

MARCH + APRIL 2007

DATELINE MANAMA:

A report on the 4th Water
Middle East show

METITO GETS INTL CITY STP PROJECT

VALORIZA JOINS HANDS WITH ADGECO

**UP CLOSE AND
PERSONAL WITH**
Mohamed Hijaz of Eagle
Electromechanical

**APPLYING THOUGHT TO
WATER IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

SETTLING DOWN

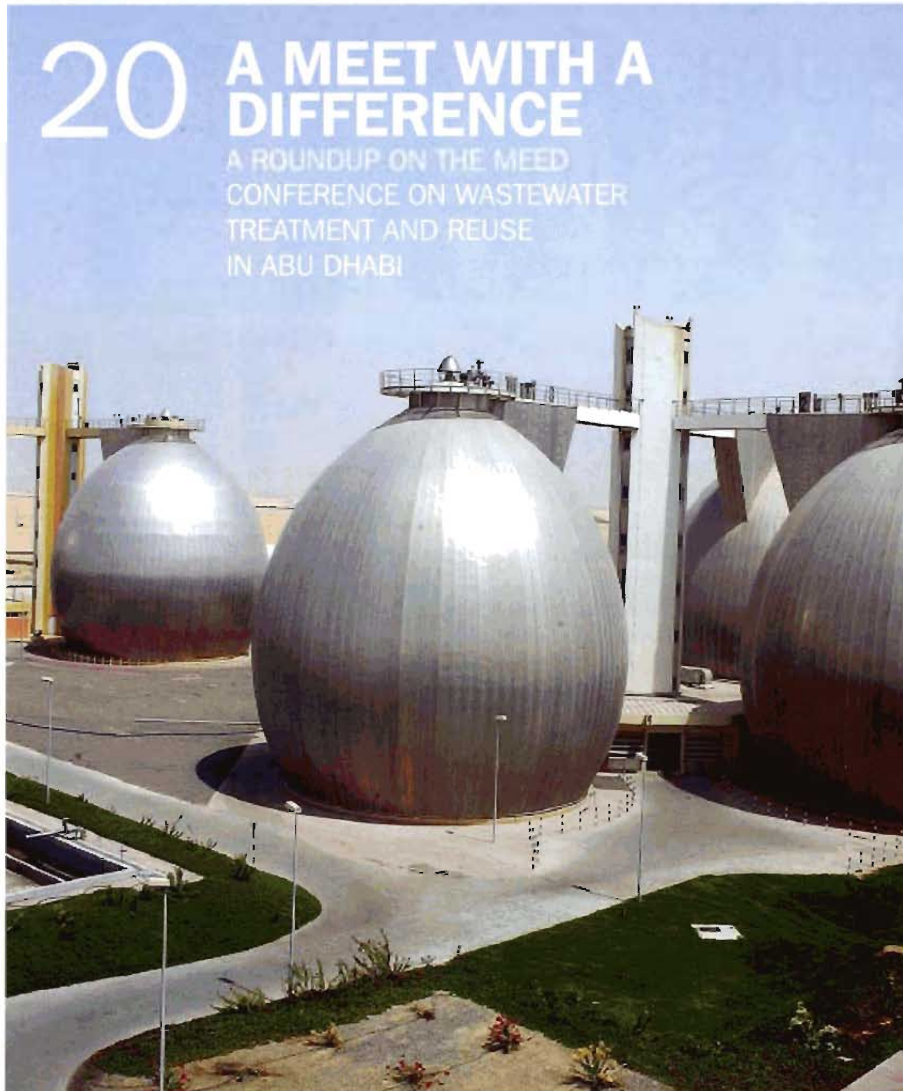
**...FOR A CHAT ON WASTEWATER
TREATMENT AND REUSE**



PLUS: Market Place, Contracts' Corner, Events Watch

CPI
INDUSTRY

US\$10



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A ROUNDUP ON THE MEED
CONFERENCE ON WASTEWATER
TREATMENT AND REUSE
IN ABU DHABI



