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Female guides welcome visitors to Socotra



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Dr. Ahmad Asafani: "Yemenis are more interested in qat than food"



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Smoking increasingly popular among Yemeni girls

Constitution amendment debate begins without opposition parties

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, Jan. 19 — Discussions on the ruling party's proposed constitutional amendments commenced in Parliament on Monday this week in the presence of media, academics and civil society – but a vital player was missing.

There was no sign of the six opposition parties' coalition, the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP).

MP Dr. Abdulrahman Ba Fadhil, head of the strongest opposition party Islah, said that they rejected the amendments.

"We will not be part of these constitutional amendments because they are designed to serve the interests of the ruling party and allow the president to rule forever. Approving these amendments means cancelling the revolution and all the democratic achievements and going back to the royal system," he said.

However, according to the ruling party, there is no such amendment concerning the presidential term in the way portrayed by the opposition. According to the suggested amendments, Article No. 112 states that the presidential term will change from seven to five years as "the current term is relatively long and to allow peaceful transfer of power through elections".

Article No. 161 will also be amended to state that this change in term duration will be effective starting from the coming presidential term after the 2013 elections in addition to the removal of any limits to how many terms any president can rule.

"The president never asked to cancel limitations on the presidency terms and it is not there. Those who claim otherwise are trying to distort the image of the president in the public's eye," said Ahmed Abdullah Al-Sofi director of the Democratic Institute.

With or without opposition

Although the JMP was not present at the discussions on Monday, they followed the constitutional amendment debate closely. Ba Fadhil warned the State of going ahead with the amendments

without the opposition.

"They saw what happened in Tunisia," he said.

He also said that the opposition has started lobbying popular protests in the streets, demanding implementation of the February 2009 agreement and negotiations with all stakeholders, adding that after Tunisia, the ruling party will not dare enter the elections alone.

"It is not fair to compare Yemen and Tunisia. Although they are more advanced than us when it comes to infrastructure, Yemen is way more advanced when it comes to the democratic experience," said Al-Sofi in defense of the ruling party.

As for having the elections without the JMP's participation, Al-Sofi said that in a democratic country no-one can force a party to participate or boycott an election.

Civil society involvement

Monday's session was the first of a series planned to take place every Monday over two months, which is the time-line decided by the Parliament's presidency to resolve the constitutional amendment issue.

Himyar Al-Ahmar, a member of the Parliament's Presidency Council, who has been nominated to lead these discussions, said that they are ready to receive any suggestions from the attendees. This includes academics, civil society and media which are given the opportunity to be part of the discussions.

The first session's discussions included much criticism of the amendments making up for the absenteeism of opposition parties. Objections were raised on the repetitive constitutional amendments as there have been three amendments since 1990 at a rate of one every seven years.

Others demanded putting a limit as to how many terms any president can rule, but many of the attendees, especially women, were concerned about the 44 additional seats dedicated to women.

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Tribal threats still haunt young woman set free from jail

By: Ali Saeed

HAJJA, Jan. 19 — Ala'a Hajj, the man controversially prevented from marrying Rania Al-Aitary, has blamed tribesmen in Hajja governorate from discriminating against him.

In an exclusive interview with the Yemen Times this week, Hajj said that the local tribesmen also influenced the judiciary in the case against Al-Aitary who was jailed in December 2010 because she wanted to marry him.

The case of the two young people who wanted to marry but were not allowed to do so has made headlines since it first came to light in late November 2010. It has also focused attention on the tribal customs in Hajja governorate, located 127km northwest of the capital Sana'a.

Hajj, 24, who lives in Qufi Shamar district in Hajja, told the Yemen Times that Al-Aitary, 21, was this week forced to change her mind about marrying him. Al-Aitary was released from jail this week when she made this decision.

Hajj said that tribesmen in Qufi Shamar do not allow their daughters to marry a man whose ancestors were butchers. He is from a tribe which forms two-thirds of Qufi Shamar's population but because his ancestors were butchers, they are considered as an inferior class.

"Our clan is two-thirds of the population but none of us is a member of the local authority and all jobs are confiscated by tribesmen. We are all Yemenis and we are supposed to be equal, but in fact there's no equality and no fairness," he said.

Despite the fact that he studied in Malaysia, completing his higher education in information and communication systems, Hajja tribesmen would not allow him to marry Al-Aitary.

He explained that initially "there were no fond relations between me and the girl, but she was only my neighbor". He said that he had other marriage plans before deciding that he wanted to marry

Al-Aitary.

"I decided to marry a woman from another village. But Rania came to our house and threatened to burn herself if I did not ask her hand from her father. Eight months ago, I asked her hand from her father and he agreed, but when her uncle knew this, he kept her in an isolated room for eight months and stabbed her on her feet," he said.

"Later on, she fled to the tribal leader for protection and then appealed to the court. I demand equality and a protection for Rania."

Hajj said that tribesmen denied Al-Aitary any justice and forced her to cancel her court case during her detention in a Hajja prison.

Al-Aitary's court case has faced various obstacles since November last year when it started. Tribesmen influenced a decision to have her case moved from Qufi Shamar Primary Court to the Abs Primary Court. Al-Aitary had appealed against her father's orders that she could not marry Hajj.

Al-Aitary fled from her uncle's house to a tribal leader near to her village where the sheikh told her to go the court and sue her father to enable her get her rights.

