

the arabian sun

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a weekly Saudi Aramco publication for employees



Aramco gears up for Formula 1 in 2020 and beyond

As a result of a milestone sponsorship deal, we've put our fuels, lubes, brand, and capabilities in pole position before massive F1 audience.

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CEO to YLAB: Life isn't perfect; be prepared for setbacks

Sixty of our youngest and brightest employees gathered online for a warm virtual welcome to the YLAB Academy from Aramco president and CEO.

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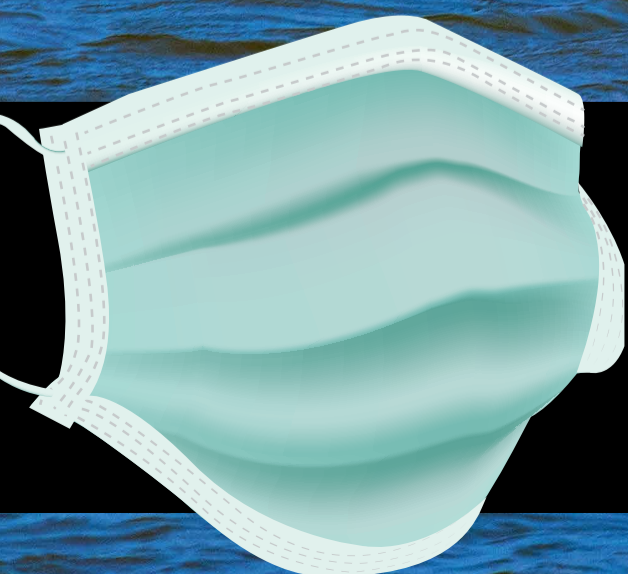
nature comes first at island paradise

oil and gas operation protects Abu Ali Island

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Beneath a light-filled Arabian Gulf sky, elegant flamingos wade and feed on the turquoise shoreline in front of Aramco's Abu Ali Island gas-oil separation plant and adjacent marine logistics base for workers transferring to and from the company's many offshore platforms. (Photo: Ahmad El Itani/MPD)



With restrictions now lifted ...
we must not become complacent in controlling COVID-19

Do Your Part by
Wearing a Mask in Public

maintain physical distancing
of 2 meters at all times



F1 – benefiting our business

company puts its fuels, lubricants, brand and its capabilities in pole position in front of massive Formula 1 audience

by Eamonn Houston

Dhahran — Aramco's global partner sponsorship with Formula 1 (F1) is designed to meet a mix of business objectives at the right time.

lubricants and retail positioning

The impending launch of lubricants and our retail fuel initiative bring Aramco in touch with consumers and the need to position the company competitively in this space. The F1 platform builds the consumer connection with racing and performance expected from these products. Aramco secured the rights to use the F1 endorsement on its lubricant products.

awareness building

F1 has a massive fan base of more than 500 million and a television audience of 1.9 billion, and Aramco's sponsorship provides a unique opportunity to raise the brand profile of the company to new markets and customers.

The sponsorship will introduce the company to millions of on-target audience members to build our reputation as a forward-thinking, fully integrated energy and chemicals company.

grow familiarity with our business

F1 provides a platform for the company to share stories about its capabilities and technologies through a lens that audiences can understand. Complex topics such as nonmetallics can be explained through the example of the value of lightweight, stronger materials used in F1 vehicles to enhance efficiency and performance.

promoting our efforts in ESG

As an official partner of the F1 season, we will use the platform to showcase the company's commitments to engineering, performance, and "future fuels" that ad-

dress global expectations on emissions reduction and transport efficiency.

Aramco is at the forefront of the energy industry's efforts to develop the fuels of the future for the automotive industry and the wider transport sectors.

Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser said, "As the world's largest energy supplier and an innovation leader, we have the ambition to find game changing solutions for better performing engines and cleaner energy."

F1 CEO Chase Carey lauded the new opportunity to exchange expertise.

"We are looking forward to sharing our combined expertise and working with Aramco on technological innovation, and we will benefit hugely from its capabilities and expertise in the fuel and energy

sector," Carey said.

F1 is already using fuels with a significantly reduced carbon footprint, and the partnership with Aramco will highlight the company's efforts in greenhouse gas mitigation and boost its reputation as a global corporate citizen.

As car specifications are set by F1 for future years of racing, Aramco has an opportunity to shape the technologies adopted to support the company's view on the optimal efficiency solutions for transport globally and to prove the performance of those solutions in one of the world's most exciting and toughest sports.

“As the world's largest energy supplier and an innovation leader, we have the ambition to find game changing solutions for better performing engines and cleaner energy.

— Amin Nasser

aramco aramco aramco

The Aramco brand gets a big boost through its Formula 1 sponsorship, as the sport has a massive fan base of over 500 million and a television audience of 1.9 billion. The sponsorship deal provides a unique opportunity to raise the brand profile of the company.

your voice

so-so automation and the future of work



by Manar Sughayer
Dhahran
Manar.Sughayer@aramco.com

The first ever task that was assigned to me as a co-op student at Aramco was to develop a program that will automate the generation of a management report that the department called "management dashboard." That program was much more productive than humane. It reduced multiple days of work to seconds. Therefore, when I heard the term "so-so automation" in an episode of a podcast, I was immediately intrigued. So, what is so-so automation? And, why do I think it is the future of work?

