

# the arabian sun

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a weekly Aramco publication for employees

More than  
just a  
pretty place

Aramco's new

منتزه المانجروف البيئي  
**mangrove**  
eco-park

a natural wonder

see pages 6 and 7



# JHAH Awarded ‘Gold’ Person-Centered Care Certification

Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare (JHAH) has been accredited as one of only four organizations in the Kingdom with Gold certification. Person-Centered Care is an international standard established by Planetree International for quality in health care, where staff, patients, and families have their needs and desires heard and addressed.

The Gold Award was celebrated at a ceremony Jan. 3 in Dhahran. Nabeel A. Al-Jama', senior vice president of Human Resources and Corporate Services and JHAH chairman of the Board, and Dr. Susan Frampton, president of Planetree International, joined the ceremony virtually to celebrate with JHAH leadership, including Dr. Michael Walsh, chief executive of JHAH; Salem Al-Shehry, COO and Person-Centered Care advocate; and JHAH employees.

“As of today, JHAH is officially the gold standard for person-centered care in Saudi Arabia,” Al-Jama' said at the award ceremony. “This is thanks to the hard work and determination of a great many people: doctors, nurses, technicians, support personnel, JHAH’s leadership, and of course, all the patients

*Nabeel A. Al-Jama', JHAH chairman of the Board and senior vice president of HR and Corporate Services, delivers celebratory remarks to attendees after being introduced by Dr. Amar Sattar, co-chairman of the Person-Centered Care Council.*



and their families who’ve come with us on this journey. Together, you have built a JHAH culture that puts people and their needs right at the front and center of everything we do.

“This Planetree gold certificate is a milestone and not an endpoint,” Al-Jama' added. “We must build on and strengthen this culture. But for now, you can all be incredibly proud of what you have achieved. So thank you, and

congratulations.”

The Gold certification was achieved after a weeklong validation visit by international quality surveyors who assessed JHAH’s delivery of health-care services. As part of the assessment, surveyors interviewed a number of focus groups that included front-line staff, clinical staff, and patients. The surveyors visited all five of JHAH’s locations in the Kingdom.

“As of today, JHAH is officially the gold standard for person-centered care in Saudi Arabia. Together, you have built a JHAH culture that puts people and their needs right at the front and center of everything we do.

— Nabeel A. Al-Jama'

As defined by Planetree, person-centered care creates positive impressions and satisfying experiences, but beyond that, it improves lives. Person-centered care creates workplaces that energize and inspire joy at work. It improves health outcomes and unites communities around health and wellness. Research has documented that person-centered care yields internal, external, and cultural benefits to health care organizations and improves organizational performance in quality, safety, and experience.

The surveyors noted a number of JHAH’s services that demonstrate person-centered care excellence, including Patient and Family Advisory Councils, Patient-Directed Visiting Hours, Welcome Guides, and a health encyclopedia for patients in Arabic and English, among others.



Dr. Michael Walsh and Salem Al-Shehry are pictured with the “Gold” Person-Centered Care Award from Planetree International.



From left, Dr. Elmotaz Ahmed (Al-Hasa Health Center), Dr. Ali Mollah (Abqaiq Health Center), and Dr. Mohsin Jafri (Ras Tanura Health Center) accept the “Gold” standard Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care by Planetree International on behalf of their district health centers.

## Notable achievements in JHAH’s journey to Person-Centered Care Excellence

- **Experiential Communication and Compassion Training:** 97% of JHAH employees completed Experiential Communication Training (four hours) and Compassion Training (two hours) within 12 months.
- **Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFAC):** JHAH established PFAC, which is a partnership between patients, families, and staff that works together to create a person-centered health-care culture. The PFAC members include active employees, retirees, persons with disabilities and spouses who team up to improve patient and family experience.
- **Patient-Directed Visiting Hours:** When patients are admitted to the ward, they will be asked their visiting preferences. This information is recorded in “Epic,” the

- electronic medical record.
- **MyWay — Digital Navigation App:** JHAH’s wayfinding technology is here to help JHAH patients and visitors find their destination and information.
- **In the Medical Intensive Care Unit (ICU),** JHAH staff holds multidisciplinary rounds partnering with patients and their loved ones to take into account personal preferences and respect spiritual and cultural needs.
- **JHAH’s Service Excellent Unit created “Welcoming to All — An Employee Guide to Communication.”** This training provides practical resources and tips on welcoming all people to the hospital, including people with disabilities and special needs.
- **JHAH’s Human Resources department** includes the presence of either peer-to-

- peer staff or patients in the interview process for potential new hires.
- **Welcome Guides:** JHAH Welcome Guides are available to assist patients, family members, and visitors with directions within our hospitals.
- **Emergency Department Entrance New Parking:** Five new patient parking slots were added, including parking for people with disabilities, close to the JHAH Emergency Department entrance.
- **Executive Rounding:** This takes place across all JHAH facilities, with pairs of C-suite leaders “rounding” or visiting wards and offices, taking time to talk with staff, patients, and families.
- **The courtyard area,** near the main lobby of the Dhahran Health Center, was re-opened in 2019 after extensive land-

- scaping. Research is finding that natural light in a health care facility can help patients recover faster and reduce their need for medication as well as reduce the stress of health care workers while increasing their productivity.
- **Inpatient Welcome Guide Booklet:** The Welcome Guide Booklet is a part of ensuring a comfortable stay, and to help personalize our care and services for patients and their loved ones. The booklet is available upon arrival in all inpatient rooms.
- **Radiology’s Calming Ambiance:** JHAH’s Radiology Department has chosen equipment that combines advanced diagnostic technology with person-centered design. It provides a patient with controlled immersive environmental display technology.



