

# Saudi Arabia in Focus

The monthly update from the KSA's mission to the European Union



*National Day Special Edition  
23 September 2016*

## *In this issue*

- > Celebrating Saudi Arabia
- > Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman leads Saudi delegation at G20
- > Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir speaks at Chatham House
- > King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre's tireless work in Yemen
- > Latest technology in Makkah for a safe and sacred Hajj pilgrimage

## History of the National Day

23 September marks the national day of Saudi Arabia - Al-Yaoum Al-Watany - and offers a chance for Saudi citizens to celebrate their heritage and love of their country.



That day in 1932 witnessed the birth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Thirty years after he had recovered the city of Riyadh, the capital of the kingdom of his ancestors and fathers in January 1902, His Majesty King Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud issued a royal decree declaring the unification of all parts of the modern kingdom under the name of Saudi Arabia.

King Abdulaziz designated the two crossed swords and a date palm as the emblem for the newly established Kingdom, as well as the flag of the kingdom: a green rectangle with the words "No god except Allah and Mohammed is his messenger" in white.



## Celebrating Saudi Arabia

**It is 86 years ago that King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud founded modern-day Saudi Arabia on 23 September 1932. It is for this very reason that we celebrate our National Day today; a day of pride for all Saudis. In a very short time, our country has achieved great feats. King Abdulaziz united a fragile country which has since become one of the fastest growing economies in the world.**

Over these years, the Kingdom and its citizens have managed to keep their values in the face of enormous cultural, economic and social developments. As a result, the Kingdom has attained a very real and visible renaissance in all areas, and has enhanced its standing amongst nations.

This achievement is reflected in the strong bond between the Kingdom's leadership and its people. The national spirit and allegiance of all citizens to the country have helped push the nation forward in prosperity and progress.

So much has happened in the space of one generation: Where previously life

expectancy was under 40 years old, rates have doubled; where previously women were not educated, 55% of college students are now female, where institutions were previously non-existent, consultative councils and ministries are changing the shape of Saudi politics for the better.

But what is already great, can become greater. Now we are determined to once again transform the country with Vision 2030. This ambitious plan is a roadmap to diversify our economy away from reliance on oil by fully harnessing our resources and unleashing the potential of our youth so the country is best positioned for further success.



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# Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir spread a positive message about the Kingdom



## HRH Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman led the Saudi Delegation at the G20 summit in China

Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman led a senior Saudi delegation to China and Japan, as part of a trip that included the kingdom's participation at the G20 summit in Hangzhou.

In April, Prince Mohammed launched radical economic reforms designed to develop non-oil industries in Saudi Arabia and attract billions of dollars of foreign investment. Chinese and Japanese banks and companies are also expected to play major roles.

The prince first visited China for talks on economic ties as well as security issues, before visiting Japan and meeting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Prince Mohammed then returned to China on 3 September to join the leaders of the world's twenty biggest economies in the eastern city of Hangzhou. The event embodies an international forum bringing together governments and central bank governors and aims at studying, reviewing, and promoting high-level discussion of policy issues pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability. At the margins of the meeting, the Prince took the opportunity to meet with global leaders from the UK, Germany, France, South Korea and India amongst others.

Prince Mohammed bin Salman presented his economic reform plan to the G20, which envisages state spending of around 270 billion riyals (£65 billion) in the next five years on projects to diversify the economy. Saudi officials also discussed energy cooperation agreements with China and Japan, including a plan to cooperate with China in storing crude oil, the Saudi cabinet said.

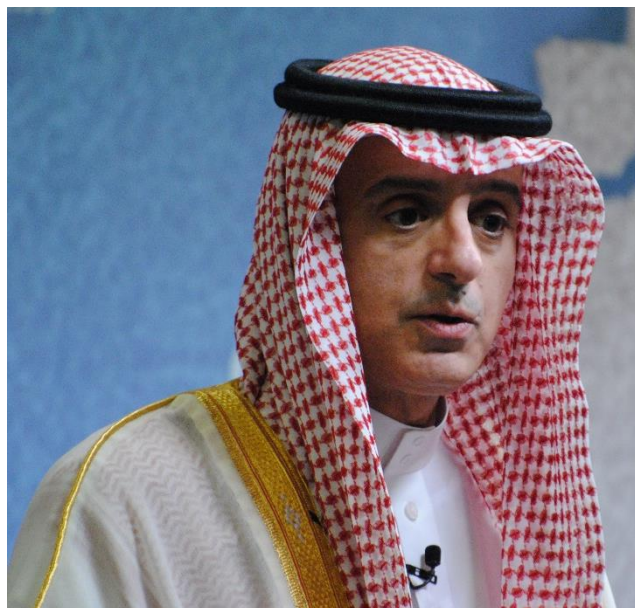
## His Excellency Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir addresses a captive audience at Chatham House

Greeted by an enthusiastic audience in Central London on 7 September, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir tackled the subject of the Kingdom's regional foreign policy at the UK's Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House.

Mr Al-Jubeir began by providing some historical context; noting the long and rich 300-year old history of the Saudi state, from its first inception in 1744 to its modern incarnation founded in 1932 by Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud. The state, he underlined, is perhaps the one example in history of a nation reconstituting itself with the same leadership twice. This constancy in overcoming, the minister elaborated, testifies to the legitimacy enjoyed by the Saudi monarchy and its deep roots with the Saudi people.

Saudi Arabia's history of constant change was also underscored in the minister's speech. He pointed to the incredible social, economic developments that have seen the Kingdom transform from a tribal society to the burgeoning economic power that it is today.

