

SPECIAL



EDITION

2020

SAUDI ARABIA

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

**President Halimah Yacob
on Singapore's First State
Visit to KSA**

Extraordinary Heritage, Uncompromising Expertise



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Saudi Arabia

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST

SPECIAL G20 EDITION

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AT THE HELM



Commemorating the
90th 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





King Abdulaziz Al Saud
Founder of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**King Salman
bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**
The Custodian of the
Two Holy Mosques



Commemorating the
90th NATIONAL DAY of the
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



**H.H. Prince Faisal
bin Farhan Al Saud**
The Foreign Minister of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia





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SAUDIA

75
عَامًا
YEARS



90 عامًا فوق هام السحب

90 YEARS OF
SOARING GREATNESS



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SAUDI NATIONAL DAY

تهنئ الشركة السعودية العالمية
للموانئ القيادة والشعب بمناسبة
اليوم الوطني 90



Happy 90th National Day
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Greetings from
Saudi Global Ports Company

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Celebrating 90th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore gave a speech to mark the independence day of the Kingdom

On this happy occasion, I have the honour to extend my highest congratulations and blessings to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and to His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Chairman of the Council Ministers, Minister of Defense and to the honourable people of Saudi Arabia.

It is a proud day for all Saudis to remember the great moments when King Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud united the kingdom on September 23, 1932 and built a modern country that now occupies a high position among the countries of the world.

On our National Day, we are celebrating the major achievements that the Kingdom is experiencing on an unprecedented path drawn by Vision 2030 for the development of the Kingdom and responding to the aspirations of its citizens.

In light of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic the world is witnessing this year, Saudi Arabia has taken the threat of the novel coronavirus seriously, responding rapidly and robustly to slow its spread in the Kingdom and to protect its citizens and residents:

- Curfews have been introduced to restrict social contact
- Quarantines have been implemented in certain hard-hit districts
- Repatriations of Saudi citizens abroad and providing them with free hotel accommodation during quarantines
- Closed all mosques apart from the two holy mosques in Mecca and Medina
- Hajj for this year was limited to a few number of Muslims
- Providing urgent economic initiatives and financial packages to revive the local economy

Saudi Arabia, through its presidency of the G20, has also provided a number of initiatives in cooperation with the Group to address this pandemic and held several virtual meetings to come up with quick solutions that respond to this crisis.

Singapore, which the Kingdom invited to participate as a guest country in the G20 meetings 2020, has actively participated in the group's meetings and has put forward many initiatives to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The invitation of Singapore to participate in the G20 2020 meetings comes in the light of the distinguished relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Singapore, which witnessed in November 2019 the State Visit of

Her Excellency the President of the Republic of Singapore Mdm Halimah Yacob to the Kingdom where she met with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz. His Majesty conferred upon her the King Abdulaziz Medal in appreciation of her Excellency and the relations

between the two countries. That visit and the subsequent visits between officials from the two countries will enhance the relations between them in all fields, and in the future, we will notice great progress in the relations between them.



HAPPY NATIONAL DAY

Warm greetings to the leadership and people of Saudi Arabia on our 90th National Day, as we reflect on our strong dedication and commitment to enable Vision 2030



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Singapore President Halimah Upbeat on Saudi-Singapore Ties

President H.E. Halimah Yacob in an exclusive interview with Ms Nomita Dhar, Publisher and Editor in Chief of the publication, shares her thoughts with the readers of Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East, on the closeness of ties between Singapore and KSA. The State Visit was also a diplomatic success marked by several important initiatives and outcomes at various levels for both nations





“It was a great honour to receive the King Abdulaziz Medal from King Salman, which reflected our (countries’) strong bilateral relationship”





*(Opposite page): Great honour to receive the King Abdulaziz Medal from HM King Salman and (inset) a closer look at the award and medal.
(Above): Warmly received by HRH Prince Faisal Governor of Riyadh*

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Could you share with us the highlights of your visit to the Kingdom?

I visited Saudi Arabia in November 2019 at the invitation of His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. As Singapore's first State Visit to Saudi Arabia, it was a milestone that highlighted the warm, longstanding and diverse relations between Singapore and Saudi Arabia. It was also a strong signal of our commitment to fortify bilateral ties.

I was grateful to King Salman for his gracious hospitality. We had an excellent exchange of ideas on how to deepen bilateral co-operation, including two concrete proposals on the creation of a ministerial-level Joint Committee on economic cooperation and the reactivation of the Saudi-Singapore Business Council. I also reaffirmed Singapore's support for Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 transformation plans. It was a great honour to receive the King Abdulaziz Medal from King Salman, which reflected our strong bilateral relationship. King Salman was also very kind in granting me access to the Holy Kaaba in Makkah and the inner sanctum of the Raudhah in Masjid Nabawi in Madinah. As a Muslim, these places hold a special significance in my heart, and were one of the most unforgettable aspects of my visit to Saudi Arabia.





(Above): President Halimah engaged with Singapore Business Federation delegates visiting the KSA. (Below): President Halimah with Ambassador Saad Saleh Al-Saleh in KSA. (Opposite page l & r): The President also played host for a dinner with members of the Singapore community living, working and studying in the Kingdom



I also treasured the opportunity to meet with the vibrant and diverse Singaporean community in Saudi Arabia and learn about their experiences of living and working in the Kingdom. Singapore has a good reputation in the region and many Singaporeans have found good jobs there. They act as goodwill ambassadors for our country.

Considering the long history and ties between Singapore and Saudi Arabia, why is this only the first State Visit from Singapore to Saudi Arabia? Did it mark a particular development in relations between both countries?

Singapore and Saudi Arabia have enjoyed regular government-to-government exchanges since diplomatic relations were established in 1977 and frequent people-to-people exchanges even before that. My State Visit had been preceded by numerous high-level visits on both sides. Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Mr Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam have at various times visited Saudi Arabia. The leaders of our two countries also meet often at the sidelines of international fora, including the G20 Summit. These interactions have frequently been underpinned by initiatives that bring our countries closer together.



“My visit is an important milestone to mark what has been done thus far. I am confident that there will be more exchanges in the years ahead, especially as the international community works together to combat COVID-19. I also hope that HM King Salman and HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman will visit Singapore soon, at a mutually convenient time.”

My visit is an important milestone to mark what has been done thus far. I am confident that there will be more exchanges in the years ahead, especially as the international community works together to combat COVID-19. I also hope that King Salman and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud will visit Singapore soon, at a mutually convenient time.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Singapore and Saudi Arabia have strong economic ties. Diplomatically, what do you hope the visit achieves for bilateral ties?

I am happy that an MOU on environmental cooperation was concluded during my State Visit. This is an important area of cooperation given the need for all countries to work together on environmental sustainability and resilience. I am glad that since my State Visit, progress has also been made on the Singapore-Saudi Joint Committee, which King Salman had proposed during our meeting. Our business associations are also looking forward to reinvigorating the Singapore-Saudi Business Council as soon as the situation permits. The two respective governments will continue to support and facilitate cooperation between our peoples and businesses, especially as we weather the COVID-19 pandemic. I also hope that the Saudi Government will continue to look upon our request for a higher Haj quota for Singaporean pilgrims favourably.

Can you tell us about some projects that Singaporean companies have been working on in Saudi Arabia in recent times?

Singapore companies are actively involved in Saudi Arabia's transport and logistics sector, which is also a priority sector under Vision 2030.

In January this year, SATS Saudi Arabia Company, a unit of Singapore's SATS, was awarded a 25-year cargo terminal concession in King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. Upon completion, the terminal will be able to handle up to 600,000 tonnes of cargo annually. This is SATS' second project in Saudi Arabia, following the award of the air cargo facility in 2016 for King Fahd International Airport.

In April, Saudi Global Ports, a joint venture between Singapore's PSA International and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, signed a deal with the Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) to consolidate the operations of seaport terminals at King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam, in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province.

Beyond the transport and logistics sector, Singaporean companies are also keen to explore further opportunities in Saudi Arabia, in areas such as in the tourism, digital solutions, education, and oil and gas sectors. I look forward to more of such partnerships going forward.

What would be your message to encourage Saudi Arabian companies to use Singapore as a regional hub?

Singapore has a pro-enterprise and business-friendly environment. Singapore is the world's most competitive economy and among the easiest locations in the world for doing business. Singapore is also home to many of the world's top MNCs and Asian enterprises. This allows companies setting up shop here to easily plug into a strong network with an established base of customers and exchange new solutions and ideas easily. Singapore's strategic location in Southeast Asia, which has one of the world's fastest growing economies and is home to a highly skilled and enterprising population, also makes us an ideal hub from which to access the region and its growing consumer market.



(Above): Hejaz Railway Museum visit - President Halimah learnt some insights on the rich history of the city of Madinah. (Opposite page, clockwise from top): President Halimah visiting Islamic holy sites: Uhud Mountain, the Kaaba the Grand Mosque of Mecca and the Black Stone located in the eastern corner of the Kaaba

I welcome Saudi companies interested in setting up their business in Singapore to get in touch with Singapore's Economic Development Board and Enterprise Singapore. Enterprise Singapore has an office in Riyadh which can put companies in touch with the relevant agencies to kickstart the process.

G20-2020

Prime Minister Lee received an invitation from King Salman in October 2019 to participate in the G20 Summit in Riyadh. Can you comment on Singapore's participation and contribution to the Summit? Do you have a wish / message for Saudi Arabia about the Summit?

Singapore is honoured by the invitation to attend the G20 Summit in Riyadh, and I conveyed our gratitude for this to King Salman. As we have done at previous G20 Summits to which we were invited, Singapore has been and will continue to work closely with Saudi Arabia to achieve a successful outcome at the G20 Summit in November 2020. This includes assisting to promote stronger engagement between the G20 and the Global Governance Group (3G), of which Singapore is the Convenor, as well as with the wider UN membership. In this regard, Singapore commends Saudi Arabia's efforts to reach out to non-G20 members to reflect a broad and inclusive range of international interests and perspectives.

For Singapore, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the theme of the Saudi Presidency, "Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for All", even more relevant. As the global community grapples with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, international cooperation has become ever more crucial. Singapore commends Saudi Arabia for its leadership in galvanising international efforts to address the challenges posed by the pandemic, which included the convening of the G20 Extraordinary Virtual Leaders' Summit in March 2020. We also commend Saudi Arabia for ensuring that the important work of the G20 has continued through virtual meetings as travel is still not possible during this period.

Apart from the immediate priority of tackling the health and safety consequences of the COVID-19, Singapore hopes that the G20, as the premier international economic forum, will send a strong message of support for the rules-based multilateral order as well as global trade and supply chain connectivity at the upcoming G20 Summit in November 2020.

WOMAN POWER

What are your views on Saudi Arabia's initiatives and opportunities to empower women?

For Singapore, empowering women and supporting them in the pursuit of their dreams and ambitions is critical to our success. I am happy to see that Saudi women are eager to work and contrib-



ute to their nation's success and have readily taken up jobs in all levels of society including in government. For example, Princess Reema Bint Bandar Al Saud is the distinguished Saudi Ambassador in Washington DC as well as the first Saudi woman to be an elected member of the International Olympic Committee. I was also pleased to note that one of the Saudi officials coordinating and facilitating my visit was a capable young lady.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

On a lighter note, were you able to do much outside the official programme such as any shopping, visit local craft centres? Where did you go and what did you buy?

In Riyadh, I was happy to visit the King Abdulaziz Historical Center, which provided me with a detailed overview of the development of Saudi Arabia. Given its rich history and cultural diversity, Saudi Arabia is an archaeologist's dream come true. I look forward to more work being done to showcase the rich and beautiful history of the Kingdom and its people in the years to come.

“King Salman was also very kind in granting me access to the Holy Kaaba in Makkah and the inner sanctum of the Raudhah in Masjid Nabawi in Madinah. As a Muslim, these places hold a special significance in my heart, and were one of the most unforgettable aspects of my visit to Saudi Arabia.”



Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All

The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. It gathers the leaders of the largest economies of the world to discuss financial and socio-economic issues. Riyadh will welcome G20 leaders to the 2020 Leaders' Summit, as the culmination of the Saudi G20 Presidency that will take place on November 21-22, 2020.

Saudi Arabia holds the Presidency of the G20 this year and is playing a leading role in setting the agenda and organising the Leaders' Summit. In the run-up to the Summit the Presidency hosts several meetings featuring Ministers, senior government officials as well as civil society representatives. Although not a G20 member Singapore has been invited to participate in the G20 meetings



HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Singapore presenting the formal G20 invitation to Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong last year

Saudi Arabia assumed the 2020 G20 Presidency in December 2019 under the theme "Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All". The Kingdom is working on an extensive agenda that includes:

- Creating conditions for all to live, work and thrive
- Fostering collective efforts to safeguard the planet
- Shaping new frontiers to share the benefits of innovation.

(See table next page for a comprehensive overview of the Presidency's Agenda),

KING'S MESSAGE

HM King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in his message, when assuming the Presidency of the G20 strongly believes that in an increasingly interconnected world where G20 countries and their people face common challenges, the need for international collaboration is



Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi shakes hands with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan to mark the handover to Saudi Arabia as future hosts in Nagoya last year



“We, in the G20, have a collective responsibility to advance global cooperation. We should empower people, pave the way for a better future for all and strive for sustainable economic policies to safeguard planet earth.”

- HM King Salman

G20 COUNTRIES

- Argentina
- Australia
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- France
- Germany
- India
- Indonesia
- Italy
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Mexico
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- South Africa
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- United States
- European Union

GUEST COUNTRIES in 2020

- Jordan
- Rwanda
- Singapore
- Spain
- Switzerland
- UAE
- Vietnam

Empowering People	Safeguarding the Planet	Shaping New Frontiers
Create conditions in which all people, especially women and youth, can live, work, and thrive	Foster collective efforts to protect our commons	Adopt long-term and bold strategies to utilize and share benefits of innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Unleashing Access to Opportunities for all by breaking barriers preventing underserved groups' access to opportunities ▶ Boosting financial inclusion of women and youth ▶ Concrete actions to finance the 2030 sustainable development agenda ▶ Promoting accessible, safe and person-centric health systems ▶ Creating inclusive tourism destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Creating cleaner and more sustainable energy systems for a new era and practical approaches to manage emissions ▶ Focusing on energy access and the use of all energy sources to promote sustainable development ▶ Minimizing land degradation by reforesting the planet ▶ Improving global water management, and reducing global food loss and waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Utilizing technology in infrastructure ▶ Delivering a global solution to tax challenges from digitalization ▶ Developing smart cities and creating trustworthy AI ▶ Harvesting the benefits from the entry of BigTech in finance ▶ Tackling emerging risks, and ensuring cyber resilience

The Presidency's Agenda

more important than ever. His Majesty declared that: “We, in the G20, have a collective responsibility to advance global cooperation. We should empower people, pave the way for a better future for all and strive for sustainable economic policies to safeguard planet earth. We should also be forward-looking and adopt a bold long-term vision that makes the most of the current wave of innovation to shape new frontiers.”

Singapore which enjoys excellent ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is also invited as a representative of the Global Governance Group (3G), which is an informal grouping of 30 small and medium-sized members of the United Nations established to, inter alia, promote greater transparency and inclusivity in

the G20 process by encouraging stronger linkages between the G20 and the broader UN membership. Singapore is active in supporting and contributing to the G20 discussions. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong participated in the Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit on 26 March 2020, which culminated in a G20 Leaders' Statement on COVID-19.

Before the Summit takes place in November, the Presidency will have hosted more than 100 meetings and conferences, including ministerial meetings as well as meetings of officials and representatives from civil society. In this Special G20 Report Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East presents the **Headlines and Highlights** of several of these meetings.

HEADLINES & HIGHLIGHTS G20 MEETINGS

Information & Photos: Saudi Arabia G20 Secretariat



(Top row): King Salman chaired the video conference of G20 world leaders and other international bodies and organisations from his office in Riyadh. (Above): Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong also joined the virtual event

G20 First Virtual Leaders Summit: Focus on Pandemic Preparedness & Response

The virtual Summit discussed how to coordinate the world's economic response to the COVID-19 crisis. Following are excerpts from the King's Opening Remarks and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's thoughts about meeting the challenges ahead

26 March 2020

It was announced at the Summit that the G20 Leaders are injecting more than US\$15 trillion into the global economy to counteract the health, social, economic and financial impact of the pandemic. The Global Leaders have also committed to strengthen national, regional and global capacities to respond to potential infectious diseases by substantially increasing their pandemic preparedness and response.

The G20 committed to “do whatever it takes and to use all available policy tools to minimize the economic and social damage from the pandemic. It has also asked the WHO (in cooperation with relevant organisations to **assess gaps** in pandemic preparedness with a view to establish a global initiative on pandemic preparedness and response.

King Salman in his opening remarks at the Summit also said the G20 will work to ensure the flow of vital medical supplies, critical agricultural products, and other goods and services across borders.

The G20 Leaders also committed to deploy a robust, coherent, coordinated, and rapid financial package and to address any gaps in cooperation with the front-line international organisations. They also stated that the virus respects no borders and resolved that they are “strongly committed” to presenting a united front against this common threat. They also further commit to **provide immediate**

resources to the WHO's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI) and Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance) on a voluntary basis.

