

Saudi Arabia Lifts Cinema Ban

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Category : Lifestyle/Entertainment

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **cease** / **sis** / (v) – to stop
Example: The government decided to **cease** the screening of the popular film because of its offensive content.
- 2. **conservative** / **kən'sɜr və tɪv** / (adj) – traditional
Example: The country was able to preserve its **conservative** culture.
- 3. **notion** / **'nɒʊ ʃən** / (n) – a general opinion on something
Example: There is a **notion** that the town is not safe to visit.
- 4. **box-office** / **'bɒks,ɔ fɪs, -ɒf ɪs** / (adj) – relating to a successful film
Example: The movie, which is a **box-office** hit, received a lot of praises from viewers.
- 5. **depleted** / **dɪ'plɪt ɪd** / (adj) – used up or dwindling
Example: Resources are becoming **depleted** because of the country’s high population.

Article

Read the text below.

Saudi Arabia is now allowing movie theaters to operate 35 years after the cinema ban was implemented.

In the 1980s, the Saudi Arabian government **ceased** the operations of cinemas, which was a move prompted by the country’s **conservative** culture and the **notion** that Western movies are immoral. But in December last year, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman decided to lift the ban as part of the modernization plans for the country.

Black Panther, one of Hollywood’s **box-office** hits, was the first Western film screened in cinemas in Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh, / ri'yɒd / after the ban’s lifting. The film revolves around the fictional African kingdom called Wakanda, which is ruled by a young king who decided to utilize its resources for the common good.

Reports say that *Black Panther*’s plot reflects Saudi Arabia’s situation. Like Wakanda, the country is dependent mainly on its natural resources, particularly oil. Because oil reserves have greatly contributed to Saudi Arabia’s wealth, Prince Salman aims to utilize these resources for the country’s political and economic reorganization before they become **depleted**.

According to the Saudi Arabian government, the lifting of the ban on cinemas is in line with Prince Salman’s “Vision 2030,” a program that focuses on economic and social reforms. Culture and Information Minister Dr. Awwad Alawwad believes that the revival of cinemas will benefit the local economy as it boosts household spending on entertainment. At the same time, it will provide job opportunities in the country.

By 2030, the government aims to establish around 350 cinemas to cater to Saudi Arabia’s population of over 32 million.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Do you think that a cinema ban is enough to protect a country’s conservative culture? Explain.

- Aside from Black Panther, what other movies do you think should be screened in Saudi Arabia? Why?

Discussion B

- Would you consider your country’s cinema industry successful? Explain.

- How would you feel if your government decides to stop the operations of cinemas? Discuss.