

## Saudi Arabia national day

## Continuing to improve the lives of our people, region

Abdulaziz Turkistani  
AMBASSADOR OF SAUDI ARABIA

On the occasion of our 83rd national day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I would like to present my most sincere and heartfelt regards to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family and the government and people of Japan.

On this date, history recorded the birth of a strong sovereign state on the land of the Arabian Peninsula; a colossal country that utilizes means of development. For more than two decades, King Abdulaziz Al Saud,



Prince Miqren bin Abdulaziz Al Saud



King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud



Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

the founder of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, made tireless efforts into creating a modern country with all facets of de-

velopment and security needs in place. Building modern networks of roads and highways connecting cities and towns, schools and hospitals dotted every town and village in the country. All historians agree that the evolution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in our modern history.

This year marks the eighth anniversary of the ascension to the throne of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. Many accomplishments were witnessed in the last few years, including the expansion of the Two Holy Mosques, the construction and distribution of additional housing units, the allocation of a huge budget for education, and the promotion and development of health services. King Abdullah is always committed to promoting peace and attempting to stave off human injustice everywhere. Since King Abdullah is known for his care of the people and his commitment to improving their lives, all people inside and outside the kingdom have sensed the Saudi people's love of King Abdullah, who is the leader caring for his homeland, religion and our relations with other people and nations.

King Abdullah has made a series of recent changes within the government. In January 2013, royal orders were issued to amend the Shura Council (Consultative Council) mandating that no less than 20 percent of the council's members will be women. Out of 150 members, 30 females were chosen by the King according to their knowledge, experience and profession.

Saudi Arabia is the largest free market in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region's 400 million-strong population, with 25 percent of the total Arab gross domestic product (GDP). One of the world's 20 largest economies, and No. 1 in the MENA region, Saudi Arabia is ranked 22nd out of 185 countries in overall Ease of Doing Business, according to the International Finance Corp./World Bank's "Doing Business" report in 2013. Moreover, the kingdom is one of the fastest-growing countries in the world, with per capita income forecast to rise from \$25,000 in 2012 to \$33,500 by 2020.

According to the Central Department of Statistics and information (CDSI), GDP is estimated to reach 2.7274 trillion Saudi riyals (\$727.3 billion) in current prices in 2012, reflecting a growth of 8.6 percent compared to 2011. The private sector is esti-

ated to grow by 11.5 percent in current prices in 2012. According to preliminary data from SAMA, the trade balance is estimated to record a surplus of SR1,005 trillion (\$268 billion) in 2012, an increase of 10 percent compared to last year. Standard & Poor's confirmed Saudi Arabia's sovereign rating at AA-. Such reports continue to encourage international corporations to invest in Saudi Arabia as it continues to grow its non-petroleum assets.

Total revenues are projected to be SR1,2395 trillion (\$330.5 billion) in 2012 and expenditures to be SR853 billion (\$227.5 billion). This year, budget appropriations will continue to focus on an investment program that enhances strong long-term sustainable economic growth and employment opportunities for citizens. Specifically, the focus will be on education, health, social services, security

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Strengthening ties: H.R.H. Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who is the deputy prime minister and minister of defense of Saudi Arabia, holds talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on April 30 in Riyadh during Abe's visit to Saudi Arabia. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA



Monumental: The King Abdullah Clock Tower in Makkah (Mecca) houses the world's tallest minaret, made of gold, and the largest clock face and man-made crescent. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA



Historical stage: It was at the Masmak Fort that the recapture of Riyadh, led by Ibn Saud, occurred in 1902. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THE PEOPLE OF  
THE KINGDOM OF  
SAUDI ARABIA  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE 83rd ANNIVERSARY OF  
THEIR NATIONAL DAY



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# Saudi Arabia national day

## Promoting cultural exchanges, strengthening ties

Hiromasa Yonekura  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-SAUDI ARABIA  
SOCIETY

On this auspicious occasion of the 83rd anniversary of the National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I would like to offer on behalf of the Japan-Saudi Arabia Society our best wishes to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, His Excellency Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Japan Abdulaziz Abdulsattar Turkistani and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In April this year, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Saudi Arabia. It was his second time — Prime Minister Abe visited the kingdom in 2007 as well, during his first stint as prime minister — and in the summit meeting with Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in Jeddah, he expressed high aspirations to further strengthen and expand Japan-Saudi Arabia relations. The visit testifies to the strong awareness of Prime Minister Abe and the Japanese government that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of Japan's most important partners.

The prime minister proposed in the summit meeting that Japan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia work together to build a multi-layered partnership embracing not only the ties in the field of natural resources and energy but also cooperation on other various fronts — from defense to infrastructure development, agriculture, medical care, the environment and human resource development. The two



Urban center: Situated in the center of the Arabian Peninsula, Riyadh is the capital and largest city of Saudi Arabia. KHALID KHIDR

leaders agreed on the need to enhance Japan-Saudi Arabia relations in a wide range of areas, and their Joint Statement on the Strengthening of the Comprehensive Partnership between Japan and Saudi Arabia was issued, while the Japan-Saudi Arabia Investment Agreement was signed. We in the Japanese business community sincerely hope that these results will add momentum to the efforts to expand economic and industrial cooperation between Japan and the kingdom.

