



SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

MONTHLY UPDATE | Saudi Mission to the EU

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From the Ambassador

First of all, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate all Muslims on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. I am honored to also convey the congratulations of all my colleagues at the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Mission to the European Union. Eid Mubarak to all Muslims.

Furthermore, I want to praise the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman, as well as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, on the success of this year's Hajj season. For this massive celebration, Saudi Arabia receives every year over three times more people than the attendance of the Summer Olympics. The high level of organization, the attention to every detail, and the outstanding performance of Saudi public services to Hajj pilgrims are a testimony to the excellence of the Kingdom's leadership.

As the European Union's leadership prepares for the start of a new term, I would like to emphasize that there are several areas in which our priorities align, and the much valuable Saudi-EU partnership still has much room for improvement.

Saudi **Vision 2030** aims to improve our international partnerships to build a better, fairer, sustainable, and prosperous future. And when our goals are in the same direction, and we work together towards them, that's when our efforts, our policies, and our investments can yield even greater results.

Saad bin Mohammad Alarify

Head of the Saudi Mission to the European Union

SAUDI ARABIA HOSTS MILLIONS OF PILGRIMS DURING HAJJ 2019

Under the guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia successfully served nearly two and a half million pilgrims - more than 67 thousand of them coming from Europe - during this year's annual Hajj pilgrimage.

Through resolute leadership and relentless preparation, Saudi Arabia was able to manage the massive amount of people coming to the Holy City of Mecca, as well as providing them with all the assistance and infrastructure to perform Hajj with all comfort and ease.



Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman oversees Hajj preparations (Photo: SPA)

The developments implemented in Saudi Arabia benefit pilgrims from all around the world. This year, more than one and a half million visitors profited from state-of-the-art electronic services, available to provide an ample array of guidance material in 15 different languages to make their pilgrimage as smooth as possible.

Saudi authorities successfully mobilized the Kingdom's capabilities to provide security, efficient transportation, reliable health care, and all public services to pilgrims.



Pilgrims had access to state-of-the-art e-services (Photo: SPA)

The sincere dedication by Saudi leadership in offering care and hospitality to the visitors inspired the collaboration of thousands of volunteers from all across the Kingdom. Registered volunteers received training to deal with emergencies, problem-solving, communication skills, intercultural approach, crowd management, and ethics through the Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Foundation (MiSK Foundation).

The governor of Mecca, HH Prince Khalid Al-Faisal thanked King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for supervising the services offered to pilgrims during this year's Hajj. Prince Khalid also expressed the pride felt by all Saudis in the efforts made to help pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom.

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VISION 2030 CONTINUES TO EMPOWER SAUDI WOMEN, EXPAND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Qiddiya: Saudi Arabia's entertainment, sports and culture giga project

Saudi Arabia is making progress with the giga-projects announced in the scope of its Vision 2030. The Qiddiya project aims to develop a destination that can be a hub for entertainment, creativity, sociability, and opportunity. Qiddiya will be the world's biggest entertainment supercity and is expected to create over 25 thousand new job posts by 2030.

The first phase of Qiddiya will be finished in 2023 and will include a Six Flags theme park, a water park, a motorsports center and sports and performing arts venues. This first phase will consist of over 45 projects and 300 activities, such as racetracks and roller coasters. All these initiatives are creating new employment opportunities for Saudi youth in exciting new sectors.



Six Flags Qiddiya park
(Photo: Saudi CGC)



King Salman inaugurates Qiddiya project
(Photo: Al Arabiya)

The Saudi General Entertainment Authority and Qiddiya Investment Company initiated an international scholarship program that has already provided 60 scholarships for Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The program aims to educate and train Saudi students at the most prestigious universities in the world, giving these students an opportunity to learn a new profession and bring back valuable skills when they return to the Kingdom.

In July, the project has achieved another milestone: the Qiddiya Investment Company has started the process to build a 2,000-square meter office building on the Qiddiya site, just 30 minutes from Riyadh. The offices will be designed in line with Qiddiya's environmental conscience and sustainability principles and will serve as a temporary workspace while the supercity is under construction.

IMF publishes encouraging assessment of Saudi economy

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund concluded in July the process of bilateral consultation with Saudi Arabia. As is usual, IMF experts visited the Kingdom to collect economic and financial information, as well as discuss the country's economic developments and policies with national officials.

Based on their report, IMF Executive Directors praised Saudi leadership for the progress in the implementation of the economic and social improvements of Vision 2030. They noted that reforms are already producing concrete results and that the forecast for the economy is positive.