They recognised more than ever that **global action** in the form of solidarity and international cooperation are necessary to address this pandemic. They are confident that working closely together the world will overcome it.

King Salman continued in his Opening Remarks to say that: “In addition, it is our responsibility to extend a helping hand to developing countries and least developed countries to enable them to build their capacities and improve their infrastructure to overcome this crisis and its repercussions.”

He said. “The G20 has previously proven its effectiveness in mitigating the severity of the global financial crisis and its ability to overcome it. Today, through our cooperation, we are confident that we, together, will overcome this crisis, and move forward towards a future where all people thrive, prosper and are healthy”

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong who also took part in the Extraordinary Virtual @G20org Leaders' Summit said, “We must learn from our experiences, and emerge stronger and more resilient from it.”



G20 Extraordinary Foreign Affairs Meeting

G20 Foreign Ministers to Strengthen International Cooperation in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Riyadh, KSA

3 September 2020

The G20 Foreign Ministers held an extraordinary meeting to discuss enhancing international cooperation to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic as well as strengthening preparedness for future pandemics.

The ministers and representatives of international organizations discussed the importance of coordinating precautionary measures on cross-border management to protect lives and livelihoods.

During the meeting, foreign ministers acknowledged the importance of opening borders, uniting families, and promoting

“Reopening borders, in accordance with all the protective measures and national regulations, will help our economies to thrive, people to prosper, and will of course bring hope for humanity to have faith in cooperating to overcome the pandemic.”

- HH Prince Faisal Farhan

measures to allow the economy to thrive in light of the protective measures given by health organizations and national regulation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ministers expressed their deep condolences for the huge loss of human life and tragic impacts caused by COVID-19 and acknowledged the efforts and commitment of frontline workers to public health and safety.

His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Foreign Minister stated that “Reopening borders, in accordance with all the protective measures and national regulations, will help our economies to thrive, people to prosper, and will of course bring hope for humanity to have faith in cooperating to overcome the pandemic.”



First G20 Sherpa Meeting

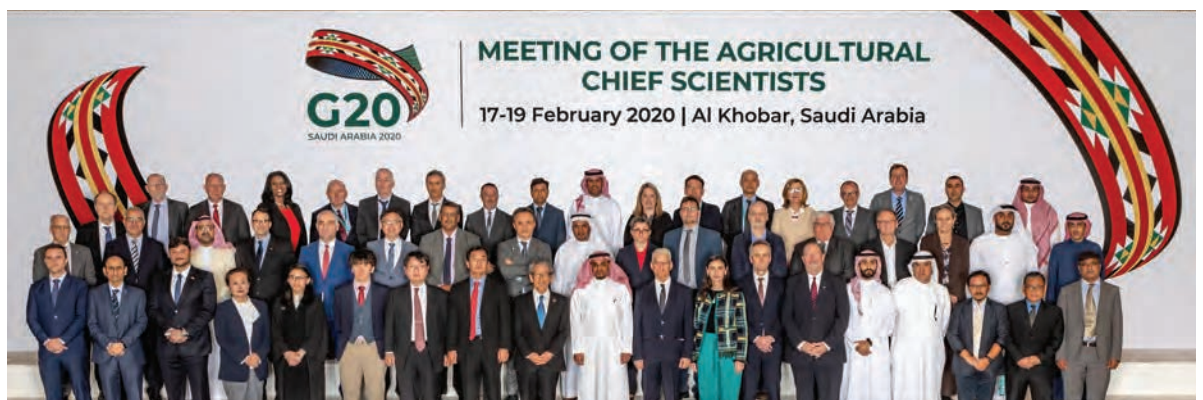
5 December 2019

G20 Sherpas met for the first time under the Saudi G20 Presidency in Riyadh with invited guest countries as well as international and regional organizations to begin discussions towards “Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All”. The pivotal role of the G20 Sherpas is to help pave the way to the G20 Leaders’ Summit by progressing policy discussions in meetings throughout the year. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will facilitate the dialogue process to guide the overarching policy discussions building on previous G20 achievements and reflecting the spirit of collaboration among the leaders. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is determined to build consensus around solutions to address global common challenges.

G20 Chief Scientists Address Sustainable Agricultural Productivity and Global Food Security

19th February 2020

High-level agricultural scientists from the G20 countries attended the 9th Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS) of the G20 in Khobar, Saudi Arabia to promote cooperation in pursuit of sustainable agricultural productivity and global food security. The meeting focused on global issues such as sustainable agriculture development in drylands, promoting agricultural productivity through innovative cutting-edge technologies, and the Water, Energy and Food nexus.



G20 Engagement Groups



Business 20
Represents the private sector



Civil 20
Represents civil society organizations



Labor 20
Includes labor unions



Women 20
Represents the interests of women



Climate Stewardship: Safeguarding the Planet

4 March 2020

The G20 Climate Stewardship Working Group (CSWG) held its first meeting under the Saudi G20 Presidency, where it stressed the importance of concerted efforts to safeguard the planet. In a context that is challenging the response capabilities to global crisis, the working group focused the discussion on the importance of emissions management and promoting climate adaptation, highlighting the huge benefits of reducing emissions and realizing a greener economy.

Delegates stressed that G20 members should work together in order to realize these opportunities and maximize anticipated benefits. The CSWG Saudi Chair, Khalid Abuleif, introduced the priorities of the CSWG under the Saudi Presidency, including the Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) saying “the circular carbon economy approach maximizes the benefits of emission recycling”. The focus of the CSWG was on emissions produced by the food and transportation sectors, two of the largest emission contributing sectors in the economy. The group also examined the latest nature-based solutions and linkages between mitigation and adaptation.

PARTICIPANTS

Apart from the G20 members and nations invited, international organisations that have also historically contributed to the work of the G20 are also invited and are also involved in the meetings and conferences held in the run up to the Leaders’ Summit. They include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Financial Stability Board (FSB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations (UN), the World Bank Group (WBG), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In 2020, regional organizations are also invited, including the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), as well as Vietnam as the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Africa as the Chair of the African Union (AU), the United Arab Emirates as the Chair of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and Senegal as the Chair of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Finance Track Meetings of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, as well as their Deputies, which focus on fiscal and monetary policy issues, such as the global economy, infrastructure, financial regulation, financial inclusion, international financial architecture and international taxation.

Sherpa Track Meetings of G20 Ministers and relevant senior officials, who focus on socioeconomic issues, such as agriculture, anti-corruption, climate, digital economy, education, employment, energy, environment, health, tourism, trade and investment.

Engagement Groups The G20 has a strong tradition of working with a broad range of organizations to bring different perspectives on financial and socioeconomic challenges to the G20 table. The Engagement Groups are independent collectives that are led by organizations from the host country. They work with other organizations from G20 countries to develop policy recommendations that are formally submitted to G20 leaders for consideration. (See diagram below for the G20 Engagement Groups in 2020).



Think 20

Is a network of think tanks & researchers



Urban 20

Includes city representatives



Science 20

Represents the science community



Youth 20

Brings together young leader



Energy: Focus on Cleaner and More Sustainable Systems

8 March 2020

The Saudi G20 Presidency led its first Energy Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) meeting in Riyadh where delegates have addressed a range of topics with a focus on insuring the continuous growth of cleaner and more sustainable energy systems for the new era, universal access to affordable energy, more secure energy markets, and energy market stability.

Given the current population growth and related development needs, G20 member states emphasized the importance to eradicate energy poverty and spur development in most

current and vulnerable areas of the world with the impact of a worldwide crisis. G20 delegates explored solutions of global crises along the lines of all the energy sources, solutions, and technological approaches to ensure the cost-effectiveness of energy access that can foster global economic growth.

Additionally, G20 members discussed effective and innovative ways to enhance energy market stability including demand growth, potential supply sources, policy signals, and investment flows especially in the current global situation. The Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) approach was discussed to advance new energy systems based on innovation and technologies that utilize all energy sources to provide affordable energy.



Priorities for International Trade and Investment: COVID-19 & Future of WTO

11 March 2020

Under the Saudi G20 Presidency, the Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) held its first meeting, chaired by Abdulrahman Al-Harbi, the Governor of the General Authority of Foreign Trade.

In his opening remarks, the TIWG Chair expressed Saudi Arabia's sympathies to the COVID-19 victims and their families. He also shared the G20 Presidency concerns regarding the serious implications of this outbreak on trade and economic growth. G20 delegates and representatives from international organizations discussed the impact of the rapid spread of the

virus on global trade slowdown, supply chain disruption and investment flows reduction affecting the global economic growth. Further to the COVID-19 outbreak, members exchanged their views on trade and investment measures that can help mitigate its impact and to assist all those affected by it.

Members agreed to launch the "Riyadh Initiative on the Future of the World Trade Organization (WTO)". This initiative aims to identify common ground and shared principles among all G20 members on the WTO's next 25 years, and beyond, and to provide the political support needed to make progress in the discussions on WTO reforms among all WTO Members. Members expressed their broad support and readiness to work constructively with the Saudi Presidency on the Riyadh Initiative throughout the year.

G20 Health Ministers Meet to Discuss Prevention and Response to COVID-19

19 April 2020

The G20 Health Ministers held a virtual meeting chaired by Saudi Arabia's Minister of Health, Dr Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, to further coordinate efforts in combatting COVID-19. They emphasized that people's health and well-being are at the heart of all decisions taken to protect lives, tackle illness, strengthen global health security, and alleviate the socio-economic impacts resulting from COVID-19. Health Ministers recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted systemic weaknesses in health systems. It also has shown vulnerabilities in the global community's ability to prevent and respond to pandemic threats.

Ministers addressed the need to improve the effectiveness of global health systems by sharing knowledge and closing the gap in response capabilities and readiness. They also echoed the G20 Leaders' concern regarding the risks posed by the pandemic to developing and least developed countries, where health systems and economies may be less able to cope with the challenge. The meeting also addressed necessary actions to improve pandemic preparedness, the importance of utilizing digital solutions in current and future pandemics, the emphasis on patient safety and the importance of improving value in health systems as well as antimicrobial resistance.

In an earlier meeting on 19th April 2020, the Saudi G20 Presidency has called for US\$8 billion to combat the pandemic



Dr Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Health

and Saudi Arabia has pledged a US\$500 million contribution that comes in response to the commitment made during the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit, which was called for and chaired by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in March. Saudi Arabia allocated US\$150 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI), US\$150 million to The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI), and US\$200 million to other international and regional health organizations and programs.



G20 Digital Economy Task Force Tackles Critical Common Challenges

5 May 2020

The G20 Digital Economy Task Force (DETF) held a virtual workshop to discuss the "G20 Roadmap Toward a Common Framework for Measuring the Digital Economy" report. The workshop brought together G20 members, experts from international organizations (IOs) and key stakeholders, including business, to share experiences and challenges in measuring the digital economy to guide policy making. The DETF reviewed and discussed a suite of fundamental indicators

for joint adoption and monitoring of trends in jobs, skills, and growth in the digital economy, aiming to measure these areas as well as the effects on them.

Participants also discussed the policy relevance and statistical feasibility of indicators as part of the report, which will set out a conceptual framework for the measurement of the digital economy and identify areas of work for future actions. The DETF further encouraged the distribution of digital tools and the role of the digital economy in promoting jobs and development.



EMPOWER: Spotlight on Women Leadership

24 June 2020

The G20 meeting The Private Sector Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (EMPOWER) underscored how strongly the Saudi G20 Presidency is committed to keeping up the momentum from previous G20 Presidencies to make concrete progress on women and girls' empowerment. This forum continues this work and supports greater recruitment and advancement of women to leadership positions in the private sector. The alliance is establishing a data stock take report to identify the current state of women in leadership positions in the private sector, as well as policy practices related to supporting better gender equality for women in managerial and leadership positions. This benchmark will encourage evidence-based discussions on how to best support the advancement of women to leadership positions



(From l to r): Governor of Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority Ahmed al-Kholifey; Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan attend the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Video Meeting in Riyadh on July 18, 2020. G20 finance ministers and governors of central banks vowed to take immediate and exceptional measures to address COVID-19

G20 Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors Meeting

18 July 2020

The collective goal, set by G20 Leaders in the extraordinary Leaders' Summit held on 26 March 2020, is to protect lives; safeguard people's jobs and incomes; restore confidence, preserve financial stability, revive growth and recover stronger; minimize disruptions to global supply chains; provide help to all countries in need of assistance; and coordinate on public health and financial measures. The G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBGs) endorsed on 15 April 2020 the G20 Action Plan – Supporting the Global Economy through the COVID-19 Pandemic (the "Action Plan"), which sets out the key principles guiding the G20 response and its commitments to specific actions to drive forward international economic cooperation as it navigates this crisis and look ahead to a robust, sustained and inclusive global economic recovery.



First Engagement Group Summit - L20 8 September 2020

On behalf of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, HE Ahmad bin Suleiman Alrajhi participated in the first Engagement Group (EG) Summit conducted under the Saudi G20 Presidency. The unprecedented virtual Labour 20 (L20) Summit, which advocates for the interest of workers around the world, was chaired by Nasser Aljaryad, chairman of the Saudi National Committee of Workers Committees, and attended by notable delegates from various organizations.

Representing the business and civil societies, Engagement Groups are at the heart of the G20, building a better world for all by contributing to the policy-making process with their unique and unparalleled perspectives. This was emphasized in His Excellency's speech highlighting the importance of accelerating the development of civil society across the world and praised the efforts made by the Engagement Groups, including the L20 and said that: "The important role played by labor organizations, represented by the L20, is evident. The L20 represents the voice of all workers, which was clearly demonstrated in the four statements released during the Saudi G20 Presidency year."

Following the conclusion of the Summit, the L20 will publish their final recommendations, which will be handed over to the Saudi G20 Presidency.



LATEST Singapore Hosts 13th Ministerial G20-3G Meeting

Singapore hosted the 13th Ministerial Meeting of the Global Governance Group (3G) via videoconference on 23rd September 2020. The 3G and members of the G20 Troika exchanged views on challenges facing the international community, and the continued relevance of multilateralism.

The G20 Troika (previous, present and incoming Presidencies) – Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Italy – gave a briefing to the Global Governance Group or 3G on the side-lines of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly on 23rd September 2020 to discuss challenges facing the international community arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saudi Arabia, in its capacity as the current G20 President, briefed the 3G Ministers on the key priorities and proposed deliverables for the G20 Leaders' Summit scheduled in November 2020.

The 3G Ministers commended the strong leadership of Saudi Arabia in galvanising international effort to address the tremendous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the convening of the virtual Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit on COVID-19 on 26 March 2020, the Extraordinary G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 3 September 2020, the timely launch and advancement of the G20 Action Plan to coordinate the global economic and public health response to the pandemic, as well as the good progress in the various G20 tracks and working groups.

PREPARING FOR FUTURE SHOCKS

The 3G Ministers welcomed, inter alia, the G20's promotion of digital means to cope with the disruptions brought about by the pandemic, and emphasised the need to utilise this momentum to accelerate technological development and digitalisation in order to ensure that the international community will be more resilient to future shocks.

They also reiterated their support for an environmentally sustainable and inclusive recovery, in line with the Paris Agreement, as a crucial element of future resilience. They also emphasised the importance of maintaining functioning, open and connected global supply chains and noted that the G20 is committed to the same, especially the continued flow of vital medical supplies and other essential goods and services.

Saudi Arabia: Investment and Trade Initiatives



Saudi-Singapore relations continue to shine, underscored by an economic synergy that is destined to be only more robust thanks to the GSFTA and the continued appeal of Singapore as a base of operations for Saudi firms seeking an entry in the Asia-Pacific market

According to Dr. Majid Al Qasabi, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Commerce and Investment what unites all investors in the Kingdom is "that they recognize an exciting opportunity in Saudi Arabia – a G20 economy at the convergence of three continents – and they see that reforms have made it easier than ever to access that opportunity."

He said this in the Winter 2019 edition of *Invest Saudi* and the Minister sees "that 2020 is an important year for Saudi Arabia – not least because later this year, we will become the first country in the Middle East to host a G20 Summit, putting the Kingdom's economy in the spotlight on the global stage. We are confident that over the next twelve months the economic reforms we have made will continue to translate into tangible results – and we look forward to welcoming more investors from around the world to join us on this journey."



HE Dr. Majid Al Qasabi Minister of Commerce and Investment

The Saudi government's reforms and initiatives, under its Vision 2030 agenda, have contributed to marked improvement in the economic performance in the non-oil sector. Preliminary estimates indicated a GDP growth of a 0.9.0% for FY 2019, with expected continued improvement, reaching 3.2% in 2020, due to the positive effects of the medium and long term structural reforms. These reforms aim to diversify the economy, achieve

fiscal sustainability and strengthen the role of the private sector in the economy as a major driver of growth and employment. The pace of these reforms was demonstrated clearly when Saudi Arabia rose 30 places in the World Bank's *Doing Business 2020* report – improving more than any other nation on the list, as shared by the Commerce and Investment Minister.

