

the arabian sun

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a weekly Saudi Aramco publication for employees

'Id Mubarak: together in the spirit of sacrifice

Dear colleagues,

I would like to extend my best wishes to you and to your families for a peaceful 'Id al-Adha and some well-deserved time for rest and relaxation.

I recognize that a number of our colleagues are away from their families this 'Id, but we are united in our appreciation for their sacrifices. While there has been much progress in fighting the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot afford to let our guard down just yet. It is crucial that we maintain our momentum and remain vigilant by wearing face masks and maintaining high

standards of hygiene while practicing physical distancing.

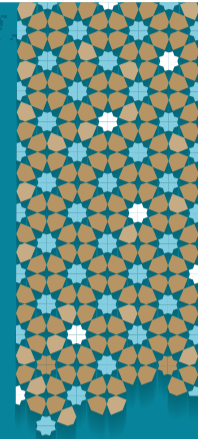
You are making a difference, not only by helping halt the spread of the virus, but also by reaching out to those most affected by it. Through Aramco's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" care box campaign, you donated nearly SR6.5 million to support the less fortunate, and through the Ramadan Campaign, nearly 10,000 of you went on to donate more than SR5 million. Together, with the company matching your donations, we have provided approximately SR23 million to people in need. I continue to be inspired by your generosity

and care for our communities.

'Id al-Adha is the "Festival of the Sacrifice," and in a year of unprecedented challenges, we have all certainly gained a better understanding of how placing the needs of others first can be a powerful force for good. Even if we are separated by many miles, let us be together in spirit, recognizing that the essence of 'Id is within us.

On behalf of Aramco management, I wish you a heartfelt 'Id Mubarak.

Amin Nasser
Saudi Aramco president and CEO



'Id Mubarak

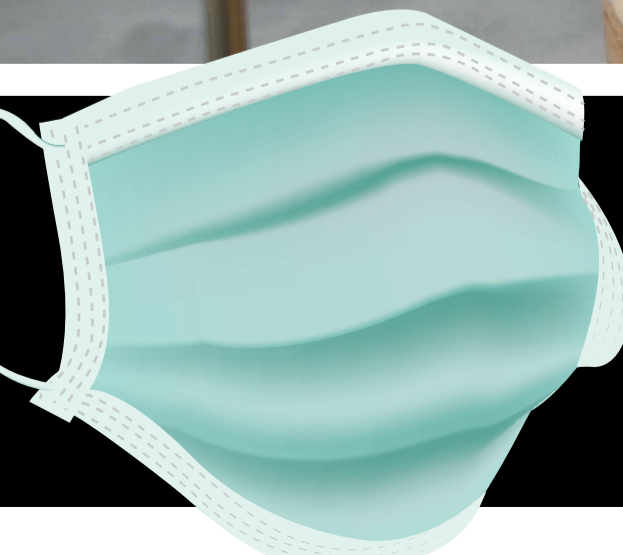


from invention to localization another iktva success story

see page 3

Two decades of work came to fruition as employees from Aramco and Zeeco came together to celebrate the first in-Kingdom manufactured High-Pressure Air Assist System smokeless flare tip. The technology traces its heritage back to an idea from Mazem M. Mashour, who in 1999 invented the technology that has become another iktva success story with the start of manufacturing in Dammam. (Photo: Hatim Oweid/IMPD)

MADE IN
SAUDI ARABIA



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





Abdulkhalek A. Al-Gouhi, center, poses with Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser and other members of corporate management during a farewell ceremony held last week in Dhahran. (Photo: Abdulaziz Al-Moaiweed/IMPDP)

dedication, expertise, leadership

Abdulkhalek A. Al-Gouhi bids farewell to Aramco after nearly four decades

by Eamonn Houston

Dhahran — As he leaves Aramco after almost 40 years of service, Abdulkhalek A. Al-Gouhi was praised for his dedication, expertise, and leadership at a special ceremony for the former vice president of Industrial Services.

Hosted by senior vice president for Human Resources and Corporate Services Nabeel A. Al-Jama', the ceremony was attended by Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser and members of corporate and executive management.

Al-Gouhi joined Aramco in 1982 at the age of 23, accumulating extensive experience with the company ranging from oil and gas production to Downstream operations, pipelines and terminals, refining, supply planning, hydrocarbon transportation, joint ventures, and finally, Industrial Services, to which he was appointed as vice president in 2015.

impact and influence

In noting Al-Gouhi's contributions over the decades, Al-Jama' said, "As I was thinking about what to say about Abdulkhalek, I kept coming back to two words — impact

and influence.

"Abdulkhalek has made an enormous impression on Saudi Aramco and the people who have worked with him and for him," Al-Jama' said, adding that Al-Gouhi has been a driving force in leading Industrial Services to help keep Aramco moving and working.

"In some ways it's a behind-the-scenes job, where success is measured in reliability, resilience, continuity, and cost effectiveness. But maintaining reliability becomes a challenge when the company is growing in leaps and bounds," said Al-Jama'.

Al-Jama' further noted how those in the company benefited from Al-Gouhi's leadership, wise guidance, and unwavering support.

happy and honored

Reflecting on his career, Al-Gouhi said: "I am very fortunate. Aramco molded me with knowledge and experience, and I have had the chance to work all over Aramco, most recently in Industrial Services, where I had the chance to work with Aviation, Marine, Shops, Transportation and Corporate Maintenance. So, I have been extreme-



Abdulkhalek A. Al-Gouhi spent nearly four decades at Aramco in a wide variety of roles and jobs, stepping down in his final role as vice president of Industrial Services.

ly fortunate in my career, I experienced the full horizon."

Adding that it has been an honor and privilege to make a career at Aramco and that he was appreciative for the knowledge and experience the company provided, he offered some parting advice to the next generation of employees and leaders.

"To employees, I would say that you have

an outstanding employer — a diverse integrated energy producer that brings value to the world — and you are a major contributor and a valuable part of this enterprise.

"To our young employees, I say take the lead of your development. Take each task, small or big, seriously, and get the most out of it. Set high expectations, anticipate challenges and look for opportunities.

"This company has always demonstrated the highest levels of resilience, ingenuity, and development. The future is full of opportunities and investments. Transformation will never stop our pursuit of excellence. This can only be done by you," Al-Gouhi concluded.

appreciation

When an employee was asked what they would miss about Al-Gouhi, the employee quickly answered the leaders' frequent visits to the field where he always greeted workers and had kind words for them.

Al-Gouhi earned a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in 1982, and attended the Executive Management Program at the University of Pennsylvania in 2005.

give the gift of health and safety this 'Id al-Adha

by Rawan Nasser

We've come a long way since we started the complicated journey of understanding and protecting ourselves and our loved ones from COVID-19. It hasn't been easy, but we've survived and thrived as a community and as individuals.

We have been creative and brave, finding countless ways to say "hello," "thank you," and "I love you" while acting responsibly by maintaining our hygiene, washing our hands often, keeping at least a 2 meter distance, and wearing a mask whenever we've left our households.

As we approach 'Id al-Adha, it is important for us to continue these practices to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities. We must be alert and brave, taking the right precautions to protect ourselves from infection while

not being afraid to advise our loved ones to take the same precautions, to be the voice of reason, and to lead by example. Succumbing to social pressure could have serious ramifications, not just within our own circles, but for our community and the nation as a whole.

Shortly after government curfews lifted in June, we began to regain some sense of normalcy — visiting family and friends, going for morning coffee runs, and shopping with our masks and gloves on. Although, while some people resumed their lives with caution, others acted irresponsibly and attended large social gatherings with friends and family, which led to a surge in infections in the period following 'Id al-Fitr. To avoid a repeat of this, and to achieve an ongoing decrease in daily cases across the Kingdom, each individual and

every household must commit to acting even more responsibly.

