

[Egypt to link 9 countries with the largest road in Africa](#)

Author:

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CAIRO: Egyptian Minister of Transport Kamel Al-Wazir said that Egypt is adopting a vast infrastructure plan to link nine African countries, including Sudan, with the largest land road in Africa.

During a plenary session of the Egyptian parliament, Al-Wazir confirmed that the development of the project, including the road and railway systems, aims to create a route from Salloum to Benghazi, explaining that this supports Egyptian industry and labor and contributes to the transport of goods to Libya.

"There was coordination with Chad regarding whether the route passes from Sudan or Libya, and we settled on starting from Libya, then Chad and then Congo," Al-Wazir said.

He added that the development of the railway system comes in parallel with the establishment of the express electric train, explaining that the systems used in the railways aim to achieve safety and avoid human errors.

The minister confirmed that the Egyptian state is making great efforts to develop land and dry ports, indicating that a comprehensive plan has been prepared to establish 13 ports and a logistical center.

The new Egyptian ports aim to facilitate internal and external trade movement, support the Egyptian economy, prevent the accumulation of goods and containers in sea ports and achieve integration between means of transportation.

The minister said that in total, 35 projects were planned, with a total cost of 15 billion Egyptian pounds (\$951,000). Nine projects have already been completed at a total cost of 300 million pounds, the most important of which is the construction of the Qustul land port at a cost of 79 million pounds, the Arqin land port at (93 million pounds), and development of the Taba land port (40 million pounds).



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UAE imports \$2.9bn in non-oil goods from Egypt in 2020
Egypt receives 50,000 AstraZeneca jab doses from India

[Lebanon hits Daesh terror cell in border town](#)

Tue, 2021-02-02 01:26

BEIRUT: Lebanese security forces said on Monday they had smashed a Daesh terrorist cell operating near the border with Syria. Eighteen Lebanese and Syrian nationals were arrested and a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was seized in an intelligence operation in the border town of Aarsal, the Armed Forces Command said. Those arrested “belong to cells linked to the terrorist organization Daesh” and had been “planning to carry out terrorist acts,” a military spokesman said.

Meanwhile the Iran-backed Hezbollah group said it had shot down an Israeli drone after it flew over the UN-demarcated Blue Line border in southern Lebanon. The group released images of a four-armed drone equipped with what appeared to be a camera.

The Israeli military admitted that the drone had come down, but claimed it

had crashed. "There is no risk of breach of information," it said. Hezbollah said in September 2019 that it would shoot down any Israeli drones flying over Lebanon after an incident the previous month when two drones packed with explosives targeted Hezbollah's stronghold in south Beirut. In August 2020, the group shot down and seized an Israeli drone that flew into Lebanese airspace. Israel again said at the time that the drone had "fallen."

Last week the Israeli army shot down an unmanned aircraft it said had entered its airspace from southern Lebanon.



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UK jets destroy Daesh cells in Iraq
Top Daesh figure in Iraq killed: prime minister

[Yemeni PM criticizes UN report on central bank corruption](#)

Tue, 2021-02-02 02:02

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's Prime Minister Maeen Abdul Malik Saeed on Monday criticized a UN report accusing the country's central bank of corruption.

Saeed said that the methodology for the report was wrong and that a Saudi deposit of \$2 billion into the central bank in Aden had “greatly alleviated the humanitarian crisis” in the country.

In its report last week to the UN Security Council, the Panel of Experts on Yemen found that the central bank had helped a group of Yemeni traders make \$423 million in profits from “a sophisticated money-laundering scheme of the Saudi deposit” and manipulating foreign exchange rules.

Saeed told reporters at a press conference in Aden that his government had reservations about the report’s accusations and that they were cooperating with international auditors who would examine the central bank’s financial activities, mainly with regards to the Saudi deposit.

“The government’s principle is absolute transparency,” he added. “We have reservations about the conclusions of the report.”

HIGHLIGHT

Saeed told reporters at a press conference in Aden that his government had reservations about the report’s accusations and that they were cooperating with international auditors who would examine the central bank’s financial activities, mainly with regards to the Saudi deposit.

He criticized the UN report for saying the government’s management of the deposit and its measures to address effects of the depreciation of the Yemeni riyal on prices of commodities were ineffective.

“The methodology on which the report was based is wrong and led to those conclusions. When they say (our) policy of subsidizing basic commodities is a destructive strategy, what does it mean? Should we leave our people to starve?”

He also said that food security was at risk in 2018, which had prompted Saudi Arabia to deposit the money. “The Saudi deposit has greatly alleviated the humanitarian crisis.”

Yemen’s parliament is investigating the UN’s claims, the official news agency Saba reported on Sunday.

Sultan Al-Barkani, the parliament’s speaker, ordered a committee of financial experts and officials to head to the central bank to investigate the allegations by auditing the bank’s activities, quizzing the bank’s workers and briefing the parliament’s presidency on their findings.

