Beyond the call of duty

During the recent attacks on facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais, Saudi Aramco heroes displayed unflinching courage ... these are their stories

see pages 7-16

integrated arbitration system a must in today’s business world: Al Mansour

Saudi Aramco senior vice president and general counsel tells attendees of the Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration conference that effective mechanisms and alternatives can help to achieve positive returns in the investment environment. see page 2

agreements demonstrate evolving strategic relationship with Russia

Saudi Aramco signs nine MoUs with major upstream companies and a share purchase agreement during the Saudi-Russia Forum in Riyadh. see page 3

Saudi Arabian Drilling Academy officially opened in Abqaiq

A nonprofit facility established to provide young Saudis academic and professional training to prepare them for entering the oil and gas industry workforce. see page 5

Saudi Aramco by the numbers

325

young Saudis have graduated from the Saudi Arabian Drilling Academy, which recently held its official inauguration. Another 500 trainees are currently attending the academy.
company secures agreements for supply of control valves

company news

Riyadh — Saudi Aramco senior vice president and general counsel Nabeel A. Al Mansour has stressed the importance of providing effective mechanisms and alternatives to settle commercial disputes to achieve positive returns in the investment environment, and the level of competitiveness in the business and arbitration sector, which would also benefit Saudi Aramco.

Speaking at the Second International Conference of the Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration (SCCA) in Riyadh earlier this week, Al Mansour said success can be achieved by providing sufficient flexibility for investors in choosing items such as the dispute settlement mechanisms, procedures, number of arbitrators, arbitration location, and language.

Moreover, said Al Mansour, the existence of various internationally authorized rules in commercial arbitration gives investors wider options to manage a dispute settlement mechanism in a fashion that is in line with the nature of their projects and businesses. Saudi Aramco served as sponsor of the conference, with the theme of “The Evolution of Arbitration in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region — The Reality and Perspectives.”

two main pillars

In his speech, amid a large crowd of participants who gathered for the discussion sessions that marked the conference, Al Mansour highlighted the Kingdom’s keenness to establish an integrated system to activate the local role of arbitration in a competitive environment that is characterized by justice and transparency. He believes that such a system should be based on two main pillars — the establishment of an infrastructure suitable for the institutional arbitration, and a culture of communication.

Al Mansour praised the role of the SCCA in the Kingdom for its efforts in supporting the investment environment. The SCCA, he said, provides highly professional services for those who refer their disputes to the organization and have them settled in accordance with clear rulings and procedures in line with the best international practices.

The SCCA appoints the arbitrators, decides on the method of holding the sessions, and conducts a calculation of arbitration fees and costs, which ensures residence of dispute management and control cost. Al Mansour revealed Saudi Aramco’s serious interest in taking steps to boost the role of arbitration in Saudi Arabia and promote its staff in support of arbitration practices.

“Out of our great confidence in arbitration and our belief in the availability of appropriate environment and capabilities for arbitration, Saudi Aramco has included an arbitration clause in most of the contracts signed with companies inside and outside the Kingdom. “We hope that this step will have an impact in supporting the arbitration practice for the local investors,” he said. “In alignment with this initiative, Saudi Aramco was keen to develop its staff in the field of arbitration by providing training programs and participating in many local and international courses and programs, including SCCA programs, which have become key tools for qualification and support of arbitration practices in the Kingdom.”

He added that Saudi Aramco recruits specialized arbitration lawyers with international experience in oil and gas contract disputes and uses the best international and local law firms.

Al Mansour expressed his confidence that the Kingdom can still achieve more development for the local investors, “In alignment with that, the existence of arbitration in the Kingdom can still achieve more development for the local investors,” he said. “In alignment with the initiative, Saudi Aramco was keen to develop its staff in the field of arbitration by providing training programs and participating in many local and international courses and programs, including SCCA programs, which have become key tools for qualification and support of arbitration practices in the Kingdom.”

He also discussed a number of techniques and treatments striving to make arbitration more effective and less costly, including class action and special arbitration rules, during a panel discussion.

Mohammad A. Al Shammari, a Saudi Aramco lawyer working in arbitration, said, provides highly professional services for those who refer their disputes to the organization and have them settled in accordance with clear rulings and procedures in line with the best international practices.

The four companies — Emerson Process Management Arabia Ltd., Dresser Al-Rushaid Valve and Instrument Company Ltd., Flowserve Abshaisn Flow Control Co. Ltd., and Metso Flow Control Oy — are expected to build and expand their local capabilities and competitiveness throughout the five-year duration of the agreements.

These agreements, which carry a multi-million dollar procurement value, serve a number of major strategic goals for the company.

These companies will provide the company with a local and reliable supply of control valves for use in oil and gas plants, refineries, pipeline stations and water works. On a deeper level, the agreements expand Saudi Aramco’s strategic approach to leveraging the total company spend with key industry players by awarding corporate procurement agreements to local manufacturers, as mandated by the company’s iktv program.

Supporting local manufacturing helps to strengthen and diversify the Kingdom’s economy, creating thousands of new jobs, while ensuring that Saudi Aramco gets the services and equipment that it needs on a timely and cost-effective basis.

Taken together, the agreements show that Saudi Aramco’s commitment to empower local companies is gathering force and having an impact on the local economy.

October 16, 2019 | The Arabian Sun

Nabeel Al Mansour, senior vice president and general counsel with Saudi Aramco, addresses delegates at the Second International Conference of the Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration in Riyadh earlier this week. Al Mansour said success in arbitration can be achieved by providing sufficient flexibility for investors in choosing items such as the dispute settlement mechanisms and procedures.

Timothy K. Colvin, a Commercial and Corporate Law adviser with Saudi Aramco, discussed a number of techniques and treatments striving to make arbitration more effective and less costly, including class action and special arbitration rules, during a panel discussion.

The conference included eight sessions. The first session discussed the developments of institutional arbitration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and how arbitration contributed to creating an attractive investment environment in support of the realization of Saudi Vision 2030.

expedited procedures

Another session was moderated by Timothy K. Colvin, a Commercial and Corporate Law adviser with Saudi Aramco. Initiating the session, Colvin indicated that, due to its cost, arbitration is sometimes seen as an unlikely option. Some recent court rulings have argued that the arbitration clause cannot be applied to some contracts where the parties cannot afford the arbitration costs.

He pointed out that various initiatives and techniques in this regard have been created to help subject matter experts resort to arbitration in an effective and low cost manner, such as adopting expedited procedures. Colvin pointed out that the trend toward adopting rules for some business sectors may enhance their chances of resorting to arbitration.

He also discussed a number of techniques and treatments striving to make arbitration more effective and less costly, including class action and special arbitration rules.

Saudi Aramco participated in the exhibition held along with the events.

Mohammed Al-Sulaiman, a Saudi Aramco lawyer specializing in litigation practice, presented a briefing for attendees on the key messages presented by Saudi Aramco’s participating booth. He indicated that since July 2019, Saudi Aramco has abandoned ad hoc arbitration rules and officially adopted the arbitration rules followed by SCCA in almost all contracts.

“Our adoption of SCCA’s arbitration rules can be attributed, to a large extent, to the ability of the rule system to address a number of administrative issues, provide clear guidance from qualified arbitrators, with the ability to hold hearings in different languages,” said Al-Sulaiman. “We believe that we will benefit from this change in our ability to resolve commercial disputes that may take place.”

The conference included eight sessions. The first session discussed the developments of institutional arbitration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and how arbitration contributed to creating an attractive investment environment in support of the realization of Saudi Vision 2030.
Nasser calls for collaborative effort to address long-term future of oil and gas industry

London, England — Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser emphasized the long-term viability of oil and gas as a vital global energy source — even during what many perceive to be a period of transition — in his keynote address at the Oil & Money conference in London last week.

The theme for this year’s conference was “Strategies for the Energy Transition,” and examined milestones achieved in 2019, but also reflected on the crossroads at which the energy industry finds itself today — particularly in its response to the challenge of climate change.

Nasser characterized as the three Rs — Recycling, Reusing, and Recycling.

He noted that the need for more forward thinking in finding more impactful and lasting solutions, suggesting that the current focus is on two solutions: replacing hydrocarbons with renewables in the power sector, while on electrifying light-duty road passenger transport, is not enough.

Instead, Nasser offered a four-pronged collaborative strategy to improve and accelerate carbon reduction.

First, we must go beyond electric power generation and light-duty passenger transport, broadening our focus and paying attention to all of the other economic sectors that jointly account for about two-thirds of global GHG emissions.

“Second, most clean R&D and technology funding by governments is currently focused on emerging energy sources, and this must be extended to the existing energy sources that will be with us for a long time to come.”

