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SAUDI ARABIA

GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST
SPECIAL EDITION 2023

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Celebrating with the Nation
93rd National Day of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



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LEADERSHIP



نحلم ونحقق
اليوم الوطني السعودي 93



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



Commemorating the
93rd NATIONAL DAY of the
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

سابك
عنك



نحلم ونحقق
اليوم الوطني السعودي 93

حلمنا العلياء وواقعنا وصل

SAUDI NATIONAL DAY 93





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



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LEADERSHIP



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



Commemorating the
93rd NATIONAL DAY of the
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



Visionary Changes Now a Reality

Very few societies in the world have undergone the level of economic and social transformation the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is going through right now. As the sweeping social reforms are propelling the Kingdom into the new era of opportunity and prosperity, on the eve of its 93rd National Day Saudi Ambassador to Singapore H.E. ABDULLAH MOHAMMED AL-MADHI shares the story of new opportunities that are leading to the Kingdom's transformation with EDITOR-IN-CHIEF NOMITA DHAR

As a diplomat, when you return home to Saudi Arabia, what notable changes do you see?

I have witnessed remarkable changes in Saudi Arabia. The most evident include the diversification of the economy through visionary projects, an expanding tourism and entertainment sector, increased opportunities for women in various fields, and a strong commitment to sustainable energy.



Ambassador, could you please provide an update on Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the progress made towards achieving its goals?

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is a comprehensive roadmap for the country's economic and social transformation. Since it was launched in 2016, Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in various areas. Initiatives like the NEOM and Red Sea giga projects, and the development of the entertainment sector have been instrumental in diversifying the economy.

Through the visionary leadership, efforts are also being made to empower women, promote tourism, and enhance digital infrastructure. All these steps are helping in providing new and diverse opportunities to the people of Saudi Arabia. The nation's commitment to renewable energy, with projects like the Saudi Green Initiative, also highlight our commitment to sustainability.

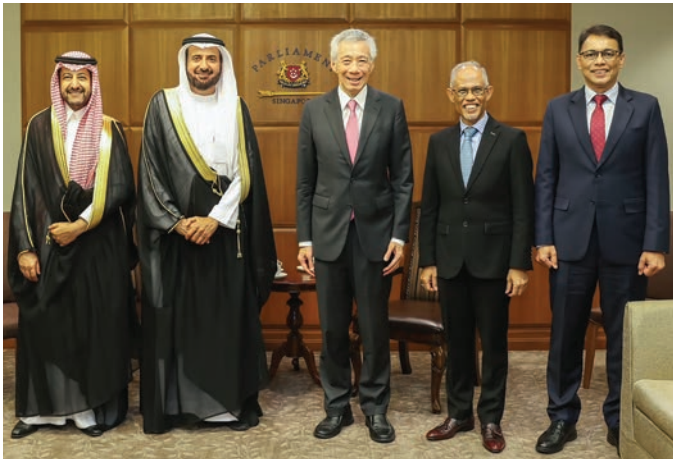
How has the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia contributed to the realization of the Vision and the economic diversification efforts of the country?

The (PIF) has been a driving force behind Vision 2030, with strategic investments in key and some new sectors, including Utilities and Renewables. We're diversifying the economy and enhancing the quality of life across the nation and driving change worldwide.

What is the role of the newly announced Events Development Fund?

The Events Investment Fund (EIF) was established with a budget of US\$3.7 billion. It aims to develop the culture, tourism, entertainment, and sports sectors in the country. There are plans to finance and oversee the creation of over 35 venues by 2030, with assets including arenas, art galleries, theatres, and more.

EIF's primary objectives are to position Saudi Arabia as a global hub in these sectors, provide sustainable infrastructure for a national events calendar, attract foreign investment, and support our stated economic diversification efforts.



Several Ministerial visits took place this year, pictured here with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong is Dr. Tawfiq Al-Rabiab, the Minister of Hajj and Umrah



Foreign Minister HH Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud met with the Foreign Minister of Singapore Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, and signed the Kingdom's instrument of accession to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)



Saudi Finance Minister H.E. Mohammed Al Jadaan visited Singapore from 31 August to 1 September 2023. During the visit, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong hosted him to a lunch at Kampong Glam, which houses a major landmark, the Sultan Mosque. During his visit, the Minister also had meetings with GIC, TE-MASEK and Tuan Sing Holdings Limited, SLA and MAS

This initiative aligns with the goals of increasing non-oil GDP, boosting the tourism sector, and transforming Saudi Arabia into a global tourist destination by 2030.

What is the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) and what are its main objectives and targets in combating climate change and enhancing environmental sustainability in Saudi Arabia?

The SGI is a comprehensive vision for climate action. Its core objectives include reducing carbon emissions by 278 million metric tons per annum by 2030, planting 10 billion trees, which is equivalent to rehabilitating 40 million hectares of land, and increasing the size of protected areas up to 30% or more of the total land and sea areas by 2030. SGI unites sustainability efforts across Saudi Arabia, with 77 activated initiatives representing over US\$186 billion in investment to drive sustainable growth and support the nation's commitment to combat climate change while aligning with global goals.

Tell us about the new Special Economic Zones and opportunities on the investment front?

This year, we have announced the establishment of four new Special Economic Zones (SEZs). This will provide tax and other administrative benefits to global investors and companies.

Managed by the Economic Cities and Special Zones Authority and they are strategically located throughout the Kingdom. The King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) SEZ is located in Makkah province; the Jazan SEZ in the Red Sea; the Ras Al-Khair SEZ in the Eastern Province and the Cloud Computing SEZ in King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST).

Could you update us on the engagements on the bilateral front between Singapore and Saudi Arabia ?

This year sees a significant increase in bilateral visits by high level government delegations, business and industrial as well as private organisations. Recently Saudi Finance Minister visited Singapore and also met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mr. Lawrence Wong.

The dialogue between our Foreign Ministers is ongoing. This year Singapore and Saudi Arabia forged stronger ties as KSA signed the instrument of accession to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). This was a crucial milestone in the bilateral relations between the two nations underpinning their commitment to strengthen ties in various areas of mutual interest. Singapore and Saudi Arabia have positioned themselves to serve as an example for the global community by blazing new trails of cooperation and understanding.

How can Singapore participate in all the exciting developments taking place in the Kingdom?

Our Embassy is actively engaged with many stratas of Singapore society at the economic, social, cultural and religious levels. Many of the visits I mentioned were aimed at getting Singaporeans to know and understand more about us and what is currently happening in the Kingdom. Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East features many articles that can help in this area.



Saudi Arabia Signs Amity and Cooperation Treaty

Singapore and Saudi Arabia forge stronger ties as KSA signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), that promises to elevate bilateral relations and enhance regional coordination

In a momentous meeting on July 12, Singapore's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Affairs Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud convened in Jakarta for the signing of the instrument of accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The gathering marked a crucial milestone in the bilateral relations between the two nations, as they reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen ties in various areas of mutual interest. Saudi Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, Faisal Al-Amoudi was also present in the meeting.



During the high-level talks, the officials reviewed the existing bilateral relations, which have been cordial for decades, and explored ways to elevate them to new heights. The discussions encompassed fields such as trade, investment, culture, security, and education, with a shared focus on fostering mutual growth and prosperity. This renewed commitment to cooperation bodes well for both countries as they aim to capitalize on untapped potential and explore new avenues for collaboration.



Beyond bilateral matters, the meeting also served as an opportunity to engage in candid dialogues about regional and international issues. With Singapore's strategic position in Southeast Asia and Saudi Arabia's pivotal role in the Middle East, the exchange of perspectives proved to be enlightening and constructive. The two nations pledged to enhance coordination and communication, ensuring that their interests and concerns are aligned on critical matters affecting the region and beyond.

prosperous future. As the world grapples with complex challenges, this strengthening partnership signals the enduring spirit of international cooperation. With dynamic leadership and a shared commitment to making a positive impact, Singapore and Saudi Arabia stand poised to set an example for the global community, blazing new trails of cooperation and understanding.

Looking ahead, the world can expect closer and more proactive engagement between Singapore and Saudi Arabia, driven by shared values and a vision for a peaceful and

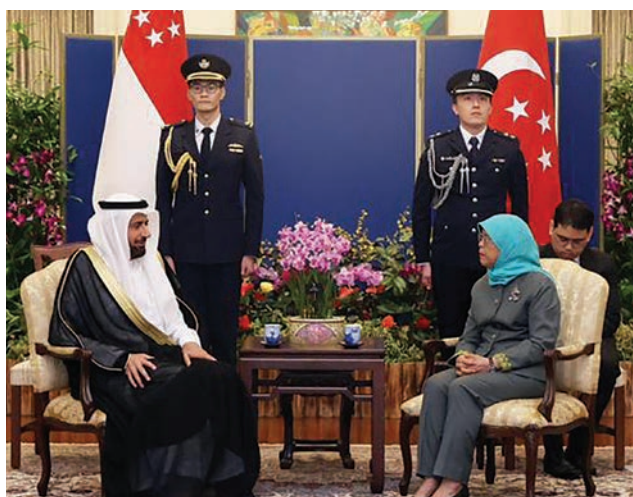
The TAC documents were signed in the presence of the Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi. Indonesia



is currently the Chair of ASEAN in 2023. Speaking on behalf of ASEAN she expressed her appreciation to Saudi Arabia. She said, "Saudi Arabia is the 51st country to sign the TAC. This shows Saudi's strong commitment to adhere to ASEAN values and principles as embodied in the TAC. We welcome Saudi Arabia to the ASEAN Family. Together we must be a positive force for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region."

Highlights of Bilateral Engagements

Saudi Arabia and Singapore have enjoyed a long-standing diplomatic relationship marked by mutual cooperation and collaboration across various sectors. There have been interactions at multiple levels. We bring you some highlights



On 1st March 2023, Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, arrived in Singapore for an official visit on the invitation of Minister Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development, Second Minister for Health & Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs. Dr. Tawfiq Al-Rabiah paid a courtesy call on H.E. Halimah Yacob, the President of Singapore, at the Istana and PM Lee Hsien Loong at the Parliament House. Amongst the matters discussed was the latest updates and developments related to Hajj and Umrah and reaffirmed the friendly and longstanding ties that both countries share.



