

SAUDI ARABIA IN FOCUS

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FOREIGN AID

King Abdullah orders aid to earthquake victims in Pakistan, India

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz on October 9 issued directives to establish an air lift to provide urgent relief assistance to victims of the earthquake which struck Pakistan and India on Saturday. The air lift is designed to ensure an uninterrupted supply of relief aid, including food, medical supplies, tents, and blankets, for the victims of the earthquake. The first plane left arrived in Pakistan on October 10, carrying 70 tons of relief supplies.

In line with the King's directives, a medical team from the Ministry of Health and the Saudi Red Crescent Society will be dispatched to the region to assess the situation in the affected areas. Another directive provides for the launch of a donation campaign throughout the Kingdom for the victims of the earthquake.

King Abdullah telephoned Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on October 10 to offer his condolences and to stress the Kingdom's support. In its meeting that same day, the Cabinet also extended its condolences to the victims of the earthquake.

AGFUND donates \$200,000 to victims of natural disasters

The Riyadh-based Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) has allocated US \$200,000 for the assistance of children and women affected by natural disasters in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Guatemala, said AGFUND President Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz on October 11. The funds will be administered through the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

ECONOMY

Annual SAMA report shows rapid growth in the Saudi economy

The annual report by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) shows that in 2004, the Saudi economy continued to grow at a rapid pace in various sectors for the third consecutive year. The national income increased by 16.8 percent, and the real Gross Domestic Product grew by 5.3 percent. The Kingdom's general finance recorded a surplus of SR 107 billion [US \$28.5 billion].

EDUCATION

GM and GOTEVOT to set up 100 auto institutes in the Kingdom

The General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT), in association with US automotive giant General Motors, plans to establish 100 automobile training institutes in various parts of the Kingdom.

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