

The Prophet's Mosque at Madinah

## Renovation of the Two Holy Mosques

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 ditions allow. These domes, weighing 80 tons each cover an area of 324 sq. metres.  
 Paving the mosque's surrounding areas with heat-reflecting Islamic designs, these areas of some 235,000 sq. metres add about 430,000 to the Mosque's capacity, making space for a total of more than 700,000 worshippers, reaching a million at the height of Hajj and Ramadan seasons. These open spaces have entrances to ablution areas that contain 5,600 ablution units, 1890 toi-

lets and 690 cool water fountains. Underground car parks are accessed through these spaces. The two-storey car parks have room for 4,000 ve-

hicles and equipped with cameras and a traffic control system operated from a central control room.  
 The Custodian of the Two

Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz placed the last brick of the project on 5 Dhul Qada 1414 H (16 April 1994 AD) signalling the completion of the

largest and most comprehensive improvement in the history of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the city of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

## Hundred Years of Development

IN the hundred years since King Abdul Aziz recaptured Riyadh on Shawwal 5, 1319 H (January 16, 1902) Saudi Arabia has undergone profound changes. The immediate result of this historic event was that it enabled King Abdul Aziz to focus his boundless energies on unifying his people — which ultimately led to the formation of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. By establishing a modern nation-state based on Islamic principles and traditions, he introduced peace and stability, which are essential for development but were absent in the Arabian Peninsula for a long time, and thereby set his nation on the path of growth and prosperity. A society that had remained largely unchanged for centuries, one which relied on rudimentary agriculture and limited trade, is now a showcase of industry, commerce, agriculture, education, health and other areas of human endeavour. During the span of one hundred years Saudi Arabia has turned into a respected economic and political power on the international scene. It has the nineteenth largest economy in the world and plays a crucial political role at the regional and international levels as an advocate of peace and cooperation and mediator of crises.

**Greatest Resource:** The Kingdom's development has been realized in a steady, calculated manner, with each phase meticulously planned and implemented. King Abdul Aziz and his sons who succeeded him — Saud, Faisal, Khalid and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd — have followed a simple edict: the people are the nation's greatest resources and the government will make available to them all the facilities and services necessary to help develop their potential to the fullest. To implement this policy, Saudi Arabia needed funds. Historically, the fees paid by pilgrims to the Holy

Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosques in Madinah were a major source of revenue for the rulers of the Hajaz, the western part of Saudi Arabia. When he extended his protection to this area in 1926, King Abdul Aziz introduced a novel concept: the Kingdom would serve the pilgrims and not rely on pilgrimage dues to fund government expenses.

Fortunately, in the years following the founding of the Kingdom, exploration uncovered extensive reserves of oil in the Eastern Province. The exploitation of these vast hydrocarbon reserves provided a steady source of funds that were used to finance the nation's socio-economic development.

From the outset these reserves — a quarter of the world's proven oil supply — were viewed by the nation's economic planners as an engine that would power the growth of the non-oil economic sector that would one day supplant the oil industry as the principal generator of revenue. To maximise earnings from the oil sector, Saudi Aramco, the national oil company, established a network of production facilities, refining plants, pipelines and transportation and distribution facilities. The overall objectives of Saudi development planning have been to secure prosperity and growth on a national scale and to establish a thriving economy that would realize self-sufficiency in a wide range of products and services. This would reduce the Kingdom's dependency on imports, and eventually lead to the export of finished products to other countries.

**Five-year Plans:** While significant steps were being taken towards realizing these objectives in the four decades following the founding of the Kingdom, the pace of development shifted into high gear with the introduction of a series of five-year development plans starting in 1970. These plans

introduced cohesion and a long-term outlook. Each five-year plan served as the foundation for future ones while the later development plans in the 1980s and 1990s put emphasis on diversification and privatization of the economy.