On 5th June 2023 Assistant Minister of Defense of the KSA, Eng. Talal bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi, participated in the roundtable meeting of the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Defense ministers, senior military leaders, and defense and security policymakers came from all over the world. While here, the Saudi Defense Minister also met with Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence of Singapore Mr Zaqy Mohamad, as they reviewed the defense and military cooperation relations and issues of common concern.



The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development for Emiratization, Eng. Majid Al-Dahwi and his accompanying delegation visited Singapore.



The Saudi-Singapore Forum was opened by H.E. Ambassador Abdullah Mohammed Al-Madhi, and was attended by H.E. Engineer Ahmed bin Saleh Al-Khamshi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture along with many prominent figures from the Saudi and Singaporean business communities.



The Minister of Transport and Logistics, H.E. Saleh Bin Nasser Al Jasser the Co-Chairman of the Saudi-Singapore Joint Committee visited Singapore; his accompanying delegation also visited Changi International Airport and Tuas Sea Port to learn more about the Singaporean experience in managing the airport and port as well as the modern technologies used for this purpose.

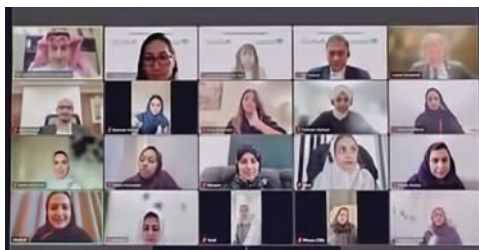


In November 2022, the Minister of Interior of Saudi Arabia met with Minister of Home Affairs and Law of Singapore, H.E. Mr. K.Shanmugam and held a fruitful discussion on bilateral relations between our countries and ongoing security cooperation.

Saudi Students Collaborating with Singapore



On 4th June 2023 it was announced that three teams of male and female students (pictured right) have qualified for the finals of the **Formula 1 School Program**, which will be held in Singapore during the Formula 1 race in September. They represent the Kingdom alongside 55 other countries in the finals. F1 in Schools is a global educational programme to raise awareness of STEM and Formula 1 among students covering topics like physics, aerodynamics, design, manufacturing etc. The event is organised by the **King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)** and sponsored by **Saudi Aramco**.



On 31st May 2023 the **Saudi Logistics Academy** launched the first programme dedicated to qualifying and developing capabilities of 15 female leaders in the logistics field, in partnership with the **Supply Chain and Logistics Academy (SCALA)** in Singapore. The Executive Director of the Saudi Logistics Academy **Dr. Abdullah Al-Abdulakareem** said that the programme is the first dedicated to women leaders.



World Invent 22+23 Singapore saw participation of Saudi students. Several Saudi students won gold, silver and bronze medals at the event.



Eid Celebrations and Hajj Pilgrims Send-off

Singapore's Minister for Social and Family Development as well as Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs, Mr Masagos Zulkifli, was accompanied by the Saudi Ambassador H.E Abdullah Mohammed Al-Mahdi, when the minister bid farewell to Singaporean hajj pilgrims at Changi airport.



The Saudi Arabian Embassy hosted an exciting and vibrant celebration for Eid Al-Fitr this year. The event was graced by several esteemed guests, including the Minister of Social and Family Development and also responsible for Muslim Affairs, Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, and diplomatic friends of Saudi Arabia from many countries. A diverse group of attendees, including embassy employees, scholarship students, citizens, diplomats, and members of parliament, were also present.



Congratulations and Best Wishes to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of their 93rd National Day



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On 20th June 2023 the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) delivered the Kingdom's gift to Singapore about 25 tons of dates. The Saudi Ambassador to Singapore, H.E. Abdullah Mohammed Al-Madhi handed over the gift to the Singaporean side, represented by the President of the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), Mr Kadir Maideen. A team from KSrelief was on hand to witness the delivery. The gift comes within the relief and humanitarian programmes offered by the Saudi government to a number of brotherly and friendly countries to reach the neediest families in different regions around world.



The Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Singapore received a delegation from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals. They are visiting the Republic of Singapore as part of the student visits programme. Their itineraries include visits to the most prominent universities, scientific and research institutions, and factories in Singapore.



World Arabic Language Day was organised by the Saudi Embassy and facilitated the participation of students. The celebration featured a wide range of events and activities in addition to visual content that focused on important and fascinating subjects that highlighted the Kingdom's contribution to the Arabic language.



The Saudi Arabia team at the opening of the Darts Championship competition in Singapore with support from the KSA Embassy here.



Best Wishes to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of its 93rd National Day



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SBF Making Plans for Saudi Arabia

H.E. Shamsber Zaman, the non-resident ambassador to Jordan and Chairman of Middle East Business Group (MEBG) at the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) shares how SBF is helping businesses seize opportunities in Singapore and Saudi Arabia

Could you please share with us how SBF is engaging the Saudi Market?

Singapore Business Federation (SBF) has been the Secretariat for the Saudi-Singapore Business Council since its launch in 2006. As Secretariat, SBF facilitates trade relations between Singapore and Saudi Arabia which includes actively engaging the Singapore Embassy, various Ministries, local Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs), and private organisations in planning and co-/hosting of events such as roundtables, forums, seminars, and webinars both in Singapore and Saudi Arabia, as well as providing close assistance in hosting Saudi Arabian political officeholders or representatives when they visit Singapore.

Guided by the three pillars- "Learn, Land, Localise*" in the GlobalConnect@SBF programme, we have organised four business missions to bring Singapore companies to Saudi Arabia where they got to network with potential business counterparts, gain a deeper understanding of market opportunities and business environment insights, and eventually make in-roads into the Saudi Arabia market, establishing a sustainable business presence. SBF has also helped provide Singapore companies with 57 advisories and facilitated 2 successful overseas ventures into Saudi Arabia**.

*(Learn: access practical in-person advice and useful market resources; Land: tap on expertise and experience to win deals and launch successfully overseas; Localise: deepen market presence through established business networks for long-term sustainability)

Are there any upcoming visits planned between Singapore and Saudi Arabia?

While Saudi Arabia officials have made several visits to Singa-



pore this year, SBF, the Saudi Ministry of Commerce, the National Competitiveness Center (NCC), and the Federation of Saudi Chambers (FSC) will be co-hosting a business forum titled Saudi-Singapore Business Forum on 26 Sep 2023. SBF is also planning for a seven-day Overseas Market Workshop to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates which would take place between 16-22 October 2023.

How can Saudi Companies leverage on SBF's networking to increase collaboration and cooperation with Saudi Arabia?



H.E. Shamsber Zaman with (far left) Saudi Deputy Minister for Agricultural Affairs H.E. Eng. Ahmed Alkhamshi at a recent business forum co-organised by the Saudi Arabia Embassy in Singapore

Upcoming Mission to Saudi Arabia and Forum in Singapore

The Singapore Business Federation is planning to hold the Saudi-Singapore Business Forum on 26th Sept 2023. It will be graced by H.E. Dr Majid Al-Kassabi, Saudi Minister of Commerce, and Dr Tan See Leng, Minister of Manpower and Second Minister of Trade and Industry of Singapore, and co-organised between the Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry, National Competitiveness Center (NCC), Federation of Saudi Chambers (FSC) and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF).

Following the Forum, Enterprise Singapore and Singapore Business Federation are also organising a business mission to Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and Abu Dhabi and Dubai, United Arab Emirates in October 2023.

SBF is actively engaging and collaborating with Saudi Arabian counterparts in both the public and private sectors to facilitate business and investment partnerships.

The GlobalConnect@SBF programme also promotes Singapore as an international hub where Saudi companies could set up their companies here in Singapore.

In 2022, the Saudi-Singapore Joint Committee (SSJC), SBF, and the Federation of Saudi Chambers (FSC) jointly hosted a Saudi-Singapore Roundtable, which focused on the Saudi Vision 2030, enabling a common understanding between both countries.

Saudi-Singapore Forum

A Taste of KSA Food Potential

The Kingdom truly has a large and dynamic food industry that encompasses items from dates to dairy products right up to seafood. The Forum held on 26th June 2023 at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre introduced some of Saudi Arabia's leading food industry organisations to Singaporean companies



The wonderful variety of date products from date butter, date sparkling drinks, date confection, milk and dairy products right up to seafood from the Red Sea was on display

The Forum is organised by the Saudi Ministry of Environment Water and Agriculture and supported by the Saudi Arabia Royal Embassy in Singapore and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF). The agricultural delegation was led by Deputy Minister for Agricultural Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Saleh Eyada Al-Khamshi and also included major private sector players from Saudi Arabia.

H.E. Shamsher Zaman, the SBF Chairman for Middle East Business Group and non-resident ambassador to Jordan said, "We are happy Saudi Arabia has chosen Singapore as a hub to reach out to the other ASEAN markets, the wide range of products, can open new areas of cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Singapore."

A special showcase was also set up at the forum that displayed shrimp/prawn, dairy products such as baby milk powder and a variety of products made from dates that

ranged from butter dates to sparkling apple and date juice!

Dr. Mohammed Alnuwairan, the CEO of the National Centre for Palms and Dates (NCPD), shared, "We are happy for Singaporeans to taste our high quality dates, we are the Number 1 exporter of dates to Singapore and would like to further use Singapore as a hub to enter other ASEAN markets."

Saudi Arabia is also making inroads and significant progress in the area of sustainability. Research into the latest technology has resulted in more efficient processing, cleaner environment and less usage of water. As of 2022, agriculture contributed US\$19.37 billion to the nation's GDP.

From the private sector Mr. Faisal Alfahadi, Vice President of the Almarai

Group gave a presentation on the highly successful conglomerate that specialises in food manufacturing and distribution. Last year the Saudi dairy giant recorded a net profit to US\$453 million in 2022 driven by its bakery and dairy segments. A wide range of quality-controlled products including baby milk powder is something they are looking to export to Singapore and the region.

Also on the shelves for Singaporean importers were shrimps and fish from the Red Sea. Ms Koh Siew Lan Director, International Sales at NAQUA (National Aquaculture Group) said, "Our shrimps are sourced from the unique 65 km Red Sea shoreline and is antibiotics free". The company produces more than 100,000



Saudi Ambassador H.E. Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Madhi



VIPs and guests including (middle) Saudi Deputy Minister for Agricultural Affairs Eng. Ahmed Alkhamshi



H.E. Shamsheer Zaman, SBF Mid-East Business Group & NR Amb to Jordan

tonnes of marine products per year and they export their shrimps, fish and sea cucumber to markets all over the world.

