



LOCAL TECH TAKES ON THE TRAFFIC

DRIVERS IN DOHA SET TO BENEFIT FROM
SMART-TRAFFIC TECHNOLOGY

**ANY GUESSES ON THE OFFICIAL NUMBER OF
TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN QATAR IN 2011? 5000, AS PER
A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY QATAR STATISTICS
AUTHORITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD DAY
OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ON 23 NOVEMBER, 2012.**

This number marks a 13% rise when compared to 2010. In 2011, the Civil Defense Department carried out 356 rescue operations. 57% of the total rescue operations were related to road accidents. Recent studies by Qatar University show that Qatar has the world's highest traffic accident fatality rate relative to its population. To address this, in Qatar, QR62 billion (\$17 billion) has been allocated to road projects ahead of the 2022 World Cup. Late last year, the Gulf Traffic Conference provided a regional platform for as many as 40 Qatar-based companies to share transport infrastructure expertise and innovation. Organised by Informa Exhibitions at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre on November 19-21, 2012, Gulf Traffic brought together more than 130 exhibitors, 1751 visitors and 190 delegates involved in the design, build, and maintenance of the region's road, rail, parking and public transport projects.

Government organisations met with suppliers and manufacturers, showcasing products, services and technologies for improving road, rail and public transport industries. This is especially significant, given that governments in the Gulf have outlined impressive plans to boost investments in developing their road networks. One of the Qatari companies in attendance, Qatar Mobility Innovations Center (QMIC), is the first independent research and development center in Qatar and the Gulf region, and focuses on using emerging mobility and wireless technologies to deliver locally engineered innovations to the market. Omar Bondogji, Head of Marketing & Business Development at QMIC, said his company's participation at Gulf Traffic this year was key to introducing the business and its innovations to the public and its target market.

"Increased efforts from the Ministry of Interior are being made to contain accidents. Besides adhering to traffic rules; having the right traffic information tools go a long way in reducing accidents. Change in user behavior in combination with strict law enforcement and the use of proper technology tools are all essential to improve driving habits and reducing traffic accidents," he said.

QMIC has developed Masarak(tm) an intelligent transportation, road safety and logistics portfolio of applications and services – and the Traffic Congestion Monitoring tool (iTrafficMon) for Qatar. The tool informs the driver to avoid certain routes where congestion or an accident may be cited by the tool. QMIC is also working on innovating in the car-to-car and car-to-infrastructure technologies which aim at increasing road safety and eliminating accidents.

Speaking to *Qatar Today* about the significance of the application of traffic engineering, Husam Musharbash, President and CEO, Traffic Tech Group (Middle East/Gulf), said, "While the concept of the 3 E's of traffic safety is well known, namely; Engineering, Education and Enforcement, what is not widely understood is that they need to be applied in that particular order. Most traffic authorities always think

mainly in terms of enforcement and education and neglect the effect of sound engineering in promoting traffic safety. With the exception of speeding violations particularly on highways that require speed enforcement methods, most other violations that usually lead to accidents can be reduced by proper design of roads and traffic control devices. Traffic engineering has a lot to do with Human Factors Engineering. A good design attempts to positively influence the behavior of road users and commands their respect for road rules."

"I am a strong supporter of a design-build approach for ITS projects; system integrators like us can select the latest technologies and products and make sure they work together. Not only that, in our experience, such an approach reduced costs and the time to implement the system", he continued.

Richard Pavitt, Exhibition Director, Informa Exhibitions commented, "Qatar is considering major decisions that will determine how its traffic and transport strategy evolves and is implemented as it cements its reputation as a venue for global events such as the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup. Road safety is also cited as a key priority in the National Development Strategy 2011-2016. By highlighting and resolving issues concerning traffic safety and security, we are able to compliment Qatar's existing holistic safe-system approach and extensive awareness campaigns. Through the annual editions of the conference, we bring to the region extensive expertise and latest strategies and technology in road safety and congestion management." According to the Middle East Market Report published by Eng. Zeina Nazer, Secretary General of ITS Arab based in London, UK on December 6, a number of progressive ITS and law enforcement leaders are equipping regional capitals to become global models for advanced ITS, security and safety system design and deployment, with the adoption of technologies including video vehicle detection, automated traffic data collection and classification, fully actuated intersections, and the removal of hazardous roundabouts and replacement with high-efficiency fully actuated and coordinated arterials.

The report stressed on the need to base all system designs on standardised products with proven performance and open and standardized system interfaces. Zeina suggests R&D investment in Communication Access for Land Mobiles (CALM), produced by ISO TC204/WG16 which is a vehicle-to-vehicle technology that will make vehicles 'aware' of each other. Other delegates from Qatar included representation from Arab Center For Engineering Studies, Salam International Investment Co, Al Jaber and Makhoulf, Smart Mobility Solutions, Doha Industrial Safety Services; Al Fahd Consulting & Technology, Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Co, and the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), among others. Alternating each year between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Gulf Traffic is the only dedicated event for the road, public transport and parking sectors. The tenth edition of the conference will return to Dubai in November 2013 ■

RECENT STUDIES BY QATAR UNIVERSITY SHOW THAT QATAR HAS THE WORLD'S HIGHEST TRAFFIC ACCIDENT FATALITY RATE RELATIVE TO ITS POPULATION. TO ADDRESS THIS, IN QATAR, \$ 17 BILLION3 HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO ROAD PROJECTS AHEAD OF THE 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP.