities in the ports and logistics sector, SGP has a significant role in supporting the Saudi Vision 2030's objective of economic diversification."

Future-Ready Terminal

As elaborated by Mr Wan Chee Foong, PSA International's Regional CEO of Middle East South Asia and Head of Group Business Development this early commitment from shareholders to make the terminal future-ready in anticipation of mega vessels has been pivotal in enabling SGP to remain at the very forefront of competition in the Arabian Gulf. "We thank COSCO and its alliance partners for their continued support and trust in SGP, as we work alongside them to create greater value for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's shippers and global logistics partners," he said.

Mr Qiu Jinguang, COSCO's President for West Asia, responded warmly to the welcome and acknowledged this important juncture of COSCO's operations at SGP. He said: "COSCO will gradually introduce larger vessel-carrying capacity in this service as growth returns to the Middle East and Saudi Arabia. We have been partners since the start of regular operations at

“COSCO’s choice of SGP as its port of call at the Upper Arabian Gulf for one of the world’s largest vessels is one of the many industry recognitions of SGP’s service and capabilities. As PIF’s strategic partner towards the development of the Kingdom’s capabilities in the ports and logistics sector, SGP has a significant role in supporting the Saudi Vision 2030’s objective of economic diversification.”



Token of appreciation presented to representatives of COSCO and Orient Overseas Container Lines (OOCL)

SGP and are confident that their operational, infrastructural and service excellence will allow us to offer highly competitive services to the consignees and shippers in Saudi Arabia.”

SGP, situated on the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia in Dammam’s King Abdul Aziz Port, is a critical deep-water hinterland port in the Arabian Gulf and serves major provincial cities in the Eastern and Central Provinces of Saudi Arabia. Dammam is the closest gateway port to the country’s economic centre and capital city, Riyadh, and is linked by an existing railway network and excellent highways.

Volume Growth Since Start

SGP, a joint venture between the Public Investment Fund or PIF (see box story) and PSA International, operates the second container terminal in King Abdul Aziz Port Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Since the start of operations in 2015, SGP has recorded year-on-year volume growth and raised the benchmark performance for Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. SGP believes in the development of local capabilities, where it has employed and trained more than 300 Saudi nationals to raise their skillsets for the benefit of the Kingdom’s industry.

PSA is a leading global port group and a trusted partner to cargo stakeholders around the world. With flagship operations in Singapore and Antwerp, PSA’s portfolio comprises a network of over 50 coastal, rail and inland terminals in 18 countries. Drawing

on the deep expertise and experience from a diverse global team, PSA actively collaborates with its customers and partners to deliver world-class port services alongside, develop innovative cargo solutions and co-create an Internet of Logistics. As the partner of choice in the global supply chain, PSA is “The World’s Port of Call”. For more about PSA International visit: www.globalpsa.com.

More about PIF - Saudi Arabia’s Sovereign Fund

Public Investment Fund (PIF) PIF, the sovereign wealth fund owned by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, aims to be a global investment powerhouse and the world’s most impactful investor, enabling the creation of new sectors and opportunities that will shape the future global economy, while driving the economic transformation of Saudi Arabia. PIF reports directly to the Council of Economic Development Affairs chaired by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.

Apart from SGP, PIF’s investments in transport and logistics include the National Shipping, Company of Saudi Arabia (Bahri), the Saudi Railway Company (SAR), Saudi Arabia Public Transport Company (SAPTCO), and GDC Middle East. PIF’s objectives in this sector include developing the country into a regional leader in seaport operations, to enable Saudi Arabia to leverage its Red Sea and Gulf locations and play a pivotal role globally in providing services necessary to support imports to and exports from the Kingdom. For more information visit: www.pif.gov.sa

SACM Diary: Increasing Educational Opportunities Top Priority

by Dr Abdulaziz Mohammad Alsaleh,
Cultural Attaché to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission
in Singapore (SACM-SG)



HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh (left) with Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh

“Since taking office from July 2018 as the Cultural Attaché, I have had an eventful year. Increasing opportunities for postgraduate admission and clinical fellowship training has always received the highest priority. Receiving Saudi delegations visiting Singapore and meeting various representatives from Singapore universities and institutions to explore collaboration between both countries’ institutions have also been main features of our work.”

Since taking office from July 2018 as the Cultural Attaché, I have had an eventful year. Increasing opportunities for postgraduate admission and clinical fellowship training has always received the highest priority. Receiving Saudi delegations visiting Singapore and meeting various representatives from Singapore universities and institutions to explore collaboration between both countries' institutions have also been main features of our work.

Education and Training

Arising from the efforts made, about 150 opportunities related to admission to postgraduate programmes and clinical fellowship training have been secured for the next two years. Building on recent results achieved, SACM-SG hopes to attract more suitable scholars and clinicians to tap the golden opportunities here.

I am extremely glad for our Saudi scholars to receive at least 15 offers of admission to programmes commencing in August 2019 and January 2020 at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore Management University (SMU), INSEAD and TUM Asia. The offers are to various Master/PhD programs: Audiology; Computer Science; Finance; Management; Technopreneurship and Innovation; Rail, Transport and Logistics; Engineering, etc. More than 10 have accepted the offers.

I am also happy to inform that at least 20 clinical fellowships have been awarded to Saudi clinicians to train in Surgical Breast Oncology, General Surgery, Diagnostic Imaging, Dermatology, Urogynaecology, Anaesthesiology, etc. with various hospitals under the SingHealth Group and National University Hospital Systems. Training under these fellowships commenced in June 2019 and will continue into 2020. From September 2018 to August 2019, more than 6 clinical fellows in various specialities have completed their training in Singapore.

My team and I wish all our new scholars and clinical fellows exciting learning journeys ahead.

Saudi Delegations Visiting Singapore

September 2018 was an exceptionally busy month when SACM-SG received 3 Saudi university delegations who were here for the World Academic Summit hosted by NUS. Delegations from King Abdullah Medical City (KAMC) and the Saudi Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) also visited in the same month. In February 2019, a delegation from Saudi Electronic University (SEU) visited Singapore. The team worked extremely hard to make sure that their visits were fruitful by arranging discussions with local institutional representatives to understand their work and identify learning, training and collaborative opportunities.

SACM-SG also had the pleasure to welcome two delegates from the Saudi Centre for International Strategic Partnerships (SCISP) in July 2019. In the same month, the largest delegation by far of 72 participants, consisting of staff and students from 12 Saudi universities, was received. SACM-



SG arranged for the Saudi delegation to visit Singapore's 2 leading universities, NTU and NUS, to learn more about these great universities.

Visit by Saudi Ambassador to SACM-SG

SACM-SG staff and I had great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore (*pictured in the opposite page*), to our office at Valley Point in May 2019. We were deeply honoured by his visit and his opening of the expanded office.

Collaborative Meetings

SACM-SG's work cannot be done in isolation. Thus, I had the privilege to meet various representatives from NUS and SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre in exploring study and training opportunities for our scholars.