Third, he argued that there should be a concentrated effort in moving toward a “circular economy,” an economic system focused on the elimination of waste and the sustainable use of resources, which Nasser characterized as the three Rs: Recycling, Reusing, and Recycling.

Finally, he stated that we must look for GHG reductions across specific economic sectors offered by the circular economy, which would be lost if we work on various sectors in isolation, or focus only on a selected few.

Nasser discussed how Saudi Aramco is working both on its own and with others in addressing its own GHGs.

He expressed pride in the fact that today the carbon intensity of Saudi Aramco’s upstream operations is among the lowest in the industry — 10 kilograms of CO₂ equivalent per barrel of oil produced.

Also, based on third-party verification, last year Saudi Aramco’s intensity of methane gas was just 0.065%, also one of the lowest levels in the industry.

Nasser also spoke of a company initiative to plant more than three million trees across the Kingdom to absorb carbon and enhance biodiversity, while also prioritizing water conservation as well as its treatment and reuse.

Turning to areas of research and development, Nasser spoke about Saudi Aramco’s success stories such as developing higher mileage and lower carbon integrated engine-fuel systems, carbon capture utilization and storage, beneficial uses of carbon, and clean hydrogen from oil as a key energy source to fuel a potential future hydrogen economy.

“concrete action”

“Our industry is fully committed to further lightening the GHG footprint of oil and gas,” he added. “We are backing our words with concrete action. By the same token, I urge governments around the world to work closely with us to develop pragmatic policy solutions to deliver ample, reliable, safe, affordable, and — at the same time — sustainable energy to the world.

“I’m confident that with all stakeholders working together toward rational solutions, this goal will be achievable.”

Now in its 40th year and hosted by Energy Intelligence, the annual Oil & Money conference is one of the world’s preeminent forums for the energy sector bringing together senior executives, policymakers, and industry experts.

Our industry is fully committed to further lightening the GHG footprint of oil and gas. We are backing our words with concrete action. By the same token, I urge governments around the world to work closely with us to develop pragmatic policy solutions to deliver ample, reliable, safe, affordable, and — at the same time — sustainable energy to the world.

— Amin Nasser

agreements demonstrate evolving strategic relationship with Russia

Riyadh — Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser attended the Saudi-Russian CEO Forum on Monday in Riyadh as part of the state visit of Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At the forum, Nasser noted the growing importance of Saudi Aramco’s evolving strategic relationship with Russian companies.

After the forum, Saudi Arabia’s King Salman ibn Abdulaziz Al Saud and Putin, alongside HRH Crown Prince Mohammed ibn Salman ibn Abdulaziz Al Saud, oversaw the signing of a confirmation agreement between Saudi Aramco, the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), and Rusnano, to enter into a share purchase agreement to acquire Rusnano’s 30.76% share in Novomet — a leading Russian service provider and manufacturer of high-tech electric submersible pumps.

The deal is expected to close early next year, subject to regulatory approvals and closing conditions.

Today’s agreement is expected to enable future investments in both Saudi Arabia and Russia that come under the framework of the Saudi-Russian Energy Co-Investment Platform through Saudi Aramco, PIF, and RDIF, targeting to promote investments in the energy sector in both Saudi Arabia and Russia,” said Nasser.

“We look forward to expanding our mutual interests in the energy sector through this important co-investment platform with Russian companies.”

Saudi Aramco also entered into nine additional memorandum of understandings (MoUs) with major Russian companies as a part of Saudi Aramco’s upstream strategy, which were signed with the following Russian companies: Gazprom Neft.

With the agreement, the expectation is to exchange technical knowledge for oil applications and identify mutual technical studies of interest to both companies.

Angara Service

For special chemicals and cleaning services with existing service providers to Saudi Aramco’s oil refineries and production sites.

Chelpipe

To localize production of ball valves in Saudi Arabia through a joint venture with a local partner.

Galen

To localize fiberglass rebar.

Integra

For a manufacturing facility for downhole drilling motors, drilling tools, and bottom-hole assembly components.

NKT

For submersible cable line protectors.

Technovel

For submersible equipment and parts for wellhead equipment.

PAO “TMK”

For line pipe and OCTG components such as drilling, casing, and tubing material.

Intratool

To localize hot tapping, line stopping split trees, and repair features.
Saudi Aramco zeroed in on ‘bringing Vision 2030 to life’

company committed to Kingdom’s economic transformation journey: Al Shammary

Riyadh — Saudi Aramco is “heavily focused” on playing an integral part in delivering the aspirations contained in the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 economic and social roadmap, a prestigious logistics conference was told earlier this week.

Hosted by His Excellency, Minister of Transport, Nabeel Al-Amudi, the Third Saudi Supply Chain and Logistics Conference was addressed by Saudi Aramco’s vice president of Procurement and Supply Chain Management (P&SCM), Mohammad A. Al Shammary.

He told delegates attending the three-day conference in Riyadh that the Kingdom had entered a “new era with this ambitious vision,” and that Saudi Aramco would play a pivotal role. The conference attracted some 2,000 experts in the field.

“Saudi Aramco recognizes the importance of this transformative journey, and so we are heavily focused on doing our part in bringing Vision 2030 to life,” said Al Shammary.

‘collaborative skills development initiatives’

“Complementing our internal efforts in workforce development in-Kingdom, we continue to encourage and incentivize our workforce development in-Kingdom, we continue to encourage and incentivize our workforce development in-Kingdom, we continue to encourage and incentivize our workforce development.

This increase of local content will result in growing the share of small- and medium-sized enterprise contributions to the Kingdom’s GDP, creating high-value jobs for Saudis in the energy sector, while increasing export levels of our in-Kingdom manufacturing capacity to 30%.

“Support this, Saudi Aramco is currently leading the development of King Salman Energy Park (SPARK), creating a central industrial hub for energy-related manufacturing and services, with advanced logistics and infrastructural support, and spanning a massive area of over 50 square kilometers. This is expected to attract some of the world’s biggest and most innovative energy industry suppliers and service providers,” said Al Shammary.

Al Shammary added that Saudi Aramco is partnering with major logistic service providers to expand the capacity for goods and cargo transportation throughout the Kingdom to accommodate the growing demand in new operational areas such as Jazan, and the northern area.

“In this regard, I would like to express special appreciation to colleagues in the Ministry of Transport and Saudi Railways for their major efforts in leading the expansion to accommodate growing demand, while improving the safety and reliability of the Kingdom’s roads and railways.”

technological advancements

Al Shammary also pointed to increasing influence of technological advancements and stressed that Saudi Aramco is committed to exploring and implementing the latest technologies in the area of nationalistic business-to-business e-Marketplace — a collaborative framework to promote trading among business partners. He also spoke about the recently introduced Supply Chain Control Tower — an integral part of IR 4.0, which will transform the company’s supply chain using the latest disruptive technologies and advanced analytics.

Blockchain, big data analytics, robotics, and artificial intelligence applications will contribute to the Kingdom’s economic transformation, he predicted.

“We believe that all of these enablers will greatly contribute to building the Kingdom’s future position as the prime supply chain and logistics hub in the region,” said Al Shammary.

A goal of the conference is to streamline the movement of products and information, facilitating supply chain operations, and identifying the right mechanisms to reduce costs and improve effectiveness; thereby developing the Kingdom’s supply chains and logistics services in fulfillment of Vision 2030.

Its main targets include the simplification of supply chain logistics and technology, the exploration of the future of Saudi Arabia’s supply chain, raising awareness of investment opportunities in the Kingdom, examining the role of renewable energy in the supply chain and big data analysis and its impact on businesses.

Saturday saw the launch by HE Al-Amudi of a new logistics zone in the Red Sea city of Jeddah as part of a package of economic initiatives to diversify the Kingdom’s economy away from oil and stimulate job creation for the population.

The Al-Khomrah zone will be constructed on an area of 2 million square meters in its first phase with a goal of making it the largest logistics hub in the region and creating 10,000 direct jobs.

Saudi Aramco was also represented at the conference by Wa’ed CEO Wissam Basawri, who participated in a panel discussion on “New Horizons in the Development of Small and Medium Projects in the Logistics Sector.”

Abdulelah Al-Sufari, a business systems analyst with P&SCM, delivered a presentation on the Supply Chain Control Tower.

excellence in corporate sustainability

Yanbu’ Refinery first-ever from Saudi Aramco to win prestigious King Khalid Award

Yanbu’ — In line with its vision toward becoming a role model supplier of high quality refined products by 2022, the Yanbu’ Refinery Department (YRD) was recently announced as the first-place winner of a 2019 King Khalid Award under the Corporate Sustainability category.

