

UAE — at a Glance

The Environment

Continued from page 8
has been two to one, and by the end of 1991, over 5,300 women had graduated in a wide range of disciplines. A recent survey showed that over 80 per cent of the citizens employed in the Ministries of Health and Education were women.

Sports and Tourism

Sports and tourism have joined hands in the Emirates, which now boasts, in Dubai, two of the finest golf courses in the world. Top golf tourna-

Twenty years ago, agriculture in the Emirates was limited to a few scattered oases or mountain settlements. Now the desert soil sprouts lilies and chrysanthemums, the latter being exported from Fujairah as far away as Britain, while there is a surplus of vegetables exported to the rest of the region every year. Green parks, waving corn and groves of lemons and pomegranates reach up into the mountains,

and away, into the edge of the Empty Quarter, one of the most forbidding places on earth.

It has been an expensive process, costing billions of dirhams, but the result has been worthwhile, particularly in the taming of the desert. Nearly 80 million trees, in-

to self-sufficiency in a number of salad crops.

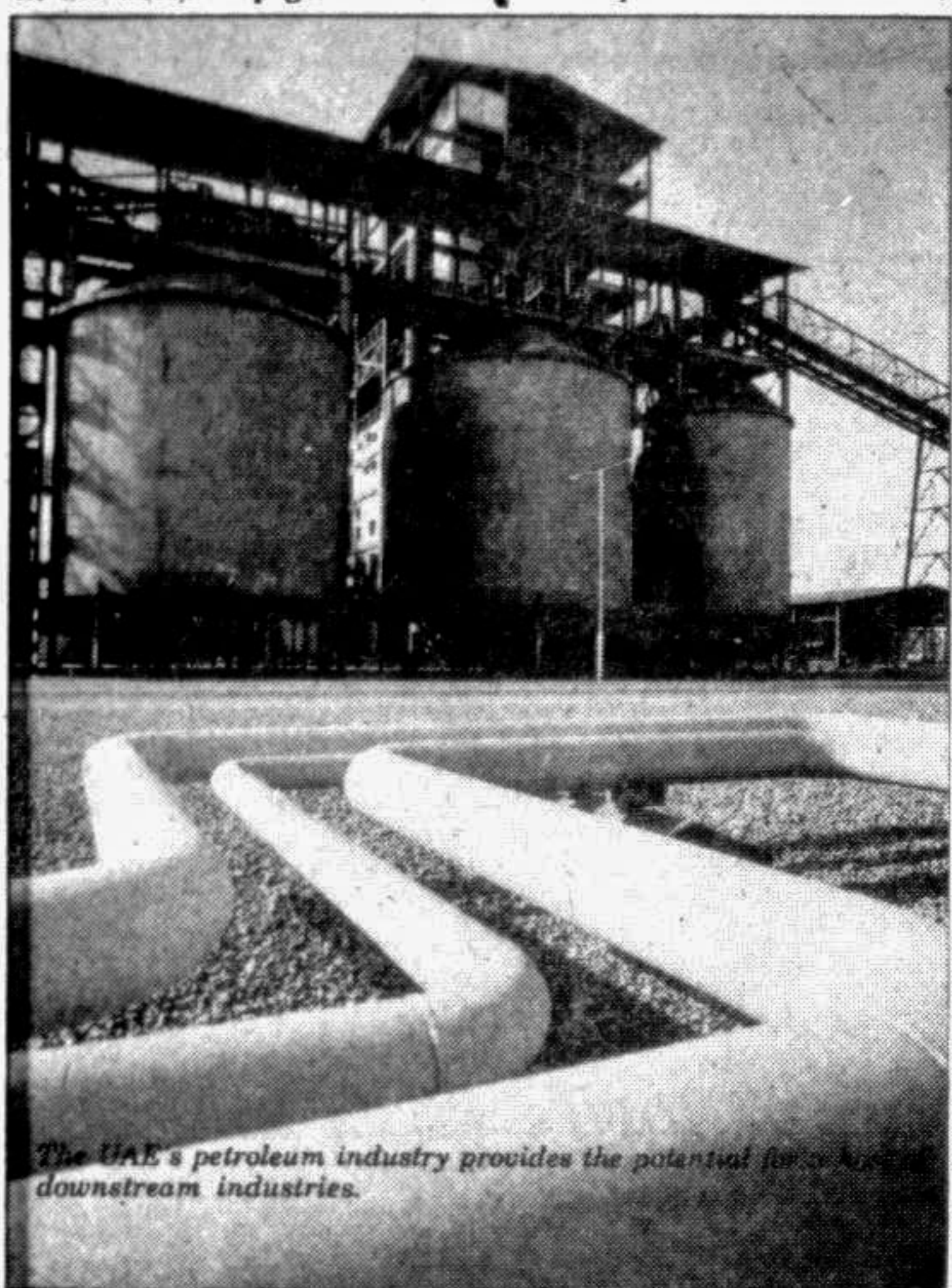
The greening of the Emirates has done wonders for the area's ecology. In the past, migrating birds had to look hard for odd hospitable tree or valley, but rolling parks and fields in the cities and the countryside now attract over 360 species of birds, many coming from as far away as Siberia. Many are now staying to breed, feeding on the plants