International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education (IECHE) in Riyadh, April 2019

This year, we had the honour to have the participation of NUS, SMU and University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman at IECH in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It was the golden opportunity for prospective Saudi scholars to get to know these universities and receive impetus to come to this part of the world for their studies.

The last year since I took office in July 2018 has been exhilarating. Much has been accomplished and there is no let-up in the momentum. The team and I will continue to work hard to bring the attractive benefits of learning and training in Singapore to Saudi people. The positive experiences as recounted by our clinical fellows who completed their clinical fellowship training – Dr Mohammad Saqib Siddiqui, Dr Diyaa Abdulrauf Algazwi and Dr Abdullah Saad Aldriweesh – as well as our first Doctorate scholar – Dr Khalid Alharbi – serve to remind us of the satisfaction that we all derive through hard work. My thanks go to all at SACM-SG and collaborative partners for a wonderful year!

Saudi Delegations in Singapore

Participation by Saudi University Delegations in Times Higher Education World Academic Summit with Meetings with High Level Representatives from Singapore Universities

25-27 September 2018

SACM-SG extended a warm welcome to delegations from Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU), King Saud University (KSU) and Alfaisal University (AU) which arrived for the Times Higher Education World Academic Summit held in September 2018 at the National University of Singapore (NUS). The summit offered a platform to debate and discuss contemporary perspectives and issues surrounding the theme "The transformative power of research: Advancing knowledge, driving economies, building nations".

The delegation from PNU was headed by H.E. Dr Huda Mohammed S Alameel, Rector; and KSU by Prof Ahmad Salem Mohammed Al-Aamri, Vice Rector for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research. Prof Khalid Manna K Alk-

attan, Dean, College of Medicine, represented AU. Apart from attending the summit, the delegates also met key representatives from universities in Singapore to discuss and explore collaborative opportunities to advance academic and research cooperation.

High level representatives from Singapore institutions that hosted the delegates included:

- Prof Andrew Wee, Vice President (University and Global Relations) of the National University of Singapore (NUS);
- Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, Nanyang Technological University Board of Trustees Member (NTU);
- Prof Christine Goh, Director of the NTU National Institute of Education (NIE) and Prof Paul Teng, Managing Director/Dean of NIE International (with PNU only).

The Saudi delegates were also hosted by H.E. Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Saudi Ambassador to Singapore, on the occasion of the 88th National Day Celebration at its dinner reception held on 24 September 2018.



(1st row): ○ Prof Andrew Wee (left picture, 1st from left) in discussion with ○ Prof Khalid Manna K Alkattan (right picture, 1st from left), Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh (2nd from left), Prof Ahmad Salem Mohammed Al-Aamri (3rd from left). (2nd row) ○ Saudi delegates hosted by Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed (4th from right) with NTU colleagues. ○ Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh hosting Prof Ahmad Salem Mohammed Al-Aamri (on his right) and Prof Khalid Manna K Alkattan (on his left) at SACM-SG

Delegations from King Abdullah Medical City (KAMC) and the Saudi Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) September 2018

SACM-SG also welcomed delegates from King Abdullah Medical City (KAMC) and the Saudi Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) in September 2018.

The KAMC delegation, headed by Dr Maan Abdulmalik Waggass, Director of Graduate Studies, was hosted by Mr Paul Wong, Director for Programme Development with SingHealth International. The discussion primarily dwelt on clinical fellowships available from the SingHealth Group, especially from its Post-graduate Medical Institute, and the role of the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties in cat-

egorising and recognising fellowship training.

The MCIT delegation was headed by H.E. Dr Ahmed H. Al Theneyan, Deputy Minister for Technology Industry and Digital Capacities. His contingent included senior officials from the National Digitization Unit, MCIT eGov Programme, and the Saudi National Centre for Digital Certification. Despite a busy schedule in Singapore, SACM-SG was glad to arrange for the delegation to be hosted by Prof Mohan Kankanhalli, Dean of NUS School of Computing. Discussions centred on degree programmes, as well as research and consultation capabilities of the school to explore collaborative opportunities for the future.

All delegates also had the pleasure to be hosted by the Saudi Ambassador at the 88th National Day Celebration dinner on 24 September 2018.



(1st row): ● Dr Maan Abdulmalik Waggass (2nd from left) hosted by Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh at SACM-SG. (2nd row): ● Dr Maan Abdulmalik Waggass (left picture) in discussions at SACM-SG. ● HE Dr Ahmed H. Al Theneyan (right picture, 2nd from right) in discussion with Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh and Saudi scholars at SACM-SG

Delegation from Saudi Electronic University (SEU) February 2019

A delegation from Saudi Electronic University (SEU), headed by Prof Ibraheem Almuaqel, Vice President, came to Singapore for visits scheduled by SACM-SG to local institutions in February 2019. SEU, in the process of seeking ideas and seeing configurations of smart facilities for its new campus that leverage on the use of ICT for teaching and learning in various universities around the world, was hosted by:

- Mr Ravi Chandran, Senior Director of NUS, Centre for Instructional Technology;
- Mr Koh Yeow Siah, Director of NTU, Centre for Information Technology Services – Learning Technology and Digital Media Team; and
- Mr Tim Chapman, Deputy CEO (Operations), Surbana Jurong Consultants Pte Ltd.

SACM-SG was appreciative of the generous support extended by the hosts in sharing their knowledge, skills and expertise.



Delegation from Saudi Centre for International Strategic Partnerships (SCISP) July 2019

July 2019

Mr Mohammed Alhassnah, Vice President for Asia Strategic Partnerships & Business Development, and Mr Zarea Mohammed Qranbaish, Director for Strategic Partnership & Business Development, from the Saudi Centre for International Strategic Partnerships (SCISP) visited SACM-SG to understand its work. This is in aid of SCISP's exploration of opportunities from Singapore to carry out its strategic mandate in building, developing and strengthening global partnerships.

Mr Walid Alromaih from SACM-SG hosted the visitors who were given a presentation of the mission's key work in attracting Saudi scholars to Singapore and facilitation of exchange between Saudi and Singapore institutions. Through the presentation, the visitors also got to know the key universities in Singapore with which close working relations are maintained by SACM-SG.



(Clockwise from top right): Mr Mohammed Alhassnah (in blue suit) with Mr Zarea Mohammed Qranbaish (on his right), Mr Walid Alromaih (on his left) and SACM-SG staff. SEU delegation at NTU. SEU delegation at NUS. SEU delegation at Surbana Jurong.

Delegation Consisting of 12 Saudi Universities' Representatives and Students

July 2019

SACM-SG had the pleasure in welcoming a Saudi delegation consisting of 12 Saudi universities' representatives and students headed by Dr Abdullah Alothaid, Dean of Student Affairs in King Khalid University. A total of 72 participants, with the inclusion of members of the Saudi company selected to organise the trip, visited Singapore from 6 to 15 July 2019. The scientific trip programme of 2019 was made possible by the Deans Committee of Saudi Universities under the Saudi MOE.