# Journeying to new levels of road safety

## North Ghawar Producing Department merges technology with journey management by commissioning NGPD Field Operation Support Center

By Eamonn Houston

**Abqaiq** — The North Ghawar Producing Department (NGPD) has deployed cutting-edge technology to monitor in-the-field road safety of employees and contractors across its approximately 14,000 km<sup>2</sup> area of operations.

The newly established NGPD Field Operation Support Center (NGFOSC), operating from its base at Abqaiq’s South Administration Building, is a centralized hub for the coordination and monitoring of all journey management related tasks.

### Trip monitoring

The NGFOSC is the latest initiative to further boost field journey safety. Aramco employees and company contractors will benefit from this new trip monitoring function when they are driving in remote areas for field operations.

The center has emerged as a pillar of safety excellence for NGPD, striving to minimize the risks that personnel face when traveling in remote locations.

### State-of-the-art features

Among its state-of-the-art features, the center has an integrated dashboard that is overseen by journey management coordinators (JMCs) 24 hours a day, and includes a tracking and monitoring system.

The NGFOSC provides a 24/7 fully manned operation to ensure that all employees and contractors enjoy successful trips while availing state-of-the-art tools and technologies to facilitate their safe dispatch and return.

According to NGPD manager Abdulaziz U. Al Saleh, the new center will further improve journey safety across its area of operations.

“Due to the extent of NGPD’s land-



President and CEO Amin Nasser on a visit to the newly established NGPD Field Operation Support Center, at its base in Abqaiq’s South Administration Building. Vice president of Southern Area Oil Operations, Khaled A. Al Buraik, and vice president of Safety & Industrial Security, Aali M. Al Zahrani, were also in attendance.



The center is another pillar of safety excellence for the North Ghawar Producing Department, and has the goal of minimizing the risks that employees and contractors face when traveling by road to remote locations.

scope area, our operations are not just limited to on-site activities. Off-site or remote activities represent a great deal of our daily operations with an average annual driving distance exceeding 3 million kilometers,” Al Saleh said.

#### Top NGFOSC features include:

- **Live Field Maps:** The center is equipped with an integrated dashboard displayed on digital monitors, providing a live overview of the Corporate Emer-

gency Response Tool.

- **Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL):** Dedicated JMCs are assigned to monitor all travelers to ensure everyone returns safely. These JMCs check the location of travelers every three hours and are able to communicate with them by radio or mobile phone via a centralized tracking system.

- **Tracking System:** The journey management tracking system allows travelers

to log their personal information and trip details. Each trip is shown on the dashboard where it is tracked by the JMCs.

If the trip is not completed (closed) during the intended period, notifications are sent to the travelers’ direct supervisor to take action.

The department also has a number of vehicles equipped with SOS buttons. When activated, a notification containing the vehicle’s live location and number, as well as the driver’s name is sent to an emergency contact list.

- **Contractor awareness:** The NGPD has conducted extensive awareness sessions with contractors to include the development of their journey management programs and incorporate their automatic vehicle locator systems into the center.

NGPD has established several initiatives to bridge the gap in traffic safety, traffic violations, and notifications. Since 2017, there has been a significant improvement in driving behavior and a remarkable 93% reduction in violations and notifications.

North Ghawar Producing Department  
Operational Excellence & Compliance Group

## Journey Managing Utilization



Employee logs the trip into the Journey Management Tracking System.



The trip will then be forwarded to the department Journey Management coordinator (JMC) for approval.



Upon approval, the employee will then dispatch to the destination.



The JMC will check the location of the traveler every three hours and communicate by radio or mobile phone.



In case of an emergency, travelers will activate the SOS button, which will send an emergency message to the search and rescue responders.



Upon completion of the journey, the JMCs will close the trip in the system.

# Leading the way in cybersecurity, Aramco scoops a prestigious international award



The cutting-edge efforts of Aramco's Information Security Department (ISD) have been spotlighted by an international organization pledged to digital transformation and boosting cybersecurity across the global industrial landscape.

Aramco's Third-Party Cybersecurity Program, which was designed to help guard the company from cyber threats stemming from third parties, received the prestigious CSO50 2020 award from the technology media company International Data Group.

The award ceremony was held virtually due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. ISD's program introduced governance and protection mechanisms across Aramco's supply chain to protect against increased cyber risks.

It had a key role in not only securing the company, but also in increasing cybersecurity awareness and capabilities of Aramco's third parties.

CSO50 is a prestigious global award presented to the top 50 distinguished projects that have resulted in the highest positive impact to an organization's cybersecurity posture, community, and ecosystem.