COVID-19 CHALLENGE IN TRADE & INVESTMENT

Upping the ante in early 2020 the Kingdom and Singapore continue to power the spiral for further enhancement in investment and trade with an eye on cementing ties in this critical area. In this endeavour it will not be deflected by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The G20 Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) led the Riyadh Initiative

“2020 is an important year for Saudi Arabia – not least because we will become the first country in the Middle East to host a G20 Summit, putting the Kingdom’s economy in the spotlight on the global stage”



The Trade and Investment Working Group (TIWG) led the Riyadh Initiative Workshop in June was followed by a virtual TIWG meeting to advance key trade and investment priorities

Workshop on June 25, followed by a virtual TIWG meeting on June 28-29 to advance key trade and investment priorities. The Riyadh Initiative Workshop addressed strategic questions that frame the discussion on the future of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The workshop facilitated ways to identify common ground of objectives and trade policy principles that can provide a foundation for WTO reform discussions and provide political support. The TIWG

meeting has focused on recent trade and investment trends and developments, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause disruptions to global supply chains.

The G20 Trade and Investment Ministers announced the G20 Actions to Support World Trade and Investment in Response to COVID-19 in May and the TIWG has played a key role in the implementation and tracking of these actions with the aim of supporting the

Significant Saudi Business Reforms

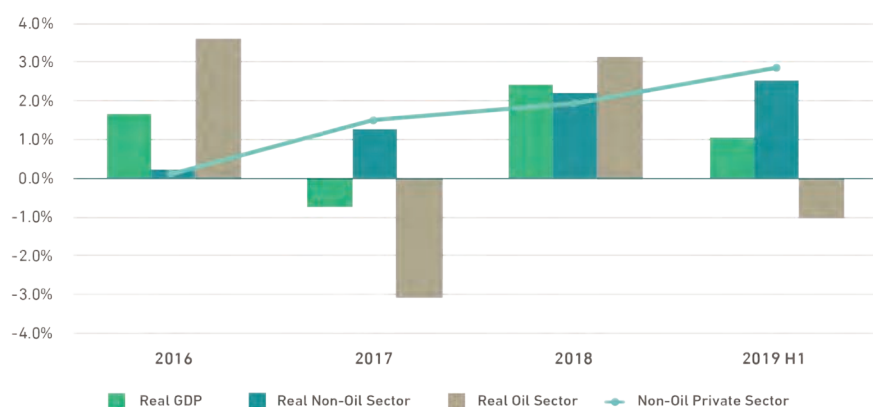
Last July a landmark reform to the Kingdom’s procurement law was finalized, coming into effect in November. The new law introduced a more competitive, flexible, centralized, and effective system for government tenders, including equality between Saudi and international contractors (provided local content requirements are met). The government is also now able to pay sub-contractors and sub-suppliers directly and allows for arbitration of disputes via the Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration.

In September 2019 a historic moment for the country, Saudi Arabia launched its first tourist visa scheme for 49 nationalities around the world, opening up a wealth of business opportunities in the Kingdom’s untapped tourism sector

In October saw the launch of a highly anticipated franchise law that was approved by the Council of Ministers, due to come into effect in April 2020. The new law will enable international companies to access local markets, as well as develop a regulatory framework for the relationship between franchisors and franchisees. The law will help both franchise parties make better investment decisions and improve the quality of goods and services on offer in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia officially opened the publishing sector to 100% foreign ownership. The sector was among the last that still prohibited full ownership by foreign investors.

Real GDP Growth (2016-2019 H1)



Source: General Authority of Statistics

Best Wishes to the People and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their 90th National Day



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HE Eng. Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser
Minister of Transport and Chairman
of the Saudi Logistics Hub

“Between 2016 and 2018, Singapore’s imports from Saudi Arabia rose by 56 percent, reflecting the strong ties and mutual support between the two countries. In line with Saudi Arabia’s commitment to continue shaping an enabling trade environment with foreign partners, Singapore’s inclusion in this series of roadshows demonstrates our shared keenness to drive groundbreaking initiatives across the logistics sector.”

multilateral trading system, building resilience in global supply chains, and strengthening international investment.

SAUDI LOGISTICS HUB

One area for growth, as indicated by a report by *Business Wire*, is logistics— where we find the Saudi Logistics Hub is looking “to build on this existing relationship to create lucrative investment opportunities across the logistics sector. Strong ties between Saudi Arabia and Singapore are a key component in connecting the key logistical hubs of the Asia Pacific region and the GCC region.” The Saudi Logistics Hub is a government initiative mandated to drive growth in Saudi Arabia’s thriving logistics sector.

Saudi Arabia currently has one of the fastest-growing logistics sectors globally and was ranked the world’s fastest economic reformer by the *World Bank Group’s Doing Business 2020* report, jumping 30 positions to 62nd place. It showed immense improvements in 9 of the 10 Doing Business indicators, including jumping 72 positions to 86th place in the Trading Across Borders ranking, and 103 positions to 38th place in the Starting a Business ranking. There’s no doubt that the Kingdom’s impressive reforms have been pivotal to its efforts to enhance the business climate and encourage foreign investors to set up operations in the country.

As stated by His Excellency Eng. Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, Saudi Minister of Transport and Chairman of the Saudi Logistics Hub: “Between 2016 and 2018, Singapore’s imports from Saudi Arabia rose by 56 percent, reflecting the strong ties and mutual support between the two countries. In line with Saudi Arabia’s commitment to continue shaping an enabling trade environment with foreign partners, Singapore’s inclusion in this series of roadshows demonstrates our shared keenness to drive groundbreaking initiatives across the logistics sector.”

In Saudi Logistics Hub’s latest global roadshow Singapore was its sixth stop; it was held on December 11th at the Four Seasons Hotel. Participants at the event included a host of leading business leaders from the logistics industry and gained

invaluable insight into the current logistics landscape in Saudi Arabia, as well as an understanding of the Saudi Logistics Hub’s drive to engage with foreign partners and encourage investment in the Kingdom’s logistics sector. The global roadshows have proved to be an ideal platform to promote the latest opportunities for collaboration and investment; at the same time they enhance the Saudi Logistics Hub’s credentials as a logistical gateway to Asia, Africa, and Europe.

VENTURE CAPITAL AGREEMENT

In April 2019 over 20 venture capital firms from the US, UK, China, and Singapore signed agreements under the VENTURE by Invest Saudi platform. Launched at the Financial Sector Conference, the VENTURE by Invest Saudi platform provides streamlined licensing procedures for venture capital portfolio companies, including an ‘instant license’ available in under three hours.

As the third Future Investment Initiatives (Riyadh; October 2019) demonstrated Saudi Arabia holds great potential for companies and individuals looking to maximize their ROI. Acting as a vital forum connecting local and international investors with hundreds of emerging opportunities and projects in the kingdom, the 2019 FII was a major success. On its opening day, SAGIA announced it had signed 23 investment agreements valued at \$15 billion. The month of October saw over 80 representatives from 13 government and private sector entities from Saudi Arabia and across the globe come together to sign a raft of new petrochemical investment agreements.

Saudi Arabia is already home to a burgeoning startup community, with SAGIA unveiling the Entrepreneurship License back in late 2017. The license allows start-up founders from all over the world to launch their business ideas in Saudi Arabia without the need for a local partner. More than 200 startups have been licensed since then, an average of nine each month. In 2019, it welcomed 179 innovative foreign entrepreneurs.



SPORTS INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In an interview Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal Chairman of General Sports Authority (GSA), shared that “Sports investment opportunities are massive across the board. Awareness and demand of sports is growing tremendously. With that growth comes an ecosystem that must grow in parallel, presenting an opportunity for the private sector to fill in any gaps in the ecosystem. Our direction is to enable the private sector to do exactly that. This presents lucrative opportunities in every part of the value chain from sponsorships, clubs, sports professionals, facilities, merchandising, and many others. Additionally, a growing number of large-scale, internationally-recognized events present lucrative partnership and sponsorship opportunities.

He continued that “There is a massive youth market in Saudi Arabia that is

energetic and ready to explore new sports. There is a significant increase in the amateur-level practice of sports such as motorsport, mixed martial arts, boxing, and tennis among others. The governance and financial support strategy of clubs will be rolled out to diversify sporting interests beyond football.”

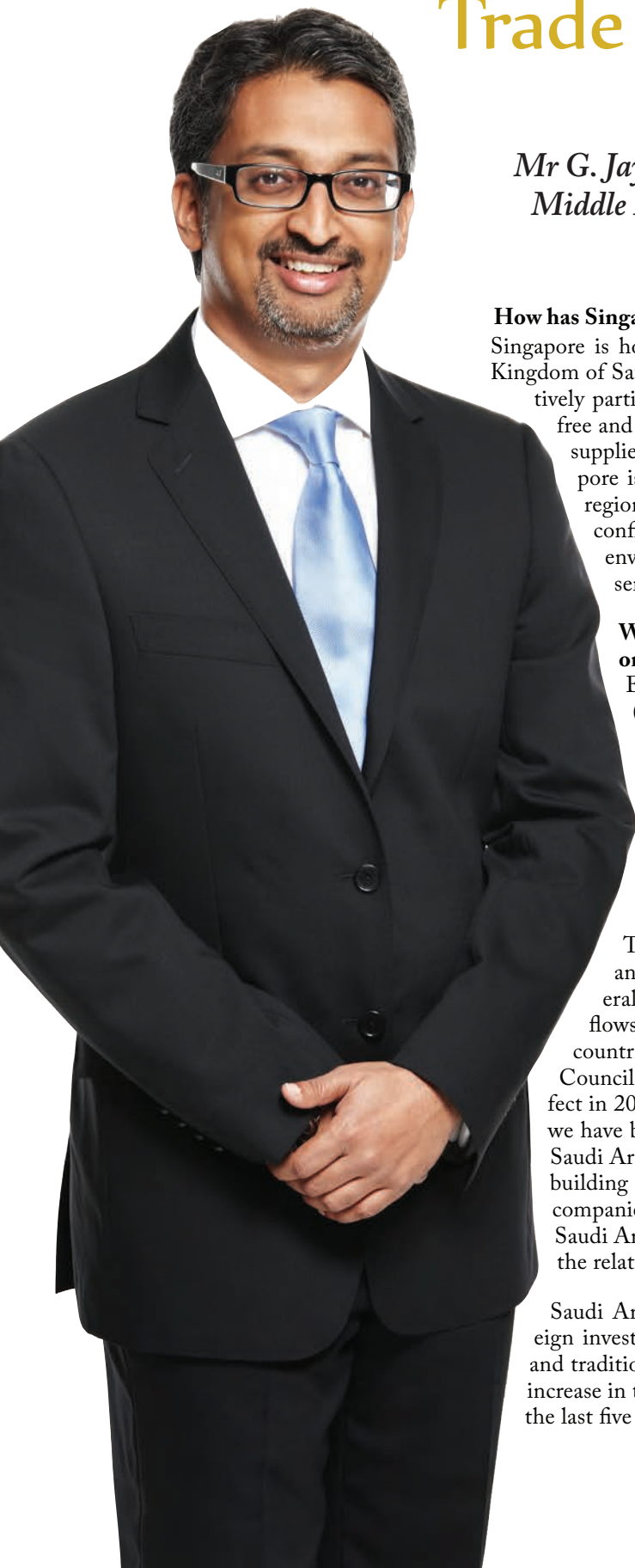
The Prince further added: “In 2020, we want to increase our momentum in developing infrastructure, athletes, leaders, and administrators. Our goals are to further enable our federations to create more opportunities and to engage and grow mass participation in sports. We have started to see the return on our investment and will continue to grow with private sector involvement locally and internationally.” An excellent example of this kind of commitment is the UK based Extreme International (US\$50 million) which has signed a deal with Fast Service to develop and launch a series of action and adventure sporting events across Saudi Arabia.



Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal
Chairman of General Sports Authority (GSA)

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Singapore and KSA Working Together for **More Investments, Trade and Open Markets**



*Interview with
Mr G. Jayakrishnan, Global Markets Executive Director,
Middle East, Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe,
Enterprise Singapore*

How has Singapore been involved in the G20?

Singapore is honoured to be invited to participate in the G20 meetings by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Singapore's senior political office holders have been actively participating in the G20 meetings, supporting members' consensus for free and open trade, now more than ever, to ensure the flow of vital medical supplies, essential products, and goods and services across borders. Singapore is committed to keeping our air and sea hub facilities open to the region and the world. This is a time for us to work together to rebuild confidence and promote a transparent and stable trade and investment environment. We look forward to working with the Kingdom in the series of G20 meetings.

What is ESG's role in Saudi Arabia and can you share more on the outcome of President's visit to Saudi Arabia in 2019?

Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) organised a business mission with 30 Singapore companies to Riyadh and Jeddah, during President Halimah Yacob's state visit to Saudi Arabia in 2019 (*see picture opposite page*). Comprising business leaders and C-suite executives from the information and communications technology (ICT), infrastructure, and hospitality sectors, the mission delegates discussed trade and investment opportunities with Saudi government officials and business leaders to support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals.

The recent business mission aside, Singapore companies have strong and longstanding business ties with their Saudi counterparts. A Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed in 2006 has promoted investment flows between Singapore and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is one of six countries in the Middle East that are signatories to the Gulf Cooperation Council - Singapore Free Trade Agreement (GSFTA) that came into effect in 2013. ESG's Overseas Centre in Riyadh was established in 2009, and we have been proactively engaging with government and business leaders in Saudi Arabia to understand their needs and development goals. Relationship building is very important as it helps us match partnerships with Singapore companies that are keen to expand into the Kingdom. Our President's visit to Saudi Arabia affirmed our continued commitment to strengthen and deepen the relationship between the two countries.

Saudi Arabia's economic liberalisation policies have encouraged more foreign investments and partnerships in new sectors such as ICT and tourism, and traditional oil & gas and infrastructure sectors. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the number of Singapore companies operating in Saudi Arabia over the last five years.



Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) organised a business mission with 30 Singapore companies to Riyadh and Jeddah, during President Halimah Yacob's state visit to Saudi Arabia in 2019. (Photo: Istana.gov.sg)

The Singapore companies in Saudi Arabia range from large corporates such as PSA International and SATS to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups. Singapore SMEs and startups are most active in the ICT space, forging partnerships with Saudi enterprises in banking, construction, and oil & gas to develop innovative technology solutions to support the Kingdom's digital transformation journey. For example, Singapore-headquartered enterprise AI solutions firm Addo AI, is partnering the Islamic Development Bank to develop contract tracing solutions to the bank's member countries as they seek to better manage the spread of COVID-19.

Growing consumer demand in the Gulf states has also resulted in more lifestyle brands establishing a presence in the region. E & Co Jewellery, a jewellery manufacturer, has set up retail and manufacturing facilities in Saudi Arabia to meet the demand for luxury products in the region.

How have your international offices been operating during COVID-19? Would you like to share some challenges and how ESG overcame them?

ESG has 35 Overseas Centres across the globe with two in the Middle East - Riyadh and Dubai. ESG officers stationed overseas walk the ground and are attuned to market developments, familiarising Singapore companies with local regulatory requirements and connecting them to suitable local partner(s). Even though COVID-19 has disrupted global economic activities and supply chains, we continue to work closely with Singapore and Saudi enterprises, providing advice and assistance in this incredibly challenging period.

Demand for medical products and solutions increased significantly across the world, Saudi Arabia included, at the peak of COVID-19. These products included face masks, personal protective equipment, ventilators, contact tracing solutions, disinfectant robots and Singapore-manufactured COVID-19 test kits. ESG assisted by connecting Singapore suppliers with Saudi partners during this period.

Can companies interested in Saudi Arabia still leverage on your presence in Saudi Arabia; in what ways can you help them at this juncture with travel restrictions in place?

We continue to organise webinars for Singapore companies to understand the opportunities in Saudi Arabia despite restrictions to international travel. B2C and B2B e-commerce has grown exponentially as digital platforms offer consumers and businesses a safe alternative to making purchases and access suppliers, respectively.

Pre-COVID-19, Singapore's e-commerce market grew at a compound annual rate of around 15% (CAGR) from 2015 to 2019 to reach US\$6.2 billion in 2019. Post COVID-19, online sales are expected to hit over US\$7 billion for 2020 alone. The pandemic has provided further impetus for companies to go digital, enterprises can diversify and scale up safely in this uncertain time. The online channels allow our SMEs to establish a presence in a new market without physically being there and is a viable alternative direct-to-consumer entry model.

We recently organised an e-commerce seminar in the Gulf Cooperation Coun-

"Singapore is honoured to be invited to participate in the G20 meetings by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Singapore's senior political office holders have been actively participating in the G20 meetings, supporting members' consensus for free and open trade, now more than ever, to ensure the flow of vital medical supplies, essential products, and goods and services across borders. This is a time for us to work together to rebuild confidence and promote a transparent and stable trade and investment environment. We look forward to working with the Kingdom in the series of G20 meetings."

