

## Camelfest puts Taif on heritage map



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman attended the closing ceremony of the Crown Prince Camels Festival in Taif on Saturday. Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and other dignitaries were present. Khalid bin Faisal bin Shuraim, owner of Al-Anoud, the winner camel, bagged a sword and SR1.5 million prize money. The event, organized by the Saudi Federation of Camels, was attended by a number of princes and guests from the Gulf countries.

SPA

JOLT TO REGIME

# 29 gunned down at Iran military parade

Opposition group, Daesh both claim responsibility

AFP Tehran

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani vowed a "crushing response" after gunmen shot dead at least 29 people including women and children on Saturday in an attack on an Iranian military parade.

Daesh claimed to have carried out the rare assault in the southwestern city of Ahvaz, while Iranian officials accused "a foreign regime" backed by the US of being behind it.

"The response of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the smallest threat will be crushing," Rouhani said on his official website, after addressing a similar military parade in Tehran to commemorate the start of the 1980-1988 war with Iraq.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the attack near the Iraqi border was carried out by "terrorists recruited, trained, armed & paid by a foreign regime."

Behrad Ghasemi, a local journalist who witnessed the attack, said shots rang out for 10 to 15 minutes

First we thought it's part of the parade, but after about 10 seconds we realized it was a terrorist attack as bodyguards (of officials) started shooting.

Behrad Ghasemi  
A local journalist

and that at least one of the assailants, armed with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, wore the uniform of Iran's Revolutionary Guards force.

"First we thought it's part of the parade, but after about 10 seconds we realized it was a terrorist attack as bodyguards (of officials) started shooting," he said.

"Everything went haywire and soldiers started running," Ghasemi said. "The terrorists had no particular target and didn't really seem to care as they shot anyone they could with rapid gunfire."

State television gave a casualty toll of 29 dead and 57 wounded, while the official news agency IRNA said those killed included women and children who were spectators at the rally.

Many of the wounded were in critical condition.

In a message of condolence to Russia's close regional ally, President Vladimir Putin said he was "appalled by this bloody crime" which was a reminder of the "necessity of an uncompromising battle against terrorism".

PUTTING US UNDER PRESSURE

## Turkey set for new Syria offensive

Menekse Tokyay Ankara

Ankara is gearing up for a military offensive in the Syrian town of Tal Abyad, according to news reports, with video footage showing a military deployment near the Turkish border town of Akcakale.

The deployment is aimed at putting additional pressure on the US to accelerate the implementation of a roadmap endorsed by Ankara and Washington in June for the northern Syrian city of Manbij, experts told Arab News.

The roadmap consists of the withdrawal of the Syrian-Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from Manbij.

Tal Abyad, an Arab-majority town north of Raqqa city and near the Turkish border, was captured from Daesh in 2015 by the YPG in an offensive supported by US-led airstrikes.

An operation in Tal Abyad would likely mark a new phase in Turkey's

**HIGHLIGHT**

An operation in Tal Abyad would likely mark a new phase in Turkey's military intervention in Syria.

military intervention in Syria.

Turkish presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin on Friday said his country would soon start joint training and patrols with the US in Manbij, but added that Washington's continued military support of the YPG is unacceptable.

The US State Department omitted the YPG and its political wing, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), from its 2017 Country Reports on Terrorism, which was released on Wednesday.

Detailed report Page 13

TheBrief

MODI UNDER FIRE

India's prime minister was under fire over allegations of corruption in a military jet deal with France after comments by former French President François Hollande. **P14**

UAE BAD LOANS

The UAE banking sector is well-positioned for future growth with the days of "bad loans" dragging down bank balance sheets "behind us," says a top banking official. **P17**

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NO LETUP IN VIOLENCE

## Libya seeks UN help as militia fighting kills 10

AP, AFP Benghazi

The latest bout of fighting between rival militias in the capital Tripoli has left 10 people dead.

The medical authorities said 59 people were also wounded when fighting erupted the previous day, taking the death toll to 106 since armed conflict first began there late last month. Friday's fighting further strained a cease-fire that has been in force since Sept. 4. They said a total of 18 people remain missing.

Libya's internationally recognized government has called on the UN to take "concrete and effective" action to protect civilians and halt the fighting. The Government of National Accord (GNA) called on the UN mission to "present the Security Council with the reality of the bloody events in Libya so that it can ... protect the lives and property of civilians".

Libya slid into chaos after the 2011 uprising that overthrew longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi and led to his death. It's governed by rival authorities, based in Tripoli and the country's east, each backed by an array of militias.

FASTFACT

Libya slid into chaos after the 2011 uprising that overthrew longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi and led to his death.

CASIO



UP TO 70% FROM 23 SEPTEMBER TO 3 OCTOBER



G-SHOCK BABY-G PRO TREK EDIFICE SHEEN

JEDDAH  
• CORNICHE COMERCIAL CENTER - AL-BALAD - 012-6423510  
• QUEEN BUILDING, AL-BALAD - 012-6447882  
• RED SEA MALL  
• JANDUBIA MARKET, AL-BALAD - 012-6447225 / 012-6490130  
DAMMAM  
• AL-DANMAM SEINO MARKET, KING SAUD ST. - 013-8325606

RIYADH  
• KINGDOM TOWER  
• VELLAGIO 1, MALL AL BATHA  
• OLAVIA SHOWROOM, SITEEN AGARIAH - 011-4656685  
MEDINA  
• SULTANAH ST. AL-MASANI - 014-8268616 / 014-8221453  
• AL-NOKHBA ROYAL HOTEL - 014-8207372

AL KHOBAR  
• LULU HYPERMARKET - 013-4987575  
• AL-RAHMANIYA CENTER, KING ABULLAH BIN ABDULAZIZ ST.  
MARKAH  
• AL MANSUR STREET NEXT TO S.A.M.A - 012-5377587 / 012-5378022  
• JABAL OMAR MARKETS - 012-5389923 / 012-5759784

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# National Day

## SPECIAL COVERAGE

TRANSFORMATION ON TRACK

## Saudi Arabia's journey: From 1932 to 2030 and beyond

As the Kingdom marks National Day, Arab News tracks how the bold reforms underway in KSA mean the country is undergoing a period of change like never before



Saudi Arabia has embarked on a plan to boost renewable energy. Shutterstock

Arab News Riyadh

**There are several shorthand terms for Saudi Arabia bandied around in the press: “Oil-rich,” perhaps, or “the desert Kingdom.”**

Neither, of course, does justice to the modern Saudi Arabia of 2018 — nor to where the Kingdom is heading over the next 12 years.