While it is tempting to celebrate 'Id as we do every year, it is much wiser to plan in advance how we will spend these days with our loved ones. We must think of creative ways to greet our family while keeping 2 meters apart, smiling wide so that they can see our eyes crinkling as we keep our masks on. We must consider the elders of the family and plan how the younger members will gather to greet them safely. Will individual families come separately to keep the gatherings manageable? Will youngsters receive their usual gifts? These are important questions to ask ourselves and our family members as we prepare for this joyous occasion.

It isn't easy to take these safety measures, and that is precisely why we have

to try our best. Accepting this responsibility and taking it seriously minimizes the rate of transmission in our communities, it helps ease the stress of hardworking medical personnel at health care facilities, and it gives us a chance to celebrate next year the way we used to, with kisses and hugs and visible toothy grins.

Remember, we are no longer inexperienced when it comes to celebrating in "COVID-times." We've celebrated in a 24-hour lockdown, welcomed new babies into the world while maintaining social distancing, attended weddings on Zoom, and even threw virtual parties for new graduates.

Surely, celebrating with a few precautions won't be that hard a task for us as we help give our families the greatest gift this 'Id — good health.

Amin Nasser announced as recipient of prestigious Kavaler Award by vote of industry peers, executives

Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser has been announced as the recipient of the prestigious Kavaler Award for 2020. The award by the U.S.-based Chemists Club is sponsored by leading chemical industry publisher Independent Commodity Intelligence Services (ICIS). Industry peers and senior executives in the ICIS Top 40 Power Players vote for the award winner each year.

Nasser is the first person ever to have won both the Kavaler Award and the award for Energy Executive of the Year by Energy Intelligence, and the first to win in the same year. He's also the first person from the Asia region to receive the Kavaler award.

selection criteria

The award will be presented to Nasser later this year at a virtual event that will

include a fireside chat with ICIS about Aramco's strategy, outlook, and key trends of the energy and petrochemicals industries.

During the selection process, industry peers invited by ICIS and the Chemists' Club voted for three individuals based on achievement in one or more of the following categories:

- Profitability or shareholder value
- Environmental, social, governance
- Innovation in technology, product, business process
- Merger and acquisition or projects.

"Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser has made huge advances in petrochemicals with the \$69 billion acquisition of SABIC, the construction of mega-projects worldwide and the ongoing development of crude oil to chemicals technology," said Joseph Chang, global editor of ICIS Chem-

ical Business, a publication owned by ICIS and its parent company, Reed Business Information.

"The level of project activity for Aramco is unprecedented for any company. Its global ambitions and investments in petrochemicals will create waves in the industry for years to come," he added.

past winners

Previous winners of the ICIS Kavaler Award include CEOs from some of the world's top chemical companies, including LyondellBasell CEO Bob Patel (2018, 2019), BASF CEO Kurt Bock (2017), INEOS chairman Jim Ratcliffe (2016), former Dow Chemical CEO Andrew Liveris (2015), former LyondellBasell CEO Jim Gallogly (2014), and former PPG CEO Charles Bunch (2013).

The Chemists' Club is a nonprofit ed-



Amin Nasser

ucational organization founded in 1898 with the goal to "promote the interests of chemists and those interested in the science and applications of chemistry."

from invention to localization

production of emissions reducing technology another iktva success story

by Michael Ives

Wednesday, July 15, marked the culmination of two decades of work when Aramco and Zeeco, a local combustion technology company, came together to celebrate the first in-Kingdom manufactured High-Pressure Air Assist System smokeless flare tip; and what a rewarding journey for the Kingdom and Aramco it has been.

This technology traces its heritage back to the spark of an idea from a young Aramco engineer. In 1999, Mazem M. Mashour invented smokeless flare technology, going on to win a gold award at the International Inventors Conference in Geneva in 2006 for his ingenious solution to reduce emissions. The invention was to inject a relatively small amount of high-pressure air into the flare to all but eliminate smoke, with significant savings over larger, more complex systems.

Mashour's invention delivers air, under high pressure, into an air-distribution ring. Jets, contained in a wind shield, create the turbulence needed for smokeless operation. The increased airflow creates a much hotter flame, which burns off the impurities rather than releasing them into the environment.

The High-Pressure Air Assist System smokeless flare tip was first installed at



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Shaybah in June 2000, and to date, it has been installed in more than 30 operations, delivering significant reductions in both greenhouse gas emissions and water use.

an iktva success story

Subsequently, this is a story of far more than the technology itself. It is a story of

successfully bringing manufacturing, and all of the benefits that produces to Saudi Arabia.

Aramco worked hand in hand with Zeeco throughout their localization journey, culminating in the 5,000 square feet of plant and manufacturing facilities in Dammam Industrial City 2, and the celebration on July 15 of the first smokeless flare manufactured in the Kingdom. The flare's manufacture encapsulates the benefits of Aramco's iktva program to the company and the Kingdom.

"Flair tips are one of 12 highly engineered commodities approved in the first half of 2020 for first time manufacturing in-Kingdom. We will be working with Zeeco Middle East and other vendors to expand their manufacturing potential to serve both local and international markets," said Aramco chief engineer Jamil J. Al-Bagawi.

"In addition to creating jobs and promoting investment, iktva has resulted in transferring the latest technologies and creating a robust local ecosystem," said Abdullah B. Al Thaaly, Aramco's manager of Industrial Development and Strategic Supply. "We always work in partnership with our suppliers throughout their iktva localization journey, and we are delighted to see Zeeco operat-

ing locally and manufacturing products for the first time in the Kingdom."

Zeeco is purchasing many components and raw materials from local suppliers, including pressure vessels, spool fabrications, control panels, and cables that are used in fabricating its equipment line. In addition, the manufacturer is exporting high-tech material to countries in the Middle East.

a collaborative effort

In line with iktva, Procurement and Supply Chain Management, and Engineering Services (ES) collaboratively play a pivotal role in providing investors and local vendors with technical and quality consultations throughout the vendor qualification process. This involvement includes investment planning reviews, technical/quality consultations and manufacturing technical/quality assessments.

ES has also created a program to ensure that local startups with no previous manufacturing experience are allowed to sell products to Aramco under "trail order schemes" to minimize risks to the company's supply chain while enabling vendors to successfully establish local manufacturing facilities that could compete with renowned international suppliers.



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— Abdullah B. Al Thaaly



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critical engineering certification exam goes online

For the first time in Saudi Arabia, the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) professional certification exam is now available online through the National Assessment Center (Qiyas) testing platform for all engineers in the Kingdom. The FE exam is the principal credential, trusted by organizations and academic institutions alike, for validating a licensed engineer's foundational competence in a given engineering discipline.

The Technical Services Professional Academy (TSPA) has partnered with the Saudi Council of Engineers (SCE) and Qiyas, the Kingdom provider of Saudi college admissions tests, to introduce this exam in an online format. SCE, through a team of discipline specific and cross-discipline engineering specialists, test item designers, exam writers, and other professionals, developed FE certification exams in six major engineering disciplines, including mechanical, electrical, civil, chemical, industrial, and general (i.e., other) engineering disciplines. Each exam is a six-hour exam that ensures thorough and accurate coverage of the required fundamental knowledge for each engineering discipline.

perfect timing to go online

Chief engineer Jamil J. Al-Bagawi attributes the foresight of SCE and Qiyas as an important success factor in availing the FE exam online at this critical time for the entire world, including centers offering such tests.