Greater investments in KSA: Last April Saudi Global Ports (SGP) and Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) sealed a new Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) agreement for the First and Second Container Terminals in the King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam



“Oil & gas remains a crucial sector for Saudi Arabia. Policy changes, such as the In-Kingdom Total Value Add (IKTVA) Program, marks a greater need for localisation. More than 30 Singapore companies have offered solutions ranging from equipment repair to consultancy services. With the Kingdom looking to drive domestic value creation, we hope to facilitate more partnerships between Singapore companies and Saudi partners to meet the localisation requirements.”

oil and used the opportunity to showcase opportunities in Saudi Arabia. These include opportunities for Singapore and Saudi businesses to collaborate in Saudi Arabia’s e-commerce sphere, with the market predicted to reach US\$24 billion by 2026. The pandemic has further accelerated online purchasing and e-payment adoption among consumers. Saudi retail group Bin Dawood for example reported a 400% increase in its shopping app downloads and a 200% increase in online sales over a 10-day average in March. With the passing of the e-commerce law in October 2019 to regulate digital payments and protect consumers online, we expect the growth momentum for the digital economy to continue.

Can you share more about emerging digital trends post COVID-19 that ESG has observed in the Middle East and any collaborations in particular that were taken up? Capital expenditure (Capex) is expected to decrease due to economic uncertainty, and the urgency for enterprises to digitalise is growing. In a bid to improve productivity and efficiency, enterprises in the Middle East are adopting new digital solutions to offset the reduced reliance on the foreign workforce. The greater demand to digitalise opens more opportunities for Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) companies, particularly those that streamline processes to increase productivity and improve service delivery.

Quarantine and social distancing measures that were put in place due to the pandemic, have introduced new challenges for schools and healthcare ser-

vices. Many education and training institutes have shifted to remote learning, via online and virtual platforms. Virtual services in telemedicine and teletherapy have also been developed to keep patients safe while enabling treatment to continue from home. As more businesses come to appreciate virtual platforms, Singapore companies with the expertise and capabilities to meet these market needs will stand in good stead.

Top industry sectors or new frontiers ESG is recommending Singapore companies to look into? We have identified several growth areas in Saudi Arabia with substantial partnership opportunities for Singapore companies.

The first is digital solutions. Digitalisation plays a crucial role in Saudi Arabia’s efforts towards Vision 2030 and is even more important today in our post COVID-19 business environment. Singapore companies with expertise in e-government and digital solutions are well-positioned to partner Saudi Arabia. For example, Singapore company CrimsonLogic has operated in Saudi Arabia for more than ten years, offering its digital trade facilitation solutions to support Tabadul, a Saudi Public Investment Fund owned company, in digitising trade and logistics compliance services.

The tourism sector also plays a vital role in Vision 2030. Though impacted by COVID-19, Saudi Arabia seeks to boost tourism by developing large-scale projects (e.g. the Kingdom’s plans to build US\$500billion megacity, Neom,

to encourage local and foreign tourist receipts), training programmes and tourism-related services. Singapore companies can offer a range of services, from virtual tours to hospitality services, to provide Saudi Arabia's visitors with an enhanced and seamless experience. For instance, Singapore company LDR Technology Pte Ltd is keen to offer travellers to Saudi Arabia travel and cultural heritage experiences through its immersive story-telling mobile application Locomole that uses augmented reality to facilitate navigation, merchant discoveries and onsite interactions.

Beyond these sectors, oil & gas remains a crucial sector for Saudi Arabia. Policy changes, such as the In-Kingdom Total Value Add (IKTVA) Program, marks a greater need for localisation as the Kingdom looks to develop its oil & gas sector further. More than 30 Singapore companies have offered solutions ranging from equipment repair to consultancy services. With the Kingdom looking to drive domestic value creation, we hope to facilitate more partnerships between Singapore companies and Saudi partners to meet the localisation requirements.

Any Saudi Companies that have expanded into Southeast Asian (SEA) market taking the Singapore route? Saudi companies can leverage Singapore as a gateway to the SEA market.

Several Saudi companies have set up their regional headquarters in Singapore, including Aramco Trading Singapore & Aramco Asia Singapore, SABIC, Olayan Group, and the Al Rajhi Bank.

While we hope to work more closely with Saudi companies in Singapore, we also welcome Saudi companies to partner Singapore SMEs in their expansion into SEA. Enterprise Singapore will continue to facilitate partnerships between companies from both countries and are committed to supporting enterprise growth for the long term.

**Enterprise
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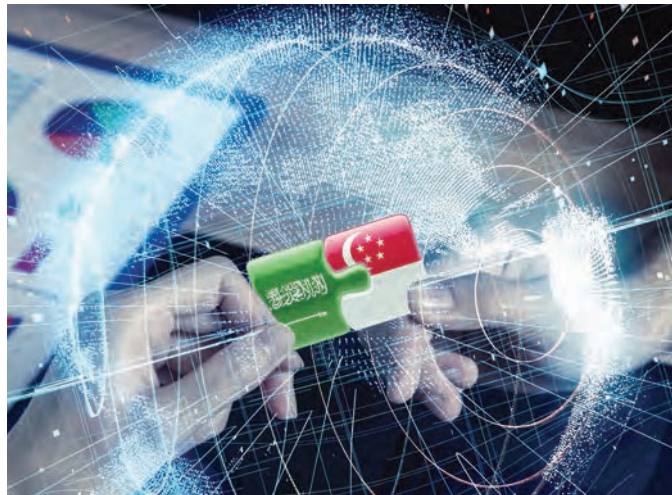
Singapore Ups the Ante for Fintech & Infocomm Connectivity

Singapore's burgeoning importance as the go-to hub for sourcing Fintech / Infocomm companies for growing one's business, is opening up exciting new avenues of trade and enterprise for the Middle East and South East Asia

Straddling one of the most strategic locations in Southeast Asia, which has one of the world's fastest growing economies and is home to a highly skilled and enterprising population, Singapore's reputation as a business and financial hub is lending wing to a host of new ventures in the digital space, to reach out to new markets with constantly evolving solutions in fintech and infocomm.

The Middle East is emerging as one of the most important regions in the world to generate partnerships with Singaporean firms in these enterprises. Led by its young population (60% of its inhabitants are under 35 years of age) who are big users of smartphones and social media, the Middle East region is undergoing a massive digital disruption. It has been estimated that in 2019, the e-commerce industry in the region was worth US\$14.3 billion (~S\$19.6 billion).

UAE and Saudi Arabia for example have been creating a lot of interest in this arena. Though geographically speaking Saudi Arabia is more spread out thus creating a "natural need" for e-commerce, its offline footprint of physical malls is not as dense as in the UAE. This makes e-commerce an ideal access channel for many brands and people who would like to shop away from what's available in the neighbourhood mall. Singapore Business Federation (SBF), in partnership with Enterprise Singapore, has set up GlobalConnect@SBF to be the partner for Singapore companies looking to expand overseas.



Singapore's reputation as a business and financial hub is lending wing to a host of new ventures in the digital space, to reach out to new markets with constantly evolving solutions in Fintech and Infocomm.

SINGAPORE HEADING OUT

Leadbook, ADDO AI, HAKOVO Pte Ltd and Locomole are some of the Singapore-based firms that have taken up the challenge of exploring this relatively untapped market. They were interviewed by Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East and shared their thoughts and insights on the dynamic growing market in the Middle-East.

DEEP TECH

Leadbook aims to revolutionise business prospecting by aggregating millions of business contact data and allowing marketers to prospect at scale via an online lead generation platform. Basheer Cassim, Leadbook's CEO positions Leadbook as an industry-changing marketing technology platform for lead generation. He said: "Leadbook is the next generation lead generation platform, powered by proprietary Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and big data techniques that include Data Mining, Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Machine Learning (ML) technology. The

technology allows us to gather, verify and process millions of global contact data from millions of online sources within a structured, self verifying and ever-growing database that has been providing marketers with a ready pool of potential prospects since 2017."

Headquartered in Singapore, Leadbook has had frontline exposure to the latest and greatest in technology, which drove the development of its technology and

“Smart Cities, AI and Fintech are three of the biggest trends to impact the developing and the developed world at the moment. They all three converge very clearly, especially in places like the Middle East and S.E.Asia.”



Leadbook's CEO Basheer Cassim

expertise to be on par with international pace setters. Leadbook offers an all-in-one solution, combining a marketing automation suite and a verified database of 200 million business contacts that covers 11.5 million organisations across 150 industries, in 195 countries, and all the automation tools necessary to engage at scale. Leadbook's marketing experts are also available to help users achieve success and compliance in their campaigns.

Leadbook has offices in Dubai, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the USA. Its products and services are industry-agnostic and global, enabling it to service cross-regional projects for international brands. Today, Leadbook is working actively to expand its coverage also across Asia-Pacific and the Middle-East with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as key target geographies. According to Basheer, “Leadbook has the largest database for Asia, and is well-positioned to help businesses across Asia-Pacific and the Middle-East venture across borders and into new markets in Asia.”

ADD O AI, an artificial intelligence (AI) solutions firm and incubator helps companies come up with a data strategy to innovate, optimize and automate their services; it has been building data

structure so that they can use the wealth of data that they have in an organized manner and it uses this data for machine learning models so they can actually become faster at whatever they do at a cheaper rate. ADDO AI's clients include some of the largest communication firms, banks, governments and healthcare companies in Asia. ADDO AI's co-founder and CEO, Dr Ayesha Khanna, highlighted “Smart Cities, AI and Fintech are three of the biggest trends to impact the developing and the developed



HAKOVO's Founder - CEO Takayuki Akahodani

world at the moment. They all three converge very clearly, especially in places like the Middle East and S.E.Asia. (See page 36 for the full interview with Dr Ayesha).

HAKOVO Pte Ltd was launched in 2018 and ever since the Singapore-based company has been branded as a value-added service provider in the trading space. HAKOVO'S uCCH is the world's first platform to focus on ASEAN+ Trade. uCCH connects and enables customs data exchanges for China, Singapore, and Indonesia. HOKOVO's founder and CEO Takayuki Akahodani explained, “Every country has its own import and export custom clearance process which must be complied in the International supply chain. The lack of seamless data flow among countries also creates loop holes for incompliant trade. HAKOVO's international digital platform, uNIFIED

CUSTOMS CLEARING HOUSE (uCCH), is created to address these issues. The key features of HAKOVO's import solution is the early data acquisition and auto-transformation and preparation of data for import.”

In HAKOVO uCCH, importers, customs brokers, and freight forwarders can be seamlessly integrated with local customs authorities to conduct business anytime, anywhere and in real time. The solution simplifies import customs declaration by reducing process time, and improves compliance by removing errors, thus avoiding delays, and saving time and money for their organization and trade partners.

The CEO said HAKOVO is looking to expand its footprint in Saudi Arabia, where it already operates.



LDR CEO Png Bee Hin

Locomole a mobile travel app for the independent traveller was set up to encourage Singapore's Millennials to learn about Singapore's history, heritage and culture. Developed by LDR Pte Ltd, its CEO, Png Bee Hin described how “It serves as a platform which allows young people to create content on their own, so they would be interested to discover and learn for themselves. As smartphones are ubiquitous in Singapore, an app to discover Singapore is an ideal tool for self-discovery of the island- state.”

The technology is transferable to other countries for applications such as promoting tourism, heritage subjects, exploring places of interests etc. Png said a Locomole Mobile Travel App is designed especially for both the locals and foreign travellers to explore independently and authentically and have meaningful cultural interactions and experiences. The in-app Augmented Reality features also provide them with a fun and engaging photo taking session. The app is already available in Singapore and Malaysia. The company is looking to tap deeper into the Saudi market.

THE PITCH FOR SAUDI ARABIA

ADD0 AI sees a huge potential for collaboration between Singapore and Saudi Arabia. While Singapore could share many of its experiences in Smart Cities with Saudi Arabia, the KSA could also teach the island nation a great deal about the investments that they are making and different kinds of start-ups and their plans, in terms of sustainability and diversification of the economy. **ADD0 AI**'s future plans are very much about expanding across the Middle East and its already looking to set up its own office at Riyadh and is working with Enterprise Singapore to do that next year.

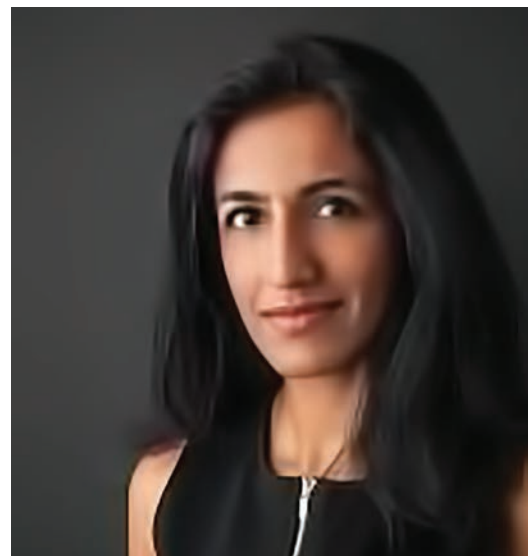
HOKOVO is aiming to add Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Japan into the uCCH network in 2020-2021. **HAKOVO**'s uCCH strategy is to connect the ASEAN+ countries with the GulfCooperation Council (GCC) via the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). To expand efficiently, the firm is looking for local and strategic partners to develop and market customized version of uCCH for the import country. **PSA** has ongoing projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It focuses on LogTech solutions as envisioned in CP4.0™ technology blueprint and views the intelligent container port in the 4th industrial age enabled by real-time connectivity, data orchestrated operations, as an integral component of the supply chain. **HAKOVO**, as a digital forwarder, collaborates with **PSA** to bring the benefits of logistics digitalisation to the SME market, particularly for the companies within the **PSA** network.

The Port of Dammam could be the next digitalised national logistics ecosystem port as currently the operational cost at the port is fairly high. **HAKOVO** is working together with a local partner to help KSA to identify improvement strategies using its global digital trade data. The project scope includes the whole transportation sector, as well as shipping, port, warehousing, and container depot. **HAKOVO** is targeting to increase terminal handling capacity and address missed revenues due to incorrect tariff assessment. The firm also hopes to improve KSA's risk assessment capability and identify contraband and counterfeits effectively with richer datasets and synchronization of data and information with global trade partners.

Leadbook offers its full list of product offerings, which is already available for the Saudi market. Its strength lies in its huge worldwide database, and access to millions of verified global contacts on a rental basis, instead of the traditional purchase model. This will unlock doors for companies in Saudi Arabia to outreach at scale and grow their businesses beyond borders. **Leadbook** provides a lead generation platform that is capable of outreach to millions of contacts daily. It also provides expertise to help sales and marketing teams optimise and ensure during outreach. Saudi teams can benefit from **Leadbook**'s experts' knowledge and experience in various aspects of lead generation, from optimising campaigns for the various markets to adhering to data protection regulations.

Locomole is exploring the possibility of introducing its app in Saudi Arabia. The company would like to offer its Locomole App with local trails just for Saudi Arabia. The local trails can be based on the different precincts in Saudi and each trail comprises both the popular places of interests as well as the hidden gems. Users of the app can join the local trails and discover heritage stories that will allow them to learn about the country's history, heritage and culture. The app will likewise include AR features to create a fun and engaging travelling experience for users. They can also enjoy discounts from local merchants.

The trails are all about Saudi Arabia and its beautiful attractions and places of interests. The stories and everything in the trails are about the history and traditions of Saudi. For instance, to cater for religious travel, it could offer a trail for travellers to visit the Hajj and Umrah. To cater to leisure travellers who are probably more interested in visiting popular attractions, shopping and dining, there could be a trail just for them. Most importantly, the firm can translate the trails into the Arabic language for local users.



Could you tell us about your company and the solutions that you provide in the AI space?

My company **ADD0 AI** is an artificial solutions firm headquartered in Singapore. We do three main things: We help companies come up with a data strategy to innovate, optimize and automate their services; we have been building data structure so that they can use the wealth of data that they have in an organized manner; we use this data for machine learning models so they can actually become faster at whatever they do at a cheaper rate. Our clients include some of the largest communication firms, banks, governments and healthcare companies in Asia.

How do you see the future opportunities in the island-state?

I cannot speak on behalf of **IMDA**; however, I am giving my observations. Coming to the government in the area of education in technology I see a great deal of investment in education for Singaporeans, so that they are capable, upskilled and confident of taking up the opportunities in new industries such as AI, the Internet of Things, Virtual Reality, Robotics and, of course, Nanotech and Biotech.

Could you expand on the fact that the purpose of AI is to amplify human potential?

Many of us view AI as disruption that will change our lives, our careers, our homes, and our city. However, this is a very passive way of looking at AI. Actually the right way to look at it is how we can make it work for us, like: How can I use AI to

Dr. Ayesha Khanna: Savvy Economies Benefitting from Digital Solutions

In an in-depth conversation with Editor-in Chief Nomita Dhar, Dr. Ayesha Khanna, Co-Founder and CEO of ADDO AI, an artificial intelligence (AI) solutions firm and incubator, shares her experiences as a strategic advisor on artificial intelligence, smart cities and fintech to leading corporations and governments and the enthusiastic response during her visits to KSA

make my company more customers? How can I, the head of a hospital use it to have a faster diagnosis for my patients? How can I as a teacher use personalized education with AI to make sure each one of my students is learning better?

When you take this proactive approach towards AI you are focused on amplifying your own potential, the potential of the company you started, the hospital, you run and your personal profession. This is what I mean by the true purpose of AI, because we should focus more on what it can do for us, rather than what it will do for us.

How does your work in Smart Cities, AI and Fintech converge to provide better opportunities?

