

A'am al-Bina'a

“The year of 2008 will be a year of reconstruction for Iraq”
-- Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki



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Iraqis take lead in Mithaq Pool opening

The District Advisory Council and the residents of the Thawra 1 neighborhood of the Sadr City district of Baghdad celebrated the re-opening of the Mithaq Pool Complex with prizes, competitions and music Aug. 30.

Representatives from the DAC, Ministry of Youth and Recreation, Iraqi Army and community organized the celebration amid improved security conditions. The festivities included guest speakers, a swimming and diving competition, and gifts for the younger Iraqis.

Iraqi Army Lt. Col. Yeayah Rosoul Abdallah al Zubadie welcomed the attendees and thanked the many people who were involved in the important event.

“The Iraqi Army is here to serve the people of Iraq. The community leaders here today, with the help of the government, have a chance to make a difference for their people,” said Yeayah. “The re-opening today is an example of all of us together working together for our people.”

“The local and national leaders involved were integral to the process,” said U.S. Army Capt. Nicholas Cantrell. Approximately \$500,000 was spent on the pool. “The pool was in pretty bad shape but all parties involved agreed it was a good project and would be good for the



The winner of the swimming competition climbs out of the pool a champion during the celebratory events at the grand re-opening of the Mithaq Pool Complex Aug. 30 in the Thawra 1 neighborhood of the Sadr City district of Baghdad.



The younger swimmers enjoy the wading pool at the Mithaq Pool Complex. The complex is an important hub for recreation in the neighborhood.



Residents gather at the Mithaq Pool Complex to celebrate the grand re-opening organized by the Thawra 1 community Aug. 30.

community,” said Cantrell.

The DAC and community leaders of Thawra 1 also assumed responsibility for maintaining and operating the swimming complex.

“Security is quite good now and the local people feel safer and that has given them the confidence to have large celebrations,” said Cantrell. “The opening of the Mithaq Pool complex is beneficial for the people of Sadr City. It provides alternatives to young males and children and is a positive symbol for the community.”

Iraqi and U.S. Army doctors improve health care in al-Kut

Iraqi and U.S. Army doctors treated more than 230 patients at the Theeba Clinic in al-Kut during a combined medical engagement organized by the U.S. Army Aug. 21.

"It's all about teamwork, working hand-in-hand, a partnership to learn each other's medical culture and to better facilitate and train the Iraqis," said U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Sebastien Goillandeau.

These efforts, part of Operation Bring on the Docs, allow the medical professionals in the area to train, work and share experiences together in order to improve the health care provided to residents of al-Kut.

"The focus for this particular clinic was sharing advancements in medicine that the Iraqi doctors didn't have access to over the last several years," said Goillandeau.

Bringing the U.S. Army doctors' experience to the clinics has had an immediate impact on the local Iraqis here, by improving the care Iraqi doctors can provide to their patients, said Goillandeau.



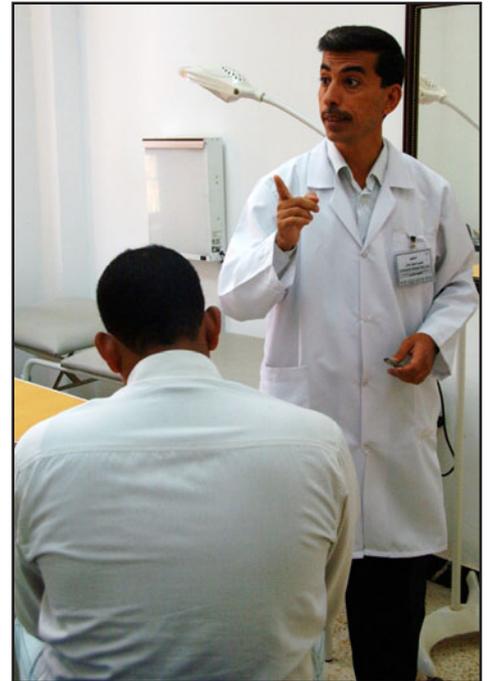
A mother and her son stand in the waiting hall of the Theeba Clinic in al-Kut during a combined medical engagement with Iraqi and U.S. Army doctors.

"We're trying to increase their capabilities," said U.S. Army surgeon - Col. Italo Bastianelli.

"We look at the building, the infrastructure development, equipment, supplies and mentoring with the Iraqi doctors to improve their experiences and capabilities," said Bastianelli.

The U.S. Army doctors also brought \$5,000 of medical supplies to the clinic, another aspect of 'Bring on the Docs' program that helps to improve the medical care for the people in Wasit.

RIGHT: An Iraqi doctor, Hussain As-sak Dallal, works with a patient at the Theeba Clinic in al-Kut, Aug. 21.



Iraqi voter registration a success

More than 2.9 million Iraqi citizens visited voter registration centers across Iraq during a six-week open registration period that ended Aug. 28. The citizens visited local community centers to ensure they are registered properly to vote in the upcoming provincial elections.

