

economy makers



Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar
Vice Chairman & Managing Director
Al-Tayyar Travel Group



In a frank and courageous dialogue, Business & Finance Club Magazine has interviewed Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar, the Board Vice-President & Managing Director, Al-Tayyar Travel Group. As I have known him for 25 years, this man's narcissism and pride have not changed but his experience and popularity have increased.

He has exerted great efforts to realize a turning point in transferring a local small establishment into an international great group. Al-Tayyar Travel Group is one of the greatest and most important international tourist companies in the Middle East. Before we start this dialogue with Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar, establisher of this entity, we want to mention something of his simple biography.

He was born at Al-Zulfi city in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1957. He has Bachelor degree in administrative sciences (politics), Master degree in business administration (2000) and PhD in business administration (2002).

He has established Al-Tayyar Group and developed it continually to become one from the great companies in kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Gulf and Middle East. He is the establisher and publisher of Traveler Magazine (The famous Arab Magazine specialized in Travel & Tourism). He has involved in many studies and business seminar papers specialized in Travel & Tourism.

He has participated in all symposia involved in travel and tourism concepts' discussion (especially inward tourism). He has written many works contributing in supporting the state's decisions to establish Supreme Commission specialized in Tourism in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as many specialized articles issued in papers and interviews through TV.

He contributed in enriching the intellectual library through a Book entitled "Effectiveness of Tourism on Economics of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" and a book entitled "Tourism Marketing in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia".

He was an employee in City Bank, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Booking & Sales of Saudi Airlines, Sales man in Hong Kong Airlines (Alkai- Pacific) in the kingdom, Public relations manager in Filipino Airlines in the kingdom, Board Vice-President & Managing Director, Al-Tayyar Group in Arab Egyptian Republic, Board President of Al-Tayyar Group in Sudan, Board President of Al-Tayyar Group for Investment

Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar, the Gulf Tourism Godfather, has realized a turning point in transferring a small Tourism branch to be the International Greatest Tourism Group in the Middle East.

& Real Estate Development, Publisher of Traveler's Magazine and member of Local and International Organizations as:

- Member of International Tourism Organization
- Member of Consultative Sales Council, Saudi Airlines
- Member of World Tourism Organization

- Member of International Organization for Meetings & Conferences

- Certified arbiter in the Saudi Ministry of Justice.

- International certified arbiter in a number of international arbitration centers.

- Space expert in travel, tourism and cargo disputes

- Certified administrative consultant

- Tourism Development Council in Riyadh

Now he is operating Al-Tayyar Travel Group, a Saudi joint-stock Company. He is the Board Vice-President & Managing Director, Al-Tayyar Travel Group which is of multi activities in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its offices abroad; in Cairo, Dubai, Canada and Khartoum. Its annual budge is more than \$450 billion. This group is one of the greatest 100 companies in kingdom of Saudi Arabia since 1989 and one of the greatest 10 companies specialized in travel and tourism.

As Al-Tayyar Travel Group, the sponsor of tourism section for the Finance & Business Magazine's special Issue (Riyadh, the capital of Oil & Finance Achievements) and



Head Office, Al-Tayyar Travel Group, Riyadh City.





A picture of the main booking lounge where it shows the distinctive Saudi national while he is involved in serving passengers through PC technology.

on the occasion the 50th anniversary of the achievements of His Royal Highness, Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, Riyadh Region Emir, we have carried out the following dialogue with Al-Yayar Travel Group, Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar, the Board Vice-President & Managing Director, Al-Tayyar Travel Group:

During the past 25 years, and during the period of His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, Riyadh Region Emir, How did Al-Tayyar Travel Group start?

In the beginning I thank Business & Finance Magazine for giving me this opportunity to talk about Al-Tayyar Travel Group. First of all, Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz is one of the great figures in Riyadh city for his great achievements in the kingdom. Your Business & Finance Magazine's special Issue is an evidence of this and this is the least thing to be said about His Royal Highness.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group has started its business in one office staffed with 6 employees and with a capital of SR 250 thousand. Nowadays, there are more than 200 branches in kingdom wide and 9 branches abroad affiliated to Al-Tayyar Travel Group

whose capital is SR 150 million. Al-Tayyar Travel Group became a Saudi joint-stock Company in the field of travel & tourism section in the Gulf and the kingdom. Tourism business was not mentioned in the kingdom before the Custodian of the Two Holly Mosques and His

Al-Tayyar Travel Group transferred into joint- stock Company whose capital was raised. Al-Tayyar Travel Group stock exchange will start in the next few months.

crown prince had established the 1st Tourism Commission,

The state has been concerned with the tourism and the related places which may serve the tourism industry section. His highness Prince Salman started to be concerned of tourist places and enterprises as

Diplomatic Quarter Park (Salam), King Abdul Aziz Museum, Janadriay, Al-Masmak, Al-Deriyah and many other places and areas which have been concentrated on to be as an essential tourist infrastructure.