On Sept. 23, Saudi Arabia observes National Day, in recognition of the date in 1932 on which the country was founded by King Abdul Aziz, known in the West as Ibn Saud.

It was during King Abdul Aziz's reign that oil was discovered in commercial quantities, when in March 1938 “black gold” was struck at the site known as Dam-

mam Well No. 7, or “the Prosperity Well.”

And prosper Saudi Arabia did. The oil boom brought untold riches to the Kingdom — yet the country became over-reliant on the energy industry, forming what Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has called an “addiction” to oil.

It is the crown prince's bold — and, say many, ambitious — Vision 2030 reform plan that aims to overcome that addiction.

The plan, unveiled in 2016, is a comprehensive blueprint for the future, laying out a strategy, and clear targets, to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy, and develop public service sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, recreation and tourism.

Under the spirit of the plan, a raft of changes have already taken place. Mu-

sical concerts and cinemas have made a comeback, women have been given the right to drive as of June this year, and the economy has opened up more to foreign investment.

Saudi Arabia — despite, as some news outlets tell us, being so “oil rich” — is also embarking on a plan to boost renewable energy. As part of the Vision 2030 program, Saudi Arabia plans to meet 10 percent of its power demand from renewable sources by 2023 — and it fully expects to exceed this target. The country's planned megacity — the \$500 billion NEOM project, announced last year — will run entirely on renewables.

It is for these reasons that Arab News is looking forward, rather than back, on this year's National Day.

On the coming pages, we delve into myriad aspects of this changing Kingdom,

from how the youth — surely the country's most valuable resource — perceive the future of the country, to the various megaprojects underway, women's empowerment, and the entertainment revolution being seen in country where cinemas, until very recently, were banned.

This is complemented by a new section on the Arab News website called “Road to 2030” — available at [www.arabnews.com/road2030](http://www.arabnews.com/road2030) — where you will find all the latest news, analysis and opinion about the reforms.

It is becoming increasingly clear to the world, Saudi Arabia is no longer a “desert Kingdom,” nor will it be oil-rich forever.

It is rich in other ways: In its youth, its leadership, and its bold plan to transform over the next 12 years in a way it has never done before.

EDITORIAL

## Why today is about Saudi Arabia's future, as much as its past

FAISAL J. ABBAS  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

On National Day, we Saudis typically celebrate our past. In a way, this occasion is very much like Thanksgiving; we look back at the blood, sweat and tears that were sacrificed for the unification of the Kingdom in 1932... and then praise God for what this nation has become.

Cynics would argue that any country which stumbles upon a vast wealth of oil would have ended up the same way. Of course, all these cynics need to do is just look at Iraq and Iran, for example, and they will find out that their argument doesn't stand.

On National Day, local newspapers typically publish stories reminding the public of why we should be proud of our past. However, we at Arab News have decided to mark this occasion differently this time.

In 2016, Vision 2030 was announced by then-Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Promising to rid the Kingdom of its dependence on oil through introducing social and economic reforms, the vision quickly emerged as a blueprint to Saudi Arabia's future.

It wasn't too long after that we started feeling the change. We finally had a young leader who spoke our language, empowered by his father, King Salman. It was uncommon for Saudis to hear the terms “Project Management Office” and “KPIs” from their leaders. Then suddenly, international companies were granted licenses to operate without the need for a Saudi partner. The religious police's powers were curbed for the first time, and their role restricted to a somewhat advisory one.

A government entertainment authority was established and we — like any normal country — started having concerts and live shows. For instance, this year's National Day will be celebrated by a special performance of Cirque du Soleil, who are visiting KSA for the first time.

In 2017, Mohammed bin Salman was appointed crown prince; with greater powers, he accelerated his reform plans.

Only a few months ago, cinema theaters re-opened, a Culture Ministry was established, and women were allowed to drive and enter sport stadiums.

Vision 2030 has also unleashed the potential of Saudi women; from government positions, to CEOs, to Uber drivers, there is no disputing that they are now driving much more than just cars.

In a symbolic gesture, MBS — the man who will one day become Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques — also met with the Coptic Pope in Egypt, the Archbishop of Canterbury in England and with Christian and Jewish leaders in the United States.

Of course, with change comes teething problems. And there is no doubt that not everyone will be at ease with these fast and drastic reforms. Will the vision achieve all of its targets? Certainly not — but the idea is to reach for the stars anyway.

Needless to say, we as Saudis were never used to paying VAT or having unsubsidized utility bills — and of course, many people would rather this not be the case.

However, if we want to be a normal country, we must start behaving like one. For the first time, we in Saudi Arabia are minding our spending, switching off unnecessary lights and considering gasoline bills before we buy our next car.

It is also significant that the government launched ADAA (The National Center for Performance Measurement). In today's issue, we interview the head of ADAA, Husameddin AlMadani, who tells us that their aim isn't only to monitor government body performance, but to allow citizens to have a constant say in it too.

As government officials constantly review and amend the targets and deliverables, we at Arab News decided to dedicate today's National Day coverage to imagining how Saudi Arabia could look in 2030.

With the introduction of artificial intelligence, renewable energy, the completion of mega projects such as NEOM and the restoration of ancient heritage sites such as Al-Ula, our journalists envisioned Saudi Arabia's future — and it looks bright.

This is why we are also proud to introduce Road to 2030, our new online section dedicated to tracking and reporting on Saudi reforms and Vision 2030.

As such, today we celebrate the Kingdom's past, present ... and future.