Let us define automation first. Wikipedia defines it as a technology by which a process or procedure is performed with minimal human assistance, the key phrase here is "minimal human assistance," or in simple terms, replacing humans with a machine (job loss). However, studies show that if automation is done correctly, it increases the productivity of the tasks it is doing, which in turn creates a job somewhere else. A perfect example of this is the automation in manufacturing cars where huge robots replaced human workers. This sig-

nificantly increased the number of cars produced, which increases the demand in the sales and marketing departments. This is called a productivity effect.

However, so-so automation, according to MIT Professor Daron Acemoglu and Boston University's Pascual Restrepo, is an automation that does not have the productivity effect. This means job loss in one area without the increase to demand in other areas. One example they used was the automated customer service over the phone.

The new risk of a lockdown that the COVID-19 crisis has introduced to business will play a major role in the rise of so-so automation. Automation will no longer be looked at as a cost saving or productivity improvement only, but also a business continuity solution. Replacing humans alone will be enough of a motive to businesses to invest on automating its processes. We might even see business sacrifice productivity for the sake of continuity. Combine this with the roll out of the much-anticipated 5G network along with artificial intelligence

and machine learning becoming more mainstream, and you have a great environment for business to invest in so-so automation.

Governments will also play a big role in this. Lawmakers could introduce policies that encourages automation such as the social distancing laws in the workplace. They could also relax some laws that discourage automation such as the laws around self-driving cars where it is required to have a human that has full control on the car's behavior at all times.

The truth is we are living in extraordinary times. The future is more uncertain than ever. Any talks about it, including this article, is an educational guess at best.

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing our lives forever. It will go down in history with an equal importance as the Great Depression and World War I and II. Our kids and grandkids and their kids to follow will have a COVID-19 chapter in their school's textbooks. Let us hope that they study our reaction to it with admiration and not disappointment.

Your Voice reflects the thoughts and opinions of the writer, and not necessarily those of the publication.

YLAB Academy goes virtual

CEO to YLAB: Life isn't perfect; be prepared for setbacks

by Janet Pinheiro

Dhahran — In a wide-ranging virtual discussion this week with 60 of the company's youngest and brightest employees from across the business, Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser tasked the group of potential young leaders to engage in challenging issues, such as climate change.

To the employees gathered online to compete for one of 16 leadership positions at the Young Leaders Advisory Board (YLAB) Academy, Nasser described climate change as the "single biggest challenge we face going forward as an organization, and as individual citizens of this planet."

"How can YLAB make even more of an impact, including in areas like tackling climate change, for example," he commented.

In turn, the group pursued the digital opportunity to quiz Nasser about some of the biggest social, environmental and health challenges of our times, including the COVID-19 market impact, the YLAB's role in Aramco's growth strategy, acquisition of 70% stake in SABIC, brand positioning as a newly listed company, and strategy for a younger leadership.

virtual connection

The group, all aged under 35 years and selected from hundreds of applicants, were linked up for a six-day academy as part of an exceptional opportunity to serve the company through YLAB, which was established by the company in 2011 to capitalize on incorporating "youth" into its corporate strategy.

A hallmark of our COVID-19 environment is using technology to connect, and Nasser signed into day two of the gathering from the Dhahran executive headquarters.

Expressing a wish that he and the group could all meet together in person, Nasser added, "Meeting virtually is the next best thing."

prepare for the unpredictable

In the context of the global pandemic, Nasser noted that when he last spoke to YLAB in January, he had advised, "Be prepared to overcome challenges — not only the ones we can anticipate, but those we cannot predict."

On Tuesday, Nasser reflected, "I didn't



Talking with 60 employees selected from hundreds of applicants to compete to lead the company's advisory board for employees under age 35, Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser said that when it comes to the health of people and our climate, "We are each a link in a chain that is only as strong as its weakest link." (Photos: Ahmad El Itani/MPD)

expect these words to become so real, so quickly."

He added that just as the global economy was challenged by the pandemic, so was the company.

"Our unique low-cost base, and the resilience of our talented workforce, are significant differentiators that will enable us to withstand the headwinds better than the others," he added.

youthful Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's population is growing younger, and YLAB assists Aramco management to connect with its 69,000 in-Kingdom workforce, where more than half of them are 35 years old or younger.

In hindsight, Nasser said, the YLAB had proved successful for the company, adding, "It has been a catalyst for transformation and change, as well as a way to find and nurture talented young men and women."

Recognizing not everyone can be selected for the latest YLAB cohort, he urged Academy participants to not see it "as the end, but rather as a beginning."

"This is an opportunity for you to turn a short-term disappointment into a long-term catalyst for personal and professional growth, with a renewed focus on continuing to build your leadership skills," Nasser added.

The cohort of 60 for this year's YLAB Academy were tasked by the CEO to find ways to engage past and present participants and to "re-invent YLAB for the next decade."

ready to do battle

Every 18 months, from all career paths and business streams, hundreds of employees under age 35 apply for the chance to be a member of the YLAB.

The early career candidates battle through rigorous scrutiny measuring their professional and personal abilities, before a selected 60 attend the six-day academy, where they present to a judging panel on a corporate challenge.

Although this year's workshop is online, final judging may continue as a location-based event — upholding the traditional value of people sitting together to discuss things.

Before concluding his discussion with the YLAB Academy, Nasser spoke about his personal experiences and said that the ability to deal with disappointments would help one succeed in their career and also in life.