After seven sessions at the Qufi Shamar Court, the judge decided that Al-Aitary should move from the sheikh's house, where she was protected, to a prison in Hajja city.

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Ala'a Hajj, 24, a university student from Hajja who studied in Malaysia, alleges that tribesmen discriminated against him and prevented him from marrying Rania Al-Aitary.

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Popular uprising faces security threats

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, Jan. 19 — Police responded heavily to this week's protests in Sana'a by arresting demonstrators, beating students and clamping down on public gatherings.

An official source from the Interior Ministry also said this week Tuesday that marches and demonstrations that are staged without the ministry's permission would be suppressed, reported the official Saba news agency.

This statement was released after four demonstrations staged by youth and students from Sana'a University demanded that President Ali Abdullah Saleh should step down. Redhwan Masood, head of the Yemen Students Union, said that riot police arrested several demonstrators but later released them.

"They want to hold back demonstrators under the guise of implementing marches and demonstration laws. We have already refused this law that restricts demonstrations to be held," said Masood.

"The Yemeni regime used to stifle the civil movement but now Yemenis are awake more than ever. If the Yemeni riot police suppressed demonstrators the security situation will get worse more and more."

Masood urged Yemenis to hold peaceful demonstrations and to avoid friction with the police.

"We warned the security about crushing

the people's uprising or arresting any demonstrator. This will lead to an escalation of demonstrations," he said.

Several students from Sana'a University yesterday told the Yemen Times that riot police beat some students with batons.

"There were heavy security reinforcements that tried to disperse the crowd. The number of riot police were more than demonstrators. The riot police are more aggressive today. I think the security situation will deteriorate next days," said Mohammed Saeed Al-Sharabi, 25, a student at Sana'a University.

He said that students' demonstrations have been an exceptional situation because they have been staged spontaneously and without support.

A 38-year-old woman, who named herself as "one of the people", told the Yemen Times that poverty, hunger and fears for the future compelled her to demonstrate.

"No to unemployment. Yes to freedom," she shouted, demanding that Yemen's president should be overthrown.

MP Shawaqi Al-Qadhi said that the State wanted citizens to adhere strictly to its rules but that it does not adhere to any principles.

"Those are students who want to express their opinions peacefully. They are frustrated, angry, poor and deprived. They demonstrated because their State is dealing with them carelessly," he said.

Yemeni journalist jailed for Al-Qaeda links

By: Shatha Al-Harazi and Tom Finn

SANA'A, Jan. 19 — A journalist accused of being the "media man" for Al-Qaeda in Yemen was sentenced to five years in prison on Tuesday for allegedly collaborating with the global militant group and its leaders in Yemen.

Abdulelah Shayi, 34, who works for the state-run Saba news agency, was found guilty of "participating in an armed gang, having links with Al-Qaeda and for taking photographs of Yemen security bases and foreign embassies to be targeted by the terrorist organisation."

The verdict, delivered to a court specializing in terrorism cases in the capital Sana'a, also claimed that he helped to circulate Al-Qaeda communiqués and wrote for its online magazine, Sada al-Malahem (Echo of the Battles).

Speaking from behind a white steel mesh inside his cell, Shayi told reporters he had simply been pursuing his career as a journalist and denied supporting Al-Qaeda in any way.

"This is fabrication by the authorities that is unfounded and untrue," he said. "I boycott the court from the first day" said Shayi.

Kept in solitary confinement in an intelligence agency detention centre in Sana'a since his arrest last August, Shayi has refused to attend several recent hearings, and continues to dispute the court's legality.

"I am not before a court but the intelligence services," he said, beckoning at the row of prosecutors as his verdict was read out. "This is a political court."

Shayi, who specialised as a terrorism and Al-Qaeda expert, has made numerous appearances in international media and is often described as having a close relationship with the group.

In early 2009, he conducted an exclusive interview with Anwar al-Awlaki, a US-born radical cleric on the run in Yemen accused of inspiring terrorist attacks against the US. The footage was later broadcast by the pan Arab television station Al Jazeera. He is also alleged to have met with Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

The prosecution had previously accused Shayi of working as a media advisor to Awlaki who was sentenced in absentia on Monday to 10 years in jail for inciting the killing of foreigners in Yemen.

After the verdict, the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate (YJS) held a



Yemeni security officials confront a group of Yemeni journalists and human rights activists protesting against Shayi's sentence and the legality of the court.

round table meeting attended by Yemeni actor Faht Al-Qaini and former Guantanamo detainee and Al-Jazeera cameraman Sami Al-Haj to discuss how to support Shayi.

Abdul Rahman Berman, a lawyer from the Sana'a-based human right group Hood, was challenged by the syndicate for "convincing Shayi" to boycott the trial.

"Nothing will be changed with a lawyer, because this is what they planned to do from six months ago. We're giving a message to the world through this case that our judiciary system is run by the national and political security," Berman responded.

Berman went on to describe the illegality of the court's procedures. "The laptop that was used as evidence against him was taken from Shayi" by the political security a month before he was arrested," said Barman.

The Yemeni law states that no evidence should be seen by the court unless it is taken with an appropriate arrest warrant by the prosecution.

According to Berman, an email presented as evidence in the court which supposedly reveals Shayi's links with Al-Qaeda, was a word document saved on his desktop with no indication of from whom it was sent or to whom.