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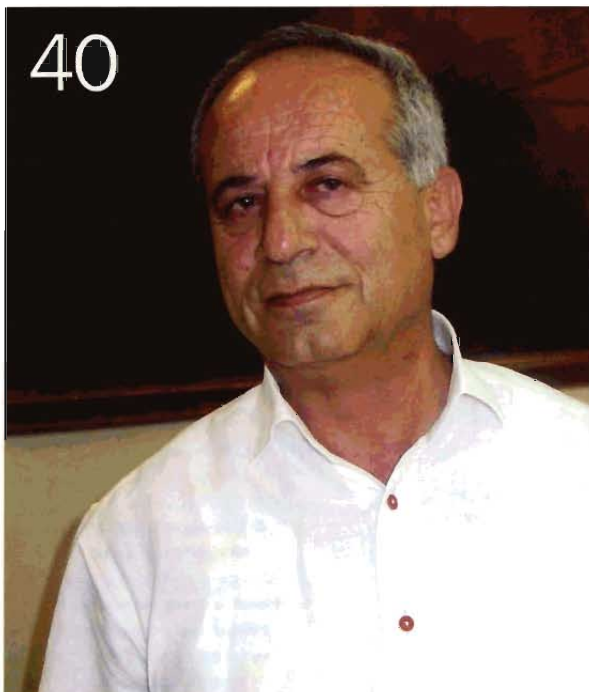
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The life mission of Mohamed Hijaz (Eagle Electromechanical/Al Hijaz Mechanical Equipment) is to design, develop and promote indigenous STP systems that will serve the most ambitious of developments taking shape in the region.





Naji Jreijiri, Company President & Head of Automation Products – Gulf, and BoonKiat Sim

POWER AND AUTOMATION

ABB'S THIRD ANNUAL TECHNICAL SEMINAR FOCUSES ON INTEGRATING AP PRODUCTS IN WATER, WATER TREATMENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES

ABB organised a three-day technical seminar in its Dubai premises from March 6-8. The seminar, an annual event, attracted ABB customers, consultants and channel partners.

BoonKiat Sim, Regional Manager Middle East and Africa and Country Manager UAE, addressed attendees about ABB's latest group results and development in the region. His address was followed by presentations from the Power and Automation Technology divisions of ABB.

The seminar included 10 technical workshops that ran in rotation throughout the three days. Speakers were from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Germany, Finland,

Sweden, Norway, UK and the US. The themes of some of the automation workshops revolved around solutions integrating AP products in targeted segments like the water, water treatment and the construction industries; other workshops highlighted the product features and the tools ABB provides to the consultants and partners to simplify their work during the design stage.

Power technology workshops featured turnkey substations, substation and distribution automation, power system communications, and medium and high voltage products and services, most of them used in the transport and distribution of electrical energy. ■

IAHS IN THE UAE

Dr Ahmed Murad has been appointed as IAHS National Correspondent for the UAE for a period of two years. Murad is Head of the Geology Department in the College of Science, UAE University.

As National Correspondent, Murad will receive all information about IAHS activities and publications and will disseminate the same within the national hydrological community in the UAE.

The IAHS will disseminate towards the global hydrological community the information that Murad will send to them about hydrological achievements and activities in the UAE.

EAGLE EXPANDS ITS WINGS

Eagle Electromechanical Company on March 1 received an award for two DBOOT projects from Palm Water. The two projects, 8,000 m³/day and 1,000 m³/day, will use MBR technology and will be located in JAFZA.

Eagle in January also received an award for two projects for Dubai Industrial City to execute two temporary packages. The projects, 1,600 m³/day and 600 m³/

day, will use SBR technology. Eagle will operate the two projects for a period of four years.

