

Saudi Arabia national day

Achieving development while preserving fundamentals

Abdulaziz Turkistani
AMBASSADOR OF SAUDI ARABIA

First, we would like to thank Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family and the government and people of Japan, for their expressions of condolence at the loss of our beloved Crown Princes, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, both have fully supported and worked closely in building the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in participating and influencing the important local, regional and international events of our times.



King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud



Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

It is evident therefore that the kingdom's domestic and foreign policy shall remain and continue to be inspired by the same values and principles and shall persist

to be a valuable member in the international community while adhering to our deep-rooted customs, traditions and values at the same time.

Since King Abdullah came to the throne, the Kingdom witnessed great achievements in educational, agricultural, industrial, social and architec-

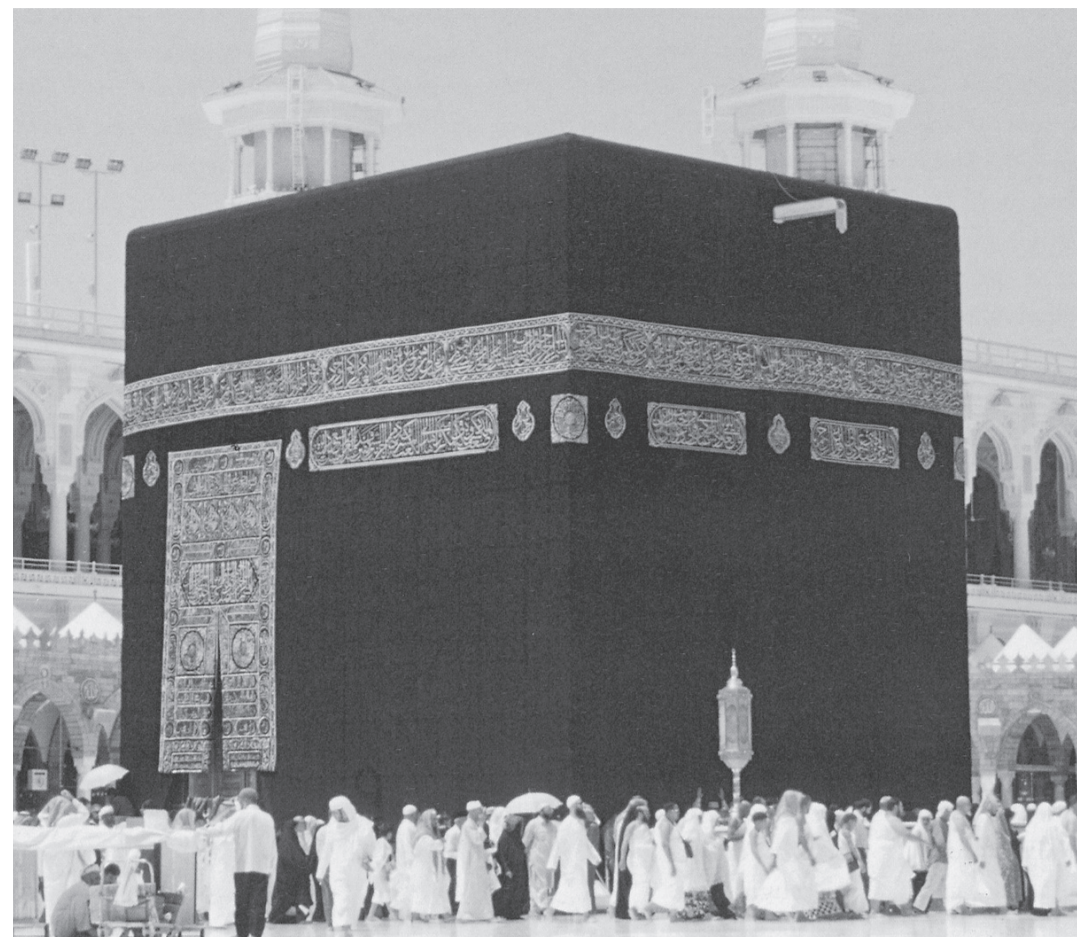
tural fields during a short period characterized by integrity and comprehensiveness. The King has played a remarkable role that contributes in strengthening the basis of the present Gulf, Arab and Islamic political work and in forming its vision and planning the future.