"Life isn't perfect and we have to be prepared for setbacks. But how we handle them will help you succeed in your career and in life in the future," Nasser said.

diversity and inclusion

Delivering a digital welcome alongside Nasser, was Strategy and Market Analysis

vice president Yasser M. Mufti, who said the YLAB was a mechanism for emerging leaders to inform and advise the company.

"Your active engagement also allows us to address existing age and gender gaps in the organization, and to be a more diverse and inclusive company — which is vital as we enter new operational areas, new markets and new geographies," said Mufti.

Advising that authentic leaders are measured by the respect they command, he noted, "Respect is always earned, ladies and gentlemen, never simply given."

authentic storytelling

During the academy's first day, Public Affairs general manager Fahad K. Al-Dhubaib spoke to the candidates ahead of a storytelling workshop, advising that every leader needs well-perfected communication skills.

"Every leader must be a good communicator," said Al-Dhubaib. "Each of you have a responsibility to become the very best communicators you can be."

Using the current pandemic as an example, he said effective communication requires empathy, "It is empathy that drives engagement."

nine years young

Saudi Arabia is a young nation where more than half its 34 million people are under the age of 30, and with an annual increase of 2.52%, the Kingdom will be one of the youngest nations on Earth by 2030.

Recognizing its shifting workforce demographic toward a younger composition, Aramco facilitated a youthful perspective within its business through the YLAB, and the employee construct is set to celebrate its 10th anniversary next year.

Those chosen for board roles voluntarily serve an 18-month term, undertaken in addition to their normal work roles.



Connected from his office to this week's YLAB Academy, Strategy and Market Analysis vice president Yasser M. Mufti congratulated the candidates on their progress so far, and thanked them for their continuing contributions to Aramco.



Addressing YLAB candidates from his desk, Public Affairs general manager Fahad K. Al-Dhubaib stressed the importance of strong and authentic leader communication in modern corporate workplaces.

Aramco showcases expertise and capabilities at international pipelines event

by Brian Binoy

San Diego — Pipelines are considered lifelines in the transport of oil and gas. With over 23,000 kilometers of pipelines, this makes Aramco the world's largest single hydrocarbon network. The company's participation in the Pipeline Research Council International (PRCI) and its 2020 Research Exchange Meeting (REX-2020) underscores the company's technical and operational expertise and

commitment to work safely, responsibly, and sustainably seeking innovative solutions and utilizing the state-of-the-art knowledge.

Aramco served as a gold sponsor for this event.

Members of the Pipelines, Distribution and Terminals (PD&T) Projects and Technical Support Department (P&TSD) of PD&T served as ambassadors, and were the sole Middle Eastern company present at the event, bringing a unique set of geographical challenges to the forefront of the association.

Mohammad A. Al-Hatlani, Pipelines general manager and a member of the PRCI Executive Assembly, said, "Aramco membership on PRCI is essential to enable access to international pipelines research and development. Al-Hatlani added that the partnership and knowledge exchange with key pipeline international companies and research centers is an important enabler on our efforts toward achieving the highest level of safety, integrity, and reliability of our pipelines.

PRCI: an opportunity to contribute and collaborate

PRCI was established in 1952 as the Pipeline Research Committee for pipeline companies in North America, then start-



Husain Muslim explains the value of leveraging PRCI research data in pipeline operations during the annual Research Exchange Meeting earlier this year.

Pipeline research topics

Aramco representatives at this year's PRCI Research Exchange Meeting suggested a number of new topics for consideration:

- Pipeline mid-Wall Defect Detection
- Re-Inspection Intervals for Corroded Pipelines
- Pipeline Integrity Linear Stationing
- Solar Powered Valve Actuator
- Gas Pipeline Valves Spacing Assessment
- Valve Stem Packing Material
- Cathodic Protection Assessment Using Fiber Optics
- Detection and Tracking UAV Attacks
- Gas Turbine Performance Prognostics

ed expansion internationally in 1980.

Walid Al-Kulaibi, P&TSD manager, said, "The knowledge sharing forum created by PRCI provides Aramco with an opportunity to contribute and collaborate with experts in the direction, implementation, and adoption of research with a high value proposition to the pipeline industry."

Aramco Pipelines management has also participated in the PRCI Executive Assembly as a member and voted for key strategic projects that will be sponsored by PRCI. Moreover, Aramco submitted

and collaborated in several new research topics to be voted on by PRCI members at the upcoming executive assembly.

"We leverage PRCI research data in our pipeline operations," said Husain M. Muslim, senior pipeline integrity engineer in PD&T.

Abdulaziz N. Ababtain, pipelines operation foreman, noted, "These kinds of events give Aramco the opportunity to showcase their technical capabilities and benchmark with other companies within the industry."

3-D printing tool shows promise in Riyadh pilot

Digitalization and 3-D printing are opening a number of opportunities to Aramco and other companies Kingdomwide, as they benefit from reduced manufacturing time and improve the timely delivery of critical parts.

Aramco recently partnered with Siemens Gas and Power to manufacture and deploy our first metallic pump impeller using additive manufacturing (AM) technology. The tool was designed for use at the Riyadh Refinery. Its installation was part of a strategy to build needed experience and be ready for this transformational technology in the oil and gas industry.