Representing Jazadco, one of Saudi Arabia's largest fishery and agricultural companies was Mr. Mohammed Al-Resheid, CEO, who shared fascinating business insights into the processing and distribution of the products in the Saudi market and its intention to expand its markets into Asia.

marketing. The Forum succeeded in laying the foundation for further collaboration between importers and exporters between the two countries. In the Q&A session that followed there were some importers from Singapore who also expressed interest in opening up the Saudi market for Singapore/Asian food products like the popular "satay".



Dr. Mohammed Alnuwairan, NCPD

Conversely, insights from one of Singapore's leading halal supply chain operators was shared by Mr Zuraimi Jumaat the Vice President of Ever Rich Pte Ltd who welcomed collaboration between Singapore and Saudi Arabia especially in areas involving *halal* certification and

One of the invitees to the forum, Mr M. Jalaluddin, a Director at United World Halal Development said he found the forum very useful and that "they really can succeed here as not many Singaporeans know about the success and quality of Saudi food products; perhaps there can be a national marketing campaign to inform Singaporeans – that would really be an eye opener for them!"



Mr. Faisal Alfahadi, Almarai Group



Mr. Mohammed Al-Resheid, Jazadco



Mr Zuraimi Jumaat, Ever Rich Pte Ltd



Master Plan Riyadh Expo 2030

Unveiled



Saudi Arabia has unveiled its master plan for Riyadh in its bid to hold the World Expo 2030 there. The Kingdom is competing against Italy, Ukraine and South Korea to be the next Expo host. The World Expo is one of the top three major world events next to the Olympics and the World Cup and is expected to attract up to 40 million visitors during its seven month-long run.

Saudi Arabia unveiled the master plan for Riyadh Expo 2030 during an official reception organized by the Royal Commission for Riyadh City in Paris, France, in the presence of delegates of 179 member states of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). BIE members will vote this November for the country that will hold the next World Expo



(Above left) Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman attended the official reception in Paris for the unveiling of the Master Plan. US\$7.8 billion has been earmarked for the Expo

“**T**ogether for a Foresighted Tomorrow.” This is the theme of the very ambitious Riyadh Expo 2030 which promises to bring the best of the world together, keeping in view the interests of Mother Earth.

The Riyadh Expo 2030 will be held near King Salman International Airport, which is currently being developed, making it easily accessible for visitors arriving there. They can reach the exhibition site within minutes by using the “Riyadh Metro” network, covering all parts of Riyadh city and connecting to one of the three exhibition entrances and the modern road network.

The exhibition pavilions, estimated to be 226, were designed in a spherical shape, with an Equator line running through them. This visual approach aligns with the exhibition’s vision, ensuring equal opportunities for all participants.

The exhibition’s design reflects the ancient urban style, history, culture, and nature of Riyadh city. It also showcases the Kingdom’s shared concern with the rest of the world for the climate and its ambition to foresee a future full of potential.

The pavilions’ locations for participating countries at the exhibition will be flexibly determined based on their longitudes. Such a design will bring together countries from the north and south of the globe side by side, symbolizing the Kingdom’s important role in facilitating global cooperation.

This will facilitate visitors’ journeys and ensure easy movement between pavilions, public squares, cultural and innovation facilities, food services, rest and waiting areas in a smooth and flexible manner while covering very short distances.

Moreover, visitors to the exhibition will enjoy strolling through fully shaded corridors with designs inspired by Riyadh’s architectural heritage.

In addition, visitors can stroll through a modern green oasis located within one of the tributaries of Wadi As-Sulai, which passes through the exhibition site. This demonstrates the Kingdom and Riyadh’s commitment to preserving and sustainably developing nature. In the same context, a prominent landmark will be built at the heart of the main plan for Riyadh Expo 2030,



(Above and above right) Visual impressions of the Riyadh Expo 2030 at night

symbolizing “Responsibility for Protecting the Planet.” It will be based on 195 columns representing the number of countries participating in the exhibition. Surrounding this landmark will be three pavilions, each representing the exhibition’s sub-themes of “Prosperity for All,” “Climate Action.” and “A Different Tomorrow.”

The exhibition will also feature the Collaborative Change Corner (C3), an area that will drive innovation and creativity during the seven-year journey leading up to and beyond Riyadh Expo 2030. The C3 aims to showcase how collaboration amongst the smartest minds in scientific, social, and intellectual innovations can accelerate the changes that will shape our future.

A member of the blueprint team for the Riyadh Expo 2030, Lamia Bint Abdulaziz, told BIE members, “The blueprint will work on developing a version of the Expo that is the most flexible when it comes to visitors’ movement at the site; and the most interactive, collaborative, and sustainable ever, and we will make sure to provide an exceptional experience

for visitors to the exhibition. We will also work on enabling full and balanced participation, and with added value for all participating countries, and we will provide unprecedented experience of high quality for more than 40 million visitors.”

Elaborating further, she said, “The Riyadh Expo 2030 is inspired by the natural and traditional features, as it was designed around a valley surrounded by a group of pavilions for each country, and provides all participating countries with unlimited opportunities, as the exhibition plan offers a wide range of pavilions of different sizes and types with a commitment to allocate a pavilion for each country.”

She also pointed out that, “All participants will be able to achieve their priorities and develop pavilions in harmony with the main theme of the Expo and its sub-themes, as the opportunities for exploration will be limitless so that visitors can live the experience of moving to any country in the world and enjoy the accompanying diverse cultural and entertainment events. The exhibition will include international restaurants from around the world and live music performances.”

She also said that the exhibition will include rich technical opportunities for cultural and professional development, adding, “We are planning to launch a participating laboratory in Osaka Expo 2025 and it will continue to help countries deal with recurring challenges in the preparatory period for Riyadh Expo 2030.”

For her part, Expo blueprint team member Eng. Nouf Bint Majid Al-Muneef said, “Our goal in the Kingdom is to organize the first environmentally friendly exhibition that achieves Net Zero Level of carbon emissions. The Riyadh Expo 2030 site will be powered by clean resources that rely on solar energy, and we are developing high standards for resource efficiencies and detailed strategies to enhance biodiversity, eliminate food waste, and ensure green waste management and recycling.”

“We will enable and help finance and build various partnerships that enhance the development phase and the objectives of the exhibition, based on the collaborative angle of change that we call the tripartite vision, as we will finance and incubate it in order to build international projects starting from 2025,” she added.



from **OIL**



3IA GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Carbon is not the enemy.



to **SOIL**

Carbon is a friend.

Events Investment Fund - A Game Changer

The Events Investment Fund is committed to attracting foreign investment and maintaining financial standards aimed at strengthening its investment portfolio and achieving sustainable growth in both returns and assets



A new \$3.7 billion fund to develop culture, tourism, entertainment and sports sectors across Saudi Arabia was announced on Tuesday.

The Events Investment Fund (EIF) will conceptualise, finance and oversee development of more than 35 venues by 2030.

Announced by Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, the fund also aims to create strategic partnerships to boost local industry, increase foreign investment and contribute to Vision 2030's aim of a vibrant society.

Ambitious National Events

The aim of the fund is to position the Kingdom as the global hub in these sectors, to provide world-class sustainable infrastructure for the delivery of an ambitious national events calendar and to create sustainable financial returns to support the Kingdom's economic diversification efforts.

The fund's assets include indoor arenas, art galleries, theatres and conference centres, horse-racing tracks, auto racing tracks and other event facilities across the Kingdom, with the aim of delivering its first asset by 2023.

The EIF is committed to attracting foreign investment and maintaining financial standards aimed at strengthening its investment

portfolio and achieving sustainable growth in both returns and assets. EIF is also contributing to Vision 2030 with respect to diversifying the economy and increasing its share of non-oil GDP, as well as supporting the contribution of the tourism sector to annual GDP, from its current rate of 3 per cent to more than 10 per cent by 2030.



MISA is Back in Singapore

The head of the Ministry of Investment Saudi Arabia (MISA) International Office shared in this interview with Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East's Editor-in-Chief, Ms Nomita Dhar, how it can facilitate any business interested in doing business with the Kingdom.

In this comprehensive interview, we reconnect with Eng. Abdullah Al Yahya, Head of the Ministry of Investment Saudi Arabia (MISA) International Office in Singapore. Eng. Abdullah AlYahya's mission is to reignite and rejuvenate MISA's role in helping businesses tap into the flourishing opportunities within Saudi Arabia. After navigating the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic, he is back with renewed vigor to support businesses in their journey to Saudi Arabia.

Welcome back to Singapore, Eng. Abdullah AlYahya. Can you share your role as the Head of MISA Singapore and its significance in aiding businesses to Saudi Arabia's prosperous future?

Thank you. As the Head of MISA Singapore, my role is instrumental in aiding businesses to explore Saudi Arabia's opportunities. We serve as a bridge, facilitating trade and investments between Saudi Arabia and Singapore. Our mission is to make this process as seamless as possible for businesses looking to expand.

How does MISA Singapore assist Singaporean companies interested in entering the Saudi market, and vice versa?

MISA Singapore provides comprehensive support. We offer market insights, navigate regulatory landscapes, and connect businesses with suitable partners. Our aim is to simplify the market entry process, ensuring a successful transition for companies.

Could you highlight sectors that hold promise for Saudi-Singapore business collaborations, and why?

Key sectors include logistics, tourism, education, and technology. These align with the economic priorities of both nations and offer substantial growth



Eng. Abdullah Al Yahya, Head of the Ministry of Investment Saudi Arabia (MISA), Singapore

potential, creating opportunities for mutual benefit.

Can you provide examples of businesses that have thrived with MISA Singapore's assistance?

Certainly. PSA International, SATS, Millennium, and Ascott are notable success stories. These companies have successfully expanded their operations in Saudi Arabia, demonstrating the diverse opportunities available in the Kingdom.

What is your vision for the future of Saudi-Singapore business collaborations, and how does MISA Singapore plan to contribute to this vision?

We envision a future of continued growth and collaboration. We aspire to see more Singaporean businesses flourishing in Saudi Arabia and vice versa. MISA Singapore will continue to play a central role in facilitating these partnerships.

What message would you like to convey to businesses in Saudi Arabia and Singapore regarding the support and opportunities MISA Singapore provides?