In late 2006, Eagle was awarded the contract for the expansion of the Al Dhaid STP. According to the terms of the contract, Eagle has to execute the project over a period of eight months.

The existing plant at Al Dhaid, which is four years old, has an MBR system supplied by Zenon. It is the first MBR project in the Gulf. The existing capacity of the plant is 250 m³/day. After the expansion, the capacity of the plant will increase to 1,000 m³/day.

Besides the Al Dhaid project, Eagle has a slew of projects, in different stages of completion. In July 2006, the company was awarded a 12-year BOT contract to execute a 25,000 m³/day STP plant for the Dubai Sports City development. The project has a 15-month completion period. And in November 2006, Eagle received a contract to execute a sports canal filtration system (84,000 m³/day) in the Dubai Sports City development. A third project, awarded in September 2006, is for Dubai Motor City (8,000 m³/day). The completion period is eight months.

All three projects use MBR technology. "We are able to offer a competitive price and production quality to our clients," said Majd Hamdallah, Operations Manager of the company. "And with MBR, we are also able to offer a small footprint for the plant. The system is also odour-free, which is an important factor for consideration, especially because it is close to residential developments worth millions of dirhams. The compact footprint is a key advantage in the sports canal project in Dubai Sports City. The filtration system will be positioned under a bridge. Nobody will see it or feel it."