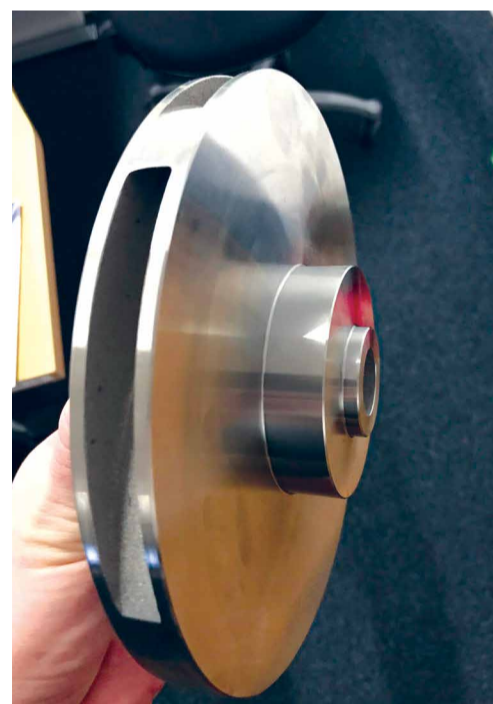
The technology presents an opportunity to move from a physical to a digital model in warehousing spare parts, greatly simplifying the supply chain and optimization of the investments in these parts.

"Building in-house additive manufacturing hands-on experience will make Aramco an industry leader in adapting such distributive technology," said Abdullah Al-Gham-

di, head of the Consulting Service Department's rotating Equipment Division. "This new manufacturing process will bring great benefits to the company, and this is in-line with the company move to maximize benefits from digital transformation."

As a pilot, to build experience and validate the AM's capability, the team chose to create a 3-D model of a water circulation pump. The model, a digital twin, can be used to manufacture the impeller "as-is" or to redesign it for performance improvement. In the pilot, the final impeller was made from 316 stainless steel, a higher grade material than the original's cast iron, which suffered failure due to corrosion.

After exhaustive testing and inspection, the tool was used at Riyadh Refinery over a period of five months, and was found in very good condition. Also, the operation conditions indicated compliance with the original impeller performance. Therefore, the team decided to return the impeller to the pump for continuous operation.



After post-processing (no heat treatment).



After printing (printing time 64 hours).



Area IT Department: 'The key to safety is all in the head' — launches innovative safety helmet idea

The Area IT Department Information Technology (IT) Delivery Support Group has come up with an innovative idea for a safety helmet that integrates vital items of first-aid safety equipment in a fire resistance bag.

The department has been encouraging employees to publish their ideas and share their knowledge, and Abdullah M. Alamri has answered the call with the idea for a new safety helmet.

The innovation includes a built-in "Re-

sistor Bag" made of plastic vinyl, including: First aid contents such as plasters, bandages, an alcohol pad, scissors, gloves, sterile wipes, tape, mask, burn cream, and sterile eye dressings. These items can be accessed without the need to remove the safety helmet.

Alamri explained, "We can utilize the helmet with integral first aid in areas where there is no nearby first aid available, such as a boat's radar deck, platforms, rigs, piers, and open areas, such

as buildings, gas plants, and onshore and offshore areas.

"Safety is everyone's business in the workplace and fosters harmony in our community by taking ownership of safety procedures.

"The ideas and innovation created by the department provides sustainable benefits for everyone throughout the world and facilitates our role to generate our efforts to reach our target goals," Alamri said.

creativity saving lives

Ithra produces 2,200 3-D protective face shields for front-line workers in the fight against COVID-19



Dhahran — In solidarity with national efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19, and as part of its mission to translate ideas into easily implemented solutions addressing social and creative challenges, the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture's (Ithra) Idea Lab facility has designed, produced, and manufactured more than 2,200 3-D protective face shields for distribution to medical staff and front-line workers.

The initiative looks to benefit the wider community dealing with the virus on a daily basis by focusing on service industries and supporting government efforts to contain the virus.

volunteers, partners develop a creative solution

Ithra commissioned its in-house Innovation Program team to produce the face shields in cooperation with local digital manufacturing experts Namthaja, and additional machine donations from the National Talents Co.

The Ithra-produced shields used a six-stage manufacturing process covering design, print preparation, printing, assembling, sterilization, packaging, and distribution. Importantly, they adhere to the World Health Organization's required standards for deployment in medical facilities.



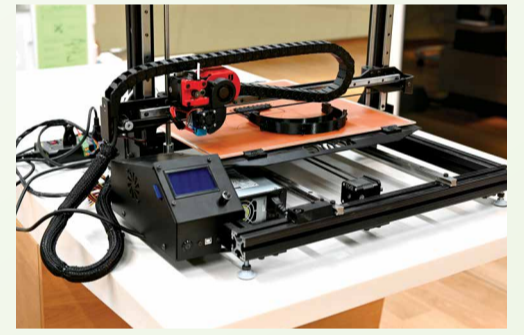
Sixteen volunteers participated in the production process by working six hours a day over several weeks. Through this community outreach initiative, Ithra seeks to target young volunteers and volunteer teams by providing them with development opportu-

nities designed to share knowledge, build and develop personal skills, in addition to developing practical skills.

Idea Lab brings concepts to life

The 3-D face shield initiative is another innovative product out of the Idea Lab, Ithra's center for creativity. The Idea Lab focuses on idea translation and bringing concepts to life through design thinking and prototyping. It holds year-round workshops, talks, panels, and discussions on creativity and ideation, and is home to Ithra's Creativity Season (Tanween).

All of this comes as yet another proactive response from Ithra addressing the current public situation. The initiative aligns with the precautionary measures that the Kingdom has undertaken under the slogan "We're all responsible" to fight the COVID-19 virus by urging social distancing, wearing of masks, adhering to hygiene recommendations, and staying home as part of a series of efforts to reduce the spread of the virus.



