

# Suez Canal receives Middle East's largest dredger

Author:

Sat, 2021-04-10 22:23

CAIRO: Egypt has welcomed the largest dredger of its kind in the Middle East, the "Mohab Mamish," on board the heavy transport vessel Xiang Rui Kou.

Dredgers are advanced drilling equipment used by the Suez Canal to cleanse the waterway of sand and mud deposits, contributing to its expansion and deepening.

The Suez Canal showed its reliance on dredgers in the rescue and re-float operation of the giant container ship "Ever Given," which ran aground in the shipping course on March 23. The incident caused the canal's closure for six days.

Sources said that the dredger, inaugurated by the Dutch IHC Shipyard, would begin its new duties within the Suez Canal fleet soon.

The "Mohab Mamish" has a length of 147.4 meters, a width of 23 m, a depth of 7.7 m, and a draft of 5.5 m. It has a productivity of 3,600 cubic meters of sand per hour over a length of 4 km.

Its maximum drilling depth is 35 m and the dredger has control, safety and security systems matching the latest standards of international supervisory bodies.

The head of the Suez Canal Authority, Osama Rabie, said the "Mohab Mamish" was one of the vessels used to boost the canal's development and that the dredging fleet was the main pillar in the strategy for developing the canal's shipping course.

It provided the best guarantee to maintain the canal's 24-meter depth, allowing the crossing of giant ships with large submersibles.

Rabie added that the canal's dredging fleet had recently expanded its work, joining in with the development of Egypt's ports and the disinfection of lakes.

IHC is working on launching another dredger for the Suez Canal called "Hussein Tantawi." The two dredgers have a combined value of €300 million (\$357.06 million).

Rabie also said the authority's machines would be developed and the tensile strength would be adjusted to carry 250,000 tons, in comparison to the current 160,000 tons to match the tonnage and size of ships crossing the shipping course.



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## [Coptic prayers suspended in Egypt as virus cases rise](#)

Sat, 2021-04-10 22:42

CAIRO: Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church has suspended Mass prayers in seven dioceses following a rise in daily coronavirus cases.

Prayers were suspended at the dioceses of the Virgin Mary in Fayoum, Archangel Michael in Aswan, Asna and Armant in Luxor, Akhmim in Sohag, Tahta and Juhaina in Sohag, Nag Hammadi in Qena, and Sohag.

"The suspension follows a significant increase in coronavirus cases recently," said Besada El-Anba, bishop of Akhmim.

He said that priests will continue daily Mass with a number of deacons without people attending for an indefinite period.

“The diocese of Aswan started suspending Coptic prayers in churches during the holy week and resurrection,” the bishop added.

“Mass prayers will be limited to priests and a limited number of deacons,” said Bishop Hani Bakhoum of Sohag.

Anba Kyrillos, bishop of Nag Hammadi, said that the suspension of prayers will begin on Monday and will continue on until further notice, depending on health advice.

Prayers will be limited to priests and a few deacons during the restrictions.

Other dioceses have taken precautionary measures to confront the outbreak of the virus, including holding Mass with 25 percent of the church’s capacity, stopping church activities, services, Sunday schools and conferences, and closing cemeteries.

Priests have also been advised against making home visits.



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Suez Canal receives Middle East’s largest dredger Egypt to unveil ‘portion’ of 3,000-year old city

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# Never insulted Erdogan? You're eligible to stay in a Turkish student dormitory

Author:

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JEDDAH: A surprise amendment to the regulation of dormitory services under the Youth and Sports Ministry was adopted and published in the Official Gazette on Friday.

Under the amendment, students who have been convicted for a prison term of more than six months – or for insulting the Turkish president – will be unable to stay in student dormitories.

The move was criticized by rights groups as politically motivated.

Between 2014 and 2019, 128,872 investigations were launched into cases of insults against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and prosecutors launched 27,717 criminal cases about these alleged insults.

Turkish courts sentenced 9,556 of those charged with insulting the president, including politicians, journalists and even children. A total of 903 minors between the ages of 12 and 17 appeared in court on this charge.

In 2018, a 14-year-old boy was prosecuted over an Instagram post that allegedly insulted the president. Although he was sentenced to five months in jail, it was later turned into an administrative fine.

Several students from Bogazici University were recently charged with “insulting the president” during protests against the appointment of a ruling party loyalist, Melih Bulu, as the rector of the university, one of the most prestigious in the country.

An open letter in which they addressed the president, reiterating their demands and seeking to enjoy their constitutional rights, was also subjected to criminal proceedings with charges of insulting Erdogan.

Separately, Turkey’s main opposition Peoples’ Republican Party (CHP) faced an investigation after banners were put up in the northwestern province of Mudanya.

On the banners, which were taken down within hours, the CHP asked about a \$128 billion hole in the Turkish Central Bank’s foreign reserves.

For a couple of months, the CHP has been raising the issue of accountability as to where and how these reserves have been spent since 2019.

Durmus Yilmaz, former head of the Turkish Central Bank, has also called for an investigation to determine how these huge and much-needed reserves were spent.

The opposition claims that the reserves might have been spent to support the Turkish lira against foreign currencies, while Erdogan said that the money was used in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The chief public prosecutor will investigate the party officials – who will be charged with insulting the president – for being involved in the preparation and display of the banners on the billboards for a couple of hours.

“The name of the president does not appear anywhere on the posters. I’m wondering what they thought about when opening such an investigation,” Zeynep Gurcanli, a senior journalist, tweeted.

The decision triggered a nationwide social media protest, with thousands of people tweeting: “Where is the 128 billion dollars?”