To businesses in both nations, MISA Singapore is your dedicated ally in realizing your ambitions. Whether you are seeking to expand or explore new markets, we are here to guide you toward success.

The potential for fruitful collaborations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore is substantial, and we invite you to explore it with us, we are located along side the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Singapore, and we welcome all.



وزارة الاستثمار
Ministry of Investment

www.misa.gov.sa

World's Fastest Growing Economy?

On July 20, 2023, the Executive Board of the IMF reported Saudi Arabia was the fastest growing G20 economy in 2022. Overall growth reached 8.7 percent, reflecting both strong oil production and a 4.8 percent non-oil GDP growth driven by robust private consumption and non-oil private investment, including giga projects. An Arab News report in June 2023 also said the ongoing economic reforms in Saudi Arabia have elevated its ranking to 17th position in the World Competitiveness Index 2023, placing it much higher than its G20 peers.

Credit rating agencies S&P gave Saudi Arabia an A with stable outlook; Moody's was last set at A1 with positive outlook. Fitch's credit rating last reported at A+ with stable outlook.

Giga Project **NEOM** Attracts Major Investors

NEOM is introducing a futuristic model - a living laboratory for entrepreneurship, a home for an international community of dreamers and doers - set in breathtaking natural landscapes. It is to be fueled by US\$500 billion from KSA's Public Investment Fund, local and international investors.



Nesma Holding Co., and Tamasuk, along with two separate partners, Al Majal Al Arabi Group Company and the Saudi Arabian Trading and Construction Company (SATCO).

active stewards of its commercial assets. The substantial investment of billions of riyals demonstrates the magnitude of the project for Saudi Arabia and will have a direct economic impact on the region. Furthermore, it will help foster local competency, promote sustainable construction solutions, and generate employment opportunities.

Neom, the futuristic mega-city in Saudi Arabia, secures a groundbreaking \$21 billion public-private partnership agreement for the first phase of its residential communities, marking a significant step towards its vision and attracting investors while boosting local development and sustainability.

NEOM, the futuristic mega-city project in Saudi Arabia, has reached a significant milestone in its expansion plans with the finalization of contracts for the first phase of its residential communities' development. This ambitious social infrastructure project aims to accommodate the growing workforce in the region, and the agreement is valued at over SAR 21 billion, making it one of the largest international public-private partnerships in terms of accommodation. The preferred bidders for this phase include prominent Saudi Arabian companies, Alfanar Global Development, Almutlaq Real Estate Investment Company (AREIC),

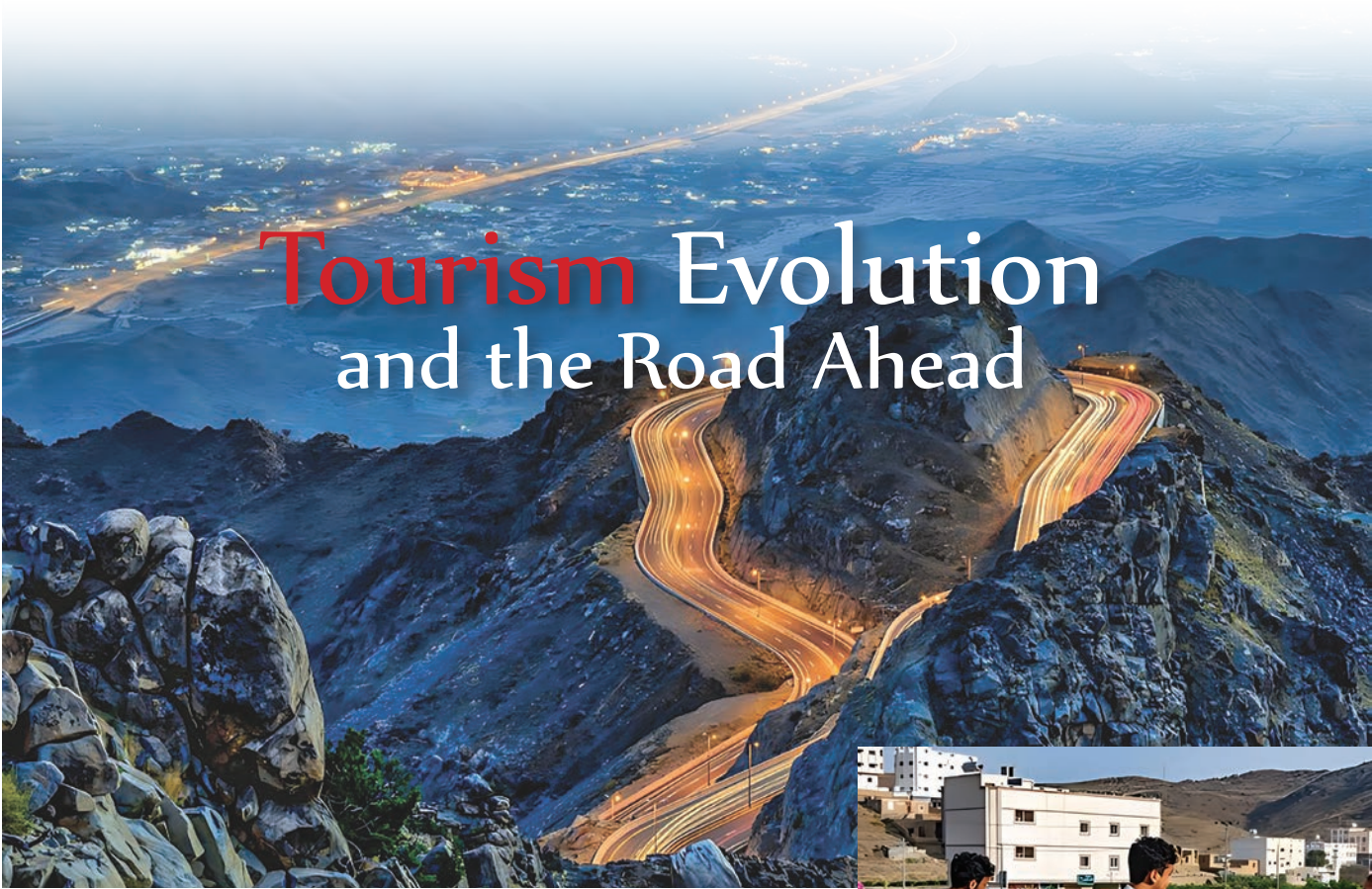
NEOM's Chief Executive Officer, Nadhmi Al-Nasr, expressed his satisfaction with the selection of leading Saudi Arabian companies as partners for delivering and operating the temporary communities. Al-Nasr stated, "The newly formed partnerships mark an important milestone for the region and is a testament to the capabilities of our team and partners who rapidly achieved financial close on a record amount."

The agreement signifies a crucial step in encouraging greater private sector involvement in NEOM's infrastructure development. The second phase of the temporary residential project is expected to be open to the market in the near future, while NEOM is currently reviewing interest from potential investors with plans to shortlist pre-qualified participants.

NEOM aims to attract more investors to contribute to its vision and become

NEOM's core developments, including THE LINE, Trojena, Oxagon, and Sindalah, are progressing, and infrastructure is gradually unfolding across the vast region. This recent public-private partnership is a crucial step towards realizing larger plans within the agreed timescales. The scope of the agreement encompasses various aspects, such as design, finance, construction, operations, and maintenance of the housing communities.

Upon completion of the first phase of the project, the agreement will lead to the establishment of 10 additional communities across NEOM, providing accommodation for an estimated 95,000 occupants. The development will have essential services and also a wide range of lifestyle facilities, including sports fields, cricket ovals, tennis courts, volleyball courts, basketball courts, swimming pools, and entertainment venues.



Tourism Evolution and the Road Ahead

The future of Saudi Arabia’s tourism is radiant. Vision 2030’s emphasis on diversity, infrastructure, and accessibility is attracting investments, both regionally and globally



The Kingdom’s Vision 2030 impact on tourism is striking. The Travel & Tourism sector is forecasted to grow by an average of 11% annually over the next decade, making Saudi Arabia the fastest-growing tourism market in the Middle East. By 2032, it’s expected to contribute approximately 17.1% to the country’s GDP, amounting to SAR 635 billion. These numbers underscore the economic significance of tourism, positioning it as a key driver of Saudi Arabia’s economy.

Steady Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the global tourism industry, and Saudi Arabia was no exception. The Kingdom’s major airports experienced a significant reduction in passenger movement in 2020, but recovery has been steady. With the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) aiming to invest over \$100 billion in the aviation sector and expand airport infrastructure, Saudi Arabia’s visitor arrivals underwent a dynamic shift. The closure of borders and travel

restrictions initially fueled domestic tourism, driven by annual festivals and events. Saudi Arabia’s strategic efforts in easing visa restrictions and revamping offerings are attracting global visitors. The tourism landscape is expected to evolve over the next three to five years, as international arrivals gain traction alongside a surge in domestic travelers. The goal of accommodating 330 million passengers by 2030 seems well within reach.

Tourism Spending Patterns

Tourism spending patterns reflect this shift. While Saudi Arabia witnessed a rise in domestic spending during the pandemic, there was also a remarkable 87% increase in domestic spending in 2021. The Kingdom’s focus on promoting new destinations and experiences, coupled with infrastructure improvements, is poised to further stimulate spending in the sector, particularly in leisure travel.

The future of Saudi Arabia’s tourism

is radiant. Vision 2030’s emphasis on diversity, infrastructure, and accessibility is attracting investments, both regionally and globally. The nation’s efforts to broaden tourist visa availability and position itself as a destination of choice are bearing fruit. As the landscape diversifies and visionary projects come to life, Saudi Arabia’s tourism industry is set to grow exponentially, redefining its identity on the world stage.

E-Visa: One Year, Multiple Entries

Saudi Arabia is opening its doors to the world through its new tourist visa. Visitors will have the chance to discover and experience the warm hospitality of the Saudi people, the rich heritage, the vibrant culture, and Saudi Arabia’s diverse and breathtaking landscapes.

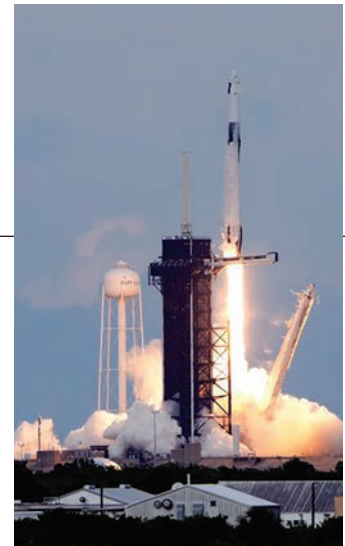
The eVisa will be a one-year, multiple entry visa, allowing tourists to spend up to 90 days in the country.

