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## **Rays of recovery - Saudi construction sector grows 4pct**

*Friday, 12 Mar, 2010*

According to a report from the Ministry of Finance, real growth in the construction sector of Saudi Arabia reached 3.9% in 2009 with real estate growing by 1.8%.

As per report, sustained government expenditure and private sector investments continue to drive new real estate and construction projects across the country.

The report said that the Kingdom had set aside SAR 46 billion for various water, agriculture and infrastructure projects, representing an increase of 30% over the previous year. The new budget covers construction of water sources, dams and wells, water and sewage networks and water desalination plants.

In addition to a wide range of commercial and residential developments, Saudi Arabia has also embarked on a diverse range of education, transportation, agriculture and other infrastructure development projects, which has further boosted the demand for specialized construction technology and expertise.

The ministry said that large scale projects being launched in the country include around 1,200 new schools in addition to some 3,112 schools currently under construction and the rehabilitation of some 2,000 existing school buildings. About 6,400 kilometers of road will also be constructed, adding to 35,000 kilometers of roads currently under construction.

Mr Shahid Bhatti project manager of Saudi Build at Riyadh Exhibitions Company said that the positive growth trajectory has in turn generated a diverse range of business opportunities, while fuelling demand for the latest construction technologies, building material and equipment in the country.

Mr Bhatti said that the demand for space at the exhibition had risen sharply, as the favorable market conditions attract regional and international industry payers. The continued growth in international participation reflects the strength and huge potential of the Saudi market, while underscoring the strategic importance of Saudi Build or Saudi Stone 2010 as a gateway for international exhibitors and visitors to explore a wide range of business opportunities in the country.

He said that this year's edition is shaping up to achieve another record participation as real estate and construction market conditions remain bullish in Saudi Arabia. In fact, we have recently added Belgium, Egypt, UK, France and Taiwan to the growing list of country pavilions at the exhibition.

(Sourced from Trade Arabia)

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