This National Day, we honor those who helped protect not just Saudi Arabia but the world.
The Kingdom vs. COVID-19
Countless medical workers risked their lives in hospitals and clinics across Saudi Arabia since the coronavirus disease hit the Kingdom in March. Here are a few of the courageous staff from around the Kingdom, many of whom were themselves infected as they battled the disease.
How KSA kept the virus at bay

For its peak in June, Saudi Arabia’s daily number of new cases has dropped below 500

Jonathan Rashad, London

At the height of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, June 7 was a day to remember for Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom’s disease tally peaked at 4,919, deaths climbed to 58, and gatherings were cancelled. For the Saudi people, it was an appropriately somber day — for that was the day its number one enemy, COVID-19, broke the back of the Kingdom. After that, slowly but surely, life in the country began to return to normal.

In future, however, June 7 might be seen as an appropriate date for the people of the Kingdom to remember their nation’s epic battle against the scourge that brought the world to its knees — but that was the price of daily new cases peaked. At the time, the day’s tally of 4,919 seemed daunting. In fact, the rule of 100 had little in favor of the Kingdom. After that, slowly but surely the number began to drop. From an all-time peak on March 2, Saudi Arabia had brought the back of the pandemic in just 107 days.

COVID-19: Regional measures in 2020

Saudi Arabia acted quicker than most other countries in the world to set up borders, and restrict movement and gatherings. This year the decision was taken on Feb. 24, in less than 48 hours. The Kingdom announced a ban on all pilgrims, including foreign pilgrims. The Kingdom also announced a ban on all international flights by March 15. Restrictions on pilgrims continued and imposed on March 5 onward. Over the next five months more than five million 5 million pilgrims were barred from entering the Kingdom.

Information campaigns

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COVID-19 Follow-up

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Saudi Arabia was keenly aware of the costs of inaction. In January, Saudi Arabia rushed to inoculate its residents. On Feb. 27, the number of daily cases peaked at 58.

We were luckier than many other countries, Dr. Wael Alhejji observed. “Saudi Arabia’s decision to halt the virus was better prepared than many countries for what was coming. A 24-hour round the clock drive was implemented to inoculate all residents. As a result, the country’s number of cases dropped to 58. As a result, the number of daily cases peaked at 58.

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Such technology would also play a vital role in the management of Haj. As the custodian of Islam’s holiest sites, the Saudi government was keenly aware of the consequences for itself, the region, and the entire planet if it failed to manage the pilgrimage effectively. This year the decision was taken to limit numbers to around 7,000, selected from nationals and foreign residents already in the country. Careful screening, monitoring and management were to ensure that, in this remarkable year, Haj passed off without a single case of COVID-19.

The Kingdom’s battle against the virus has been led from the very top. On March 18, King Salman addressed the nation on television. The Kingdom, he said, “continues to take all precautionary measures to confront this pandemic and limit its effects. We depend on the guidance of God Almighty, then on deploying our full capabilities, supported by your strong determination to face adversity with the steadfastness of believers at the frontlines. Neither Saudi Arabia nor the world is out of the woods yet. But as the global daily tally of cases continues to rise, hitting a record high of over 180,000 on Sept. 11, for a total of 3.2 million cases and 195,372 deaths, so Saudi Arabia’s daily infection curve continues to shrink, even as restrictions have been relaxed and life in the country has begun to return to normal.

On Sunday, the number of daily new cases dropped below 500 for the first time in five months. As Ministry of Health spokesperson Dr. Mohammed Al-Daly Al-Daly said ‘We witness the fruits of our labor today.’ The huge improvement was thanks to everyone’s effort.

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EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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A national preparedness and response plan was in place early in January, long before the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed, and the right decisions were taken to be implemented promptly and in a coordinated manner," he said.

El-Ziq noted that the Saudi government had quickly distributed additional hospital beds andried and engaged with communities through social media and other digital platforms, stressing the importance of staying at home, the need to observe social distancing, and the importance of hand washing and face masks.

"The Kingdom was not only prepared in Saudi Arabia, but also in more than 15 other countries to reach the whole population," he added.