3-D printer machine.



Sixteen volunteers participated in the production process by working six hours a day over several weeks. (Photos: Ahmed Al Thani)



The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture's (Ithra) Idea Lab facility has designed, produced, and manufactured more than 2,200 3-D protective face shields for distribution to medical staff and front-line workers. The initiative looks to benefit the wider community dealing with the virus on a daily basis by focusing on service industries and supporting government efforts to contain the virus.



latest edition



- > An insight into SABIC
- > The start of our new normal
- > Generous contributions
- > A new 'Hope' is born

nature comes first at isla

by Janet Pinheiro

(Photos: Ahmad El Itani/MPD)

Early morning sun rays brighten the soft winter air at Abu Ali, a pristine island where white sand shores stretch into far-reaching views, and sunlit ripples of Arabian Gulf

waters sparkle like diamonds.

Situated north of Jubail city, Abu Ali Island spans 120 square kilometers and is Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province at its environmental finest.

In the distance — as far as the eye can see — is a green sea of lush mangrove

forests, where breezes laced with seasonal rain gently explores around the trees' vivid green leaves, steadfast branches, and roots.

Look in the other direction and Aramco's oil and gas operating facility and marine logistics base emerges on

the horizon. Concealed deep beneath is Berri oil field.

The oil field's rich seagrass meadows and coral reefs are major foraging areas for threatened species of marine turtles, some of whom nest along the shore of Abu Ali Island each spring.



strictly no fishing

Aramco is unwaveringly serious about protecting Abu Ali Island, giving Nature the utmost priority.

To protect and preserve her island home, the company together with Saudi Arabia's Coast Guard, strictly control access to Abu Ali's shores, dunes, *sabkha* plains, inter-tidal mud and sand flats, and mangrove salt marshes.

Fishing is not permitted anywhere on the island — not even by the 350 workers accommodated at the company's residential camp.

Ras Tanura Producing Department manager Naif A. Sulami says Aramco is committed to protecting the island's biodiversity through its many initiatives such as mangrove plantations and nurseries, shoreline cleanups, and artificial nests.

"The key to a greener planet is in our hands and we work together to protect Abu Ali Island," said Sulami.



Aramco Biodiversity Protection Area

Within this charming site of the Kingdom's biodiversity, Aramco facilities occupy about 5% of the island's land area, where both land and sea creatures thrive contentedly to a discrete backdrop of pipes and tanks noiselessly processing 250,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

Scientists recently identified Abu Ali Island as one of 18 biologically significant areas under Aramco's stewardship, and in January 2014, was the first of 10 areas to be formally designated by the company as a "Aramco Biodiversity Protection Area."

start of mangrove plantings

Environmental Protection Department environmental consultant Ronald Loughland explains that the goal of the designation is to protect important habitats, species and landscapes, and to enhance the plant and animal life species that naturally occur, or historically occurred, within the designated area.

"Abu Ali Island is important because it contains many salt tolerant plant species, and was significant in initially demonstrating the success of undertaking mangrove plantations," he said.

"In the early 1990s, 100 mangrove



seedlings were planted on the island. These flourished, and today there is a mature 7-hectare mangrove forest occurring as a result of that initial plantation effort."

Loughland says the success of the island's mangrove forest led Aramco to plant more than 2 million mangroves in the Eastern Province.

"We thought if we could get seven hectares of forest at Abu Ali from 100 seedlings, what happens if we plant more," he added.

home to abundant species

Abu Ali Island provides habitats for a multitude of fauna and flora species.

In the aquamarine waters of an inlet adjacent to oil and gas pipes and separation tanks, birds busily forage among the abundant fish, shellfish, and marine vegetation.

With its natural projection into the Arabian Gulf, the island is a land bridge assisting many migrating birds with their annual migration across the Gulf, providing much needed habitats to rest and feed, before stretching their wings to continue their long journey, and disappear into an expansive horizon toward Asia, Africa, or Europe.

preservation in everyone's hands

Abu Ali Island's ecologically important flora and fauna sustains many sensitive species, and Ras Tanura Producing Department environmental coordinator Khalil Ur Rehman says the company works hard to eliminate negative physical impacts on the site.

"I am proud to be working for an oil and gas company which always goes the extra mile in protecting the environment," said Rehman, who holds a master's degree in environmental sciences.

"We explain to our employees and contractors that Abu Ali's preservation is in their hands, and Aramco expects everyone to follow the rules to protect the island."

Adding that all waste is removed to an approved facility, and domestic or feral animals are managed, he says driving is enforced to paved access roads: "Careless off-road driving disturbs the sand, damages vegetation and root systems, and can kill smaller creatures living underground."

Beneath a light filled Arabian Gulf sky, elegant flamingos wade and feed on the turquoise shoreline in front of Aramco's Abu Ali Island gas-oil separation plant and adjacent marine logistics base for workers transferring to and from the company's many offshore platforms.



Abu Ali is part of more than 1,200 km² of tantalizing biodiversity living within Aramco's onshore producing areas.

● Aramco Biodiversity Protection Area
● Company area of significant biodiversity

Aramco's environmental preservation and restoration work at Abu Ali Island is helping to manage crucial bird migration corridors, which have existed for millennia.



nd paradise | oil and gas operation protects Abu Ali Island

magical mangrove forests nature's tree connecting land and sea

Flamboyant dragonflies delicately hover like helicopters on top of an enchanting Abu Ali Island mangrove forest, and among the roots, crabs fastidiously conceal themselves, spiders build nests with artistic exactness, and seedlings sprout with the promise of continuing life.