The IMF pointed out that following the reforms envisioned in Vision 2030 will be vital in fostering sustainable economic growth, creating jobs, and achieving the Kingdom's goals.



King Fahad Olaya-road, Riyadh
(Photo: Samer Bassam)



Arab News' all-female reporting team

The most prominent English-language newspaper in Saudi Arabia took a historic step by entrusting the special coverage of Hajj 2019 to a team made entirely of female professionals. The team comprised Hala Tashkandi, Rua'a Al-Ameri, and photographer Huda Bashatah.

Bashatah said: "I'm touched and proud to be part of the team as this is my first Hajj journey. I'm even more excited to leave my fingerprint on people's memories with the photos I take of the pilgrims."

Hajj coverage is one of the newspaper's initiatives in the strive to promote full gender balance in the newsroom, in tandem with the women empowerment goal of the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

VISION 2030 CONTINUES TO EMPOWER SAUDI WOMEN, EXPAND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Saudi Arabia announces the world's first long-range hyperloop test track

Saudi Vision 2030 is taking the Kingdom closer to becoming a hotbed for innovative technology. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is about to become the testing ground for the revolutionary hyperloop technology. The King Abdullah Economic City Authority and Virgin Hyperloop One announced the signing of a development partnership to build what will be the world's first long-range test track for the technology that will change transportation all around the world.

"With Vision 2030, the Kingdom has demonstrated bold leadership to advance game-changing solutions. A hyperloop system could help enable Saudi Arabia to become a global transportation powerhouse, nurture the nation's innovation and entrepreneurial culture, and grow an innovative knowledge workforce," said Jay Walder, CEO, Virgin Hyperloop One. The test and certification track will be 37km long and will be built just outside the Red Sea port of Jeddah, in the King Abdullah Economic City.



(Photo: Virgin Hyperloop One)

The world-class hyperloop center of excellence will include a research center and a hyperloop manufacturing facility. It will generate over 6000 jobs in the technology sector and allow the development of the local industry to produce hyperloop components. The hyperloop concept involves a pressurized pod with a magnetically-suspended vehicle carrying passengers or cargo up to 10 times faster than current rail. By hyperloop, the commute from Riyadh to Jeddah - that currently takes 10 hours by car - will be possible in less than 80 minutes.

This groundbreaking technology is equivalent to the combination of traveling at the speed of a jet plane with the energy efficiency of a train. "Having hyperloop at King Abdullah Economic City is going to act as a catalyst for a Saudi Silicon Valley effect and galvanize our software development, high technology research, and manufacturing industries," Secretary-General of the ECA, Mohanud A. Helal said.

COMBATTING TERRORISM & TERROR FINANCING

Saudi Arabia hosts second forum of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition

The Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition held its Second Forum, entitled "Building Research and Intelligence Capacities to Combat Terrorism," at the organization headquarters in Riyadh.

International experts joined their Saudi counterparts and Member States' Delegates to discuss the fight against terrorism.

The symposium highlighted the need to address the ever-changing nature of terrorism and to develop distinct approaches to terrorism and violent extremism - which have traditionally been handled as the same phenomenon.

This shift of paradigm brings the focus to prevention, tackling violent extremism at the source through an active exchange between social workers, doctors, and religious scholars.

By hosting this event, Saudi Arabia reaffirms its continued commitment to global security and peace. The Kingdom remains determined to be at the forefront of counter-terrorism by investing in research and the development of the most advanced mechanisms to prevent the global threat of violent extremism.



(Photo: IMCTC)

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THE LATEST : SAUDI ARABIA IN THE EU

HE Ambassador Saad Alarify enhanced Saudi-EU alignment through engagement in a series of constructive dialogs with senior members of EU Institutions and prominent business leaders

The Ambassador help productive meetings to strengthen dialogue and increase understanding in areas of common interest with Dr. Christos Stylianides, the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management; with Mr. Jean-Christophe Belliard, Deputy Secretary-General of the EEAS; and with Mr. Eamon Gilmore, the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights. His Excellency also met with Mr. Philippe Ducom, president of ExxonMobil Group Europe, to highlight the progress being made in the context of Vision 2030 and discuss cooperation opportunities.



HE Ambassador Alarify with Dr. Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management



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HE Ambassador Alarify with Mr. Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights



HE Ambassador Alarify with HE Jean-Christophe Belliard, Deputy Secretary General of the EEAS