To accelerate the growth of the private sector, the government set up specialized institutions to provide interest-free long-term loans to help individuals and companies establish new facilities and expand existing ones in the industrial, agricultural and commercial fields. By 1997, these funds had provided a total of more than 72.8 billion dollars in loans to the private sector. As a result of these and other programmes, the Kingdom's gross domestic product (GDP) grew seven-fold between 1970 and 1997 to 544.82 billion Saudi riyals (145.28 billion US dollars). During the same period, the non-oil sector's share of the GDP rose from 41.1 per cent to 65.2 per cent. In the non-oil sector, the private sector accounted for 47.4 per cent of the economy's output in 1997, compared with 29.3 per cent in 1970. The realisation of such socio-economic growth and its continuation in the 21st century has required extensive investment in the country's educational system. At the time of the modern Kingdom's establishment in 1932, education was not available to everyone and was limited to individual instruction at religious schools in urban areas. Today, education at the Kingdom's eight universities, more than 80 colleges and 22,300 schools is free, and 4.5 million Saudi Arabians are currently enrolled at these institutions.

**Progress in Other Areas:** Similar progress have been made in other areas of the national life. While there were no modern facilities in Saudi Arabia in 1932, there are currently 290 modern hospitals and 2,329 healthcare clinics

that provide the full spectrum of medical services, from preventive care to organ transplants. In industry, the number of factories has grown to more than 3,100 employing approximately 280,000 workers. These factories manufacture a wide range of industrial and consumer goods for the domestic market as well as for export of goods worth 23 billion riyals (6.13 billion dollars) to 118 countries annually. In the communication sector, a network of more than 44,100 miles of highways and paved roads and thousands of miles of secondary roads, airports, seaports and other transportation facilities handles the movement of people and products. One of the priorities of the development plans has been to provide adequate supplies of water to meet the growing urban, industrial and agricultural demand. A total of 184 dams with a storage capacity of 27.3 billion cubic feet of water and 33 desalination plants producing 520 million gallons per day of potable water have been built.

A major beneficiary of the abundant supply of water has been agriculture which now annually produce three million tons of cereals, 2.59 million tons of vegetables, 1.15 million tons of fruit, 397,000 tons of poultry meat, 157,000 tons of red meat and 816,000 tons of dairy products.

**Influential Power:** Saudi Arabia has also emerged as an influential power in regional and international affairs. Its growing importance in international relations is partly due to its special status for the one billion strong Islamic community as the birthplace of Islam and the home of Islam's two holiest sites, namely, Makkah and Madinah. It is also due to the Kingdom's stable government and thriving economy, as well as the responsible manner in which it has conducted its relationship with neighbouring countries and with other states.

Heartiest felicitations to the Government and the brotherly people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the auspicious occasion of their 68th National Day



King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz



King Abdul Aziz, founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz



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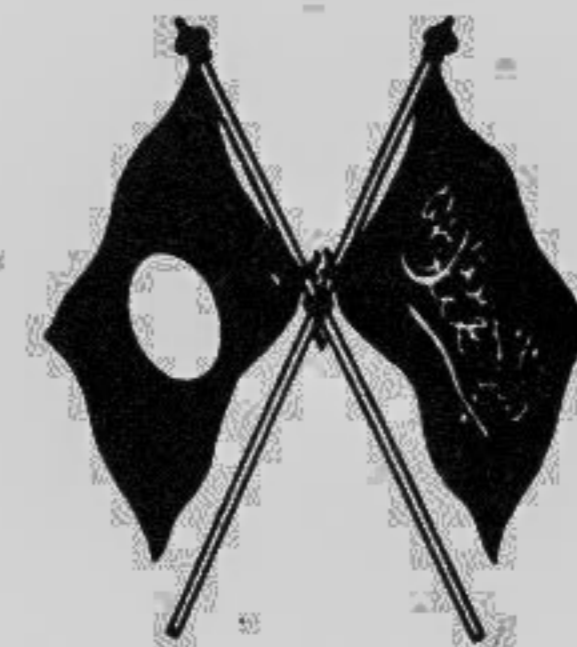


Warmest felicitations to the Govt and the Brotherly People of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their National Day



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Warmest Felicitations to the brotherly people and the government of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the

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