Smart Cities, AI and Fintech are three of the biggest trends to impact the developing and the developed world at the moment. They all three converge very clearly, especially in places like the Middle East and S.E.Asia.

If you look at S.E.Asia, over 60% of adults do not have access to a bank. This means they cannot take out money for their children's college, or even for a mortgage for their own house or to pay for their parents' hospitalization bills. But with AI this kind of capital and loans can be provided to them easily, even if they don't have bank account, and therefore there's no added credit risk profile. Whereas, a traditional bank would say no to them, because they may not have a traditional job or an account or a history of transactions a fintech company on the other hand will use AI and alternate data, such as provide by

the behaviour on their mobile phone and permitted by regulation of the country to assess the credit risk of that individual. This is the way AI and Fintech together make commerce, education and healthcare easier and simpler, regardless of which economic class you belong to, and also thanks to the true hallmark of a Smart City, one that democratizes access to all basic services with the power of technology and data.

AI is a new avenue in the technology space and that you are part of; how did you decide on AI as a creatory, and would you recommend it to other people?

I came into the field of AI when I went to graduate school after finishing my under graduation at Harvard University. I then went on to pursue operations research, which is applied maths, at Columbia University, and over there I was introduced to machine learning, bio-informatics –and how statistical analysis, data science and machine learning could be used to improve public sector services, the way that our body responds to certain medication and also for us to understand how the stock market works, for example.

I decided to go from there to Wall Street, where I started as a software engineer, working on trading systems. I learned a lot from my colleagues and I was fascinated by the ability to gain greater insights using large amounts of data and to automate processing using machine learning.

Then when I came to Singapore I started my company because I saw such a gap in the market for data-driven companies that built data platforms for large enterprises.

Would you recommend this to other women?

Yes! Absolutely, as it is a huge growth area. There will not be any industry in the world, be it entertainment, law, finance, healthcare, construction, which will not have AI in them, and any woman who learns the basics of AI or goes on and progresses to a Ph.D and more, will certainly benefit and have a career that is guaranteed a long and fruitful future.

Which countries excel in the AI game and how do they collaborate for a larger reach?

Traditionally the countries that have always excelled in technology have largely been those in the West. In Europe you have Switzerland, and Germany, and then you have the giant universities of America – Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, Columbia. They have always been at the forefront of such endeavours; but now you see new players emerging; Canada, partly because it has excellent universities, but also because it has immigrants from countries all over the world.

We also have China, as it begins to grapple with the huge proliferation of data it has now and therefore has a pressing need towards machine learning. There are also countries like India and Pakistan which always had a great deal of talent in technology and are now upscaling to become data engineers and data scientists.

In all of these countries, and many more, as education becomes more accessible, they have AI at the core of their economic strategies.

Dr Ayesha in Riyadh early this year for the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Municipal & Rural Affairs conference to speak on smart cities and artificial intelligence



“We can share many of our experiences in Smart Cities and bring that to Saudi Arabia. The KSA, on the other hand can also teach us a great deal about the investments that they are making and different kinds of start-ups and their plans, in terms of sustainability and diversification of the economy. This back and forth exchange of information, learning, training and in general stronger ties between the two countries will lead to economic empowerment and sustainable governments for both.”

The way to collaborate is primarily in governance. While there is a lot of talk of AI there is also the downside, like manipulation, cyber-terrorism and any other kinds of abuse of AI. The way the countries can collaborate is to have a regulatory system of data piracy in AI governance and to protect people from the maluse of AI and to have a greater exchange of information on the latest technology so that everyone can benefit from it.

In fields like AI there are sometimes a few sole superstars in areas such as team sports – and the more people that know, the more collaborate to the better the product.

You have been to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia many times. What was the experience like?

I visited KSA several times last year and I was immensely impressed with the effort made by the ministries such as the Ministry of Technology, and the young entrepreneurs and small business owners I met, and the effort made by large companies such as SADIC and ARAMCO, to all of whom I gave keynotes on the topic of AI; their interest, their investment and their talent development in the field of AI I found to have created a vibrant atmosphere with a great deal of forward looking thinkers who are excited about going on the AI journey and bring a lot of economic benefit to Saudi Arabia and also their own careers.

What are your thoughts on the changing role of women in the KSA?

I met many women across Saudi Arabia during my visits and I was extremely impressed by their positive attitudes, but their enthusiasm and curiosity and a genuine desire to learn more technology, to participate in the economy in the way that it was beneficial for them and their country; they are generally of a very positive outlook, which always bodes well

when young people are excited to build their country together.

I feel like there is a wonderful spirit shared amongst women in KSA that they want to contribute to the country that they want to develop their own careers and want to learn more cutting edge technology. I'm excited to see everything they can achieve in the coming years.

Which areas in AI do you think Singapore and Saudi Arabia can collaborate?

There is a huge potential for collaboration between the two countries. First of all we can share many of our experiences in Smart Cities and bring that to Saudi Arabia. The KSA, on the other hand can also teach us a great deal about the investments that they are making and different kinds of start-ups and their plans, in terms of sustainability and diversification of the economy. This back and forth exchange of information, learning, training and in general stronger ties between the two countries will lead to economic empowerment and sustainable governments for both.

What are the highlights of your journey and future plans?

Our future plans are very much about expanding across the Middle East and we would like to set up our own office at Riyadh and we are excited to work with Enterprise Singapore to do that next year. *Insyallah*. We are also excited to develop more products; we already have one in the education space that is already being used by one of the leading universities in Pakistan. We see it having great potential in ASEAN and the Middle East. Recently we have been involved in healthcare, which is a new and exciting sector for us. We work with one of the largest healthcare networks in the US and will soon be working with one of the largest ministries, the Ministry of Health, in ASEAN, and the ability to make a difference in the life of patients and improve outcomes.

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
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For more information:

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Rotary's 7 hectares of yard facilities in Jubail

Saudi Global Ports

Mega Container Port Project on KSA's Eastern Coast



*Saudi Arabian and Singapore officials give the thumbs up on the new agreement sealed in a virtual signing ceremony on 13th April 2020
(Photos taken from video transmission source)*

Saudi Global Ports (“SGP”), a member of the PSA International Group, and Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) signed a new Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) agreement for the First and Second Container Terminals in the King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam over a virtual signing ceremony on 13th of April 2020, making SGP the sole container terminal operator of the port.

Under the patronage of H.R.H Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Governor of the Eastern Province, the agreement was signed between Mawani President H.E Eng. Saad Abdul Aziz Al-Khalb and SGP Chairman Mr. Abdulla Al Zamil, and witnessed online by Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Transport H.E. Eng. Saleh Al Jasser, Singapore’s then Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Transport Mr. Khaw Boon Wan and Singapore’s then Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Dr Koh Poh Koon. Key officials from the Singapore Embassy to Saudi Arabia, the Public Investment Fund (“PIF”) and PSA International were also invited to attend the ceremony.

Upon assuming the responsibility of managing both Container Terminals from 1st October 2020, SGP will embark on a multi-phase development and modernisation program to transform the King Abdulaziz Port into a mega container hub and increase the Port’s capacity to an estimated annual handling capacity of 7.5 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (“TEUs”) when the planned expansion works are fully completed.

The first phase of development is expected to commence in 2021 when SGP will invest in additional container handling equipment in both terminals, infrastructure rehabilitation and upgrades for the First Container Terminal. For the Second Container Terminal in particular, SGP will be investing in three additional units of next generation quay cranes and will extend its current quay by another 225m, making it a 925m of continuous deep-water quay to accommodate the future generation of mega container vessels. This will increase annual port capacity to 3.15million TEUs.

The total estimated investment of more than SAR 7 billion (SGD 2.6 billion) is expected to be the largest seaport investment by a single operator under the public-private partnership in the Kingdom. The overall investment will bring about greater efficiency and modernisation with the introduction of automation and electronic logistics and trade platform to transform Dammam into the next Smart Port



Abbreviations for PHASE-1 Infographics (above right): QC – Quay Crane | RTG – Rubber Tyred Crane | RS – Reach Stackers | ECH – Empty Container Handler | PM – Prime Movers | FL – Fork Lifts

The total estimated investment of more than SAR 7 billion (SGD 2.6 billion) is expected to be the largest seaport investment by a single operator under the public-private partnership in the Kingdom. The overall investment will bring about greater efficiency and modernisation with the introduction of automation and electronic logistics and trade platform to transform Dammam into the next Smart Port.

PSA International - Trusted Partner

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 19 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". Visit us at www.globalpsa.com.

About PIF

PIF, as a majority shareholder in SGP, is committed to developing the logistics sector in Saudi Arabia by providing patient investment capital and through catalyzing the right partnerships to develop infrastructure and local capacity and expertise in this strategic sector. This is in line with PIF's mandate to diversify the Saudi economy under Vision 2030.

PORT PROFILE

King Abdulaziz Port Dammam

King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam is the Kingdom's main port in the Arabian Gulf. The port is considered the main gateway through which cargo from all over the world reaches the Eastern and Central Provinces of the Kingdom. It also provides services for the oil industry and all other major cities in the east and central region of the Kingdom.

The port is self-sufficient in providing administrative offices, workshops of various natures, whether maritime, electrical, and mechanical or in the communications fields. The port also has its own maritime communication network and desalination plants. Also the port offers a medical clinic, fire stations, a large residential complex for port employees, a mosque & commercial market. The port is connected through a network of highways with the rest of the regions in the Kingdom and the neighbouring Gulf States, as well as a railway to Riyadh dry port.

Saudi Women Empowerment Role Models for the Future

From G20 to W20 and also the Kingdom's own Vision 2030 agenda to increase the female workforce to as much as 30 percent over the next decade, Saudi women are already reaping good dividends for the economy as the new reforms take root

For long the oil sector has reigned supreme as the most significant driver of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's economy. A lead player in this arena has been Saudi Aramco, which has been a pioneer in empowering Saudi women from way back in the 60s, by training them and harnessing their energy, intelligence and professionalism in all areas of the company's work - from general planning to reservoir management.

Aramco has been well reputed for preparing its female workforce for employment on the frontlines of its core business of exploration and production, refining and chemicals, mechanical engineering, chemistry, petroleum engineers, laboratory experts, geology, geophysics, technology and information protection, safety inspections, firefighting, and loss prevention.

According to 2015 statistics from the Ministry of Education, Saudi women make up 51.8% of Saudi university students but, despite their academic success, only 22% of women joined the workforce. It is without doubt that Saudi Arabia has had immense potential to make huge strides towards gender equality. The launch of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 was aimed at also using female power to spur on the country's economy.

With market conditions spurring the Saudi government to redefine the parameters of its economic goals the blueprint for transformation — Vision 2030, the guiding light for the country's economic, social transformation and reforms and spearheaded by Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin



H.E. Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman at the launch of Vision 2030: He placed women and women's rights at the forefront of change as part of the Vision 2030 plans for the Kingdom

participation from 22 percent to 30 percent, over the next decade.

BOLD REFORMS

The bold reforms introduced by Vision 2030 have transformed women's legal rights in Saudi Arabia. 5.5 million Saudi women over 21 years of age are already benefiting from the reforms and powered by the assurance that they will continue to reap the benefits for generations to come.

A World Bank report places the Kingdom first in gender equality in the GCC bloc and second in the Arab region. The bank's "Women, Business and the Law" (WBL) 2020 report gave the Kingdom an overall score of 70.6 out of 100 — a 38.8 jump since its last ranking — placing it first among GCC countries and second in the Arab world.

The World Bank's annual report tracks how laws affect women in 190 economies. Saudi Arabia made the biggest improvement globally, enacting reforms in six out of eight areas measured including in women's mobility, sexual harassment, retirement age and economic activity," according to the report.

It also noted that Saudi Arabia had also amended the Civil Status Law to allow a woman to choose where to live in the same way as a man by removing a provision that made the husband's home the default residence. "These new regulations are history in the making. They call for the equal engagement of women and men in our society," Saudi Ambassador to the United States Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan said about the reforms, and felt that it is a holistic approach to gender equality that will unquestionably create real change for Saudi women.

With the reforms came landmark changes in the professional field as well as in the everyday life of women in the Kingdom.

For the first time 30 women were appointed to the Saudi Shoura Council (2013) and 17 to municipal seats in 2015.

Today a large number of Saudi women hold managerial positions in new fields and sectors from which they previously were excluded.

Salman, was aimed at diversifying Saudi Arabia's economy beyond oil and gas and to promote private sector growth and entrepreneurship. Envisaging the powerful role that Saudi women could play in this journey, a unique feature introduced in this agenda was the increasing of women's labor force

The W20 is one of several independent engagement groups, led by organizations from the host country, that focus on different sections and sectors of society and develop policy recommendations for consideration by G20 leaders.



As indicated by the findings of the reports the year 2019, has been marked as a groundbreaking year for the empowerment of Saudi women that allowed women greater economic opportunities in Saudi Arabia. "Saudi Arabia basically has become one of the leaders in the Arab world in terms of women empowerment," World Bank's Regional Director for the GCC Issam Abu Sulaiman said, according to the Saudi Press Agency.



With the reforms came landmark changes in the professional field as also as well as in the everyday life of women in the Kingdom. For the first time 30 women were appointed to the Saudi Shoura Council (2013) and 17 women were appointed to municipal seats in 2015. Today a large number of Saudi women hold managerial positions in new fields and sectors from which they previously were excluded.



(Topo): Saudi Aramco saw the potential for Saudi women a long time ago and are empowering them by hiring Saudi women for various jobs in the oil company.
(Above): Al Nahda Society activity during International Women's Week: The society Al Nahda Society is the lead organization in the facilitation of W20

Based on a survey of nearly 256,700 women around the world, the new report recently published by the CEOWORLD magazine Sweden was ranked the best country in the world for women, while Saudi Arabia has been ranked Arab world's best country for women, and 89th globally.

According to recent statistics, with 23.5 percent of the private sector workforce being female, the Kingdom is well on the way to reaching that target (of increasing of women's labor force participation from 22 percent to 30 percent, over the next decade)

KPMG has been firm supporter of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal No .5 aimed at 'achieving gender

equality and empowerment to all women and girls. As part of its ongoing efforts for the empowerment and professional development of women KPMG's support and sponsorship of the dialogue sessions of the Women 20 (W20), has been reinforced with its signing up of a strategic partnership with the **Al Nahda Society**, the lead organization in the facilitation of W20, in the year that Saudi Arabia hosts the G20 meetings. Al Nahda Society for Women is of the firm belief that there is hope for a gender-balanced country.

W20 ENGAGEMENT GROUP

The W20 comprises a transnational network of delegates representing non-governmental women's organizations, civil society, female entrepreneurs, businesses, and think tanks across G20

member states. Its core agenda is to ensure that the gender considerations are mainstreamed into G20 discussions and translate into the G20 Leaders' Declaration as policies and commitments that foster gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Saudi Arabia holds the presidency of the G20 this year and the 2020 G20 Leaders' Summit be held in Riyadh on November 21-22, 2020. The 2020 G20 Leaders' Summit will be the 15th meeting of the G20. This is the first time ever that the Kingdom will be hosting the prestigious G20 Summit. The W20 is one of several independent engagement groups, led by organizations from the host

country, that focus on different sections and sectors of society and develop policy recommendations for consideration by G20 leaders.

As observed by Al-Walan, Shahd Attar, executive director of the technology and communications department, Ministry of Investment, while presenting recommendations for digital inclusion at a discussion hosted by the G20's women's engagement group, W20: "Changing women's perceptions about themselves is essential for success in entrepreneurship because working in this field is risky and needs courage and confidence." At the end of the W20 discussion it was concluded that the empowerment and economic inclusion of Saudi women are necessary steps for the creation of a more productive society that supports improved economic growth.

Faten I. Al-Hubaishi: Be the Change

She is a motivational leader with strategic mindset, influencer, quality living advocate towards climate actions for better quality of life. She is the first Saudi female Ambassador at the Global Wellness Institution (GWI), and was KSA Quality of Life Vision Realization Office representative at GWI Summit, Singapore, 2019



Faten wears many hats. In a freewheeling conversation with Editor-in-Chief Nomita Dhar she speaks of the changes sweeping her country and how that framework is shaping the growing emancipation and empowerment of Saudi women

Tell us in brief about your background?

I was the youngest daughter in my family home in Dammam, Eastern Province. In all we are ten brothers and sisters and I think this may have shaped my desire to find some special space for myself. I was inspired by the fifth flight of Space Shuttle Discovery (1985) and became a confident person who was very inquisitive about things from a very early age. You could say I had an inquiring mind from the age of five and out of this evolved my thinking as an adult that we use the abilities of our brains proportionally over life's journey. Thus, I decided to reinvent myself (what I call my 'deep dives') every 10 years.

In my high school days I enjoyed

studying Physics (all about Acceleration, Transformative Energy, Gravitational Force) and learnt about the physiological and psychological responses of the human body. This motivated me to consider studying one of three majors: Aviation, Law, or Medicine. The first two preferences were not a choice, either as a major or a career path. So Medicine it was. Art (abstract expressions), which also interested me was a weekend relaxation pursuit.