## Pride

Chief information security officer Khalid S. Al Harbi spoke of his pride in the award and the efforts of his team.

"In ISD, our motto is, 'Information security is everyone's responsibility,' which highlights the role every employee plays when it comes to protecting the company's data and assets," Al Harbi said.

Cyberattacks are growing in sophistication, and rather than exploiting technologies and security systems, attackers



Aramco's Information Security Department's team, who won the prestigious award from International Data Group.

are using social engineering techniques. Such techniques exploit human instinct to lure unsuspecting users into exposing data, spreading malware, or giving access to restricted systems.

"Advanced technology and security practices, no matter how sophisticated, will always be constrained by the human factor. Therefore, we are committed to continuing our efforts in promoting a resilient cybersecurity culture in Aramco through our Cybersecurity Behavior Management Program," Al Harbi added.

## Behavior management

The program is undergoing a shift to create a vigilant culture, transforming it into a collaborative behavior-centric program.

Al Harbi said that ISD continues to scale its efforts through collaboration with government agencies and critical national infrastructure to promote positive cybersecurity behaviors nationwide.

"We are currently co-leading global research on 'cyber resilience for the oil and gas industry' with the World Economic Forum (WEF). Efforts have a focus on addressing cyber risk on operational

technology and information technology infrastructure. This research is a global community effort with a common interest and commitment to strengthen cybersecurity capabilities," Al Harbi said.

As a founding member of the WEF's Center for Cybersecurity, Aramco and the center, known as C4C, are leading a cyber resilience program specifically focused on the oil and gas industry.

## Resilience

Aramco and the WEF are leading the development of cyber resilience guidelines for boards of directors to influence organizational and behavioral change in the industry. The program creates a trusted network of collaboration to embed cybersecurity across the oil and gas ecosystem.

"The company has therefore been driven by the objective of strengthening its cyber resilience to ensure the evolution of cybersecurity capabilities for the enterprise and its ecosystem," said Al Harbi.

Aramco realized that this resilience is a collective effort and is built upon stron-

ger alliances across the supply chain. As such, the need of the Third Party Cybersecurity Program emerged in 2016 to address this gap.

## Collaboration

Dheba S. Al Rashid, the lead for the Information Security Programs Development Group, said that the very nature of Aramco's business as a global organization requires strong collaboration between the company and its partners to effectively address cybersecurity challenges.

"We rely on many partners and third-party suppliers to achieve our business objectives. This includes exchanging data and extensive communication. Naturally, this raises the risk level around data governance and security," Al Rashid said.

"The program strives to proactively combat cyber risks originating from third parties by embedding cybersecurity at every stage of the third-party engagement life cycle," she added.

ISD has also established the first digital certification for the company's third parties, called the Cybersecurity Compliance Certificate, which strives to elevate cybersecurity capabilities across Aramco's supply chain to ensure that best practice standards are upheld.

Ali Al-Asseri, the lead for the Supply Chain and Third-Party Compliance Group, focused on the mutual benefit of collaboration and how it is a key to strengthening online security.

"ISD elevated third-party discussions and hosted multiple collaborative sessions Kingdomwide to unify national efforts in tackling supply chain risks and raise security standards," Al-Asseri said.

## Your voice



By Steve C. Magnan  
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## Mental health in the workplace: the biggest pandemic issue of 2021

My hope in sharing my story is to encourage others to do the same.

On July 10, I got infected by COVID-19. I found out by surprise. I was working with a cross-functional team on establishing a COVID-19 protocol for industrial trainees. As I suffered from a runny nose and very mild flu-like symptoms, I decided to get tested. To my surprise, I tested positive. Fourteen days later, I was back at work. During these two weeks, I received numerous messages inquiring about my health and wishing me a speedy recovery.

On Dec. 25, I was admitted to JHAH. It was like I had fallen off a 10-story high building and smashed my head on the concrete. My blood pressure was rising and falling without any apparent reason. This condition started eight months earlier in April when we first heard of COVID-19 sweeping its dark cloak throughout the world.

First, I tried to ignore it. Then, I tried

to brush it away, but it kept coming stronger and stronger. It started with a feeling of not being able to breathe. Feeling trapped as if I was being buried alive, I couldn't breathe. I was panicking and getting anxious. My symptoms kept becoming harsher — feelings of hopelessness, increased irritability, loss of pleasure, and trouble concentrating and sleeping.

Then my thoughts became dark. Dark and bleak ideas started infiltrating my mind. These thoughts became more and more obsessive. What if tomorrow was like today? What is the pleasure of living if you are in so much pain? What is wrong with me? I was slowly sinking and desperately trying to shout "Help!" But no one was hearing me. This time I was sick, but without apparent symptoms. No one was wishing me a speedy recovery, as my sickness was invisible to others.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an international experience of stress, anxi-

ety, and depression. But now, it may inspire more open discussions about mental health in the workplace than ever before. McKinsey, a management consulting company, said in 2020 that, "If companies make mental health services more accessible and intervene in the workplace in ways that improve well-being, they will simultaneously make investments that will provide real improvements in employee outcomes and consequently in company performance."