"The laptop was stolen for a month before the case started, anyone can create these files, it can't be seen as evidence" said Barman.

Outside the court tensions were



Abdulelah Shayi.

high. Skirmishes broke out as Yemeni security officials tried to prevent a group of Yemeni journalists and human rights activists from protesting against the sentence.

Mrwan Damaj from the syndicate said that many local and international NGOs did not want to get involved. "The case is related to Al-Qaeda and when Al-Qaeda is mentioned any case become sensitive therefore no NGO wants to get involved" said Damaj.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which recently released the 2010 Press Freedom Index ranking Yemen

170 out of 178 countries, responded to Shayi's trial by condemning it and calling for his "immediate release".

"The Yemeni authorities have used the pretext of combating terrorism to convict a journalist who is an expert on issues related to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and whose reporting tended to question the government's security policies," Reporters without Borders said.

Damaj told the Yemen Times that the syndicate were about to release a press release calling on the president to intervene and overrule the verdict.

CORRECTIONS

The front page of the Yemen Times Issue No. 1433, published January 13 2011, carried an article 'While the world shuns Yemen, Turkey opens its doors' that included a map displaying Western Sahara in North Africa as an independent state. This map is incorrect as this region is still part of Morocco and not independent. The Yemen Times apologizes for this unintended error. Western Sahara is still part of Morocco, as displayed in this correct image.



In the same edition of, the story 'Courier ban hits companies hard' had information about the FedEx courier company. The Yemen Times confirms that the information was obtained through clients of FedEx and not directly from the company's office or employers. The word 'client' was removed in error.



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The Embassy of India, Sana'a cordially invites all Indian nationals, persons of Indian origin and friends of India in the Republic of Yemen, along with their families, to join in the celebrations of the 62nd Republic Day of India on Wednesday, the 26th January, 2011 at the Embassy premises (Building No. 12, Djibouti Street, Off-Haddah Street, Sana'a). All are requested to assemble at the Embassy by 0845 hours.

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Somali pirates use merchant ships to attack Indian Ocean vessels

By: Malak Shafer

SANA'A, Jan. 19 — At least 32 merchant ships are being exploited to attack Yemeni boats and international ships in the Indian Ocean, Shuja' Al-Deen Almahdi, director of the Coast Guard Authority in Aden told the Yemen Times.

These merchant ships were attacked by Somali pirates in 2010. When the ship owners failed to pay the ransom for the return of the ships, the pirates started using them as mother ships in the Indian Ocean.

Now, these ships are used to provide the small boats of Somali pirates with fuel and supplies, according to Almahdi.

According to Coast Guard Authority, Somali pirates recently attacked two commercial ships in Pakistani territorial waters. An Algerian ship was attacked on 1st Jan., and a South Korean ship on Jan. 15th. Almahdi said that the authority believes that the pirates have mother ships based in the Indian Ocean to support attacks on ships in the area.

"Small boats cannot go all the way from Somalia to Pakistani waters without apparent help," said Almahdi.

The distance between Somali and Pakistan is more than 1,100 miles which is beyond the range of the small attack craft. The Coast Guard Authority obtained information from Somalia that the support ships were those where ransoms were not paid.

They were among 51 ships abducted, 19 of which were returned when the ransom was paid. All the ships were originally attacked and confiscated by Somali pirates in Somali coastal areas.

The pirates are currently in contact with the owners of the ships to obtain ransoms in return for releasing the ships. The ships are of many different types including an oil tanker, bulk carriers, container ships, fishing boats and tongs. Until the ships are released, the Somalis are using them to extend their activities into the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

"These ships became more like bastions in the ocean and the pirates are using them to seize other ships," explained Almahdi.

He added that the quiet monsoon season may be helping pirates use small boats and navigate the international shipping routes. According to the Coast Guard Authority, there are at least 28 international ships in

the Gulf of Aden trying to control piracy as part of an international campaign.

Pirates fail to hijack a Yemeni oil tanker

At least five pirates attacked a Yemeni oil tanker last Saturday evening in attempt to seize it in Yemeni territorial waters in the Red Sea, according to the Coast Guard Authority. The Captain of the oil tanker recognized a "suspicious boat carrying Somali pirates." The boat attacked the tanker, which is called Radeef Gana, at 5 pm on Saturday.

The pirates approached the tanker until they could use a grappling hook, and attempted to board the ship by a metal ladder, the Captain told the authority. However, once the naval security team on the tanker fired in the air, the pirates aborted their attempt and escaped. The ship continued on its course safely to the port of Mocha in Hodeida on the Red Sea.

Meanwhile, the authority said that it recommends that all the tankers and ships should have enough weapons to protect themselves.

Most Yemeni fishermen, however, do not carry weapons and thus are exposed to more danger than the

large ships, according to the authority's records. It is also reported that at least six Yemeni boats belonging to fishermen have been attacked by pirates on the 5th and 6th of January in Yemeni regional waters.

The first boat belonged to Zaid Al-Hadirami from Hadramout. Al-Hadirami, sent a letter to the Coast Guard Authority telling them that his boat was attacked and stolen while he was fishing in the Arabian Sea.

Yemeni fishermen risking their lives in Somali waters

Many Yemeni fishermen, especially from Hadramout governorate, attempt to fish in Somali regional waters. A Yemeni fisherman was killed in the last few days as Somali pirates and the Yemeni fishermen exchanged fire. Another Yemeni fisherman was injured during this clash, and arrived back in Al-Mukala on Tuesday. The Yemeni Coast Guard Authority have no information regarding Somali injuries.