DEEP DIVES

My first 'deep dive' was while studying at King Faisal University, College of Applied Medical Science I joined the Saudi Aramco (Oil & Gas Company) Summer Program for eight weeks. I was nominated to win a full Scholarship, which was very nice because, it guaranteed direct employment as an evaluated (outstanding proactive, analytical thinker and team-oriented performer); I won three prizes (Salmon Fish) as a project team leader who could swim against the current and successfully executed creative proposals that represent a multinational's and multidisciplinary team approach.

My second 'deep dive' occurred when I decided to bring personal ideas to a personal business, away from high management approvals. I completed my MBA & Entrepreneurship program at Prince Mohammed Bin Salman College in September 2019. Regarding my third 'deep dive'...its coming soon, wait for it.

How is the current environment for professional women in Saudi Arabia?

Never been better, Saudi women are living the "Golden Era"...dreams are becoming a reality. Their passion and commitment have placed them in positions as Ambassadors, scientists, teachers, physicians, pilots, film producers, entrepreneurs, lawyers, policewomen, spokeswomen, sportswomen (not locally but internationally).

What are the major changes that have improved opportunities for women?

We are part of the world; the Saudi Arabia Government is making incredible efforts implementing Saudi Arabia 2030 Vision through the National Transformation Plan NTP 2020. Also globally, Saudi Arabia, is an active member of 193 United Nation countries, and one of the G20. Women empowerment all over the world is an important pillar at both.

What and who helped you overcome and become the success you are today?

I have two messages to share from my late father:
- "Life will not go neither smooth nor easy always; accept it as a self-challenge towards your goals."
- "I'm proud of you, and happy of your achievements, don't let anyone interrupt you, I see high potential in your character and continue to believe in you".

Both of these messages prepared me with a mind set of interpersonal and professional skills that will ready me to overcome the worst.

Since your childhood days, what positive changes have you seen for women in Saudi Arabia?

Undoubtedly, the international presence of Saudi women.

Re-imagining Saudi Arabia

Tourism



Kingdom is investing in tourism for a post-COVID world where it is expecting growth from both domestic and inbound tourists generating enough income to become Saudi Arabia's "White Oil"



(Above): Qiddiya will also open new professional pathways for the youth of Saudi Arabia, creating 17,000 jobs by 2023 and 25,000 jobs by 2030. Visitors will find more than 300 ground-breaking recreational and educational facilities with 70% of the site devoted to an Eco Zone

Saudi Arabia's diversification plans include a pivotal role of tourism under the umbrella of the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's **Vision 2030** which is propelling the Kingdom's economic reform agenda. Combined with the collated data and the insights offered by the discussion of panelists included representatives from Saudia Private Aviation, Dur Hospitality, Colliers International MENA, Marriott International, Jabal Omar Development Company and Saudi General Investment Authority at the **Arabian Travel Market 2019** on opportunities related to upcoming tourist-focused developments and visa reforms, the \$25 billion tourism sector can become Saudi Arabia's 'white oil'.

Kingdom-based industries in direct contact with tourists were expected to generate over \$25 billion in 2019, about 3.3 percent of Saudi Arabia's GDP. As ascertained by a research conducted by Colliers Saudi Arabia's domestic tourist

trips were projected to rise by 8 percent in 2019, while inbound visits from international markets were predicted to grow by 5.6 percent on a yearly basis. The Kingdom's overall number of tourist trips was predicted to be on course to hit 93.8 million by 2023, up from 64.7 million in 2018.

THE RED SEA PROJECT AND QIDDIYA

The development of The Red Sea Project and Qiddiya, as reimagined centres from the perspective of hospitality, wellness, entertainment and sports is expected to resonate with many segments of the Kingdom's local populace which will be stimulated to spend money at home rather than abroad. In the first phase of some 30,000 rooms will open in 2022 at the Red Sea Project.

And clearly with the reforms already in place there is a gathering momentum in the change of mindset when it comes to

opening up this country for visitors for both religious and general tourism.

BEAUTIFUL GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

Reema Al Mokhtar, head of destination marketing, Jabal Omar Development Company, pointed out during the Arabian Travel Market 2019: "Our country has beautiful geographic diversity and a host of cultural attractions so, once visitors come into the kingdom and see the different projects lined up for them, I think it will market itself." Driving this spurt of activity in the tourism sector is the improvement in visa-related matters and the roll-out of 30-day Umrah Plus Visas, eVisas for tourists and specialist visas for events such as the Formula E Championship's E-Prix. An important trigger for international investment in the destinations has been the latest reforms which allow for 100 percent ownership and easier registration for foreign companies in areas like the Red Sea and Noem.

What about the COVID Spanner in the Tourism Works?

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of UNWTO is cautiously positive



With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the tourism industry in the Middle East and North Africa region has taken a massive hit. That said, as indicated by an interview conducted by Hussam Al-Mayman in *Arab News* with Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The tourism chief was cautiously optimistic that the Middle East could bounce back from the pandemic quickly and that Saudi Arabia had a vital role to play in the expected recovery. Pololikashvili, was happy that Crown Prince (see picture above) had been very supportive of the Kingdom's tourism sector during the pandemic. The Secretary-General, pointed out that: "The two main components necessary to restart tourism are reopened borders and a return to the connectivity that we had before." He was of the opinion that recovery to a large extent would depend not only on how fast connectivity can restart and how soon borders reopen, but also on how the pandemic will be evaluated in different parts of the world.

Till recently the Kingdom used to only issue visas to expatriate workers, people visiting on business, and pilgrims visiting the holy sites of Makkah and Madinah. With Saudi Arabia opening its doors to international tourists with easing of visas restrictions (with a new visa regime for 49 countries) a new narrative is in the making for exploration of this exotic, forbidden land which has long shunned tourism except for religious purposes. From the verdant mountains of the Asir in the south-west where you can indulge in a spot of paragliding and mountain climbing, to the

"While we can't predict entirely what will happen, we will be better prepared for what comes in 2021," is how he saw it. The Secretary-General also mentioned the special Saudi programme the idea behind which was to be ready, after two or three years, to prepare young men and women who will be involved in the Kingdom's mega projects, in which Saudi Arabia is investing over the next five to six years. He spoke of the high regard he had for the government led by HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who, he reiterated, has been very committed to the tourism sector. Pololikashvili felt that after the pandemic, people will start to travel domestically, not only in Saudi Arabia but also across the rest of the world. That means that, in a period of one and a half years, people will travel more within countries than abroad because there are still many closed borders and restrictions on travel. And since people will use their holidays to travel inside their countries, it will be also beneficial for these local destinations.

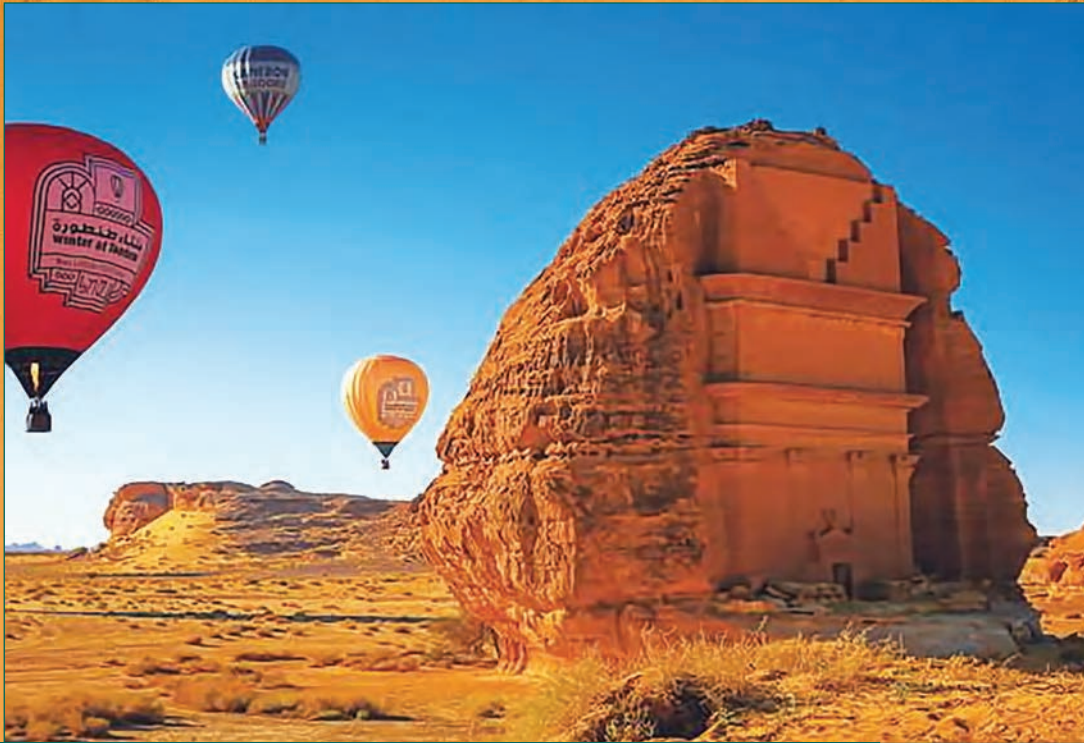
turquoise expanses of reefs in the Red Sea, the spice markets of that riveting melting pot and UNESCO-acclaimed Heritage Site that is Jeddah and the serene oasis of Al Hofuf – there is a delightful geographical and cultural landscape to savour in all its richness and variety. Then for history and heritage buffs there are the ancient Nabataean ruins ready to be explored at Mada'in Saleha, a fine UNESCO World Heritage Site. This archaeological site features 111 monumental tombs dating from the 1st Century BCE to the 1st Century CE.

SECRET WORLD IN THE DESERT

You can marvel at the splendour of the al-Hofuf oasis considered to be the largest of its kind in the world. A secret world in the desert of silvery streams, more than 2.5 million date palms and beautiful gardens. Locked away in the middle of the desert is the, is Al Wahbah – a large volcanic crater with a salt field in its centre and a major attraction for the hiking buff and then there are the that are alluring finds of the snow mantled mountains of Tabuk and the shifting sands of the Empty Quarter.

That said it is imperative to note that as yet it has been Islamic Tourism which has contributed most significantly to Saudi Arabia's tourism sector. Located in the the Hejazi region, the venerable and deeply venerated cities of Makkah and Madinah are at the heart of Islam and often referred to as the cradle of Islam. The Kingdom's lead tourist destination have been Makkah, Medina, Mada'in Salih, Yanbu, Jeddah and Riyadh, with the holy sites grabbing the biggest flow of tourists, basically on religious pilgrimages, who have now started venturing into the leisure destinations with encouragement from the tourism commission. Makkah is said to get three million Muslim pilgrims in the month of Dhu al-Hijja in the Hajj, considered one of the five pillars of Islam; in the month of Ramadan about two million perform Umrah. According to BMI Research in 2017 The Hajj and the round- the -year lesser pilgrimage, Umrah, generated \$12 billion in revenues from lodging, transport, gifts, food and fees of the pilgrims.

But the global repercussions of the COVID pandemic have put a spoke in the wheel to the government's plans to develop international tourism. Instead of cancelling the Hajj, after great deliberations the call in late July was taken to instead make drastic curbs to numbers for annual Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah in view of crisis. Saudi Arabia has reported more than 161,000 cases of the coronavirus, and the number of deaths has surpassed 1,300. From the 2.5 million people pilgrims descending on the two holy sites from around the world the numbers were expected to be a mere 1,000 or so of Saudi residents, due to COVID-19 restrictions.



◀ Al Ula



▲ Jazan

◀ Al Uqair

● (Background)
Children playing at
a sand dune in Riyadh



▲ Tabuk

◀ Riyadh



Going Forward with Aramco Singapore's New Boss

Managing Director Marwa Al-Khuzaim describes to Ms Nomita Dhar, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief, how Aramco Singapore is responding to the COVID-19 challenge with resilience and vigilance

In December 2019, Saudi Aramco appointed Marwa Al-Khuzaim to lead Aramco's Singapore office, making her the first woman in Aramco to head an overseas office.

Prior to her current role, she was the Global Supply Chain Director at Aramco Chemicals Company, where she managed costs optimization, operational efficiency, supply chain strategy and execution, as well as sourcing and contracting matters.

An avid hiker and reader, Marwa enjoys exploring Singapore and discovering the rich and diverse different cultures here in her free time.

She holds a Master of Science in International Management (Oil & Gas) from University of Liverpool and Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from King Abdulaziz University.

It is our pleasure to welcome you as the first ever female head of an international branch of Aramco. Please share with our readers your Aramco journey and more about this post in Singapore.

I am a computer scientist by training and I started my career with Aramco in the Human Resource department. Aramco has a culture of diversity and inclusion and empowers employees by providing equitable access to resources and opportunities. To empower and develop women in the workplace, Aramco has several mentoring and leadership development initiatives. I am a product of Aramco's inclusive environment and work culture.

In my 18 years at Aramco, I have worked in different segments of the oil and gas business such as corporate, chemical to trading spanning different functions from human resources, planning and budgeting, procurement and public relations to supply chain. This wide-ranging exposure has provided me with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the business.

As the managing director of Aramco Asia Singapore, I am responsible for developing and executing Aramco's corporate strategies in the Southeast Asia and Australasia regions. In my current role, I manage and oversee the marketing of crude oil, LPG and products to customers in this region, and drive the performance of supply chain, procurement and inspection services in Singapore.

As the managing director of Aramco Asia Singapore, I am responsible for developing and executing Aramco's corporate strategies in the Southeast Asia and Australasia regions. In my current role, I manage and oversee the marketing of crude oil, LPG and products to customers in this region, and drive the performance of supply chain, procurement and inspection services in Singapore.

You have taken charge during challenging times, with the COVID-19 Outbreak taking its toll on the world's economy – how were you able to implement initiatives for the smooth functioning of your office during lockdown?

People are our priority and during this unprecedented time, we have secured the health and safety of our workforce and communities while at the same time, ensuring the continuity of our crude oil supply. In Singapore, we have done this by monitoring the situation closely every day since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in January and pro-actively implementing safe-distancing measures to minimize the spread of the virus.

Even before the start of the circuit breaker as mandated by the Singapore government in Singapore, we have limited our employees' exposure by cancelling face-to-face meetings, limiting visitors to our office, instituted staggered working hours. At the same time, we distributed care

packages consisting of thermometer, hand sanitizers and face masks to the employees. We also started reviewing our business continuity plan and enhancing our IT and technology infrastructure early on and as a result, we were able to implement work-from-home arrangements without any impact to our business and operations in April when it became compulsory for all businesses in Singapore to do so.

This success is the result of our culture of resilience as well as the dedication and pro-activeness of Aramco team in Singapore to ensure that we operate business while keeping our people safe in a fast-changing environment.

How have you been keeping both productivity and morale high for your employees who have been working from home?

Regular and pro-active communication is key. On a corporate level, I keep the Singapore management updated on latest corporate developments and COVID-19 situation, and discuss our direction and COVID-19 responses with them regularly. I also update the employees on major policies and operational measures, and ensure that they are updated regularly on our efforts to maintain a safe working environment and the latest health protocols and safe distancing measures.

With working from home, personal communication becomes even more important. I encouraged Aramco Singapore managers to contact their team regularly through phone and video calls, not just for work matters or meetings but also to connect socially and be updated on the employees' well-being. For me, I contact the managers at least once a week and some employees to ensure that they have been coping well.

The positive results of a recent employees' satisfaction survey showed that our communication efforts and our initiatives

Continued next page...

aramco



"I am a computer scientist by training and I started my career with Aramco in the Human Resource department. Aramco has a culture of diversity and inclusion and empowers employees by providing equitable access to resources and opportunities. To empower and develop women in the workplace, Aramco has several mentoring and leadership development initiatives. I am a product of Aramco's inclusive environment and work culture."



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have been successful in keeping the employees engaged and motivated.

Singapore, as a global hub, was heavily impacted by the sudden closure of borders. How did it impact your business and what alternative steps did you take to mitigate this?

Aramco Singapore has customers and suppliers in the Southeast Asia and Australasia regions and the border closures and travel restrictions did not deter our commitment to the reliable production and supply of energy. While nothing beats face-to-face interactions, we have coped by leveraging technology such as tele-conferencing tools and virtual platforms. In a way, it is 'business as usual'. Where we cannot meet physically, we hosts and participate in regular tele-conferences with customers and our suppliers and service partners. In July, our Japan office held a virtual forum for over 180 manufacturers and service providers from across Asia to discuss quality issues and the latest company standards. Taking this regular forum virtual allows us to deepen suppliers' understanding of Aramco's latest quality requirements, cultivate closer engagement with business partners and ensure business continuity amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aramco has been implementing Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives in Singapore and across the region. With restriction on face to face interaction, how were you able to fulfill your planned CSR objectives?

Aramco remains committed protecting our people and planet. We are working closely with our NGO partners to carry out our current programs such as mangrove conservation and building safe houses in in this region safely. Besides our current programs, we have also reached out to help the vulnerable elderlies living alone in Singapore who have also impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. In August, our employees in Singapore volunteered with the Red Cross Society of Singapore to pack relief kits and helped deliver them to the senior citizens. (See following story)

COVID-19: Aramco Singapore Delivering Care to Vulnerable Elderly



Amongst the broader effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is the suffering of older people, as their basic needs coupled with healthcare services for conditions unrelated to COVID-19 become strained. In Singapore, more than half of the residents are aged 65 and above.

