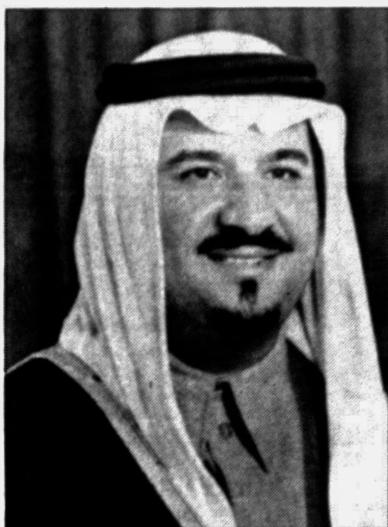




Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, Deputy Premier and Commander of National Guards



Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz, Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defence Aviation & Inspector General



Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia

Spectacular Economic Development in Saudi Arabia

THE Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has, according to an official estimate, spent more than a trillion dollars over the past 25 years to cover the domestic development needs and expansion of its non-oil sector. The expenditure did not include loans and grants to farming, industry and other sectors, estimated at more than SR 58 billion. During the past five development plans (1970-95) government spending alone totalled SR 3,869 billion (\$1,031 billion) covering infrastructure, health, education and other development projects.

Two Important Events: It may be recalled that in the early thirties of this century two important events, namely, the unification of the Arabian Peninsula under the name the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and

the discovery of oil, combined to usher in the most dramatic changes that completely transformed the face of the region under the leadership of late King Abdul Aziz, founder of modern Saudi Arabia. Economic development in Saudi Arabia could only be started after security in the country was firmly established by him. Within a few years the Kingdom became an oasis of stability. If Saudi Arabia is an economic power today it is because of its size and the influence it enjoys as an important world economic power and a major stabilising factor in the region.

Sixth Development Plan: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia approved its sixth five-year development plan last year, with spending projected at \$200 billion by 2000 AD. The Plan sets a growth

target of 3.8 per cent for the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). The plan focuses on improving the Kingdom's economic efficiency, diversifying the national economy, promoting the role of the private sector in the national economy and encouraging the manpower development. The general objectives of the sixth plan is: preservation of Islamic values, defending religion and homeland, maintaining the country's security and social stability, training productive working citizens, realising balanced development in various provinces, continuing to encourage private sector participation in the country's economic and social development process, diversifying the economic base in the industrial and agricultural sectors, facilitating the development of mineral resources, improving and upgrading the performance of public utilities and equipment, enhancing scientific, cultural and information activities, realising the economic and social integration of the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries and strengthening the Kingdom's relations with Arab, Islamic and friendly countries.

The high expenditure during the past five development plans boosted the gross domestic product (GDP) by more than four times while the non-oil sector's share in the GDP surged to 67 per cent from 53 per cent. Non-oil revenues also increased to 22 per cent from 16 per cent of the total income. Non-oil exports jumped to more than SR 15 billion (\$4 billion) due to a surge in petrochemical sales.

Infrastructure: In the field of infrastructure, the paved roads increased to 42,000 kms from only 8,021 kms 25 years ago, sea port quays rose from 27 to 182 and telephone lines from 29,000 lines to 1.53 million

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: A Profile

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Continental with high temperatures in the summer and low temperatures and some rain in winter. In the high lands of the western and southern regions, the climate is rather moderate in the summer with some periods of rain.

Religion: Islam is the official religion in the Kingdom. The Holy book 'Al-Quran' and the Sunnah (sayings & conduct) of the Prophet Muhammad are the sole basis for all governmental rules and regulations.

Government: Saudi Arabia is a monarchy. The Council of Ministers, the Shura Consultative Council and the King constitute the executive branch of government. The Council of Ministers is headed by King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz. The Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz is the Deputy Head of the Council of Ministers and heir to the throne. Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz is second Deputy Head of the Council of Ministers.

Capital: The city of Riyadh is the capital of Saudi Arabia. As the seat of government, it is home to various governmental agencies, ministries, embassies and foreign missions.