Majd Hamdallah

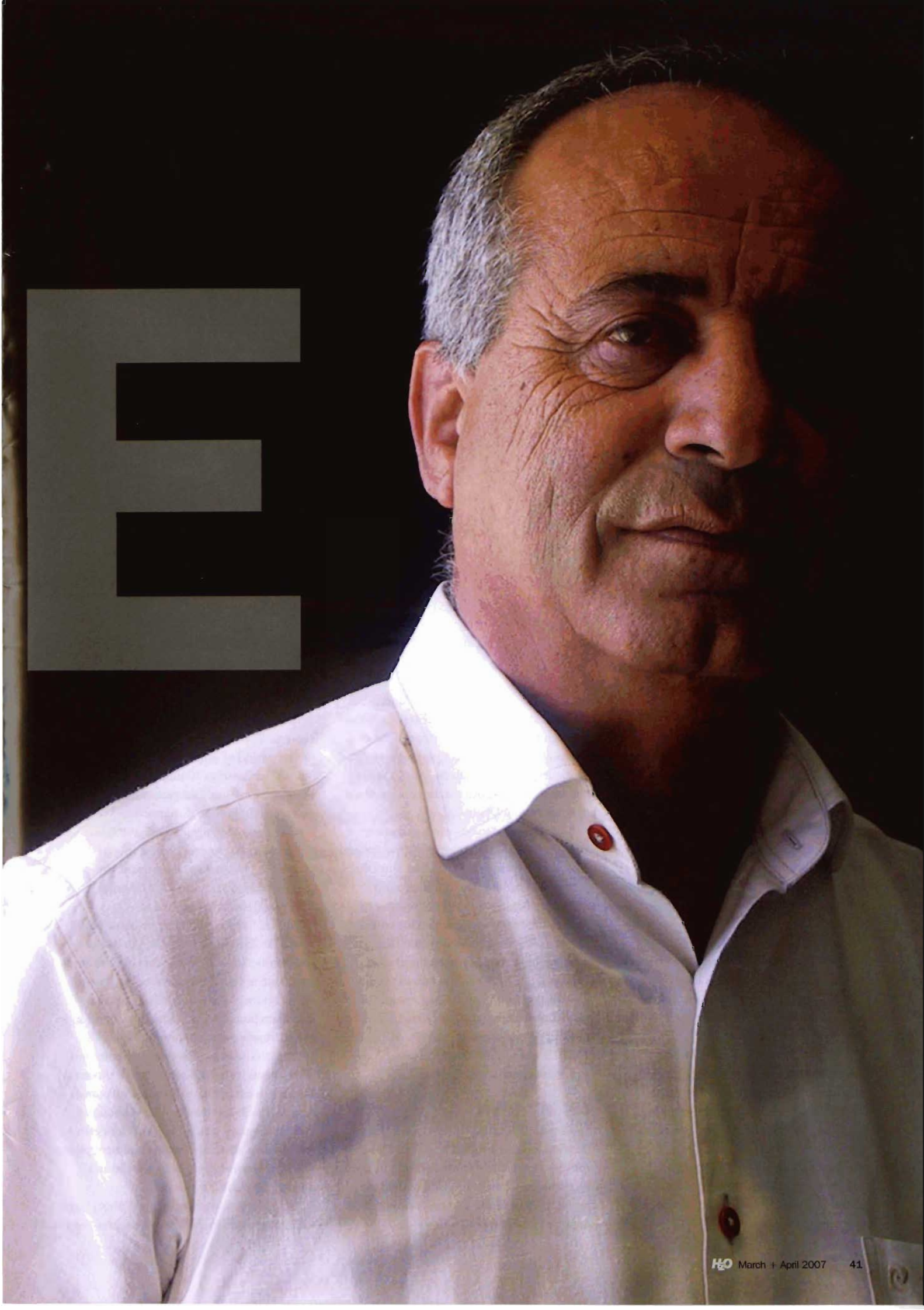
END-POINT

MADE IN

U A

THE LIFE MISSION OF MOHAMED HIJAZ, GENERAL MANAGER OF EAGLE ELECTROMECHANICAL/AL HIJAZ MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT, IS TO DESIGN, DEVELOP AND PROMOTE INDIGENOUS STP SYSTEMS THAT WILL SERVE THE MOST AMBITIOUS OF DEVELOPMENTS TAKING SHAPE IN THE REGION. HERE, HE TALKS ABOUT HIS WORK, HIS LIFE, HIS FAMILY...

E





MY BACKGROUND

I was born in 1953 in the West Bank. I attended school in a village called Anabta, near to Nablus, in the West Bank. I stayed there till ninth grade and after that attended high school in a place called Tulkaram in Palestine. It was around that time my land came under occupation. I finished my school under occupation. The year was 1972.

I passed out of school with a baccalaureate degree. I had very high graduation marks in baccalaureate. I tried to join university but had trouble getting admission owing to the political situation. And so I travelled to Poland to find a university.

I joined a course in Poland with the support of my brother. I spent the first year of the course learning Polish language in the city of Wroclaw. Then, in the second year, I joined Warsaw Technical University to be an aeroplane constructor.

After five months, a few well wishers convinced me to choose a better type of engineering – one that would be more appreciated in the Arab world – saying that there was no visibility for aeroplane constructors. The result of the persuasion was that I chose to study Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Protection in the Technical University of Poznan. The year was 1974.

The course at Poznan was a five-year integrated programme. My specialisation was in nitrification and denitrification in Actual Sludge Process. During the fourth and fifth years, I got a strong feeling for water and all its applications – chilled water, plumbing, water treatment and sewage treatment, inclusive of all network and facilities related to sewage water.

COMING TO ABU DHABI

In 1979, I finished my doctoral studies at Poznan. In a bizarre repeat act of the onset of occupation in Palestine, my stay in Poland came to a rather abrupt end, owing to the start of the Solidarity Movement. The political situation made it difficult for me to stay. And so in 1980, I left for Jordan.

I travelled by car out of Poland. I left on the same day that the Solidarity Movement started a strike in Gdansk. My travel took me through Budapest, where I stopped for two weeks. It was during this time that I met a gentleman from Abu Dhabi. We got talking, and on learning about me, he convinced me to come to Abu Dhabi.

And so it came to be – my association with the UAE. I joined the infrastructure and contracting company, SOGEX in Abu Dhabi.

Initially, I had trouble communicating in English, but in a short time, I was able to demonstrate my ability, engineering-wise. I proved that I could implement good designs for water facilities and sewage treatment plants.