Nowadays tourism has flourished in the kingdom, where it is difficult to get a room in a hotel or an apartment around the year. This is because of high demand of tourism. So, many important tourist enterprises have erected, as; Al-Faisalia. These enterprises are new in the kingdom to be visited by local and foreign tourists.

Tourism in terminology is to go outside your region to spend specified time in order to have rest and recreation. There are many tourist projects to be established in Riyadh in the future. His highness Prince Salman exerts great efforts to develop the tourist section through promising tourist projects as Al-Dariyah project where the valley will be made good recreation place in Arkah area. This is in addition to Al-Tahlia Street which is considered from the tourist places; it is called Champs Elise.





Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar, while he was speaking in an interview carried out by Business & Finance Magazine.

Many places have been prepared for people to practice their hobbies and walking sport easily. This is for the purpose of strengthening the tourist section and making it more attractive.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group has been the focus of government support and encouragement to achieve many aspects which contributed in our success especially, the support of His highness Prince Salman who has supported us in meeting our vital requirements of pre-qualified tourist areas and achieving our paper works in a short time in the government departments.

Within 25 years of continual hard work to develop tourist section locally and abroad you have presented great achievements depending on the testimony of all, so, How do you evaluate tourism now in the Kingdom?

Tourism industry in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is in the beginning stages, where there are no tourism regulations in the kingdom because it is still new and this will require tourist infrastructure to meet the tourists' needs. Tourist industry is competes oil industry; it is a main

income source for some countries as; France, Spain, Germany, Dubai and Egypt. Certainly, this industry can be depended upon rather than oil and other industries.

More than 25% of Al-Tayyar Travel Group's employees are Saudis. The recruitment door is open for Saudi nationals around the year. Procedures are under process to operate local airlines conforming to international specifications.

Supreme Commission for Tourism has been established in the kingdom from nothing; there has not been any management or authority to be specialized in this field because establishing this commission requires long time depending on

quickness and modernization of the tourist section which is distinguished from other sections.

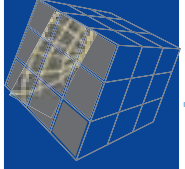
Do you mean that you call the government to develop these current regulations?

There is no any tourist authority or any tourist regulations in the kingdom, however, Supreme Commission for Tourism is working now to set some regulations to organize such virgin section which is not organized in a proper way; every government authority concentrates on one part of tourism. Actually, Supreme Commission for Tourism started to set some tourist regulations in the Kingdom. So, it should exert great efforts to catch up with other advance tourism industries in the world. And this requires long time and great efforts.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group has become reliable source to provide tourism and tourist related service. So, have you thought to establish a training academy for candidates and grant approved international certificates?

Yes, Al-Tayyar Training Academy has been established. It has been





supposed to be established before one year, but the government requirements and Maratonic procedures have delayed it. However, we have started training many candidates to occupy the positions as: booking staff, tourism programs designer, tourism accountant, aviation, etc. The first batch will be graduated after one year from to date.

Recently, the press media mentioned that an agreement has been concluded with U. A. E aviation to train Aramco pilots in the United Arab Emirates. So, in your opinion, who should establish this enterprise to train pilots if we consider United Arab Emirates is a new state compared to other states? And what is your opinion regarding opening special training branch, especially if

this is through cooperation with and international aviation authority?

Our field is travel and tourism and not aviation. In my opinion, this issue is related to Saudi Airlines. In fact, the Saudi Airlines has the greatest aviation training center in the Middle East, however the Saudi youth have not interested in it very much. Also, Saudi Airlines has established Prince Sultan Academy to train pilots.

Saudi Airlines, in its new plan aims at including the greatest number of pilots. So, Saudi Arabia is need for such academies more than other states do.

If we take into consideration Aramco which requires high efficiencies in this field, so United Arab Emirates state has established that academy conforming to high degree of

technology to attract many Arab and Foreign candidates.

As you have thought of employing Saudi women in your business; in other words the Saudi woman qualification for such works as booking and other tourist works, so what is the woman role in this vital field?

It is known for all, that tourism business depends greatly on women who carry out booking, tourism procedures and travel. Unfortunately, this does not apply in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but the new regulations streamlined this situation and Saudi women started to work in some private enterprises according to certain conditions. As for Al-Tayyar Travel Group, we stated women employment for one year and I expect that the number





of employed women in Al-Tayyar Travel Group will be 200 in a short period. We have specified one section for those women who desire to deal with women, one telephone section for our customers who deal with us in accounts, one tickets booking section and employed women in accounts department to revise documents, accounts and enter data. Hope we had more freedom to employ women in other areas because we need them to work in some related offices.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been concerned with Saudi nationals and gave them priority of employment especially aviation, so would you please tell us about the percentage of pilots Saudization (males & females), in other words are Saudis in the front?