The parliament has vowed to bring corrupt officials to justice, Saba added. Yemen family conglomerate Hayel Saeed Anam Group was named in the UN report. It received a substantial chunk of the Saudi deposit.

“The panel’s analysis shows that, between mid-2018 and August 2020, the Hayel Saeed Anam Group made a profit of approximately \$194.2 million from the letter of credit mechanism alone, excluding profits made from the import and sale of commodities,” it said.

The group on Sunday denied the UN accusations and pledged to assign professional auditors to respond to the allegations.

“HSA is aware of a report released by the Panel of Experts,” it said in a statement seen by Arab News. “The report contains unsubstantiated allegations of wrongdoing in relation to the KSA deposit. We reject any and all such

allegations in the strongest terms. HSA will now commission an independent audit into the allegations.”

The group added that it had received a bigger part of the deposit because it was the largest trader and manufacturer of goods in Yemen. “HSA emphasizes that the company received the largest portion of the disbursement of the KSA deposit due exclusively to HSA’s status as the largest food importer and manufacturer in Yemen.”

Yemeni journalists, activists and politicians have demanded that the government form an independent inquiry to investigate the UN corruption allegations and to inform the public about the bank’s activities.

“We demand an investigation with (corrupt) officials of the central banks and referring those who are involved (in corruption) for prosecution,” tweeted Fatehi Bin Lazreq, the editor of Aden Al-Ghad newspaper. “People die of starvation and those (officials) steal.”



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Yemeni officials meet Saudi Islamic Affairs Minister

[**El-Sisi rejects any procedure that**](#)

violates Nile water rights

Author:

Tue, 2021-02-02 01:54

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has reiterated his rejection of any procedures that violate the rights to water from the River Nile, according to his spokesperson, Bassam Rady.

During a meeting with the chair of the African Union (AU) Commission, Moussa Faki, El-Sisi reaffirmed Egypt's aim to reach a comprehensive legal agreement between all concerned parties on the rules for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

This desire was reiterated by Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry, who also met with Faki.

BACKGROUND

During a meeting with the chair of the African Union Commission, El-Sisi reaffirmed Egypt's aim to reach a comprehensive legal agreement between all concerned parties on the rules for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Shoukry reviewed Egypt's position regarding the GERD, stressing Cairo's permanent readiness to engage in negotiations to reach a legally binding agreement on the procedures for filling and operating the dam, in a way that achieves the interests of the three countries in question – Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan – and which secures Egypt's rights and water interests.

Faki expressed his appreciation of Egypt's efforts to reach a solution over the GERD, stressing the importance of continued cooperation to reach a fair and balanced agreement.

Ahmed Hafez, a spokesman for Egypt's Foreign Ministry, said Shoukry and Faki also exchanged views on a number of additional issues and files, including on the conflicts in other African countries, and highlighted the need to provide political and financial support to provide "African solutions to African problems" to further the "Silencing the Guns on Continent" agenda.



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Sudan says Nile dam talks to resume Sunday
Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia restart Nile mega-dam talks

[GCC secretary general and Iraqi PM discuss Gulf power line project](#)

Tue, 2021-02-02 01:35

RIYADH: Iraq's prime minister and the GCC secretary general held talks on Monday to boost trade and supply electricity from the Gulf.

Iraqi leader Mustafa Al-Kadhimi and Nayef Al-Hajraf also discussed rebuilding Iraq after the war with Daesh.

Iraq has been blighted by a woeful power supply in recent years which feeds public anger and protests at the government's inability to provide basic services.

Iraq signed a deal in 2019 with the GCC to build a power line that would import 500 megawatts of electricity.

During their meeting in Baghdad, Al-Hajraf updated Al-Kadhimi on progress with the line that will connect Iraq to the Gulf's power grid from Kuwait.

The Iraqi prime minister, who took office in May last year amid a series of crises and widespread protests, said he wanted to strengthen relations with GCC countries "to accomplish goals and economic and commercial growth."

Al-Kadhimi stressed the importance of open dialogue between Iraq and the GCC, a statement said.

Al-Hajraf said it was important to strengthen Iraq and help with its efforts at targeting terrorism.

Iraq is still recovering from a devastating period between 2014 and 2017 when extremist group Daesh occupied swathes of Iraqi territory.

Relations between Iraq and Gulf countries have steadily improved in recent years. A donor conference in Kuwait in 2018 to help the country rebuild raised pledges of \$30 billion.

Last year, the GCC and Iraq signed an agreement to strengthen cooperation between the nations and enhance economic development, security and investment.



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[Mustafa Al-Kadhimi](#)

[Nayef Al-Hajraf](#)

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Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Iraqi president discuss cooperation UK jets
destroy Daesh cells in Iraq