Meetings with the following were organised for the delegation by SACM-SG:

- Saudi Ambassador, H.E. Saad Saleh Alsaleh, who hosted the group to a dinner
- NTU, Nanyang Technopreneurship Centre
- NUS, Global Relations Office
- Visit to the office of SACM-SG, hosted by Mr Walid Alromaih

Through the visits to NTU and NUS, delegates had a first-hand overview of the highly ranked universities through presentations of their study programmes, as well as research and innovation capabilities.



(Top row) ○ Delegation hosted to dinner by the Saudi Ambassador, HE Saad Saleh Alsaleh (centre in white). (2nd row) ○ Delegation at NTU (left picture) and NUS (right picture). ○ (3rd row) ○ Presentation at NTU and delegation at SACM-SG

Saudi Ambassador's Visit to SACM-SG



HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh (centre) with Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh and SACM-SG staff

The Saudi Arabian Ambassador was updated on the activities of the mission to attract more Saudi scholars and clinical fellows and develop collaborative relations between Saudi and Singapore institutions

Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh and staff had great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore, to SACM-SG's office at Valley Point on 28 May 2019. Dr Alsaleh updated His Excellency on the activities of the mission to attract more Saudi scholars to study and clinical fellows to train in Singapore, and to establish collaborative relations between Saudi and Singapore institutions.

The office was recently renovated to create a bigger work space for Academic Affairs and a more spacious student lounge. Having expanded premises to serve Saudi students and trainees attests to the mission's commitment to them. Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh thanked His Excellency for declaring the expanded office open.

Following the opening, a presentation was given to His Excellency on the King's scholarship programme supporting Saudi scholars for overseas education. The heart of the programme is about equipping them with 21st century knowledge and skills that they would bring back to build Saudi Vision 2030.

Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh and staff at SACM-SG thanked His Excellency for all his help and support towards the work of the cultural mission which is committed to attracting more Saudi students and trainees to make Singapore their study and training destination.

Participation by Universities from Singapore and the Philippines at IECHE 2019

The International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education, organised by the Saudi MOE, was held in Riyadh from 10 to 13 April 2019. Following up on invitations extended by the Saudi MOE, SACM-SG was immensely pleased with the participation of the National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore Management University (SMU) and University of the Philippines Diliman (UP Diliman).

Meetings to Foster Collaboration

In line with SACM-SG's primary role in supporting scholars and clinical fellows, the Cultural Attaché, Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh met up with various institutional representatives to discuss opportunities for admission of more Saudis into programmes across various disciplines.

■ National University of Singapore (NUS)

The Saudi MOE Elite Scholarship Programme has come into force as part of the government's continuing efforts in nurturing young Saudis through higher education to contribute towards



Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh with Prof Freddy Boey

the Kingdom's Vision 2030. Saudis who have gained admission to degree studies (from Bachelors to PhDs) at any of the top 20 universities in the world recognized by this programme will be granted scholarships administered by the Saudi MOE subject to meeting its requirements. NUS is the only university from the Asia and Oceania region in the list. Numerous meetings to seek out opportunities were held. A meeting was held with Prof Wei Kwok Kee, Dean of the School for Continuing and Lifelong Education, and his team in January 2019.

Also in January 2019, the Cultural Attaché met with Prof Emily Ang, Head of the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. Its Master and PhD in Nursing by research were of interest to Saudi nursing professionals working in Saudi hospitals and medical cities.

As part of the continuing efforts, the Cultural Attaché met with Prof Freddy Boey, Deputy President (Innovation and Enterprise), in March 2019 to explore the provision of conditional offers with pathways towards Master and PhD studies by research.

Extensive efforts have gone into the promotion of various post-graduate programmes of interest to Saudis. SACM-SG welcomes their warm response and is especially encouraged by the success in getting admissions by a number of Saudi scholars into various programmes.

■ SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre

In April 2019, Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh met with Ms Veronique Tan, Head and Senior Consultant of the Breast Centre. This is a continuation of his efforts to build bridges for collaboration.

At the 1st level, SACM-SG is keen to find more opportunities for Saudi medical professional staff, especially clinicians and nurses who enjoy generous scholarship funding from Saudi healthcare institutions, to train in Singapore and benefit from its high standards. At the 2nd level, SACM-SG is keen to explore exchange programmes between Singapore and Saudi healthcare institutions.



Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh with Dr Veronique Tan (1st from left) and staff from SACM-SG

■ Saudi Companies to Discuss Attachment Opportunities

The meeting with Mr Nader Alarfaj, Managing Director of Aramco Asia, and his colleagues at SACM-SG in August 2019 was to garner support towards Saudi scholars who might need attachment opportunities to complete their graduate studies. With the same objective, SACM-SG helped to link SABIC and SABIC SK Nexlene with a school from the National University of Singapore at a meeting held at SABIC in July 2019.



Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh (right) in discussion with Mr Nader Alarfaj

Clinical Scholars Give Thumbs Up for Training in Singapore

Three Saudi Arabian clinical fellows who have completed their training (two in radiology and one in breast surgery) share their experiences and why they are glad they chose the Island Republic to further their work and studies

DR MOHAMMAD SAQIB SIDDIQUI

Dr Saqib is the Consultant General Surgeon at King Fahd Hospital in Jeddah and right from the start of the interview wanted to pay tribute with thanks to the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission (SACM-SG) here in Singapore. The general and breast surgeon was the most senior of all the scholars who spoke to *Saudi Arabia: Your Gateway to the Middle East* in this issue and his sentiments were echoed by them: "By God, they took such good care of us; I didn't think I was even in a foreign country! They started guiding me from Jeddah in everything. It was really quite a soft landing for me and family (wife and three sons) coming here."



Dr Saqib is also the deputy head of surgery at the King Fahd hospital as well as the Residency Programme Director for the last four years. The hospital is a well-known major and busy hospital that serves the northern and western regions of the Kingdom. He is working in a practical clinical fellowship at the Singapore General Hospital and National Cancer Centre Singapore. "The facilities are very good and everything is very well organised. In fact, in general, the whole of Singapore is well organised and patient load and care is good. The hospital here also receives many patients from the Middle East especially the

UAE for treatment and they always asked why I chose to come here. I told them there is a high number of cases where I can get hands-on experience and learn good case management," said Dr Saqib.

While he is especially impressed by the universities here and can foresee how Saudi Arabia will increase sending more students here, "They can train and teach you well but for the medical profession very practical hands-on experience is also needed. I noticed whenever hands-on work was required it took some time but thank God I remained determined and persistent and I got it," said the doctor.