National Day: 23rd September is the National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is on this day in 1932 (1351 H) that late King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud proclaimed and unified the state of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Historical Sites: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a number of ancient historical monuments going back to thousands of years ago. The most important archeological sites are located in Al-Madinah Al-Manawwarah, Al-Aula and Madain Saleh. The city of Al-Madinah has many historical monuments dating back from the Islamic era. Among these monuments the mountain of Uhud which was the site of the famous Battle of Uhud, the cemetery of the martyrs, Al-Khandaq (tunnel) and the mosques that were built during the first years of Islam. The Najran region also has many historical vestiges such as ancient inscriptions on stones. The Eastern region is the site of an ancient civilisation, having been one of the biggest and oldest urban centres in the past.

Tourism: Among the most well known resort areas in the Kingdom, there is the town of Taif in Makkah region with the resorts of Al-Shifa and Al-Hada. There is also Al-Bahaha located in the south-western part of the Kingdom. This town is situated at an altitude of 2500 meters above sea level and is surrounded by the chain of mountains of Tihama and Sarat. Among the attractions of the area, there is the Wadigan forest, the Wadi Al-Malad forest, Wadi Bida and Marzouq waterfalls. And, then there is the region of Asir, the richest of ar-

reas in the Kingdom. It is characterised by its high mountains, its greenery and its year-round moderate climate. Abha, Khams, Mushait and Al-Namas are the most important cities in the Asir region. Among the best attractions in this area, there is the Assir national park, the Al-Soudah park, the Daligan park, the Garaa park, Wadi Mahayil, the Dahna waterfalls and the forests of Hudhwa. The Eastern Region is known for its beautiful beaches such as the 'Half Moon' beach, its historical sites and oases. The city of Al-Ahsa is particularly interesting. It is a huge oasis dotted with water springs and farms. It also has the Qarat Al-Sukhra mountain with its many caves dug by erosion effects. These caves are cool in the summer and warm in winter. On the western coast, there is the big city of Jeddah with its beautiful coral reefs and long beaches among which the Ubhur beaches are famous for their fun parks and resort village.

Education: Ever since the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 the educational sector has been the focus of the efforts of the state. The endeavours at government level stem mainly from the Islamic faith which urges all Muslims — men and women — to seek knowledge. At present there are more than three million students registered in different educational institutions,

including universities. There are 10,000 schools for boys and an equal number of schools for girls. There are seven modern universities teaching modern subjects. Besides there are a number of colleges, institutes, training centres for special education and for the handicapped. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that education is completely free of cost in the Kingdom. In fact, the government offers scholarships to university students and books are supplied free of cost to students of elementary schools and high schools.

Youth Welfare: The Government of Saudi Arabia always pays great attention to youth welfare and activities relating to culture and sports. The youths are considered to be the pillars of the future society in Saudi Arabia and they are therefore worthy of all attention. The general Presidency of Youth Welfare is the government agency directly responsible for setting up programmes and activities for Saudi Youth so that free time is spent in a useful way through which special talent can be developed and encouraged for the benefit of society. The youths in Saudi Arabia are provided with the most modern facilities and the best training available in the world. The Presidency has built a number of stadiums and sports centres all over the Kingdom. The King Fahad Interna-

tional Stadium at Riyadh is considered to be one of the most modern stadiums in the world. The Presidency of Youth Welfare supervises the activities of 154 sports clubs, 17 sports federations, 19 youth centres and a number of sports complexes all over the Kingdom. The Presidency also supervises the activities of the Saudi Society for Art and Culture and nine literary clubs located throughout the country. The Presidency runs a special hospital for treatment of sports injuries.

Health: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia pays utmost attention to its citizens who are considered to be the pillars of the society and most valuable assets. As a consequence, health care is one of the main priorities of the government. Health care is accessible and free to all citizens and expatriates alike. At present there are 267 hospitals in the Kingdom with a total capacity of 40,000 beds. Besides general hospitals there are specialist hospitals staffed with most competent doctors recruited from all over the world. The number of preliminary health care centres has reached 3028 of which 1668 are run by the Ministry of Health. The Kingdom allocates highest per capita health expenditure in the world.

