

**Serving the Global Islamic Community**



Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz

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 assistance to build dams and irrigation networks, dig wells and set up farming communities in regions devastated by famine. They set up health clinics and conduct campaigns to vaccinate children and conduct a range of other humanitarian services.  
 Saudi Arabia and the Islamic organizations it supports were galvanized into action after the fall of the Soviet Union, which had sought to isolate from the Islamic world tens of millions of Muslims in the Central Asian republics, subjecting them to religious persecution for more than seven decades. Although Islam had survived the communist years, most mosques had been closed and there was a dire need for copies of the Holy Qur'an. Moving quickly, the Kingdom established large Islamic centers in the capitals of all six independent republics and mosques in their smaller cities. At the same time it began airlifting to the republics millions of copies of the Holy Qur'an printed in local languages at the King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex in Madinah for free distribution

at mosques and Islamic centers. The printing complex has been a particularly useful tool in Saudi Arabia's effort to serve Muslim communities. Established in 1985, it has printed more than 100 million copies of the Holy Qur'an as well as recorded millions of audio cassettes of the Holy Book in eight major languages. These are distributed free of charge to pilgrims at the Holy Mosque in Makkah, as well as in mosques throughout the world.  
 Another aspect of Saudi Arabia's national effort to serve Muslim minorities involves education for young Muslims. As Muslim communities outside the Islamic world have continued to grow, a real need has emerged for Islamic and Arabic educational facilities for children. In most cases, Islamic centers and mosques in the community adequately fulfill this need. However, in some areas the Muslim community numbers in the tens of thousands, large enough to require proper schools. Some two decades ago, Saudi Arabia began establishing Islamic academies in North America and Europe.

These full-fledged schools, offering a complete curriculum in Arabic and the local language with emphasis on Islamic studies, are located near Washington DC and in London, Bonn and Moscow. Studies have already been initiated to establish others, including in southern California and Scotland.  
 Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is involved in a major effort to provide scholarships for outstanding students from Muslim minority communities to study at Saudi universities. Currently, thousands of such students from across the world are studying at universities in Makkah and Madinah.  
 Speaking at the opening ceremony for the new mosque and Islamic center in suburban Los Angeles in July, Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince Abdul Aziz Ibn Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz said that although the primary function of such centers is to serve the local Muslim community, they also perform an important secondary role in helping non-Muslims acquire a better understanding of Islam and its

message of peace and brotherhood. Indeed, helping non-Muslims better understand Islam and Muslims is another main objective of Saudi Arabia.  
 The Islamic centers and mosques established across the world serve this purpose well by engendering close contacts between Muslims and the leaders and members of the community at large.  
 To further serve this objective, Saudi Arabia has also provided the necessary funds and support for the establishment of departments of Islamic studies at major universities in the United States and Europe. The best known of these departments are at Harvard University's Law School, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of London and Moscow University. These departments are intended to advance knowledge and understanding of Islam, to promote the objectivity and accuracy of teaching in Islamic courses and to provide resources to scholars and institutions involved in research on Islam and the Muslim world.



Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz

**Remarkable Centenary**

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 amongst the most modern establishments in the health sector.  
 The picture in the field of communication is equally impressive. There is the breathtaking ten-lane highway linking Jeddah with the holy city of Makkah. Indeed beautiful highways now criss cross the entire country. I recall that when I worked as Assistant Secretary-General of OIC in Jeddah in the early eighties, I used to see Korean workers blasting through rocks and hillocks and building roads, their skins red in the blazing desert sand. Saudi Arabia rightly boasts of some of the largest and finest airports in the world. Merchant marine has been vastly expanded.  
 The arid country of Saudi Arabia appeared condemned to live on import of every kind of commodity and mostly food items. Thanks to a serious effort in this direction the Kingdom has achieved a near self-sufficiency in food production. The story of wheat production is unique. Starting from nothing it has attained self-sufficiency.  
 While looking after the material progress of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the rulers have not neglected the spiritual aspects well. The official title of the King of Saudi Arabia is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques—namely Al Haram in Makkah and the mosque of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (SA) in Madinah. The Holy Kaaba in Makkah used to be surrounded by slum type of structures. The entire place has been totally

cleared and a very large square opened for the facilities of the pilgrims. I recall that while performing Omrah our feet used to get burnt by midday sun. Now through modern technology, arrangements have been made for cooling the entire place where Tawaf is performed. The entire area around the Holy Kaaba and the beautifully relaxing mosque of the Holy Prophet (SA) in Madinah have a modern clean look.  
 One official statement of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia states that the foreign policy of the Kingdom has remained unchanged since the days of the founder Abdulaziz. It is based on solid tenets of Islam and Arab culture and tradition.  
 Service to Islam is the bedrock of Saudi policy. It is in this spirit that the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) had its headquarters in Jeddah. Saudi Arabia gives it all out support. Since I had the privilege of serving as the second man in the organisation during the early eighties I am in a good position to vouch for it. Saudi Arabia strives ceaselessly for Arab unity.  
 From its appearance on the map as a new state a hundred years ago, Saudi Arabia has taken remarkable strides and the landscape has changed beyond recognition. The Bedouin half asleep under date trees is only for children's folklore. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is definitely a modern, developed country and is continuously playing a responsible role in world affairs.

