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## *Sports Club in Basra source of local pride*

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The Shatt Al Arab Stadium in Basra is undergoing a \$300,000 renovation to modernize the facility. [USACE Photo by A. Al Bahrani]

**Basrah, Iraq**—Hundreds of Iraqis in al-Tanoma city in east Basra will soon have access to a modern sports club where they can host and watch sporting events. The project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is designed to provide a safe haven for youth to play, practice and develop their skills.

“The rehabilitation work for the four decades old facility is an important step to meeting the needs of Basra’s next generation of athletes,” said Lateef Khlaf, the

sports club administrator. “As you know, the Iraqi people love sports like soccer and basketball. They will be very pleased with the new changes taking place here.” He pointed out that currently about 750 Iraqis have memberships at the facility. “It will showcase local sports in Tanoma and its 240,000 residents.”

The \$300,000 project includes renovating existing facilities with electrical, mechanical and civil repairs, installing a rubberized surface on the existing playing

court, building new sun shades, a boundary wall, two locker rooms, showers, and two restrooms.

Iraqi engineer Ali with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says this project started in September 2008 and is 45 percent complete. It is having a significant impact on the local economy, by employing 30 Iraqi local workers a day. In addition, materials for the project are purchased from local Basra merchants. USACE is helping to jump start Iraq's economy and building a strong foundation for the country's success, he said.

"Currently, we are installing the presidential seating area, public seating area and a meeting hall," Ali noted. "When we're done, it will be a signature facility Basra families can take pride in."



An Iraqi worker welds one of the four 11-meter high lighting towers at the Shatt Al Arab Stadium in Basra. [USACE Photo by A. Al Bahrani]



A local Iraqi plumber installs one of a water basin in one of the new restrooms being built at the Shatt Al Arab Stadium in Basra. [USACE Photo by A. Al Bahrani]

**Note:** A. Al Bahrani is the public affairs officer for the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact public affairs by phone at 540- 665-1233, by e-mail to [CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil](mailto:CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil), or visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).