Under the chairmanship of King Salman, the ministerial, G20 Leader Summit was held in March to discuss preparedness and response to the world was facing due to the pandemic. "

Addressing the leaders of the G20 member states and invited guests, the king said: "The impact of this pandemic has spread to reach the global economy, financial markets, trade and global supply chains, hampering growth and development and reversing the gains accomplished to the previous years. This human crisis requires a global response. The world counts on us to come together and cooperate in order to face this challenge."

As the coordinating president of the G20, Saudi Arabia played a leading role in obtaining pledges from the G20 countries totaling $250 million to fund the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) for the global fight against COVID-19. The Kingdom itself, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offered $100 million to the SPRP to support national, regional, and global efforts.

In addition, during the early March days of the pandemic, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief), the country’s international relief agency, made a $100 million donation to the WHO to implement urgent measures to minimize the global spread of the disease and support countries with vulnerable or unstable health care systems with their preparation and response.

KSrelief provided an additional $15 million to the WHO’s national offices in Yemen to purchase critical medical supplies and equipment, including personal protective equipment for health workers, laboratory tests, and trauma medications, to support the country’s readiness to respond to COVID-19.

In all, Saudi Arabia has to date provided $103 million to the WHO to combat the pandemic. The prominent role that the Kingdom has and will continue to play, through its G20 leadership and national institutions is expected to only strengthen its partnership with the WHO.

El-Ziq said Saudi Arabia had always collaborated with the organization to promote health in the Kingdom as well as in other countries. "The strong relationship continues as well in the current pandemic, with a number of activities taking place. Seven Saudi hospitals have participated in an international study supported by the WHO to identify the most effective treatment for COVID-19."

He added that the Saudi Ministry of Health had immediately designated 25 hospitals and hospitals with, including 6,100 inpatient beds and 31,000 beds, for the treatment of COVID-19 cases.

"When needed, more facilities were added, for example, building a 600-bed field hospital in Makkah and Madinah, and later a 550-bed hospital in jeddah. (J.C) beds across the country were increased by approximately 2,200 in the past three months. Also, 323 Tawam clinics were provided across the country as dedicated clinics for COVID-19."

Through the campaign, the country has vaccinated more than 80% of the population, and the efforts are still ongoing.

"As the rotating president of the G20, Saudi Arabia played a leading role in obtaining pledges from the G20 countries totaling $250 million to fund the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) for the global fight against COVID-19."

For the purposes of the Saudi government, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) and the Saudi people, I would like to thank the government for its continued and extensive support for the WHO’s efforts and programs.

Saudi Arabia has been among the first to step forward and enable us to continue our activities, as we provide life-saving supplies in millions of displaced people, strengthen education systems, train and employ needed personnel, maintain critical health programs, and fight chronic and communicable diseases, saving millions of lives."

"Since its foundation, the Kingdom has demonstrated that great things are possible through spirit, commitment, solidarity and action. It has undergone a transformation while building bridges of friendship with neighboring states and beyond. I look forward to seeing further achievements in years to come.

"As we believe that collective strength, unity, cooperation and participation are vital to tackle the many challenges that confront us. Only by working together can we foster development, peace and progress and realize our vision of ‘Health for All, in All’ in our region.

"We must once again express the WHO’s appreciation for Saudi Arabia’s wise leadership and compassionate people. As we celebrate Saudi National Day with you, we are confident that the Kingdom will continue to play a key role in supporting the whole human community, leading the enhancement of the region.

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Of all the extraordinary images beamed around the world from this year’s unprecedented Hajj, it was the time-lapse footage of pilgrims circumambulating the Kaaba with carefully choreographed, socially distanced precision that best captured the spirit of Saudi Arabia’s determination to tackle the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic effectively, efficiently and on its own terms.

With responsibility for the health of millions of pilgrims who visit each year, and by extension for the wellbeing of the nations from which they come, it was clear from the start of the pandemic that Saudi Arabia was not going to take any chances with its management of the fifth pillar of Islam. On Feb. 27, before a single case of COVID-19 had been detected in the Kingdom, Saudi Arabia announced it was suspending overseas ‘visas’ for Umrah, the lesser pilgrimage, and closing the holy sites to foreigners.

On March 17, Saudi Arabia took the unprecedented but necessary step of temporarily closing all places of worship but for the Two Holy Mosques in Makkah and Madinah. Three days later, those too went shut.

Meanwhile, Muslims around the world waited anxiously to see how the Kingdom would manage Hajj in this most extraordinary of years. It seemed impossible that Hajj would not go ahead in some form, but much was at stake.

In 2018, 2.5 million pilgrims converged on Makkah for Hajj, among them 1.5 million from overseas, and the prospect of potentially sending large numbers home with the virus to dozens of countries around the world was unthinkable.

In the end, Saudi Arabia settled on a historic compromise. On June 23, the government announced that Hajj would go ahead, but with only a “very limited” symbolic number of pilgrims allowed to take part, a decision taken in consultation with a number of other countries whose governments had decided to cancel their Hajj missions in light of the pandemic.

In a statement, Dr. Mohammed Saleh Zaman, minister of Hajj and Umrah, said the decision had been taken to limit numbers to just 1,000 pilgrims, chosen from all over the world, and that each one would be mandatorily sterilized and issued a bracelet while performing Hajj.

Throughout Hajj, 51 clinics, five hospitals and a mobile medical unit were ready to treat pilgrims, with no fewer than 100 ambulances and thousands of healthcare professionals on standby.

The Grand Mosque itself has been cleaned 10 times a day during the pandemic crisis.

On the eve of Hajj, at the 46th Grand Hajj Symposium on July 28, Zaman said the Kingdom was “born to ensure that the 40th pillar of Islam is performed in a secure, healthy and safe manner, along with the great care of those who will be able to attend and perform Hajj.”

Sheikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, the head of the Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques, stressed the importance of adhering to the preventive instructions and measures adopted by the government, which include paying attention to medicine and mental health, working against myths and working to implement the Prophetic (PBUH) hadith.

For Islamic Affairs Minister Sheikh Abdulfadl Al-Sheikh, the wisdom of the Islamic Shariah attached “great importance to the safety of worshippers and seeks to protect them from any harm while praying and performing their religious duties.”

Saudi Arabia’s long experience of imposing strict protective measures to guard pilgrims against the possibility of contagious disease helped to ensure that 2020 passed without a hitch. In 2018, for example, when 2.5 million pilgrims performed Hajj, there were no public health issues. In the end, not a single case of COVID-19 emerged during Hajj, a public health victory for the state that belonged also to the pilgrims, whose behavior and adherence to the new rules was exemplary.
Saudi Arabia unites the world against the pandemic

O ur current priority is overcoming the pandemic and its health, social and economic impact," said Prince Faisal bin Salman Al-Saud, minister of state for foreign affairs, in an address to the G20 Leaders’ Summit on Sept. 21: "We will overcome this. We will protect human life, restore global economic stability, and lay out solid foundations for strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth."

The statement expressed the determination of the G20’s 20 member countries to protect jobs and incomes, restore confidence, preserve financial stability, promote recovery, minimize disruption to trade and global supply chains, providing help to Israels and bordering countries, enhancing global cooperation in fighting the pandemic and its impact are of the utmost priority. The effects on the G20’s 20 member countries in terms of health, economic, international development and financial measures are several key areas, the most important of which is international collaboration in developing vaccines for COVID-19, ensuring equitable and fair access to vaccines for everyone while taking into account the needs of poor and low-income countries, and drawing on the lessons learned from this pandemic to ensure a better future in the face of health and economic challenges." "We are one world and we are one community, and we must work together to support each other through this crisis," said Faisal, adding that the G20 summit was held in line with the 2020 theme of global cooperation now more than ever, and encouraged multilateral efforts to achieve greater harmonization in terms of health, economic, international development and financial measures. The meeting again emphasized that global cooperation was essential in overcoming the pandemic and its impact on the world. International collaboration and cooperation will guide the world towards a solution to this crisis. Optimism and hope will continue to walk towards a better future, in which every day will be safer.
Saudi Arabia unites the world against the pandemic

Saudi Arabia is working with global partners, including China and Russia.
As part of its efforts to contain the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, Saudi Arabia launched a set of new applications, as well as improving existing ones, to provide various health care services to its residents.

