

Local

KFAED, UN-Habitat sign KD 4m deal to help reduce dust storms

KPC, UN-Habitat ink MoU on sustainable development



KUWAIT: United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Program Maimunah Sharif (left) and KFAED Director-General Marwan Al-Ghanem pose for a group picture after signing the agreement. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) yesterday signed a grant agreement worth KD 4 million (\$13.2 million) to finance Improved Resilience to Transboundary sand and Dust Storms in Kuwait and Iraq Project. The deal was signed by United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Program Maimunah Sharif, and KFAED Director-General Marwan Al-Ghanem.

Ghanem said in a press statement on the sidelines of the signing ceremony that the project would contribute to reducing about 40 percent of the total amount of sand and dust falling on the state of Kuwait. It will also help reduce the amount and number of occurrences of sand and dust storms in two specific areas, Muthanna and Dhi Qar provinces in the Republic of Iraq, which are located about 250 kilometers north of the Kuwaiti border, he added.

The project aims to identify the main causes that lead to the formation of sand and dust storms in terms of climatic, geological, and chemical factors, and provide solutions in the areas suffering from these storms, he added. This will be achieved through analysis of information using specialized

programs to obtain results that help to carry out fieldwork to mitigate the negative effects of these storms, he said, noting that the main components of the project are: preparing technical, economical and health indicators, and procurement documents for goods and services, physical intervention and fieldworks, monitoring and analysis of results and securing project sustainability.

Moreover, the project will directly contribute to maximizing regional efforts in achieving a set of sustainable development goals, most notably the eleventh goal on creating sustainable cities and local communities, the thirteenth goal on expanding the scope of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and the seventeenth goal on strengthening global partnerships and cooperation in achieving development goals, he noted. In the meantime, the UN official said the project will contribute to cutting sand and dust storms and their negative impacts on public health and the economy of the affected areas,



Cutting 40% of sand falling on Kuwait



KPC's CEO Hashem Hashem (left) and Director of the Regional Office for the Arab States at the UN-Habitat Erfan Ali sign the memo of understanding.

specifically on the State of Kuwait.

Sustainable development

Meanwhile, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and the UN-Habitat yesterday signed a memo of understanding (MoU) for attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MoU was signed by KPC's CEO Hashem Hashem and Director of the Regional Office for the Arab States at the UN-Habitat Erfan Ali, with officials from both sides attending.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Hashem said the document is meant to provide a cooperative framework for both sides to work together to realize SDGs. The MoU will be put in place in Kuwait by means of focusing on environment recovery, urban governance, decision-support mechanism, social inclusion and basic service management, Hashem elaborated.

The document defines joint cooperation programs for carrying out particular projects pur-

posed to make the KPC a role model for sustainable corporations that are capable of surviving and working together for improving the environment performance of the KPC and its subsidiaries and even the State of Kuwait. It, further, offers environmental consultations and oil sector-bearing sustainability consultations with a view to attaining sustainable urban development goals, together with cooperation for implementing new environment projects in the oil sector, eventually leading to further revamping Kuwait's reputation regionally and globally.

The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. KPC was established in January 1980 as a state-owned oil corporation. The shares of its subsidiaries, namely Kuwait Oil Company, Kuwait National Petroleum Company, Petrochemicals Industry Company and Kuwait Oil Tanker Company, were transferred to the new corporation. KPC is responsible for marketing Kuwait's oil outside the country. — KUNA

Turkey taking firm steps towards future

KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak released the following statement on the occasion of Turkey's national day, which falls tomorrow:

"On October 29, we celebrate the 98th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. I would like to thank our friends in Kuwait who did not leave us alone with their messages of celebration. We are proud because in nearly a century since its establishment, the Republic of Turkey has been a respected country both in its region and beyond, with its democratic structure, economic and political independence.

"Particularly in the last 19 years, we have made a great breakthrough in all aspects of state and national life, from education to health, from security to justice, from transportation to energy. With this breakthrough, we have established the basic infrastructure for the '2023 goals', referring to the 100th year of the Republic, as well as the 2053 and 2071 visions.

"The world has been grappling with deep, devastating and transformative problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for the past two years. Turkey is one of the few countries that has managed to stay strong during this difficult period and even increase its power. First of all, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important quality and accessible health care is. The city hospitals, which we have implemented through public-private-partnership, serve our own citizens as well as our guests from abroad. I believe that our Kuwaiti friends will also benefit from the quality health services offered by Turkey.

"In 2020, which was the peak of the pandemic, Turkey became the second country with highest growth rate with 1.8 percent. This was not coincidental, as we continued with growth rates of 7.2 percent in the first quarter of 2021 and 21.7 percent in



Turkish Ambassador Ayse Koytak

the second quarter. We expect to complete the year 2021 with nine percent growth.

"Turkey is one of the few states among OECD countries that has increased its employment too, compared to the pre-pandemic period. While investments decreased by 35 percent globally during the pandemic period, they have hardly slowed down in Turkey. We want to increase the scale of international investments in our country even higher. For this, we will transform our investment incentive system into a much more attractive structure.