Nowadays, many Yemeni fishermen take the adventure and go to Somali regional waters as it is rich with fish. This often ends with them being at the Somali pirates' mercy, Al-Mahdi concluded.

When in Yemen, must wear sunglasses

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Jan. 19 – Yemen and China's friendly relations go way back to the mid-nineties but it was in 1956 when the diplomatic relations between the two countries were firmly established.

In 1966, the first Chinese medical team visited Yemen to offer its services to Yemeni patients. Since then, various Chinese medical teams visited Yemen to perform hundreds of operations and improve the lives of many Yemeni citizens.

Currently, an ophthalmology medical Chinese delegation is visiting Yemen to

treat patients and perform eye surgeries. Yet, this team of seven doctors not only helped Yemeni patients see but also inaugurated the Yemeni-Chinese ophthalmology section in Al-Jumhuri Hospital in Sana'a.

This section is fully funded by the Chinese government, specifically the district of Longyang. In the next few months, Chinese doctors sponsored by Longyang district will be posted to work in the section.

"There are common eye problems in Yemen caused by the environment. Yemen's geographical position and terrain are reasons behind the various cataract

and cornea diseases," said Dr. Hua Lur who is heading the current delegation.

She added that people living in Yemen should use sunglasses to protect their eyes. Even if they can't afford the expensive brands which offer more protection, they can buy the cheaper ones sold in the streets to provide minimum protection.

During this delegation's seven-day visit the team has conducted 22 surgeries in Sana'a and 50 in Taiz. Most of their patients were rather old and suffer from preventable problems that could have been treated during early stages.

According to Chinese ophthalmologists, people living in Yemen are highly suitable to certain eye diseases such as cataract and cornea problems due to the high altitude above sea level and ultra-violet rays' intensity.

This was the first visit to Yemen for all seven doctors who admitted that they were apprehensive due to the negative reporting on Yemen in the news.

"Media coverage portrays Yemen as an unsafe place where a lot of violence occurs. Now that we are here we have discovered that this is not true. We feel perfectly safe and have been to the Old City of Sana'a and some shopping streets as well as the Saleh Mosque," said Dr. Hua Lur.

To prove how much they have enjoyed Yemen, the Chinese doctors bought lots of souvenirs such as Jambya's (traditional daggers), honey and handicrafts in order to remember their visit to this country.

But what they will remember of Yemen most is the enthusiasm and ambition of Yemeni doctors who were very eager to learn. According to Dr. Hua



A seven-member Chinese ophthalmologist team operating on Yemeni patients at Al-Jumhuri Hospital in Sana'a for free. The team also donated equipment worth USD4,000 for eye surgery.

Lur, the Yemeni doctors who participated in the surgeries were very attentive and wanted to make the best of this learning experience.

"We were impressed that there was one Yemeni female doctor working with us during this mission. From what we

read on Yemen we knew that traditions did not allow Yemeni women to work much. But this female doctor was equally enthusiastic and confident," said Dr. Hua Lur, adding that she hoped that next time they visit Yemen there are more female doctors on the Yemeni side.

Continued from Page 1

Constitution amendment debate begins without opposition parties

"We wonder to what extent the ruling party is honest about its promises to empowering women? Having an additional 44 seats is not the same as having a quota from the original body of the Parliament," said Amal Al-Basha, an activist and director of the Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights.

Female activists in the session were concerned that playing the women's issues as a card was a way of saving face for the ruling party in case the opposition decided to go ahead with the election boycott and in order to show some plurality in the coming elections.

Another objection mainly stated by academia was on the literacy condition to run as a member of parliament. They demanded that members of parliament should have more credentials other than just the ability to read and write since they will need to examine various kinds of legislations.

Tribal threats still haunt young woman set free from jail

The judge later abandoned the case – allegedly because of tribal threats – said Yahya Al-Asnaj who was Al-Aitary's lawyer at the time.

Al-Asnaj told the Yemen Times that the new lawyer, Mohamed Abdo Qardaw, was not Al-Aitary's legitimate legal representative. He said that his client was forced to appoint Qardaw while she was in prison.

Qardaw denied this claim and told the Yemen Times that Al-Aitary appointed him as her lawyer without any pressure. He said that Al-Aitary was now living at his house and that she is safe.

However, Al-Asnaj said that Al-Aitary's life is at risk and

that her father and some other tribesmen might kill her.

Hajj provided the Yemen Times with a copy of the Abs Primary Court's verdict released on January 15. It states: "Al-Aitary has given up her lawsuit and should be handed over to her father".

But Hajj said that this "unfair decision" from the court was the result of pressure on Al-Aitary to give up her case. He explained that tribesmen with support from the local authority in the governorate forced the previous judge in Qufi Shamar Primary Court to abandon Al-Aitary's case last Saturday.

Al-Asnaj said that the court's verdict was "illegal".

"It was released while she was in detention and I was banned from visiting her or talking to her on the phone. My client's life is at risk. She could be murdered by her father and I urge all humanitarian organizations to stand with this woman to rescue her life," said Al-Asnaj.

"I will challenge the verdict from Abs Primary Court as it was issued without having my client present, and the judge did not invite her to the session."