Building on this, Mr Al-Jubeir portrayed the Kingdom as a united and pragmatic nation, which has no ambitions beyond its borders, and, on the contrary, strives for peace. This regional stability, the minister stressed, is the government's priority and will allow internal focus to be on the Saudi people and improving their lot. Vision 2030, he said would be a continuation of this trend and help build an even better life for Saudi citizens.



# King Salman Relief: Reaching out a helping hand



**The King Salman Humanitarian and Relief Centre (KSRelief) is a foundation that was set up in 2015 by HRH King Salman to provide relief around the world.**

The foundation of the centre stems from the teachings of the Islamic religion which enshrines the provision of relief and aid to needy people as well as the provision of a respectable life that preserves human life, dignity and health, in addition to the continuation of the key role of KSA and its global mission in the field of humanitarian aid

The foundation's "Regaining of Hope" initiative supports the Yemeni people. It is a top priority in the program, and the centre dedicates special attention to the situation in Yemen by virtue of direct instructions from his Excellency the Custodian of the two holy mosques.

On the occasion of the opening of the centre, HRH King Salman bin Abdulaziz said, "It is our goal and mission to exert our every effort to dedicate the centre fully and exclusively to providing humanitarian aid, re from any other motives, in cooperation with accredited international relief entities and organizations. In the light of our deep consideration of our brothers and sisters in Yemen, as well as "Regaining of Hope" initiative, the centre shall pay full attention to relief and humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people, so very dear to our hearts."

A snapshot of some of the work KS Relief does can be seen below, but for more information on the work of the foundation, go to [www.ksrelief.org/en/](http://www.ksrelief.org/en/)

## KS Relief in Action

Taiz, Yemen, 25 August

KS Relief distributed medical supplies for the Revolution General Hospital in Taiz, through the humanitarian relief coalition. The delivery included antibiotics, anti-fungal, pain-killers and medicines for both children and adults, as well as medical and surgical supplies.



Al-Wadiah Crossing, Saudi Arabia, 6 September.

KS Relief distributed dry meals to Yemeni pilgrims, who passed through the Wadia'ah border crossing on the way to perform Hajj in Makkah. The distribution of these meals to Yemenis on their way to the holy sites of Islam is another example of the provision of food, medical and humanitarian aid provided by the centre to the fraternal Yemeni people as part of the Regaining of Hope initiative.

# Latest Technology used to secure Hajj pilgrimage



Taking part in the Hajj pilgrimage at least once in one's lifetime is one of the pillars of Islam and a major obligation for all Muslims with the physical and financial means. Between two and three million people participate in the six-day ritual every year, which re-enacts the actions of the Prophet Muhammad in his "farewell pilgrimage" in AD 632.

Millions of devout pilgrims visited Makkah this month to perform Hajj. Pilgrims move between three areas, Mina, Muzdalifah, and Mount Arafat, the three holy sites. Performing Hajj includes walking from one site to the other during specific times of the day.

The Saudi government has been keen on expanding the capacity of the Grand Mosque in Makkah to accommodate more visitors during Hajj and throughout the year. The latest expansion is expected to accommodate 1.85 million people inside the Grand Mosque at the same time.

This expansion included installing 78 electronic gates, 4,524 speakers, and 6,635 control cameras to ensure a great experience for its visitors. Today's Grand Mosque has 1,500 sensors linked to applications that locate users and make navigation around the mosque easier.

This year, the Kingdom issued an e-bracelet for each visiting pilgrim. The

bracelets serve as an electronic ID, where personal information and medical history are stored, making it easier for officials to identify individuals and treat them in case of emergency. Bracelets are also connected via GPS for easy navigation around Makkah, and include a multi-lingual guide for non-Arabic speakers. In addition, a control room equipped with 3,121 cameras and 150 screens allows officials to monitor movement and crowding, enabling quick reaction in case of an emergency inside and outside the Grand Mosque.

Water-resistant and user-friendly via the use of a smartphone app, the devices will also instruct worshippers on timings of prayers and a multi-lingual help desk to guide especially non-Arabic speaking pilgrims around the various rituals of the annual Islamic event.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz instructed authorities to double their efforts to ensure that pilgrims perform their rituals in ease, comfort and tranquillity. These measures are also part of the kingdom's Vision 2030, as part of which Saudi Arabia announced that it will increase its pilgrimage capacity to accommodate over 15 million Umrah pilgrims annually by offering a wide range of technology services and facilities.

## They said,,,

>> "Vision 2030 is a dynamic program toward changing the overall face of the country. With this change taking place, every country is looking toward the Kingdom with hope and optimism as it is undergoing a fundamental change from an oil driven economy to an industrial economy.

**Dieter W. Haller, German Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

## In Brief



>> **Saudi Arabia hits the medal table in Rio De Janeiro**

Saudi Arabia's Hani Alnakhli won the bronze medal at the Rio Paralympic Games for his performance in the shot put F33. Al-Nakhli threw the put a distance of 8.99m, placing him in third place behind Germany's gold medalist Daniel Scheil and Algeria's defending champion Kamel Kardjena.

>> **Jendriyah**

The annual two-week Jendriyah festival promotes and fosters traditional cultures and crafts. The festival opens with an epic camel race that sees up to 2000 participants sprinting across a 19km track, and then settles into a less frenetic pace. The programme features traditional songs, dances and poetry competitions, as well as demonstrations of falconry and exhibitions of traditional crafts from around the kingdom. It's a very colourful event and offers the best chance of seeing one of the more than 50 folkloric dance and music groups in Saudi Arabia.