The Saudi Astronauts

New Era in Space Exploration

In a groundbreaking feat, Saudi Arabia has achieved a monumental milestone in the realm of space exploration. On May 22, 2023, history was made as two Saudi astronauts, Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali al-Qarni, embarked on an extraordinary journey to the International Space Station (ISS). Aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft propelled by a Falcon 9 rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, their successful launch marked the first-ever inclusion of a Saudi female astronaut in space exploration





Rayyanah and Ali (above far left & far right resp.) with fellow astronauts John Shoffner and Peggy Whiston in the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket (top right)

On 22nd May 2023, history was made as two Saudi astronauts, Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali al-Qarni, embarked on an extraordinary journey to the International Space Station (ISS).

This significant achievement heralds a turning point for Saudi Arabia in the global space landscape. The duo's mission, a part of the Axiom 2 space initiative, aims to carry out 14 innovative scientific and research experiments aboard the ISS. Their contributions not only propel the Kingdom into an avant-garde position in space exploration but also underscore Saudi Arabia's commitment to advancing humanity's scientific frontiers.

A core focus of the mission centers around human research, cell sciences, and cloud seeding experiments conducted in the unique microgravity environment of space. Collaborating with top-notch research centres, such as the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, the mission investigates key questions about human adaptation, inflammatory response changes in space, and even simulates cloud seeding to enhance precipitation rates – vital insights for future space colonization efforts.

Dr. Khalid Abu Khabar and his team, in partnership with the Saudi Space Commission, led the charge in cell science experiments. These experiments delve into the impact of space on inflammatory responses, shedding light on the lifespan of RNA. Similarly, the cloud seeding experiment, supervised by Dr. Ashraf

Farhat of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, holds the promise of making life viable on the Moon and Mars by creating suitable living conditions through simulated rain.

Perhaps most inspiring is the mission's educational outreach. Rayyanah Barnawi, the first Arab Muslim female astronaut, and Ali al-Qarni will engage in three interactive educational experiences with students in Saudi Arabia. By fostering direct interaction between students and astronauts, the program not only ignites curiosity about space but also emphasizes its potential to enhance life on Earth.

This bold step falls in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, showcasing the country's commitment to fostering scientific innovation, developing human capital, and positioning itself as a leader in the space sector. By investing in STEM education and elevating its space program, Saudi Arabia aspires to inspire generations, both locally and globally, and galvanize the nation's future in space exploration.

The journey of Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali al-Qarni transcends mere space travel; it symbolizes empowerment, breaking gender barriers, and showcasing Saudi Arabia's unwavering determination to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of space exploration. As they orbit the Earth, these Saudi astronauts not only navigate through the cosmos but also steer their nation toward new horizons of knowledge, discovery, and possibility.



Rayyanah and Ali conducted 20 experiments including research into predicting and preventing cancer as well as carried out a study into how to generate artificial rain in future settlements on the Moon and Mars!

Singapore Allocation for Hajj Places Restored

On 9th January 2023, the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia allocated 900 places for Singaporean pilgrims for the Hajj 1444H/2023 season. The Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs, Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, signed the Hajj agreement during a conference in Jeddah



Every year, Saudi Arabia allocates 900 spaces for Singaporean pilgrims. The allocation is reviewed based on prevailing conditions and decisions by the Ministry of Hajj. For instance, due to the pandemic, no spaces were allocated in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, 407 spaces were allocated as Saudi Arabia cautiously resumed Hajj.

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) will allocate the 900 places to potential pilgrims who registered in the Advance Hajj Registration System (AHRS) and meet the conditions for Hajj 2023. Allocation is based on the registrants' position in the AHRS queue.

MUIS will issue Letters of Intent to eligible pilgrims, confirming their interest in Hajj 2023. Registration resumes after a backlog of 35,000 prospective pilgrims accumulated due to the pandemic. The new portal MyHajSG facilitates registrations and Hajj-related transactions. The application fee of \$240 includes a subsidy to maintain affordability.

Registration resumes after a backlog of 35,000 prospective pilgrims accumulated due to the pandemic. The new portal MyHajSG facilitates registrations and Hajj-related transactions.

MyHajSG enables pilgrims to track their applications and receive alerts about their status. Existing registrants updated their contact details in the portal to ensure communication. MUIS expresses gratitude to Saudi Arabia for its commitment to pilgrim welfare and safety.

Prospective pilgrims are advised to be prepared physically, mentally, spiritually, and financially when they receive notification letters from MUIS. It also appreciates the patience of prospective pilgrims and hopes for successful Hajj performances.

Singapore Mufti Pays Tribute to Saudi Leadership for Serving Pilgrims

On 22nd June 2023, the Mufti of the Republic of Singapore, Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir, paid tribute to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and HRH the Crown Prince for their efforts to serve pilgrims. Dr Nasir praised the Saudi leadership's reception of the pilgrims as part of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Guests Programme for Hajj and Umrah for this year, 1444 AH. The Mufti hailed the program as a valuable opportunity for performing Hajj and meeting

Muslims from all over the world. Every pilgrim, man or woman, can feel the efforts made by the Kingdom to facilitate Hajj and provide all related services, he stressed. He also hailed the Kingdom's management of the crowds of millions of pilgrims, voicing appreciation for these efforts that serve all Muslims worldwide. The Mufti of Singapore valued the Kingdom's efforts in serving Islam and Muslims at the time of the Coronavirus pandemic, one of the greatest challenges the world had faced.


HAPPY 93RD NATIONAL DAY TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
 يوم وطني سعيد
 23 SEPTEMBER 2023


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Congratulations to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the 93rd Independence Day
 From EXCO and All Members


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

200 Jalan Sultan, #02-16 Textile Centre Singapore 199018
 Tel: 6297 2861 E-mail: amtassin@gmail.com

SPAO Wins Outstanding Pilgrim Services Award

Singapore Pilgrims' Affairs Office (SPAO) received the prestigious Labbaitum Award for best office, marking the first time Singapore has been recognized, showcasing the dedication of the country's Muslim community in providing exceptional support and services to pilgrims



Singapore's Muslim community is rejoicing as the Singapore Pilgrims' Affairs Office (SPAO), under the guidance of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), has been awarded the esteemed Labbaitum Award for Best Office by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This momentous achievement marks the first time that Singapore has received such a prestigious recognition. The award acknowledges SPAO's exceptional service to Singaporean pilgrims, highlighting its commitment to quality initiatives such as the PilgrimSG mobile application, which was launched last year to enhance the pilgrims' experience.

Outshining offices from 30 other countries in the category for countries with less than 3,000 pilgrims, Singapore's triumph demonstrates the outstanding dedication and support from various entities, including the appointed Ground Service Agents (GSAs), the Singapore Consulate-General in Jeddah, and the Saudi authorities. The achievement is a testament to the unwavering commitment of all past and present SPAO members,

who have tirelessly strived to provide Singaporean pilgrims with unparalleled assistance and support during their spiritual journey in the Holy Lands.

Recognition

The recognition bestowed upon SPAO has garnered appreciation from various quarters, including Singapore's Muslim community and esteemed leaders. Expressing his gratitude, a Singaporean citizen conveyed heartfelt thanks to all individuals involved, while particularly acknowledging the dedication and efforts of SPAO members. Furthermore, the citizen expressed gratitude for the personal congratulations received via WhatsApp from His Excellency Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, Dr Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, who commended Singapore's commitment to offering a seamless and spiritually enriching Hajj experience.

Adding to the nation's recent achievements, MUIS has yet another reason to celebrate. The accolades earned by MUIS continue to bolster Singapore's standing on the international front. Following the Imam Al-Qarafi Award for

Distinction in Fatwa conferred upon the Mufti and the Muis Fatwa Committee last November, this latest success highlights the ability of Singapore's minority Muslim community to make a significant impact globally. Through these accomplishments, Singapore demonstrates that size is not a limitation to achieving excellence and leaving an indelible mark in the world.

The Labbaitum Award for Best Office and the Imam Al-Qarafi Award for Distinction in Fatwa are indicative of Singapore's commitment to upholding the highest standards of service and knowledge within its Muslim community. These achievements are a testament to the concerted efforts of organizations like SPAO and MUIS, as well as the unwavering support and collaboration from various stakeholders. They serve as a source of pride for Singaporeans and inspire the nation to continue striving for excellence in the pursuit of its vision as a minority Muslim community of success on the global stage.

Greater Use of Digitalisation to Process Documents

New Absher Digital Platform and new visa regulations for Saudi nationals visiting Singapore are easing travel for both Saudi and visitors to the Kingdom. They have been implemented to ensure a seamless travel experience that's designed to spur an increase in tourism traffic between Saudi Arabia and partner countries

ABSHER PLATFORM EMPOWERS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

During the first half of 2023, the Ministry of Interior's "Absher" electronic platform processed over 12 million operations, offering 350 e-services to citizens, residents, and visitors. Notably, the platform streamlined visa-related processes and civil affairs tasks. It issued 631,624 e-passports and renewed 3,524,191 residence permits. Exit/re-entry visa extensions and issuance reached 268,407 and 2,277,054 respectively.

The platform facilitated 10,970 authorizations for female worker rivals and issued/renewed passports for minors under 10 (428,078 operations). Absher also handled driving and vehicle-related services, including 605,348 vehicle license renewals, 383,311 driving license renewals, and 490,868 vehicle repair permits. The platform introduced 16 new services, embracing digital identity advancements, modernizing photo uploads, and launching roadwork permits.

During Eid Al-Adha, the platform executed 600,000 e-operations, contributing to the Kingdom's digital transformation journey with customer-focused, technology-driven solutions.