The hovering abundance of dragonflies and other creatures is testimony to

the overall environmental health and conservation management at the island.

Mangrove forests are an especially precious member of nature's wonderland.

Growing at the front-line between land and seawater, these bilingual trees delicately talk the languages of both seawater and coastal shores.

The hardworking trees complete an impressive list of tasks — magically purifying salt water to freshwater, providing habitats for abundant seafood, and nurseries for fish and shrimp.

Their dense roots rely on high and low tides to breathe, and are key toward stabilizing coastlines, preventing erosion from waves and storms, and reducing coastal damage.

sensitively managing production increase

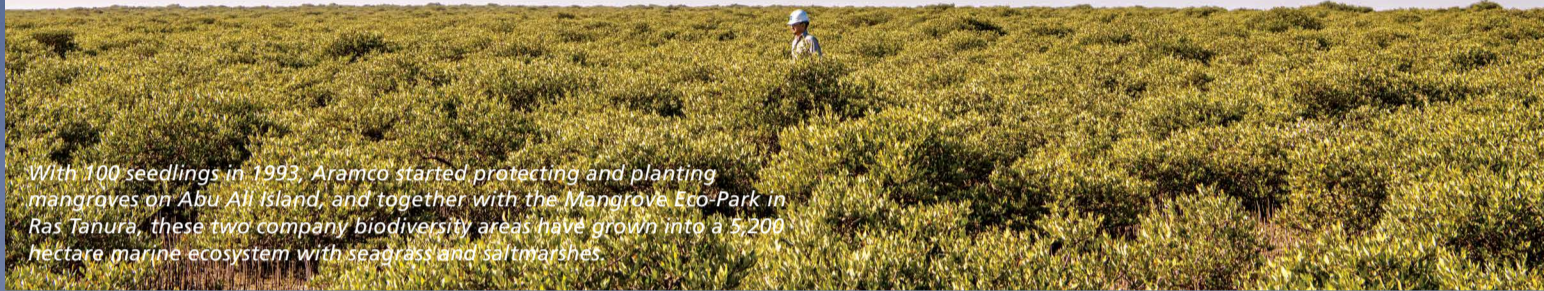
Aramco announced plans last year to increase the Marjan and Berri oil fields' production capacity.

At Abu Ali Island, the increment will see a new gas-oil separation plant to process 500,000 barrels per day, construction of a new camp increasing accommodation from 255 to 500 rooms, and removal of the old camp.

Northern Area Oil Operations vice president Dawood M. Al-Dawood says, "The increment will ensure that Aramco remains a reliable energy provider to the world, and that careful implementation will safeguard and enhance Northern Area Oil Operation's biodiversity.

"Hydrocarbon operations and a clean environment can co-exist if done correctly," said Al-Dawood.

"Northern Area Oil Operations is embarking on a major biodiversity initiative in partnership with the Environmental Protection Department to protect, increase and promote biodiversity in our northern marine and coastal operational areas," he added.



With 100 seedlings in 1993, Aramco started protecting and planting mangroves on Abu Ali Island, and together with the Mangrove Eco-Park in Ras Tanura, these two company biodiversity areas have grown into a 5,200 hectare marine ecosystem with seagrass and saltmarshes.



restoring nature's ancient wisdom



Growing up in Qatif, Majed S. Hamzah remembers playing with his brothers and friends in its mangrove forests.

"Many mangroves grew in Qatif, some reaching 7 meters," recalls the Ras Tanura Producing Department environmental coordinator. "There were lots of big crabs, and we would catch the fish in the water using our hands, and then let them go."

Standing in one of Abu Ali Island's mangrove forests, quietly modest

Hamzah says: "We feel proud that we have such a huge amount of mangroves."

"Areas where Aramco operates contain the last existing healthy mangrove forests in the Arabian Gulf," adds Hamzah, who has worked for Aramco for 18 years.

Since taking stewardship of the island, beginning in 1971 Aramco built two mangrove tree nurseries, from which two mangrove forests have been planted.





a gahwa renaissance

by Shaistha Khan

As Zayed al-Tamimi's brass pestle hits the mortar, its rhythmic clink resounds with the crunch of coffee beans through the hall of the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center. On a display screen above him, close ups of his motions attract the eyes of coffee professionals and enthusiasts. Watching most closely is the panel of four judges.

Al-Tamimi has traveled from Iraq to the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to compete in the first-ever *Gahwa* Championships, held in December. He is preparing a signature pot of *gahwa* — the Arabic word for coffee — as he vies for honors in the category of Sane' Al Gahwa, (literally, "Maker of the Coffee"). As he drops thick pods of cardamom and delicate threads of saffron into the mortar to crush with the beans, he fuses all he has learned about centuries-old Arab coffee making.

As the competitions hit a stride, attendees discuss the importance of coffee making across the whole of the Arab world, and how it is not just a matter of a dark- or light-roast beverage served with optional sugar and milk. Arab *gahwa* is a ceremonial affair, each pour symbolic of the historical and social significance of coffee drinking and an embodiment of hospitality. Coffee is synonymous with Arab hospitality.

In his 1982 poem "Memory for Forgetfulness," the late, celebrated Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish described the first cup of morning coffee as the "mirror of the hand." He continued: "And the



NOORAN AL BANNAI
Coffee Architecture

hand that makes the coffee reveals the person that stirs it. Therefore, coffee is the public reading of the open book of the soul. And it is the enchantress that reveals whatever secrets the day will bring."

