

## Crown Prince Abdullah

FOR more than five decades, Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz has been closely involved in the profound social, economic and administrative changes that have taken place in Saudi Arabia. He has had the experience of working with five Kings who successfully brought about far-reaching socio-economic development while preserving and strengthening the foundations of Saudi society with a strong commitment to Islam and Arab heritage. Under the guidance of his elder brother The Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz, who appointed him Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister in 1982, Crown Prince Abdullah has assisted in the implementation of the country's series of development plans. He strengthened King Fahd's efforts to ensure the nation's peace and prosperity as well as serving Islam and the Muslim community.

Born in Riyadh in 1924, Crown Prince Abdullah received his early education at the Royal Court. Growing up around his legendary father King Abdul Aziz, who was at that time involved in the successful effort to unify the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula into the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Abdullah demonstrated, at an early age, an abiding commitment to Islam and a keen interest in Arab history, culture and traditions. Like his brothers, Abdullah was tutored by scholars in Islam and Arab history and underwent the rigorous training for the development of his sons, King Abdul Aziz used to say: "I train my own children to walk barefoot, to rise two hours before dawn, to eat less, to ride horses bareback" and to study the Holy Quran, the Sunnah and Arab history. As they came of age, the Crown Prince and his brothers spent much time in their father's daily 'Majlis' (meetings) where any citizen could approach the King and discuss a grievance. In this way they learned the intricacies of statesmanship and the art of communicating with the people.

**DEVELOPING BONDS WITH PEOPLE:** To develop a strong bond with the people, a deep respect for their heritage and understanding of their aspirations, King Abdul Aziz wanted that his sons spend some time with the 'bedouins' in the desert. The years Crown Prince spent living with the tribes instilled in him a respect for their values of self-respect, simplicity, generosity and bravery which qualities strengthened his desire to serve the common people.

Crown Prince Abdullah's close association with the affairs of government and the people continued after King Abdul Aziz passed away. He acted as advisor to King Saudi Bin Abdul Aziz and later to King Faisal Bin Abdul Aziz and was



deeply involved in the international affairs of the Kingdom.

### COMMANDER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD:

In 1962, Crown Prince Abdullah was appointed to command the Saudi National Guard which was formed from appointed to command the Saudi National Guard which was formed from among the descendants of bedouins who were King Abdul Aziz's followers during the years he was working to establish the modern Kingdom. Because of his knowledge of the tribes of Saudi Arabia and their heritage which was accumulated over the years of close association with the tribal elders and members, Crown Prince Abdullah's appointment to this position proved to be particularly appropriate and rewarding. Over the following years, Crown Prince Abdullah worked tirelessly to modernize the National Guard and make it a potent force committed to the preservation of the Kingdom's peace and security. He supervised the establishments of military and technical schools with a view to modernizing the force, as well as the establishments of hospitals, clinics and housing facilities for guard members and their families.

### DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER:

On the succession of King Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz, Crown Prince Abdullah was appointed to the prestigious position of Second Deputy Prime Minister, while retaining his command of the National Guard. In 1982, King Fahd appointed him Deputy Prime Minister and Crown Prince, while appointing Minister of Defence and Aviation Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz as Second Deputy Prime Minister. With his appointment to the position of Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister, Crown Prince Abdullah intensified his involvement in the on-going national development programme as well as with the Kingdom's foreign relations. He became intimately involved in major foreign policy issues, such as, Saudi Arabia's relations with the Arab, Islamic and other countries, its efforts to resolve crises, including the civil war in Lebanon, the factional fighting in Afghanistan, the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Middle East peace process.

### FAHAD'S EMISSARY:

As King Fahd's emissary, Crown Prince Abdullah has represented the Kingdom at various international conferences, including summit meetings of the Arab League member states, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Non-aligned Movement (NAM). He has met with world leaders in Saudi Arabia and conducted state visits to other countries, including the United States in 1976 and 1987. Some years ago, he visited Egypt, Syria and Jordan in an attempt to restart the stalled Middle East peace process and to promote Arab unity and co-

operation. At home, he stepped up the frequency and duration of his visits to various parts of the Kingdom. He undertook visits to Asir, Taif and Al-Baha to inaugurate universities, dams, power generation plants and other development projects. While performing all these duties, Crown Prince Abdullah has steadfastly supported efforts to preserve Saudi Arabia's rich heritage. As chairman of the organizing committee for the Jenadriyah National Culture and Heritage Festival, he has overseen the two-week festival held annually since 1985 to promote a greater respect for and a deeper understanding to Saudi Arabia's rich past, its dynamic present and its promising future.

### LOVE OF DESERT:

Throughout his life, Crown Prince Abdullah has retained a love for the desert which is reflected in his patronage for equestrian clubs, the Crown Prince's Camel Race and other activities associated with the bedouins. He has also developed a passion for knowledge and reading. He has established two libraries: the King Abdul Aziz library in Riyadh and one in Casablanca (Morocco). After decades of public service in positions of importance, Crown Prince Abdullah is to-day recognized, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in the Arab and Islamic worlds as a leader dedicated to ensuring his country's continued future development while preserving past achievements.