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Turkey tops Council of Europe list for incarceration rates  
Turkey and EU blame each other in 'sofagate' scandal

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## [Disappointed Lebanese protesters](#)

# return to street, demanding end of deadlock

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Sat, 2021-04-10 20:26

BEIRUT: Heavy rainfall on Saturday afternoon prevented large numbers of people from participating in a "Day of Rage" in the heart of Beirut, declared by the Oct. 17 groups demanding a transitional government with exceptional legislative powers.

These groups are trying to reactivate protests against the political class that they accuse of corruption.

Waddah Sadek, deputy head of the "I Am a Red Line" initiative, told Arab News: "We support these protests. The aim on this day was to mobilize school and university students to take to the streets and encourage people to gradually return to the streets to express their anger. Protest squares have been empty in the past few months due to the coronavirus and people are disappointed as demos did not manage to make any change on the governmental level."

Sadek talked about "the recent mistakes of protesters, caused by some disputes over minor issues that could have been avoided."

Sadek said that "the main revolutionary groups, opposing political parties, independent politicians and intellectual figures will announce the formation of an opposition political front by the end of April, that has a political program aiming to form a rescue government that would save the country.

"The current political class is unable to form an alternative government. Any government they form will only be the same as the current one," he said.

Judge Shoukri Sader, who served as head of the State Shoura Council before retiring, told Arab News: "If protesters do not unite, the same politicians will be elected in 2022. Those in power now are seeking to divide us. If we present three electoral lists in the next parliamentary elections, they will beat us. Today, we are risking our own presence. We cannot remain divided; therefore, we are forming a political front to unify votes and priorities."

He added: "We cannot play their game; they disagree on the government's nature and quota. We, on the other hand, must unite and put the small details aside.

"Large groups of protesters are communicating via Whatsapp and Facebook and each one of them has their own demands and opinions. What is required of these groups at this point is to be mature and aware, before actually trying

to wake up the silent majority of Lebanese who are suffering.

“Activists must agree on the priorities and must not force others to follow them. People quit their political parties and joined us not to be forced to follow opposing politicians and partisans nor to be marginalized.

“The top priority we should agree on is the rejection of Hezbollah’s arms. We must reclaim the decision of the state from its kidnappers. Our second priority is restoring the provisions of the constitution because the Lebanese constitution includes all our sovereignty demands; the neutrality of Lebanon, a parliamentary republic and a free economic system. Therefore, let us cut to the chase and call for early elections and a transitional government. The country is collapsing.”

He said: “President Michel Aoun’s experience in power has been unsuccessful, from the War of Liberation in the 1980s, the War of Cancellation until his current mandate. He has only done the opposite of what he promised and has put his personal interests above the national interests. We are aware that in Lebanon, revolutions are doomed to fail, and we are also aware that a new civil war is impossible since there is no equity among fighters in the presence of Hezbollah’s arms. Chaos might prevail and this is what is making us wait for the constitutional deadlines to make the change.”

One hundred and seventy days have passed since Saad Hariri’s nomination to form a new government, yet officials are still swapping responsibilities and accusations without establishing any social security network for the poor and needy amid the worsening economic collapse.

Zeina Akar, defense minister in the caretaker government, shed light on the living situation of soldiers during a visit she made to a town in the Bekaa valley. She said that soldiers’ salaries had lost 85 percent of their value against the US dollar. “Soldiers can no longer provide for their families or even pay transportation to and from work,” she said.

Akar urged soldiers “not to slip into anything that could prevent them from performing their duties because they represent the safety valve protecting Lebanon’s sovereignty and people, and preserving its security and stability.”







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## [Turkey tops Council of Europe list for incarceration rates](#)

Author:

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ISTANBUL: Turkey has been ranked first among member states of the Council of Europe (CoE) for its annual incarceration rate, with a record number of inmates convicted for terrorism offenses.

Last year, the Turkish parliament adopted a controversial law to release about 45,000 prisoners to ease overcrowding in prisons and protect detainees from the pandemic.

However, the amnesty law was found to be politically biased as several drug dealers and mafia bosses were released while dissident journalists and politicians were excluded.

The Council of Europe released its Annual Penal Statistics report on Thursday: Turkey topped the list with an incarceration rate of 357.2 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants.

Turkey was followed by Russia, Georgia, Lithuania and Azerbaijan in the report.

According to the report, about 300,000 people, including pre-trial detainees, are behind bars in Turkey – second only to Russia.

Based on the ratio of the number of inmates to the number of places available in penal institutions, Turkish prisons were also found to be the most overcrowded in the CoE report, with 127 inmates per 100 available places. Turkey was followed by Italy in the report.

Of 30,524 prisoners convicted for terror charges in the European continent, the majority of them – 29,827 people – were found in Turkey alone. Terrorism offenses are broadly defined in Turkish laws under which dissident activities such as attending demonstrations and exercising critical journalism are punished; disregarding European Court of Human Rights' judgments.

The Council of Europe has repeatedly demanded that Ankara immediately release from prison the prominent businessman and activist, Osman Kavala, and the Kurdish politician, Selahattin Demirtas, after their years-long detention based on political motives.

The country also has Europe's second largest prison population, at 297,019, after Russia. Over the past decade, the imprisonment rate in Turkey has increased by 115.3 percent.

Separately, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is working on legal amendments to digitally record and retain all visits to inmates for a period of one year – a move that has been criticized by the opposition as a serious invasion of prisoners' privacy.

Opposition deputies have called on the AKP to withdraw its controversial bill, saying inmates' private lives need to be protected.

Turkish penitentiary institutions made headlines recently after opposition party claims about the use of unlawful strip-searching of women as a degrading practice.



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