So important is *gahwa* in the Arab world the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) included *gahwa* in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar in the agency's 2015 Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The design-

nation recognized the value of preserving the historical customs and traditions of coffee drinking in these nations.

Eid Bin Saleh Al Rashid of Saudi Arabia's Royal Hospitality House Group, and one of the supporters for the UNESCO designation, emphasized coffee's importance for the future of culture in his country, "given its symbolic meaning for national identity and to preserve and pass this element to younger generations."

In the desert at the eastern edge of the

vast Rub' al-Khali, heritage guides Waesam Fathalla and Ali al-Baloushy are doing just that. They share centuries-old coffee traditions with tourists, in much the same way their tribes shared with visitors centuries ago: out under the stars, sheltered by a tent, sitting with friends on floor cushions.

Like all good *gahwa*, they begin with green, unroasted Arabica or Robusta beans. Over a makeshift pit of hot coals and sand, Fathalla roasts the beans in a shallow, circular pan with a handle long enough to keep his hands safely away from the fire. The beans bounce back and forth revealing a golden-brown shade and a faint floral aroma. Fathalla explains that while Saudi tradition favors light, blonde roasts, Emirati purists favor darker roasts. Once the beans are ready, they are removed from the fire and ground into powder using a mortar and pestle. Water boils in a *dalah*, or metal coffee pot, and nutmeg, clove, or cinnamon is added before the coffee.

Throughout the centuries, coffee has been a unifying drink, something to do with family and friends old and new. The spices and flavoring in it can signal one's economic status, level of respect for a guest, or both. Coffee recipes with saffron and rose water demonstrated wealth and regard for a guest most clearly.

Al-Baloushy begins to explain the role of the *gahwaji* or server of the coffee, as his assistant begins pouring. The *gahwaji* holds the *dalah* in his left hand and balances in his right hand a stack of *finajin* (handless cups; one cup is a *finjan*). He gently clinks the cups together to signal the coffee is ready.

Although there are regional preferences and variations in both the preparation and serving of *gahwa*, the basics of the ceremony remain much the same from place to place.





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excerpted from the March/April 2020 edition of *AramcoWorld* magazine

Al-Baloushy tries the first cup to determine if the coffee is suitably tasty. Then he begins serving the first of three rounds. The first guest cup is al-dhaif, and it cannot be refused without risking insult to the hosts. The coffee is a gift, the men explain, and it establishes trust. To each guest as the *gahwaji* hands out the cups, al-Baloushy says, "You are welcome."

The heart of the ceremony, he says, is hospitality, a cherished Bedouin value. As nomads, Bedouins often lived in harsh conditions with scarce resources. They relied on reciprocal generosity among the communities and tribes they encountered. Still today, any traveler or visitor, as was the custom of their older tribesmen, is always hosted, sheltered, and fed for three days and three nights with no questions asked. All visitors receive a welcoming cup of coffee; simply placing a *dalah* atop a fire pit is invitation enough for anyone to join.

The second cup he serves is al-kaif, for enjoyment and pleasure. Finally, al-saif — literally the cup of the sword — is served, traditionally when the parties have established a protection deal between them — a promise to defend one another in the event of threats against their people.

Abdullah Khalfan al-Yammahi, a heritage expert and author of *Etiquette of Gahwa Serving in the UAE*, explains how coffee brings together people of different ages, social classes, and tribes.

"We sit together to discuss and debate. We talk about anything and everything," says al-Yammahi, who is one of the four judges at the *Gahwa* Championships. "A *dalah* is seen as a living entity because it is present in our happy occasions and in sad ones."

To encourage dialog, raise awareness and safeguard the coffee ceremony as cultural heritage, Abu Dhabi's Department of Culture and Tourism has sponsored several programs, of which the



ZAINAB ALMOUSAWI
To The Moon & Back Coffee Shop

Gahwa Championships are one. Another is the Bait Al Gahwa (House of Coffee) initiative that, since 2018, has encouraged young Emiratis to train with heritage experts and operate tourism projects related to the ceremony.

"Although young people may be influ-

enced by foreign culture or trends, they always come back to their roots," says heritage expert and author al-Yammahi. "They recognize their heritage and traditions. It makes me proud to see their involvement and investment in this intangible heritage."



COVID 19
Responsibility

They picked up more than new shoes at the mall

Meaad and Noor were eager to get together and do some shopping. Best friends since childhood, they felt silly wearing masks and keeping apart from one another. Besides, with the curfew finally lifted, was there really a need for those precautions anymore?

But Meaad had picked up the virus from close contact with an infected shopper, and now she was passing it on to Noor. Their lack of vigilance put them both at risk.

Never let your guard down.

Because it's not only about you. It's about everyone's safety.

Unsafe personal behaviors can destroy lives. Do your part to keep us all safe.



Maintain a **safe distance** of at least **2 meters** from others.



Wear a facemask in public. Facemasks should be worn when you may be near people.



If you have a **fever, cough,** and **difficulty breathing,** call your health care provider immediately.

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protecting employees

Al-Midra Tower awarded Bureau Veritas Safety Label for COVID-19

by Gehan Mufti

Dhahran — The global pandemic has changed the way businesses around the world currently operate and how they will likely operate for the foreseeable future. And despite the uncertainty of how long this may last, the priority for all businesses is to return to work as quickly as possible with optimum health, safety, and hygiene conditions for employees.