The U.S. financial magazine Forbes has once again ranked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz among the seven most powerful personalities in the world. Explaining the ranking, Forbes hailed the Saudi monarch for embarking on reforms and adopting moderate stances on a wide array of issues. Specifically, it noted the decision to allow women the right to run for office and to vote in municipal elections. The magazine also noted that the King has spent more than \$130 billion to fund social projects and has initiated the King Abdullah Project for General Education Development.

These achievements were based on firm fundamental principles, including adherence to the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, exerting efforts, overcoming all challenges, the pursuit of development to achieve growth in various fields throughout the country while preserving the values and fundamentals, and living in security and stability in light of a national unity that has become a unique model in appreciation and cohesion between the leaders of Saudi Arabia and its loyal people.

The kingdom has made efforts to maintain balance in the world oil market in order to meet the global demand for energy and plans to push forward with major public infrastructure projects to meet the needs of its citizens.

In September 2011, King Abdullah announced that Saudi women will be appointed to the Majlis Al-Shura (consultative council) and will be allowed to



The noble cube: Muslims throughout the world are supposed to face the Kaaba in Mecca's Grand Mosque during their daily prayers. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

participate in future municipal elections.

The Extraordinary Islamic Solidarity Summit in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, was opened on Aug. 14 in the presence of presidents, prime ministers, kings, and heads of delegations from a number of Islamic countries. The summit aimed to achieve its goals of uniting ranks, achieving solidarity and comprehensive development, adopting moderation and tolerance, and rejecting extremism, sectarianism, differences and discord. King Abdullah suggested in the summit to establish a center for dialogue among Islamic sects to come to common terms, with the capital

of Riyadh as its headquarters.

The first concerns of King Abdullah were to touch the people's needs and closely study their conditions in order to improve the people's living standards and to strengthen the course of the national economy.

Despite the global financial crisis that has dragged down leading economies, the Kingdom has avoided serious repercussions, not to mention the lack of the public and private indebtedness that has devastated other nations. Instead, the kingdom enjoyed its 11th consecutive year of growth, at a rate of 4.1 percent, with the non-oil economy growing at 4.9 percent.

A budget surplus of 5.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) was achieved. Furthermore, the kingdom saw its 12th consecutive balance of payments surplus, equaling 250.3 billion Saudi riyals (\$66.74 billion). In addition, the inflation rate increased slightly from 5.1 percent in 2009 to 5.3 percent in 2010, falling to 5.2 percent by October 2011, because of the rise to the costs of food and rent.

The kingdom has maintained its top ranking among Middle Eastern and North African nations regarding ease of doing business, according to the annual report of the World Bank CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Monumental: Madain Saleh, 400 km northwest of Medina, is a pre-Islamic archeological site that was inhabited by the Nabateans some 2,000 years ago and was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2008. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

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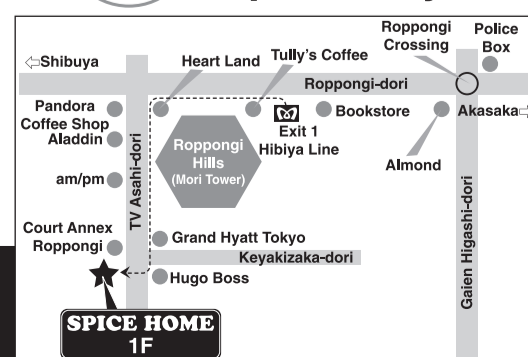
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Saudi Arabia national day