Doing good while appreciating the need where Aramco operates, Aramco Singapore reached out to the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) to contribute in one of their initiatives to provide customized care packages for the vulnerable elderlies living alone.

"Aramco is focused on securing the health and safety of our workforce and communities as part of our on-going global response to COVID-19," said Marwa Al-Khuzaim, managing director, Aramco Asia Singapore. "In Singapore, we want to support Singapore's COVID-19 relief efforts by making a difference to the community and this partnership with the Red Cross allows us to deliver on our commitment to those who needs it most."

On his part, Mr. Benjamin William, Secretary-General and CEO, Singapore Red Cross, said "we are very thankful to

Aramco for the support and dedication towards our COVID-19 local response. During these trying times, the Singapore Red Cross remains committed to delivering essential services in aid of the local vulnerable,"

"The care packages will provide much-needed support and relief to our beneficiaries for their most immediate and essential needs. It is heartening to see more corporations stepping forward to help and we look forward to nurturing a long-term partnership with Aramco." Mr. William added.

The response from Aramco Singapore employees was also overwhelming. Over three days from 11 – 13 August, 28 Aramco Singapore volunteers packed 390 customized packages comprising a mixture of food, medical, hygiene and household items to meet the needs of the elderly. At the packing site, there were safe distancing measures in place to safeguard the health and safety of the volunteers.

Feedback from the Aramco volunteers have been positive. Market Analyst Faruq Mohamed Taib said, "The activity is very

“One of Aramco’s values is the emphasis on citizenship and fostering relationships with the local community. Through this social responsibility activity, we were given the opportunity to contribute to Singapore by supporting our senior citizens. It’s an experience that resonated greatly with me and my colleagues.”



meaningful, especially during the current difficult times. It feels good knowing that our little contribution probably made the old folks’ lives a little bit better, and I hope that there will be more opportunities to engage the community more often in future.”

Twenty eight Aramco employees packed customized care packages for the elderly in Singapore

Asia Talent Acquisition Manager Fatimah Al-Namlah added, “One of Aramco’s values is the emphasis on citizenship and fostering relationships with the local community. Through this social responsibility activity, we were given the opportunity to contribute to Singapore by supporting our senior citizens. It’s an experience that resonated greatly with me and my colleagues.”

On 15 August the care packages were delivered to the elderly and Aramco Singapore volunteers also took time to conduct a visual assessment of the elderly well-being. “I received many items in the care package like sanitisers, wet wipes, gauze, and some food items. These are very useful to me, especially as I am not working right now. I’m very thankful to the volunteers for taking their time to deliver the care package to me,” said Grace Lee, a recipient from the Community Befriending Program.



MESSAGE FROM THE CULTURAL ATTACHÉ



SACM-SG works closely with the Royal Embassy of the KSA in Singapore and Saudi MOE to protect the well-being of scholars and their dependants here

The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Singapore (SACM-SG) takes great pleasure in contributing its feature in this important yearly publication of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Singapore. The impact of COVID-19 is pervasive and significant for governments, organisations and people world-wide. Since the emergence of the disease in Singapore in late January 2020/Jumada al-Ula 1441H unleashing its devastating impact, the safety and well-being of Saudi scholars and their dependants in Singapore have been of utmost importance.

We are pleased to share SACM-SG's efforts working in tandem with the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Royal Embassy in supporting them in the face of COVID-19 in this feature (*see following story*). Precautionary health supplies were provided and various channels of communication and administrative support were maintained to respond to their needs. The generosity of the Saudi MOE, in extending the provisions of scholarships to tide over those who had completed their studies or training but unexpectedly had to extend their stay due to the suspension of return international flights, remained deeply appreciated by one and all affected.

We are appreciative of the cooperation extended by Saudi and Singapore institutions during this extraordinary period. SACM-SG will continue to work adaptively to the changing circumstances for the continuation of its services to Saudi students and citizens. Recounts of our scholars going through the thick of upheavals at places of study at local universities as students or places of training at local hospitals as clinical fellows, and yet achieving their goals and growing richer through their extraordinary experiences, give us great

satisfaction and encouragement. We take this opportunity to congratulate our scholars who returned to Saudi Arabia in mid-June after completing their studies or training and wish them every success. For those who are still here, we continue to support them.

A lot of resources have been expended to protect lives and livelihoods by the Singapore government and precautionary measures remain for health and safety reasons. As situations improve, we seek to attract more scholars to Singapore as it provides excellent programmes within a safe environment.

Lastly, SACM-SG wishes to thank the National University of Singapore, its Global Relations Office and Nanyang Technological University for the hosting of visits to some of their centres by a student delegation from the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in early January 2020. We also had great pleasure in meeting senior Saudi officials from the Presidency of State Security (for Human Resources), King Fahd Security College and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, who attended the Singapore International Cyber Week in October 2019, for discussions on excellent cyber-security study opportunities here.

It has been an unprecedented time with the emergence of COVID-19. The team and I at SACM-SG remain committed to the well-being of our scholars and dependants and have every confidence to welcome more of them to advance their study and training development in Singapore.

Dr. Abdulaziz Alsaleh
Cultural Attaché, SACM-SG

Saudi Scholars Get Support During COVID-19 Outbreak

In support of Saudis studying here during this time of great upheaval, SACM-SG provided precautionary health supplies, including face masks, maintained contact via telephone calls, emails and Twitter, and ensured that all requests submitted through Safeer2, the Saudi MOE scholarship system, were addressed promptly

The first patient in Singapore to have contracted Covid-19 was confirmed on 23 January 2020, three days after arriving with his family for a holiday in this sunny island. At that time, there were 55 Saudi scholars with their dependents here.

The patient was discharged 28 days later after receiving medical care from a top tertiary hospital in Singapore. About 20% of the Saudis here safely returned to Saudi Arabia before mid-March when international flights to Saudi Arabia were stopped to fight the spread of the disease.

COVID-19 had picked up momentum and a "circuit breaker" to slow the chains of infections was instituted on 7 April 2020 with its hold gradually loosened in phases only from 2 June 2020 permitting another batch of Saudis to return in mid-June on a repatriation flight.

This country has been praised by the WHO for its "all-of-government" approach in tackling the pandemic helped by people who cooperate in an all-of-society approach in cushioning its impact.

The government, people and business remain vigilant to hold the disease at bay and to protect lives and livelihoods. During this extraordinary period, SACM-SG has worked closely with the Saudi MOE and the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Singapore to look after the well-being of its scholars and dependents and is appreciative of their cooperation extended in return.

At the height of the fight against COVID-19, the ramifications were pervasive: classes started going on-line, people started working from home except for those performing essential services, daily economic and social activities mostly

ground to a halt with people staying home to reduce contact. The list goes on.

FORMS OF SUPPORT

In support of Saudis at a time of great upheaval, SACM-SG provided precautionary health supplies, including face masks, maintained contact via telephone calls, emails and Twitter, and ensured that all requests submitted through Safeer2, the Saudi MOE scholarship system, were addressed promptly.

Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh, the Cultural Attaché, made a video assuring scholars and their dependants of precautionary measures in place for their safety, the unwavering support from the Saudi government to its citizens and the fullest cooperation from SACM-SG.

The Saudi MOE had generously extended provisions of scholarships for Saudis whose return to their home country was delayed by the suspension of international flights despite having completed their studies or training. SACM-SG followed up expediently with its scholars and their dependents who were most appreciative of such generosity to address the needs of an unexpected extension of stay.

The journey in fighting COVID-19 successfully is made possible by the cooperation from the scholars and their dependants here. As the situation improves, adjustments have been made in accordance with official recommendations to suit changing needs. SACM-SG will continue to work in tandem with the Saudi MOE as well as the Royal Embassy in engaging with and working for the well-being of Saudis studying and training in Singapore.

"We are appreciative of the cooperation extended by Saudi and Singapore institutions during this extraordinary period. SACM-SG will continue to work adaptively to the changing circumstances for the continuation of its services to Saudi students and citizens. Recounts of our scholars going through the thick of upheavals at places of study at local universities as students or places of training at local hospitals as clinical fellows, and yet achieving their goals and growing richer through their extraordinary experiences, give us great satisfaction and encouragement."

Saudi Scholars in Singapore During Circuit Breaker

Husband and wife Doctors Hassan Moira and Amirah Alatawi chose to stay on to learn more about the coronavirus



DR HASSAN MORIA & DR AMIRAH ALATAWI UNDERGOING CLINICAL FELLOWSHIP TRAINING

Although the terrible effects of COVID-19 were beginning to be felt round the world in the first quarter of this year, the couple instead responded with: “Our (NUH) departments had dealt with COVID-19 cases here and had daily exposure and review of cases so we asked SACM-SG to extend our attachment for three months to increase our knowledge and gain more experience with the disease.”

Both husband and wife are Assistant Professors from the University of Tabuk in Tabuk City. Dr. Moria is a Senior Anesthesiologist and Critical Care Physician and is currently sub-specializing at the Singapore National University Hospital (NUH) in Chronic & Cancer Pain Medicine. Dr. Alatawi is also an Assistant Professor and Senior Family Medicine Physician and currently sub-specializing at Singapore NUH in Dermatology.

They came to Singapore in August 2019 and had plans to leave by December 2020. While they were unfortunate that the COVID-19 outbreak happened just a little while after they arrived, they were blessed with a healthy baby when Dr Alatawi came to term with their first child while they were here!

Dr Moria saw the situation in a positive light as he felt, “We had the pleasure of our first baby to be born in Singapore, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Singapore (SACM-SG) giving us the chance to stay in Singapore and serving patients in NUH supporting our Singaporean colleagues during this pandemic.”

Before arriving, the doctor had heard much about Singapore, mainly about the island republic’s “tight rules and regulations.” This was more than balanced out by the country’s

superior infrastructure, schooling system and health care. He said, “We see a diverse range of patients, of different ages and various races with different disorders. They all have proper access to clinics and hence we could review their progress very efficiently. We learn to work efficiently and at a quick pace.” The learning environment is also good as: “We always have direct and immediate supervision from consultants and other ancillary teams – they are always available.”

Most of all this professional couple said that they were most grateful that SACM-SG and the Saudi Embassy in Singapore have always been providing vital and fundamental support as “without them, we can’t carry on; their help includes (but not limited to) helping with things such as visa permits, processing the permission for the birth of our daughter and passport upon arrival in Singapore, helping in making arrangements for the birth in a well-recognized health care institution here, thus avoiding the need to return home for the baby’s delivery.”

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Overall they felt they would highly recommend their colleagues back home to get training in Singapore. They singled out NUH, SACM-SG and the Embassy here for special mention: “There were no problems with bureaucracy as all documentation is properly and quickly processed without delays. Language is not a problem as you can get by with simple, straight to the point linguistic phrases and the NUH environment is top-notch. We will always appreciate how NUH has opened its doors to us and provided us useful professional exposure to gain more experience.”



Ajjwad (left) with her mother at last year's KSA National Day celebrations in Singapore

AJJWAD KHALID TUNBUSI STUDYING MASTER'S DEGREE IN INDUSTRY 4.0, NUS

Ajjwad Khalid Tunbusi is from Jeddah who was accepted by the Saudi Ministry of Education's Elite Scholarship Program to pursue her Master's degree in Industry 4.0 at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She started on the program in August 2019 and will complete it in December 2020. The holder of a bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems from King Abdulaziz University, she hopes the skills she is acquiring will help prepare her support the country's 2030 Vision.

She is grateful for all the assistance extended to her in her journey in furthering her education. The 25-year old said: "It's my first time to study abroad, and everything is new to me. Since day one, SACM-SG has helped me a lot especially with my student pass and my academic journey. The academic affairs team are very supportive and are doing their best to help the students."

But when COVID-19 broke out, "Singapore was one of the first countries affected by COVID during January-February. At first, it was tough to understand what's happening, and there were many emails and news about the cases. But it was good to feel that the Singapore government was providing the details, measures, and the precautions every day then. NUS emails were also very professional in providing the students the reassurance that we are in this together, and this too shall pass."

She continued: "During the Circuit Breaker period, SACM-SG called several times and sent a lot of emails. In the beginning of the pandemic, I was worried and whenever I contacted the academic affairs team, they replied immediately to help me and support me during this difficult time. Also, Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh called to check on us asking if we needed any help and how we were dealing with the pandemic. I'm grateful to feel that I have a second family here in Singapore, which is SACM-SG."

Replying to how COVID has affected her studies, Ajjwad said: "Singapore has managed to contain the spread and how Singapore has responded to COVID-19 is impressive. I always try to keep up with the new measures and restrictions that the Singapore government is applying to attack this pandemic and it's fascinating! That's why I feel that I'm safe and lucky to be in Singapore."

"About my studies, in the beginning we were attending the classes but NUS told us that we needed to take our temperatures twice a day, take pictures of the temperatures and then upload the pictures to the NUS temperature system. To be honest, it's really impressive how NUS developed new systems to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff. In the last month of the second semester, all the courses went online and for some of our project presentations we needed to present them via ZOOM."

She continued: "My NUS academic adviser was wonderful and helped a lot whenever I felt worried and struggled with my decisions." One of those decisions related to whether she chose to stay on and complete her studies: "In the past few months, the government of Saudi Arabia provided a special arrangement for travel to all Saudi students around the world. However, I felt safe in Singapore such that I didn't feel the urge to leave everything and go back to Saudi. I've decided to stay in Singapore to continue with my studies and my capstone project. Also, SACM-SG supported me through this challenging time and I'm thankful to all of the kind people around me."



Daily newspaper headline appearing in March of the Straits Times: The mass media started featuring spread of COVID-19 articles and advice on what to do during the pandemic were published everyday

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SACM-SG Visits Diary



▲ *NUS Deepwater Ocean Basin at the Technology Centre for Offshore and Marine, Singapore (TCOMS) hosted by Mr Wong Tien Loong, Deputy Director (Engineering Cluster), Science & Engineering Research Council, A*Star*



▲ *NTU Nanyang Technopreneurship Centre hosted by Mr Rick Tay, Deputy Director*

❖ King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals

SACM-SG took great pleasure in receiving a Saudi delegation made up of 20 students and 4 university staff from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals from 8 to 12 January 2020. The delegation was headed by Dr Basem Almadani.

The visits arranged by SACM-SG made up the essential academic and scientific learning components of the trip. SACM-SG is grateful to their hosts at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) for their great hospitality and generosity in sharing their knowledge and expertise. In particular, SACM-SG would like to thank the NUS Global Relations Office for arranging the

majority of the visits to NUS. Through all the support given, delegates were able to reap an enriching experience.

Apart from highlights shown by the photographs taken at both universities, at NUS, the delegation was also briefed on its Petroleum Engineering Programme by A/Prof Elita Li, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and visits were also made to the:

- Multiphase Oil-Water-Air Flow Loop Test Facility hosted by A/Prof Loh Wai Lam, Department of Mechanical Engineering;
- Sembcorp - NUS Corporate Laboratory hosted by Prof Ng How Yong, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; and
- Solar Energy Research Institute of Singapore (SERIS) hosted by Mr Eddy Blokken, Business Development Manager.

Thank you NUS and NTU!



▲ NUS Faculty of Engineering



▲ NUS Global Relations Office with lunch hosted by A/Prof Reuben Wong, Academic Director



▲ Rolls-Royce@NTU Corporate Lab hosted by Dr Rudy Schalk, Adjunct Associate Professor and Director



Photo source: Singapore International Cyber Week

- ❖ Presidency of State Security (for Human Resources)
- ❖ King Fahd Security College
- ❖ Naif Arab University for Security Sciences

Dr Abdulaziz Alsaleh had the pleasure to meet senior Saudi officials from the Presidency of State Security (for Human Resources), King Fahd Security College and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences who attended the **Singapore International Cyber Week** held from 1 to 3 October 2019.

Given the need to train and nurture specialised manpower resources to meet the increasing demands in cyber security, SACM-SG was glad to discuss how it could assist. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Advantages of doing tertiary education in Singapore and SACM-SG's role in supporting Saudi scholars;
- Postgraduate programmes and research centres under the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Singapore Management University for training in the field of cyber security with mention of NTU's RSIS, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.



Photo: Leo Morgan / Shutterstock.com

Muslim pilgrims in Al Haram Mosque Makkah performing Tawaf during Hajj Season at the time of the coronavirus

COVID-19 Creates Major Strictures for Hajj 2020

There was a scaled down Hajj as millions of Muslim pilgrims from around the globe have not been able to perform the Haj to keep them safe from the spread of the current pandemic

As the days near the end of July and it's the time of the annual Hajj at the holy Kaaba in Saudi Arabia where in normal times about 2 to 3.2 million pilgrims turn up to pay obeisance at the holiest sites of Islam in Makkah and Madina for the week-long Hajj. With the assault of COVID-19 on a global scale since March this year plans for this pilgrimage have gone awry for vast numbers of Muslim devotees from many countries.

Even though the Kingdom took early and unprecedented measures to check the spread of the virus domestically, it

has one of the highest rates of coronavirus infections in the Middle East, with over 161,000 total confirmed cases and 1,307 deaths.