As organizations work to restart operations, they will face significant challenges to safeguard returning employees from health risks related to the spread of COVID-19 in offices. With this in mind, Aramco has taken action to ensure the safety of its building facilities and in compliance with COVID-19 precautionary measures.

Al-Midra Tower recently was awarded the SafeGuard certification “Bureau Veritas Safety Label for COVID-19.” Bureau Veritas is a world leader in testing, inspection, and certification, offering a robust SafeGuard Assurance Program that meets the needs of all sectors of the economy as they reopen for business. It does this by assessing facilities and identifying the implementation of COVID-19 policies and procedures.

The program addresses risks — specific to location and operation — by requiring businesses to maintain good hygiene practices and checking that protective measures are properly implemented. The assessment is aligned with local regulatory requirements,



Office Services Department manager Ahmad AlZahid (left) accepts the Safe Guard certificate from Bureau Veritas' Saudi Arabia Eastern manager Wadie Derbel. The certificate was awarded to Aramco for meeting stringent guidelines put forth by the world-leading testing and inspection company.

good hygiene, health and safety practices, and it comprises a series of checklists, developed based on globally recognized best practices from the likes of the World Health Organization, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other globally recognized organizations.

a first in the Kingdom

Al-Midra Tower is the first business facility in Saudi Arabia to be awarded the Safeguard Bureau Veritas Safety Label for COVID-19, and now joins almost 800 facilities worldwide, including office buildings, hotels, and recreation facilities, which have achieved the same.

In addition to the dedication of Aramco's Office Services Department (OSD), the certification is a result of more than three

months of preparation, and coordination of several organizations' combined efforts through their commitment to mitigate COVID-19.

Before the auditing and inspection was carried out by Bureau Veritas, a customized checklist was developed for the Al-Midra facility that included awareness, training, personal protection equipment, disinfection measures and procedures, hand sanitizers, thermal screening and disposal procedures, and many others.

During the assessment period, execution of the checklist guidelines and procedures were monitored closely and scrutinized before the SafeGuard Label was granted.

beyond Al-Midra

Currently, Phase I is already under way to

Did you know?



Al-Midra Tower has previously been awarded the LEED Platinum certification and three ISO certificates (Energy Management System ISO 50001, Quality Management System ISO 9001, and Asset Management System ISO 55001).

obtain the Safeguard Label for 12 more office facilities located in the Central, Northern, and Southern areas.

OSD's plans are to extend this initiative further to include more of its facilities in the near future. In the meantime, focus on mitigation efforts will continue to ensure OSD buildings' compliance with COVID-19 precautionary measures for the health and safety of all employees.



historical photo



Exploring the Rub' al-Khali in 1952 wasn't all work. Having gone ahead of the main party, exploration geologist C.W. "Brownie" Brown waits in his sedan for the others to catch up. A half century before the iPhone and well out of radio range, he makes his own music with his ukulele and book of songs. (Photo: T.F. Walters)

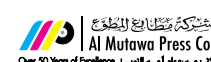


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the arabian sun



a gahwa renaissance

The power of Arabic coffee, or *gahwa*, is long documented throughout the region, and its cultural significance and popularity still resonate today.

see pages 8 and 9

Abqaiq stables keep the horses going

by Diane Leverton

Abqaiq — During these challenging times, work at the Abqaiq horse stables has not stopped. The Abqaiq Arabian Horse Association (AAHA) team here have had to adapt and learn new skills to keep the horses and the facility in first-class condition.

During the lockdown, the team wasn't able to get a farrier to tend to the horses' hooves. One of the grooms learned how to maintain the horse's feet until we were able to get a farrier to attend.

And as the heat of summer has been increasing, the team has been shaving the long fur from the ponies to keep them cool. This, along with the fans and water sprays in the stables, keeps the horse comfortable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that all of the riding lessons had to be stopped. However, horses still have to be exercised to stay healthy. Freda de Zoete, the grooms, and Diane Leverton have continued to ride the horses in the early mornings to ensure the horses maintain

fitness, and extra time has been dedicated to training the individual horses.

maintaining the stables

As well as these extra duties, the grooms have also kept the horse stables spotlessly clean by regularly washing down all of the walls and floors.

The arena has been cleared of the show jumps, and the surface has been maintained with the harrow and quad bike.

Much appreciation goes out to Abqaiq Recreation Services Unit for the support and financial help provided. This has meant it has been possible to buy food in bulk and supplies before the lockdown commenced, thereby keeping the horses healthy.

Finally, this has been a tough time for the whole community. However, the measures in place have kept everyone safe and healthy, and the horse stables team and the AAHA are looking forward to opening up fully and recommencing horse riding lessons.

But in the meantime, stay safe and healthy.



Some horses on early morning exercise. (Photos: Diane Leverton)



Jahirul Islam Chowdhury shaves long fur from the ponies helping to keep them cool.



Though activities have largely come to a halt, personal care for horses has continued as Naim Sattar trims a horse's hoof.



a symbol of hope over Dhahran

Imad Brohi caught a glimpse of a rainbow over the Core Area on April 13 in Dhahran during a series of rain showers across the Eastern Province. The rainbow, a rare spectacle in the Arabian Peninsula, provides a ray of hope for everyone affected by the COVID-19 virus. Brohi captured the image on his iPhone. He lives in Dhahran and works as a petroleum engineer in the Gas Reservoir Management Department. Brohi has been with the company six years.