Abdulrahman Al-Barman, a human rights activist at the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD), told the Yemen Times that "the court that was expected to grant Al-Aitary her justice has just let her down".

"We know that her true desire was to sue her father for banning her to marry the man she has chosen, but she was pressurized to change her mind when she was imprisoned," said Al-Barman.

He said that "the judiciary in Hajja is under the control of the local authority and most of its members are tribesmen".

He also said that all the local authority's members in Hajja pressurized Al-Aitary not to marry Hajj.

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Their News

Yemenia Turns To SITA To Manage Passenger Growth

Yemenia, the official carrier of the Republic of Yemen, today announced that the airline will migrate its passenger management and distribution to air transport IT specialist, SITA, to manage its expected 10% annual growth in passenger numbers.

In addition to this extensive seven-year passenger management agreement, Yemenia has also contracted SITA for network communication services for the airline's offices worldwide. With SITA's managed IP (Internet protocol) solution, a total of 60 locations including Yemenia's head office, sales offices and out-stations, will have secure IP access.

Captain Abdulkhalek Al-Kadi, CEO and Chairman of Yemenia, said: "This is a very important step for Yemenia. By working with SITA we know that our future growth will be managed efficiently and effectively.

We are looking for SITA's Horizon passenger management and distribution services to save up to 30% of our various costs as we implement more direct sales and increase our e-commerce offerings to our passengers. We will also benefit from SITA's significant ongoing investment in Horizon.

"All these services will be underpinned by SITA's communications network which will ensure reliable, fast and efficient communications throughout all our offices. We are confident that this combination of improved infrastructure and IT solutions will not only support but encourage our planned growth."

SITA Horizon, the world's largest, international neutral multi-host system used by more than 130 airlines, will provide reservations, inventory, ticketing, pricing, fares distribution, departure control services, frequent flyer



and advanced e-commerce capabilities to Yemenia. In addition, revenue integrity and revenue management services will ensure maximised yields from all flights.

Hani El-Assaad, SITA Regional Vice President, Middle East and North Africa, said: "This is a significant continuation of the investment Yemenia is making with SITA in world-class technology to provide services for its passengers that have the added benefit of improving the cost efficiency of the airline."

"SITA's unique capability in the air transport industry will provide Yeme-

nia with the network infrastructure to support its operations and the sophisticated IT solutions for passenger management, which is the heart of an airline's operations. As a single supplier, we will manage the coordination of network management with passenger operations and our deep understanding of airline requirements will ensure that operational reliability, outstation coverage and ideal network communication requirements are met."

The implementation of SITA's integrated services will begin in early 2011 with phased cutovers over the following months.

Al-Aqsa Society calls for supporting Palestinian orphans

Al-Aqsa society calls on all Yemeni people and philanthropists to support the Palestinian orphans and poor families project as a notion of Islamic solidarity.

Adnan Al-Muntaser director general of the society says they are trying to reduce the suffering of Palestinians through providing monthly support to the new orphans and continue supporting the ones already in the society's list.

Al-Aqsa society currently supports more than 2,600 orphans and 508 poor Palestinian family. The support includes financial aid, clothing, gifts on Eid and rehabilitation and training

programs in the Palestinian territories and return camps outside Palestine.

"There is an increasing number of Palestinian children and families that need your help. They are being subjected to massive suffering everyday and deserve your material and emotional support because of what they are going through," said Al-Muntaser.



Al-Hutami wins a dream house from the YCB Jawaher Commercial Program for 2010

Mr. Abdualmalak Ghaleb Al-Hutami has won the dream house prize from Yemen Commercial Bank (YCB). This is the biggest prize for 2010 from the Jawaher Commercial Program. The award was presented at a ceremony held by the bank yesterday in the capital Sana'a by Sheikh Mohammad Ben Yahya Al-Rowishan, head of the board of directors at the bank. The ceremony was also attended by representatives from Al-Rowishan group, many banks, commercial corporations and media outlets. All were there to see the winner Abdualmalak Al-Hutami and his family receive the key to his dream house, located on Al-Khamsin Street in the capital Sana'a.

In the ceremony, Sheikh Al-Rowishan



han said we are so happy on this occasion, which can be considered as the result of the Jawaher Program that shows trustfulness and credibility to all its clients. He added that the idea of giving away different prizes was based on a study done by economic experts. He said that apart from the grand prize of the dream house, there are lots of other prizes including 84 luxury cars and more than 4000 other

worthy prizes.

"Honesty was our basic principle from the beginning of launching the bank which has an effective role in many development projects.

It is also a national duty to support development in our country. Finally, we hope that Abdualmalak lives a happy life with his family in the house."

Abdualmalak, who came from Hodeida with his family to receive the prize, expressed his extreme happiness in winning the house which will relieve them from the burden of rent. He said he couldn't believe that he was the winner of the house. He thanked



Sheikh Al-Rowishan and all the employees of the bank. He also praised the special services of the bank and

recommended the bank's honesty. Yemen Commercial Bank has won the international The Banker's Bank



of the Year Award from London, UK for three years in a row; 2008, 2009 and 2010.

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Female guides welcome visitors to Socotra

A steep goat path leads up to Hoq Cave. A group of tourists are moving slowly, panting. They are following a tiny Soqotri woman covered in a black balto and niqab despite the heat. Their feet in sophisticated outdoor shoes step on sharp stones and reddish soil which her plastic flip-flops had touched just a moment ago. They still have a long way to go.



