



KUWAIT: The National Guard joined Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and the Civil Defence in controlling the gas leaks in one of the units in Ahmadi refinery. Following up Tuesday night's gas leak at Ahmadi refinery, officials from EPA and KNPC met to discuss the procedures followed when the leak happened. Both sides hailed the efforts exerted to prevent any damage. EPA also stressed that a wide scale investigation was in progress to determine the leak's causes and report on the measures taken to control it. Speaking to reporters, EPA Chairman and General Manager Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said that the meeting discussed how the incident was dealt with.

KUWAIT URGES INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO BACK UNRWA

KUWAIT 'KEEN ON PROTECTING' PEOPLE FROM TORTURE

NEW YORK: Kuwait has urged the international community to assume the responsibility of supporting efforts by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In remarks at a meeting for the UN General Assembly committee for announcing donations to the agency, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah also appreciated the briefing offered by the UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General on the agency's conditions.

Al-Jarallah expressed concern over the UNRWA's finances, which hinder the agency's efforts to carry on with its educational, social and relief services to the Palestinian refugees, both in the occupied territories and in hosting countries. Kuwait has always been keen on backing UNRWA and has offered more than \$163 million, both voluntary contributions to the

agency's budget, as well as responding to urgent appeals, the latest of which was \$15 million to help 500,000 Palestinian students, he said.

The country has allocated \$45 million for the Palestinian refugees in Syria, during three annual conferences on the humanitarian situation in the war-plagued country, he added. In 2009, Kuwait offered Palestinian refugees in Gaza \$34 million, after Israel destroyed 36 UNRWA schools in the Strip. In addition, Kuwait presented \$200 million to the international efforts for reconstruction in Gaza, during a Cairo conference held in October 2014, Al-Jarallah said. In the meantime, Al-Jarallah reaffirmed the Palestinian right of return, in line with item 11 of the General Assembly Resolution 194. He also urged the international community to pressure Israel to comply with all resolutions of the international legitimacy.

Combating torture

Kuwait is keen on cooperating with the international community on efforts to combat torture, said Kuwaiti permanent envoy to the UN headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim here Thursday. On the sideline of his participation in the 15th meeting for member states of the United Nations Convention against Torture, Al-Ghunaim said that Kuwait's policies regarding efforts against torture was in line with international laws and norms. Kuwait is keen on fulfilling its obligation against the spread of torture and inhumane acts, said the Kuwaiti diplomat, affirming that this attitude stemmed from his country's utmost support for human rights. The UN Convention against Torture was adopted by the UNGA on December 10, 1984. — Agencies

SAUDI HAJ DISASTER 'DEADLIEST'

DUBAI: The crush and stampede last month outside of Saudi Arabia's holy city of Makkah killed at least 1,453 people during the haj, a new tally showed yesterday to make it the deadliest event to ever strike the annual pilgrimage. The Associated Press count is 684 higher than Saudi Arabia's official tally of 769 killed and 934 injured in the Sept 24 disaster in Mina. Saudi officials, who could not be immediately reached for comment yesterday, previously have said their tally remains accurate, though an investigation into the causes of the tragedy is ongoing.

Authorities have not updated their casualty toll since Sept 26, two days after the disaster. The previous deadliest-ever incident happened in 1990, when a stampede killed 1,426 people. The AP figure comes from statements and officials' comments from 19 of the over 180 countries that sent citizens to the five-day annual pilgrimage. Authorities have said the Sept 24 crush and stampede occurred when two waves of pilgrims converged on a narrow road, causing hundreds of people to suffocate or be trampled to death.

Iran says it had 465 pilgrims killed, while Egypt lost 148 and Indonesia 120. Others include India with 101, Nigeria with 99, Pakistan with 93, Mali with 70, Bangladesh with 63, Senegal with 54, Benin with 51, Cameroon with 42, Ethiopia with 31, Sudan with 30, Morocco with 27, Algeria with 25, Ghana with 12, Chad with 11, Kenya with eight and Turkey with three. Hundreds remain missing, according to these countries.

Shiite power Iran, Sunni Saudi Arabia's Mideast rival, has blamed the disaster on the kingdom's "mismanagement" and accused Riyadh of a cover-up, saying the real death toll exceeds 4,700, without providing evidence to support the claim. Iran has called for an independent body to take over planning and administering the five-day haj pilgrimage, required of all able Muslims once in their lifetimes. But the ruling Al Saud family likely would never give up its role in administering the holy sites, which along with Saudi Arabia's oil wealth gives it major influence in the Muslim world. King Salman himself is known as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. — AP

KUWAITI SEEKS COSTA RICA SUPPORT TO GET NON-PERMANENT UNSC SEAT

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti Parliamentary friendship group sought Costa Rica's President Luis Guillermo Solís' support to help Kuwait obtain a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for the year 2017/2018. Head of Kuwaiti-Costa Rican Friendship group PM Dr Yousef Al-Zalzalah made this remark in a press statement yesterday. During the meeting Al-Zalzalah relayed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim to the Costa Rican President.

The Kuwaiti delegation urged the Costa Rican President to swiftly implement two agreements that were signed two years ago on foreign investments and dual taxation, as Kuwait has been waiting for the Costa Rican approval. Al-Zalzalah said that the meeting also tackled various topics on oil investment, oil ports, and infrastructure, education, and health projects in Costa Rica, in addition, to holding investment conferences in Kuwait to encourage investment in Costa Rica. The Kuwaiti Friendship group also met with Costa Rican Parliament Speaker Rafael Ortiz where they discussed means of cooperation in all parliamentary fields. The Kuwaiti parliament delegation arrived on Costa Rica on October 3 in an official visit to discuss means of cooperation at all levels between the two countries. —KUNA