### SIGNIFICANT VISITS ABROAD:

In 1998, Crown Prince Abdullah visited Great Britain, France, the United States, Japan, China, South Korea, and Pakistan. Speaking about the aims and outcome of these visits, he said, "the Kingdom seeks to be a partner in the formulation of the new world order. This is why the Kingdom decided to move forcefully and present its comprehensive conception to the rest of the world, so as to jointly explore new future horizons." In course of an interview with Jeddah-based daily "Okaz" (Nov 1998) he said, he discussed issues of importance to the Arab and Islamic worlds with the leaders of the countries he visited. "We do not concentrate only on bilateral cooperation with other countries of the world. Rather we always try to find solutions to the many problems that affect world security and stability."

Commenting on the Kingdom's relations with the United States, the Crown Prince said his talks with President Bill Clinton, Vice-President Al Gore and senior US officials focussed on matters of interest to Saudi Arabia and the Arab and Islamic worlds. "This enhanced our mutual trust and understanding and opened new horizons for constructive cooperation."

## Islamic University of Madinah

THE Islamic University of Madinah Al-Munawwarah (IUM) is a unique Islamic educational institution that caters to Muslim students from all over the world. Set up in 1961, it has five colleges, for Shariah (Islamic Law); the Holy Quran (textual studies of the Holy Quran); Dawah and Usul Al-Din (propagation and theology); Hadith (Islamic traditions); and the Arabic Language. Currently more than 3000 students are enrolled. Of them about 450 are foreign students drawn from more than 70 countries.

Unlike other Islamic universities that have diversified into secular programmes such as medicine and engineering, the Islamic University of Madinah has continued to focus all its resources on religious affairs. Its main aim is to convey the message of Islam to the world at large. Its other objectives are to inculcate a true Islamic spirit in its students, urging the individual and the community to practice Islam in daily life and worship God alone; to follow the noble examples of Prophet Muhammad (SM) with utmost sincerity and devotion; to impart religious education to students who come from different parts of the world; to seek the cooperation of highly qualified scholars specialized in various Islamic and Arabic disciplines; to collect, verify and publish works on Islamic heritage; and to maintain academic and cultural ties with other universities and scientific institutions worldwide that serve the cause of Islam and realize its objectives.

**University Council:** The University Council, chaired by the Minister of Higher Education, publishes research reports and other studies; awards scientific degrees, diplomas and certificates to university graduates; awards honorary doctorates following the suggestion of the concerned college council; recommends regulations to decide on the academic calendar and vacation time, subsidies for students and approval for the university's final accounts; and reviews issues brought up by university President or other members of the Council.

The Scientific Council implements the University Council's policies in preparing scientific research, undertaking translation, writing papers, and collecting Islamic heritage. It promotes relations among other research centers outside the university and cooperates with them, and holds conferences and seminars with local, regional and international participation. The University has a Vice-President for post-graduate studies and scientific research, who is appointed by a resolution of the Supreme Council of Higher

Education for a three-year term, which is renewable.

Like other universities in Saudi Arabia, the Islamic University of Madinah is equipped with the latest administrative, educational and research facilities. A data centre set up in 1991 prepares the university's development plan and introduces the computer system to the educational and administrative departments of the university. It also coordinates with government agencies as well as with other computer systems in the universities.

An important centre at the university is that of Sunnah and Sira (the Prophet's tradition and biography). This centre has undertaken a project for preparing an encyclopedia on the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), besides undertaking various projects in related fields. It has also published translations of the Sunnah and Sira in a number of languages.

**Islamic Heritage Centre:** The Islamic heritage centre was founded in 1983 to conduct research in the fields of scientific, Islamic and Arabic studies, and to publish a scientific magazine. It also publishes periodicals and booklets on the issues facing Islamic society; promotes Islamic heritage;

responds to media reports on Islam and Muslims around the world; cooperates with other organizations and institutions working in the scientific research inside and outside the Kingdom; maintains contact with leading Islamic personalities; and collects manuscripts, documents, information on Islam.

The university employs a rigorous procedure for selecting only the brightest and most promising students for admission into its programs. Although the majority of students gaining admission to the university have completed high school studies in the Kingdom and abroad, some are graduates of the IUM's own secondary school. The university also runs an intermediate institute. Like the university itself, both schools are open to students from other countries as well as Saudi Arabia.

Currently there are more than one hundred students from a number of countries besides Saudi Arabia studying at the two schools. Furthermore, there are two other intermediate institutes, one in Madinah and one in Makkah, that are affiliated with the IUM. In addition, there is a centre for teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers, that helps

students to qualify for admission to the university.

Worthy of note is the university's Deanship of Service to Society. Graduates of this program are qualified to serve on Islamic delegations or as teachers and lecturers for teaching Arabic and Islamic culture in Muslim countries around the world. Graduates are also qualified to lead prayers inside and outside the Kingdom, and hold seminars and lectures. This Deanship also distributes books and other printed material in schools and institutions inside and outside the Kingdom.

**A SHINING EXAMPLE:** For outstanding students from overseas, the university offers a wide range of generous benefits, including travel between their home countries and the Kingdom. Besides, the students get free accommodation, text books and transportation, in addition to the regular monthly stipend that all students in the Kingdom receive.

The Islamic University of Madinah represents a shining example of the Kingdom's service to Islam and Islamic studies and has been serving as a centre of Islamic studies throughout the world, presenting Islam in its pristine purity.

*Heartiest felicitations to the Government and the brotherly people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the auspicious occasion of their 69<sup>th</sup> National Day*

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*Our Warmest Felicitations from the core of our heart to the Government & the brotherly people of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the auspicious occasion of Saudi National Day*

**We wish progress and happiness of the Government & the People of the Kingdom & hope the fraternal relationship between the two countries will be further strengthened & remain everlasting.**



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