SINGAPORE GRANTS VISA FREE ACCESS TO SAUDI NATIONALS FROM JUNE 2023

Singapore's decision to grant visa-free entry to Saudi passport holders from June 1, 2023, brought joy to Saudi nationals and simplified travel, except for diplomatic passport holders. The former visa application process remained straightforward for pre-June 1 visits, requiring Form 14A, a signed photo adhering to guidelines, and a passport copy valid for six months past entry. Supplementary documents might be needed. A nonrefundable S\$30 fee applied, processed in three days excluding submission day. Online applications via partners or in-person at missions/agents were flexible options. Each application was individually assessed, needing tailored documents based on the visit's purpose. Initiation within 30 days of arrival was advised. This change allowed

hassle-free Singapore trips and advanced travel planning.

SAUDI MINISTRY EXPANDS E-VISA TO 8 NEW COUNTRIES

Aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, the Ministry of Tourism introduced e-tourist visas for eight more nations: Maldives, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Albania, Georgia, and South Africa. The move aims to increase tourism's GDP share from 3% to over 10%, create a million jobs, and attract 100 million tourists by 2030.

Celebrating 90 Years of Saudi Aramco and 30 Years of Presence in Singapore

In 2023, Saudi Aramco marks 90 years of exploration, discovery, and innovation stemming from its long-term role as caretakers of Saudi Arabia's vast hydrocarbon resources. At the same time, it also celebrates 30 years of presence in Singapore.



Aramco's story is one of creativity and perseverance in equal measure - overcoming challenges, advancing knowledge in the industry and far beyond, and helping to usher in an age of abundant energy and transformative technology. Today, even as Aramco evolves and transitions into a new era of energy, its history continues to inspire.

Investing in the next 90 years

Accelerating investments in Asia to meet the region's growing needs

Aramco is accelerating investment to meet Asia's growing needs for oil, refined products, chemicals, advanced materials, lubricants - as well as new lower-carbon energy such as hydrogen, supported by game-changing technologies.

Aramco's presence in Asia started in Japan with the establishment of an office in 1990. Currently, Aramco has offices in China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea. Aramco is growing its businesses with major Asian partners to create new pathways for growth that drive social and economic progress.

In Korea, Aramco began work on a seven billion dollar petrochemical project with S-Oil. Aramco signed agreements for two multi-billion dollar liquids to chemicals investments in China. Aramco's PRefChem joint venture with Petronas in Johor shows the company's confidence in Malaysia and the broader Southeast Asia region.

In Singapore, Aramco started with a representative office in 1993 with a small team to provide services to sales and business development. Since then, Aramco has significantly expanded its presence in Singapore with the expansion of the Aramco Asia Singapore office and the setup of Aramco's first international trading office in Singapore with both entities currently employing more than 160 employees and contractors.

A stable, realistic and more inclusive energy transition

Aramco has a unique and central role to play in a stable, realistic, and more inclusive energy transition in Asia and across the world.

Aramco is meeting the critical need for energy security by working to increase its oil production capacity from 12 to 13 million barrels per day maximum sustainable capacity by 2027. Aramco is also growing its gas production with a mix of conventional and unconventional gas.

Leveraging technology leadership and innovation, Aramco has launched one of the largest Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS) hubs globally, which aims to capture up to 9 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year by 2027.

These efforts will help Aramco achieve its greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2035 and its Net Zero by 2050 ambition for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions across wholly owned operated assets.

Some of Aramco's Highlights in the Last 90 Years

Oil concession agreement signed — **1933**



1938 — Commercial quantities of oil discovered at Dammam Well No. 7

1958 — Oil production exceeds 1 million bpd annually

1976 — First to produce more than 3 billion barrels of oil in a year

1980 — Saudi government concludes purchase of Aramco



Set up office in Japan — **1990**

35% interest acquired in Korean refinery —

1991

First shipment of Arabian oil sailed from Ras Tanura to China



1993 — Established presence in Singapore

1998 — Established presence in China

Set up Korea office — **2012**

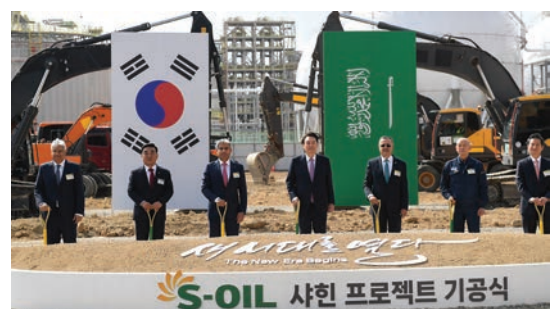
2017 — Aramco Trading inaugurated its first international office in Singapore



Inaugurated new India office in New Delhi

Announced formation of two new joint ventures in Johor, Malaysia — **2018**

Despatched world's first blue ammonia shipment from Saudi Arabia to Japan — **2020**



Conducted ground-breaking for the integrated refinery and petrochemical complex joint-venture in Liaoning, China — **2023**

Broke ground for Shaheen petrochemical project in South Korea

Completed US\$3.4bn purchase of Rongsheng Petrochemical

Aramco Expands Marine Biodiversity Protection Efforts in Southeast Asia

Saudi Aramco strives to create a culture that prioritizes the community understanding of ecological habitats, plants and animals, and promotes their protection. Through its office in Singapore, Aramco has mobilized its resources to generate opportunities that help make a positive impact on people and the communities in Southeast Asia.

Aramco expands mangrove conservation efforts to Indonesia and Vietnam

Aramco has teamed up with Global Environment Centre (GEC), Yayasan Gambut and Centre for Environmental Science and Ecology (CESE) to mitigate the coastal erosion and rehabilitate 11 hectares of degraded mangroves with coastal communities in Riau Province in Sumatra, Indonesia and Soc Trang Province in the Lower Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

The projects aim to engage and empower the local communities in the rehabilitation and conservation of mangroves to achieve sustainable development.

To kickstart the projects, community mangrove nurseries will be established in the Buruk Bakal Village, Bengkalis District, Riau Province, Indonesia and Soc Trang Province in the Lower Mekong Delta, Vietnam to supply 8,000 and 15,000 mangrove seedlings respectively. After the seedlings have grown to a suitable size in the nurseries, they will be planted at the degraded mangrove areas.

Mangroves serve a vital role as a protective zone along the coastline. For instance, Indonesia's Buruk Bakul Village in Riau, has faced challenges of coastal erosion over the last five years, and without proper mitigation efforts in place, the situation can eventually lead to the destruction of the village land. Similarly, the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, home to the largest expanse of Vietnam's mangroves, is also highly vulnerable to the twin effects of climate crisis and coastal development.



Mangrove nursery in Indonesia



Aramco Asia Singapore and Global Environment Centre signed an agreement in June 2023 to rehabilitate 11 hectares of degraded mangroves in Indonesia and Vietnam

Faizal Parish, Director of GEC said, "Aramco's commitment to mangrove conservation has allowed GEC to expand community-based mangrove rehabilitation programs to more countries in the Southeast Asia region and we are delighted with the opportunity to share our experience and success with the communities in Indonesia and Vietnam."

The new projects will be undertaken with two long-term GEC partners, Yayasan Gambut from Indonesia and CESE from Vietnam. Speaking on the Indonesia project, Mulyadi, Director of Yayasan Gambut pointed out that one of the key features of the project will be the construction of a 100-metre-long wave breaker within the planting area to reduce pressure from wave erosion. "The wave breaker serves to control erosion and tidal flow pressure, until the mangroves are established," he added.

“Aramco’s commitment to mangrove conservation has allowed GEC to expand community-based mangrove rehabilitation programmes to more countries in the Southeast Asia region and we are delighted with the opportunity to share our experience and success with the communities in Indonesia and Vietnam.”

- Faizal Parish, Director of GEC



More than 110kg of marine litter was collected at Singapore’s East Coast Park



Besides Aramco employees, family members and sponsored students also participated in the coastal clean-up

Dr. Le Phat Quoi, Vice Technical Director of CESE said, “Satellite imagery and observation in the district reveals that some mangrove areas are degraded and bare, with Soc Trang Province in the Lower Mekong Delta recording severe erosion over the last eight years with a cumulative reduction in the width of the mangroves by between 10 to 50 metres”.

“We hope that by combining the experience from Vietnam and Indonesia, we can further strengthen measures to protect and restore mangrove ecosystems in Southeast Asia,” said Faizal Parish. “The partnership with Aramco is critical to enable this activity to be undertaken”.

Aramco’s commitment to mangrove protection spans the globe. In Saudi Arabia, Aramco has completed the development of the first mangrove eco-park in the Kingdom in 2022, protecting 64km² of marine habitats. Over 6.3 million mangrove trees have also been planted at sites along the Arabian Gulf, and in the city of Yanbu on the Red Sea coasts. In Asia, Aramco is supporting mangrove conservation and protection efforts in Haimen Island in Fujian Province, China; Okinawa, Japan; and Johor, Malaysia.

Protecting Singapore’s marine biodiversity

Since 2021, Aramco has contributed S\$500,000 (US\$396,000) contribution to Garden City Fund’s Plant-A-Coral, Seed-A-Reef programme and educational program to promote the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems.

As part of the program, Aramco volunteers participated in its second coastal clean-up in February 2023 and collected more than 110kg of marine litter at East Coast Park. Previously, Aramco volunteers had also performed coral nursery maintenance work at the Marine Park Outreach and Education Centre and participated in a coastal cleanup at Bendera Bay on St. John Island.

“We are encouraged by Aramco’s support in raising awareness on the importance of our marine ecosystem and involvement in protecting Singapore’s marine biodiversity. The volunteers’ efforts will not only contribute to cleaner waters for the benefit of our corals and the surrounding ecosystem, but also provide important data to educate the public on marine debris issues,” Dr Jeffrey Low, Senior Manager, Biodiversity, National Parks Board.

From Oil to Soil: New Sustainable Process to Decarbonise Atmosphere, Regenerate Topsoil and Manufacture Water

Singapore played a key role in connecting Saudi Arabia with biotechnology that can help solve one of the great problems of natural agro sciences – soil, water and ecosystem regeneration

The loss of topsoil is a global problem, since virtually most observable life and the continuity of civilisation depends on it. Like fossil fuels, topsoil was thought to be a non-renewable resource that takes thousands of years to form with experts estimating that earth is losing as much as 43 billion tonnes of agricultural topsoil a year.

Singapore-based Mr Mohamad Alsagoff with familial roots from Saudi discovered the breakthroughs achieved by Australian-based biotech company VRM Biologik in next-generation soil regeneration technologies.

They highlighted potentially scalable, low cost decarbonisation through recarbonising of soils, while reducing irrigation needs by as much as 50% in the first year - making the technology an ideal candidate for Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia.