Kingdom has great potential for Japanese companies



Riyadh icon: Al Faisaliah Tower was the first of the startling new structures to rise above the Saudi Arabian capital's skyline. On its 34 floors there is a five-star hotel, four exclusive restaurants, a shopping mall, offices and apartments. The needlepoint pinnacle is 267 meters above the ground. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

Easier than ever to do business in Saudi Arabia

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4
Group and the International Finance Corp., which was released in 2011. At the international level, the 2012 report ranked the kingdom the 12th easiest place for commercial transactions out of 187 nations. The high rating is a result of improvements introduced by the kingdom that have streamlined governmental procedures and promoted entrepreneurship.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013 issued by the World Economic Forum, Saudi Arabia ranks the 18th most competitive economy in the world. Saudi Arabia has continued to grow its economy since joining the World Trade Organization in 2005. According to the International Monetary Fund, the kingdom's economic expansion rate increased in 2011, as Saudi GDP grew by 7.1 percent. The non-oil economy expanded by 8 percent — the largest amount since 1981 — and inflation remained at 5 percent. Meanwhile, new initiatives to tackle critical issues, including unemployment, housing and the financing of small and medium businesses, were launched, as

government spending increased by 20 percent.

The kingdom opens its doors to Japanese tourists with its traditional hospitality so that discerning visitors can enjoy and experience places from archaeological wonders and historic sites to a great diversity of traditional and modern attractions, scenic beauty and the remarkable wildlife in our country.

Bilateral relations

Official contacts between Saudi Arabia and Japan began in 1938, when Hafiz Wahba, Saudi envoy to England, visited Japan to attend the inauguration of the Tokyo Mosque. In reciprocity, Masayuki Yokoyama, Japanese envoy to Egypt, visited the kingdom in 1939, and had an audience with King Abdulaziz Al Saud who founded the modern kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 1953, Japan sent an economic delegation to Saudi Arabia. In 1955, the two countries formally established diplomatic relations.

The bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and Japan marks its 57th anniversary this year, and is distinctively built on common values and shared

interests. It has proven to be a model for bridging the gap between people and culture. This relationship has witnessed important developments through the reciprocal visits by the leading figures in the two countries, which strengthened the friendly relations.

The visit to Japan by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz; the deputy premier; the minister of defense and aviation; and the inspector general in 1960 marked the beginning of bilateral visits by dignitaries of both nations.

On this auspicious occasion, we would like to reiterate on behalf of the people of Saudi Arabia, our heartfelt greetings, respect and best wishes for the Imperial family and the friendly people of Japan. I hope the solid bonds that exist between Saudi Arabia and Japan — one of the longest, most influential and closest relationships in the world — will further strengthen. Subsequently, I cannot emphasize more that the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Tokyo as a whole is always keen to serve fully the further and future development of our two countries.

Hiromasa Yonekura
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-SAUDI ARABIA SOCIETY

On this occasion of the 82nd 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, H.E. Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Abdulsattar Turkistani, and all the people of the kingdom.

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz in October last year and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in June this year. I

would like to express my sincere condolences to the royal family and people of the kingdom for the demise of the Crown Princes, a great loss to both the kingdom and the international community.

Under the leadership and guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the heir apparent, has become a strong driving force for the further progress and prosperity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 1998, when visiting Japan to see Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman attended the welcome reception hosted by the Japan-Saudi Arabia Society. We at the society sincerely hope that His Royal Highness will continue to provide generous support to enhance and further strengthen the relationship between Japan and Saudi Arabia.



Folk tradition: Aradah, a type of folkloric dance of the Bedouin tribes, is performed by men carrying swords or canes accompanied by drums and spoken verse. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

Since Japan and the kingdom established diplomatic relations in 1955, the friendship and partnership between the two countries has ever been growing and

deepening. In April last year, Japan was invited to the Janadriah Festival, becoming the first guest country from Asia to join the annual Saudi national feast of heritage and culture. The Japan Pavilion, which presented exhibitions of Japan's history, culture and innovative technologies, attracted some 300,000 visitors.