The apps that helped keep Saudis safe

The Kingdom launched new digital services, and improved existing ones, to help tackle the pandemic by the National Information Center and launched in April, provided a number of important services, including accessing temporary permits. Users surpassed 7 million over four months, with three new services added this month including an alert status, safe gathering management and dependent care for adults to monitor children. Users can also report suspected cases of COVID-19, with the app available in English, Arabic, Bengali, Filipino, Hindi, Indonesian and Urdu. The MOH launched the Tabaud app in June to help people identify cases in proximity to them, by sending encrypted data to smartphones running the app, using Bluetooth technology to detect other nearby smartphones with it. Sehhaty enables users to access medical e-services provided by different organizations, including COVID-19 test booking and prescription tracking. It also promotes a healthy lifestyle through an integrated steps tracker. Other systems activated include the 937 health care number and the Seha and Mawid apps, launched in 2017, to allow users to receive medical consultations from accredited specialists, and to book appointments at public health centers. By September, the number of 937 calls grew to 17.73 million, while Seha app downloads exceeded 1.5 million.

**WHAT THE APPS DO**

**TETAMMAN**
Allows users to book appointments for COVID-19 tests and enables regular follow-ups on cases through daily check-ins to report symptoms.

**TAWAKKALNA**
Shows users’ health status, allows them to obtain movement permissions and report suspected cases or any potentially infected gatherings.

**TABAUD**
Tracks the spread of COVID-19 infections, allowing users to know confidentially, if they have been in contact with any positive cases.

**SEHHTAY**
Provides access to health information and medical e-services offered by different health organizations in the Kingdom.

**APP NUMBERS**

- **17.73m** people have received medical consultations through the 937 number.
- **1.9m** people visited Tetamman clinics.
- **2.7m** people have had COVID-19 tests through Takkad drive-through stations.
- **7m** people have used the Tawakkalna app.
Of the 6,000 or so Saudi doctors currently living across 41 countries on medical fellowship programs, many continue to do their part in fighting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

These doctors have shown gritty determination in combating COVID-19 alongside colleagues from around the world. A substantial percentage of them refuse to leave despite the dangers, remaining in the countries where they are studying to help their colleagues in the battle.

Dr. Abdullah Boqays, a fellow working as a dermatologist in Trondheim, Norway told Arab News that 2020 has been a frightening year for many medical workers.

“Doctors with various specialities have fought since the start of the pandemic, especially the ones dealing directly with infected patients - not only while working in hospitals, which make them more vulnerable than others in terms of infection, but also while dealing with patients who suffer from a weakened immune system,” he said.

Boqays told Arab News that the staff in his department, working on skin tumors and dermatology, have had to deal with follow-ups and consultations with visiting skin cancer patients, many of whom are at advanced stages of the disease or have weakened immune systems due to chemotherapy or immunosuppressants.

Tumor removal surgeries have continued despite the pandemic, Boqays said. “The work environment, as well as behavioral and ethical practices, obliges us to continue the treatment, regardless of the reasons and methods used. Delaying chemotherapy drugs, administering immunosuppressors or not performing curative surgeries might have disastrous consequences for patients. We rely on God first, take the necessary precautionary measures to meet the demands of patients, support them and please their parents,” he added.

“Even though we are far from our precious country, we are at peace because our government - under the leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman - supports us and cares for Saudi abroad,” Dr. Boqays said.

Dr. Abdullah Mohsain, a psychiatrist resident at the Skane University Hospital in Malmo, has been in Sweden since 2014. “There are more than 50 Saudi doctors on a medical fellowship program, working in various specialties in different cities, and most of them were on the frontline in the Swedish health system,” he said.

“Some of my colleagues were infected with COVID-19, and quickly returned to their post in hospitals after they recovered. The work achieved by Saudi doctors in Sweden was and is still appreciated here.”

Sweden made headlines for its soft strategy in combating the pandemic. “The government did not close down shops, restaurants or cafes, and did not impose a quarantine for its citizens and residents. The decision had major consequences at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden,” Mohsain said.

“The mortality rate was one of the highest in Europe, which was difficult on the health system,” Mohsain said. “I hope that the Saudi doctors played an important role in the face of this challenge.”