Twitter: @FaisalJAbbas



**On National Day, we Saudis typically celebrate our past. However, we at Arab News decided to envision Saudi Arabia's future under Vision 2030 — and it looks bright.**

HEALTHY GOALS

## A grand coincidence: Saudi teenagers who will turn 30 in 2030

Deema Al-Khudair Jeddah

The year 2030, when the Kingdom's Vision is due to be fully realized, will be an auspicious time for the 18-year-old Saudis of today, as it is also the year in which they will turn 30.

Arab News talked to some of these ambitious teenagers, who are already playing their part in achieving the goals of Vision 2030 to create a successful and thriving Saudi society, to find out what they think about the changes and the future of the Kingdom.

Firas Al-Nasser, a law student at the University of Leeds and vice president of nonprofit organization Us the Youth, feels the weight of responsibility that this coincidence of age brings, but is facing it with admirable optimism.

“This coincidence, while remarkable, places on me the responsibility to be the embodiment of (Crown Prince) Mohammad bin Salman's vision,” he said. “Of course, with all the platforms he has laid out for me and others alike, this responsibility translates seamlessly into ambition.”

He said that Vision 2030 is both a plan and an ideal, adding: “It builds an infrastructure for innovation and it also encourages the people, especially the youth, to innovate.

“Us the Youth is an organization that strives to motivate the youth to

innovate, create and connect with one another. Hopefully, we are successful in conveying the same sentiment the crown prince does in his vision.”

Al-Nasser applauded the crown prince for providing the Kingdom with grand opportunities in all aspects. “The beauty of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's dynamic vision is that the future is taking place in the present,” he said.

“Ambitions are coming to life every year, with new infrastructural plans and genuinely beneficial social changes.

“In order to understand what Saudi Arabia will be like in 2030, one only needs to see the change the crown prince has made in one year. In one year, women were given more financial opportunities and the legal ability to drive. In one year, the construction of an entire new city has begun, in which hundreds of billions of US dollars have been invested. In one year, we have significantly reduced our economic reliance on crude exports.

“Now imagine what the next 12 years might have in store. That sense of mystery and anticipation inspires the youth of Saudi Arabia, an achievement only possible under bold, decisive leadership.”

Lojain Maawadh, a freshman studying medicine at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, wants to become a surgeon and hopes to use her expertise to assist with future Hajj projects.

### YOUTH VISION



Lojain Maawadh Student at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University

Hopefully, I can have an influence in the Hajj season medical services and hospitals in diverse regions.



Firas Al-Nasser Student at University of Leeds

The beauty of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's dynamic vision is that the future is taking place in the present.



Musab Al-Majnoui Student at Princeton University

Before 2030, I wish to acquaint myself with all the projects and initiatives helping us reach our goals.

“My plans will obviously be related to the medical field, and hopefully I can have an influence in the Hajj season medical services and hospitals in diverse regions,” she said.

She is also excited to see the ways in which Vision 2030 is realized, adding: “I see a future where the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be within the top-ranked countries in technology, education and health.”

Musab Al-Majnoui, an electrical engineering student at Princeton University and secretary of Us the Youth, said he feels privileged to have been born in the year 2000.

“I am in a position where I can observe the positive transformation of Saudi Arabia as part of my daily life, and I am confident that there is so much potential for me to contribute to that change as we get closer to 2030,” he said.

He aims to excel in his chosen field, so that he can play his part in the realization of Vision 2030 “given the emphasis on science and technology in our modern economy and its alignment with our future goals.”

He added: “Before 2030, I wish to acquaint myself with all the projects and initiatives helping us reach our goals. With that knowledge, I would love to take part in a project involving education, as I believe it to be the most vital aspect of Vision 2030.”



Qiddiya is the brainchild of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is the chief architect of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 reform program.



# Saudi Arabia National Day

VISION 2030

## Kingdom's mega projects shaping a bright future for all

From Neom, Qiddiya to The Red Sea project, Saudi Arabia seems determined to redefine innovation and invention

Mohammed Al-Kinani Jeddah

**Work on a number of massive leisure and infrastructure projects in Saudi Arabia is nearing completion, while others are in the earlier stages in a country where the vision for the future includes increased diversification of its income sources.**

From Neom and Qiddiya to The Red Sea project and more, the Kingdom seems determined to change our understanding of innovation, recreation, aviation and invention.

Neom, the world's first independent economic zone, is currently being developed in Tabuk, in the northwest corner of the country.

A pillar of the nation's Vision 2030, it is being precisely designed and constructed to serve nine specialized investment sectors: Energy, biotech, food, mobility, advanced manufacturing, technological and digital sciences, tourism, media, and entertainment — sectors strategically chosen to attract international investment, and all part of a grand push to diversify Saudi Arabia's oil-centric economy.

Neom is being built on diverse terrain sheltered by mile-high mountains and cooled by breezes from more than 450 kilometers of Red Sea coastline.

Future inhabitants will be able to enjoy previously untouched, naturally formed beaches, islands and vast desert terrains where

snowfall can be expected during the winter.

Supported by fully automated services, along with zero-carbon infrastructure, Neom will operate solely on wind and solar power.

Thousands of solar panels and wind turbines will generate enough power to supply the development with low-cost regenerative energy all year round.

With aspirations to become a global hub for innovation, knowledge and trade, it will establish itself as the prime exit from the King Salman Bridge, a \$4 billion causeway linking Western Asia and Africa.

Neom will stretch across the Egyptian and Jordanian borders, thus establishing itself as the first private economic zone to span three countries.

It aims to foster innovation through an open-source policy, under which the world's top scientists will have an open invitation to conduct research in the fields of medical science, artificial intelligence and virtual reality.

By adopting a regulatory framework that fosters technological growth according to the highest international standards, guidelines, and practices, scientists will have the luxury of using Neom as a scientific testing ground for next-generation genomics, gene therapy, nanobiology, bioengineering, and stem-cell research.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Maghlouth, a member of the Saudi Economic Association, said that Neom is a major addition not only to the Saudi



Neom is being built on diverse terrain sheltered by mile-high mountains and cooled by breezes from more than 450 km of Red Sea coastline. Photo/supplied

economy but the global economy, as international companies will invest in it.

"The project will add to the national gross domestic product," he said.