Winning this award sets YRD as a pace-setter for the implementation of quality and sustainability in the entire Kingdom.

“This is a reflection of all Yanbu’ Refinery leaders and employees and their commitment to implement the Operational Excellence (OE) objectives,” said Al Shammary.

Mohammad A. Al Shammary, vice president of Procurement and Supply Chain Management with Saudi Aramco, told delegates at this week’s Saudi Supply Chain and Logistics Conference that our company is prepared to “play a pivotal role” in the transformation of the Kingdom that is called for in Vision 2030. "Saudi Aramco recognizes the importance of this transformational journey," said Al Shammary.

Al-Shami

Operational Excellence (OE) objectives," said Al-Shami.

“Striving to set standards and attain awards is tantamount to exploring and implementing various awards on the corporate, national and international level during the past three years relevant to various fields such as energy, safety, environment, cybersecurity, corporate social responsibility, and most recently, sustainability.

about the award

According to the King Khalid Foundation website, the King Khalid Award is “a platform for celebrating and accelerating social change within Saudi Arabia.”

Awardees are selected for the award, which has been given out for more than a decade, based on the fact that their initiatives are “delivering proven impact … to complex social challenges with creativity and skill” — empowering others to follow in their footsteps.

In addition to the award for corporate sustainability, other awards recognize excellence in nonprofit management and social innovation in the Kingdom, illuminating the vital role played by individual change makers and the nonprofit sector in transforming society in Saudi Arabia.

The King Khalid Sustainability Award honors inspiring enterprises that have taken sustainability “to the heart of their business model, and used it to unlock economic growth.”

Winners are celebrated at the King Khalid Awards’ Gala, which is held under the patronage of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

This year’s winners were announced earlier this month, and the awards will be handed out next month in Riyadh.
Saudi Arabian Drilling Academy officially opens in Abqaiq

by Mohammad Adarbeh

Abqaiq — His Royal Highness Prince Ahmad ibn Fahd ibn Salman ibn ‘Abd Al-Aziz Al Sa’ud, the Deputy Amir of the Eastern Province, recently presided over the official opening of the Saudi Arabian Drilling Academy (SADA) in Abqaiq.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Abdul Hameed A. Al-Rushaid, vice president of Drilling and Workover with Saudi Aramco, as well as members of the board of trustees of SADA.

The nonprofit academy was established to provide young national employees with professional and academic training to prepare them for entering the workforce in the oil and gas industry.

HRH Prince Ahmad toured SADA’s facilities and listened to a briefing on the equipment used — specifically an actual size drilling rig placed at the center of the academy to serve as an important teaching aid to qualify trainees before entering the labor market. He was also briefed on the capabilities of classrooms at the academy, and the professional staff who work to provide the best training to the young Saudis. He also listened to briefings from the students themselves.

meeting the needs of the oil services industry

SADA was established based on a partnership between Saudi Aramco, 34 world drilling and well services companies, and the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, with the support of the Human Resources Development Fund.

Mutlaq A. Al-Subaie, executive director of SADA, told attendees at the opening ceremony that the young Saudis at the academy represent an investment in the future of the Kingdom.

Al-Subaie said SADA’s bylaws stipulate the following:

• Graduating Saudi technicians are qualified to work in drilling and exploration
• Developing training programs in the drilling sector
• Providing the Saudi market with drilling staff
• Contributing to Saudization and the localization of technical staff.

The training period at SADA is 20 months, after which the trainees receive a diploma in drilling and workover. A total of 325 technicians who have already graduated from SADA since its inception currently work with drilling companies, and there are another 500 trainees who are being prepared to enter the industry.

trainees praise the program

SADA students interviewed at the opening ceremony agreed that they are lucky to receive the training and look forward to joining their colleagues who entered the labor market over the past two years.

Ali Al Hashlan, a youth from al-Khobar, said a friend told him about SADA after his graduation from the academy.

“I am fully aware of the challenges faced in drilling and I know that this profession needs great endurance and stamina,” said Al Hashlan. “But the feeling that I have when I contribute to the Kingdom’s main industry makes me forget these difficulties.”

Mubarak Al Dawsari, a student from Abqaiq, said he is fortunate that SADA is located near his residence.

“Praise be to God, I had the chance to join this group of distinguished Saudi youths and be among SADA’s future graduates,” said Al Dawsari. “I will have a lot of stories about this great training program that I will narrate to my children.”

He added that the best training hours are those at the actual drilling rigs, noting that this makes the graduates enter the workforce with confidence.

Sultan Al-Ghamidi, a resident of al-Khobar, praised the welcoming attitude and friendliness of the people of the south. He spoke about the friendships that he has established during the past 10 months at SADA, noting that he has had the chance to meet youths from all areas of the Kingdom.

“Sometimes I come across new vocabularies as if I were from another planet,” he said. “This experience has had a big impact on my social life.”

Al-Ghamidi said he has also learned how to communicate with his colleagues and teachers in English, adding that he did not previously know the names of some of the equipment, even in Arabic.
Ras Tanura — The Integrated Project Team of the Ras Tanura Refinery Clean Fuels Project has celebrated the safe and successful placement of its heaviest and largest piece of equipment—a naphtha splitter column weighing 544 tons.

It took approximately three hours to complete the lift of this 65-meter high column after six weeks of site preparation and crane positioning. For the lift, a 1,600 ton main crane was utilized together with a tailing crane with a total nominal capacity of 600 tons.

The 8-meter-diameter column required extensive coordination during transportation. This included disconnecting several overhead power cables to allow for safe passage and modifying the Jubail-Dhahran highway to avoid bridges.

### Three weeks from source to site

The total transport from Jubail to the project site at the refinery was alternated between day and night to minimize community disruptions. It took three weeks from source to site, with more than 10 stops along the way.

The Refining and NGL Projects Department hosted a celebration recently to mark this major milestone.

The column is the main feeder to the new world’s largest Continuous Catalytic Reforming (CCR) and Isomerization Units, with a total operating capacity of 90,000 and 65,000 barrels per day, respectively. The main function of the naphtha splitter column is to split the hydrotreated naphtha into light and heavy naphtha, which is a key function to the Naphtha Hydrotreating Unit, as it controls the benzene precursors, which are then sent to the Isomerization Unit.

The objective is to prepare the feeds to downstream units to meet the acceptable level of the impurities in the feed to the new CCR and Isomerization Units.

The splitter column has been awarded to a local manufacturing company in Jubail as part of the iktva program, which is targeting 70% localization by 2021. The complete manufacturing of the column took more than a year, achieving more than 2,500 safe working hours.

The project will provide facilities to support Saudi Aramco’s corporate objective of effectively supplying diesel and gasoline products that comply with the future Saudi Aramco gasoline and diesel quality specifications, as per Euro-V fuels quality standards. The new naphtha complex plants that will be installed as part of the project at the refinery, are comprised of a 138 MBD naphtha hydrotreater, a 90 MBD CCR Unit, and a 65 MBD Isomerization Unit.

The Corporate Communication Support Department (CCSD) recently held a recognition event to honor employees for their years of service and dedication with Saudi Aramco. The event was hosted by Abdalaziz A. Seflan, acting CCSD manager, and attended by Fuad Al Therman, acting general manager of Public Affairs. Those recognized included (20 years) Meshaal N. Otaibi, Osama S. Kadi, Sami Ghamdi; (15 years) Philip J. Embleton; (10 years) Labeed Assidmi, Abdulkarim Aldosari, Jamsheed M. Din, James S. Baker; (five years) Farahat Fahmi, Fahad Alfehaid, Alanoud Aljalal, Charles Kelly, Arulsakthi S. Jayaprathaban, Adam R. Callaghan, and Mohammad A. Adarbeh.

The Corporate Communication Support Department (CCSD) recently held a recognition event to honor employees for their years of service and dedication with Saudi Aramco. The event was hosted by Abdalaziz A. Seflan, acting CCSD manager, and attended by Fuad Al Therman, acting general manager of Public Affairs. Those recognized included (20 years) Meshaal N. Otaibi, Osama S. Kadi, Sami Ghamdi; (15 years) Philip J. Embleton; (10 years) Labeed Assidmi, Abdulkarim Aldosari, Jamsheed M. Din, James S. Baker; (five years) Farahat Fahmi, Fahad Alfehaid, Alanoud Aljalal, Charles Kelly, Arulsakthi S. Jayaprathaban, Adam R. Callaghan, and Mohammad A. Adarbeh.