I wrote this while I was in an emergency hospital stay for eight days. I was diagnosed with severe depression and anxiety. Today, I am on the road to recovery. Like past sport injuries, I intend to make this recovery a learning moment, not a lifetime shame. It will be a lifelong journey. I am privileged and lucky to be on the path to recovery. Privileged to have such a great family, friends, colleagues, and job. However, neither privilege nor luck should have to be part of anyone's mental health equation.

# Expansive Riyadh Refinery upgrade finished on budget and ahead of schedule

A significant upgrade at the Riyadh Refinery that was originally scheduled to take more than two years to complete was finished much earlier than anticipated.

Thanks to the dedication and safe work of more than 2,000 field professionals, the Hydroprocessing Integrity Project was completed in July — 24 months early. Although the work was conducted 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, the project was executed within budget, and the expedited work saved a total of 3.1 million man-hours while requiring only a single shutdown, instead of the two originally scheduled.

With this significant acceleration, the refinery's operational efficiencies were optimized while also reducing the load on all charge heaters, which effectively slashed operational costs.

The scope of the project was considerable, as the team had to:

- Demolish 61 pieces of equipment weighing 3,638 tons
- Excavate and then backfill 3,013 m<sup>3</sup> on-site to make space for new installations
- Design and install 17 new, large-sized reactors and 27 exchangers
- Install 8,000 m of new piping
- Fabricate and erect 800 tons of steel structures
- Install 141,000 m of cables for power and instrumentation
- Execute 257 tie-ins
- Perform 339 hydrotesting packages.

## Challenges and accomplishments

Although the shutdown took place during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis, the team persevered and safely com-



The installation of two new platformer heat exchangers being lifted in place with an 800-ton capacity crane during the Riyadh Refinery upgrade.

pleted the work within the allotted shutdown period.

The upgrades are designed to help Aramco meet domestic fuel demand in a reliable and cost-effective manner. Continued operation of the hydroprocessing units is essential for the operation of the refinery.

To optimize the refinery's operations, the project's scope of work focused on the upgrade of aging facilities, with eight new reactors and 12 combined feed/effluent exchangers to be installed in the hydrocracking unit to process an increased fresh feed rate.

Also, other reactors and exchangers were replaced to enhance production and to optimize profitability, including the naptha hydrotreater, kerosene hydrotreater, and platformer units that produce gasoline, jet fuel, and liquefied petroleum gas.

## The final stretch

The final part of the revamp project was an upgrade of the hydrogen reformer unit with a goal of producing 97% pure hydrogen to support demand. Faced with the challenge of generating updated vectorized drawings and maps for a refinery that was built in 1979, the team used 3-D laser scans to survey and generate the needed data for the task, resulting in cost savings and expedited deliverables.

Major work had to be done in the hydrocracking unit due to aging reactors. Significant design changes and upgrades to more than 20 pieces of equipment were required to optimize the unit's function and production capacity.

Another challenge came from material specifications and movement. Replacements had to comply with materials that are produced by only a few fabricators around the world. The eight hydrocracking reactors along with their 12 combined feed exchangers — amounting to a total weight of 2,670 tons — were

procured and transported from Europe to Riyadh, requiring the project team to diligently work beyond normal hours to meet a challenging deadline.

Following material procurement and delivery challenges, the installation process posed new sets of challenges.

During the design period, the team adopted a modular construction approach to reduce the shutdown window. The huge modular equipment installations, with their massive tonnage sizes, posed a strain on manpower.

Therefore, the plan was revised and accelerated to execute the work with just one shutdown. This major undertaking was made possible by a team of dedicated professionals.



# For community & environment

## Aramco's new Mangrove Eco-Park a natural wonder

Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser took part in a ceremony to open the Mangrove Eco-Park near Ras Tanura on Jan. 11. The Eco-Park is the first facility in the Kingdom dedicated to the preservation of mangrove forests, which provide critical buffer zones between land and sea as well as breeding and nursery grounds for various marine life.

The opening of the Eco-Park took place during a gathering of executives in Ras Tanura (RT) to review safety measures at RT area company facilities.

"Mangroves play an important role in our environment as a line of protection and as a nursery for marine life," said Nasser. "This Mangrove Eco-Park will most certainly enhance our longstanding commitment to sustainability and to protecting and enhancing the environment around us."

Started in 2012, the 63-km<sup>2</sup> Mangrove Eco-Park protects one of the last naturally occurring mangrove forests in the Eastern Province and features the longest mangrove boardwalk in the Kingdom. Protecting sensitive natural habitats in the areas where we operate not only demonstrates Aramco's commitment to environmental stewardship, it also provides an opportunity to increase public awareness about the important role that mangrove forests play in the Kingdom's environment.

Mangrove forests are not only beautiful places to visit. They play a crucial role in protecting shorelines from erosion. They also provide sanctuaries where fish, shrimp, and other marine life can spawn and produce offspring, which strengthens the local ecosystem. With healthy fish populations, local communities that rely on fishing are able to enjoy more stable incomes, providing seafood to

foreign and domestic customers.

The Mangrove Eco-Park is visited by over 100 species of birds annually, such as the whimbrel and curlew birds that migrate from as far as Siberia in Russia.