**Saudi Arabia at a Glance**

1. Official title	: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.	20. Tourism	: 2000 AD) envisages electrification in 90 per cent of the total area of the Kingdom.
2. Capital	: Riyadh (population two and half million).	21. Minerals & mining	: Among the most tourist resort areas are: Taif, Al-Shifa, Al-Hada, Al-Baha, Abha, Khams, Mushait, Al-Namas. Besides, there is beautiful 'half-moon' beach in the Eastern region and port city Jeddah's beautiful 'coral reefs' and long beaches.
3. Government	: Monarchy, Head of State -The Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz.	22. Housing	: Oil: total crude oil reserves -260 billion barrels (25 per cent of world reserve); Gas: total reserve-180 trillion cubic feet; lead, nickel, zinc, gold, tin & tungsten, iron, copper, uranium, phosphates, bauxite, potassium, granite and marbles.
4. Area	: 900,000 sq. miles.	23. Exports	: Saudi Real Estate Development Fund has so far spent nearly SR 100 billion for construction of over 400,000 houses.
5. Population	: 16, 939, 294 (1992 census).	24. Imports	: Oil, petro-chemicals, fertilizers, metals, wheat, cement, building materials, foodstuffs.
6. Language	: Arabic. English is widely spoken.	25. Main cities	: Electrical goods, house-hold appliances, garments, spices, silk-products, cultures, imitation jewellery.
7. Religion	: Islam. The Quran is the holy book of Islam. As the birthplace of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the site of Islam's holy cities of Makkah and Madinah, Saudi Arabia is a focal point for the world's one billion Muslims.	26. Port cities	: Riyadh (capital), Makkah, Madinah, Taif, Jizan.
8. Flag	: It is of green colour. It's width is two thirds of its length and it carries the creed of monotheism: There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God. An unsheathed sword symbolizing justice follows below the inscription. The flag of the Kingdom is the only one in the world that can never be flown at half-mast because of the inscription 'Tawhid.'	27. Airports	: Jeddah, Dammam, Yanbu, Jubail, Jizan.
9. Emblem	: The emblem of the Kingdom is represented by two crossed swords with a palm tree at the top. The palm tree symbolises prosperity and growth while the swords represent justice, power and safety.	28. Telephones	: 23 airports, including three international airports at Jeddah, Riyadh and Dhahran.
10. Climate	: Temperature varies from 7°C to 50°C Rainfall: scanty and irregular. Long, hot and dry summer. Temperature drops markedly at night.	29. Telex lines	: Number of telephones 015,00,000
11. Currency	: The 'Riyal' divided into 100 'halalahs' (One US dollar is equivalent to 3.75 SR)	30. Post offices	: Number of telex lines-30,000
12. Education	: Free education facilities for all citizens upto highest level. No. Of universities -7, colleges-105 (including 11 women's colleges), schools -15,500, students at all levels- 30,00,000, teachers at all levels - 185,000.	31. Radio station	: 603
13. Health	: Highest per capita health expenditure in the world. Free medical facilities for all citizens, including expatriates. No. of hospitals- 267, beds -40,000, doctors - 18,200, primary health centres -3028.	32. TV transmission centres	: 17
14. Economy	: Free enterprise system. Government encourages free entrepreneur ship.	33. Railways	: 90
15. GDP	: SR 510 billion (1996); growth rate -8.6 per cent compared to SR 469 billion in 1995, growth rate being 4.3 per cent.	34. Roads	: 600 kilometers. Annual passenger traffic- 400,000. Annual goods traffic-two million tons.
16. Per capita income	: SR 35,000 (9,500 US dollar approx.)	35. Dams	: 95,500 kilometers, including 35,000 kilometers asphalted.
17. Industry	: Over 2,500 industrial units built at a cost of more than SR 100 billion.	36. Desalination plants	: 206 dams with storage capacity of over 400 million cubic metres.
18. Agriculture	: Cultivable land, 4.5 million hectares. Land under actual cultivation-2.9 million hectares. Pasture land-48 million hectares. Main crops: Dates -500,000 tons, wheat-40,00,000 tons. Other crops-cereals, fruits, potatoes and vegetables.	37. Social development centres etc.:	: 27 plants with capacity to produce 573 million cubic metres daily.
19. Electricity	: 6,500 towns and villages have been covered under electrification programme. Sixth development plan (1996-	38. Historical sites	: 360
		39. Tourism	: Ancient historical monuments and important archeological sites are located mainly at Madinah, Al-Aula, Madain Saleh and Najran.
		40. Development of the two holy mosques	: Well known resort areas are: Taif, Al-Bhaha, Asir, Abha, Khams, Mushait, Al-Namas, Al-Ahsa. Besides, there is picturesque 'Half Moon' beach in the eastern region and coral reefs near Jeddah.
			: The two holy mosques at Makkah and Madinah have been developed at a cost of 70 billion riyals. As a result of the expansion under Fahd Expansion Plan, completed in 1995, total expanded area of the two holy mosques comes to 575,000 sq. meters allowing spaces for nearly two million persons to pray at a time.



Hearty felicitations and warm greetings on the occasion of the Centenary Celebrations of the Founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



As the day unfolds we wish the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia peace, progress and a brilliant future in the years to come



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