"Neom is a new name, a great name that represents the future. It has an important location along the Red Sea, in which nearly 10 percent of all the world's trade flows."

He added that Neom is at the heart of the world, and can be reached by 70 percent of the global population in less than eight hours.

He also pointed out that the huge project, whose consultative board members come from around the world, would also attract workers from many countries.



Saudi talent, he added, will also be involved in the project.

Meanwhile, Jeddah's King Abdul Aziz International Airport has been redesigned and expanded to handle an ever-increasing number of passengers and flights.

Occupying a 105-square-kilometer site, the new airport is an important part of the Saudi Vision 2030.

It features a 136-meter air traffic control tower, a 3,000-person capacity mosque, 220 service counters, 80 self-service counters and parking spaces for 8,200 vehicles.

"KAIA has become an ideal airport, with its creative infrastructure and immense size," Al-Maghlouth said.

"It will also create job opportunities for young Saudi men and women, and will definitely add to the national GDP.

"The biggest aircraft in the world can now land at the modernized airport, which was made under the latest quality measures. It will also attract many international

companies to invest in the city of Jeddah, the gateway to the Holy Mosques."

He said that the number of passengers at the airport hit a record high in 2017, jumping from 31 million in 2016 to 34 million, a 9.4 percent rise.

He added that the new airport welcomed more than 7 million Hajj and Umrah pilgrims in 2017. When it becomes fully operational in the first three months of 2019, with a total of 46 gates, it will be five times the size of the existing airport.

In leisure developments, by 2030 Qiddiya, the "the Saudi answer to Disneyland," is expected to be attracting 17 million visitors a year in the entertainment sector, 12 million in the shopping sector and 2 million in the hospitality sector.

Qiddiya shares the name of the area in which it is situated, 40 kilometers from the center of Riyadh city, which has spectacular views of mountains, valleys and desert. It is expected to be the world's largest entertainment city by 2030, covering a total area of 334 square kilometers, far surpassing Walt Disney World in Florida, which is 110 square kilometers.

It will include high-end theme parks, entertainment centers, sports amenities capable of hosting international competitions, training academies, desert and asphalt tracks for motor sports, water- and snow-based recreation, outdoor and adventure activities alongside nature and safari-park experiences, and a wide range of historical, cultural and educational activities and events.

The project will target local, regional and international tourists and aims to create the nation's pre-eminent entertainment, sports and cultural destination, while remaining true to the Saudi identity. Qiddiya chief executive Michael Reininger said he expects the project to attract foreign investors in entertainment and other sectors, but did not specify the cost of construction.

The project will help to diversify national-income sources and is forecast to contribute to up to SR17 billion to GDP by 2030.

Like many of the other ambitious projects, including Neom, Qiddiya

is the brainchild of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a self-styled liberal agent of change who is the chief architect of the Kingdom's sweeping Vision 2030 reform program.

The reforms stem partly from economic motives. They aim to boost domestic spending on entertainment, as the Kingdom has been reeling from the oil-price slump since 2014. Saudis have until now spent billions of dollars each year to see films and visit amusement parks in neighboring tourist hubs, such as Dubai and Bahrain, because they were denied many entertainment options at home.

To address this, in February Saudi Arabia's General Entertainment Authority announced it would stage more than 5,000 festivals and concerts in 2018, double the number of the previous year, and pump \$64 billion into the sector in the coming decade.

Another under-construction



Neom is currently being developed in Tabuk, KSA's northwest corner. SPA

mega project is The Red Sea, where visitors will be able to explore some of the nation's hidden treasures, including a nature reserve that boasts a stunning diversity of flora and fauna in the foothills of a dormant volcano.

A host of marine-oriented resort developments will also allow for unparalleled scuba diving among stunning coral reefs. The project will form an archipelago that is home to environmentally protected coral reefs, mangroves and several endangered marine

species, including the hawksbill sea turtle.

The project marked a milestone with its incorporation as a stand-alone closed joint-stock company, The Red Sea Development Company, which is wholly owned by the country's Public Investment Fund.

The company in October announced Virgin Group founder Richard Branson as one of its board members, and has also recruited John Pagano, former managing director of development for the UK's Canary Wharf Group, as its chief executive.

The company will now move forward with the creation of its special economic zone, with its own regulatory framework, it said.

This will be separate from the base Saudi economy, with a special emphasis on environmental sustainability, and will offer visas on arrival for overseas visitors, relaxed social norms and improved business

DATE WITH HISTORY

## Traveling back thousands of years by reviving Al-Ula

Arab News Jeddah

Bathing in the scorching sun of Saudi Arabia for the past 4,000 years and sitting among the sandy dunes of the northwestern region of the Kingdom, lie the country's archaeological treasures.

These treasures are even older than Saudi Arabia itself, and barely known to the world.

The area covers about 52 hectares of well-preserved land in which there are tombs handcrafted out of the rocks, relics from ancient civilizations such as the Greeks and

the Romans, archaeological riches dating back 4,000 years and other priceless artifacts from the Ottoman Empire.

The somewhat forgotten land is going to be brought into the spotlight by the year 2020 as a historic collaboration takes place between Saudi Arabia and France.

France excels in the art of preserving history so it is the perfect alliance to meet the goals of making Al-Ula a tourist attraction.

Saudis are cooperating with France in preserving and promoting culture and archaeology.



**Archaeological treasures in the northwestern region of the Kingdom are older than Saudi Arabia itself, and barely known to the world. AFP**

The French consider this project so prestigious that Gerard Mestrallet, a special envoy of the president, has been appointed for Al-Ula. Both countries share a common approach to national heritage; that culture transcends all borders and should be accessible to all who seek to observe history.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and French President Emmanuel Macron as well as Al-Ula governor, the special envoy to Al-Ula and France's foreign minister.





Past two years have been extremely positive in overcoming challenges.

**Husameddin AlMadani**  
Director general of Adaa

# Saudi Arabia National Day

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# Adaa’s vision aims to track achievements, boost transparency in national projects

Noor Nugali Riyadh

**One of the major reform projects of the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 is Adaa – the National Center for Performance Measurement.**

Adaa is tasked with performance measurement and enablement of government entities. The enablement involves providing tools, frameworks and educational support which enables better measurement and development.