Tourism Industry is similar to any other field but officials have not evaluated the tourist job, they think that the staff who issue tickets is similar to bust ticket staff. This is wrong, airlines field is different because there is need to know distances accurately and calculate distance and time. For example, transport from one airport to another requires knowing the time spent by the traveler to go from one airport to another. This requires efficient technicians. Unfortunately, tourism industry is the final option for Saudi national, so Saudization percentage is low; sometimes it is 50%, 40% and 20%. When a Saudi graduated batch finish training most of them go to work in other fields related ignoring the training they had.

Although all of this, Supreme Commission for Tourism started a program to train and employ Saudis, every batch requires 9 months to be graduated. Contracts have been concluded with many parties and students. It is necessary to know important features of Saudi employees who will cover his costs and he will attract his relatives to buy depending on prevailing habits and customs. Also, Saudi employee is not expensive because he does not need accommodation, health insurance and other related costs, especially security status. Whereas

expatriate may leave and not come back but the Saudi employee will not leave Saudi Arabia and you can hold him responsible. However, the problem we face is that there is no trained and qualified Saudis to perform such tasks in tourism section. As it is known the only

I appreciate Supreme Commission for Tourism's efforts represented by His Royal Highness, Prince Sultan Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz greatly.

country in the world which does not provide tourism curricula at schools is Saudi Arabia.

Why do not you ask Ministry of Labor to provide you with such cadres?

These cadres have been provided.

Have you any guarantees in this regard?

Ministry of Interior is responsible for this. We have requested that to have an authority to supervise this and his Royal Highness agreed.

As you have worked in this field for more than 32 years and this has made you to be a reference for tourism in the kingdom in the Middle East respectively. Do you thing that Al-Tayyar Group will appoint successors in this field?

We have tried to do so, but the nature of our work depends on commitments and responsibilities, in other words we are associated with flights and airports where we cannot assign this work to inefficient parties. So, I seize this opportunity to call any party who has the desire to join us. We are ready to provide the required training same as we have done with others who have been trained and sent abroad to training centers but they did not continue because of some other

temptations as the case with Mobili Company in this regard.

We prefer efficient candidates who are tolerant not just to finish the training; the candidate may fill a position without training but he should have prequalification. Although some companies which provides good training as Aramco, but Saudi nationals are not interested in joining because Saudis do not concentrate tourism culture; they do not consider this occupation as a good one.

The kingdom started to be opened to this sector and many aviation companies have been given licenses in view of the available good tourism market. So, there is a requirement for national cadres but Saudi youth are not interested in this field.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group works in many tourism fields, so what are the other fields you involve in?

Al-Tayyar Travel Group involves in organizing conferences, exhibitions and other related things. We have organized more than 24 official conferences in Britain, Malaysia, Egypt, Belgium, France and Saudi Arabia. These are big conferences whose attendants are not less than 1000 person each. We take over everything related to travel, stay, catering, translation, conferences and exhibits.

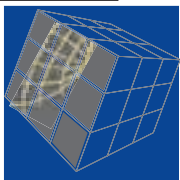
We concentrate more on this sector and we are concerned to take over any part of government sector.

Accordingly, we try to obtain a share in the government sector related to services, tickets, stays, etc. We concentrate on this field more and more.

What about religious tourism (Umrah & Pilgrimage)?

Certainly, Umrah & Pilgrimage are around the year but our great effort is involved in Kingdom tourism, travel, cargo and transport kingdom wide. This is in addition to honey moon month programs organization as or specialty in the





kingdom regardless of education programs and related other things as tickets, visas, private planes leasing, cars rental, etc.

As Al-Tayyar Travel Group business is associated with government authorities, so what is the extent of support you receive as a tourist company?

In the last ten years Saudi Airlines have lost a lot; contrary to the other tourist agencies because other tourist companies have other alternatives as other international aviation companies. However, we expect Eng. Khalid Al-Mulhim, General Manager, Saudi Airlines to support us to provide the optimal service in this field as providing the ticket directly from aviation company will cost us 18% whereas the cost reach 10%; we can save about 8% from the cost. We expect the better as we provide boarding bus to the travelers directly from our offices.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group is the first company to be given the privilege of Saudi Airlines to issue boarding bus tickets, so in your opinion what is the reason?

Our good image through our services to customers has contributed in our good fame as well as our good infrastructure which supported us to obtain this distinction.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group is considered the greatest distributor of Saudi Airlines (as for sales).

What is the average of your sales?

Our annual sales volume was more than SR 700 million in the end of 2006.

What is the number of your employees?

Our employees' number is more than 600 inside and reaches to 1800 outside the kingdom, especially in Egypt where we have great activity.

How many tickets are issued in Al-Tayyar Travel Group annually?