Key personnel with Training and Development’s (T&D) Operational Excellence team, hosted advanced degree programs, and the Trainer Observation and Development System receive recognition from acting T&D general manager Abdullah A. Ghabbani for their efforts in improving Human Resources Development within T&D.
Beyond the call of duty
Collective courage demonstrated by employees during attack

by Janet Pinheiro
(Photos: Abdulaziz Al-Moallem and Abdullah A. Alshammari/MPD, and Moath Almansour/APOD.)

Destructive flames rose into the shattered stillness of Eastern Saudi Arabia’s predawn autumn sky last month, maliciously seeking to burn the world’s largest crude oil stabilization facility, Abqaiq Plants. It was a race against time to save people’s lives and assets from the scorching flames and billowing smoke being insatiably fed by 16 menacing infernos within three of 14 massive processing facilities.

At the same time, Khurais Plants, an oil producing and processing facility 250 kilometers to Abqaiq’s west, was also responding to projectiles that pierced into four of its five oil trains.

world’s largest oil supply disruption
In the early hours of a mid-September morning, Saudi Aramco’s Khurais and Abqaiq facilities were brazenly attacked, damaging components of both facilities. The audacious attack, which caused the world’s largest ever oil supply disruption, quickly ignited an even bigger blaze of international condemnation — and a remarkable response from the company’s people, partners, suppliers, and fellow oil and gas companies. Also remarkable was the fact that no lives were lost in the attacks.

“The strikes on the company’s facilities temporarily disrupted around half of the company’s daily production, 5% of global oil production, and more than 2 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day,” said Southern Area Oil Operations vice president Khalid A. Al-Buraik. “But, we were back producing within 24 hours at Khurais, and 48 hours at Abqaiq,” adds Al-Buraik with immense pride.

For the first time in its 71-year history, Abqaiq Plants shut down.

“The attacks on Abqaiq and Khurais, while heinous, highlighted something I have long felt sets Saudi Aramco apart as a company, and that is our ability to overcome challenges both planned and unexpected. One has to remember that ours is a company that produces reliably in some of the most difficult operating environments in the world.

So, beyond the sheer bravery and proficiency of our first responders, to see our people come together quickly and decisively to rebound after an unexpected emergency was impressive and, in many ways, inspiring but it was not surprising. For me, it was a vivid example of the can-do spirit that defines what it means to be an Aramcon.”

Saudi Aramco senior vice president, Upstream, Mohammed Y. Al Qahtani

Approximately two hours from completing their weekend night shift, around 100 workers were inside the Abqaiq facility when the attack struck. Columns, spheroids, and pipes, igniting fires lasting seven hours to put out.
long-term investment

Saudi Aramco invests wisely in the design of its plants, providing extra layers of protection for safety and operational continuation. The world-class capabilities of Abqaiq Plants and Khurais are built not only on the technology fronts, but also on the company's talents. Although the facilities at Abqaiq Plants are mature, at the same time they are young. Khurais is young, but with its ultramodern technology, also wise. "I am really proud of the great efforts from all organizations during this unfortunate experience. They demonstrated high collaboration and sincere ownership that contained the associated attack risks timely as well as bringing both Abqaiq Plants and Khurais back safely," Al-Buraik said.

frontline operations

Front-line operations, intimately familiar with Abqaiq’s pipes, tanks, and columns, quickly realized that what was happening was no ordinary operational incident. Within minutes, with professional precision, the shift superintendent quietly issued the historic instruction to halt the stream of hydrocarbons from across the Southern Area oil fields to the facility.

back producing within hours

Production at Khurais resumed less than 24 hours after the attack, and Abqaiq began processing more than 2 million barrels per day within 48 hours. In addition to the courage, professionalism and innovation of all its people, vice president Al-Buraik attributes Saudi Aramco’s robust and reliable design of its facilities as a key factor behind the company’s resilience to the strikes. With a heritage dating back to 1933, Saudi Aramco has decades of experience managing the extraction, processing, and transportation of hydrocarbons, and significant investments in building and maintaining its large infrastructure and logistics network.

brave actions of first responders meet the humble workers on our frontline team

There is little doubt that the magic ingredient behind Saudi Aramco’s resilience against the attack was the amazing courage and dedication of its people and communities. Here are some of the frontline operators who, in the face of incredible adversity on the morning of the terrifying attack, considered it their duty to help their colleagues, serve their country, and go above and beyond for Saudi Aramco. Rather than talk to The Arabian Sun about their own bravery, their preference was to tell us about the courage of others. However, we managed to coax some to tell their own stories.

Contractors were carrying out testing and inspection activities on Oil Train-5. Working in a confined space, plant console controller Abdullah K. Al-Hajri went over to check that the workers were OK. He had just returned to the team building, when he heard the massive explosion of a projectile hitting Oil Train-5. “I went back to the train to check the area, saw the stabilizer vessel was alright so I rushed back to the team building to tell Mohammed,” Al-Hajri said. While he returned to the train to evacuate the contractors, plant console controller Mohammed Al-Subaei called 911. “I returned to the train to ensure they were all out of the vessel and, with the support of my colleagues, Ziad Altoom and Mohammed Alharbi, directed them to the assembly area for a head count,” said Al-Hajri, who has worked at Khurais since its commencement in 2009. Once the contractors were accounted for, Al-Hajri arranged their evacuation outside of the plant through the emergency gate. With 911 confirming they required no further information, Al-Sabaei headed out to the train to complete a head count of his operators. “The operators had switched on the two fire monitors and prepared the hose reels,” said Al-Subaei, who began his company career in 2002 at Berri Gas Plant.

Al-Subaei ordered the outside operators to adjust the fire monitors and hoses to redirect the smoke away from the team building. The pair left the train to shelter in the team building, but when the incident commander issued the all clear to evacuate, both stayed to assist the firefighters, helping with pulling hoses and opening fire hydrant valves to supply water to the fire trucks. “We have to do something for our country and company,” said Al-Hajri. “We have to save it, be strong,” adds Al-Subaei.

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Cover story

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To meet the humble workers on our frontline team, there is little doubt that the magic ingredient behind Saudi Aramco’s resilience to the attacks, considered it their duty to help their colleagues, serve their country, and go above and beyond for Saudi Aramco. However, we managed to coax some to tell their own stories. Frontline operations, intimately familiar with Abqaiq’s pipes, tanks, and columns, quickly realized that what was happening was no ordinary operational incident. Within minutes, with professional precision, the shift superintendent quietly issued the historic instruction to halt the stream of hydrocarbons from across the Southern Area oil fields to the facility.

Working together, Abdullah K. Al-Hajri and Mohammed Al-Subaei checked to make sure everyone was accounted for who was working in and around Oil Train-5 when it was hit by a projectile.

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When an operational incident happens, any part of the facility can be shut down, while remaining parts continue operating. Extinguishing blazes quickly prevents the spread of fire, and minimizes heat damage to steel and surrounding equipment. “When you fight the fire in a timely manner, you prevent the spread and minimize the damage extent,” Al-Buraik said. “That is really the way we handle it.”

Coming back even stronger

The attack has electrified the company’s work atmosphere.

Instead of shutting Saudi Aramco down, thousands of employees, contractors, and suppliers are energized, working around the clock inside the Khurais and Abqaiq Plants and offices — and beyond. Little time has been given to self-reflection, and Southern Area Oil Producing general manager Fahad M. AbdulKareem is impressed with the enthusiasm toward the repair and restoration.

On the same day of the incident, Saudi Aramco’s “Disaster Control Response Plan” was immediately activated, and by 1 p.m., president and CEO Amin Nasser had assigned the Project Management team to lead the restoration effort.

Three-phase restoration

While the heat was only starting to cool on the assaulted processing and production infrastructure, the company had already activated decisions and plans for restoration and repair.

AbdulKareem explains the repair and restoration program is following a program of three phases — immediate repair, restore flexibility, and restore sustainability.

“Phase one is about getting the product back safely, and thanks to the high degree to which our supply and service chains have been localized in recent years, the most urgent restoration work was expedited and completed,” said AbdulKareem.

“Phase two is everything back repaired, and final phase three is for all damaged equipment to be permanently restored.”

Train-5 was undergoing test and inspection and we thought something might have gone wrong with that.”

While he was standing in front of Oil Train-2, the second strike hit around 15 meters in front of him. “I heard the incident commander on the radio, and went directly to shutdown, sheltered my employees, and performed a headcount on my operators,” said Al-Subaei.

“After that, we extinguished the Oil Train-2 fire, which allowed firefighters to focus on other areas.”

Before sunrise, Ibrahim Al-Sultan’s routine is to move around the plant. He was around the pipelines when he heard the buzzing sound of a projectile, which was immediately followed by a deafening explosion.