During the pandemic, Mohsain has been working in the psychiatric emergency department. He noted the psychological effect on individuals, and noted that on those who lost loved ones. “Psychological support and treatment for those who need it is very important, especially in such difficult circumstances,” he said.

Dr. Abdullah Alhogeir, a nephrologist surgeon specialized in kidney and urinary tract diseases, has been living in France for the past seven years as part of a Saudi French fellowship program. “Similar to other countries, France fought COVID-19 very effectively in the beginning, which required suspending non-urgent medical activities. This had a major effect on the workflow, as we followed remote procedures at clinics, canceled non-urgent operations, rescheduled surgeries, canceled clinics and followed other procedures that required our constant presence and readiness to help in departments combating the virus such as the emergency department, performing many account surgeries during that time,” Alhogeir said.

“Blue skies are the Kingdom’s embassies and constant communication during this period. ‘I pray to God to protect us and help us return to our country safely, in order to serve it with all our learning and knowledge,'” he said.

Even though we are far from our precious country, we are at peace because - under the leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman - supports us and cares for Saudi abroad. Dr. Abdullah Boqays

SAUDI DOCTORS AROUND THE WORLD

More than 6,000 Saudi doctors are currently living across 41 countries on medical fellowship programs, many continue to do their part in fighting the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) pandemic.

MODHAYAN: FIGHTING COVID-19 IN SWEDEN

The King's embassy in Denmark has been in touch with the G20 presidency to stress the need for the leaders to initiate strong countermeasures to combat the pandemic and mitigate the effects of a long and devastating economic recession. The countries in Denmark and Saudi Arabia reacted rapidly to the pandemic with drastic measures such as full lockdowns and social distancing measures, which resulted in reduced demand, Danish and Saudi doctors have responded and resumed their normal working hours. The Saudi doctors have halted their month-long break, and are working overtime and weekend shifts.

“The day the pandemic hit us was crucial. One of the major initiatives by Saudi Arabia towards making contributions in renewable energy was to sign a deal with the Danish company VESTAS to deliver wind turbines for a 400 MW wind farm in Dumah Al-Saud. The wind energy farm will become Saudi Arabia’s first utility-scale wind energy source. I am excited to follow up on the development and I am looking forward to witnessing the Danish wind turbines spin in northern Saudi Arabia in 2021.”

Covid-19

Saudi Arabia's G20 presidency has created significant international attention.

Saudi Arabia is one of the first countries to introduce the concept of “Saudi Arabic Women's Forum” and it has been the launching pad for several Saudi women's initiatives. It is the only country that has been able to see the emergence of women in leading and managing positions, as well as female entrepreneurs.

Democrat has decades of experience with high participation rates in the labor market and has benefited Denmark in terms of economic growth, productivity and sustained innovation.

I look forward to follow the preparations for the upcoming G20 summit in November 2020, which will mark a new phase for the leaders’ good work in achieving results on many important global issues such as COVID-19, green economy and social security for women.

In conclusion, allow me to share my best wishes for a joyful and happy Saudi National Day on Sept. 23. With yet another another busy year behind us, I am looking forward to the coming year, and the new opportunities it will bring for France and Saudi Arabia.
Saudi Arabia has shown strong leadership in dealing with COVID-19, as president of the G20, and by contributing to a new vaccine against COVID-19. It has also demonstrated strong leadership by reducing the number of pilgrims last year.

Ole Emil Moesby
Danish Ambassador

The decision taken by the authorities to limit access to the holy sites for Hajj and Umrah to a very small number of people has been difficult, but a necessary one to prevent the spread of COVID-19. I salute the courage of the authorities for having taken such a measure.

Dominique Mineur
Belgian Ambassador

I would like to commend the efforts of the Kingdom in handling the pandemic, particularly the benevolent gesture of King Salman in providing free medical treatment to expatriates, including Pakistanis suffering from COVID-19.

Raja Ali Ejaz
Pakistani Ambassador

Saudi Arabia's progress is exemplified in its leadership of the G20. Throughout its presidency year, Saudi Arabia has convened leaders of the world's most prosperous nations to address global problems—like the health and financial consequences of COVID.