The Saudi government, in keeping with the gravity of the health situation has resolved to put strictures on the number of pilgrim allowed to make the Hajj this year. In the 90 years of this 'rites of passage' for devout Muslims since the founding of the country the Hajj has never been cancelled. Hajj minister Mohammed Benteen in a news briefing shared that strict health criteria would be used to select eligible pilgrims among citizens and residents. Those above

65 years old would not be permitted to make the annual pilgrimage, he said. For Saudi Arabia its "top priority is to always enable Muslim pilgrims to perform the Hajj and Umrah rites safely and securely" he added.

While all foreign devotees have been barred from making the annual Hajj visit Saudi Arabia has set the limit in number of domestic pilgrims as well to around 1,000, in order to rein in the spread of the contagion. The Kingdom's Ministry of Hajj said only people of various nationalities already residing in the country would be permitted to perform the pilgrimage. The call for these strictures has been taken



Waiting for the arrival of the first pilgrims for this year's Hajj: Members of the Saudi Health Ministry medical team wait for the first group of Hajj pilgrims at the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International Airport
(Source: GulfNews.com/AFP)

at the level of the highest authority in the Kingdom in view of the safety of the pilgrims and preserving the lives of people is one of the top priorities of Islamic Sharia.

STEPS TO SAFEGUARD HOLY SITES

With regard to the steps taken to ensure that the holy sites are properly sanitized and emergency arrangements for any eventuality of the outbreak impacting the visiting pilgrims, Saudi Health Minister Tawfiq al-Rabiah at a conference shared that all workers at Hajj sites would be tested and that a specialised hospital has been prepared to handle emergencies.

As one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, the Hajj is performed in very close confines, with people almost jammed together as they go through the ritual of walking and praying around the Kaaba. This reality alone has been a cause for great concern for the authorities, given the strictures of social distancing spread across the globe to contain the coronavirus.

Touching the Kaaba, is not permitted during the Hajj this year, and a social distancing space of a meter and a half between each pilgrim during the rituals including mass prayers and while in the Kaaba circling area has been imposed. Also access to holy Hajj sites at the tent city of Mina, Mount Arafat, the Grand Mosque of Mecca, and other locations such as Muzdalifah, will be limited to those with Hajj permits from July 19 till August 2, 2020, and wearing masks all the time will be mandatory for both pilgrims and organizers.

SUCCESS OF MEASURES

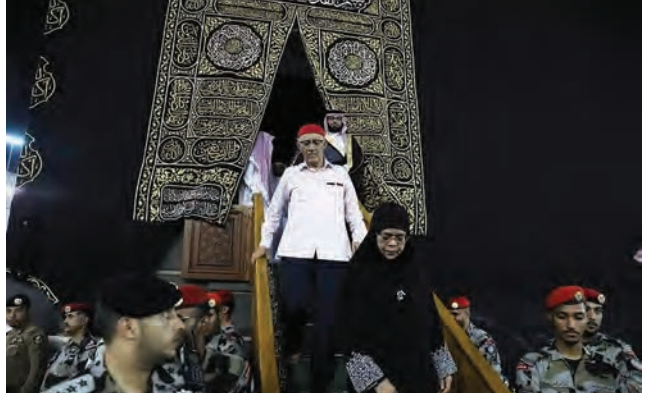
While the Kingdom as a whole reported 1,686 news cases of the coronavirus as of end July, none were detected among the Hajj pilgrims. Government officials confirmed no cases were recorded among the pilgrims as of 31st July 2020 after pilgrims performed the rituals in safety, security and tranquility. Pilgrims were quarantined for 14 days after the pilgrimage.

The *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* on 6th August 2020 declared "The Hajj 2020 was a public health success and ended on Monday 3rd August 2020." It went on to say "The decisive, logical and prudent decision making by Saudi authorities which enabled the pre-Hajj nightmare of public health, political, economic and religious concerns to be overcome. The successful completion of the 2020 Hajj is a major tribute to the leadership and commitment of the Saudi authorities, and it reflects their extensive experience of organising the annual Hajj pilgrimage, and continued commitment to improving public health issues related to mass gatherings events. The decisive actions, public health preparedness and strict implementation of public health prevention and intervention measures, pre-Hajj, during Hajj and post-Hajj, serve as exemplars for other mass gathering religious and sporting events."

Approximately 10 million people from 182 countries travel to Saudi Arabia annually for the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages during the year; they normally generate about US\$12 billion per year, or roughly 20 percent of the country's non-petroleum GDP. The lesser, year-round Umrah pilgrimage has also been suspended due to the current pandemic. The borders of Saudi Arabia are presently closed for tourists as well.

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**- International Journal of Infectious Diseases
6th August 2020**



في ملاحظة عابرة، هل كنت قادرة على فعل الكثير خارج البرنامج الرسمي مثل التسوق، أو زيارة مراكز الحرف المحلية؟
اين ذهبت وماذا اشتريت؟

في الرياض، كان من دواعي سروري زيارة مركز الملك عبد العزيز التاريخي، الذي قدم لي نظرة عامة مفصلة عن تطور المملكة العربية السعودية. نظرًا لتاريخها الغني وتنوعها الثقافي، فإن المملكة العربية السعودية هي حلم عالم آثار يتحقق. إنني أطلع إلى المزيد من العمل الذي يتم إنجازه لعرض التاريخ الغني والجميل للمملكة وشعبها في السنوات القادمة.

ما راكم في مبادرات المملكة العربية السعودية وفرص تمكين المرأة؟

بالنسبة لسنغافورة، فإن تمكين المرأة ودعمها في السعي لتحقيق أحلامها وطموحاتها أمر بالغ الأهمية لنجاحنا. يسعدني أن أرى أن المرأة السعودية حريصة على العمل والمساهمة في نجاح بلدها وتتفقد بسهولة وظائف في جميع مستويات المجتمع بما في ذلك الحكومة. على سبيل المثال، الأميرة ريما بنت بندر آل سعود هي سفيرة المملكة العربية السعودية المميزة في واشنطن العاصمة وكذلك أول امرأة سعودية تنتخب عضوا في اللجنة الأولمبية الدولية. كما سررت بملاحظة أن أحد المسؤولين السعوديين الذين قاموا بتنسيق وتسهيل زيارتي كانت سيدة شابة قديرة.



وكذلك مع أعضاء الأمم المتحدة الأوسع. وفي هذا الصدد، تنثي سنغافورة على جهود المملكة العربية السعودية للوصول إلى أعضاء من خارج مجموعة العشرين لتعكس مجلس إدارة ومجموعة شاملة من الاهتمامات ووجهات النظر الدولية.

بالنسبة لسنغافورة، جعلت جائحة كوفيد-19 شعار الرئاسة السعودية، "اغتنام فرص القرن الحادي والعشرين للجميع"، أكثر بروزًا. بينما يتصارع المجتمع العالمي مع تأثير جائحة كوفيد-19، أصبح التعاون الدولي أكثر أهمية من أي وقت مضى. وتنثي سنغافورة على المملكة العربية السعودية لدورها الريادي في حشد الجهود الدولية لمواجهة التحديات التي يفرضها الوباء، والتي تضمنت عقد قمة القادة الافتراضية لمجموعة العشرين في مارس 2020م. كما ننثي على المملكة العربية السعودية لضمانها العمل المهم لمجموعة العشرين. من خلال الاجتماعات الافتراضية حيث لا يزال السفر غير ممكن خلال هذه الفترة.

بصرف النظر عن الأولوية العاجلة المتمثلة في معالجة عواقب كوفيد-19 على الصحة والسلامة، تأمل سنغافورة أن ترسل مجموعة العشرين، بصفتها المنتدى الاقتصادي الدولي الأول، رسالة دعم قوية للنظام متعدد الأطراف القائم على القواعد وكذلك التجارة العالمية وتوفير إمكانية الاتصال في قمة مجموعة العشرين المقبلة في نوفمبر 2020م.

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إلى جانب قطاع النقل والخدمات اللوجستية، تحرص الشركات السنغافورية أيضًا على استكشاف المزيد من الفرص في المملكة العربية السعودية، في مجالات مثل السياحة والحلول الرقمية والتعليم وقطاعات النفط والغاز. إنني أتطلع إلى المزيد من هذه الشراكات في المستقبل.

ما هي رسالتك لتشجيع الشركات السعودية على استخدام سنغافورة كمركز إقليمي؟

تتمتع سنغافورة ببيئة مهيأة للمؤسسات وصديقة للأعمال. سنغافورة هي الاقتصاد الأكثر تنافسية في العالم ومن بين أفضل الأماكن في العالم لممارسة الأعمال التجارية. سنغافورة هي أيضًا موطن للعديد من أكبر الشركات متعددة الجنسيات والشركات الآسيوية في العالم. يتيح ذلك للشركات إنشاء مقرات هنا للتواصل بسهولة وشبكة قوية وقاعدة ثابتة من العملاء وتبادل الحلول والأفكار الجديدة بسهولة. إن موقع سنغافورة الاستراتيجي في جنوب شرق آسيا، التي تتمتع بواحد من أسرع الاقتصادات نموًا في العالم، وهي موطن لسكان ذوي مهارات عالية، يجعلنا أيضًا مركزًا مثاليًا يمكن من خلاله الوصول إلى المنطقة وسوقها الاستهلاكي المتنامي.

أرحب بالشركات السعودية المهتمة بتأسيس أعمالها في سنغافورة للتواصل مع مجلس التنمية الاقتصادية في سنغافورة و Enterprise Singapore التي لديها مكتب في الرياض يمكن أن يجعل الشركات على اتصال مع الوكالات ذات الصلة لبدء العملية.

تلقى رئيس الوزراء لي دعوة من الملك سلمان في أكتوبر 2019م للمشاركة في قمة مجموعة العشرين في الرياض. هل يمكنك التعليق على مشاركة سنغافورة ومساهمتها في القمة؟ هل لديك رغبة / رسالة للسعودية بشأن القمة؟

تشرفت سنغافورة بدعوتها لحضور قمة مجموعة العشرين في الرياض، وقد نقلت امتناننا للملك سلمان على ذلك. كما فعلنا في قمم مجموعة العشرين السابقة التي دُعينا إليها، سنغافورة ستواصل العمل عن كثب مع المملكة العربية السعودية لتحقيق نتيجة ناجحة في قمة مجموعة العشرين في نوفمبر 2020م. وهذا يشمل المساعدة في تعزيز مشاركة أقوى بين مجموعة العشرين ومجموعة الحوكمة العالمية (G3)، التي تترأسها سنغافورة،



السنغافوري السعودي بمجرد أن يسمح الوضع بذلك. ستواصل الحكومتان دعم وتسهيل التعاون بين شعوبنا وشركائنا، لا سيما ونحن نتغلب على جائحة كوفيد-19. أمل أيضًا أن تواصل الحكومة السعودية البحث عن طلبنا لزيادة حصة الحج لحجاج سنغافورة بشكل إيجابي.

هل لك أن تخبرينا عن بعض المشاريع التي تعمل عليها شركات سنغافورة في المملكة العربية السعودية في الآونة الأخيرة؟

تشارك الشركات السنغافورية بنشاط في قطاع النقل والخدمات اللوجستية في المملكة العربية السعودية، والذي يعد أيضًا قطاعًا ذا أولوية بموجب رؤية 2030. في يناير من هذا العام، حصلت شركة ساتس السعودية، وهي وحدة تابعة لسنغافورة SATS، على امتياز إدارة محطة شحن لمدة 25 عامًا في مطار الملك خالد الدولي في الرياض. عند الانتهاء، ستكون المحطة قادرة على التعامل مع ما يصل إلى 200 ألف طن من البضائع سنويًا. هذا هو المشروع الثاني لشركة SATS في المملكة العربية السعودية، بعد منح منشأة الشحن الجوي في عام 2016م لمطار الملك فهد الدولي.

في أبريل 2020م، وقعت شركة الموانئ السعودية العالمية، وهي مشروع مشترك بين PSA الدولية في سنغافورة وصندوق الاستثمارات العامة السعودي، صفقة مع هيئة الموانئ السعودية (مواني) لتوحيد عمليات محطات الموانئ البحرية في ميناء الملك عبد العزيز في الدمام، في شرق المملكة العربية السعودية.

سبقت زيارتي الرسمية زيارات عديدة رفيعة المستوى من كلا الجانبين. قام السيد لي كوان يو والسيد جو تشوك تونج ورئيس الوزراء لي هسين لونغ وكبير الوزراء ثارمان شانموجارا تانم بزيارة المملكة العربية السعودية في أوقات مختلفة. كما يجتمع قادة بلدينا في كثير من الأحيان على هامش المحافل الدولية، بما في ذلك قمم مجموعة العشرين. وكثيرا ما كانت هذه التفاعلات مدعومة بمبادرات تقرب بين بلدينا.

كانت زيارتي علامة فارقة مهمة لإحياء ما تم إنجازه حتى الآن. أنا واثقة من أنه سيكون هناك المزيد من الزيارات المتبادلة في السنوات المقبلة، خاصة وأن المجتمع الدولي يعمل معًا لمكافحة كوفيد-19. أمل أيضًا أن يزور الملك سلمان وصاحب السمو الملكي ولي العهد الأمير محمد بن سلمان بن عبد العزيز آل سعود سنغافورة قريبًا.

ترتبط سنغافورة والمملكة العربية السعودية بعلاقات اقتصادية قوية. دبلوماسيًا، ما الذي تأمل أن تحققه الزيارة للعلاقات الثنائية؟

يسعدني إبرام مذكرة تفاهم بشأن التعاون البيئي خلال زيارتي الرسمية. هذا مجال مهم للتعاون بالنظر إلى حاجة جميع البلدان للعمل معًا على الاستدامة البيئية والقدرة على الصمود. يسعدني أنه منذ زيارتي الرسمية، تم إحراز تقدم في اللجنة السنغافورية السعودية المشتركة، التي اقترحها الملك سلمان خلال اجتماعنا. تتطلع جمعيات الأعمال لدينا أيضًا إلى تنشيط مجلس الأعمال



بالنظر إلى التاريخ الطويل والعلاقات بين سنغافورة والمملكة العربية السعودية، لماذا هذه هي أول زيارة دولة من سنغافورة إلى المملكة العربية السعودية؟ هل يمثل ذلك تطوراً معيناً في العلاقات بين البلدين؟

تمتعت سنغافورة والمملكة العربية السعودية بتبادلات منتظمة بين الحكومتين منذ إقامة العلاقات الدبلوماسية في عام 1977م والتبادلات على المستوى الشعبي المتكررة حتى قبل ذلك. لقد

المنورة. كمسلمة، هذه الأماكن لها أهمية خاصة في قلبي، وكانت واحدة من أكثر الجوانب التي لا تُنسى في زيارتي للمملكة العربية السعودية.

كما أنني أعتز بفرصة لقاء الجالية السنغافورية النابضة بالحياة والتنوع في المملكة العربية السعودية والتعرف على تجاربهم في العيش والعمل في المملكة. سنغافورة كسمعة طيبة في المنطقة والعديد من السنغافوريين وجدوا وظائف جيدة هناك. إنهم بمثابة سفراء النوايا الحسنة لبلدنا.

رئيسة جمهورية سنغافورة السيدة حليلة يعقوب في لقاء خاص عن: "العلاقات السعودية السنغافورية"

في شهر نوفمبر 2019م قامت فخامة رئيسة جمهورية سنغافورة السيدة حليلة يعقوب بزيارة رسمية للمملكة العربية السعودية بدعوة من خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبد العزيز آل سعود كأول زيارة دولة لرئيس سنغافوري إلى المملكة. وتقديراً للعلاقات المتميزة بين البلدين فقد تفضلت فخامتها بإجراء لقاء صحفي خاص مع مجلة السفارة (Saudi Arabia, Your Gateway To The Middle East) لمشاركة قراء المجلة انطباعاتها عن تلك الزيارة والعلاقات بين سنغافورة والمملكة.



هل يمكنك اطلعنا على أبرز معالم زيارتك للمملكة؟

حول كيفية تعميق التعاون الثنائي، بما في ذلك مقترحين ملموسين تتضمنان إنشاء لجنة مشتركة على المستوى الوزاري للتعاون الاقتصادي وإعادة تنشيط مجلس الأعمال السعودي السنغافوري. كما أكدت مجدداً على دعم سنغافورة لخطط التحول في رؤية المملكة العربية السعودية 2030. لقد كان شرفاً عظيماً أن أحصل من خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان على وسام الملك عبد العزيز، مما يعكس علاقتنا الثنائية القوية. كما كان الملك سلمان طيباً جداً في منحي حق الوصول إلى الكعبة المشرفة في مكة المكرمة وكذلك الدخول للروضة في المسجد النبوي بالمدينة

زرت المملكة العربية السعودية في نوفمبر 2019م بدعوة من خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبد العزيز آل سعود. كأول زيارة دولة لسنغافورة إلى المملكة العربية السعودية، كانت علامة بارزة سلطت الضوء على العلاقات الدافئة والطويلة والمتنوعة بين سنغافورة والمملكة العربية السعودية. كما كانت إشارة قوية على التزامنا بتدعيم العلاقات الثنائية.

ممتنة للملك سلمان على كرم ضيافته تبادلنا الأفكار بشكل ممتاز

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