

# *SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS*

WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE  
ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA  
IN WASHINGTON, DC

*MAY 24, 2004*

## **ENERGY**

### **KINGDOM ANNOUNCES INCREASE IN OIL PRODUCTION**

Oil minister Ali Al-Naimi announced on May 21 that Saudi Arabia is increasing its oil production, allocating around nine million barrels per day of crude as of June 2004. Saudi Arabia, he said, will continue to monitor market developments and coordinate with OPEC to keep markets well supplied in order to maintain prices within the agreed range acceptable to producers and consumers and conducive to economic growth especially in the developing countries.

## **ECONOMY**

### **MAJOR SAUDI PRIVATIZATION UNDERWAY**

Adding force to its drive for economic reform, Saudi Arabia is selling off government shares in the National Company for Cooperative Insurance (NCCI), and privatizing the Saudi Arabian Mining Company 'Ma'aden', which is wholly owned by the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources. Both decisions came during a meeting of the Supreme Economic Council (SEC), chaired by Crown Prince Abdullah, and are part of a privatization program directed at expanding the Saudi economy and covers many vital economic sectors such as telecommunications, civil aviation, desalination, highway management, railways, sports clubs, municipal services, health services and government hotels.

## **TERRORISM**

### **TWO SECURITY OFFICERS, FOUR SUSPECTS KILLED IN BURAIDAH**

On May 20, security forces cornered five suspects in a rest house near Buraidah in Qasim Province, resulting in the death of four of them and injuries to the fifth. Their names have not been disclosed in the interests of the investigation. Two

security officers were killed in the confrontation, and two others wounded. Found in the rest house were two cars, explosive devices and supplies, weapons and ammunition, and documents.

## **MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

### **PRINCE SAUD URGES COMBINING ROADMAP AND ARAB PEACE PLAN**

Addressing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU) in Brussels on May 17 on the topic of the Middle East peace process, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal urged combining the 'roadmap' and the Arab Peace Initiative, and pointed out that the latter provides for peace between Israel and all the Arabs, including Syria and Lebanon, and not just the Palestinians. The two plans, he said, complement each other perfectly.

## **REFORM**

### **PRINCE SAUD PRAISES ARAB LEAGUE'S PLEDGE OF SOLIDARITY**

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal has praised the credibility and seriousness of the document 'Pledge of Accord and Solidarity' that was prepared in Tunis at the 16th Arab Summit. The representatives of the 22 members of the League of Arab States have pledged in this document to carry out political and social reforms, promote democracy, expand popular participation in politics and public affairs, reinforce women's rights, and expand civil society.

\* \* \*