



MARCH 19, 2007

## Government

### **King Abdullah renews terms of entire Cabinet**

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz issued last Thursday a royal decree renewing the terms of all current members of the Council of Ministers for another four-year term with the King as Prime Minister.

## Embassy Events

### **King's first pilot honored with Hart Award**

Saudi Ambassador to the US, Adel A. Al-Jubeir, presented Captain Joe Grant with Friends of Saudi Arabia's Hart Award. A reception was held in Captain Grants' honor at the Saudi Embassy on Thursday. Mr. Grant was presented the Hart Award in recognition for his "...achievements in fostering friendship, goodwill and mutual understanding between the United States and Saudi Arabia."

The Hart Award is named for Ambassador Parker T. Hart who opened the first US Consulate in Dhahran over 60 years and served as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1961-1965.

### **Embassy hosts photo exhibition**

The Saudi Embassy hosted a photo exhibition in partnership with Friends of Saudi Arabia last Thursday. The exhibit, "Yesterday and Today," featured photographs taken by Captain Joe Grant in 1945 and contemporary photos taken in 2006 by photographer and filmmaker Bruce Wendt. The exhibition will remain on display until April 6, 2007.

## Saudi-Korean Relations

### **Saudi Arabia, Korea hold summit to promote greater cooperation**

King Abdullah and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun held a summit in Riyadh Saturday and discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries. At the conclusion of their summit, Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Korea signed memorandums of understanding and agreements expanding bilateral relations and cooperation in the areas of information technology, education and culture, and trade.

### **Trade growing, construction orders expected to top \$3 billion**

The volume of trade exchange between the two countries is growing steadily according to latest figures. Trade increased from \$9.4 billion in 2000 to more than \$17.4 billion in 2005, and Korean construction orders in Saudi Arabia are expected to top \$3 billion this year.

Korean Construction and Transportation Minister Lee Yong-sup, who is in Riyadh as part of President Roh's three-day official visit to Saudi Arabia, told reporters Sunday that Korea was the world's biggest winner of Saudi construction orders, with annual volume of orders totaling \$3.6 billion.

According to Minister Lee, Hyundai Heavy Industries is scheduled to sign a formal contract in April with Saudi Arabia's Marafiq for the construction of a \$1.1 billion power plant. Daelim Industrial signed a letter of intent with Kayan, a subsidiary of SABIC, for the construction of a \$1 billion polycarbonates production plant. Samsung Engineering has obtained an order from Kayan for a \$330 million petrochemical plant in March. Hanwha Construction signed a \$500 million order with Safra Co. Ltd. in February for the construction of petrochemical plant.

## Middle East Peace Process

### **Palestinians overwhelmingly support Arab Peace Initiative**

An overwhelming majority of Palestinians support the Arab Peace Initiative calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 in exchange for normalization of relations between Israel and the Arabs, a poll released Monday showed. The poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during March 22-24, 2007 shows that 72% Palestinians support the Arab Initiative, and 26 percent opposing it. The poll has a margin of error of 3%.

## Economy

### **Kingdom opens more economic sectors for foreign investments**

The Supreme Economic Council (SEC) Sunday issued a revised list of economic sectors in which foreign investment will not be allowed to invest to encourage foreign investment in other areas, *Arab News* reported Monday. Foreign investment will now be allowed in insurance services, wholesale and retail trade, air and train transport, and communication services.

Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Tuwaijri, Secretary-General of the Supreme Economic Council told *Arab News* that the SEC opened new economic sectors for foreign investment to strengthen the economy, attract more foreign investment and enhance private sector participation. Other sectors open to foreign investment are: distribution of cinema films and video cassettes, transportation of passengers inside cities by train, air transportation services and satellite transmission services. The negative list of investment was also revised to comply with Saudi Arabia's commitments under the World Trade Organization.

Dr. Al-Tuwaijri said restrictions on real estate investment in Makkah and Madinah would continue without change. The same is the case for tourist orientation and guidance services related to the Hajj and Umrah.