The performance-monitoring agency was established in 2016. Husameddin AlMadani is the director general of Adaa, which has the aim of introducing a culture of transparency and performance assessment into Saudi Arabia’s public sector.

Adaa was created prior to the roll-out of Vision 2030 as a recommendation from the Council of Economic and Development Affairs (CEDA). “His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman saw the necessity of knowing where we stand before embarking on any grand vision in order to assess our progress,” AlMadani said.

“In planning how the center can start on a successful note we prepared for two main challenges we had to tackle; the establishment of a performance culture within government entities and improving the



quality of data provided. The establishment of a performance culture was the first step we addressed and considered our initial investment that would automatically support addressing our second challenge,” he said.

Adaa has worked with world-renowned institutions to educate public entities and increase their awareness and capabilities regarding performance measurement. Adaa has performance ambassador teams placed within each of the government entities it works with.

AlMadani said that the past two years had been extremely positive in overcoming challenges.

“We find the language completely changed; entities speak in targets they achieved, gaps they have closed. The focus is on performance numbers and KPIs. They are also

focused on the quality of data they produce and are starting to invest in the quality of their data structure. We have great success stories where entities invested heavily in their data structure. One ministry was able to reach 99 percent data validation. Even the process of producing the reports for entities describing their progress and achieving their targets has become purely quantitative.”

Adaa’s mandate directly relates to Vision 2030’s third pillar; To achieve an ambitious nation, one that is effectively governed through transparency by reporting on progress. This is achieved through engaging citizens, residents and beneficiaries of government services in the process of improving services provided, AlMadani said.

“It is on outcome-based key performance indicators: Measuring the progress toward Vision 2030’s approved targets and objectives; execution level data; collecting data on milestone achievements of Vision 2030 realization projects and initiatives; service-level data; and measuring and collecting data on beneficiaries’ satisfaction with government services.

Finding qualified professionals specialized in performance measurement that can meet the scope and scale requirement was a challenge for Adaa. However, Adaa developed their own build, operate and transfer (BOT) model which



Adaa is tasked with monitoring performance of government entities.

## FASTFACT

**Watani app covers more than 28,000 centers and more than 80,000 government services that beneficiaries can view and rate. It will soon be launched to the public.**

proved effective where existing employees looked for potential candidates that went through rigorous training, workshops and eventual hands-on job experience under continuous evaluation for transfer.

“This proved to be a strong capability building engine we are proud of,” AlMadani said.

The result so far: Four quarters of performance reports have been published up to date, Adaa has trained about 5,000 public sector employees, and sent 16 government executives to the Harvard Kennedy School.

“We launched our International Performance Hub IPH at Davos in 2018 and launched Beneficiary Experience tools (BEX) last May, where we started measuring 21 beneficiary journeys in eight different sectors: Housing, health, education, labor, trade, transport, legal, and Hajj and umrah. For example, in the BEX Hajj assessment Adaa assessed 30 services covered by 16 government entities over three main cities: Jeddah, Makkah and Madinah.”

Adaa is aiming to set the bar high and fundamentally enhance performance.

“Our aim is to be a world-class center for government performance, innovative in embracing the latest technologies and providing intelligent, accurate and timely data. Adaa will drive excellence in performance, comprehensively be capable of capturing relevant data and accurately measuring it. It will be a true enabler in building human capacity to enhance performance and build government leaders who are citizen centered in their approach giving citizens a voice and a stake in the future development of their Kingdom,” AlMadani said.



للمجد والعلية



اليوم الوطني  
88  
المملكة العربية السعودية  
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA



Announcing World record attempt for “World’s largest Lego Brick Mosaic” with image of The Custodian of Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud & HRH. Prince Mohammad Bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud – Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia On November 16th, 2018.

**Saudi National Day Greetings**

As Saudi Arabia celebrates its National Day, We salute the visionary Rulers of this great Country for giving us the best of everything and opportunities to realize the dreams.

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**Riyadh** - Riyadh Avenue Mall, Murabba | Ibn Sulaiman Commercial Center, Batha | Khurais Road Exit - 30 | Atyaf Mall, Yarmouk, Exit 9 **Hail** - Al Jamyeen South Ring Road **Al Khobar** - King Fahd Street **Al Jubail** - King Faisal Street (West), | Galleria Mall, Fanateer **Dammam** - Ash Shati Ash Sharqi | East, Al Nawras **Al AHSA** Al Salmaniyyah South **Jeddah** - Al Amir Fawaz Makkah Al mukarramah Road | Al Marwah Al Haramain Road



Muslim World League Secretary-General Mohammed bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa and the Vatican's Cardinal Tauran signed a cooperation agreement in April.



## Saudi Arabia National Day

RELIGIOUS HARMONY

# Saudi Arabia taking lead in interfaith dialogue

Riyadh has pledged to continue making efforts for peace till the world is free of terror and extremism

Mohammed Al-Kinani Jeddah

**In 2007, King Abdullah held a groundbreaking meeting with Pope Benedict XVI.**

A year later, he invited religious scholars, media representatives, academics and intellectuals from around the globe to take part in three-day interfaith talks in Makkah.

During that meeting, the parameters of the discussions Muslims should be having with people of other faiths were outlined.

Since then, Saudi Arabia's efforts to bring peace to the world have not stopped, nor will they end till the globe is free of terrorism and extremism.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said in interviews that he wants to return Saudi Arabia to a "moderate Islam" that is more open to the world and tolerant of other faiths.

In November 2017, King Salman held talks in Riyadh with Lebanon's Maronite Christian Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi.

Both men stressed the importance of the role of all religions and cultures in promoting tolerance,

renouncing violence, extremism and terrorism, and achieving security and peace for the peoples of the region and the world. Al-Rahi later also met the crown prince.

In April this year, the king received at his office at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh the chairman of the Pontifical Council for Interfaith Dialogue at the Vatican, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, and his accompanying delegation.



**We need to widen the circle of interfaith dialogue between societies in order to spread acquaintance.**

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Ghamdi  
Islamic researcher

During the meeting, they again stressed the important role that followers of all religions and cultures have to play in renouncing violence, extremism and terrorism, and achieving global security and stability.