He observes how the education system and universities in Singapore are very good as they do things professionally and foresees there is good potential for more Saudi students to come here: "(For) anyone coming here for a graduate or post-graduate education, it is a very good place for learning." Other factors that he is impressed with are: "In general, the environment is very safe and the society is very family oriented. For example, I feel so good seeing elderly folks being often accompanied by their family members. Also, during my one year here I have never seen a Singaporean in a mall or MRT misbehave. Another example is when you come here with your family there are no issues with halal food; it is easily available and people here by default are so honest they even tell you when the ingredients might be halal but because they serve alcohol they do not have halal certification!"

DR DIYAA ABDULRAUF ALGAZWI

Dr Diyaa hails from Dammam in the Kingdom's Eastern Province. He first heard of Singapore from fellow medical colleagues in Dammam: "My sub-speciality is musculoskeletal imaging that focuses on the muscles and bones. There are only three or four of such specialists in the region where I come from. One of them had undergone a fellowship in Singapore and recommended it highly."



The government hospital Dr Diyaa works in serves a population of three million people and there is only one doctor with such a specialty. At Singapore's National University Hospital (NUH) he learnt among other things: "For example, depending on the injury there might not be any need to incur

extra expense to undergo costly MRI scans when there are quicker and cheaper alternative techniques such as ultrasound examination. This will also free up the MRI machine for other patients who need it more."

One of the biggest advantages coming here when compared to other countries he said was in the area of research: "I was able to publish 12 research papers here! One paper was on why there are different degrees of healing for hand fractures

based on 200 patients. It is relatively easy to do such research in Singapore. There is already an excellent system here that can help you do this; it is very well organised so that you can collect patients' data quickly to analyse and publish." He was also glad to hear from his

Head of Department at NUH that work and research such as those carried out by him would have elevated the image of Saudi medical personnel in the hospital. In Singapore Dr Diyaa was also exposed to a far greater number and variety of cases in the last 12 months than in Saudi Arabia in the same period: "It is so invaluable to be able to see for yourself and learn to treat so many different cases as opposed to just reading about them in medical books."

He said the whole experience here for him and his young family can be summed up as most "wonderful." The 39 year-old radiologist moved here with his wife and two children aged 5 and 10 in the middle of 2018. Some of the things he did not expect after being here for a year was how well his children had taken to the educational environment at the international school they were enrolled in. He was happy they had learnt much including proficiency in the English language and were being exposed and interacting with multi-racial students as they studied different cultures and got along with many other races. His wife also took the opportunity to study English at the British Council. On the subject of pastime when asked if there were any tips he wanted to share with fellow Saudis visiting for studies he said for a family the National Library offers different sections for adults and children to spend quality time there and you could even bring your laptop if you wanted to catch up on your work or emails.



DR ABDULLAH SAAD ALDRIWEESH

Dr Abdullah has completed his work in musculoskeletal radiology and declared: "I totally enjoyed it. It was a new experience being in Singapore. I picked Singapore as my first choice after some research and recommendations from another colleague who came here several years ago. NUH is very advanced as a teaching university hospital. The country is also very advanced too so it was easier, quicker and more comfortable for us to settle down here."

"It was so easy to adapt to the lifestyle and mix with the people here. Getting around is also very easy as you can go wherever you want through different ways - by taxis, buses etc. as well as the efficient mass rapid transit system. You just need the address."

The 39-year-old consultant is married with three children - the eldest is nine and the youngest is just over a year old so there have been some challenges moving from his home in Dammam to here but he is grateful for all the invaluable assistance extended by SACM-SG: "They help us do everything. They have an interactive website for the scholars and helped process our papers. It is an almost semi-paperless process. On the second day I was here I paid a visit to SACM-SG to introduce myself and they responded very well. Since then we have been invited to their activities. For example, SACM-SG's head Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh arranged a meeting with us (scholars) to encourage us to come forward if we needed help."



DOCTORATE SCHOLAR DR KHALID ALHARBI

Innovation the Key (and Distance Matters Too!)

Business, entrepreneurship and innovation - these are the key subjects that drive Dr Khalid Alharbi. In 2011 he arrived from his home in Jeddah to first study English here at the British Council and go on to become the *first Saudi Arabian scholar to graduate from Singapore under the Saudi MOE Scholarship programme with BOTH a Masters degree from Nanyang University of Technology (NTU) and Doctoral degree in Innovation & Entrepreneurship from Singapore Management University (SMU).*



Initially he chose Singapore over other American universities for practical reasons: "I wanted to complete my Masters and Phd in a shorter period. I was in the US for a few months and realised you take up so much time just travelling because of the distances between places compared to Singapore where because of its size every place you want to go is closer." His preoccupation with saving as much time as possible is understandable as when he first arrived in Singapore in 2011 he came with his wife and a three-year-old girl. His second baby - a boy - was born here and he wanted to complete his studies as quickly as possible - starting his Masters degree course in 2013 and then returning home before coming back to start his Phd studies in 2015.

He also chose Singapore after checking out American and Australian universities: "They have a strong interest in the field of innovation but do not have degree courses especially at doctoral level in the subject like in Singapore. Here I had the opportunity to focus on innovation. You are lucky here at SMU where you have many lecturers who are specialised in different fields of innovation including even one who formerly taught at Harvard!"

Another factor that impressed Dr Khalid was that the curriculum here has a good balance between practice and research: "For example, in linking us with industry and academic resources, the university brings decision-makers and key people in different industries to discuss innovation. Again, Singapore is so compact; these decision makers can come to the campus in the morning and return to their jobs by lunch and no one will even notice they are missing from work!"

The Singapore connection continues as Dr Khalid returned here in July to lead a delegation of 72 students and staff from 15 Saudi universities and a coordinating service company to share with them why and how he was inspired by Singapore especially in the study of Innovation. He has also taught at several graduate and under-graduate schools on the subject of entrepreneurship and innovation. When asked what reasons he might offer to Saudi students to consider studying in Singapore, he said: "I recommend they consider it the first choice and not lump it together in the same category as other Middle East or regional countries here as the educational standards and facilities in Singapore are very high. Next, if you study here the classes are very cosmopolitan so you are in a sense not a minority. You can see in the class and in the streets the races and nationalities are very mixed; so you are not just getting an education, you are exposed to many other cultures!"

ARAMCO SINGAPORE

Active in Care for Community Programs

Aramco strongly believes the real value of energy lies in its potential to serve the needs of human progress and development in protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.



“Aramco Singapore cares for the communities we live and work in”



○ (1st row): Mangrove sapling plantings project in Johor, Malaysia. ○ (2nd & 3rd rows): Batam Build Project in Batam, Indonesia. ○ (4th row): Aramco's Healthy Kids, Healthy Nation campaign in Cilacap, Indonesia.

“As a leading producer of energy and chemicals, promoting and protecting biodiversity through educational programmes and positive interventions is a key focus of Saudi Aramco’s commitment to the environment and the community,” said Mr. Nader Al-Arfaj, Managing Director, Aramco Asia Singapore.

Through its office in Singapore, Aramco has mobilized its resources to generate opportunities that help make a positive impact on people and their communities in the Southeast Asia region.