Scientific research shows that mangroves even play a role in purifying seawater by absorbing pollutants and mitigating climate change by capturing and storing atmospheric carbon within the surrounding sediment. In line with the transition to a circular carbon economy, mangroves provide a sustainable carbon sequestration solution because they capture five times more carbon dioxide than terrestrial trees and do not require ongoing maintenance once established.

The Mangrove Eco-Park has been designed to educate the community — from schoolchildren to families and visiting tourists — about mangroves and their environmental and economic benefits. Each element of the facility contributes to the mission of environmental preservation and local awareness. An on-site field lab is fully equipped with all the tools necessary to study the mangrove forest and coastal biodiversity. A boardwalk has been built to allow visitors to stroll into the estuary and to view the forest and the local wildlife up close. An adjacent mangrove nursery provides space for seedlings to be nurtured to expand the size of the mangrove forest, keeping the mangrove forest at RT alive and well for generations to come.

"We are delighted with this new and exciting recreational and educational facility for RT residents and visitors," said Community Services executive director Faisal A. Hajji. "It will complement Community Services' efforts toward improving the quality of life, and more importantly, further strengthen the company's carbon sequestration contribution."

Environmental Protection general manager Omar S. Abdulhamid said, "Aramco, a pioneer in environmental stewardship and biodiversity, is proud to establish the first Mangrove Eco-Park in the Kingdom. This is yet another step in its journey toward a sustainable future."



Amin Nasser was on hand Monday for a ceremony marking the opening of the Mangrove Eco-Park near Ras Tanura, the first facility in the Kingdom dedicated to the preservation of mangrove forests.

Begun eight years ago, the park protects one of the last naturally occurring mangrove forests in the Eastern Province and features a long boardwalk to provide visitors an opportunity to see conservation in action.

But mangrove forests aren't just beautiful places to visit. They play a crucial role in protecting our shores from erosion while providing sanctuaries where fish, shrimp, and other marine life can spawn and produce offspring, strengthening the ecosystem.

The park's opening was attended not only by Nasser, but also other members of senior management as part of their monthly Executive Management Safety Review.



Photos: Ding/MPD



Visit: 2 million mangroves added to the carbon front line.

# SPARK Dry Port: Helping realize Vision 2030 with a world-class hub for the movement of goods and commerce

**Dammam** — The King Salman Energy Park (SPARK) Project Management Team (PMT) continues to make strides in the realization of Saudi Vision 2030 with the development of a world-class dry port and logistics zone.

The dry port, which sits between Dammam and al-Ahsa, will serve both SPARK industries and the wider Eastern Province. The port is also intended to attract and expand private sector participation in the economy, and directly support Aramco's objectives at SPARK.

Murad A. Sayed, general manager of Maritime, Building and Infrastructure Management, said, "This first-class system of the SPARK dry port will deliver significant improvements to the Saudi Customs' services not only in SPARK, but also to all areas served by the Customs' authority."

The dry port is also a key enabler for the development of the wider SPARK site, as it will directly leverage the benefits of the Gulf railway, which will connect all six Gulf Cooperation Council member states on the Arabian Gulf to provide new freight transport options and Customs facilities.

To meet the projected demand at SPARK, the dry port will be developed in two phases. The first one being the implementation of facilities to operate the port using truck haulage, and the second phase, which would be served when the railway is operational.

The primary objective for the dry port is to support the logistics needs of the SPARK industrial city, and surrounding industrial centers.



This conceptual representation shows the SPARK Dry Port main entrance gate.

The dry port and logistics zone within the complex furthers the development and promotion of private sector investment in the eastern part of the Kingdom. This will provide significant benefits to future tenants in SPARK, enabling them to access international markets in an efficient way, in part by leveraging on-site Customs with more feasible transport links.

The dry port design implements an Inbound Screening Facility (ISF) for Saudi Customs that helps to reduce the buildup area by 37% and increase port efficiency,

resulting in construction cost savings and a shorter completion schedule.

This ISF facility will be installed in the dry port entrance and features sensors and scanners to screen incoming cargo as it passes through the gate. This helps Customs decide in advance to either release the cargo or transfer it for manual inspection. The ISF includes a radiation portal monitor, an over height detection system, a weigh in motion, a truck photo camera, a license plate reader, an X-ray source portal, and a RFID reader.

The dry port's automation, latest technology, and Customs' clearance procedures are based on the best international practices of risk management and will be utilized for the first time in the Kingdom, reducing manual inspection rates from 80% to 20%, enabling more cargo to be handled and reducing the footprint of the Customs area and its required resources.

This dry port and logistics zone project is evidence that PMT at SPARK is continuously seeking excellence to bring benefits to the project and to the Kingdom.



This conceptual representation shows the SPARK Dry Port main entrance layout.