Inside a dark Hoq cave.

By: Bohdana Rambouskova

The quiet life of the fishermen's village of Terbak got new stimulus when tourists started coming to visit a cave located on its tribal land. Overlooking the northern coast of Socotra island, Hoq Cave is a more than 3 km long karst formation with beautiful stalagmites, stalactite curtains and a lake at the very end. Hundreds of tourists don't hesitate to hike for over an hour across difficult terrain to enjoy the cave's charm.

After the Socotra Eco-tourism Society, founded by the UNDP Socotra Conservation and Development Programme in 2003, included Hoq Cave in their tourist itinerary, local guides were needed. For the last three years,

guiding services in Terbak have been organized in a way that allows all the local inhabitants to share in the profits. Guides take regular turns, and from the YR 4,000 earned for each journey to the cave and back, YR 1,000 goes to the community and the rest to the guide's family. Similar benefit-sharing works run in many other areas on the island, and together with community-run eco-campsites, create an economic system directing income from tourism to poor local communities.

But what you will not see anywhere else but in Terbak is that local women also guide the tourists.

When men are too busy Of Terbak's more than 50 people, nine are guides that regularly accompany visitors up to the cave. Three of the

guides are female. This rare example of women's empowerment in Soqotra arose simply from necessity. If men are busy with fishing, their wives take on the job. The need to secure one's living has been stronger than the conservative traditions restricting women to household chores.

Amna Hasan is a female Terbak guide who always goes up when it is her family's turn. Her husband has been confined to bed due to serious kidney problems for the last 14 years and she has shouldered all the responsibilities for their seven children and their herd of goats. In their case, money is very much needed. Her husband has made more than 200 visits to hospitals in Mukalla, Sana'a, India, Oman, and Egypt, she says. Even though the number seems slightly ex-

aggerated, it is obvious that the treatments consume a considerable part of the family budget.

You need muscles and high spirits

Leading tourists to Hoq Cave is anything but a promenade. It is advisable to set off early in the morning before the scorching sun rises high. Scrambling up the hill takes between one and one and a half hours depending on the clients' stamina. Tourists will spend another hour walking in the darkness of the cave. And getting back down the hill takes another hour, balancing on unstable stones and stepping over tree roots. Once, a Chinese student in Amna's group fell unconscious in front of the cave's entrance because he hadn't taken a sufficient supply of water. She walked all the way down to bring back a bottle of water for him, without asking for any extra money.

"Tourists are usually old and weak, especially the ladies. They wouldn't be able to do the guiding job," said Amna laughing. She herself is around 60 years old. Usually, her turn comes twice or three times a week. In the peak season around New Year, she even goes twice a day.

A woman can always manage

How is it possible that Terbak men let their women do a job that is elsewhere considered as strictly male? "Our husbands trust us and we deserve the trust," Amna explains. She states that women are able to achieve anything they decide to do. She is not afraid to accompany any foreign or Yemeni tourists up to Hoq Cave. The only thing she fears a bit are the jinns likely to hide inside the darkness of the cave.

However, strong Terbak women are laughed at by other inhabitants of Socotra. Each time Amna hitchhikes to a neighboring village, people who take

her in their car make fun of her because of her unusual occupation. The traditional society is not yet ready for such independently acting women.

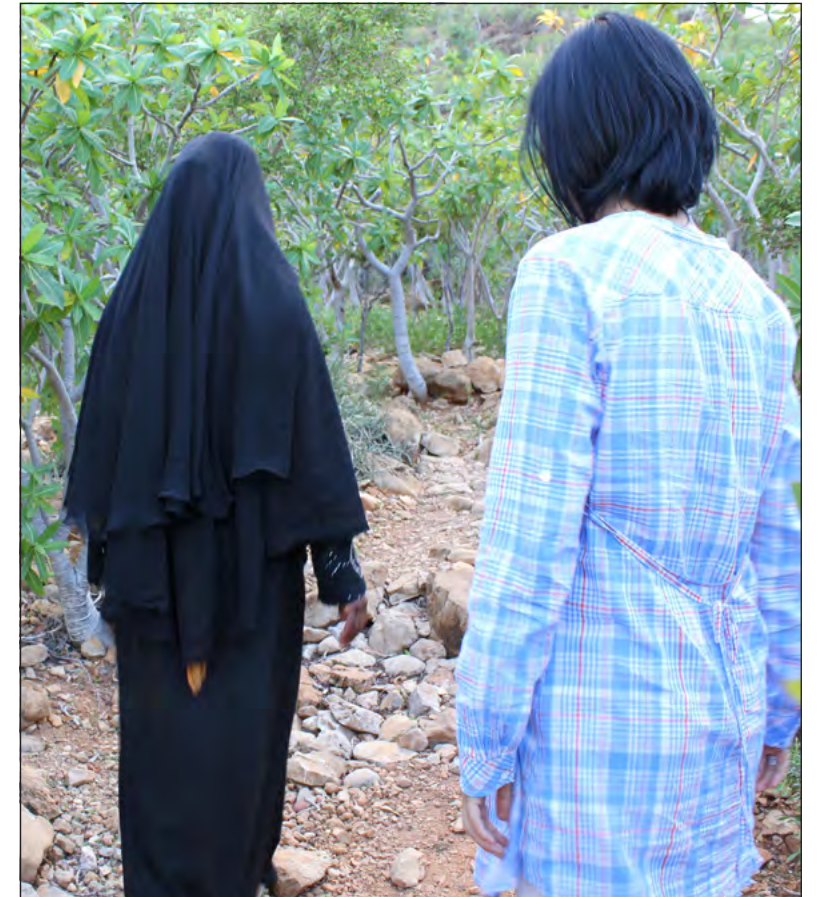
Journeys in different directions

Even though she has shown the beauties of Hoq Cave to hundreds of tourists, Amna herself has never seen any other places of interest on her island. "My husband is ill. I don't have time to travel around!" she says shaking her head. The income from guiding tourists just complements other sources of income. She still needs to look after her goats and help their sons to mend

fishing nets daily.

We are drinking tea with Amna and her little granddaughter Sumaia. Will she allow the girl to guide tourists the same way her granny does now? "No," says Amna, "because Sumaia will go for studies."

The sun is slowly approaching the horizon and Amna is getting restless. There is no time for chatting, she needs to go and gather her goats. Tomorrow, it is her turn to lead tourists to Hoq Cave. While she is ascending to the cave, her husband will set off for another hopeful journey to doctors in Sana'a.



Female tour guides show the way in Socotra.



Visitors book signed by tourists from Yemen and other parts of the world.



The tranquil view from Hoq.



Mountains surrounding Terbak village.

Stories from Real Life

By: Nawal Zaid
For the Yemen Times

Becoming a second wife

She wanted an understanding and experienced husband

Eman Ali is 25 years old, married and lives in Sana'a. She graduated from University Art College and was an excellent and respected student. She always dreamt of a husband who was understanding and experienced, regardless of whether he was already married or not. She found one of her professors at the university to be such a man. He liked her personality and the way she talked. He respected her, helped her and took care of her.

When he proposed to her, her family accepted him because they knew that Eman wanted him despite the fact that

he was already married. Eman was so happy for this marriage, and saw her future husband as much better than other younger men. She was willing to take complete responsibility of her husband and his other wife and children.

She became a second wife so she could be provided for

Fadia is a 30 year old housewife living in Sana'a. She is married and has a daughter. She has an average education and has five sisters and one brother. After her father's death, her uncle took care of her family. He used to visit them and gave them some money and supplies.

When all her sisters got married, Fadia also wished to marry a man who could be like her father and provide for her everything she had been deprived of. So, when a man, Kareem, proposed to take her as a second wife she accepted despite the fact that her uncle refused. After being married a while problems started between Fadia and Kareem's first wife, Nada, but Fadia tolerated everything so that the problems wouldn't increase between her and her husband. Her brothers-in-law were always cursing her and telling people that Fadia wasn't a good woman. One of them actually threatened to kidnap her and her daughter, and cursed her in the presence of their neighbors with no fear of his brother.

Fadia thinks that if she went back to her family house everyone would blame her for her choice to marry. She

cannot go back to the suffering she ran away from. Besides, Fadia loves Kareem so much and loves all his children. As for Kareem, he loves both his wives very much and provides for them all their needs.

She married to escape her brothers' bad treatment

Sana'a Ali is a 35 years old dressmaker who lives in Sana'a with her husband and one son. She has an average education. Her father died when she was only two years old, and her mother got remarried and left her and her two brothers, Mohamad and Mahdi, at their grandmother's house. She lived without the feeling of

her mother's love, despite the fact that her grandmother tried to make up for that love. When she reached the seventh grade she left school and learned how to sew because there was no one to encourage her to keep going to school and learn. After a while, she decided to teach sewing and she earned a good amount of money besides her sewing job.

When her brothers found out that she earned good money, they let her pay for all her needs herself. Moreover, problems arose between Sana'a and her brothers' wives. They demanded she do their housework for them, and if she refused their demands, they told her brothers who caused more problems. Her brothers used to take her money and demeaned her in the presence of their wives. They didn't even give her any food so that she could

feed herself. She managed to make a small kitchen for herself in a lousy room in the backyard of the house where the rain leaked in. This situation continued for several years.

One day a man, Naji, proposed to her. He was the only man who had proposed to her. He was married and had six children, and wanted Sana'a as a second wife. Her brother refused the proposal, but Sana'a insisted on accepting it so that she could leave all her family miseries behind.

After a short period of time, she moved into her husband's house, which was separate from the house of Naji's first wife. Sana'a give birth to a baby boy and keeps on sewing. Naji keeps on going to see his first wife and children, but Sana'a doesn't mind at all as she now lives in a much better situation than before.

SKETCHED OPINION

By: Hamid



Tunisia: An example for Yemen?

By: Ghamdan Al-Yosifi
alyosifi@gmail.com

It was a moment of great happiness for those who are against the current government system in Tunisia while they watched the Tunisian's president, Zein Al-Abidine Ben Ali, announce the end of his Presidency.

Compared to the Tunisians and their revolutionary spirit, the Yemeni dreams for a similar situation appear far off and may have died when we reached the year 2000. I remember in 2005, for instance, when Yemenis revolted against the abolition of oil subsidies and the increasing oil prices in what became known as the Hungry Revolution. The revolt lasted for four days yet the cold blood of the hungry soldiers defeated the rebel

blood of the hungry citizens, leading to the death of 100 people.

