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ARAB WORLD

King Abdullah holds tripartite summit with leaders of Egypt, Bahrain

King Abdullah traveled to Sharm el-Sheikh on June 30 for a one-day visit to Egypt, during which he held talks with President Hosni Mubarak. Upon the King's arrival, he met with the Egyptian leader at the Sharm el-Sheikh Conference Center. The main topic of discussion was the Mideast peace process and, specifically, Egyptian efforts to facilitate reconciliation between Palestinian factions. Later, King Abdullah and President Mubarak held a tripartite summit with Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah. During their meeting, they reviewed regional and international issues, especially Palestinian reconciliation efforts, and discussed ways to boost cooperation between their countries.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S.

Embassy hosts Saudi exchange students

The Saudi Embassy hosted a luncheon on July 2 for a group of Saudi students participating in the Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES). The students described their experiences in the U.S. to Ambassador Adel A. Al-Jubeir, who encouraged more students to participate in such exchange programs.

YES brings students between the ages of 15 and 18 to the U.S., where they live with an American family while attending a semester or a full year of high school. The program is managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Cultural Mission organizes student exhibition, graduation ceremony

Saudi Minister of Higher Education Dr. Khalid Al-Anqari opened in Washington, D.C. on July 3 a Cultural Exhibition organized by the Saudi Embassy. The event highlighted the activities of Saudi students on scholarship at U.S. institutes. Dr. Al-Anqari was accompanied to the exhibition by Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel A. Al-Jubeir and Saudi Cultural Attaché Dr. Mohammed Al-Issa.

On July 4, the Minister of Higher Education attended a ceremony for 1,072 graduating Saudi students, all of whom are participants in the Program of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for Foreign

Scholarships. The event, organized by the Saudi Embassy's Cultural Department, was also attended by Ambassador Al-Jubeir.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Al-Anqari noted that in 2009 more than 60,000 Saudis were studying abroad on scholarships. A total of 18,700 students were pursuing their education in the U.S., including 4,200 female students. Before the inception of King Abdullah's program four years ago, the number of Saudi students studying abroad on scholarships was only 5,000. After the public remarks, Dr. Al-Anqari and Ambassador Al-Jubeir laid the foundation stone for the new headquarters of the Cultural Department in Washington, D.C.

Saudi-U.S. trade grew 14% last year

The signing of new trade agreements by Saudi Arabia and the United States resulted in a 14 percent growth in bilateral trade between the two countries in the last year, according to a June 30 Arab News report. The total volume of Saudi-U.S. trade last year was valued at \$53.35 billion, according to Mazin Battarjee, the Deputy Chairman of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI). Officials in both countries plan to further boost economic ties by facilitating the exchange of Saudi and U.S. business delegations.

During a June 29 meeting between members of an American delegation and JCCI officials, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Richard Erdman announced that the U.S. Embassy in the Kingdom "is working on entry visas [for] Saudi businessmen and businesswomen, in addition to expanding the training program for Saudi students in the U.S." Erdman stressed the importance of removing the barriers preventing the strengthening of bilateral economic relations – particularly between Saudi and American businesswomen.

During its tour, the U.S. delegation visited the Khadijah bint Khuwailid Center, a subsidiary of the JCCI that specializes in promoting the business activities of Saudi women. Battarjee, who met with the delegation, stressed the important role played by the Center in finding employment for women, noting that there are 3,000 female-run businesses in Jeddah.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia gives Yemen \$1.2 million to fight malaria

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador in Sana'a, Ali Al-Hamdan, delivered \$1.2 million in financial aid to Yemeni Undersecretary of Health Dr. Ghazi Ismail to support anti-malaria efforts in Yemen. The assistance includes a check for \$533,464 to support a malaria control program, a shipment of medical equipment and preventative supplies worth \$666,830, and 500 swine-flu detectors.