In March, Crown Prince Mohammed met political and



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman says he wants to return Saudi Arabia to a 'moderate Islam' that is more open and tolerant of other faiths. SPA

religious leaders on the second day of his landmark visit to the UK. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion of millions of Christians, received the crown prince at Lambeth Palace in central London, where the two men talked for an hour.

They also viewed a selection of early texts from the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths, including fragments of a Qur'an manuscript found in a Birmingham University library in 2015, which are thought to be among the world's oldest.

The crown prince extended an invitation to the archbishop to visit

Saudi Arabia, according to senior sources at the Saudi Embassy in the UK and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

They added that the meeting had been "very positive and very pleasant."

Three weeks later, the crown prince met several US religious

leaders in New York.

During those meetings, the crown prince stressed the importance of respect between followers of all religions and the need to promote the positive values of coexistence and tolerance.

A few days before his trip to the UK, the crown prince met Coptic Pope Tawadros II at Cairo's largest cathedral, and invited Egyptian Christians to visit Saudi Arabia, saying that all Coptic Christians are welcome.

Meanwhile, the secretary-general of the Muslim World League, Mohammed bin Abdul Karim Al-Issa, and the Vatican's Cardinal Tauran signed a cooperation agreement in April for achieving common objectives.

Islamic researcher Sheikh Ahmed Al-Ghamdi said interfaith dialogue is a necessary human, religious and cultural endeavor



that will help to curb terrorism and extremism.

A former president of the Makkah branch of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice — sometimes referred to in the media as the "religious police" — he believes that such discussions should be widened to include more followers of other religions to ease hostilities and thwart terrorism, sectarianism and racism.

"We need to widen the circle of interfaith dialogue between societies in order to spread acquaintance, create rapprochement and correct the distorted image of Islam," he said.

"Dialogue between followers of all the divinely revealed religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — can bring peace to the world. Moreover, talking with followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and other religions can also widen the space for peace.

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ENTERTAINMENT

## Big-screen business in Saudi Arabia will be billion-dollar industry by 2030

Jennifer Bell Dubai

The big-screen business in Saudi Arabia will be a billion-dollar industry by 2030, according to experts, as regional and global movie operators queue up for a ticket into the Kingdom's hugely profitable movie market.

Saudi Arabia is expected to amass the largest share of the cinema business in the Arabian Gulf region by 2030, with hundred of cinemas and thousands of screens set to open across the Kingdom over the next 12 years.

Within months of Saudi Arabia formally ending a 35-year-long ban on cinemas, three cinema operation licenses were awarded to operate in the Kingdom, the first was to AMC Theaters, an American chain owned and operated by Wanda Group. It opened the Kingdom's first modern cinema on April 18 and plans to open around 40 cinemas in 15 cities in Saudi Arabia over the next five years, and between 50 to 100 cinemas in about 25 cities by 2030.

Shortly after, the second license was awarded to VOX Cinemas, now one of Saudi Arabia's biggest movie operators. It plans to open 600 screens in Saudi Arabia in the next five years, the same number of screens as the company's regional footprint combined.

In July, it was announced the third license had been awarded to the Al-Rashed United Group — Empire Cinema — which plans to build 30 theaters in the country over



Saudi Arabia is expected to become a significant box office market. AFP

the next three years. And last month, a fourth license was awarded to Lux Entertainment Co., which plans to open 300 cinemas across the Kingdom within five years.

VOX, which plans to open 80 new screens over the next 12 months, says the Kingdom will form half of its overall revenues in the Middle East over the next five years.

"Saudi has huge opportunities and is expected to become a significant box office market worth \$1 billion (SR3.75 billion)," said



### FASTFACT

**AMC Theatres plans to open around 40 cinemas in 15 cities in Saudi Arabia over the next five years, and between 50 to 100 cinemas in about 25 cities by 2030.**

Cameron Mitchell, CEO of Majid Al-Futtaim Cinemas, of which VOX Cinemas is a subsidiary. He said the Kingdom's box-office market is expected to become "one of the largest" in the world, with a majority of its 32-million population under the age of 30. "The market is massive and full of opportunities as the population is young and enthusiastic about cinema."

Will Saudi Arabia ever host the world premiere of a Hollywood movie? No one's saying right now, but with such a covetable box-office market, it may only be a matter of time.





Saudi employees have impressed me with their professionalism, their drive and their passion.  
Glenn Lovell



# Saudi Arabia National Day

NEW PERSPECTIVE

## Saudi Arabia's road to profound changes, in the eyes of outsiders

Ameera Abid Jeddah

As the National Day of Saudi Arabia approaches, the people of the Kingdom gear up in green to celebrate it. As excited as Saudi nationals are, expats living in the country also play their part in celebrating National Day. Arab News made contact with some expats in Saudi Arabia to hear

an outsider's view on the transforming country. A 66-year-old Yemeni expat living here for half a century, Salman has seen changes occur in front of his very eyes, "All the changes are moving toward a better Kingdom, for the perfect effect we will need to wait 10 or 15 more years." He added: "Saudi Arabia is a country rich in resources. All its

resources mixed with modern methods can really take the country somewhere." Sarmad Hassan from Pakistan, who has lived in the Kingdom for 9 years, says, "The major changes that had a positive impact were cinemas opening and women driving, as these are things the community has been waiting for a long time. "I had expected the changes for

some time now because they were required to make a better country in the long run. "Change is always good, it is usually hard to accept changes when they first happen but with time everything will get back to normal. To carry out the KSA's ambitious welfare and development projects, changes which would add value to the economy are required."

Amin-Al-Mrstani, a Syrian expat living in Saudi Arabia for 33 years, commented: "I never thought that the changes would happen, but they did happen and most of them are good. "The further changes that I would like are to stop the shops closing during prayer time and better maintenance of the main roads and cities, which needs more attention."

KIWIS IN KSA

# How 3 New Zealanders made Riyadh into a new home

Hala Tashkandi Arab News

Over the past few decades, Saudi Arabia has been home to many an international expatriate. And like most foreigners who know little about the country before they visit for the first time, they quickly come to learn that you shouldn't believe everything you hear.

