Travel from Riyadh & WIN exciting gifts!

(Effective 26th January to 15th March 2008 only)

Contact Air India on (01) 477 4484 / 473 9158 / 473 9163 or your Travel Agent for more details



Saudi Gazette

• An Okaz publication

saudigazette.com.sa

SR2.24 pages

07.02.08

TODAY'S KEY INDICATORS

Democrats' race still



'Amazing' premiere of Aramco Brats' 'Home'

By Suzan Zawawi

RIYADH - A documentary hoping to set the record straight on living in the Kingdom and the people living in it, had its first public viewing in Riyadh, Tuesday.

"Home - The Aramco Brats' Story" was screened to a full house at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies.

"It was amazing," said Todd Nims, a director and producer of the movie. "It seems the movie was well received."

"Home" is a documentary film about the Kingdom as seen through the eyes of the expat children (known as Aramco Brats) who lived in Aramco compounds in Dhahran, Abqaiq and Ras Tanura.

The film was directed, produced and funded by three young American Aramco Brats; Todd Nims, Mathew Miller and Zach Nims. All three were born and raised in the Kingdom.

Audience members praised the film.

"I read about the movie in the paper and I had to come and bring my family," said Faisal Khaldee, a Saudi married to an American. "This movie was touching to both my wife and my children, it spoke of their feelings."

"I loved it," said Mohamed Al-Kaoud. "But I wanted to see more."

The screening was initially for the local press but it was mostly attended by interested Saudis and expats.

During the Q&A session that followed the screening, a Saudi looking man with a gray beard wearing a winter thobe and shemagh (red chequered head gear), stood up and said: "I am from California and I have just arrived in the Kingdom 16 days ago.



These three men made this movie out of their pocket and out of their love for this country, and it shows.

hours away from my home town Merced in California but I am here in the Kingdom and since I have been here I have already fallen in love with the Kingdom and the Saudis I met," said Michael Bloed in perfect Californian accent.

"I feel the same way these people in the movie feel - I AM experiencing the Saudi hospitality, generosity and camaraderie," he said.

Many of the people interviewed in the documentary expressed how they missed the



This movie was touching to both my wife and my children, it spoke to their feelings. Kingdom after they left. Some even explained how their identities had changed for the better after living in the Kingdom and experiencing its diverse cultures.

The movie was made in order to dispel myths about living in the Kingdom and about the people of the land.

Waleed Al-Yahya, CEO of Friends of Saudi Arabia, said the movie hit its mark.

"The movie hit the nail on the head, by showcasing the good relations the external community had with the Kingdom," said Yahya. "These three men made this movie out of their pocket and out of their love for this country, and it shows."

On to Hollywood

Friends of Saudi Arabia has been supporting the movie by helping them premiere the movie in Hollywood and in Riyadh.

The film will move on to the United States along with a lecture tour to promote a positive side of Saudi Arabia.

"We will be sponsoring a lecture seminar tour of the movie around the US from Washington to Boston visiting top US universities and other venues," said Yahya

After Nims finds a distributors for "Home", he is planning to look for a distributor for Tunes from the Dunes CD and a music producer to make the song Tlike chicken kubsa cheese bread and honey lubna in SA SA' into a music video.

"I don't know how many young people watch documentaries but I know they watch music videos," said Nims.

Through the music video, Nims hopes to spread his message of friendship between Sau-



Todd Nims, director of "Home - The Aramco Brats' Story", which premiered in Riyadh on Wednesday - SG photo by Susan Zawawi.

No push for private sector pay rise

Saudi Gazette report

JEDDAH - The Ministry of Labor has dashed the hopes of Saudi private sector workers that businesses would be pushed to follow the example of government and increase salaries to offset the higher cost of living.

Quesi Al-Felalli, director of the Labor Office in Jeddah told Arabic daily Asharq Al-Awsat that the ministry has no intention of doing any such thing. The Council of Ministers

had last fortnight raised government staff salaries over a threeyear period: 5 percent in the first year, 10 in the second and 15 in the third. Al-Fellali said government policy allows businesses all freedom to determine staff salaries. He said that though the ministry generally supports Saudi workers in salary matters, the final word remains with employers.

Experience proves that in most cases businesses are driven by their own sense of responsibility to increase staff salaries during hard times, Felalli said.

Private sector employees

were hoping that at least this time around they'd get a pay rise, especially after having been ignored twice in the past two years when government staff salaries were raised.

Asharq Al-Awsat voiced the reactions of some workers. "We have been suffering from the rise in prices of consumer products since the civil servants were given a salary rise. We have been suffering from the evil of this increase without having a share of the good of this evil," the paper carried a quote.