“There was a big flame, 10-floors high, and I knew it wasn’t operational,” he said.

Following site operating procedure, the shift coordinator moved toward the impacted area to carry out the isolation protocol.

“Soon, we saw it wasn’t one attack. Other tanks began to be struck, and other areas of the facility,” he said.

“We received the order to start isolating the plants according to protocol, and for people to secure themselves by sheltering in the control rooms or team buildings.”

Abqaiq operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and Al-Sultan, who has worked at the site for 21 years, says it has become a second home for him. “I was shocked at seeing it being destroyed, it was like my home was on fire,” he said.

Describing the actions of the front line workers as amazing, he said deluge systems to cool the hydrocarbons were activated straightaway.

“We operate one of the world’s largest oil and gas facilities and we were able to extinguish the fires within hours,” said Al-Sultan proudly.

It was coming toward the end of the night shift. Among the preparations diligently commenced by Oil Train-2 operations supervisor Saud B. Al-Subaei was preparing the morning report, collecting DCS data, and finalizing the operators’ daily check lists.

Working at Khurais since its commencement in 2009, Al-Subaei intimately knows the sounds of the central processing facility.

Four of the five trains were operating smoothly when their humming was abruptly interrupted with a sound so loud it caused a tremor. “An abnormal sound came through,” Al-Subaei said.

“Train-5 was undergoing test and inspection and we thought something may have gone wrong with that.”

Proud of how quickly Khurais came back online and is being restored, Oil Train-2 operations supervisor Saud B. Al-Subaei sheltered his colleagues and supported extinguishing the Oil Train-2 fire.

Installed in 1948, Saudi Aramco’s 71-year-old second stabilization column, known as “Number 2,” was destroyed in the blaze from the attack. The company’s other oldest column, “Number 1,” was installed at Ras Tanura.

Southern Area Oil Producing general manager Fahad M. AbdulKareem says Saudi Aramco has become a beehive of innovation and activity as company and outside experts figure out what will work, and what won’t work for repair and restoration.
flawless emergency response kept everyone safe
exceptional professionalism in face of terrifying adversity

Rostered on a remote day shift of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Ahmad H. Al-Ghamdi was woken up by a call from the Management Emergency Alert System.

“They said Khurais was under attack in more than one place,” said the shift superintendent.

“I pulled on my fire retardant clothing and didn’t even wash my face.”

In the dark, Al-Ghamdi proceeded to the emergency control center.

“I went inside, glanced up at the screen, saw Oil Train-4’s stabilizer was alight, immediately activated the ECC room, and provided the required support to the incident commander on site.”

At 5:50 a.m., Al-Ghamdi handed the incident manager role to the Khurais Producing Department manager, grabbed a vehicle and headed to the central processing facility to assume the incident command role.

Remarkably, the attacks at Abqaiq and Khurais left no one hurt.

The world greeted the reports of zero fatalities — or even minor injuries — with incredulous surprise.

During the attack, approximately 80 emergency responders responded to the emergency in different emergency and disaster control centers.

The emergency systems worked smoothly to automatically isolate affected areas and ensure containment and safe disposal of the products, and the dedication, commitment, and hard work of the people resulted in timely and effective containment of both attack situations, and the rapid recovery.

“It was really a wonder. Not even a small cut. It was astounding what the first responders did in the plant,” said Abqaiq Plants Operations manager Khalid S. Al-Ghamdi.

“Abqaiq is a big facility of global significance, but what is even bigger is the courage of our people and our communities,” he said.

“Despite the many responders from Saudi Aramco organizations and contractors on the day of the Khurais incident, it was remarkable that no one suffered any injury,” said Khurais Producing Department manager Mohammed I. Sowayigh.

“We saw employees show sacrifice and high courage. An employee returned from leave where his father was ill in intensive care, another called from abroad, offering to cut his honeymoon short,” he said.

emergency response strategy

“There is nothing more important than the health and safety of our people,” Sowayigh said.

“Considering the challenge of Khurais being in a remote area, 170 kilometers from the nearest city before any external emergency response strategy kept everyone safe, exceptional professionalism in face of terrifying adversity.

Everyone went out to check the noise.

Operations supervisor Abdullah R. Otaibi says the historic shutdown was a wise decision.

“Everyone assumed their roles and responsibilities, and within minutes, we secured the facility and had activated the dumping system.”

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After parking at the central control room, he walked to Oil Train-5 to relieve his colleague and friend of the incident command.

“When I walked past Oil Train-4, most of its stabilizer was on fire,” Al-Ghamdi said.

At 8:20 a.m. he announced the fire was extinguished and the emergency partially under control.

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Oil Train-3 and -4 supervisor Abdulmohsen N. Nashmi was assigned to Train-3. He heard the first strike inside the train’s team building.

“It was very loud and everything shook like there was an earthquake,” Nashmi said.

“I got up to check the monitors but saw nothing, so I called the control center and the DCS operator told me Oil Train-5 had been struck.”

The third hit was to Nashmi’s area, and he activated the emergency shutdown system to Oil Train-3 and -4.

Outside, he and operator Faisal Almutairi worked together to start the two fire monitors, which extinguished the blaze and enabled the fire crew to focus on more serious matters.

“The timely contractor worker evacuation and the employees’ shelter in place were elements of the response strategy, and were proven effective,” he said.

The “Emergency Response Plan” for both sites capitalizes on people, procedures, and systems to recover from emergencies and disasters.

Announced and unannounced emergency drills keep the facility’s emergency response teams in a state of readiness, and the site’s Emergency Response Plan defines individual responsibilities for directing activities required to control and contain an emergency to ensure the safety of personnel, as well as assets.

“The knowledge, confidence, and commitment shown by the emergency response teams was a testament to the frequent training and drills we carry out as well as the extensive preparations we make for events we hope to never face,” Al Ghamdi said.

**supervision**

**from Saudi Arabia**

**Civil Defense Force**

Members of the Kingdom’s Civil Defense Force quickly assembled alongside Abqaiq’s emergency response workers, providing professional help to ensure the fire was quelled, while multiple Civil Defense teams were dispatched to Khurais from Riyadh and al-Hasa to provide any needed assistance.

*Oil Train-4 at Khurais was the most severely damaged. From 3:31 until 3:48 a.m., the Kingdom’s second biggest oil field, Khurais, had projectiles aimed at its producing facility, igniting quickly contained fires and scattering shrapnel across piping infrastructure where roughly 200 workers were inside — most carrying out routine maintenance work.*

Supervising operator Ahmad A. Al Ghamdi worked with a team closing a 24-inch gas pipeline to assist with preventing the spread of fire to the NGL plant.

It takes steady nerves to climb up a ladder to close a gas pipeline because it is next to a fire in an oil and gas plant.

With 19 years of experience at Abqaiq, supervising operator Ahmad A. Al Ghamdi had sheltered himself and his team.

The group had finished following the emergency protocol, and were now sitting in the shelter, listening to the radio. Al Ghamdi got a call from the shift coordinator at 5 a.m. to go outside and isolate some lines.

“We needed to isolate the valves for an overhead gas line, because the tank next to it was on fire,” he said.

“We were afraid the fire could spread through these pipes to the NGL plant.”

Al Ghamdi set out in the heat and smoke with a group of operators to close the valve of the 24-inch pipeline, which fed into the 60-inch main NGL pipeline. Al Ghamdi climbed up the ladder successfully closed the 24-inch pipeline valve.

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Outside, he and operator Faisal Almutairi worked together to start the two fire monitors, which extinguished the blaze and enabled the fire crew to focus on more serious matters.

The two then sheltered back in the team building, awaiting further instructions from the incident commander. Calm and thoughtful, Nashmi has worked at Khurais since its inception in 2009, and advises that if people are protected, assets will also be protected.

“I am proud to part of Saudi Aramco and Khurais.”

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maintenance key

decades-maintained system works first time

facilities may not have been shut down safely within minutes, achieving no causalities, or escalation of the emergency to other plants. Both site’s fire water systems performed as designed. It was a testament to the maintenance continuously carried out on the systems and a testament to how critical it is to keep systems in their best readiness, supporting business continuity and emergency response.

’super-dump system’ activated for first time

Abqaiq Plants maintenance manager Sami S. Al Huwais said Abqaiq maintains emergency disposal systems to ensure safe disposal of products. “For more than 50 years, we have maintained but never used a super-dump system for crude oil disposal,” he said. The attack saw the super-dump system switched on, and thanks to its rigorous periodic maintenance schedule adhered to for decades, the system worked smoothly.

environmental impact

The attack’s potential environmental impact was minimized through the rapid control of the emergency.