"TSPA, SCE, and Qiyas have been exceptionally proactive in addressing the gap in FE testing as a result of the pandemic. Our partnership has made it possible for engi-



neers Kingdomwide to benefit from this safe and effective alternative choice for FE testing," Al-Bagawi said. "It's another example of Aramco's commitment to people development."

Abdullah O. Al-Baiz, vice president of Engineering Services and champion of the Digital Transformation Program, reflects on the importance of technology in meeting the challenges of the moment.

"The challenge was to transition a credible, internationally recognized certification

exam to a digital platform while maintaining the exam's prestigious history," Al-Baiz said. "The Kingdom's Qiyas testing platform has provided the opportunity to bring testing protocols into the future, leveraging the power of artificial intelligence (AI) and live proctoring for reliable and valid FE certification exam results."

Qiyas exam security protocols include the deployment of a fully automated identity verification system solution that flags suspicious behavior for professional review

by proctors who monitor every session remotely through cameras. Live proctors assume administrative privileges over the attendee's workstation during the duration of the exam, ensuring that high-stakes online testing maintains the same integrity as in-person proctored testing.

a strong response

Hundreds of engineers responded to Aramco's initial invitation to attend the SCE-sponsored FE exam. The first cohort of 138 engineers attended the inaugural virtual examination session on July 2, 2020. This important milestone will enable availing this exam to thousands of engineers across the Kingdom.

Ahmad A. Al-Sa'adi, senior vice president of Technical Services, looks forward to continued collaboration with SCE and other Kingdom organizations. "This is just another example of Saudi Aramco being a good corporate citizen, in support of the Kingdom's Vision 2030. The adversity of the COVID-19 pandemic has required us to seek innovative alternatives to the status quo, and our partners throughout the Kingdom have proven capable and rose to the challenge."

Engineers interested in attending the FE certification exam must first register with SCE prior to availing the exam through Qiyas. As with most international professional certifications, an engineer's Qiyas application will be sent to SCE for verification and approval prior to scheduling and enrollment in the exam. The prerequisite for the FE exam is a Bachelor of Science degree in an engineering field through an accredited university.

Aramco Asia gathers virtually to talk technical excellence, quality

In the presence of over 180 participants from Japan, South Korea, China, India, Singapore, and Southeast Asia, Aramco Asia held the 2020 Quality & Technical Excellence Virtual Forum on July 17.

Specialists from the quality, technical, and project management fields, and Asian manufacturers and service providers joined through a virtual platform to discuss challenges, exchange knowledge, share best practices, and lessons learned on various quality and technical issues.

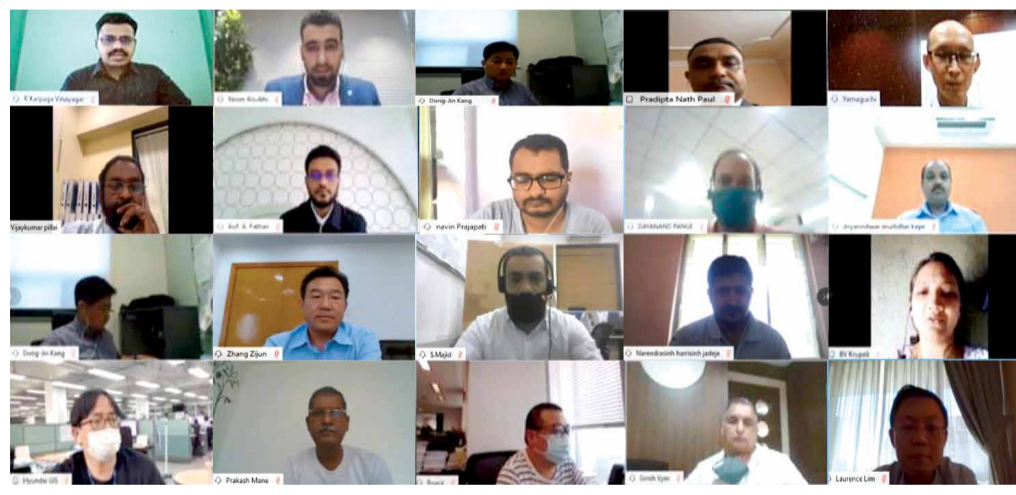
This forum is one of a series of events held regularly across Asia to enhance the supplier's understanding of the latest requirements and exchange ideas of mutual interest.

building trust during COVID-19 pandemic

Under the theme of "Toward Excellence in Supplier Performance," the virtual forum sought to deepen the suppliers' understanding of Aramco's latest quality requirements, cultivating closer engagement with business partners and ensuring business continuity amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Omar Al-Amudi, representative director of Aramco Japan, opened by emphasizing the importance of exchanging technical and quality ideas for adapting to the new business and manufacturing practices, and he underlined the collaboration efforts toward achieving the ultimate goals of a safe working environment and operational excellence.

Mohammed Al-Qahtani, vice president of Aramco Asia Engineering and Technical Ser-



Over 180 participants across Asia joined the 2020 Quality & Technical Excellence Virtual Forum on July 17 to discuss challenges, exchange knowledge, share best practices, and lessons learned on various quality and technical issues.

vices, followed by noting such a knowledge sharing platform could help optimize quality and technical functions, ensure material integrity, and meet the expectations of our customers.

quality and technical insights

Through a mixture of presentations and online panels, the event provided valuable information on Aramco's latest quality requirements and world-class standards.

In his presentation "An Introduction to Quality Management," Yasser Al-Subhi, head of Aramco Asia Quality Management, focused on a variety of inspection services, associated challenges, and mitigation plans for all functions across the Asia Pacific re-

gion.

Adrian Wang from Aramco China Engineering Services introduced the engineering functions and the major roles in supporting company operations, such as manufacturer assessment, technology scouting, and capital projects support.

Hani Baba from Aramco India presented "Quality Improvements and Escalation Process," during which he highlighted various quality pitfall scenarios, associated consequences, and treatment plans.

"An Overview about Manufacturer Quality Performance," presented by Rashid Al-Hajri from Aramco China, reviewed in detail various quality monitoring tools, including the "Vendor Quality Index" and "Equipment



The Korea quality management team attentively listens to Omar Al-Amudi as he delivers the opening remarks at the 2020 Quality & Technical Excellence Virtual Forum on July 17. Al-Amudi emphasized the importance of exchanging technical and quality ideas for adapting to the new business and manufacturing practice

Deficiencies," in addition to nonconformance and how to prevent it through alignment with international practices.

Rakan Al-Wutayd, Project Management representative, delivered a presentation of "An Overview about Marjan Increment Program," regarding the project scope and related company requirements, and he facilitated a question-and-answer session regarding the project.

The event concluded with quality and engineering management and professionals, including members of management, joining participants for a panel session to explore solutions for pressing challenges and voicing the company's full support to manufacturers.

Ithra to celebrate 'Id al-Adha with double the festivities

Dhahran — The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) is doubling the fun over the 'Id al-Adha holiday with three days of festivities and activities themed all around discovery and exploration.

Running Aug. 1-3, the center will host #Ithra_Eid — *Twice the Celebration*, spread across both the inside and outside of the iconic creative hub.