"We are among the three most successful countries in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technologies. We will make our drone fleet number one in the world with the introduction of our combat unmanned aircraft system. We are among the 10 countries in the world that can design, build and maintain their own warships. We meet the needs of friendly and allied countries along with ourselves in land and sea vehicles. We currently have seven companies in the top 100 defense companies in the world. We plan to commission the first of our new type of submarines next year. We aim to take our own design electric vehicle off the band by the end of 2022.

"Last year, we made 540 billion cubic meters of natural gas discovery in the Black Sea with our own seismic exploration and deep drilling vessels. Turkey has written a success story not only in

exploration and discovery activities, but also in the widespread use of natural gas and its delivery to households.

"After all, compared to the past, we see a Turkey that has increased its national income by three times, risen to 11th place in the world according to purchasing parity, and has set records in investment, production, exports, employment and growth. Despite the multidimensional challenges that we have experienced recently, the progress Turkey has made in democracy and development is promising for our future.

"The world is on the eve of a new and radical transformation. We have significant advantages to capture this new revolution, where many complex elements from climate change to artificial intelligence are combined. Turkey will not miss this new change in the global system. It will reach its targeted levels in all areas. In this process, it is my greatest hope that relations and cooperation between Turkey and Kuwait continue to further develop and strengthen in all areas.

"I avail myself of this opportunity to wish health, happiness and long life to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the friendly people and government of Kuwait."

Geagea dodges court...

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arsenal after the conflict. Their latest feud adds a layer of complication

44 global firms to set up...

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He did not disclose the names of the firms. "We have a short-term goal to reach up to 400 or 500 companies, but there is no cap," added Falih. Saudi Arabia will offer companies incentives, such as zero percent corporate tax for 50 years, a 10-year waiver from the state's "Saudization" policy to reserve jobs for Saudis and "preferential" treatment in government contracts, according to a document seen by AFP.

"The direct and indirect benefits from the presence of companies (in Saudi Arabia) amount up to 170 billion riyals (\$45 billion)," said Falih. Saudi

to the fate of Tarek Bitar, the judge investigating the port blast that killed more than 200 people and disfigured Beirut last year. Bitar's determination to question senior officials over the explosion has earned him the respect of the victims' families - and the enmity of the political barons running a country where major crimes have systematically gone unpunished. — AFP

officials are putting the finishing touches to launch the King Abdullah Financial District (KAFFD), a multi-billion-dollar project announced in 2006, with many companies expected to be based there.

While some experts believe Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's largest economy, is directly competing with Dubai, Falih said it was about "integration" with the emirate. "If there is competition, it is a creative competition that is beneficial to both parties. Everyone will benefit from growth and openness," he said. Falih said that the United Arab Emirates, which is made up of seven emirates including Dubai, will also benefit from the kingdom's growth. "In the UAE, they are trailblazers and successful, and their success and brilliance will continue in many areas, including in the field of attracting companies." — AFP

Sudan junta tightens grip...

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military takeover in Sudan "unconstitutional" and suspended its membership within the continent wide bloc. The World Bank later suspended aid to the East African country over the coup.

Analysts had warned that the putsch could put at risk much-needed international assistance unlocked under Hamdok's government to rescue Sudan's economy, battered by decades of US sanctions and by mismanagement. The blows came after Burhan allowed home Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok - who was detained by the military on Monday along with his ministers and civilian members of Sudan's ruling council - following intense international pressure.

But Hamdok and his wife were returned "under close surveillance", his office said on Tuesday, while other ministers and civilian leaders remain under full military arrest. In a joint statement, Western diplomats called for an urgent face-to-face meeting with Hamdok. "We continue to recognize the prime minister

and his cabinet as the constitutional leaders of the transitional government," read a joint statement by US, UK and Norway, the European Union, and Switzerland.

The coup comes after a rocky two-year transition outlined in an Aug 2019 power-sharing deal between military and civilians. Their joint rule followed the ouster of autocrat Omar Al-Bashir on the back of mass protests against his regime. It was the latest putsch in one of the world's most underdeveloped countries, which has experienced only rare democratic interludes since independence in 1956.

Burhan who has been Sudan's de facto head of state since Bashir's ouster was also a senior general during Bashir's three-decade long hardline rule, and has the support of Sudan's much feared paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. Tensions had long simmered between the civilian and military sides, but divisions peaked after a Sept 21 "foiled" coup. Four people were killed and scores wounded on Monday when soldiers opened fire on protesters, according to an independent doctors' union.

Violence against protesters has mounted in a "vengeful" crackdown by

security forces, said the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella of unions which were instrumental in the anti-Bashir protests. Late Tuesday, security forces arrested Sedeeq Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi, the Umma party deputy, and took him to "an unidentified location", his family said.

Internet services have largely been blocked. But Khartoum airport, which has been closed to flights, was set to reopen yesterday afternoon, the civil aviation authority said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Hamdok on Tuesday, the State Department said, welcoming the prime minister's return home from custody but expressing "deep concern" about the takeover and reiterating US support for a civilian-led democracy.

Washington has suspended hundreds of millions of dollars in aid over the coup. The EU has also threatened "serious consequences" for Sudan's rulers, including suspension of financial support. Bashir has been jailed since his ouster in 2019 and convicted of corruption. He is separately on trial for the 1989 Islamist-backed coup which brought him to power, and is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide in the civil war in Darfur. — AFP