Khurais ‘intelligent field’ and oil trains concept crucial

Known in the industry as an “intelligent field,” the slick central processing facility at Khurais operates and controls its vast geographic oil field and wells remotely. “During the attack morning, this feature was demonstrated skillfully by the SCADA field operators by remotely shutting down oil wells,” said Khurais Producing Department manager Mohammed I. Sowayigh. The five oil trains in Khurais operate independently, which provides flexibility in terms of restoration and resuming production. Sowayigh says the facility’s ultra-modern design and investment in many sustainability features were toward enabling its robust resilience in the face of the attack.

“This oil train design philosophy allows us to work on damaged oil trains simultaneously, while other healthier trains are on-production. “This was a critical factor in retaining production within 24 hours from the attack,” he said.

It takes a lot of nerve to open up four fire monitors in an oil and gas facility that is under attack. Operator Mubarak Dossary was in his plant area doing routine checks on the pressure gauges, drains, and lube oil systems, when he heard a sudden bang, followed by a call from the Distributed Control System operator called to check if everything was OK.

“The bang did sound unusual so I checked my area and confirmed that everything was normal. After that I decided to make my way back to my Team Building to perform the morning prayer,” Dossary said.

“When I was on my way to pray, I saw my friend Faisal Alqahtani, and was about to go over and say hello to him, when I saw a projectile hit.”

“I went back to Unit 3 to open up fire monitors to protect the equipment.”

Dossary opened up a staggering four fire monitors before the heat of the explosions forced him to leave.

Shutting down a central processing facility is a delicate art. Khurais is a large facility composed of many plants within one facility. It also has hundreds of oil wells flowing to the facility with an “intelligent field” system where their operations are controlled remotely through high-end technology.

From a central control room, facilities and wells can be started or stopped, and product flow monitored and controlled. The immense responsibility of fine-tuning the shutdown sequence fell to shift coordinator Hussain Wadani.

After receiving the command to shut-down, Wadani took center stage in the central control room to delicately orchestrate the emergency shutdown, ensuring its safe execution.

He issued ongoing technical instructions to DCS operators about what level they should increase or decrease pressure. Wadani managed with his team to depressurize the high-pressure fuel gas system to avoid any explosions, and utilized propane gas to maintain the flare system.

“The shutdown needs to be proper,” says quietly spoken Wadani.

“My role includes shutting down the high-pressure fuel gas system, but at the same time keeping the flare system going to prevent any release of gas through the flare system.

“We had to be strong so the facility could be shut down safely, and I am so proud of how my team performed,” said Wadani.

A critical contributor to the company’s Emergency Response Plan is its commitment to maintenance. Without ongoing maintenance, both

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Cutting half of the flow of the company’s oil and gas is a big decision.
The historic call to stop hydrocarbons flowing from the Kingdom’s mighty
reservoirs into Abqaiq was the responsibility of shift superintendent Saad A.
Alharbi, an oil and gas processing veteran with 39 years of experience.
Alharbi had just left the plant’s central control center to complete one of his
routine driving tours of the operating area, when the first projectile hit a tank
40 meters in front of him.
“I was going to say hello to two operators working by the tank,” he said.
“Instead, I called Security and began following procedure by driving to the
safe side of the explosion, when another two projectiles struck.”
Quickly realizing the plant was under an uncontrollable attack, Alharbi
switched on the emergency communication channel and, within minutes of the
first strikes, calmly made the decision to shut down Abqaiq for the first time in its
71 years of operation.
“By closing the emergency valves, we stopped more oil coming into Abqaiq,
which would have continued to feed the fire, putting our people’s lives at risk,
and those of the surrounding community.”

Being in charge of an oil and gas facility that is under attack requires courage and
more — it needs a bold determination to first and foremost protect your people,
defend company assets, and to serve your country.
Shift superintendent Fawaz A. Al-Mujaljal was in his office doing the shift turnover
with the shift coordinator.
They had reached a discussion about the oil and water night samples when they
heard something unusual, and the building shook.
“I went to look at the screens,” Al-Mujaljal said. “I heard an operator on the
radio saying that something unusual had hit the stabilizer.”
His role instantaneously changed to emergency incident commander, and he
spent the remainder of his shift and beyond running the emergency response to
the attack on Khurais.
“It was a big incident that had the potential to get even bigger. However,
everyone remained calm, assumed their roles, and followed procedure,” said
Al-Mujaljal proudly.
“I was the incident commander but it was the support from everyone toward my
leadership that ensured the right actions were taken at the right time.
“I didn’t tell my family about the incident or my role until a day or so afterwards.
“They were shocked, but the experience has made me a better man, and we are all
stronger for it,” he said.

Everything was normal.
It was the last night shift before changing to day shift for Mohammed Al
Mansoor.
He was assigned to Unit 1, doing routine checks, such as draining water
from the gas lines, when he heard a Distributed Control System operator
speaking with an urgent tone.
After the first explosion, the operator with five years of service said he wanted
to get away from the fire.
“I saw one of my friends sitting, and I told him to get up and come with me,”
Mansoor said.
“We quickly moved to an area that we thought would be safe, but then went
back to confirm the fire monitoring system was activated.

“We thought the explosion was process-related, but then realized we were
under attack.”
Mansoor says the pair were near a 60-inch gas line.
“I was afraid that it would be impacted, and that my friend and I would be unable
to be evacuated.
“But everything was activated, the fire department and the government came to
help, and there was no shortcoming from anyone,” he said.

The first explosion threw Faisal H.
Alrayed to the ground.
It blew up 10 meters from his right side.
Despite having just one year of plant work experience, the blast didn’t deter
the young operator from getting up, and bravely activating seven fire water moni-
tor systems, as well as the deluge systems for two tanks.
After the explosion knocked him down,
Alrayed first made his way to the field communication device to report the
explosion to his colleagues inside the control room, but the device was dam-
aged by the attack.
He decided to make his way toward the team building to inform his colleagues,
but returned to Unit 3 because he re-
membered his friend was working there.

“My friend was fine and he was activat-
ing fire monitors, so I helped him,” recalls
Alrayed.
“After that I went and started opening
more fire monitors, then I went to the
pump areas to open the fire monitors
there.
“Then my friend and I heard another
incoming projectile, so we ran.
Eventually, the two work mates safely
sheltered in the North Stabilization team
building.
A Distributed Control System call to Operations supervisor Saad S. Qumaish in Abqaiq sent him outside to investigate what was going on. It was then that the first explosion went off 200 meters in front of him. Qumaish set off to help spray water on the unaffected tanks.

“I realized it was not a process incident,” he said.

“I thought I needed to shelter, but went outside the area to the operators who had activated the fire monitor systems, to encourage them to shelter.”

With 20 years of service, Qumaish says Saudi Aramco’s switchable plant design allowed the facility to quickly come back online.

“It was devastating to see the damage, but our plants are flexible. Within one hour we can switch what a piece of plant infrastructure can process,” he explained.

“We do a lot of emergency training, doing scenarios over and over again, and we now know that this has paid off.”

Operations, Maintenance, and Engineering staff rush for restoration ideas

While fires were being extinguished, Abqaiq Plants experts started generating a restoration plan by prioritizing repair activities to revive crude production in a timely manner.

“Operations, Maintenance, and Engineering staff were on the spot, developing solutions for the repairs,” said Abqaiq Plants Maintenance manager Sami S. Al Huwais.

“Some of the critical material requirements for restoration were sourced in the first few hours, which proved to be a major success factor.

“It was amazing to see them coming up with solutions, deciding the materials, and arranging to source it locally or internationally, with the construction contractor mobilizing and gearing up to start the reconstruction,” said Al Huwais.

Khurais quickly resurfaced

Production at Khurais returned within 24 hours, and in only 10 days after the attack, the facilities’ capacity was fully restored.

Less than a month later — other than Oil Train-4 — the modern site has re-emerged as its usual neat and shiny self.

Khurais Producing Department manager Mohammed I. Sowayigh explains that Oil Train-5 was under test and inspection during the attack, with more than 80 contractor maintenance workers on the site that morning. “With the exceptional response of our operators, all workers were evacuated safely.”

Two other fires resulting from strikes at Oil Train-2 and -3 were extinguished in 10 minutes, while the other two fires at Oil Train-4 and -5 were put out within four hours. Oil Train-1 was not struck.

“The challenge with the type of damage faced in Khurais’ piping and equipment is the hidden damage caused by hundreds of fragments and shrapnel hitting piping, equipment, structure beams, and electrical and instrumentation systems,” said Sowayigh.

“This has mandated extensive surveys and equipment scanning by our teams to assure readiness before the oil trains start-up.

“We are now in phase two, restoring the redundancy phase, having repaired a good amount of the damage in phase one,” he said.

massive ongoing actions facilities can be damaged, but people’s spirit and innovation cannot be destroyed
In Abqaiq, as Yazeed A. Oraini went outside to check what the strange noise was, the 911 telephone number started to ring.

The fire and security

If a fire occurs at a Saudi Aramco facility, it is the role of the frontline operators to isolate the flow of oil and gas, and then contain the area to make sure fire does not spread throughout the plant.

Once the incident commander declares the facility is contained, operators can exit, and the firefighters, security, and other necessary personnel can enter the area.

A firefighter for one year, Yazeed A. Oraini fought the blaze for five hours.

Yazeed A. Oraini fought the blaze for five hours.

The tranquility was shattered by the ring of an alarm at the fire station.

Two rings meant it was the central processing facility.

Then a radio call announced it was an explosion in the central processing facility.

Arriving at the facility, he saw a lot of people coming out of the gate.

“My task was water supply, which involves connecting the hoses to the truck,” he said.

“It meant I sat behind the driver.”

“We heard the sound, went outside but couldn’t see anything,” Almuhanna said.

“We did all what we had been trained for,” Oraini said.

“It felt like my home was being attacked.”

“I feel proud that I was there to extinguish the fire, although when you wake up you feel all your muscles yelling,” he smiled.

“We did the risk assessment and stuck to the plan.

“This fire was demanding because of multiple attacks.

“We did all what we had been trained for,” Oraini said.

“I called my father, my brother, and my sisters to let them know I was all right.

“Firefighting is my work, and it is an honor to serve my country,” he said.

Abqaiq firefighter Omar J. AlBehidel released the firetruck’s door handle and stepped down to confront the roaring flames.

In Abqaiq, as Yazeed A. Oraini went outside to check what the strange noise was, the 911 telephone number started to ring.

The sky lit up like it was dawn as Oraini’s squad geared up to enter the facility.

Wearing 32 kilograms of firefighting gear — coat, fire pants and boots, face mask, flash hood, gloves, helmet and breathing apparatus with cylinder — he set off protected from the soaring heat of the fire.

Working with the Civil Defense crews, Oraini administered cooling water to the fires for seven hours.

“We did all what we had been trained for,” Oraini said.

“A lot of people were coming out of the gate.”

“Firefighting is my work, and it is an honor to serve my country,” he said.

“The heat wrapped around him before his feet touched the ground.

Trained for two years by Saudi Aramco and serving for one year as a firefighter, for five hours AlBehidel helped to run the hoses to cool the first column, had a break, then went in again for around two hours until the fire was extinguished.

“Firefighting is my work, and it is an honor to serve my country,” he said.

“Then I came back to the fire station, there were many missed calls from them.

“I called my father, my brother, and my sister to let them know I was all right.

“Firefighting is my work, and it is an honor to serve my country,” he said.

Behind the voice was senior fireman and communicator Zyad Al-Harbi.

Instead of responding to his sister, Al-Harbi followed the alert voice message system and stage two,” he said.

“A firm voice coming from the fire station microphone repeatedly stated: “Fire and explosion in Khurais.”

Behind the voice was senior fireman and communication officer Zyad Al-Harbi, who was taken aback when he received the 911 message about an explosion at Khurais.

“I had to play the message again to make sure I had heard it correctly,” he said.

“My sister in-law lives in Abqaiq town and just before had sent a text message to my family’s group, saying she was anxious.”

Instead of responding to his sister, Al-Harbi followed procedure by discarding his mobile phone, made the station announcement, and stepped into his role as the nerve center for Khurais firefighting operations.

“The fire commander instructed me to activate the alert voice message system and stage two,” he said.

“Khirais fireman specialist Abdulaziz M. Shehri describes the fire as difficult.

“This fire was demanding because of multiple attacks and multiple locations,” Shehri said.

“We did the risk assessment and stuck to the plan.

“The recent exercise we did helped a lot for things to go smoothly.”

Shehri has served with Saudi Aramco for 11 years, and his role on the night was a nozzle man.

“It was a big fire and we needed a lot of water and foam.

“Working in firefighting for seven years at Abqaiq, he knew there was a problem and I looked at my mobile for an emergency response message,” he said.

Working in firefighting for seven years at Abqaiq, he set off for the company’s fire station, geared up, and was quickly taken by a support crew to the facility where he was assigned as a truck operator.

“I wanted to help my friends fight the fire,” Qahtani said.

“Adel M. Almuhanna was one of three on the firefighting team working the late night shift.

His supervisor assigned him and his colleague to do routine inspections of fire systems at one of Abqaiq’s 14 plants.

The pair worked on half of the inspections until 12:30 a.m., then returned to the fire station, planning to complete the remainder during the next night’s shift.

“We heard the sound, went outside but couldn’t see anything,” Almuhanna said.

“Then we saw a plant catch fire.”

The firefighting team mobilized at the fire station to wait for security clearance away from the line of the attack.

“When we entered the facility I could feel the heat and smoke,” he said.

“I really value the training and hardship I went through has kept me safe.”

Firefighter Turki A. Alotaibi was taking the opportunity of a quiet 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. weekend night shift in Khurais to do a workout.

A fire and security

Once the incident commander declares the facility is contained, operators can exit, and the firefighters, security, and other necessary personnel can enter the area.

If a fire occurs at a Saudi Aramco facility, it is the role of the frontline operators to isolate the flow of oil and gas, and then contain the area to make sure fire does not spread throughout the plant.

Fire equipment operator Fahad M. Qahtani wasn’t on duty at 3:51 a.m. on Sept. 14.

Asleep in his flat in the local Abqaiq township, a sound woke him up.

“I knew there was a problem and I looked at my mobile for an emergency response message,” he said.

Working in firefighting for seven years at Abqaiq, he set off for the company’s fire station, geared up, and was quickly taken by a support crew to the facility where he was assigned as a truck operator.

“I wanted to help my friends fight the fire,” Qahtani said.

“My friend and I worked together, this is our job, and we want to keep everyone safe.

“When I was in the truck, I wanted to come out and help. It is my job to do my role.”

A firm voice coming from the fire station microphone repeatedly stated: “Fire and explosion in Khurais.”

Behind the voice was senior fireman and communication officer Zyad Al-Harbi, who was taken aback when he received the 911 message about an explosion at Khurais.

“I had to play the message again to make sure I had heard it correctly,” he said.

“When all the fires were out, I allowed myself to feel tired,” he smiled.

“A firefighter you always assume the worst, but once you reach there, it is not the worst you thought it could be.”

The tranquility was shattered by the ring of an alarm at the fire station.

Two rings meant it was the central processing facility.

Then a radio call announced it was an explosion in the central processing facility.

Arriving at the facility, he saw a lot of people coming out of the gate.

“My task was water supply, which involves connecting the hoses to the truck,” he said.

“It meant I sat behind the driver.”

“We all have allocated seating in the truck based on our firefighting role.

“When all the fires were out, I allowed myself to feel tired.

“I am proud of what we did,” he smiled.

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Instead of responding to his sister, Al-Harbi followed procedure by discarding his mobile phone, made the station announcement, and stepped into his role as the nerve center for Khurais firefighting operations.

“The fire commander instructed me to activate the alert voice message system and stage two,” he said.

“When the firefighters returned safety, I hugged them all, and then went to contact my sister.”

Khurais fireman specialist Abdulaziz M. Shehri describes the fire as difficult.

“This fire was demanding because of multiple attacks and multiple locations,” Shehri said.

“We did the risk assessment and stuck to the plan.

“The recent exercise we did helped a lot for things to go smoothly.”

Shehri has served with Saudi Aramco for 11 years, and his role on the night was a nozzle man.

“It was a big fire and we needed a lot of water and foam.

“As a firefighter you always assume the worst, but once you reach there, it is not the worst you thought it could be.”

The best thing about the attack is that no one was injured,” he concludes.

A firefighter for one year, Yazeed A. Oraini fought the roar of a once-in-a-lifetime fire.

Firefighter Turki A. Alotaibi was taking the opportunity of a quiet 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. weekend night shift in Khurais to do a workout.

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A fire and security
A loud noise woke Saad F. Aldossary, asleep in his home in the local Abqaiq township, situated 2.5 kilometers from the Abqaiq facility.

“I heard a big bang so I went outside my house and, after a few minutes, I heard another bang,” recalls Saad. “I started to see fires in the facility.”

Without hesitation, the Security group supervisor and his brother Saleh, also working for the Industrial Security Operations Department, both considered it their duty to put their uniforms on and report to work.

“We are fully trained for incidences and the possibility of a second strike,” Aldossary said.