Its outdoor track, *Eid on Wheels*, is inviting visitors to enjoy a 45-minute exploration around Ithra — all from the comfort and safety of their own cars. *Eid on Wheels* will see families drive around the Ithra Ring Road, discovering a host of "Mystery Zones" along the way that together will feature challenges, snacks, activities, and games, including a car photo booth, light tunnel laser show, an interactive car orchestra, and musical and dance

performances — all held as part of what promises to be a one-off physically distanced celebratory activity.

explore Ithra on the inside, too

The center's accompanying indoor festivity, *Explore Eid*, will offer visitors the opportunity to participate in a two-hour massive group competition. The map-led hunt will take participants on The Seven-Mile Journey throughout Ithra. Individuals, groups, and families will embark on a race against the clock to solve mystery challenges, explore Ithra, and complete the scavenger hunt, allowing everyone to discover hidden spaces and solve a series of riddles and challenges as they take photos and undertake various tasks along the way.

Open from 3-11 p.m., *Explore Eid* will

also expose participants to art, history, music, and culture, including Zamzam traditions, a Kiswah manufacturing station, and musical performances as they complete their treasure hunt.

Both activities are ticketed and will offer participants the choice of which track festivity to partake in. Spaces are limited, with tickets available to purchase in advance via Ithra's website at www.ithra.com.

Ithra is a creative and cultural destination designed to ignite cultural curiosity, explore knowledge, and inspire creativity through the power of ideas, imagination, and innovation. Ithra champions Saudi culture on the world stage and delivers contemporary, historical, and traditional global culture experiences to local audiences.

Eid on Wheels, is inviting visitors to enjoy a 45-minute exploration around Ithra — all from the comfort and safety of their own cars. *Eid on Wheels* will see families drive around the Ithra Ring Road, discovering a host of "Mystery Zones" along the way.



propelling career growth, promoting hands-on learning through Harvard Management Leadership Café sessions

In coordination with the Management and Professional Development Department, Power Systems (PS) launched the Harvard Manage Mentor Leadership Café for all PS chief position holders.

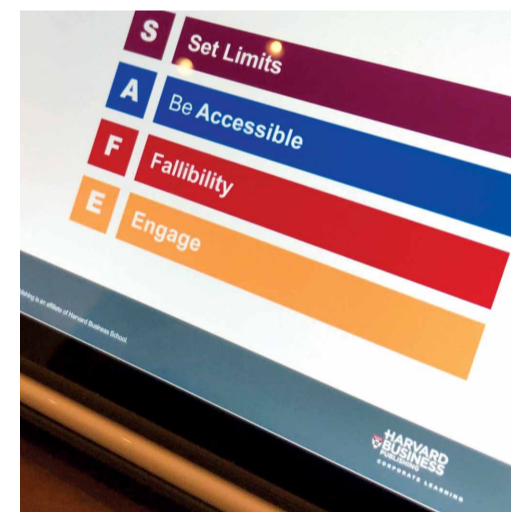
Following the first event held in March, a pair of virtual events were held at the end of June. The two sessions were attended by 100 chief position holders to learn about "How to Grow People Further and Faster," "Promote Hands-On Learning," "Support

the Creation of a Development Plan," and "Propel Career Growth."

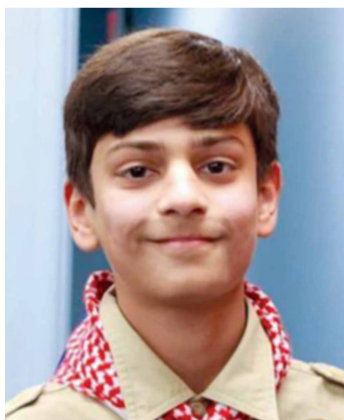
The Café is a unique opportunity to work with Harvard thought leaders to motivate and boost leadership expertise by leveraging Harvard's remarkable online learning platform. The program includes self- and online-based learning and an interactive session facilitated by Harvard, and participants are encouraged to record progress via the "on-the-job" application.

The program is part of the PS Leadership Development Framework to provide relevant learning opportunities and to support leaders in their leadership journey.

The Harvard Manage Mentor Leadership program includes self- and online-based learning and an interactive session facilitated by Harvard, and participants are encouraged to record progress via the "on-the-job" application.



your voice



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

returning to school in the COVID-19 era — options, solutions, and considerations

Dhahran Middle School has been investigating what to do in the coming school year. Considerations include easing back into a physical school setting in the coming school year, with consideration of continuing virtual classes, resuming classes at the school, and even a mix of the two.

All of these options — attending classes in person, virtually, or a mix of them — have benefits and challenges, considering the safety aspects related to COVID-19, public buildings, as well as the strain virtual teaching puts on instructors, students, and families.

A mixed schedule certainly has benefits to it that an entirely virtual school would lack. For instance, everyone would get a chance

to attend school physically two times a week. This is good because both groups would get a chance to experience the benefits of a physical school environment.

Another benefit to this schedule is that teachers will be much more flexible about assignments and tests, which will cause less stress for the students.

One final benefit from this schedule is that people physically attending school will get to socially interact with their friends, which is good for their mental health.

There are still some challenges, of course, especially for students virtually attending. For example, students attending virtually might have to work harder to get the teacher's attention, and if they fail to

do that, it could mean less help with their coursework.

Also, they will need to be more vigilant in fighting distraction, as it is much easier for a student to get distracted while virtually attending their classes.

And that's not to mention the potential of internet connection and technical issues, which could result in missing some class time — and their classmates potentially losing learning time while waiting for them.

Benefits and challenges aside, these are difficult and strange times, and we sometimes need to compromise in the near term before returning back to normal.

Faris is the son of Taqi M. Baig, a facilities planning specialist in the Facilities Planning Department.

travelers of Al-Andalus

the travel writer Ibn Jubayr

Excerpted from the January/February 2015 edition of AramcoWorld.

According to later chroniclers, the adventure of Ibn Jubayr, one of the most illustrious rahhala, or travelers, from Al-Andalus to destinations throughout the Mediterranean and farther east, began in the year 1183.

To name him in full, **Abu al-Husayn Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ibn Jubayr al-Kinani** served as secretary in the palace of Granada's governor, **Abu Said Osman**, son of the first Al-mohad caliph, **Abd al-Mu'min**. As a pious Muslim scholar, Ibn Jubayr set out to fulfill one of the five pillars of Islam by making the long pilgrimage to Makkah.

His two-year journey made a considerable impact on literary history. His account of his travels and tribulations in the East served as the foundational work of a new genre of writing, the *rihla*, or the creative travelogue: A mix of personal narrative, description, opinion and anecdote. In following centuries, countless people emulated and even plagiarized him.

Ibn Jubayr was 38 years old when he left Granada on February 15, 1183. He moved first to Ceuta in North Africa to embark for Alexandria aboard a Genoan boat. His first act upon reaching Cairo was to stand before tombs of the



Ibn Jubayr's rihla helps modern readers understand the complexity of the encounter between the cultures of East and West, Islam, and Christianity.

Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) followers. Next, he went up the Nile by boat to the town of Qus (near modern Qena), from where he mounted a camel to ride to the Red Sea port of 'Aydhhab, near the modern Egypt-Sudan border, and from there sailed across the Red Sea to Jiddah. In August, he arrived at Makkah.

For his return journey, he joined a pilgrim caravan that stopped in Madinah. In circular, even backward fashion, he crossed the deserts of Hijaz and Najd in

the direction of Baghdad, heading east and north. There, in the Abbasid capital, he praised "the natural goodness of its air and waters," but he complained about the vanity of its people.

He returned through the fertile lands of Mesopotamia, through Mosul and west toward Syria, via Aleppo. The city of Damascus, where he remained for two months, dazzled him: "Paradise of the Orient," he called it. He then took the road to the Mediterranean port of Saint John d'Acre ('Akka), still occupied

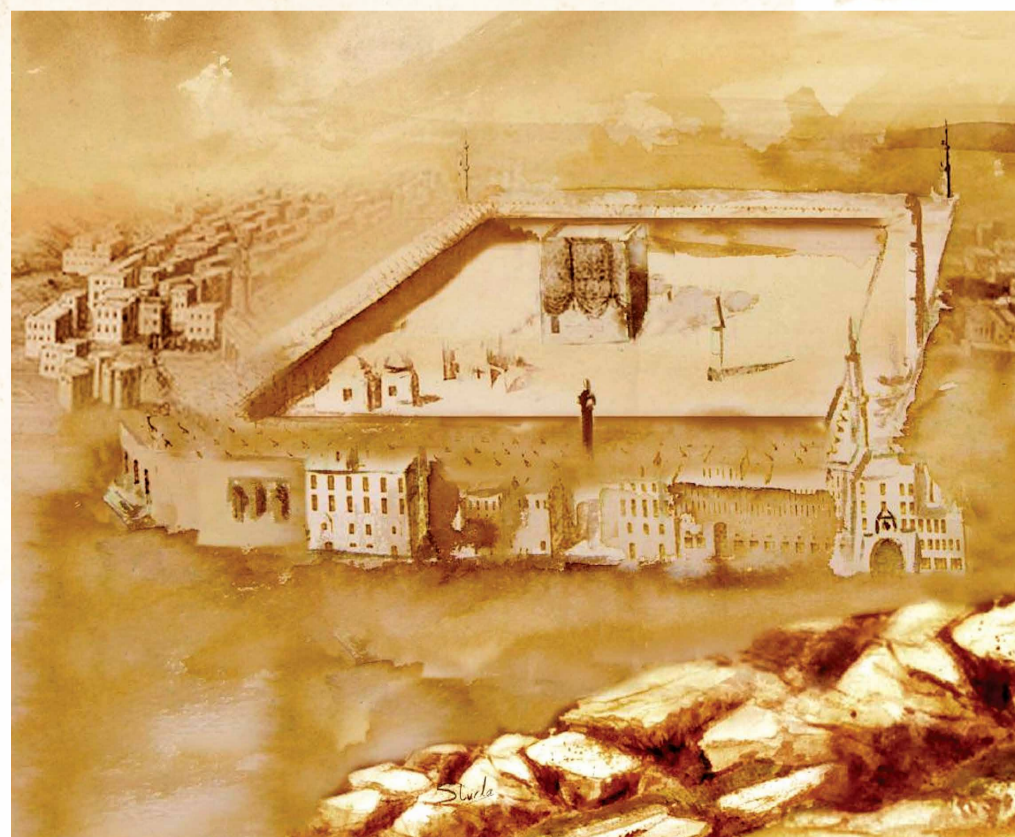
by a Crusader army, intending next to travel into western lands.

dangerous winds

But this leg turned dangerous. Unfavorable winds left him shipwrecked in the Strait of Messina in Sicily, fallen into Christian hands a century earlier. There he remained for nearly four months, living under the hospitality of the Arabic speaking King William II (known as "William the Good"), whom Ibn Jubayr came to admire for bringing non-Chris-



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GRANADA

The Travel Writer: Ibn Jubayr

Sturka

TRAVELERS of AL-ANDALUS I

*"Amolo con re volor sunt et quis doluptat
explitis magnatas ducitium earum quat ate
yendit et accus, qui Dolutes et dendaec."*

tians into his court. "He has much confidence in Muslims," he wrote, "relying on them for his affairs ... in them shines the splendor of his realm."

When the winds again turned, he set out for home, and he disembarked back in Al-Andalus, at the port of Cartagena. He arrived at his house in Granada in April 1185. There, he set about to write down his story.

Once home, he surely enjoyed increased authority as a returned scholar and pilgrim, yet what he did next is not recorded. Four years later, he returned to the Arab East. When he was 72 years old, he undertook his last trip, passing through Makkah, Jerusalem, and Egypt, where he died in Alexandria on Sept.

29, 1217. The *rihla* and two poems are all he left behind.

a chronicle of East meets West

Ibn Jubayr's epic story constitutes one of the most valuable testimonies about the eastern Mediterranean world in the late 12th century, which had recently been turned upside down by Crusaders in Syria and Palestine, as well as by the Norman invasion of Sicily and the fall of the Fatimids in Egypt to the rising Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, or Saladin.

Ibn Jubayr's *rihla* helps modern readers understand the complexity of the direct encounter between the two worlds of East and West — Islam and Christi-

anity — that until then had been seeing each other more slantwise from across the sea, glimpsed from the corner of the eye.

He explained how these two civilizations first quarreled, then learned to accept one another, and finally lived warily together, all within a single lifetime. The second Crusade, after all, was launched in 1145, the year of Ibn Jubayr's birth. Although he offered pro forma insults of other monotheisms (as was expected for his time), he made his story accessible to all, for instance, by providing both Islamic and Christian dates for the various legs of his trip.

Christians and Muslims, he observed, were meeting both on the fields of

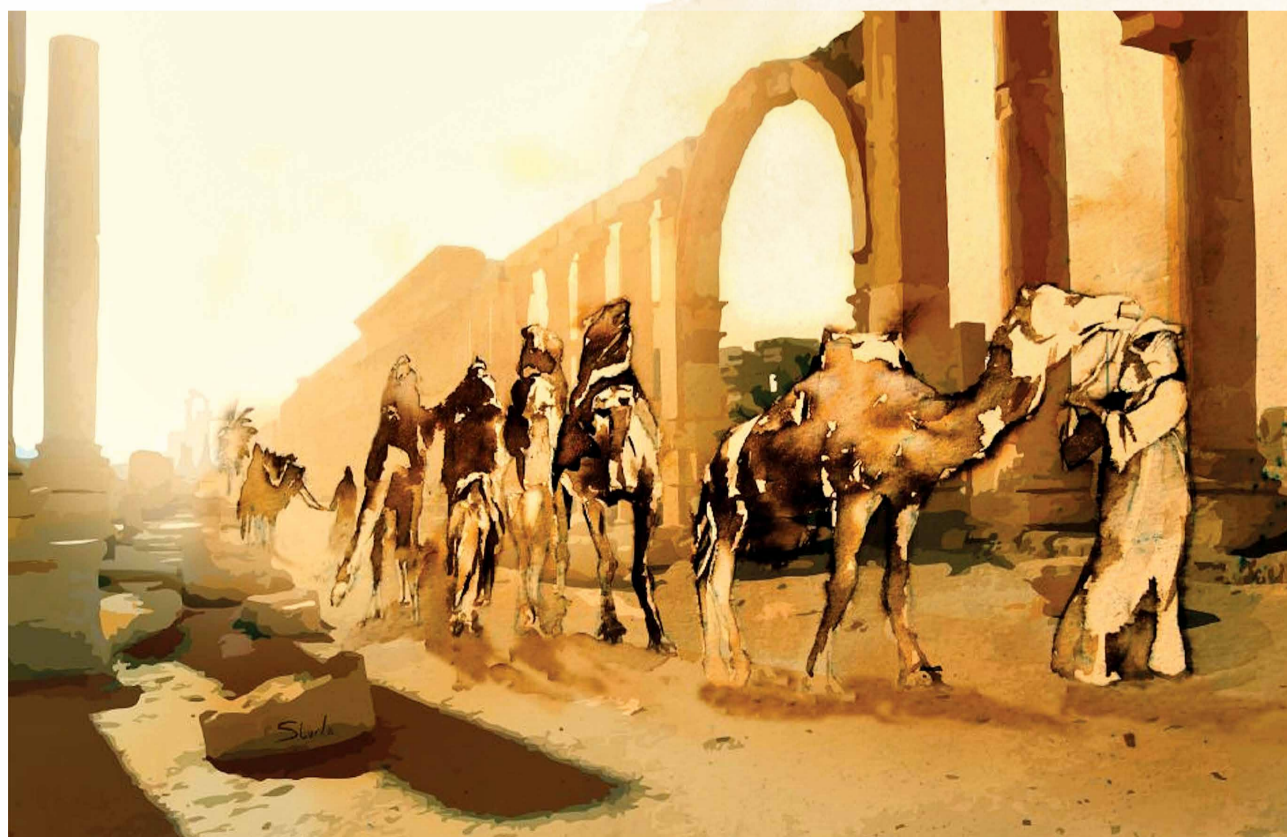
battle and in processions for marriages. "One of the astonishing things that is talked of is that though the fires of discord burn between the two parties, Muslim and Christian, two armies of them may meet and dispose themselves in battle array, and yet Muslim and Christian travelers will come and go between them without interference The soldiers engage themselves in their war, while the people are at peace."