Women play an important part in preserving the country's cultural heritage.

cluding some 18 million date palms, have been planted, 280,000 hectares of land have been brought under the plough, while afforestation schemes cover a further 100,000 hectares, a barrier of green against the spreading of the desert sand. From almost nothing, despite a population increase of ten fold in 20 years, the country is now near

and seeds, or on the smaller animals that, like them, have found the newly-green country to be an attractive habitat.



The UAE's petroleum industry provides the potential for downstream industries.

ments, (the most recent of which was won by Spaniard seven Ballesteros), as well as other international events in the spheres of chess, hockey, snooker, cricket, football and powerboat racing, bring thousands of visitors a year to the country, to relax and to enjoy traditional Arab hospitality at its best.

A magnificent network of hotels, many run by top international chains, contribute to the infrastructure for tourism, and the number of overseas visitors rises every year.



Dubai Aluminium is one of world's most efficient aluminium smelters.

Turning the Desert Green

Continued from page 8
try's agriculture, the Government has embarked on a three-part programme designed to make the best possible use of this scarce and valuable resource.

Agriculture goes beyond the mere growing of crops to include animal husbandry in all its forms. One area where growth has been dramatic is in the keeping of poultry, for meat and for eggs. Twenty years ago, the only poultry in the country were those kept by farmers for their own use, but now there are a number of modern poultry farms, in Fujairah, Al Ain, Falaj al Mu'alla, Dubai and other places, which are producing thousands of tons of meat and millions of eggs a year, eagerly snapped up by local consumers. An additional benefit of course, is the reduction of the country's food import bill.

The same is true of dairy products. Herds of imported cattle in Diddagga (Ras al Khaimah), Al Ain, Al Habab (Dubai), and in Dibba and Rughellat in Fujairah have adapted swiftly to the climate, and are now producing growing amounts of milk, as well as products like cheese and yoghurt for the local market. Gradually, too, local beef production is getting under way, to supplement other traditionally kept livestock.

Agriculture is only part,

however, of the process of the "Greening of the Emirates." Much more readily noticeable by the visitor is the planting of trees and gardens throughout the country's towns and cities and along many of the main highways. Here again the driving force has been President Sheikh Zayed, who began planting of ornamental trees in Al Ain over 30 years ago. As the success of the programme has become apparent his lead has been followed throughout the country.

The latest figures suggest that over 80 million trees have now been planted in the last 20 years, a staggering number, along with a further 18 million or so palm trees.