“Both of us felt it was our duty to support our friends to execute the emergency plan.

“We went to help, to defend the company and our country,” he said.

In Abqaiq, Nasir Al Marri’s family heard the noise and woke him up.

After his family evacuated, he put his uniform on and traveled to the site’s main entrance gate, where he was soon deployed to control the traffic to the impacted area.

“My role was to control traffic and people around the emergency area,” explained Al Marri.

A security man for 10 years, he felt safe to be inside the facility because firefighters were deployed alongside him.

Operating firetrucks need frequent refueling with diesel.

Al Marri took the initiative to accompany the truck drivers as a passenger, then walked back to the gate to accompany the next driver.

He also segregated the parking areas for diesel and foam trucks, and supply areas.

“It was tempting to help the firefighters hold their hoses, but providing logistical support is important,” he said.

Mosa Al-Rasheedi’s alarm clock was set for early morning prayer time.

He was up, preparing to go to the mosque when he heard a loud explosion.

The security man quickly put on his uniform and headed directly to Abqaiq’s main gate.

“I responded immediately to my workplace when I heard the explosion.,” Al-Rasheedi said.

“Our training prepares us for emergencies. We protect ourselves with helmets and vests, and are trained to be of service during second strikes and injuries.

“The roads to the plant were congested, and part of security’s role is to make sure movement is smooth. Civil Defense and government agencies provided significant support and, together, we sustained the company’s business by protecting lives, people, and assets using comprehensive procedures and technologies,” he said.

Beginning at his usual start time of 10:30 p.m. in Abqaiq, security man Saad Alayoubi’s third night shift at his gate was unusually quiet.

Around five hours into the shift, things would change dramatically.

It would become the busiest night of his security career.

“I looked around when I heard the explosion, and I saw a fire,” Alayoubi said.

Security immediately switched to its highest protocol level.

“My gate was close to the fire, so the order was to keep it closed,” he explained.

“The first person to go inside through my gate was one of the Operations’ shift superintendents.

“It was most physically and mentally challenging shift of my career, but it was my duty to protect lives and protect the area,” he says proudly.
Nepal
a majestic country of beautiful contradictions

by Chiara Ciampicotti Iacoangeli

Nepal is an easily accessible destination; a direct flight will get you there in under five hours.
A land of remarkable contrasts, Nepal is a thought-provoking journey. The apparent contradictions are many. For example, the people greet you with happy smiles and warm eyes, but those same faces also reflect a resolution that comes from enduring great challenges.
Their customs may seem to evade you — such as a stranger giving you a necklace as a symbol of peaceful acceptance — but they rarely fail to fascinate.

physical beauty and a rush to modernity
Nepal features lush landscapes with terraces that slope down to the valleys into beautiful lakes, and high mountain ranges that touch the sky with their majestic blunt and snow-capped peaks. It is a country full of history, monuments, and the astonishing architecture of stupas and pagodas, which are enriched with superbly carved wood. It is also rich in artisanship, with master craftsmen who transform the raw materials into works of art — be it wood, wool, ceramics, metal, paper, or gems.
And it is also a place of silence and meditation, of energy and vibrations where time loses its borders and one's ego becomes in tune with the surrounding environment.

Kathmandu, the capital city, was the home of the Newar culture, a cosmopolitan urban civilization in the Himalayan foothills. Once, it hosted the palaces, mansions, and gardens of Nepalese aristocracy, and as it is strategically located between India and China, it served as an important trade center in past centuries. (This is where the Silk Road connected India and Tibet.)
Unfortunately, the rush of modernity has made the capital a difficult place to live in, with the frenzy of traffic causing high pollution rates. A country that is struggling to take off in the major world markets, Nepal has also suffered a further setback due to the recent earthquake.

Away from the city, a cultural tour of the Kathmandu Valley can be rewarding, with its two ancient cities of Bhaktapur and Patan, and their squares featuring ancient royal palaces of dynasties long past.

a country known for its hiking and climbing
Nepal also has great natural riches. Here, an experienced trekker can complete the challenging task of climbing the Himalayas, the world’s highest mountain range and the home for 10 of the world’s highest mountain peaks. If you are a bit less energetic, you can choose to enjoy the sight of the towering peaks by booking one of the private flights that offers a wonderful view from above.

Obviously, these are completely different travel experiences, with only the breathtaking scenery the common denominator. Subsequently, timing is everything, as high altitudes sometimes make it difficult to glimpse the snow covered peaks due to cloud cover. However, when the clouds disperse, the grandeur of Mount Everest is unmatched.

the shimmering waters of Pokhara
Another stop on the Nepalese journey is Pokhara. Famous for a lake that mirrors the adjacent Himalayas, Pokhara’s shimmering waters reflect the flamboyant colors of the paddle boats. Awakening here can be wonderfully inspiring, urging you on to take an early morning trek into the hills and reaching the highest point dominating the valley before sunrise; your reward is the sight of the pre-dawn colors filling the sky.
Nepal is a diverse country with mysterious charm — despite its difficulties, you can read on the faces of its people their strong desire to rebuild and persevere, and it is really worth it to venture there. My warmest wish to this country is to find its way, without losing the value that characterizes itself, a place that warms your soul.
### Ithra movies

**Ithra Heroes Adventure**  
Oct. 18, 19, 21  
10:30 a.m.

**Coconut the Little Dragon**  
Oct. 16, 17  
6:45 p.m.  
Oct. 18, 19  
6 p.m.

**Kikoriki — Legend of the Golden Dragon**  
Oct. 19  
3 p.m.

**Champions vs. Legends — The True Winter Sports Heroes**  
Oct. 16, 17  
5:10 p.m.  
Oct. 18, 19  
1:30 p.m.

**AlphaGo**  
Oct. 16, 17, 18  
3 p.m.

**Sadega Sabt Sultan**  
Oct. 16, 17  
1:35 p.m.

**Is Sumiyati Going to Hell?**  
Oct. 18, 19  
8:15 p.m.

**Noesis**  
Oct. 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23  
4:15 p.m.  
Oct. 18  
8:30 p.m.

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**Kikoriki — Legend of the Golden Dragon**  
The resident scientist on Kikoriki Island invents a helmet that can transfer personality traits from one person to another.

**Champions vs. Legends — The True Winter Sports Heroes**  
What if the greatest high performance athletes — present and past — could compete against each other on a level playing field? If competitive conditions were equalized, would today’s stars come out on top? Or would they be beaten by the heroes of the past?

**Sadega Sabt Sultan**  
An unemployed Saudi doctor turns into an ice cream diner disguised as a puppeteer to reach his missing daughter.

**Is Sumiyati Going to Hell?**  
As told through the eyes of young Layan, the story centers on Sumiyati, the family’s housekeeper and her continuous negative work experiences.
Tanween: Upcoming events offer another magical experience for attendees

Dhahran — As Tanween Season 2 wraps up the first week of creative sessions, here’s a lineup of some of the exciting events that you can look forward to in the upcoming weeks.

Creative Events

Box Wars: Participants can sign up to attend workshops and build their own cardboard airplanes and helmets. On Oct. 26, they will join the Box Wars team in building props for the final battle that will test the participants’ design and strategy aptitude.

Greg Foot’s Extreme Sports Battle: The Ittha Theater will host an adrenaline-fueled stunt show, that features world-class runners and trick cyclists. The spine-chilling battle involves a group of experts climbing and jumping from an eight-foot-long stage.

Giant Puppets: Hosted at Al-Khobar corniche and later, at Ittha. Giant Puppets by Spanish puppeteers Carros de Foc will take you into a realm where puppets freely roam the roads, break rules, and inspire awe, just from their sheer size. Founded by Miguel Angel Martin, the Carros de Foc puppets have an urge to fly, break boundaries of art, and reach the heavens.

Play²: With a set of playground equipment made of wood and innovative tracking technology, play, learn to explore, and experience how your body movements can become a controller in interactive games.

Interactive Workshops: Tanween Season 2 promises a whole host of interactive workshops, including learning how to print on silkscreen, building your own string instruments, learning the essentials of improvisation, discovering your creative strengths, and more!

Inspiring Talks: Join renowned artists, members of the academia, and notable personalities as they deliver inspiring and life-changing talks on a wide range of topics, like innovation and entrepreneurship, filmmaking, and game designing.

Don’t miss “An evening with Thierry Henry,” a football icon and legendary French player, who will give a talk on his experience with Arsenal, professional play, and the creative process in football.

In addition to shows, workshops, and talks, there will also be several art installations and dining experiences that visitors can enjoy. For more information, visit the Tanween webpage https://tanween.ithra.com/en/.