He was appreciative similarly of the European ships that carried Muslim pilgrims to their own holy places without interference, fearing bad weather more than militant unbelievers. Throughout, he praised the thriving Christian communities in Islamic lands and the similar Muslim communities in Christian lands.

It is telling that Ibn Jubayr, despite acute homesickness when abroad, was unable to remain in Al-Andalus after his return. Perhaps it was because the Arab West at this time was facing the loss of much of its Iberian territory to Christian armies.

And perhaps just as likely, he saw in Saladin's strong hand the promise that once again Jerusalem, Damascus, and Cairo could be something like Palermo, "having all that you could wish of beauty, real or apparent, and all the means of subsistence, mature, and fresh," where peace, not war, prevailed.

"Travelers of Al-Andalus" is a six-part series selected and adapted from the original 41-part series "El Viajero Histórico," an idea and production by Ana Carreño Leyva in *El Legado Andalusi: Una Nueva Sociedad Mediterránea*, the magazine of the Andalusian public foundation El Legado Andalusi, based in Granada, Spain, from 1990 through 2010. The original of this article, by Daniel Grammatico, appeared in issue number 2, titled "Las peregrinaciones de Ibn Jubayr."



UPDC professionals get expert advice on making abstracts “concrete”

Upstream professionals in the Americas are offering courses for Saudi Aramco’s Upstream Professional Development Center (UPDC) in a completely virtual learning environment in response to travel restrictions due to COVID-19.

First was a successful three-day skill-development workshop combining live sessions, recorded lectures, and independent reading and exercises.

Gretchen M. Gillis, geological consultant with Aramco Americas Upstream and incoming American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) president for the 2021-22 term, said the first all-virtual workshop UPD-907 “Abstracts Made Concrete” received positive feedback. The workshop had 10 upstream professionals enrolled with Gillis as the lead instructor making sure individuals received personal attention.

meeting learning needs with a mix

The learning mix was designed to address the different ways people learn in a completely virtual environment.

“The most important part of the workshop is for each student to prepare an ab-

stract so that I can provide feedback,” said Gillis. “This review and feedback process provides some of the interaction and individual attention UPDC normally offers.”

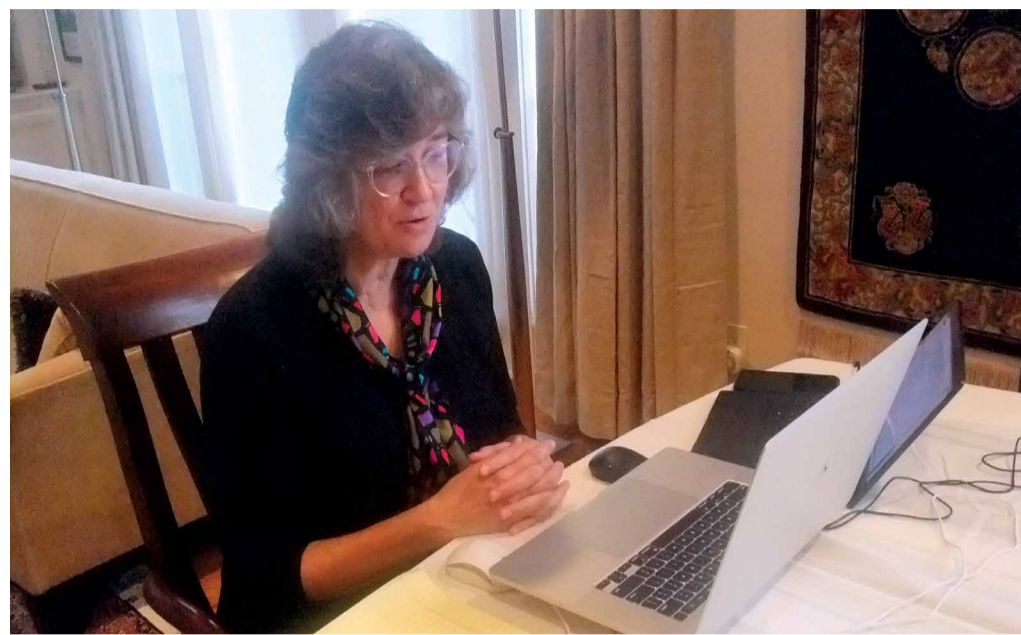
She said that while it is not possible to travel to Dhahran to conduct the workshop, the format is effective and provides a model for other training in the short term.

UPDC focuses on training tied to effective job performance in nine disciplines in petroleum engineering and geoscience. The curriculum offers a range of entry level to mid-to-senior level curriculum and job specific courses for employees. The workshop about writing abstracts for conferences engages employees from all Upstream job families.

a familiar face to UPDC learners

Gillis is a familiar instructor to UPDC, where she also teaches petroleum geology courses, and she hopes that the Virtual Instructor-Led Training model will be applied to other workshops and courses.

Gillis, who has written for Schlumberger’s *Oilfield Glossary* and directed peer-review of the monthly scientific journal, *AAPG Bul-*



Gretchen M. Gillis teaches a UPDC workshop virtually from her home in Houston.

letin, is an advocate of the written word, and she has helped many students and professionals alike improve their writing skills and the acceptance rate of technical papers and presentations for major industry con-

ferences.

UPDC is one of the many investments the company makes in professional development. Thousands of employees participate in courses each year.

Korea’s Hope Bridge grateful for our help in time of need, Aramco steps up on the global stage

by Paul Xhang

Aramco Korea, a fully owned subsidiary of Saudi Aramco, was presented with a plaque of appreciation by the Hope Bridge Korea Disaster Relief — Korea’s only relief organization designated to raise and distribute donations in times of crises — for support the company has provided to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hope Bridge chairperson Pil-ho Song thanked Aramco Korea for their efforts, “Particularly when all of us are going through difficult times. Aramco Korea’s support has indeed been a much-needed help for health care workers and those who have been affected by the virus.”

safety, well-being, and citizenship

Aramco Korea representative director Fahad A. Al-Sahali noted: “In the face of an unprecedented disruption caused by COVID-19 in Korea and around the globe, we are proud to stand together with Korea to face the challenge with a strong and united approach through the partnership with Hope Bridge. We believe it is important for members of our community to join forces and support each other during difficult times so that individuals and communities emerge stronger.

“To Aramco Korea, citizenship is a core value, and the safety and well-being of our communities are a priority.”

When the Coronavirus outbreak in Korea reached its peak in March, Aramco made an emergency donation to support the country’s pandemic relief efforts. The donation has been utilized for various



In June, Aramco Korea and Hope Bridge teamed up voluntarily to deliver hand sanitizer to the Chungang Social Welfare Center in Seoul, Korea. The delivery was made as part of Aramco Korea’s contribution to support the COVID-19 relief efforts in Korea.

purposes, including supporting the front-line medical workers, providing emergency food vouchers to affected individuals, distributing hand sanitizer wipes to school classes, and delivering hand sanitizer to welfare facilities across the country.

