

Sandstorm sinks Bahrain



The sandstorm that hit Bahrain yesterday brought the visibility to less than 1000m. (Picture courtesy of @weatherBahrain)



A screen shot from a video circulating on social media

TDT | Manama

A dust storm hit many parts of the Kingdom yesterday, disrupting normal life, with wind speeds reaching over 32 knots at the Bahrain International Airport.

However, no loss of life or major damage to property was reported.

Reports said many areas in the Kingdom experienced strong gusts reaching around 38 knots at times with authorities warning that the adverse conditions are expected to continue throughout the weekend.

“The wind is expected to continue blowing over the Kingdom throughout the weekend,” Khalid Yaseen, Head Weather Forecasting, A/Chief, Meteorological Operations and Observations told *Bahrain News Agency* (BNA).

According to Yaseen, the dust storm was caused by a very strong North Westerly winds as predicated by Bahrain Meteorological Directorate.

“This will lead the temperature to decrease to around 12 degrees Celsius,” he said.

He added: “Wind speed will decrease temporarily by early next week, but it will strengthen

again by mid of next week.”

Yesterday afternoon, Yaseen said, a wide area of thick dust generated over the northern parts of Arabian Peninsula due to high wind speed has moved towards Kingdom along with the North Westerly winds causing the visibility to deteriorate to less than 500 metres.

The dust is expected to thin out today and the visibility will improve gradually, he said.

Earlier yesterday, Bahrain’s Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications tweeted that very strong North Westerly winds are expected to af-

fect the Kingdom, with dust haze.

The ministry also urged citizens to exert extreme caution as visibility is expected to reduce to less than 1000 meters.

Satellite images, according to the Ministry’s twitter account, showed intense dust movement with high-speed.

The report further said that the dust intensity is expected to come down as the winds continue.

The meteorological directorate has asked all citizens especially sailors to be cautious during the period as the sea is expected to get rough.

Weather forecast for the coming days

FRI 18th JAN

19°/12°

Cold with some clouds and rising sand in places

NW’yly

13 - 18kt

20 - 25kt

SAT 19th JAN

18°/11°

Cold with some clouds and rising sand in places

NW’yly

15 - 20kt

22 - 27kt

SUN 20th JAN

19°/12°

Cold with some clouds and rising sand in places

NW’yly

12 - 17kt

18 - 23kt

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US coast guards in Bahrain feel the pinch of shutdown

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Hundreds of US Coast Guards deployed here are officially working without paychecks due to a US government shutdown, *Stars and Stripes* report.

Fortunately for Coast Guard members in Bahrain, they live in government-leased housing off base, meaning they won’t have to worry about impatient landlords.

Despite attempts in Washington to push the money through, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz confirmed Tuesday in a statement that the mid-January paychecks were not coming, saying it marked the first time he was aware of when servicemembers in one of the armed forces branches haven’t been paid during a shutdown.

Four weeks into the shutdown, there are still no signs of a breakthrough in the face-off between President Donald Trump and Democrats in Congress, which led to the partial shutdown of the government on December 22.

More than 800,000 federal workers didn’t get paid last week, pain shared by several million more contractors who



US Coast Guard Members (Courtesy of Coast Guard All Hands)

also have been idled by the shutdown -- many of them low-paid service workers who live paycheck to paycheck.

The Coast Guard’s Patrol Forces Southwest Asia is permanently posted in the Gulf at the request of US Naval Forces Central Command.

“The US Coast Guard has been proactively communicating the impacts of the lapse in appropriations across the service,” the report quoted Gregg as saying.

The report also points out that the coast guard, while operating

tactically under the Navy, still falls under the Department of Homeland Security. Coast guard members here are among the 42,000 of the service’s officers and enlisted personnel.

Across the Coast Guard, support resources available to service-members include financial counselling, loans, information and aid from other military support organisations. This week, the service’s commandant announced that the USAA insurance and financial services company had donated \$15 million,

which officials said would be used to fund interest-free loans for about two week’s worth of bills.

“There are many resources available to their dependents back home,” said Senior Chief Ryan Doss, a spokesperson for Coast Guard Atlantic Area, the Bahrain team’s parent command. “By engaging with our deployed members here ... we hope to minimise the personal impacts [of the shutdown] on our crews and their families.”

Top official in dock over fake certificate

● The suspect is an Assistant Undersecretary at Labour Ministry

● The suspect is likely to face five years imprisonment if convicted

TDT | Manama

A government assistant Undersecretary, accused of holding a fake Master’s degree, was dismissed from service following his arrest.

The suspect, an Assistant Undersecretary of Labour, now under police custody, is likely to face five years of imprisonment if convicted. Public Prosecution is investigating the case now.

The move follows a directive issued by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander, First Deputy Prime Minister.

In a similar incident reported four months earlier, a Director of a bank was dismissed from service for submitting forged certificates.

Following the incident reported last September, the Civ-

il Service Bureau has started monitoring government agencies.

Accordingly, first-time offenders were given a warning and a salary cut of ten days. However, if the offence is repeated, actions including dismissal from service were taken.

The investigation also created quite a stir in the Kingdom’s private sector with many of the schools in the Kingdom requesting teachers and employees there to submit attested certificates.

This, however, according to the employees have resulted in putting a strain on their monthly budget with the cost of certification from abroad touching around 110 dinars

Following the footsteps, major companies operating in the banking, construction sector of the Kingdom have also asked their employees to verify the authenticity of certificates.

The Ministry of Education has promised to investigate false testimonies in the government sector. However, it is unclear what would happen if such practices are detected in the private sector.

The General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council confirmed that there will be no complacency and forgers will be prosecuted.