# Back to school

## ACCEL International Center reopens

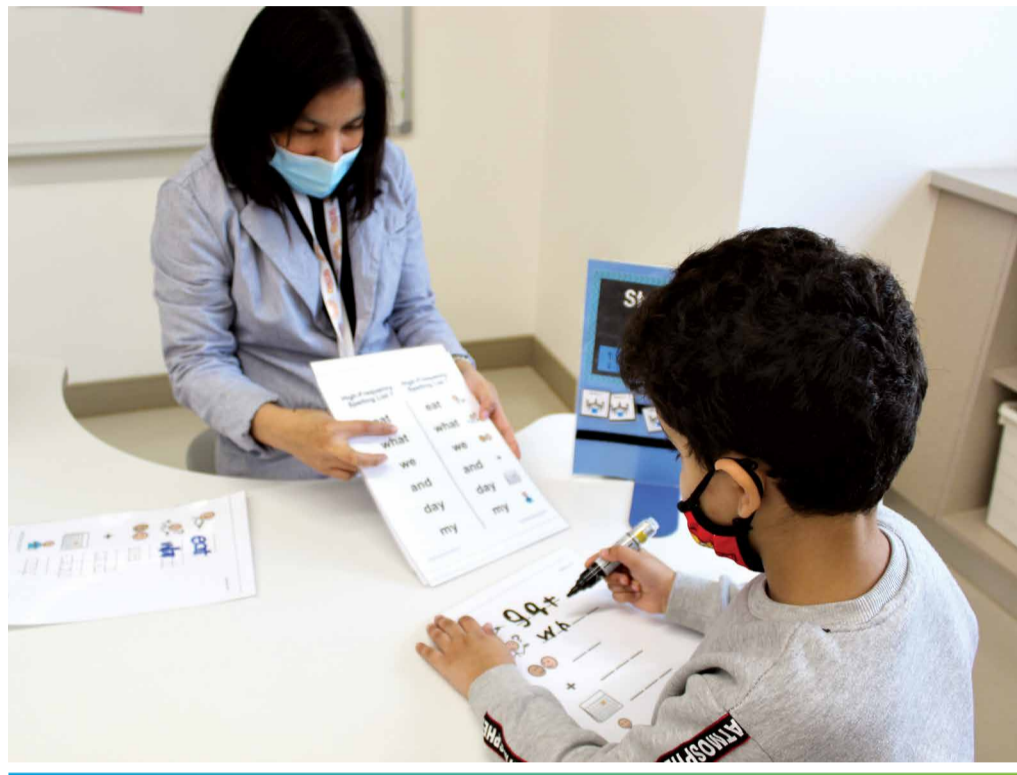
By Jim Cook

Sukaiynah Alhubail works one-on-one with her students as they go through a series of math exercises on a Monday morning at the Ajjal Center for Comprehensive Education and Life Skills (ACCEL) International Center. Her class is smaller — there are only four students per class instead of the usual eight — and the rhythm of the day is punctuated by regular pauses to clean and disinfect classrooms, but these changes don't diminish the sense of normalcy Alhubail and her students feel.

"We're getting back to what we were doing before COVID," she said. "Everything is the same, just now with extra cleaning and precautions."

Like other schools throughout the Kingdom, ACCEL, which provides a range of therapy and training services for individuals with developmental disabilities, had to suspend face to face classes earlier this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, ACCEL staff moved quickly to develop a program of online instruction for students that included therapeutic and academic components.

Alhubail said some of the biggest challenges with developing a program of online instruction for her students involved providing differentiated instruction, which caters to students'



Juliet Toralde, a paraprofessional at the ACCEL International Center, works with a student.

individual capabilities. Alhubail said mastering Zoom, the software platform used to hold class online, and applying classroom management techniques have been helpful.

"As educators, we have to be flexible, so while frustrating at first, this was a great opportunity to grow," she said.

As the new school year in September approached, ACCEL, which is ad-

ministered by an Arizona-based center, began adapting plans used by its parent organization in the U.S. to resume in-person instruction. The Ministry of Education approved ACCEL's "4-4-4 plan," which consists of having students in class four days per week, four hours per day, with a maximum of four students in a classroom.

Additional staff have been hired to accommodate the smaller class size mandate. Online instruction also

continues one day per week. Plans to reopen included appropriate sanitization, mask wearing, and social distancing requirements. In-person classes at ACCEL resumed in late October.

"It's a relief to have the kids back, it brings the life back to the center," Phillip Tanner, executive director of the center, said. "All of the extra precautions and added staff have been worth it to have the kids back."

Tanner said that while online instruction, coupled with parental involvement, can be helpful for ACCEL's students, face-to-face instruction remains ideal for the educational and therapeutic services provided by ACCEL. The center is currently serving 96 students, and plans to add 35 more upon successful piloting of the 4-4-4 plan.

One benefit of the resumption of in-person classes has been the use of COVID-19 precautions as a learning experience. Students at ACCEL participate in sanitizing classrooms, learning how to clean and protect themselves from infection.

"Our greatest goal is to provide our students with the skills they need to live as independently as possible," Tanner said. "In the era of COVID-19, learning to properly clean and sanitize is critical. It's a healthy practice, and we want them to be healthy."

# Najmah youth put talents on display

By Seema Nanda and Ali H. Al Sinan

**Ras Tanura** — Twenty-four young hopefuls sang, danced, played musical instruments, and even beatboxed in a bid to become Najmah's top talent.

