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The Kingdom's AI Gambit



Saudi Arabia's latest move indicates that AI leadership is way past the West or East. And top tech giants believe that too.

Saudi Arabia's His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud recently announced the launch of **HUMAIN**, a PIF (Public Investment Fund) initiative to position the Kingdom as another global leader in the artificial intelligence race.

To quote HUMAIN: "What sets us apart is our unwavering commitment to unlock the AI value chain to serve as a global AI hub for strategic sectors, including Energy, Government, Financial Services, Sports, and beyond. Empowering the future of AI from leading AI infrastructure to advanced intelligence - A Global AI Powerhouse"

HUMAIN is a declaration that Saudi Arabia is here to become a leader in this new AI revolution. Do they have what it takes?

Igniting a Local AI Rebirth

The initiative will transform Saudi Arabia into a regional and global AI development and deployment hub. Partnerships are already being formed with some of the world's most influential tech companies, such as Nvidia, Qualcomm, AMD, Cisco, and AWS.

They are strategic collaborations designed to accelerate innovation and economic diversification.

The list also includes Microsoft and Google Cloud and is growing fast. Watch this space to see who else puts a vote of confidence in HUMAIN.

The Kingdom has been working on digital transformation for a few years, but at a slower pace

At a local level, I believe HUMAIN will ignite a technology rebirth within the Kingdom. I imagine a Saudi workforce with the skills to

build next-generation AI systems. I picture universities acting as incubators for machine learning research. I envision smart cities that learn from it in real-time to serve citizens better. This picture is the future that Saudi Arabia is actively investing in.

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HUMAIN will be **chaired** by HRH the Crown Prince himself, which shows the vote of confidence in this initiative.

From Oil to Algorithms

Economic growth is a major moving piece of this puzzle. With **Vision 2030**, Saudi Arabia set its sights on reducing its dependency on oil. HUMAIN aligns with that vision by promoting a knowledge-based economy.

We've discovered in recent months that artificial intelligence (AI) is about establishing new markets, businesses, and jobs (not just about robots and algorithms).

It is a strategic national shift from oil to artificial intelligence and digital innovation

AI has the ability to impact every industry, from finance to health tech and autonomous systems to climate modelling, and HUMAIN may be the key that opens up this potential for Saudi Arabia.

It is a strategic national shift from oil to artificial intelligence (AI) and digital innovation, paving the road to long-term sustainable development. Can you feel the shift and opportunity?

Shifting the Global Tech Power Map

No day goes by that we don't turn on the news without seeing the US and China in a headline as dominators of the AI narrative.

With HUMAIN, Saudi Arabia is stepping into the arena as another serious contender. It could serve as a wake-up call for other nations in the Middle East and beyond.

As I **wrote** recently, Europe is on the game board of AI leadership. Will the Middle East join the board? I believe it will. This shift elevates the Kingdom's status on the global AI map.

Creating Strategic Alliances

Let's dive into some of the partnerships that are setting the stage.

Nvidia has become synonymous with AI acceleration, and its collaboration with Saudi Arabia under HUMAIN brings key GPU infrastructure into the region. It means faster AI model training, local talent development, and a chance to contribute to global AI breakthroughs.

Qualcomm enables Saudi Arabia to lead in AI-powered mobile and edge computing technologies. This partnership promises to create a ripple effect of innovation from consumer electronics to smart city sensors in a region with a young, tech-savvy population.

AMD's involvement will strengthen the Kingdom's data centre capabilities, a foundational element for running complex AI workloads. When data sovereignty and speed matter, local capacity makes all the difference.

Cisco is laying down the digital arteries that will connect all of this, networking infrastructure, secure systems, and scalable platforms.

AWS, meanwhile, offers cloud flexibility and access to AI services that can democratise innovation. Through this partnership, startups and enterprises in Saudi Arabia will be able to build AI solutions at a global scale.



Nvidia's collaboration with Saudi Arabia under HUMAIN brings key GPU infrastructure into the region

Taken together, these alliances are about ecosystem building. That's the real power of HUMAIN, it's planting seeds that will grow into a self-sustaining AI economy. Together, they are also a multi-billion-dollar deal.

As for the challenges? As Saudi Arabia builds its AI infrastructure, it must invest in frameworks ensuring technology serves the people and not just those with the deepest pockets. We must empower youth and professionals with education and upskilling to thrive in an AI-first world.

When we think beyond borders, HUMAIN's success depends on its ability to connect, not compete. The partnerships forged today must evolve into collaborative ecosystems.

Saudi Arabia has the resources and the ambition and has already forged key alliances. It has a very strong start.

Shift from ambition to action

HUMAIN symbolises the Kingdom's shift from ambition and reliance to action and resilience, from looking outward for innovation to building it within.

Transformation isn't about copying models that worked elsewhere. It's about defining your own future, because what works somewhere else doesn't mean it will work in your backyard.

As we watch Saudi Arabia embark on this journey, remember, leadership in the age of AI is about vision, courage, and the will to build. The Kingdom has created a vision and is building it.

HUMAIN isn't just about artificial intelligence. It's about human potential

The launch of HUMAIN is just the beginning. I look forward to seeing how all the partnerships help the Kingdom's new journey evolve and develop.

In the end, HUMAIN isn't just about artificial intelligence. It's about human potential. If Saudi Arabia can reimagine itself as a global AI powerhouse, what's stopping the remaining countries from being on the board game?