■ Johor, Malaysia

Aramco Singapore joins hands with GEC and local government agencies and communities to save Pulau Tanjung Surat’s mangroves.

Over 500 volunteers comprising of volunteers from the local communities, schools, Aramco Singapore, Aramco Malaysia, PRefChem and government agencies have planted 5,000 mangrove saplings at degraded mangrove areas in Pulau Tanjung Surat over three planting activities to strengthen the island shoreline and conserve its mangrove forest.

Funded by Aramco Singapore and implemented by GEC with support from Johor State Forestry Department (JSFD), Pengerang Local Authority, the Aramco-GEC Community-based Mangrove Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Programme aims to raise awareness on the importance of the mangrove ecosystem and its contribution towards local community social-economic development, as well as to protect and preserve the mangrove forest in Johor, which is part of Johor’s vital coastal ecosystem, for future generations.

As part of the programme, a community mangrove nursery and Friends of Tanjung Surat Mangrove Forest (FTSMF) were set up. Educational programmes were also held in schools.

Mr Nader Al-Arfaj said, “In Malaysia, we are very privileged to work with like-minded partners such as the GEC, Johor government agencies and the local communities.”

■ Batam, Indonesia

Aramco continues its commitment to provide safe housing for Kabil villagers in Batam

Since 2016, Aramco Singapore, together with Habitat for Humanity Indonesia, has helped to improve the lives of 46 families in Kabil by building decent houses alongside home partners as well as providing access to clean running water and sufficient amount of electricity.

Under the programme, 33 families were given access to safe housing with potable water, electricity and toilets, while another 13 families received access to running clean water. 108 trees have been planted in the area.

On 28 Sept 2018, 400 community members including residents from Kabil Village, representatives from the local government agencies and Aramco came together to celebrate the completion of the 2017/2018 programme. To mark the occasion, Mr. Anwar Al-Hejazi, President, Aramco Asia and Mr. Nader Al-Arfaj planted trees to prevent soil erosion and beautify the village.

■ Cilacap, Indonesia

“Aramco Healthy Kids, Healthy Nation” promotes healthy lifestyle to over 5,900 Cilacap residents

Aramco, together with Yayasan Kusuma Buana, raised awareness in water hygiene, sanitation and waste management, including proper washing of hands and toilet usage in Cilacap. Over 5,900 Cilacap students and residents benefitted from the programme.

Launched in 2018, the ‘Aramco Healthy Kids Healthy Nation’ programme took a 360-degree approach in improving the students’ health and quality of life. Improvements to the facilities of 20 Cilacap public schools, madrasah (Islamic schools) and pondok pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), such as toilet, water tap and school canteen, were carried out.

Health education on sanitation, nutrition and good hygiene with activities and competitions were conducted for students, teachers and parents. In addition, a hydroponic garden was piloted in 13 schools as part of the nutrition education to encourage canteen operators to provide nutritious meals and students to eat more vegetables. As part of this initiative, TB and typhus screening were offered to the canteen operators.

A health carnival for residents was held on 26 January 2019 to celebrate the success of the “Aramco Healthy Kids, Healthy Nation” programme in Cilacap.

The “Semarak Aramco Healthy Kids, Healthy Nation” carnival brought together the community members in Cilacap to celebrate the completion of the programme. More than 2,000 Cilacap residents including elementary school students, teachers and local government officials performed mass gymnastics in the city square of Cilacap District. Besides the mass exercise, other activities include Cilacap traditional dance, parody theatre by students, speech recitation by the winner of speech competition and award presentation to the winners of healthy school competition and drawing competition.



○ (Above): Aramco helps with response to the critical need for safe drinking water in Lombok and Cilacap that benefitted more than 14,000 people!

■ Lombok and Cilacap, Indonesia

Aramco Singapore responds to urgent need for safe drinking water in Indonesia.

Aramco is deeply committed to helping Indonesia after a series of earthquakes crippled Lombok in July and August of 2018. Thousands of affected residents were forced from their uninhabitable homes and fled to displacement camps that lacked adequate supply of potable water.

In response to the critical need for safe drinking water, Aramco, through Planet Water Foundation, rapidly deployed five AquaTower systems to serve the displaced residents of Lombok. As a result, more than 5,000 people now have a reliable source of drinking water, and 2,500 children benefitted, from the Water-Health and Hygiene Education programs that were delivered to the primary education schools where AquaTowers are located. The remaining five AquaTowers were installed earlier this month in Cilacap, Indonesia, bringing the total number beneficiaries in Lombok and Cilacap to over 14,000 people.

To mark the completion of the 10 projects, Planet Water and Aramco dedicated one of the AquaTowers deployed in Lombok with a closing ceremony on April 4, 2019. Mr. Nader Al-Arfaj, Managing Director, Aramco Singapore joined with governmental

and education officials in Lombok to commemorate the successful completion of these projects.

■ Singapore

Meeting the needs of the local community through giving

Aramco has actively supported Jamiyah and PERTAPIS, two established and reputable charitable organisations in Singapore. Jamiyah finances programmes and services, including the running of welfare homes and related projects to serve the social and welfare needs of the community regardless of race or religion, and PERTAPIS' main welfare projects include the running of welfare homes, providing social support for the needy families and educational services which are designed to address some of the social problems faced by the community.

Aramco has donated almost brand new sofa sets to the visitation corner of PERTAPIS Senior Citizen's Fellowship Home and PERTAPIS Headquarters' counselling and care unit as well as Jamiyah Nursing Home, Jamiyah Home for the Aged, Jamiyah Children's Home and Jamiyah Halfway House.

Aramco has also donated office furnishing and equipment to Jamiyah in support of its services to meet the growing needs of the community.

Saudi Women: Playing a Key Role in Transformation of the Kingdom

The times are a-changing for women in Saudi Arabia and they are embracing wholeheartedly the new opportunities to improve their lives and those of their families – which also heralds a new impetus of growth and direction in Saudi society

The recent move to elevate the status of HRH Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud, as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States underpins the changing status of Saudi women and the role they will play in public life hereon. In a statement Fahad Nazer, embassy spokesperson said that: "The Ambassador will bring a fresh perspective on a rapidly changing Saudi Arabia to Washington, continuing to build on key areas of cooperation between our two countries." It's not just about closer ties between the two nations; it's also about the perception of women and their contribution in the very highest of offices that comes to light with this new development. Princess Reema is the 11th Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United States of America since 1945, and the first Saudi woman to hold the post.



Princess Reema the first woman Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States (Photo: World Economic Forum / Boris Baldinger)

position to apply for their passports independently as do men in the country. Men and women of Saudi Arabia over the age of 21 can obtain passports and travel without a guardian's approval, as indicated by the General Directorate of Passports website of the Kingdom. Under the new guidelines Saudi mothers will also be allowed to apply for their kids' passports. In the event that, Saudis under 21 (whose fathers are no longer alive) are looking to travel, the approval for travel can be given by their mother, as against the earlier rule, where this approval had to be given by a male relative in such a situation. Also, in case of divorce, the parent which has custody can apply for passports and issue travel permission for their kids.