In 1982, I quit SOGEX to join Bin Ladin Contracting Company. It was a remarkable period, considering that we carried out a large number of works locally as well as in Saudi Arabia. I was responsible for all waterworks – plumbing, water treatment and STPs.

ON MY OWN

I was with Bin Ladin till 1985 when I decided to start my own business. The move was spurred by a close friend of mine by name Jamal Halwani, who convinced me that I should use my know-how in a commercial manner.

Bin Ladin learned of my decision to move on and responded by offering me a very unusual (high) salary, but I stuck to my decision.

It was a very difficult time to start a business, owing to the Iran-Iraq war. It was a struggle to establish the company, and it (the struggle) lasted till 1989.

Once the political situation cleared, though, I was able to demonstrate my know-how. Till then, I had only small jobs in hand, and it is not possible to showcase your knowledge if the projects are small. By 1987, however, I began picking large jobs up, and the result of this act began to show in the span of two years.

THE EAGLE TAKES FLIGHT

The opportunity was in Dubai in the 1990s. I seized upon the chance and started building my company up from two persons to 10. Since then, of course, our staff strength has risen multifold. And so has our turnover. Over a period of time, we rose from a Dh 300,000 turnover to 10 million and from there to 20 million. Last year, our turnover exceeded 350 million dirhams.

My period of struggle (1985-1989) was remarkable. But I never had a doubt of succeeding. I aimed to be successful and showed maximum patience. And today, I have reached where I wanted to.

This confidence is building up in my staff, as well. Today, as ever, the focus is to localise and transfer know-how. The core of my team comprises my family. In that way, yes, it is a family business. I have taken it as a mission to help them become more technically sound and to also improve their communication skills.

From the onset, we have designed our own STP systems (extended aeration STP process). In other words, we have not relied on outside designs. In 1987, I was deeply involved in an industrial hazard treatment plant (for defence) and also in a communal waste treatment plant. I used my know-how to design, build and operate the plants for two years.

As a company, we have stepped into a high technology zone in the last two to three years.

I am, of course, referring to membrane technology.

We have been awarded a contract to implement the biggest MBR plant in the region (25,000 m³/day capacity). This is at Dubai Sports City. Also, we are working on a membrane filtration system for the Sports Canal project, again at Dubai Sports City. We are using MBR instead of conventional filtration. And we are doing it at competitive prices.

Our competitors are not happy with our level of prices. We are breaking up the business mentality of others. We are making enough money with even these prices. Yes, we are successful.

We have 40-45 STPs under operation (range 50m³ - 30,000m³). And I am concentrating very much on our operations team. This is important, because you can construct STPs and develop the know-how, but to operate the plants needs discipline. Your know-how will be revealed when operating the plants.

Thankfully, our clients are very happy. They have not faced any problems at the operational stage or in terms of productivity and efficiency level. And this is our basic reason for success. An STP is not only about construction but also about how efficient are your operational team and

your operational costs.

WATER

I respect water and am committed to its availability for mankind. At a personal level, though, I was always afraid of swimming in water. I have a phobia, I guess. But as an engineer, I have always looked at water in a different way. During my university days in Poland, I diverted from aeroplanes to sanitary engineering at the behest of my well wishers. It was a welcome move. I was young and needed guidance. Generally speaking, in Arab countries and in The Third World, planning a person's future course does not receive the attention it deserves.