(From left): Ms Annaliese Tan, Mr Rowell Soon, Saudi Ambassador Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Madbi and Mr Alsagoff

Ms Annaliese Tan from the Singapore office spearheaded collaborations between the VRM team and potential partners in Saudi Arabia. Simultaneously, Mr Alsagoff visited and studied VRM deployment sites in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia in detail to prepare for the next stage of the collaboration.

VRM Biologik's Chief Sustainability/Technology Officer Mr Rowell Soon then travelled with Mr Alsagoff to the Kingdom resulting in a series of successful pitches to the Saudi government. By May 2023, an MoU with the Saudi Investment Recycling Company (SIRC)- a Public Investment Fund company, was secured to bring VRM technology to the Kingdom.

Central to the whole venture is the incredible biotech breakthroughs developed in the last 40 years by VRM Biologik Founder-President Mr Ken Bellamy. In an interview with Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East he shared how he had founded VRM Biologik® to develop and implement next generation technologies through the deployment of microbial photosynthesis, or easier understood as **self-replicating biological solar power**.

INTERVIEW: Ken Bellamy Founder of VRM Biologik

What is your solution to save Mother Earth?

A critical issue of the planet is the declining reserves of fertile topsoil. But prior to our work, there hasn't been much of a solution that actually addressed the rebuilding of topsoil. That's where we come in. We've got a lot of work done in how to save what's left and how to better use what's left. We are looking at how to rebuild the decayed, depleted, and areas where the topsoil has even completely disappeared!

How do you make the land fertile again and bring it back into productivity?

I first started looking into it in the mid-1980s, this was long before it was fashionable to talk about sustainability. There's a general approach to the use of the land



globally, which had become entrenched. And, unless there was something completely different developed, that process was going to end in disaster. It was going to end in the point where there wasn't enough arable land to support the number of humans on the planet. A completely different systemic and fundamental approach has to be taken.

So how did you first approach the issue?

I went back to the root process which underpins all life on Earth and all growing

of crops - photosynthesis. When you grow biomass as a crop, you always harvest something from the soil, but you never actually replace what you took out of the soil. Every time you grow a crop, there's an incremental reduction in the total value of the energy stored in the ground, in the soil that allowed you to grow the crop. This led me to a discovery which was scary.

Tell us more about this discovery.

I measured whatever that went in and what goes out of the process of photosynthesis. It has to balance. What I found was, that the formula, which is in every textbook everywhere on the planet, is incorrect and does not balance. There is a deficit of ions of phosphate and ions of the energy transport proteins that are needed to make photosynthesis work. Every time a plant tries to produce a carbohydrate, there is a deficit in the formula. Plants seem to be doing photo-

synthesis, but that means the formula which describes their reaction is deficient, and something else is supplying what's missing. I set out to find what that other symbiotic reaction was - and how we could work with that reaction. That led to a discovery of a kingdom of organisms, whose function on the planet is to manufacture the water that the plants need, and simultaneously manufacture the storage - the sponges in the soil, which store the water when they make it for the plants, and which also store the nutrient of fertile soil. That substance is what we know as humus.

The difference between a desert and fertile ground is the humus, the black bit. Without that bit, there's no fertility. And plants do not supply the humus. What the plants drop onto the surface of the ground or leave in the roots underneath the ground is all consumed, and almost all ends up as carbon dioxide leaving the soil. Very, very little of it stays. We discovered that the formation of soil done by this kingdom directly sequesters carbon dioxide and minerals and other things from atmosphere, collects minerals by sequestration in the soil, resulting in the manufacture and accumulation of humus.

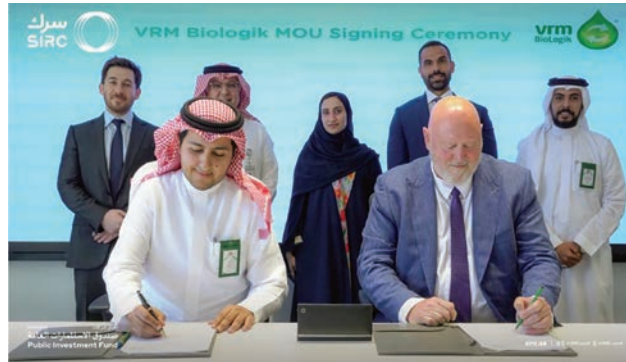
A key element of that whole process is that you don't have healthy soil if you don't have water. When it's not raining, these are the guys that actually manufacture water in the soil. One of the places that they concentrate in most is sewage. So that gave us a clue since their populations are concentrated wherever nutrient is mixed. We developed a whole series of mechanisms using waste organic matter to stimulate the flourishing of that kingdom. This effectively 'bulks up' the reaction, reduces costs and resolves multiple difficult environmental challenges all at once.

You were mentioning that this could be applicable in a desert. So do you have a solution which could change the desert country into lush greenery?

The supply of water needed to plant the number of trees and to let them grow is not present. And what's available is salty and the cost is untenable for the scope we are looking at. So having a different mechanism that actually grows the water directly in the root zone of the tree, makes good sense.

The cost of doing our method is a fraction of the cost of the water and irrigation saved

in Saudi. This is before considering the benefits in emissions reduction, carbon capture, upcycling biosolids at a lower cost than landfill, odour management, and essentially biologically terraforming the land to what it was many thousands of years ago.



Ken Bellamy, President VRM Biologik and Sultan Al Saif, Technical Director SIRC

We have signed an R&D MoU with SIRC to evaluate applications of unique processes for conversion and reuse of a range of organic residues to manufacture catalysts for soil hydrosynthesis and topsoil enhancement. SIRC will also implement VRM Biologik processes locally and monitor outcomes and benefits which can potentially be applied in a range of agricultural, revegetation and terraforming programs across the Kingdom to support the directives of the Saudi Green Initiative and the Circular Carbon Economy Framework.

The concept "From Oil to Soil" encompasses the strategic synergy between these two directives. It envisions the potential for carbon to be profitably mined out from atmosphere and into the ground as a way to diversify from only doing the other way around today. Carbon is not the enemy- it is a friend. Calculations show the potential to completely decarbonize Saudi through the development of desert soils as a massive soilbased carbon sink.

Implementation at scale will feature significant benefits. In so doing it unifies the thematic relationships between Climate Change, Waste Management, Food and Water Security in a Circular Economy - such that Regenerative and Climate Resilient Agriculture and Triple Bottom Line Sustainability is achieved.

Do you have plans for expansion in Saudi Arabia?

Yes, these will include firstly, a way to manufacture water naturally in soil; second the use of end-of-line unused organic resi-

dues such as sewage sludge, and many other things that can be safely used so that they don't end up being composted and sent up to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide and water vapour but retained as an element in the regeneration of the soil itself. Thirdly, the stimulation of the natural ecosystem such that it

begins to repair itself. It means local production, not creating another industry which is dependent on a supply chain from outside the country, creating a knowledge base and an understanding that allows that that country to build from inside itself its own resources and its own security in terms of regrowing and sustaining productivity in its food production system.

What is the long-term objective for your soil restoration technology that you have in mind?

Our long-term trajectory is focused on reclaiming 25% of the world's arable land back into the arable pool. Sustainability means we and our grandchildren and their grandchildren will be able to get up in the morning and still have food at the table. I think a primary objective of our company now is to actively manage the intergenerational transfer that's required for sustainability to be sustainable and do it ourselves. So, I'm actively engaged in passing different elements of what we're doing and management to people in their 20s and 30s.

ABOUT KEN BELLAMY

Since 1987 Ken Bellamy's greatest mission has been to offer a practical natural alternative to the "kill everything clean" practices that have dominated food production and water management. Empowered by this organic vision and globally acknowledged pioneering efforts these patented processes continue to make their mark for their capacity to resolve a range of industrial and agricultural problems.

Tracing its roots from Australia, VRM Biologik has innovated many methods and products to enhance photosynthesis and hydrogen management in soils and water. This includes the revolutionary deployment of catalysts which stimulate Biological Hydrosynthesis - a natural reaction which captures atmospheric carbon and results in the manufacture of additional water - in depleted and dry soils. Ken's ultimate objective is to provide a mechanism by which farmers and our soil are truly embraced as central elements in human survival.

Ambassador's Singapore Mural Tour

with Artist Yip Yew Chong

This year Singapore announced that Saudi nationals with passports issued by the Kingdom will no longer need to apply for a visa to visit Singapore. With this announcement the number of visitors is expected to rise. While Singapore offers many unique places of interest to travellers, Ambassador Abdullah Mohammed A. Almadhi went on a mural tour with Singapore artist Yip Yew Chong and got a sneak peek into Singapore of yesteryears



In the realm of diplomacy, the threads of culture often weave the strongest bonds between nations. This delicate fusion of diplomacy and art comes alive in the vibrant Streets of Singapore, where Yip Yew Chong, a masterful mural artist, captures captivating stories on its walls. These artworks pay homage to Singapore's multicultural history while seamlessly bridging the gap between the past and the present. The Saudi Ambassador, recognizing Yip Yew Chong's dedication to preserving culture, joined the artist on a captivating mural tour through Chinatown amidst the gentle rhythm of raindrops. In this journey, they engaged in conversations that painted a broader canvas, exploring art, culture, and the dynamic landscape of regional development.