The Iraqi High Elections Commission hired and trained more than 6,500 employees to operate the 564 voter registration centers across the country.

In addition to registering to vote, 500,000 plus citi-

zens updated critical personal information at the voter registration centers.

The Iraqi parliament passed the provincial powers law in February that defines the powers of the provincial governments and their relationship to the national government. This was the first registration following the new law for provincial elections. The Government of Iraq intends to hold the elections by the end of 2008.

"This election registration is another positive step where the Iraqi people, secured by their own military and police forces, intend to have their voice heard on the upcoming provincial elections," said U.S. Army Col. Jerry O'Hara.

Iraqi Air Force Training School graduates largest class ever

The Iraqi Air Force Training School graduated its third and largest Basic Military Training class in Taji, Iraq, Aug. 11.

Nine Iraqi officer and 10 warrant officer instructors led 283 of their countrymen through a rigorous physical and academic regimen that transformed them from ordinary citizens to Iraqi Air Force warrant officers.

The candidates will put on their new rank after completing basic technical training and English language training.

The instructor cadre is assisted by a group of 65 U.S. Air Force advisors. U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Michael Dilda said in addition to graduation, the school can celebrate reaching some key goals within the BMT program.

“When Coalition Forces stood up this school they worked with the Iraqis to set up goals they wanted to achieve within a certain amount of time,” said Dilda. “Some of the goals reached include the ability to run four training programs at the same time, having fully renovated facilities with the ability to house 500 students, and the availability of qualified Iraqi instructors to lead the courses. Today’s class represents the attainment of those goals in the BMT program.”

This BMT class was led by Iraqi instructors, under the supervision of their USAF advisors. The trainees worked hard, getting up well before the sun to clean la-



An Iraqi Air Force warrant officer candidate waves an Iraqi flag atop a human pyramid after the basic military graduation, at al-Taji Air Base, Iraq, Aug. 11.

trines, make beds and practice drills. Their days ended long after sunset.

Iraqi Lieutenant Saef Ali, a lead trainer/supervisor, has been working as a trainer for six months. He’s encouraged by the commitment of his trainees.

“These guys are not afraid of anything. They come to training and don’t let anyone stop them,” said Ali. “They want to serve their country. I feel proud to say I’m a lieutenant in the Iraqi Air Force.”

In a little more than a year, the school’s cadre and advisors have trained and graduated 526 warrant and commissioned officers from the school’s various training programs.

“In the next BMT class, the Iraqi instructors will have even more responsibility as the USAF advisors transition from a full teaching function to equal parts advising and instructing,” said Dilda.



Iraqi Air Force warrant officer candidates salute during pass and review at the Iraqi Air Force basic military training graduation.



Construction of a \$25 million 132kV substation for the city of Diwaniyah in Qadisiyah Province is 82 percent complete and scheduled to be finished this fall.

Construction underway for new substation, to help stabilize Diwaniyah's electrical grid

The Al Diwaniyah 132-kilo-volt substation in southern Iraq's Qadisiyah Province is scheduled for completion this fall. Currently 82 percent finished, this massive project has sparked the interest of Al Diwaniyah's 400,000 residents and local officials.

According to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Iraqi Engineer, Sahib Dukman, the project was originally planned in 1982. Dukman explained that at that time the Iraqi government developed an electrical master plan, but projects under the plan were delayed due to what Dukman called Saddam Hussein's bad behavior.

"The 132 kV substation in East Diwaniyah is very important for the electrical grid in this region. This new substation will reduce the load currently on two 33/11 kV substations built in 2003 to a reasonable level," said Dukman. "The substations built in 2003 are part of the master plan developed by the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity but were not built to handle the current demand for power," he added.

"More substations are being built throughout the Qadisiyah Province and when finished will link together, forming a stabilized grid," explained USACE Construction Representative John De Los Santos. "With the help of Iraqi engineers like Dukman working with contractor Pauwels International, who has employed hundreds of local Iraqis, this \$25 million project is nearly complete."

Once completed, the contractor will test, energize and commission the substation working directly with Ministry of Electricity officials ensuring the facility meets their standards.



Rows of desks await their final destination in the classrooms of two schools in Abu T'shir.

Schools refurbished in Abu T'shir

Community leaders and U.S. Army Soldiers gathered for a luncheon to celebrate the renovation and reopening of the Nahreen Primary School and the Muath bin Jabal Secondary School in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad Aug. 21.

"This is a great step to work towards the future in Abu T'shir," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Troy Smith. "Everybody wants to continue to improve the area."

The contractors made many improvements to the schools through the summer including installing new furniture, air conditioners and remodeling the sewage systems.

Dawood Salman, a civil engineer and manager of the Muath bin Jabal Secondary School, managed many projects for the school during its 45-day makeover.

"When kids return to the school and see it is in good condition, they will be very happy," Salman said.

The attendees toured the two schools to see first-hand the improvements made and then had a traditional Iraqi meal to commemorate the school's success.