Aramco is the first company recognized for its support to curb the spread of COVID-19 among companies that made COVID-19 donations to the relief organization.

further efforts in Korea

Aramco Korea remains committed to

implementing programs that support the citizenship pillars of people and planet, including:

- **Partnering with the MIDAM Scholarship Foundation** to launch a yearlong computer programming class for lower income and middle school students. The “Save Earth Coding School” has the support of top Korean universities as the students receive instruction on developing their own applications and products for environmental protection by using 3-D printers and tablet PCs.

- **Assisting underprivileged children**

at risk of fine dust allergies by planting 20,000 saplings around an elementary school and providing kits that include a fine-dust measuring device, face masks, and hand sanitizer.

- **Supporting local welfare facilities** by installing 10-kilowatt solar power generation systems, hopefully sparking children’s interest in sustainable energy and environmental protection.

These and other programs demonstrate the company’s commitment to supporting communities where we operate, embellishing Citizenship as a core value.

great gardens bring color, beauty, and life to Dhahran

by Ching Yeh

Passion.
Imagination.
Creativity.
Sustainability.

These attributes were on full display by the three winners of the 2019-2020 best yard competition in Dhahran, as they were recognized for their efforts to enhance aesthetics in the community and apply environmental friendly methods to maintain their yards.

The gardens of the **Raghid Ajamoughli family**, the **Nasir M. Khan family**, and the **Cory H. Helfrich family** were selected by a five-member panel of judges led by Nabeel A. Al Dughaiter, administrator of the Gardening and Sanitation Services division.

Each winner of the competition was given an award and a gift for their accomplishment.

The department received dozens of entries to join the competition in late 2019. The selection process began in January 2020 and was completed before the national lockdown was imposed.

"The scope of talent in gardening in the community is outstanding. The knowledge and support from the Gardening Team is significant toward the environmental achievement within our community efforts to enhance the quality of life in the Dhahran community. We are glad to see several yards reflect the sustainable concept in terms of the running maintenance and water conservation," said Al Dughaiter.

Participants of the competition were evaluated by a number of criteria, including:

- Condition of the yard
- Balance and creativity in landscape designs
- Adaptation of environmental conservation techniques, such as recycling, reuse, and xeriscape.

a passion for gardening and the environment

"At the moment we enter the houses (of the winners) we immediately see the passion. It is their lifestyle. It's in their blood," said one of the judges. "They would continue with such a lifestyle no matter if there is a competition or not."

All three winners, first-time participants in the competition, demonstrated their passion for gardening and used recycled mate-



Raghid and Indira Ajamoughli

rials to decorate or furnish their yards with style.

Raghid's wife, Indira, from Kazakhstan, is a self-made artist who was the mastermind behind their award-winning yard. She designed and painted all the flowerpots, big and small, incorporating styles of Indian mandala ornaments, a Mexican talavera motif, and a Russian hoholoma pattern.

"I want some bright, vivid colors in my yard. That's why I chose red to be the theme of my design and layered with various bright colors," she said. "I get my inspiration from Pinterest and travel posts or photos from Facebook. I take different ideas and modify them into my ideas."

Their yard was a result of team effort. Indira was in charge of painting the pots, designing the landscape, selecting plants and flowers, whereas Raghid shouldered the responsibilities of furnishing the yard. As a woodworking enthusiast, he sourced recycled materials to build benches, table, flower stands, and a gazebo.

Raghid and Indira prepared for more than two months to get their garden ready for the annual contest, which started in 2014. "When I decided to join the competition, I was determined to win," said Indira.

a sanctuary from the desert

Nasir's wife, Mariyam, made her wish come true by bringing her garden life from

Pakistan to Saudi Arabia. Their yard has served as a sanctuary for her and an outdoor activity center for their family and their guests.

"I want a sanctuary that looks like I am not in a desert," said Mariyam, an avid horticulturist with many years of experience in planting and gardening. Instead of grass, she used gravel and flagstones to pave her garden in her landscape design to save water.

It has become a ritual for her every year to make frequent visits to nurseries in the region during the October-December planting season to make plans for her yard.

"It's my passion. I love it," she said, noting her enthusiasm in gardening has been nurtured and intensified by the reading of Home and Garden magazine and exploring Pinterest, she said.

She often had her 4-year-old daughter, Narmeen, tagging along when she was working in the yard in hopes to cultivate the young girl's interest in gardening.

"I teach my daughter gardening because I would like her to develop the same passion," said Mariyam.

the restorative gifts of morning gardening

For years, it has been a daily routine for Cory's wife, Maggie, to spend her morning working in her yard. For her, gardening is healing and calming.

"Every morning, spending a couple of hours in the yard is very therapeutic and satisfying, like doing yoga," said Maggie, a Canadian native who used to work in furniture finishing as her profession and is an experienced quilter.

While envisioning her yard as a bouquet of colorful flowers and greenery, Maggie applied her quilting designs and skills in her yard. She described her yard as "an outdoor quilt in which I use mathematical and dimensional concepts in my designs."

Some species of plants were put in place purposefully to attract birds, which feed on insects from the yard, a natural ecosystem food chain that helps mitigate the negative impact from bugs in the yard, she said.

Maggie's expertise in furniture was applied to repurpose old metal, wooden, or glass panels into art pieces for the wall surrounding the yard. To add a flair of Arabic culture to her yard, she sourced traditional Saudi doors, windows, and building materials from used furniture stores or craftsman's shops in the Eastern Province.

The key reason for her to enter the competition was to share her passion in gardening to the Aramco community where she has called home for more than 20 years.

"I want to do something positive to the community, to promote gardening in our community. Everyone can do it. There are lots of people who can help and share their knowledge on gardening," she said.



Cory and Maggie Helfrich



Nasir and Mariyam Khan





a gathering of gazelles

Samir Patel captured this image of a group of gazelles gathered in the shade at Al Areen Wildlife Park and Reserve in Bahrain while visiting during a long week off. Patel used his Nikon D5200 camera with a 70-300mm Nikkor lens to capture the image. Patel lives and works in Ras Tanura as an engineer in the Ras Tanura Cluster Shared Services Department's Ju'aymah Fractionation Reliability Unit. He joined the company in November 2014.



historical photo

This 1952 photo shows Susan Kelly, left, and Faridah Sowayigh pointing out their homes, Wyoming and Saudi Arabia, on a globe. The photo accompanied an article in *AramcoWorld* about the relationship between Saudis and expatriates at the company. Kelly, an American, and Sowayigh, a Saudi, were both sixth-graders in Dhahran when the photo was taken.



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With a moderate climate, Al Fayfa is a green jewel whose fertile lands have provided plentiful agricultural bounty over the centuries. Oregano, lavender, mint, and basil faintly scent the mountain air, and in-season fruits include mangoes, lemons, guavas, figs, and avocados — but honey, with a distinctly pure taste matched only by the stunning views, is the agricultural standout. (Photos: Mohammed Alshaiikh/IMPD and Musleh Al-Khathami)



honey above the clouds | a higher taste of life in Al Fayfa

by Janet Pinheiro

Visitors to Al Fayfa Mountains struggle to decide what is more hair-raising — going up its daunting mountain slopes, or coming down.

Locals grow up navigating the challenging corners of its steep contours, and claim they know when someone new has moved into their soaring neighborhood.

