



READY FOR PILGRIMS: The extension of the Masaa (a long chamber running between Al-Safa and a few days is expected to increase capacity to 300,000 pilgrims per hour. Over 3,000 construction workers have been working around the clock to complete the SR2.99 billion project. The Masaa is now 20 meters high and includes a newly constructed third floor and a 95-meter-high minaret. (AN photo by Badaa)

Fake parts main cause of accidents

ARAB NEWS

RIYADH: Fake vehicle parts account for about half of road accident deaths in the Kingdom, an adviser to the director general of the Customs Department has claimed.

Eissa Al-Eissa said, "The number of people killed in road accidents on the Kingdom's roads in 2007 reached 6,000 and about half of these deaths were caused by the use of low quality spare parts, especially tires and brake pads."

Al-Eissa was presenting a paper on the danger of fake and imitation spare parts during a workshop that was opened by Saud Al-Fahd, assistant director of customs. He added customs officials should make sure that goods and individuals that enter the Kingdom through ports do not harm people's health and security. They should also protect the national economy from fake products, he said.

The Kingdom imports more than a million tons of spare parts worth SR29 billion annually. Abdul Mohsen Al-Shonaifi, supervisor of the risk management unit, estimated fake goods accounted for 45 percent of that total. He said more trained staff is needed as part of greater efforts to stop imports of fake spare parts.

Abdullah Al-Awad, director of Riyadh Customs, said his office had intensified its efforts to combat trade fraud, especially to prevent the import of fake and imitation auto spare parts.

"We have established a special department for the purpose," the official said. "We also make use of consultancy companies to prevent entry of fake products into the country."

Al-Awad reported an increase in commercial fraud in recent years as fraud traders are using increasingly innovative methods to import fake products. He called for a database to be established on the customs network in coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and chambers.

He added that the database should cover information about registered trademarks, manufacturing companies, their headquarters and production centers and vital information about the products.

Abdullah Al-Areefi of the Aalam Company for International Trademarks said many shops sell fake products, describing them as *tijari*. He added they also keep them in boxes that have the same color and size of genuine ones.

Defends resolution on religious defamation

RIYADH | ARAB NEWS

In response to the Obama administration's stance that an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) resolution on religious defamation was a violation of human rights, the OIC has said it is based on existing international

principles; assistant secretary of state for human rights, democracy and global human rights, said that an OIC resolution on religious defamation is "the UN's Human Rights Council far."

He said that a religion can be defamed by any comments that are derogatory to a religion can constitute a violation of human rights to us violates the

core principle of free speech," he said. However, OIC Secretary-General Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu said that the OIC position on defamation of religions was based on existing international covenants which have outlined limits to freedom of opinion and expression in cases of incitement to hatred on religious grounds.

He added that for the last 10 years OIC-sponsored resolutions on the defamation of religion have been passed by the General Assembly in New York and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The text of these resolutions has evolved over the years and, in its current form, is not restricted to Islam but denounces defamation of all religions, he said. "It is important to note that passage of these

resolutions by a majority vote beyond the membership of the OIC lends international legitimacy to the OIC position on this issue," Ihsanoglu said.

"It is, however, clear that there is a divergence of opinion on this issue as indicated by Michael Posner's statement. On our part, we are looking at the positive side encouraged by the recognition on both sides of the need to address the issue of discrimination and incitement to hatred on religious grounds", he added.

"I believe that the assistant secretary of state was referring to the recent consensual passage of the US and Egypt-sponsored resolution on the freedom of opinion and expression by consensus at the Human Rights Council in Geneva," said Ihsanoglu.

Arroyo thanks Alwaleed for donation

ARAB NEWS

JEDDAH: Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of the Alwaleed bin Talal Foundation, received a telephone call from President of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo thanking him for his generous donation to victims of Typhoon Ketsana. The donation will be used to

help alleviate the suffering of hundreds of people affected by the typhoon, which tore through the Philippines, submerging homes, triggering landslides and killing hundreds of people.

Prince Alwaleed made the donation during a meeting with Antonio Villamor, ambassador of the Philippines to Saudi Arabia.