Louise Adam relocated to Saudi Arabia in 1982 to work as a locum dental hygienist at a local public hospital. Now working at a private dental clinic in Riyadh 36 years later, Louise has found a comfortable (and permanent) place for herself in Riyadh. She lives with her two Pomeranian dogs — Besame and Tallulah — and two cats — Lucy and Fico. In her spare time, she tends to her home garden, which is embellished with distinctly Saudi touches. Beneath shady palm fronds and local flowers, she even has a Bedouin tent in the yard. Given that most of the population is under the age of 30, Louise has lived in Saudi Arabia longer than

most Saudis. She has seen the reign of four Saudi kings, witnessed nearly every major expansion of the city of Riyadh, and experienced Saudi Arabia's technological and cultural revolutions. "And it still amazes me, when I see the city, how far it's managed to come in such a short time," she said. "It makes me so excited to think of where it can go." Glenn Lovell, a lawyer, initially relocated to Saudi Arabia for what was supposed to be a two-year period in 2008. However, when that time frame was extended, he asked wife Gaelene to come and join him in Saudi Arabia. The couple have been living in Riyadh since 2010 and have been watching the progression of things in Saudi Arabia with a mix of astonishment and delight. "One of the things I love about Saudi is that when they decide to change something, they can change it practically overnight," Gaelene said, "things like the decision to let women drive. It feels like anything can happen in an instant." Glenn and Gaelene, passionate travelers and enthusiastic desert explorers, have devoted a fair chunk of their free time to exploring the coun-



Glenn and Gaelene are impressed with Saudi Arabia's progress. Photo/Supplied

try. Among their exploits are a visit to the Al-Wahbah Crater, the Mastodon Cave, the Taif Rose Festival, Mada'in Saleh, and other places that Gaelene documents in her blog, "Kiwi Living in Saudi." The two of them can often be found wandering off-road into the desert for what they referred to as "a bit of camping," and don't seem to be worried about getting lost out there. "No GPS required," Glenn said, "it's all instinct." Glenn and Gaelene found themselves pleasantly surprised by the sheer generosity that they have been shown while camping outside the city. Glenn recalled the time they came across a Bedouin man in the desert during their search for the Mastodon Cave, who despite not speaking any English, managed to invite them to his house for dinner and to put them up for the night. In the morning, they were escorted to the cave by members of his household. "And it's happened more than once," Gaelene said, "they feed us, ply us with coffee and dates, give us a place to spend the night if we need it. It's incredible." "Saudi people are the most gener-

ous, hospitable people I think I've ever come across," Louise said. With the ban on women driving lifted, Louise is thrilled to be driving herself to and from work and carrying out her own errands. "The future is bright for Saudi women," she said. "They've got so much potential," Glenn said. "We have a few young Saudi girls at the office who have really impressed me with their professionalism, their drive and their passion." On the subject of Vision 2030, they were keen to offer their perspective on the future of the Kingdom. "To be able to see those things, to see how much things have changed recently, it's amazing to witness," Louise said. "It's extremely different, but I think it's a positive kind of different," Louise said. "Saudi Arabia is right on the brink of a new age. I can't wait to see them prove themselves in the next few years." Life here, however, has not been without its challenges for the three Kiwis. "It's not always been easy," Glenn admitted, "and of course, we've seen problems, but for the most part, we do love it here."

# Only the View Changes

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# Saudi Arabia National Day



The end of driving ban has been crowning achievement so far of Saudi Vision 2030. Women started their engines and hit the roads throughout the Kingdom on June 24, 2018.

## CAREER TARGETS

# Providing a voice for the Kingdom’s Vision

Arab News Jeddah

Arab News journalists reflect on the recent changes in the Kingdom and share their hopes for themselves and the country by the time Vision 2030 is realized



Aisha Fareed

Reporting news in a rapidly changing country is, in itself, an honor. To be part of “The Voice of a Changing Region” is quite an achievement I have carefully shaped and built since 2014, when I joined Arab News as a fresh graduate.

Leading the team of Saudi reporters is a responsibility I never imagined I would assume at a young age, but, somehow, it gives me a better vision of how my career will look by the year 2030. Twelve years from now, I picture myself being a senior managing editor with even greater responsibilities. Although, I am blessed to work with such a dedicated team, I see our family growing and our foreign bureaus expanding.

Another dream I hope to realize by 2030 is to be among the elite, hand-picked journalists who are asked to interview leaders and high-profile figures in the world.

Before I reach my 40s (I will be 39 in 2030), I should also be able to say that, throughout my career, I managed to report the humanitarian stories that usually go unheard, from the least-fortunate places, such as war-torn countries.

A unique aspect of the field of journalism though, is the added benefits in the sense of how well informed I am on world events, which in turn translates heavily to my social development.

The element of spontaneity in this field is also ever present, which can lead to some very interesting travels. My aspirations are being met every day in this job. It is the gift that keeps on giving.



Aseel Bashraheel

proud to be part of the local team who has the ability to report these changes to the rest of the region and the world, helping others to rediscover Saudi Arabia and reshape their ideas and misconceptions.

By the year 2030, I am hoping that with the implementation of the Kingdom's Vision we will be looking at an entirely different Saudi Arabia, and an entirely different universe. I would love to say that being a journalist had always been my dream, but it was not.

However, nothing I worked on before felt this right. I would love to picture myself as a senior editor, walking in to this same office, greeting the same kind faces that smile at me every day, a little older and wiser, and newer faces too, as eager and hungry as I was on my first day to acquire the skills that will enable them to be journalists (in digitized forums that will suit the journalism of the future).



Abdulaziz Alaquil

My aspirations as a journalist by the year 2030 are not so much attributed to any specific goals, such as being recognized with any particular awards or accolades, but rather how this industry offers a platform for continued growth in my self-development.

I believe I am constantly refining both my professional and social skills, which is greatly rewarding to me.

There are plenty of occupations that serve simply as a means to an end in the sense of generating an income.