“There is usually an accident,” they quietly commiserate, adding that new residents drive either too fast or too close to the plummeting edges — or both.

nature’s meeting place

Things are geographically dramatic in Saudi Arabia’s southwest Jazan Province.

Covering about 120 km², Al Fayfa forms part of the Sarawat mountain range, whose solid granite interiors seem to whip effortlessly around each other.

Despite reaching more than 2,600 meters into the Kingdom’s skies, Al Fayfa is a mere 60 km from the Red Sea.

Some of the rises are so steep that a small cable car system needs to haul goods and people up and down its higher corners.

Those with 20/20 vision can stand on one of Al Fayfa’s elevated points and spot the Red Sea’s intense blue-green waters lying in the distance, possibly feeling the soft hint of a wafting salt-laden sea breeze.

At night, when you gaze up from one of its summits, it seems you have accidentally stumbled into a private meeting between the Earth, moon, and stars.

In the morning, as you look down the plunging view from your hotel window into the swirling layer of clouds beneath, you notice how the sun is straining to rise and shine light above the mountain’s lofty heights.

flower warriors

With a moderate climate, Al Fayfa is a green jewel whose fertile lands have provided plentiful agricultural bounty over the centuries.

Millet, corn, cocoa, coffee, fruits, and aromatic plants grow on mountain terraces, securely held in place by ancient stone-walls constructed by hand.

Oregano, lavender, mint, and basil faintly scent the mountain air, in-season fruits include mangoes, lemons, guavas, figs, and avocados — but honey, with a distinctively pure taste matched only by the stunning views, is the agricultural standout.

The lush environment is home to 20 tribes and clans, each with a rich cultural heritage.

Flower Men, descendants of the ancient Tihama and Asir tribes, are renowned for their strong dispositions and warfare skills.

These fearsome tribesmen hang silver daggers from their belts, wrap colorful cloth around their waists, and for centuries have worn exquisitely scented colorful flower wreaths in their hair.

Never underestimate the awesome power of flowers.



refreshing laid-back harmony

An introduction to a local journalist during dinner reveals that, along with foolish driving by the uninitiated, landslides are a favorite conversation topic among locals, who feel that new residents do not always build to suit local conditions.

Yet, the pressures of modern houses leaning toward treacherous edges and narrow windy roads blur into the background at Al Fayfa.

It is a place where life harmonizes with nature, daily routines are set by the sun, and the only thing bigger than its peaks is the friendly hospitality of the relaxed locals.

An early morning stroll up a main wind-

ing street opens up a generous invitation from a busily occupied farmer to a self-guided viewing of his crop planting area.

Another helpful resident calls a friend, who in turn will get a message to the pharmacist to open the shop where the locals buy their legendary honey, while someone else uses the neighbor communication network to see if a coffee farmer can open his shed.

After hours of friendly translated discussion with the two farmers and pharmacist, I start to feel like a resident — although it is clear that passing judgment on novice driving and landslides is a privilege reserved exclusively for implanted locals.

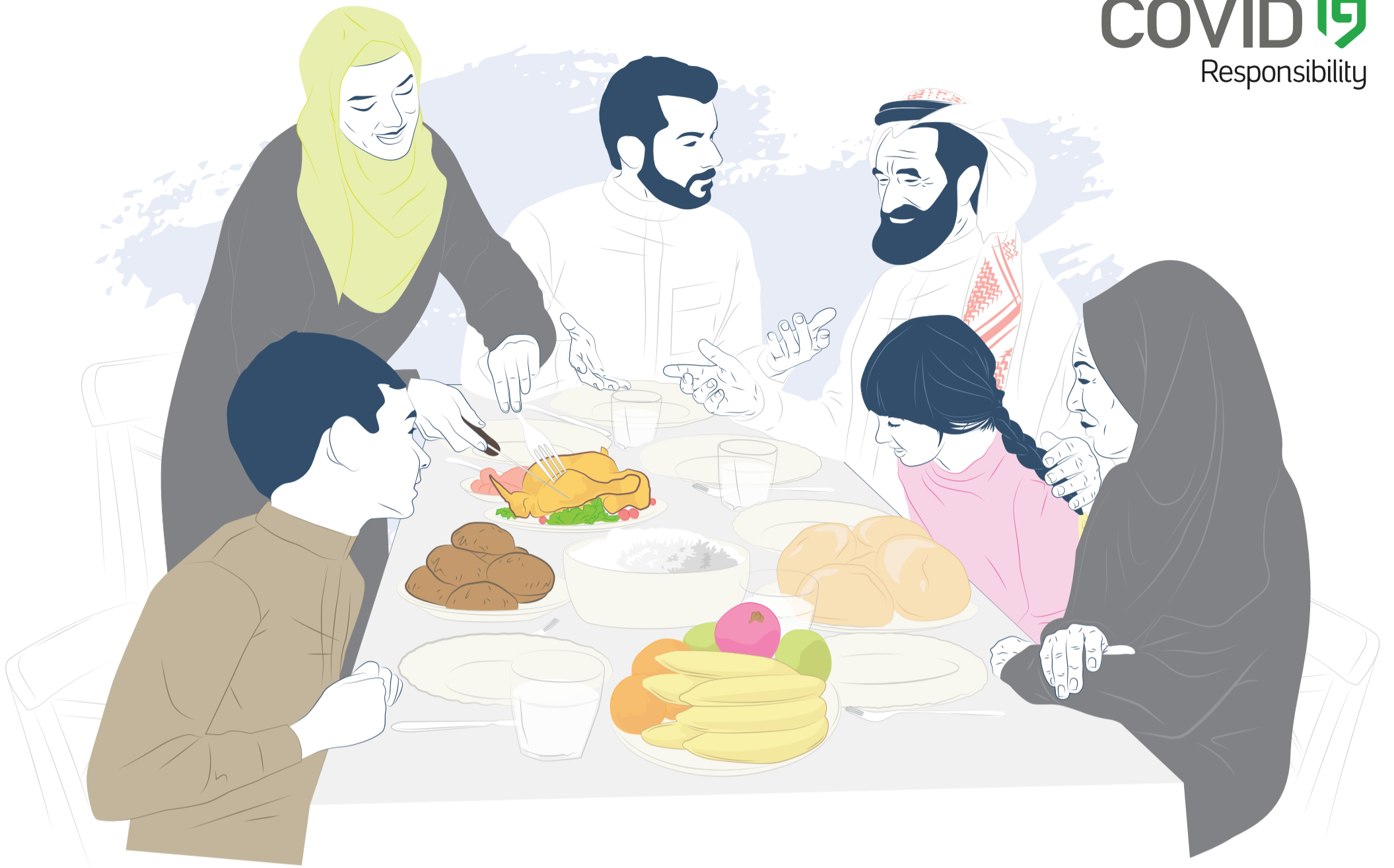
Laden with a recycled glass bottle containing a liter of unbranded honey, green unroasted coffee beans, and gifts of oversized custard apples, I explore my way back through the buzz of nature to the hotel.

High life at Al Fayfa feels naturally right.

Al Fayfa Mountains



Visit the Saudi Tourism Authority’s “Visit Saudi” website’s new “Break free” section for information on how to experience a summer destination in the Kingdom: <https://www.visitsaudi.com/en/packages>.



He's sharing more than funny stories

Ahmed was excited to have his family over, particularly his grandparents who he had not seen in months. Things seemed to be getting back to normal everywhere, so why not celebrate and laugh with loved ones?

But Ahmed was already infected and had only mild symptoms. His family gathering put everyone at risk.

Never let your guard down, especially during the holidays when it is more tempting to be less cautious.

Remember: It's not about you. It's about everyone's safety.

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