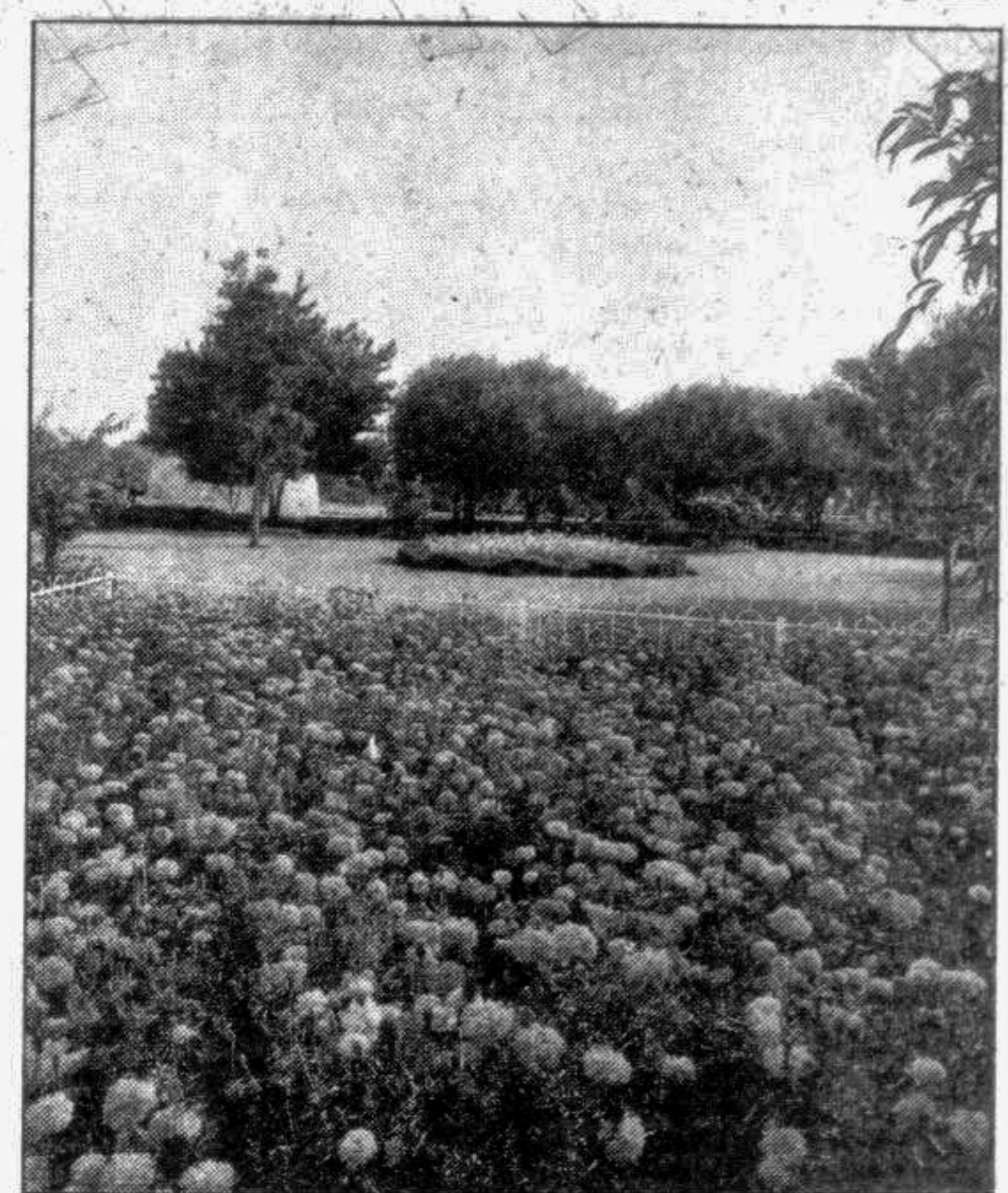
The planting has been of two kinds. In the cities and towns, there has been a beautification campaign, with the creation of parks and gardens for the local population, often complete with playgrounds for children that make a welcome addition to the facilities available. In the capital city of Abu Dhabi, there are now around 20 gardens and parks of various sizes, while major thoroughfares like the Corniche have also been planted.

Dubai, too, has an impressive programme of creating parks and gardens.

Similar programmes can be seen in other major towns, like Sharjah, Fujairah and Al Ain.

Besides the urban programme, however, there has also been a massive programme out in the desert, particularly in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, and it is here, of course, that the bulk of the nearly 80 million trees have

hectares of young forests already planted, and with tens of thousands more already being planned. They are changing the environment, too, holding back the relentless onward march of the sands. At the same time, they provide new micro-environments in which wildlife and native plants can flourish, protected by fences from grazing livestock. Birds



The hill gardens in Al Ain provide an oasis of green for visitors.

been planted.

Those fortunate to fly over the landscape can now see great patches of green where once only the occasional bush broke up the harsh lines of the sand dunes. The planting has been not only extensive, but imaginative too. Local trees and shrubs that have proved their ability to survive in the arid climate, like acacia and casuarina, march in line side by side with introduced varieties from other arid countries like Australia, watered by kilometre after kilometre of trickle irrigation.

As the trees grow to maturity, their roots will reach down to the natural water supplies underneath, and the hope is that, in the future, many of the plantations will be able to survive with little attention.

They are changing the face of the land, with over 100,000

are spreading, along with hares, butterflies and other fauna, all benefiting from the new planting. Eventually, these plantations, and the fodder fields that are often planted nearby, may be used for programmes to reintroduce to the wild some of the country's larger animals, like the Arabian Oryx and the Sand or Arabian gazelle.

Preparing of the future, the Government, through bodies like the Emirates University, is now carrying out experiments on the growing of highly saline tolerant plants in the large areas of 'sabhka' (salt flats), that are common along the coast. Initial results, hailed by international scientists, suggest that valuable discoveries have been made of plants that can be used to produce vegetable oils and feed for animals on land that was previously completely useless.



Wildlife — once threatened, is now protected in the UAE

*Heartiest Felicitations to the Government
and the brotherly people of the
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On the Occasion of the Anniversary
of their
National Day*



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and Rulers of the Emirates
and Members
of the Supreme Council,
and to all the people
of the United Arab Emirates
on the occasion of the

21st National Day



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