Industry: At present there are 2350 industrial units in Saudi Arabia with a capital of more than 110 billion Riyals. The industrial complex of Jubail and Yanbu have a number of giant industrial units. The government helps the private sector to set up factories all over the country and provides entrepreneurs with electricity and water at nominal prices. Tax-free loans and tax exemptions are also provided by the government. Petrochemicals are among the most industrial exports of the Kingdom.

Agriculture: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has achieved self-sufficiency in many agricultural products. The country produces nearly 4 million tons of wheat yearly which ranks it 6th among wheat producing countries in the world. The Kingdom ranks first in the production of dates with a total of 500,000 tons produced every year. In addition, the Kingdom also produces fruits and vegetables. The agricultural methods have been fully modernized and incentives are given to farmers by the government through distribution of farming lands among farmers and farming companies and giving subsidies for procurement of equipments and fertilizers. The Saudi Agricultural Bank provides interest-free long-term loans to farmers. Technical assistance, training and veterinary services are provided through the ministry of agriculture and water resources. The Government buys back agricultural produce such as wheat and barley at a very competitive price.

Communications and Transportation: Despite vastness of the Kingdom and its rather difficult terrain, the Kingdom has been able to set up a very modern and extensive road network linking all cities and villages of the Kingdom to each other and to neighbouring countries. While in 1953, there were only 239 km of paved roads, today there are more than 42,000 km of which 4,400 km are highways and two-way roads. A total of 80,960 km of country side roads have been built. A 578 km long railroad links the city of Riyadh to the Eastern region. Besides, a number of harbours have been built on the Red Sea and on the Arabian Gulf to handle one of the fastest flows of exports in the world.

Ports: The Kingdom is bordered on the Eastern and Western sides by two seas: the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf giving Saudi Arabia a 610 km long coastline to the East with two important harbours, namely the King Abdul Aziz Harbour in Dammam and King Fahad Industrial Harbour in Jubail. On another 1,800 km long coastline to the West, there are three very important harbours, namely the Jeddah Islamic Harbour, the King Fahad Industrial Harbour in Yanbu and the Jizan Harbour in the south.

Airports: Saudi Arabia has 25 modern airports, including three International Airports. King Khalid International Airport, built in 1983 and located

25 km from Riyadh can handle upto 7.5 million passengers a year. The King Abdul Aziz International Airport built in 1981 in Jeddah plays an important role in the transportation of pilgrims. Dahrhan International Airport in the Eastern region is another important airport in the Kingdom. Another Airport, King Fahad International Airport, is being built to replace the old Dahrhan Airport. The Presidency of Civil Aviation is in charge of building, operating and maintaining all airports, while Saudi Airlines Company has the responsibility of air transportation services inside and outside the Kingdom. Saudi Airline, Saudia, has a modern fleet of 100 aircraft and employs more than 10,000 workers.

The Holy Sites: The city of Makkah Al-Muharramah is considered the most sacred place for all Muslims. It is in this city that the Holy Quran

was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and it is from this place that the message of Islam was first heard. It is in Makkah that we find the House of God (Kaaba) which more than a billion of Muslims all over the world face when they pray. The Haram Sharif has been expanded from 193,000 sq. meters to 328,000 sq. meters providing space for 730,000 persons to pray at a time. The second most sacred place for Muslims is the city of Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, the first site of the Islamic state. It houses the sacred mosque of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and his grave. The total area of the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid-e-Nabavi) has been expanded from 16,500 sq. meters to 247,000 sq. meters, providing space for 700,000 persons to pray at a time. A sum of about 60 billion Riyals have been spent for the expansion of the two holy sites.

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King Fahd Road in Riyadh

Heartiest felicitations to the Government and the brotherly people of the Royal Kingdom of SAUDI ARABIA on the occasion of their 65th NATIONAL DAY



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Warmest Felicitations to the Government and the Brotherly People of the Kingdom of SAUDI ARABIA on their NATIONAL DAY



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