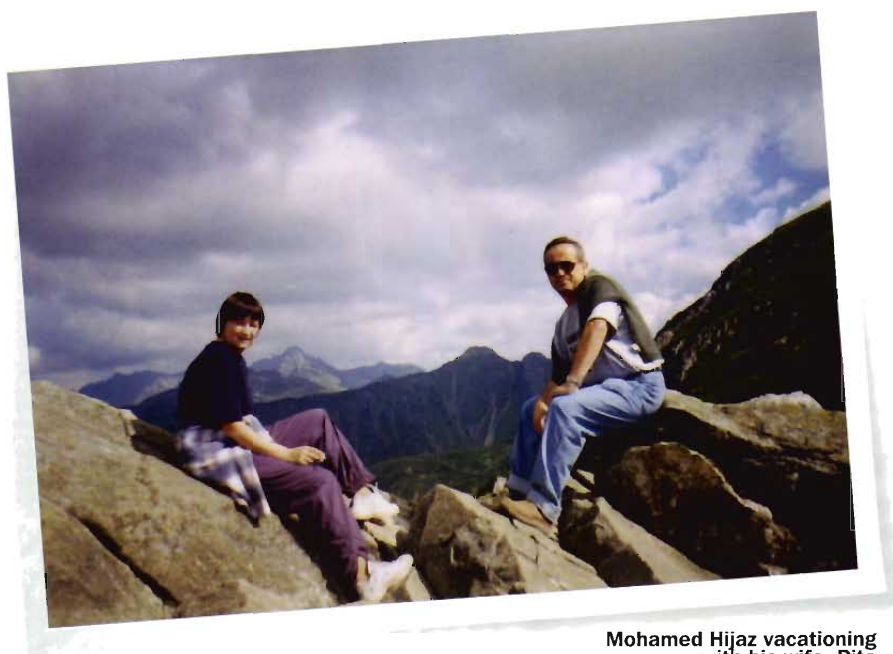
WHAT STP MEANS TO ME

STP is a part of my family. My daughter is concerned with STP. I slowly convinced her to take up the same line as mine, and today, she is pursuing studies in wastewater treatment and management. Likewise, I have convinced a number of my friends' children to go into wastewater treatment. Today, five of them are coming back after completing their studies. There is a need to educate and build awareness that wastewater treatment is as much profitable as the oil and gas industry, if not more. Then, we will see a lot more people taking this line up for a career. »

“IN A BIZARRE REPEAT ACT OF THE ONSET OF OCCUPATION IN PALESTINE, MY STAY IN POLAND CAME TO A RATHER ABRUPT END, OWING TO THE START OF THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT.”



Mohamed Hijaz with his younger son, Adam



Mohamed Hijaz vacationing with his wife, Rita

» This is important. Really, there is a need for more and more engineers. We do have a shortage from a technical point of view. We need more and more people to specialise and develop know-how in wastewater treatment; and then, it can be localised here.

I do believe it should be transferred to the Middle East and to the GCC. We should not be dependent on overseas know-how and technology.

ISSUES THAT CONCERN ME

The commercialisation of all aspects of water concerns me. Water ought not to be commercialised. Yes, the private sector could have a hand in it, but your cup of water should be under the control of a public entity. A big share of the control should rest with the public sector.

The private sector has technical aspects to offer. So yes, the private sector could play a part in the technical and operational aspects of water, but I do not advocate full control to the private sector. The owning should be shared with the public.

At this stage, the private sector does not have the experience to take on such a huge responsibility, knowing that certain highly experienced public-sector establishments are struggling to cope with the demand posed by developments in the region.

So I am all for public sector control, strategy-wise, much in the manner that the public sector is averse to giving up control of the oil assets.

Another issue that concerns me is the high rate of inflation we are facing here. There is a very high fluctuation of currency to other

currencies. It is a problem that all businesses are facing.

As a contractor, I also believe that the labour situation is out of control. And I am talking as a contractor. In terms of jobs and technology, we are self-sufficient and we can implement any new technology in the realm of wastewater treatment.

THE UAE

I am an Arab. I don't feel any different staying in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Damascus or Amman. I can stay and have the same feeling for Jerusalem, Abu Dhabi or Amman.

