

NA debate, approval essential

Project Kuwait needs govt help

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The surprise Kuwaiti government success to 'force' the National Assembly to pass a law granting Kuwaiti women their full political rights is a clear indication of the government's ability to manoeuvre and get any proposal/project approval in Parliament. And it has proved its mettle by passing the most controversial law which had been debated by the country's lawmakers for the past 40 years.

The government was finally able to convince everyone of its ability to handle 'hot issues' with a handsome majority. Nobody will be surprised now if the government appoints a woman to the Cabinet post over the next few months. It has enough names of the right candidates to choose from.

The Kuwait government has been praised and applauded by the international community for the manner in which it handled the matter and the legitimacy of the vote with a good margin. Now it is the government's duty to turn its attention to the international business community and get the approval for Project Kuwait — the development of the Northern Oilfields, which will result in increasing Kuwait's oil production from its current level of 2.7 million barrels per day to three million by year 2010.

Project Kuwait has been talked about for more than 10 years and more than four years since the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) pre-qualified several international oil companies and three years since it approved the three consortiums.

Patience

Companies are losing patience and focus of the project, beside they need fresh information and data to update them. Now is the time before the National Assembly goes into summer recess. The project has been debated at all levels by everybody and every committee you can think of in and outside government organization.

The oil sector must not let the past couple of weeks' momentum go in vain and should recapture it again before it's too late. Now is the right time to place the project in front of lawmakers in the National Assembly for a debate and necessary approval.

We have lost many opportunities by not developing and increasing our production level particularly at today's oil price level, where Kuwait is getting its highest price for its oil — more than \$40.00 per barrel.

Of course all oil producing countries will benefit from the high oil price, but every country does not have the same opportunity as Kuwait. Everything is in place for Project Kuwait. What is needed is a political push similar to what we witnessed last week, since the government knows the best way to garner votes in its favour.

The Kuwaiti government has won praise from the international community for giving Kuwaiti women their political rights. Now is the time to win applauses and praises from the international business community. It can be done and must be done in the same way the government pushed through women's political rights. It's not very difficult.