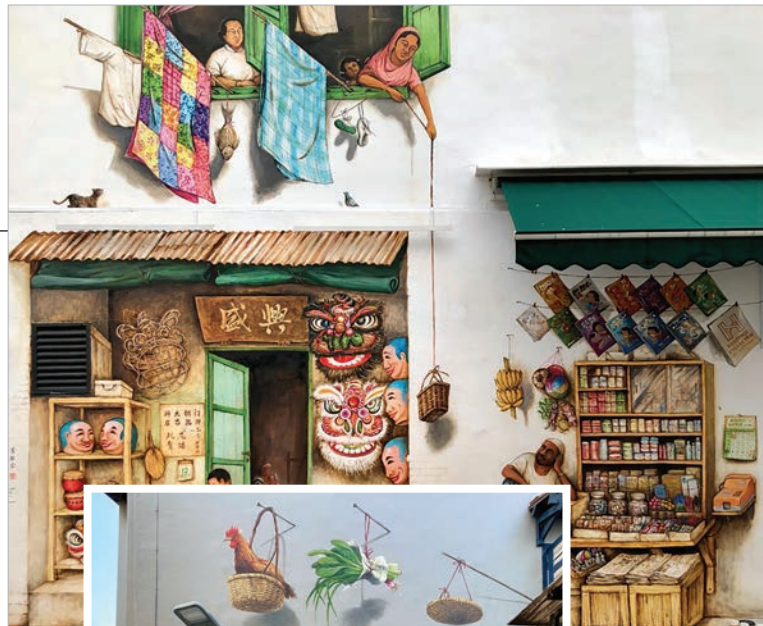


Ambassador H.E. Abdullah Mohammed Al-Madhi on a mural tour with artist Yip Yew Chong (centre)

Under the gentle drizzle, His Excellency Abdullah Mohammed Al-Madhi and Yip Yew Chong embarked on a mural tour that navigated the meandering streets of Chinatown. United by their shared passion for art and culture, these two individuals engaged in discussions that reached beyond brushstrokes to encompass the nuances of culture, the prospects of development, and the currents of regional dynamics. With umbrellas in hand, they traversed the rain-kissed streets, and their exchange epitomized the essence of people -

to - people diplomacy - the pursuit of mutual understanding.

Within the vibrant tapestry of murals, the Ambassador found a resonance with how these artworks eloquently illuminate Singapore's multicultural identity. Yip Yew Chong's murals tell



visual tales, reanimating Singapore’s history through snapshots of daily life, particularly the moments of bygone eras. These murals act as temporal bridges, sparking curiosity and dialogues that beckon newcomers to fathom Singapore’s rapid evolution and its richly diverse cultural fabric.

Reflecting on the experience, His Excellency Abdullah Mohammed Al-Madhi shared, “This tour provided me with an insightful glimpse into Singapore’s soul. It transported me through time, offering fresh perspectives and insights – truly a labor of love.” This sentiment resonates with Yip Yew Chong’s murals’ ability to evoke nostalgia, inspire inquiry, and rekindle connections to heritage.

Yip Yew Chong’s selection of subjects resembles an artist’s palette, conjuring vivid images that evoke cultures and atmospheres. The mere mention of Arab Street conjures bustling souks, majestic mosques, intricate carpets, and endless deserts. Drawing from his teenage visit, Yip Yew Chong vividly recalls bustling textile shops, wooden ladders lining quaint walkways, and the grandeur of a mosque crowned with golden domes. Through his murals, Yip Yew Chong endeavours to encapsulate the essence of these cultural landmarks, resurrecting them in the modern context.

Amidst an era of swift transformations, Yip Yew Chong’s murals serve as portals to the past, offering newcomers a lens to grasp Singapore’s inspiring journey. Initial reactions often embody astonishment as individuals behold the city’s evolution brought to life through art. Yet, these murals transcend mere aesthetics; they catalyze conversations that foster a deeper connection between people and their surroundings.

“In a world where history is ceaselessly retold, Yip Yew Chong’s murals remain steadfast reminders of the past, the present, and the enduring spirit that weaves through Singapore’s rich cultural fabric, and this tour will be on my recommendation list to all Saudis visiting Singapore. Yip Yew Chong’s art, a seamless blend of cultures and generations, weaves narratives that traverse time and place. His work pays homage to heritage, exults in diversity, and invites contemplation. This features shine a light on Yip Yew Chong’s artistic odyssey, underscoring the pivotal role his murals play in preserving cultural narratives.



(Above row & left): Photos courtesy of Yip Yew Chong

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Saudi Global Ports Growing from Strength to Strength

Saudi Global Ports is charting the future of logistics in KSA as it achieves key milestones



Saudi Global Ports (SGP) has scored several achievements in excellence in the area of port management these last two years. SGP CEO, Mr Edward Tah said, “SGP is grateful for the continued trust and support from shipping lines and cargo owners in making SGP their choice port of call in Saudi Arabia.” Some of these milestone achievements include:

Two million TEUs in One Year at KAPD

A new milestone was set for Saudi Global Ports (SGP) as it handled more than two million 20-ft Equivalent Units (TEUs) as of the end of last year at King Abdulaziz Port Dammam (KAPD). This is the first in the history of KAPD as well as other Port in the Riyadh Dry Port Ecosystem, in the Eastern Province has handled 1,000,000 TEUs since the start of operations as of 14th March 2022.

New Record for Most Containers Handled in One Month at KAPD

A total of 211,202 TEUs were processed in July 2023. This new record was set this year in July as SGP stood out in the logistics industry having the highest number of containers handled in a single month at KAPD.

KAPD Welcomes First LNG Vessel to call on the Eastern Province

The first LNG (liquefied natural gas) vessel, CMA SGM SYMI, called on 27th June 2023. The 15,000 TEU LNG-powered containership measures 366 meters in length, 51 meters in width and 16 meters in depth. This aligns with the objectives of the national strategy for transportation and logistics services and goals of the Saudi Green Initiative, which seeks to reduce carbon emissions by 278 million tons annually by 2030. This arrival confirms the readiness of King Abdulaziz Port and Saudi Global Ports (SGP) in handling different types of vessels, solidifying the Kingdom's position as a leading logistics hub connecting three continents.

SGP Riyadh Handled One Million TEUs Since Start of Operations

Since the beginning of its Riyadh Dry Port Ecosystem on 14th March 2022, the integration of SGP's operations in Riyadh and Dammam has fueled the #MovingTheWorldByRail initiative, offering more resilient and sustainable options for cargo transportation. The Riyadh Dry Port Ecosystem plays a

vital role in the Kingdom's logistics infrastructure and demonstrates its capacity to support the growing demand for cargo services in the region.


The productivity of the two ports cannot be separated from the increase in civil works with the groundbreaking ceremony in January 2023. This increase in civil works specifically develops both container terminals in four stages; improvement of berths, infrastructure and facilities at Terminal 1, expansion of existing berths and yard development at terminal 2, as well as construction of SGP Sandbox covering an area of three hectares. SGP, Saudi Telecom Company (STC), and Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. announced the completion of 5G proof-of-concepts as part of the Smart Ports initiative launched by the Saudi Ports Authority (MAWANI).

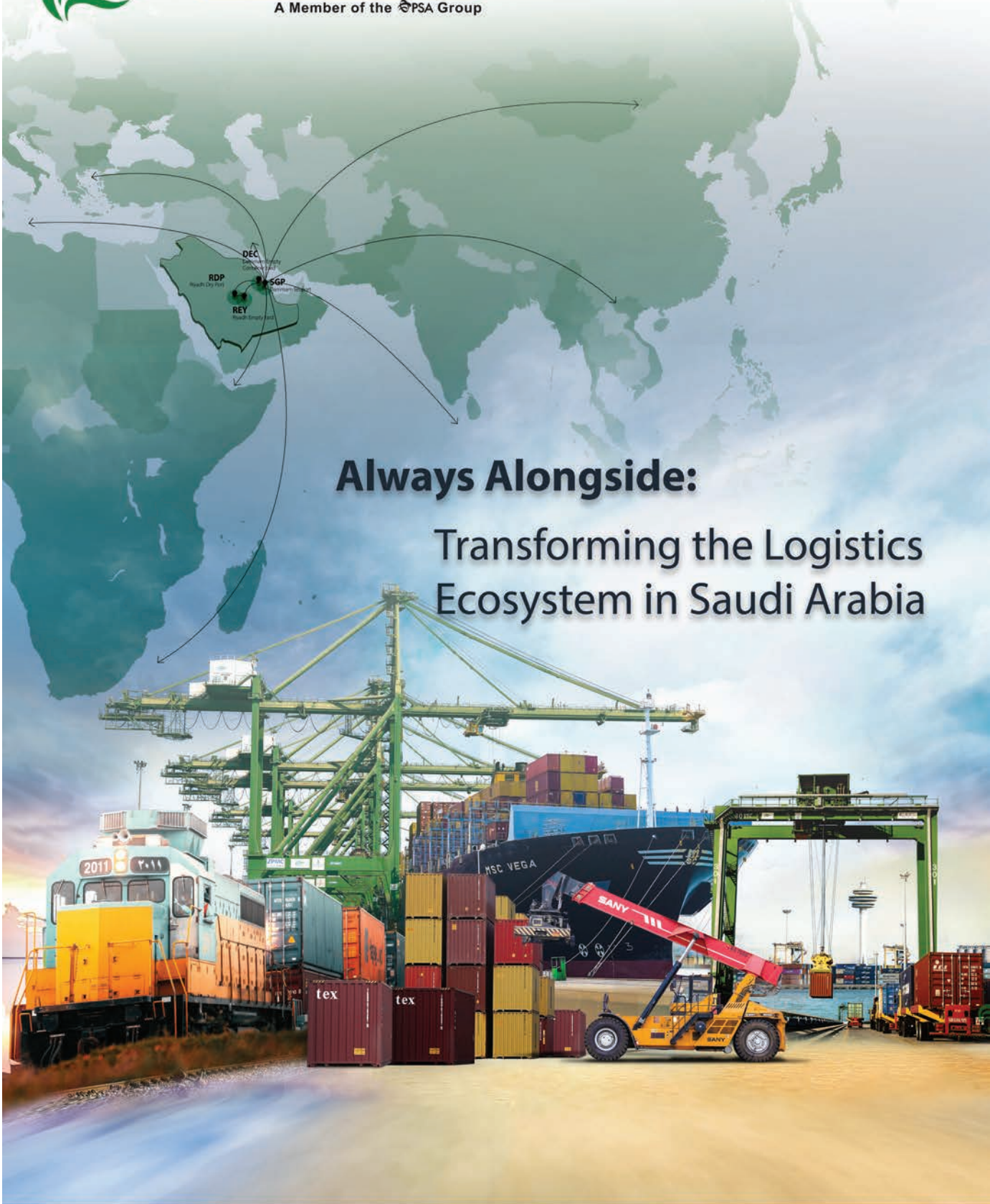
About Saudi Global Ports

Saudi Global Ports (SGP) is the operator of both deepsea container terminals at King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam, and the Riyadh Dry Port Ecosystem (Riyadh Dry Port, PSA International (PSA) is a leading port group and trusted partner to cargo stakeholders. With flagship operations in Singapore and Antwerp, PSA is “The World's Port of Call”. Visit at www.globalpsa.com



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