The Ras Tanura Recreation Services Unit hosted an online talent show, which was open to all Aramco community children between 9 and 15 years of age. Recreation advisor Seema Nanda coordinated with the 24 youngsters who registered for the show.

The top seven acts were shortlisted by a panel of volunteer judges including Andrew Redmon, Arianna de la Ree, and Ross Callander. Recreation



Lucas Wang, the winner.



Hamza Bustami, first runner-up.



Jesse Li, second runner-up.

advisor Ali H. Al Sinan hosted a two-hour live online show on Dec. 10, with Mohammed Quraish playing the oud

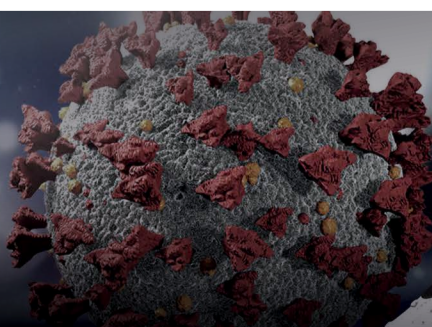
as a warm-up. Only the participants, judges, and organizers were present, socially distanced.

Top placers included winner Lucas Wang; first runner-up Hamza Bustami; and second runner-up Jesse Li.

# You have the power to defeat it

COVID-19 is still a threat. But we have the advantage to defeat it. Because the virus needs us to survive and spread.

Don't give it that chance.



Sehaty App



Download on the App Store



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“ There is a feel about Galway you can wear around your shoulders like a cloak. It hangs in the air with its dampness; it walks the cobblestone streets and stands in the doorways of its gray stone buildings.

— American author Claire Fullerton

# Along the wild Atlantic Way

*The West Coast of Ireland is a land of rugged beauty, where the frequently cruel Atlantic Ocean pummels its shores with azure surf, where the often tragic imprints of history and a wealth of culture abound, and it has now found its niche on the global tourist map as a must-see destination.*

by Eamonn Houston

The wild Atlantic Way stretches from the jutting northernmost reaches of Inishowen in Donegal to the deepest southern places of County Cork.

Along this 2,500-kilometer coastline — the last European stop before America — is a traveler's treasure hunt where unspoiled isolated beaches jigsaw with lofty cliffs. Doting the landscape with distinctive charm are colorful Irish villages and towns jostling to be renowned for their food and music.

Along the length of this coast, a mass of Ireland's population left from ports to flee starvation and teem upon the shores of the Americas and Canada from 1845 to 1849, during the Great Hunger (An Gorta Mor).



Galway street scene

## Galway city and bay

Galway is the third largest city in the Republic of Ireland, but features a modest compact population of almost 76,000 people — and what a mix it has with its quirky broth of musicians, locals, and multicultural students.

Lawrence of Arabia actor Peter O'Toole was born here. So was world-renowned Claddagh jewelry.

## Discovery

As an Irishman, I must admit that, like people from many nations, I never really fully discovered my own country while I lived in it. Although, since joining Aramco in 2011 and meeting my wife, Jane, from the Philippines, I have found myself exploring it more and more. And what a revelation it has been!

Arriving in Galway by bus from Dublin International Airport, the first thing that strikes you — besides the fresh, salty breeze of the Atlantic Ocean — is the city's centerpiece of Eyre Square, a leafy park named after U.S. president John F. Kennedy, who visited in 1963.

On mild days, people — mostly students — loll here. Tourists stroll and explore as locals relax at lunchtime. Eyre Square is dominated by the grand gray

### travelers tip

Travelers may be tempted to hire a car, but using Galway as a base, it is convenient to use tour buses to explore the surrounding area. The drivers are knowledgeable locals, and — as Ireland's coastal roads are winding and often narrow with agricultural traffic — this is the safest option.

façade of the former Meyrick Hotel, built in 1852.

But the real gem is William Street, just off the northwest corner of the square where cobblestones wind and slope downward toward Galway Bay and the harbor.

Topped by a statue of famous Irish writer Oscar Wilde and Estonian writer Eduard Vilde sitting in casual conversation, William Street is a potpourri of street entertainers, restaurants serving excellent seafood from the bay, and souvenir shops. Street entertainers and artists pepper the sloping hill, giving it the feel of a permanent festival.

The upper part of the River Corrib gushes swiftly from the lough (lake) of the same name into Galway Bay, with a salmon weir (dam) gently slowing its

pace until it reaches the bay.

Salmon fly anglers can be seen in waders along the banks, spanned by four bridges, seeking to catch the elusive fish for sport and supper.

The coastal Salthill, 3 km west on the outskirts of Galway City, has an old resort feel. Its seaside promenade (known as “the Prom”) stretches for about 5 km and has stunning views of Galway Bay. Salthill is a hotbed of cafes, restaurants, and leisure facilities, including a golf course. It's a vibrant place with a bracing Atlantic air. Seafood restaurants serve up the freshest oysters and chowder with freshly baked brown bread.

## Dungaire Castle, the Burren, Doolin, and Inis Oir

Built in 1520 by the O'Hynes clan, Dungaire Castle, a restored 16<sup>th</sup> century tower house, sits on a rocky outcrop on the shores of Galway Bay. It's steeped in history, and most tour coaches will stop by this testament to Ireland's rich history on the wild Atlantic Way.