Niclas Trouvé
Swedish Ambassador

I would like to mention the frontline health care workers who worked so hard to keep people safe during this COVID-19 pandemic. I would also like to mention all the officials and the staff who helped keep pilgrims safe during this year's limited Hajj.

Ridwaan Jadwat
Australian Ambassador

Let me congratulate Saudi Arabia for its successful presidency of the G20, a work carried out under very challenging conditions due to the pandemic. I would like to extend our warm gratitude to all the brave health workers who saved many lives and provided care.

John Abizaid
US Ambassador

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John Abizaid
US Ambassador
How virus strengthened ties between China and Saudi Arabia

Chinese ambassador says the Kingdom offered support at ‘the critical time’

The ambassador also congratulated King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi government and its people on Saudi Arabia’s 90th National Day. “No matter how the international landscape may change, China always views Saudi Arabia as a good friend, a good partner and a good brother, and sticks to maintaining and developing the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Saudi Arabia,” Chen said.

Chen Weiqing, China’s ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and his wife Zhang Yuwei celebrate Saudi National Day. Supplied

Thank You to the Frontline Heroes

For many years, we’ve had the privilege of being here alongside you, facing ups and downs along the way, but always positively facing the possibilities beyond the horizon.

When this pandemic arrived, few could imagine the tragic cost to life and health, along with the drastic changes to our everyday life and work.

But many, many more of us know that we live in a country where heroes live.

Whilst we’re all working hard to find our new normal, the work against COVID-19 is far from done for frontline heroes. It’s still at the very forefront of their day to day routine.

Aquafina’s new Thank You pack across the Kingdom is a token of appreciation in recognition of the efforts of our everyday heroes, who stepped up when called for. These heroes continue to play an important role in moving us forward and keep us all safe.

Thank You to the Ministry of Health, the dedicated nurses and the determined doctors.

Thank You to the frontline heroes – delivery drivers, production line employees – who showed us what true commitment was, especially during lockdown.

We have been proud to lead with purpose in these turbulent times, and we are comforted by the fact that we are in the great company of so many heroes who lead with purpose too.

A Thank You is sometimes the easiest thing to do in the hardest times. It is also so important, so necessary and so well deserved.

Our sincere thanks to Saudi Arabia’s frontline heroes
Ministry of Commerce put in place a number of measures to help firms weather the financial effects of COVID-19

1 The business sector
The government mitigated the pandemic’s economic impact on the private sector, deferring charges for commercial certificates for more than 116 businesses. The ministry also formed ad-hoc committees across the country to guarantee continuity of services. Ministry spokesman Abdulrahman Al-Hussain said the ministry assigned employees to carry out different transactions for businesses, sparing citizens the trouble of physically visiting branches. The employees contacted business owners and finalized all procedures remotely.

2 Consumer protection and availability of products
The ministry ran over 400,000 inspection visits to ensure that products were available. “We communicated directly with the suppliers and distributors of the basic commodities and monitored how much inventory they held and made sure they had ample inventory and resolved any issues faced by suppliers and distributors,” Al-Hussain said, adding the ministry tightened control on markets, outlets, warehouses and wholesalers to keep prices stable. An electronic system was established to monitor prices of food items, and over 30,000 penalties were given to people for price manipulation and other offences. The ministry also increased call-center employee numbers to help people with complaints.

3 Coordination with government authorities
Al-Hussain said the ministry continuously coordinated with the Ministry of Health and the Saudi Food and Drug Authority to ensure availability of ample quantities of sanitizers and face masks, while more than 21 million face masks and sanitizers were confiscated from different stores and outlets for price manipulation. The ministry coordinated with the General Authority for Competition to investigate monopolistic and exploitative practices during the pandemic. It also coordinated with the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture to ensure no shortages of essential food items, and to encourage local producers to increase production.

4 E-commerce
Al-Hussain said the ministry worked with the Communications and Information Technology Commission to link hypermarkets and pharmacies with 32 phone delivery apps, and to launch a campaign encouraging the general public to make use of them. The ministry also worked closely with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to find urgent solutions to the challenges facing shipping and delivery companies. Al-Hussain said the approach “resulted in great success. The ministry and other agencies worked together to ensure there were few stores and outlets and the largest inventory in the Middle East.”