

Parched Gulf States address water issues

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REMEDY: Gulf states are improvising ways to cope up with water shortage with the help of technology.(Getty Images)

Gulf states are investigating ways in which technology can help mitigate the immense strain that a shortage of water places on their economies.

In Saudi Arabia, the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) announced on Saturday that it has begun a joint research project with the Japanese Water Recycling Centre in an effort to develop and employ advanced desalination technology aimed at alleviating the kingdom's shortage.

The project has begun research operations in the Corporation Institute for Saline Water Research in Jubail city, according to the Saudi Gazette daily.

SWCC governor Fahd Al Sharif said the cooperative efforts aim to import Japanese technological know-how in the areas of nanotechnology to mitigate the costly and energy-intensive desalination process.

The SWCC has also inked deals with energy giant Saudi Aramco, King Abdul Aziz City for Sciences and Technology and an undisclosed Singaporean centre for saline and water technology research, the paper reported.

Al Sharif said he aims to make Saudi, a largely arid state, the global pioneer in saline and water conversion.

The move reflects similar efforts by Iran to harness rainfall. On Wednesday the Persian state announced that it had undertaken feasibility studies to generate 17,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power nationwide, according to daily, the Tehran Times.

Abbas Aliabadi, the top advisor to Iran's energy minister, told the Second National Conference on Dams and Hydropower Plants that water and energy will be the two major issues facing societies in the future, according to the paper.

Aliabada said that hydroelectric power, if properly implemented, can account for up to 30% of the nation's energy demand.

He added that although Iran is among the semi-arid countries of the world with low rainfall, its mountainous regions are highly conducive to the implementation of a hydropower strategy.

At around four million barrels per day, Iran is the world's fourth largest oil producer, although a lack of refining capacity limits its ability to generate end product suitable for consumer consumption.