A unique aspect of the field of journalism though, is the added benefits in the sense of how well informed I am on world events, which in turn translates heavily to my social development.

The element of spontaneity in this field is also ever present, which can lead to some very interesting travels. My aspirations are being met every day in this job. It is the gift that keeps on giving.



Lojien Ben Gassem

Before I became a journalist, I always wanted people to see Saudi Arabia through the eyes of the Saudi citizens. Unfortunately, today's media politics play a huge role in shaping a country, through biased ideas and false assumptions. When Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman revealed Saudi Vision 2030, “The National Transformation Program,” on April 25, 2016, people started to wonder what was happening to the country. Basically, Vision 2030 promises people a better future and better governance, which is raising hopes and expectations among Saudis. That vision led me to become a journalist in particular because people were becoming more curious about Saudi Arabia. Today I get the chance to write about the transformation step by step, by covering events and stories about young Saudi entrepreneurs, artists and empowered women. Therefore, my aspirations as a journalist for the year 2030 are: to help to increase the demand for tourism in Saudi Arabia and create an attractive and welcoming environment for tourists who are interested to get to know the country; to educate Saudis on how to understand and accept other cultures and ethnicities; and to help create a culture that accepts constructive and purposeful criticism.



Deema Al-Khudair

I aspire to be an accomplished journalist who has made a positive impact in the world through her writing. I hope to have had a hand in making a difference by

2030. I wish to have tackled major issues going on in the world by then, and bring a sense of hope, relief and joy to all those I have interviewed and written about, and make a difference in all the forums I will have participated in by 2030.

Being a journalist is a very fulfilling job as you have the chance to give a voice to people and make a difference in their lives. I wish to be recognized as a journalist who made a difference.

I aspire to be a prime example of integrity in this field, make my country and Arab News proud of me, and to learn so much more about the world and how to make it a better place to live in day by day.



Noor Nugali

My first article was published when I was 16 years old. I wanted to change the world and thought if not by actions than most definitely by words, always trusting in the idea that “the pen is mightier than the sword.” Many years have passed, and I still believe this, with a broader understanding that not everything is black and white but different shades of all the colors under the glorious sun.

In the course of just 3 years, the world has witnessed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia start to bear the fruits of its labor through Vision 2030. It has given its people hope, inspiration and, most importantly, a higher purpose that can be achieved.

The reforms we at Arab News have covered show how rapidly things are moving, in the right direction. I feel honored and blessed to not only witness them but to actually be a part of them.

Vision 2030 is a realization that change on a large scale is a team effort that takes millions of believers that share a vision of prosperity and hope.

The inner child in me still believes I can change the world, but this time not alone. It might not be through pen and paper, but more



accurately through a keyboard and a blank Word document.



Ruba Obaid

With the rapid growth of virtual data and the information available online, as well as the fast technological developments, newspapers will mostly disappear by 2030. Even in terms of language, we may invent another word in the near future to describe the new digital interactive news-delivery tool.

News reports will be written by computers, or most of them, which means the concept of competition between competitors in the media industry will change. The more an agency depends on developed technology, the more successful it can be.

In this regard, I predict more competition in producing creative, interactive, entertaining and high-value content that depends on investigative journalism and feature stories, more so than broadcast journalism, which might have less reliance on news reporters and correspondents, and more jobs for people with creative, critical and analytical skills in the media industry. Journalist will need to obtain knowledge in basic journalism, and more in technology, and creative content production.

On the basis of Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030, I would expect the media industry in Saudi Arabia to be more diversified, and prosperous, since the Kingdom is investing a developed digital infrastructure, as well as in the entertainment and sports sectors, and culture and heritage.

## GREETINGS

# Envoys assure Riyadh of full support to achieve KSA’s ambitious goals

Noor Nugali Riyadh

Since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932, it has enjoyed good relations with its neighbors and other countries around the world. Not only do the Saudi people celebrate their country's National Day, but also the expatriates from around the world who live and work in the Kingdom, and the diplomats who serve them.

Ambassadors and other envoys shared with Arab News their thoughts and best wishes to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its people on their National Day.

In a video message, French Ambassador François Gouyette expressed his warmest congratulations.

“Working together with the Saudi people is an honor that my country has embraced since the Kingdom's birth,” he said.

“Dear people of Saudi Arabia, let me assure you of my highest esteem. We will set ambitious goals and achieve them together and I seize this opportunity to express my best wishes for the continuous progress, and prosperity of your Kingdom.”

Ridwan Jadwaat, the newly appointed Australian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said: “I would like to congratulate and extend my sincere best wishes to King Salman and the government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on their National Day.

“Australia recognizes the key role that Saudi Arabia plays in the world, and as a leader in the global Islamic community. We are grateful for the hospitality extended to the thousands of Australian Muslims who perform Hajj and Umrah each year. “Australia and Saudi Arabia enjoy

Over many decades hundreds of thousands of Saudi and American officials, tourists, business representatives, and students have traveled between our countries and in the process have cemented our strong ties.

Christopher Henzel, Chargé d’Affaires US Embassy.

strong commercial ties and growing links between our peoples, including through education and tourism. We look forward to strengthening our collaboration with Saudi Arabia, including in support of Vision 2030 and as Saudi Arabia prepares to host the G20 in 2020. Mabruk.”

Adnan V. Alonto, the ambassador of the Philippines in Riyadh, said the embassy joins the Kingdom in celebrating its 88th National Day.

He added: “Saudi Arabia continues to play a vital role in maintaining peace and stability in the region and in pushing global initiatives that aim to advance the interests of the international community.

These have been made possible by the bold economic and social reforms recently implemented under the Vision 2030 platform.

Christopher Henzel, Chargé d’Affaires at the US Embassy, said: “Our partnership with Saudi Arabia extends from our close security cooperation to our strong relations in business and exchange programs.”

He said: “Together we are working to promote the security and prosperity of both our countries.”

Through our educational and cultural exchange programs, he said, we learn from each other and deepen our partnership.

“Over many decades hundreds of thousands of Saudi and American officials, tourists, business representatives, and students have traveled between our countries and in the process have cemented our strong ties,” he added.