Princess Reema, who has dedicated her career to improving the lives of Saudi women has been lauded for her role in creating opportunities for women in the workplace in the private sector. A welcome initiative was her establishment of the Kingdom's first onsite nursery in a retail venue for employees. The Princess has also served as the Deputy of Planning and Development for the Saudi General Sports Authority and as well as the Authority's Vice President of Women's Affairs, which she used as a platform for developing policies and programs to benefit women and children throughout Saudi Arabia. The Princess was also the first woman to lead a multi-sports federation in the Kingdom. Saudi women are now permitted in sports stadiums. In 2017 the General Sport Authority, the country's governing body for sports, said that stadiums would begin accommodating families. Customarily Saudi men and women are separated in public places, but there is a continuous flow now of restrictions being lifted for women in several key areas — including public entertainment.

Sweeping Legal Changes

Heartening news too, for the Kingdom's female population, are the sweeping legal changes announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as an extension of the collation of new rights for women that are being brought in under the aegis of Vision 2030 and its reforms regarding the enhanced status of women in society to help them reach their full potential.

The new laws include the lifting of restrictions against women on travel and far-reaching labour provisions that guarantee women equal pay in the workplace and protection against dismissal during pregnancy. On the home front, by the new directives, by the end of August 2019, Saudi women would be in a

When it comes to work, women in the country will henceforth also be allowed to independently open and run a business. These amendments take strength from the recently enacted law that protects women from harassment in public spaces, and expands their opportunities to occupy senior government positions. **Further, it has been acknowledged that the knowledge, skills and capabilities of Saudi Arabia's women are among the greatest assets of the country, and it's been one of the great driving forces behind the government's commitment to putting women at the center of the social and economic transformation taking place under Vision 2030.** The announcement of the lift of the ban on women being allowed to drive, following a Royal decree in September 2017, also indicated the government rethink on women on another platform, when it set itself the target of generating 65% of GDP from the private sector, and getting more females into work as the key. Lifting this restriction would create more job opportunities for women.

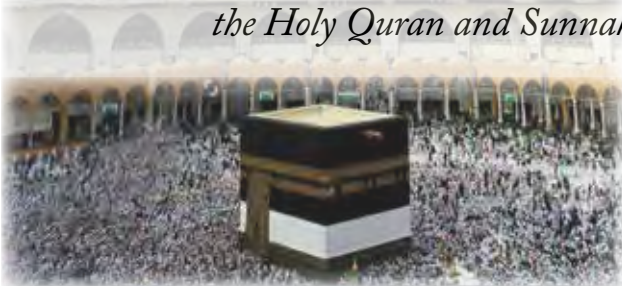
Earlier on, in June last year, Saudi women were excited to learn that a new ruling which lifted a long term ban, allowed them to drive and gave them the freedom to attend entertainment and sporting events. Princess Reema bint Bandar al-Saud, keeping in view these changes said on Twitter: "They call for the equal engagement of women and men in our society."



Haji Mohammad Alami Musa

MUIS Making a Difference on Many Levels

MUIS plays a pivotal and multipronged role at many levels of Singapore's Muslim community, be it religious, social, educational, economic or cultural – all within the framework of the principles and traditions of Islam as enshrined in the Holy Quran and Sunnah



Close links: Saudi Arabian Ambassador HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh on a visit to MUIS headquarters on 12th July 2019

The President of MUIS, Singapore, Haji Mohammad Alami Musa, has travelled to Saudi Arabia four times, and was pleased and satisfied to note the latest upgrading of all the facilities provided by the Saudi authorities for a successful Hajj for the streams of pilgrims who arrive in the Kingdom from all over the world, to visit the Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina.

During his last Hajj, the President of MUIS had many opportunities to move around amongst the Hajj pilgrims from Singapore to talk to them about their experience and noted they were quite satisfied by all the arrangements made for them, not just in the Kingdom, but even in Singapore itself before they left home, thanks to the excellent inputs of MUIS in collaboration with the official authorities of the Saudi embassy and the Singaporean government.

The President remarked on his personal experience and how good it felt to have a calm and satisfying spiritual experience. "The whole Hajj journey experience today has changed for the better, compared to previous years. The improvements have been made by leaps and bounds; not only did I see those changes in the methodology, the infrastructure and the services, I also felt the positive impact, spiritually, of the changes. Many good things have been done by the Saudi authorities to make the Hajj experience meaningful and memorable" he shared.

He is all praise for the Ambassador and his staff at the Saudi embassy in Singapore and the Singaporean government, who extended so much help to MUIS in co-coordinating all the Hajj arrangements for Singaporean Muslims. He is also very grateful that the Saudi authorities were agreeable to up the quota of pilgrims from Singapore from 680 to about 900, in the light of the rising Muslim population in the island state, which is now about 850,000.

Upgrades

The upgrades he noted began from Singapore itself, where a lot of the preparatory paperwork and pre-processing for the pilgrims was done online, saving a lot of time and hassle—and even at the airport in the Kingdom, where clearances (immigration, customs, baggage retrieval etc) were swift and smoothly carried out to have the pilgrims on the road to the Holy Sites, without any unnecessary delays. En route and in the Holy Cities themselves, the traffic was well managed, speeding up their arrival at the Holy Sites. Technology has clearly played a pivotal role in helping smooth things along the way at every step. It went a long way in helping the pilgrims focus upon the spiritual experience they had come for. MUIS has played a large role in helping streamline the process, given its excellent relations with the Saudi embassy and the Singaporean government, to make this happen.

In terms of the Muslim population's exposure to a better understanding of Islam, the President of MUIS believes that the best platform for them was the Hajj where they visit the holy sites. They also get to see so many Muslims, and all manner of them from all over the world— and when

they return home it gives them a better understanding and also helps them become more tolerant and integrate better with the community. The Hajj journey, the President shares, is a wonderful journey, a very real journey in which the Singaporean Muslims encounter the great diversity of people who are Muslims. They see the diversity of the languages, the appearances and the customs, which is a profound learning experience for them and also helps them co-exist with this kind of diversity.

MUIS' work, however, is not just about making arrangements for the Hajj pilgrimage. It has a far wider role to play in the socio-religious lives of Singapore's Muslim community, which includes the running and administration of the madrassas, the setting up and running of the mosques, the Fatwa making (religious rulings) and also arranging halal certification. MUIS is an Islamic authority in Singapore and reports within the structure of Singapore's civil service and government. It takes care of the religious developments in terms of academics, the curriculums

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in the *madrassas*, which include subjects beyond Islamic elements. In fact the students give the national exams just as do other Singaporean students at different levels of their academic development. It also manages the liaisons between the Muslim countries and the government, especially with regard to Islamic issues at different levels on the international front.