During this past year, we saw the relations between the Saudi and Japanese governments continuing to grow closer. Yukio Edano, minister of economy, trade and industry, visited the kingdom in October last year, and Koichiro Genba, minister of foreign affairs, in January this year. From Saudi Arabia, H. E. Nizar bin Obaid Madani, state minister for foreign affairs, came to Tokyo in November last year, and H.E. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Alrabiah, minister of commerce and industry, and H.E. Mohammad bin Sulaiman Aljasser, minister of economy and planning, in February this year.

On the economic front, the Japan-Saudi Arabia Business Council, the joint meeting of the Japanese and Saudi private sectors launched in 1999, held its 12th annual conference in Tokyo in January this year. Approximately 160 participants from Japan and Saudi Arabia had lively discussions on new opportunities for Japan-Saudi business cooperation. Their efforts of more than a decade have begun to deliver positive results. This year, a Japanese truck assembler, a submarine cable manufacturer and a reverse-osmosis desalination membrane producer, as well as

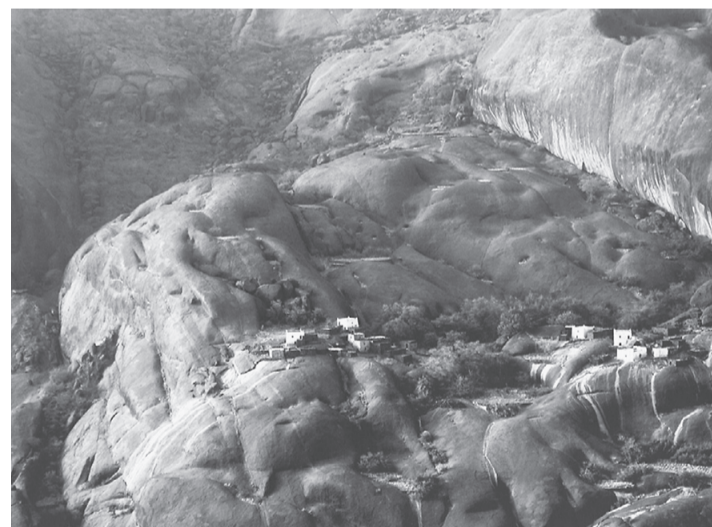
some other manufacturing companies from Japan, started their production operations one after another in Saudi Arabia. Since Saudi Arabia has great potential to become a crucial strategic location for Japanese companies seeking to expand businesses in the Gulf countries and the Middle East, Japan-Saudi business cooperation of this kind is expected to further increase in the years ahead.

The Japan-Saudi Arabia Society has, since its inception, been working to promote cultural exchange between the peoples of the two countries through various kinds of projects, including producing books on Saudi Arabia and Islam and offering Arabic language courses. In June this year, we published "The Jurisprudence for the Muslim Minorities," a guide on the Islamic law for Muslims living in a non-Islamic society, written by Ko Nakata and others. We at the society will continue to be firmly committed to working to strengthen the ties between Japan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and promoting the understanding of Islam among the people of Japan.

In closing, I would like to offer my 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, and H. E. Ambassador Abdulsattar Turkistani for good health and happiness and pray for the peace and prosperity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Heritage buildings: the Old City in Jidda, on the coast of the Red Sea, continues to shape the identity of Saudi culture, preserving its traditional multistory buildings and merchant houses, which have lost ground to more modern developments. Right: The mud houses of an ancient style are still found in Najran in the southwest of the country. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA



Mountainous region: The Asir Mountains in southwestern Saudi Arabia have the highest average rainfall in the country, which enable the local people to cultivate crops while the region's difficult terrain has helped to preserve the unique biodiversity. EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA

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 82nd Anniversary of
Their National Day

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