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the Ministry of Defence & Aviation (MODA), which is adding to its 2,000 beds with eight projects, including three extensions; the Higher Education Ministry, which plans one new teaching hospital, and the National Guard which, like MODA, has already delayed carrying out some projects.

The private sector already has 3,400 beds in 24 hospitals, with a further 13 schemes detailed by Cunningham. But, because of the government's price controls and expansion plans, the survey expects the private share of health-care to halve, to 10 per cent, by 1988.

Although acting Health Minister Ghazi al-Gosaibi has recently started to attack Health Ministry inefficiencies, the government has yet to create the National Health Council it termed a priority in the 1981-85 development plan.

"As a result," Cunningham says, "the various government agencies, as well as the private sector, continue to compete with each other — especially in the major cities — to provide the most lavish service and to attract the most customers, while much of the rest of the country is still without adequate health-care services."

In 1980, Saudis accounted for only 4.6 per cent of Health Ministry doctors, a percentage which can only fall as new hospitals and clinics open. However, the need for foreign staff — substantially increased by traditional curbs on women working — is likely to increase opportunities for hospital management contracts. Cunningham expects the Health Ministry to overcome its distaste for subcontracting management. Similarly, construction and equipment supply opportunities are likely to remain good.

### Koreans bearish about Saudi market

Although South Korean contractors won new contracts valued at more than \$8,300 million in 1982, industry sources now view the Saudi market with pessimism, MEED has been told in Seoul. Industry leaders expect a 20 per cent overall downturn in the kingdom's 1983 contractual awards and concern is deepening about payments problems, notably non-payment of the final 10 per cent instalment due after a project's commissioning (see page 14). However, given Saudi Arabia's estimated 63 per cent share of all South Korea's new 1982 overseas construction work, Korean

contractors will continue to bid keenly (MEED 11 2 83).

According to unofficial overseas construction estimates, 56 South Korean firms won new Saudi contracts in 1982; this figure includes eight subcontractors to other South Korean firms. Four companies dominated, each with new work exceeding \$700 million. They are: **Hyundai Engineering & Construction Company** (\$980 million — or about 31 per cent of its overseas total), **Daelim Industrial Company** (\$775 million — 70 per cent), **Dong Ah Construction Industrial Company** (\$715 million — 89 per cent), and **Hanyang Corporation** (\$710 million — 74 per cent).

Four companies won new work valued at more than \$400 million. They are: **Dongsan Construction Industrial Company** (\$497.5 million), **Nam Kwang Construction Company** (\$474.5 million), **ICC Construction Company** (\$452.9 million) and **Samwhan Corporation** (\$39.5 million). A further five companies won work worth more than \$200 million; 10 more each won new contracts totalling more than \$100 million.

### IN BRIEF

o Low bidder for phase three of the Riyadh sewage treatment plant is a venture between Finland's **Yleinen Insinööri-toimisto (YIT)** and **CCC**, a 51.49 partnership between Prince Talal Ibn Abdel-Aziz and Lebanon's **Consolidated Contractors Company**. The SR 260 million (\$76 million) bid was followed by Riyadh-based **Arabian Co-operation Company** at SR 290 million (\$85 million), the local **Civil Works** at just \$500,000 more, and Japan's **Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries**.

o South Korea's **ICC Construction Company** has a letter of intent for a SR 203 million (\$59 million) sewage and water pipeline in Makkah, the Jeddah weekly Saudi Business says. It is also low bidder, at SR 289 million (\$84 million), for a similar contract. The first, 36-month contract, in the Raseefah district, involves 273 kilometres of pipeline, 11,000 home connections and two sewage pumping stations. The second is for 423 kilometres of pipes, three stations and seven reservoirs in the Aziziyya district. Consultant is a venture between Riyadh's **Saudconsult** and the UK's **John Taylor & Sons**.

o Long-standing port restrictions on transit facilities may be lifted soon. This could lead to what one high-level official described as a "tremendous boom" in re-export business. Deputy Commerce Minister Abdel-Rahman al-Zamil said recently "Saudi Arabia will become a re-export transit area very soon." He added that Gulf Co-operation Council

regulations planned to lift trade restrictions between members would help the new business. "Nobody," he said, "has as good a set of (transport) facilities in the Middle East today as Saudi Arabia — or a more active private sector which moves very fast to fill our needs."

o State-backed **Saudi Consulting House** is to study projected domestic demand for polyvinyl chloride (PVC), according to local reports. The survey is to be done for the Industry & Electricity Ministry, which has already issued licences to two companies to make 72,000 tonnes a year of PVC compounds. This is expected to meet local needs. The compounds are used to manufacture plastics products, such as bottles, pipes, doors, window frames, shoes and toys.

o South Korea's **Samsung Construction Company** has a \$155 million turnkey contract to build the Human Resources Development Institute at Yanbu. Client is the Royal Commission for Jubail & Yanbu; construction time is three years. Work on the 650,000-square-metre site includes buildings over a total 130,000 square metres, and full landscaping and infrastructure. As well as bachelor and married quarters, work includes buildings for administration, vocational training, basic education, sports, medical and religious purposes.

o Belgium's **Nobels-Peelman** has a 100 million Belgian franc (\$2.1 million) contract to supply and erect metal structures for a 16,000-square-metre medical study centre in Riyadh. The contract was won against tough competition from South Korean and Japanese companies, according to Brussels reports. It is one of Nobels-Peelman's first major export orders since it was rescued from financial difficulties in 1982 by the Flemish regional government and local banks.

## SYRIA

### Damascus faces summer water shortages

Testing of the natural spring at Figeih, west of Damascus, is to go ahead in autumn 1983 to work out ways of increasing the spring's summer outflow. The work is being done with some urgency by two US companies, **Gilbert & Associates** and **P E LaMoreaux & Associates**.

The spring, which is the capital's only source of drinking water, flows at about 20-30 cubic feet a second in winter. However, during the summer the flow drops to about four cubic feet a second. With the rapid and continuing population expansion, Damascus will soon be facing summer water shortages.

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