In March this year, His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, deputy minister of defense, made an official

visit to Japan. On the occasion, Prince Khalid met with Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera and exchanged views on current situations in East Asia, the Middle East and other regions, while also paying Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida courtesy calls.

Prince Khalid is the eldest son of late Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, then minister of transportation, who came all the way from the kingdom to Tokyo to deliver a congratulatory address at the inauguration of the Japan-Saudi Arabia Society in 1960. It gave us at the society great pleasure and warmed our hearts that, 53 years after the

memorable first visit by Crown Prince Sultan to Japan, we had the opportunity to welcome his son Prince Khalid here in Tokyo. At the welcome reception hosted by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Japan, I, on behalf of the society, asked Prince Khalid

to continue to provide his generous support for the effort to further enhance Japan-Saudi Arabia relations, like his great father.

Since its inception, the Japan-Saudi Arabia Society has been working on various projects to promote cultural exchange with

Saudi Arabia, including Arabic language courses, with the aim of strengthening the ties of Japan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and enhancing the understanding in Japan of Islam and Arabic culture. In March this year, we sponsored the photo exhibition "Pray & Mosque," featuring the works of Saudi photographer Khalid Khidr, who has received prestigious awards at home and abroad. In addition, we published in July "To Live in Japan according to the Essence of Islam" — the second volume of the research paper series "To Live by the Islamic Law in Japan" by Kou Nakata and others — and "Journeys of Desert Peninsula: History and Climate of Saudi Arabia," a collection of essays written by Shunji Takahashi about his experience of traveling across Saudi Arabia while he lived in the kingdom for 18 years. At the Japan-Saudi Arabia Society we will continue to work through these activities to deepen mutual understanding between the two countries.

Last but not least, I pray for the peace and prosperity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and sincerely offer my best wishes to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah, H.R.H. Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and H.E. Ambassador Abdulaziz Abdulsattar Turkistani for good health and happiness.

## Heartland of Islam embraces all races, cultures

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services, municipal services, water and water treatment services, roads and highways. Moreover, the budget attaches particular attention to science and technology projects and e-government.

In terms of education, total expenditure amounts to SR204 billion (\$54.4 billion), representing 25 percent of fiscal year 2013 appropriations and an increase of 21 percent over FY2012 appropriations. With regard to the scholarship program, the total number of students studying abroad reached over 120,000 students, excluding their dependents who are also supported by the government, with expenditures amounting to more than SR21.6 billion (\$5.8 billion). The number of Saudi students in Japan rose to more than 500 in 2013.

With one-quarter of the world's known oil reserves and 18 percent of world production, Saudi Arabia is the world's leading exporter of oil. It has utilized oil revenues to expand and diversify the economy to reduce its dependence on oil. Aware of its influential role in the international oil market, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has sought to ensure market stability in order to safeguard the interests of both producers and consumers and promote global economic growth. International organizations acknowledged the kingdom as an important source of financial assistance and remittances for developing countries.

Islam, one of the world's great monotheistic religions, has Saudi Arabia as its heartland. The followers of Islam, called Muslims,

believe in God — in Arabic, Allah — and that Muhammad is His Prophet. Today, the worldwide community of Muslims, which embraces the people of many races and cultures, numbers well over 1 billion. Historically, Saudi Arabia has occupied a special place in the Islamic world, for it is toward Makkah (Mecca) and Islam's most sacred shrine, the Ka'abah (Kaaba), located in the Holy Mosque there, that Muslims throughout the world turn devoutly in prayer five times a day. An appreciation of Islamic history and culture is therefore essential for a genuine understanding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its Islamic heritage and its leading role in the Arab and Muslim worlds. During the Hajj (major pilgrimage) and Umrah (minor pilgrimage) season, millions of Muslims from around the world travel to Makkah, as it is the fifth pillar and the most significant manifestation of Islamic faith and unity in the world.

Saudi Arabia-Japan relations have been solid for the past 58 years. H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Saudi Arabia in April and held a talk with H.R.H. Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, where both sides discussed the depth of relations that have been existing between the two friendly countries, and reviewed the recent developments in the regional and international arenas. In addition, an agreement on the promotion and protection of mutual investments between the governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Japan was signed following the talk.

Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this occasion, and convey my sincere wishes for the government and friendly people of Japan for further prosperity and progress, and for our future relations to serve the strategic cooperation and mutual interests between our two countries.



Hospitality: "Gahwa," a traditional ritual of serving Arabic coffee in Saudi Arabia, is a sign that a guest is welcomed and honored. KHALID KHIDR



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to the People of  
**The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**  
on the Occasion of  
**Their 83rd National Day**

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Warmest Congratulations to  
**The Custodian of**  
**the Two Holy Mosques**  
**King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud**  
of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and his People  
on the Occasion of the 83rd Anniversary of  
Their National Day

**JAPAN-SAUDI ARABIA SOCIETY**

Chairman: Hiromasa Yonekura

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