

Floating plant provides Jeddah with water in three weeks

By Abdulaziz Ghazawi

JEDDAH - A floating desalination plant arrived on Shuaiba coast, 110 km south of Jeddah on the Red Sea, to address the acute potable water shortage in Jeddah. Mounted on a barge, the plant will start providing Jeddah with a daily supply of 25,000 cubic meters of water within three weeks, according to the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC).

The floating plant is now anchored at Shuaiba coast for technical work to connect its 12 units with supply pipes, a task estimated to take within three weeks, said director of operations and maintenance at Shuaiba Desalination Plant Eng. Abdulhadi Al-Sheikh.

Another floating plant with the same capacity of daily supply of water is now being prepared in Dammam to start with full force, and it will arrive in Shuaiba within next two months, increasing the daily supply of water to Jeddah to 50,000 cubic meters, he said.

The two ships were reportedly built in a record time of seven months to help curb the water crisis in Jeddah. Coupled with the quantity of water supplied by the current desalination plants in Jeddah and Shuaiba, the total daily supply of water will reach 700,000 cubic meters, he added.

Eng. Al-Sheikh unveiled a new desalination project under way to supply Jeddah with 240,000 cubic meters of water daily. The ongoing project called Shuaiba-3 is expected to be completed by Feb. 2009 with a total capacity of 1.3m cubic meters of water to supply Makkah, Jeddah, Taif, and Baha, he said. With that and more increasing supply, the problem of water shortage in Jeddah will be totally eliminated, he confirmed.

A new desalination project, which was ordered by King Abdullah, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, will start pumping more water by the end of 2011, announced Faheed Al-Sharif, governor of SWCC, in a press conference at the Jeddah Hilton hotel during the inauguration of a new plan of employment promotion and welfare of the industrial security personnel at the SWCC.