The number is one million; this has helped us to be joint-stock company although the faced obstacles because of the Saudi culture which does not recognize tourism as an

industrial sector. However, we have received a lot of encouragement and support from King Abdullah, his royal highness prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, His Royal highness prince Salman bin Abudl Aziz and Dr. Hashim Yamani, Minister of Industry. All of them have provided us many facilities.

We expect to submit the papers in the first quarter of 2007.

Do think that Al-Tayyar Travel Group will have a good share in stock-exchange market?

As the company has distinguished existence, good fame, 25 years experience, profits and the strong infrastructure that attracts the investors to involve in the company stock- exchange, we expect a lot. We have asked for the value of 290 million shares; 570 million shares have been already accepted; it is two folds of the requested amount. So, our company became global because we are in many countries as; Sudan, Canada, Malaysia, Thailand and U A E. Also, the conferences which we supervised in such countries enhanced our fame locally and internationally.

As your customers are great, so why do not you think to have a membership to make the customers and travelers benefit of respectively?

We want our dealing to be accurate especially when we provide any service which should depend on quality and purposeful profit and not for just propaganda only.

Are you satisfied with the services of the Ministry of Endowment?

We are satisfied with the services of the Ministry of Endowment but we want them to provide us more because the Ministry of Endowment is a legislative ministry.

Is there any integration between you the Ministry of Endowment?

Certainly, but there are many related issues to Umrah and Pilgrimage outside the kingdom where the Ministry of Endowment has no relation with.

So, the Ministry of Endowment in involved in performance development and we appreciate this role.

Al-Tayyar Travel Group is considered the main executive of Saudia World Program; it is from the greatest companies of tourism export in all it kinds; great, mid, etc. to many countries as Egypt and Malaysia. We have obtained many prized in this regard as the prize of the best agency by Malaysian government in 2005. This is because of our great concern of tourism as a developed and changed activity. Also, Saudia works to issue licenses and techniques for



A picture of one of Al-Tayyar Travel Group's service areas.



Dr. Nasser Bin Akeel Al-Tayyar in a frank and courageous dialogue to Eng. Emad Mohd Al-Hati, chairman of Business & Finance Group.

local and international tourism and this is a great motivation for us.

How many agencies you have?

Al-Tayyar Travel Group has not concentrated on exclusive agencies and their titles as long as we concentrate on best and easy services as well as different products and sales process. So, we monopolize South African Aviation concerning cargo and passengers, Omani Aviation concerning services, Saudi World Program Operators and Europe train in the Kingdom exclusively.

Although we do not believe in monopoly and the most important thing for us is to provide services of high level because monopoly involves providing service for certain category while we are involved in providing services for all categories and we cannot be involved in such field.

We noticed that there are counters inside Saudi airports after the chick point; such counters are affiliated to General Commission for Investment, what is this?

These counters have been operated by General Commission for Investment to ensure the highest service level for investors coming from Saudi Arabia so that we can provide best services for them and

finalize their travel procedures quickly as fetching luggage. We have taken over these counters operation to provide the required best services.

Availability of General Tourism Society whose members are from the tourism distinguished people will solve most problems of such sector.

Have you received any prizes for your services distinction as other companies in the Arab and international scope?

Al-Tayyar Travel Group has reaped many prizes. We are the best agency for Saudi Airlines and the best agency for Saudi Airlines concerning sales.

Also, Al-Tayyar Travel Group has received many prizes from the governments' departments we deal with. This motivates us more to provide better services. We have obtained the prize of the best agency from the Malaysian government.

Do you support the idea of merging Al-Tayyar Travel Group with another enterprise to form greater entity?

We have adopted this idea for 5 years seeking merging or bloc among tourism and travel agencies but we failed and this is because there is not tourism maturity in Saudi Arabia. So, Al-Tayyar Travel Group has been changed into joint-stock company; Al-Sarh & National Office companies have agreed to be under Al-Tayyar Travel Group's umbrella while many others have refused this but they have closed their offices and disappeared. Accordingly, we encourage the merging of agencies because it is strength and continuity in our opinion.

Do you think of merging with foreign partner?

Our system allows us to do so because union is strength; in other words we welcome similar foreign companies merging especially when there is common interest for both parties. I want to point out to an important idea about the Saudi Market. All know that Saudi market is a virgin market and entering this market is easy but work in it is very difficult. Accordingly, I invite investors who are interested in investing in this new market to study this market carefully. Also, I invite the passenger to be sure of the service before he gives up to attractive ads and propaganda. Also, I would like king Abdullah and His Crown Prince to work streamline regulations and laws to catch up with the advanced countries. Hope Public and Private Sectors make successful partnership to provide serve the country in a proper way. We should always exert out efforts to promote and develop our country to cope with the changing life aspects to serve the nation and the Saudi citizen.