But more is yet to come. The Burren (rocky place) sees us cross into County Clare and is an otherworldly glacial limestone rock formation that is home to a wild and diverse ecosystem. Of Ire-

land's 900 native plants species, the Burren is home to 70% of them.

The highlight of the Burren is Poul-nabrone, a portal dolmen that somehow has existed in a state of perfect balance for over 5,800 years. It guards the remains of 22 people buried over six centuries.

On the seaside edge of the Burren, the charming village of Doolin is perched on a gentle hill that slopes down to a harbor where ferries serve the famous Aran Islands. Here, you can have the best seafood chowder and traditional chocolate.

Towering like a huge row of sentinels just south of Doolin are the Cliffs of Moher. Puffin colonies thrive here, and you can see the cliffs by walking from Doolin or from the sea on a ferry.

The cliffs are one of the biggest tourist attractions in Ireland; attracting people from around the world — mostly in the summer.

## The Aran Islands

If ever there was a testament to the power of the Atlantic, it lies rusting on the limestone rocks of Inis Oirr (Inisheer) in the form of the *Plassy* wreck.

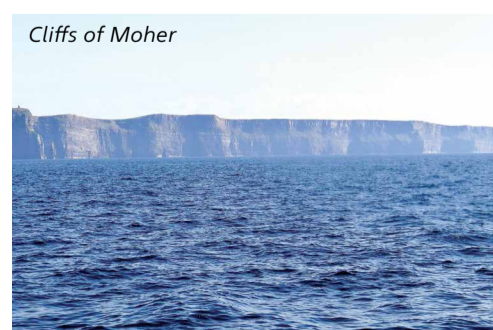
On March 8, 1960, while sailing through Galway Bay, the cargo ship was caught in a severe storm and ran onto Finnisk Rock, Inisheer, Aran Islands. All of the crew were saved thanks to the heroic efforts of the Inis Oirr Rocket Crew, a group of locals who rescued the crew from the stricken vessel using a breches buoy. The rescue is captured in a pictorial display at Ireland's National Maritime Museum in Dún Laoghaire.



Oscar Wilde statue with busker



Dolmen Burren



Cliffs of Moher

# Pearl of the Red Sea benefits from beach cleanup and tree planting campaign

By Raad Mulla and Waleed Alkhateeb

**Yanbu'** — The ancient port city of Yanbu' is known for its seaside and its industry, and the two have come together with Aramco volunteers taking part in an annual beach cleanup and vegetation planting campaign.

The "Pearl of the Red Sea" benefited from the litter collection and the planting of 200 trees and plants at Aramco's White Sand Beach as part of the environmental initiative. Two presentations on sea life protection and organic agriculture were also delivered.

The 2020 Yanbu' Refinery Beach Cleanup and Plantation Campaign was sponsored by the Yanbu' Refinery manager, Abdulatif S. Al-Shami, and attended by management and employees from the refinery, as well as members of the Loss Prevention Department, Environment Protection, the Community Services Department, and the Royal Commission Hospital.

"This is aligned with our 2022 vision to become a role model supplier of high-quality refined products while maintaining the highest safety and environmental standards," Al-Shami said.

"We hope this will propel other refineries to follow in our footsteps and implement community-based initiatives such as this one to increase awareness about the environment and reduce its indirect carbon footprint."

The campaign is in line with the company's goal of nurturing the Kingdom's biodiversity by planting 1 million native trees to preserve the environment and promote ecological balance.

As part of the campaign, participants had his or her name on the

vegetation they planted. Around 70% of the volunteers were under the age of 30 — part of the generation that will benefit most from the plantings.

The refinery's shores are home to the UNESCO nominated Red Sea mangroves, which are known for their carbon capture mechanism.

The Yanbu' Refinery has received the prestigious President's Award for Environmental Excellence four times in the past as a result of its environmental stewardship.



## Photographic memory

This mobile clinic is one of three that the company began operating in 1954 in the Abqaiq industrial area. The clinics toured industrial areas and gave on-the-spot treatment for minor injuries, thereby saving employees trips to a health center. Because of the distance required to get to a health center, most employees neglected their injuries and cuts. Each mobile clinic was staffed with one doctor and one nurse, and they toured areas as remote as Ras al-Misha'ab, Nariyah, and the Rub' al-Khali. (Photo by Khalil Rissas)



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# the arabian sun

Plassy Wreck



## Along the wild Atlantic Way

On March 8, 1960, while sailing through Galway Bay, the cargo ship *Plassy* was caught in a severe storm and ran onto Finnis Rock, Inisheer, Aran Islands.

see page 10

## 2020 Traffic Safety Excellence Award

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Eastern Province Traffic Safety Council



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Registration is OPEN now!



### Who can register?

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### How can I register?

To register, please go to: [ShareK 2020 Traffic Safety Excellence Award](#).



### When can I register?

The registration window is open from Jan. 11 to Feb. 28, 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact [2020TrafficSafetyExcellenceAward](#).



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