MUIS also is actively involved in the management of its properties, about 150 of them which are worth about S\$150 billion. It's also committed to its involvement in inter-religious engagements and promotes religious harmony in Singapore. It's also pivotal in the distribution of the financial aid, which pours into a foundation which receives generous donations from Singaporean Muslims, to the poor and disaster-affected victims.



Another Successful Year for Hajj



This year 2.5 million Guests of Allah were received by the Kingdom. Successive successes of the Hajj, year after year, are a direct result of the leadership whose first concern is to serve the Two Holy Mosques and their visitors

An overview of illuminated city of tents of Mina. (Photo: Saudi Press Agency)

The Kingdom Saudi Arabia has received international recognition this year for organizing one of the best seasons of Hajj, and the Kingdom was also able to impress the world with its ability to manage human crowds, estimated at 2.5 million people.

Following praise from many governments, religious leaders and organisations around the world, this also included congratulations from the World Health Organisation (WHO) who lauded the Saudi government and its Ministry of Health for hosting the Hajj season without one single public health issue or disease outbreak reported among pilgrims performing the Hajj.

This year 900 people from Singapore went on the Hajj. They left here for the Holy Land from between 20th July to 7th of August. This year they also enjoyed greater convenience and as medical services have been improved. The medical team of six doctors and ten nurses accompanying them is now able to treat greater numbers of up to 200 pilgrims a day (compared to the 150 last year). Medical facilities were prepared at Madinah, Mecca and then at Shisha near Jamarat. Many making the Hajj are elderly and these preparations go a long way towards easing their minds and that of their families if they require medical attention.

Foreign Minister's Congratulations

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf has also extended congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al

Saud, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense on the success of the Hajj season for this year 1440 AH.

The Minister said that successive successes of Hajj year after year have been achieved due to the follow-up and keenness of the wise leadership which made its first concern to serve the Two Holy Mosques and their visitors. Dr. Al-Assaf stressed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has harnessed all its capabilities and sectors to serve the guests of Allah and provide all means to facilitate the performance of their rituals with ease and tranquility, in view of the great responsibility towards Muslims in all countries of the world without differentiation or discrimination.

The Minister said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had the honour, as did other such government agencies and other sectors in the service of the guests of Allah; services included the use of advanced technologies for the issuance of electronic visas for pilgrims, whereas more than 1.8 million visas were granted to pilgrims from all over the world through all missions of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia and temporary Hajj missions in countries where the Kingdom does not have permanent diplomatic or consular representation. The role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hajj season integrates with the roles of other sectors of the State under the directives of the leadership to provide everything that reflects the Kingdom's efforts in the service of visitors of the Two Holy Mosques.

Pilgrims' Stories from the Malay World to Mecca

Singapore's Malay Heritage Centre
organised an exhibition titled *Undangan*

ke Baitullah (Invitation to the House of Allah, Mecca) that delved into the significance of Kampong Glam as an important port town where Muslims from all over the Malay Archipelago would congregate to prepare for the onward steamship passage to Mecca



From the late 19th century up to the early 1970s Singapore was a pilgrim hub thanks to its strategic position within the Malay archipelago. The special exhibition which was held from last October to June this year adds a Southeast Asian perspective to this annual global movement of Muslims, which for many pilgrims, can be a once-in-a-lifetime journey of faith.

The exhibition features a collection of 160 artefacts from around the world and commemorates Singapore's own Kampong Glam area's role in being the departure point for thousands of pilgrims leaving with heavy suitcases filled with pilgrimage goods and board steamships for Saudi Arabia, more than 7,000 km away. This happened every year for almost a century.

Mr Suhaili Osman, curator of the Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) said: "Similar to pilgrimages of other religious traditions, the Hajj is an important part of the religious identity of the Malay community in Singapore, and roots us to Muslims around the world. The exhibition and festival provide a platform for us to share this part of the Malay-Muslim culture with people outside the Islamic faith, and allow them to reflect and draw parallels to their own expressions of faith."

The exhibition presented a glimpse into the conduct of the Hajj from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and its evolution over the years. Among the exhibits on display was a section of the *kiswah* – a richly ornamental textile decorated with Quranic verses that once draped the Ka'bah; a 1901 travel document issued by the Ottoman Consulate in Singapore to pilgrims and travellers looking to make the long journey to Mecca; wooden models of the pilgrims that were used by Dutch colonial administrators to learn more about their colonial East Indies subjects; and the first iteration of a passport designed by the Dutch colonial government to control the movement of pilgrims to Mecca.



(Right): *Kiswah is the decorative textile that drapes the Ka'bah that is changed annually. The old kiswah is often cut into smaller pieces and donated to Muslim dignitaries from around the world. The one exhibited here is 5 metres long and weighs 14 kilograms*



Salutations to the people and the Kingdom of
Saudi Arabia on their 89th National Day

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At the core of any enterprise that deals in services is the quality and experience of its management and staff. At Tri-Ways Travel and Tours Pte Ltd the team is led by Chairman and CEO, Mr AM Mohamed Fazul Jiffry, J.P. (pictured right). He is a management Accountant & consultant by training and an experienced professional in the travel trade building up Tri-Ways as one of Singapore's leading agencies that caters to a whole host of travel services that includes: air ticketing (individual

and corporate business travel and group ticketing), promotional fares, customising tours to exotic destinations as well as a special niche for Muslim travellers that strives for 'The Best for Less'.

Tri-Ways is a Saudi Arabian government appointed Umrah Visa provider as well as a registered agent with IATA, NATAS, STB and AMTAS (Association of Muslim Travel Agents Singapore) and specialise in Umrah, Ziarah and Islamic tour packages. Mr Mohamed

highlighted how the company in the past years and after serving more than 8,000 travellers, "We have committed to offer the highest standard of services to all our valued clients specially to our Hajj and Umrah pilgrims."

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Managing Director Capt. Shaukath Ali who is prominent figure in Singapore with vast experiences and both Middle East and Singapore managers who have real world expertise and track record in meeting what they term as the “real needs of travellers and facilitate all the necessary requirements” so that their trips to any destination to the Middle East is safe, secure, enjoyable and stress-free and most memorable Holidays.

In fact, according to Tri-Ways, the company offers an exclusive and customised Hajj and Umrah packages for the pilgrims residing in Singapore with 5-star

services. “We stand by the primary aim of providing all our pilgrims with a spiritually rewarding and safe pilgrimage. This is combined with a promise to offer only the most comfortable and luxurious stay so that our pilgrims can enjoy a hassle-free and enlightening experience in the respective Holy Cities.”

