

Dhahran, Jubail, north of Dammam, and Yanbu, north of Jeddah, are two industrial cities built over the last 15 years. Aramco's head office site and residential over the Saudi Aramco, the national oil company; and Al Khobar, also a commercial centre.

Government

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy with a centralized government. National law is predicated on the Koran and provisions of the Shariah (Islamic) law. Although the system of government has been evolving towards ministerial rule, the present monarch, H.M. King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz is also Prime Minister. Crown Prince Abdullah is First Deputy Premier. Other members of the Royal Family occupy key cabinet positions including Defence and Aviation, Foreign Affairs, Interior Ministry and Public Works and Housing.

There are neither political parties nor a legislature in Saudi Arabia. However, the government contains an element of populist democracy and egalitarianism as a result of tribal traditions. Although the powers of the King are absolute in theory, he governs on the basis of a consensus of the views of the Royal Family. The country is firmly committed to capitalism and the free enterprise system.

The various institutions of local government are the General Municipal Councils, the District Council and the tribal and village councils. The country is divided into five administrative divisions: Najd (Central Province), Hejaz (Western Province), Asir (Southern Province), Medina (Northern Province) and Al Hasa (Eastern Province).