The UAE offers me a high opportunity to demonstrate my know-how as an engineer. As a business, we have created growth. In 1991, we had a turnover of Dh 10 million. And in 2006, of course, it was 350 million. If you perform in the UAE, you can satisfy your engineering instincts and skills and also your business aspirations. The UAE provides you the atmosphere and environment to utilise your skills to succeed. And naturally, I want to give something back to this country. So as a businessman and engineer, I am trying to bring the highest know-how to this place. I always try to localise and transfer know-how or update the technology for wastewater treatment.

MENTORS

During my days at Poznan University, I had the privilege of studying under Professor Zbigniew Mejbaum. He was a man of tremendous intelligence. Among other contributions to my career, he turned my point of thinking about water. He clearly demonstrated that water is the most important element »

“OUR COMPETITORS ARE NOT HAPPY WITH OUR LEVEL OF PRICES. WE ARE BREAKING UP THE BUSINESS MENTALITY OF OTHERS. WE ARE MAKING ENOUGH MONEY WITH EVEN THESE PRICES.”



the world over. He opened the keys to me to make sure that I set about looking for the best technological solutions for wastewater.

Another mentor in my life was Jamal Halwani. It was he who directed me from engineering to commercial applications. Basically, he encouraged and persuaded me to put my engineering skills to commercial use – into water and wastewater. And from that point, in 1981, I started designing my own systems. I still remember his words of persuasion: “In this knowledge, you have a goldmine.” So it came to be true. In five years, we have climbed 10 times to Dh 350 million.

And of course, my family has been my mentor. My wife has supported me by looking after my family. She has shown tremendous patience with me. As a businessman, I have had to spend a lot of time building up the company. And it has been my wife that has taken the responsibility of bringing up the children.

MY FAMILY

In 1978, I met my wife, Rita, during my student days in Poland. She was living in the same student compound as I, and that’s where I met her. In 1979, we decided to get married. Our marriage took place the very next year. In 1981, she joined me in the UAE, and we have been together ever since. I have three children – two boys and a girl. The elder of my sons, Karol Faris, is finishing his college education in Poland. He is an artist and studying graphics design. My daughter, Magdalena, is pursuing a master’s programme at Imperial College, London. Her area of specialisation is wastewater treatment. My second son, Adam, is an O-level student at English College in Dubai.

WILD MUSHROOMS

I like to be in Nature. Every year, for 20 days, I

soak my mind and body in Nature. For 10 days in winter and 10 days in summer, I go to the mountains and to the forest.

The forest is in the north of Poland, on the border of Germany and the Czech Republic. And the mountains are in southern Poland. My idea of fun is to collect wild mushrooms. It is a serious pastime with me, in the sense that I have the entire set up to collect and dry the mushrooms. And then, I bring them here to Dubai. I love mushrooms!

So yes, it is a tradition with me. Every year, for 10 days, I simply have to go off for mushroom hunting. My trip depends on the weather, of course.

HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

I enjoy reading and have an abiding interest in the history of the Middle East from the 10th to the 13th centuries. I mainly focus on the political aspects of the period and also on the lifestyle and beliefs of the people.

I am interested in exploring the fractions that were created in the society. My aim is to go deep into the history in an attempt to understand all that is going on around us. That was the time when three great civilisations clashed. I am referring to the Byzantine, Islamic and the West European (or Catholic) civilisations.

I read historical works in Arabic, English and Polish. So I get three points of view.

As a Palestinian, I read a lot about the history of the Jews in Europe. I do so to understand why this is repeated on us in this age in my country. As a Palestinian, I am always engaged in politics. I keenly follow articles on the political situation in the Middle East to cope with all that is going on around us. I am still a citizen of the West Bank. I still keep contact and keep visiting my areas there. That way, my family and I stay in touch with my origins. ■

“FROM THE ONSET, WE HAVE DESIGNED OUR OWN STP SYSTEMS (EXTENDED AERATION STP PROCESS). IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE NOT RELIED ON OUTSIDE DESIGNS.”