Tri-Ways also offer very quick Umrah Visa arrangements which mean minimal waiting and processing time as well as dedicated ground staff in Jeddah, Makkah and Madinah - two major plus points in its favour. For more information visit: www.triways.com.sg

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Salutations to the People and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 89th National Day

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اتحاد شركات السياحة للمسلمين في سنغافورة

PERSATUAN AGENSI PELANCONGAN ISLAM SINGAPURA
ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM TRAVEL AGENTS (SINGAPORE)

Taif & Souda Seasons: Fun and Festival Cheer

A spectacle of summer delights were lined up for citizens and their families at the Taif and Souda Seasons summer festivals. They are also an excellent opportunity to reconnect with ones roots through the vitality of the Kingdom's cultural and astonishingly diverse traditions, which make up the very fabric of its greatness as a destination for visitors from all over the globe

The festivities of the Taif and Souda Seasons, held in the Kingdom's Asir region in August 2019 were held under the auspices of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) are also in complete alignment with the Kingdom's competitive tourism strategy; they have also highlighted the area's historical and traditional elements, cultural and artistic diversity, as well as its produce of roses, fruit, and honey.

This exercise is also an intrinsic part of the Kingdom's agenda of Saudi Vision 2030 and bid to enhance the quality of life, increase the level of internal spend on tourism, cultural and recreational activities, and contribute to the generation of career and investment opportunities for entrepreneurs and SME's. So this makes the festivities a perfect platform for fun but also carry a more serious message of creating important contributions to an important sector of Saudi economy in terms of job opportunities and investment.

Both festivals are expected to grow and generate generous contributions from both the public and private sectors, which come together with a range of activities and products in events set up in different venues throughout Taif and Souda, to make the summer seasons truly memorable ones, not for Saudi citizens alone, but also for the Kingdom's expat community.



(Above:) Taif Rose Festival 2019, Aruddaf Park, Taif, Makkah Province Saudi Arabia in April 2019 (Image: Shutterstock.com). (Inset): It takes about 15,000 roses to make one small bottle of rose oil! (Image source: lovinsaudi.com)



(Right): Travellers having fun with Taif roses (Image source: diplostrat.net)





Arabian traditional cultural event. The photo displaying of ancient culture taken at the Souk Okaz festival in June 2018 which was held in Taif city (Image: Sainuddeen Alanthi / Shutterstock.com)

The Iconic Okaz Souk

One such event to look forward to is the iconic Okaz Souk, characterized by special literary, cultural and artistic events apart from the popular classical poetry contest 'Poet of Okaz'. Okaz Souk also includes the Arab Souk, where visitors will discover the offerings of several Arab countries for the first time. Another popular event is the Crown Prince's Festival of Camels, a perfect demonstration of what is an intrinsic part of Arab culture. Visitors can be assured of an excellent variety of activities to choose from including hiking, roses & fruit festival, Art Street, a series of plays, aeronautical and adventure sports activities, such as parachute jumping, will be taking place, in and entertainment events, which in their turn earmark the Taif region as an ideal 'Arab Summer Resort' destination now reveling in its spanking new look.

According to Noura Al Akil, Director of Taif Season, by highlighting the historical heritage, cultural and artistic diversity, while providing quality events and various activities that meet the aspirations of Saudi and resident families and the guests of the Kingdom, Taif will find its natural place as an 'Arab Summer Resort'. She shared that: "In order to provide an exceptional experience for visiting families from the Kingdom, residents and tourists from outside the Kingdom, this year, collaborative efforts have been made by public and private sectors as well as the general community, in addition to participation from a number of Arab countries... The Season serves to reintroduce Taif as the first tourist destination in the Kingdom since its establishment."

Natural Beauty of Al-Soudah

The Al-Soudah region is best characterized by its splendid

natural beauty, ranging from forests to highlands, and unique heritage and cultural treasures. On his part Hossam Al Deen bin Saleh Al Madani, Director of Souda Season, was keen to share that the Souda Season is a result of the Kingdom's visionary leadership's push to reinforce the tourism, culture, and entertainment industries, in a bid to increase quality of life for citizens and create a vibrant society, a goal enabled by the Kingdom's excellent touristic resources. He also spoke of its event calendar which was designed to put Souda on the cutting edge by focusing on the many aspects of Souda's natural, historical, and cultural assets, as well as the immense potential for entertainment and sport activities, considering its excellent climate. Visitors would be exposed to all these wondrous aspects through the line-up of events all based on the area's central features of nature, scenery, heritage, culture, entertainment, adventure, sports and climate.

Importantly also, this would all be supported by a comprehensive range of services including accommodation in the local parks of Souda, premium, international restaurants, and guided tours of Souda and Abha, the aim of this exercise is also to showcase the tourism infrastructure that is established and growing, and ensure that the services necessary to relaunch the tourism sector in Souda is well in place.

Both Taif and Souda Seasons have just launched their social media accounts, along with their online platforms on the Saudi Seasons website, where important details regarding both seasons can be perused. As endorsed by SCTH officials the events being lined up for the Taif and Al-Soudah seasons are part of coordinated efforts between the public and private sectors. (SPA).

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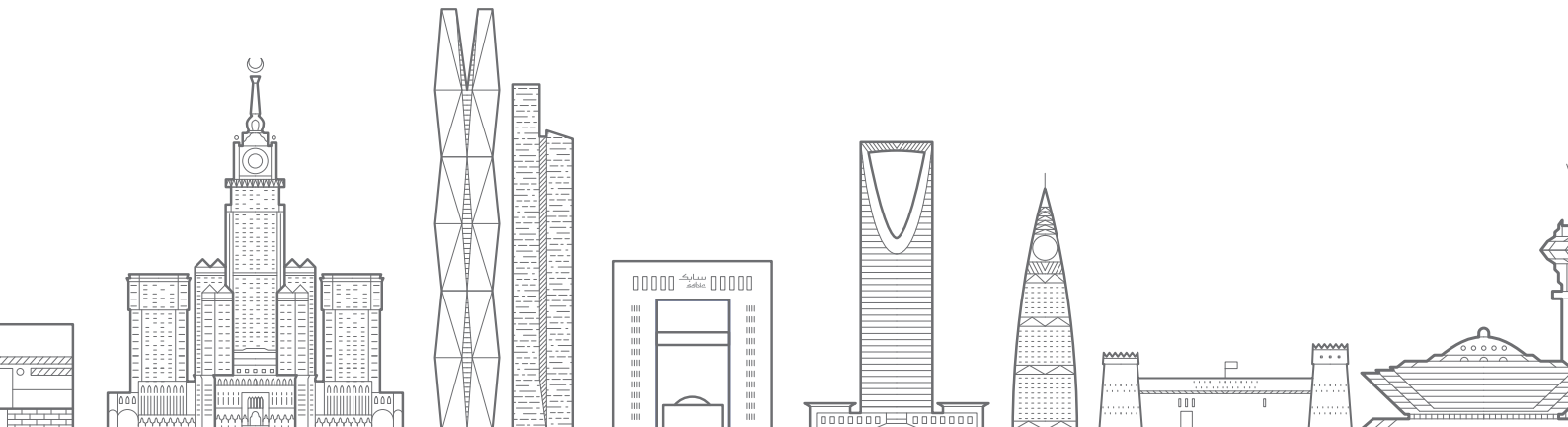
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