Unlike Tunisians, Yemenis typically wait for the opposition parties to propose their rights to the government. Yet the Southern movement, by contrast, has attempted to implement their rights by their own hands, despite their mistakes and ideas. While Yemen is clearly a very different case from Tunisia, the example set by the Tunisians shows that freedom sometimes comes at a high cost to the people. Surely Yemen however has enough like-minded people willing to revolt in a similar manner.

We must bear in mind however that we do not need Tunisians to awaken us to this course of action and indeed inform us of our rights. Also, we should not wait for other people from other countries to revolt before we make a move ourselves.

Yemen: Terrorist haven or chess piece?

By: Conn Hallinan
Counterpunch

Yemen—a country slightly smaller than France with a population of 22 million—perches on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It is the poorest country in the region, with one of the most explosive birthrates in the world. Unemployment hovers above 40 percent and projections are that its oil—which makes up 70 percent of its GDP—will run out in 2017, as will water for the capital, Sana, in 2015.

It is a bit of a patchwork nation. It was formerly two countries—North Yemen and the Democratic People's Republic of Yemen (south), which merged in 1990 and fought a nasty civil war in 1994.

The current government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh is corrupt, despotic, and presently fighting a two-front war against northern Shiites, called "Houthis," and separatist-minded southerners. Based in the north, Saleh's government has limited influence outside of the capital. Whoever runs the place, according to The Independent's Middle East reporter Patrick Cockburn, has to contend with "tribal confederations, tribes, clans, and powerful families. Almost everybody has a gun, usually at least an AK-47 assault rifle, but tribesmen often own heavier armament."

To make things even more complex, Yemen's northern neighbor, Saudi Arabia, has sent troops and warplanes to back up Saleh. According to Reuters, "The conflict in Yemen's northern mountains has killed hundreds and displaced tens of thousands." Aid groups

put the number of refugees at 150,000. The Saleh government and the Saudis claim the Shiia uprising is being directed by Iran—there is no evidence to back up the charge—thus escalating a local civil war to a regional face off between Riyadh and Teheran.

And this is a place that Hillary, Gordon and Joe think we need to intervene?

In a sense, of course, the U.S. is already in Yemen, and was so even before the attempted bombing Christmas Day of a Northwest Airlines flight by a young Nigerian. For most Americans, Yemen first appeared on their radar screens when the USS Cole was attacked in the port of Aden by al-Qaeda in 2000, killing 17 sailors. It reappeared this past November when a U.S. Army officer linked to a Muslim cleric in Yemen killed 13 people at Fort Hood, Colorado. The Christmas Day attacker said he was trained by al-Qaeda, and the group took credit for the failed operation.

But U.S. involvement in Yemen goes back almost 40 years. In 1979, the Carter Administration blew a minor border incident between north and south Yemen into a full-blown East-West crisis, accusing the Soviets of aggression. The White House dispatched an aircraft carrier and several warships to the Arabian Sea, and sent tanks, armored personal carriers and warplanes to the North Yemen government.

The tension between the two Yemens was hardly accidental. According to UPI, the CIA funneled \$4 million a year to Jordan's King Hussein to help brew up a civil war between the conservative North and the wealthier and socialist south.

The merger between the two coun-

tries never quite took. Southern Yemenis complain that the north plunders its oil and wealth and discriminates against southerners. Demonstrations and general strikes by the Southern Movement demanding independence have increased over the past year. The Saleh government has generally responded with clubs, tear gas and guns.

When Yemen refused to back the 1991 Gulf War to expel Iraq from Kuwait, the U.S. cancelled \$70 million in foreign aid to Sana and supported a decision by Saudi Arabia to expel 850,000 Yemeni workers. Both moves had a catastrophic impact on the Yemeni economy that played a major role in initiating the current instability gripping the country.

In 2002 the Bush administration used armed drones to assassinate several Yemenis it accused of being al-Qaeda members. The New York Times reported that the Obama administration launched a cruise missile attack Dec. 17 at suspected al-Qaeda members that, according to Agence France Presse, killed 49 civilians, including 23 children and 17 women. The attack has sparked widespread anger throughout Yemen that al-Qaeda organizers have heavily exploited.

So is the current uproar over Yemen a case of a U.S. administration overreacting and stumbling into yet another quagmire in the Middle East? Or is this talk about a "global danger" just a smokescreen to allow the Americans to prop up the increasingly isolated and unpopular regime in Saudi Arabia?

Maybe both, but at least one respected analyst suggests that the game in play is considerably larger than the Arabian Peninsula and may have more to do with the control of the Indian

Ocean and the South China Sea than with hunting down al-Qaeda in the Yemeni wilderness.

The Asia Times' M.K. Bhadrakumar, a career Indian diplomat who served in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Pakistan, and Turkey, argues that the current U.S. concern with Yemen is actually about the strategic port of Aden. "Control of Aden and the Malacca Straits will put the U.S. in an unassailable position in the 'great game' of the Indian Ocean," he writes.

Aden controls the strait of Bab el-Mandab, the entrance to the Red Sea though which passes 3.5 million barrels of oil a day. The Malacca Straits, between the southern Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra, is one of the key passages that link the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

Bhadrakumar says the Indian Ocean and the Malacca Straits are "literally the jugular veins of the Chinese economy." Indeed, a quarter of the world's sea-borne trade passes through the area, including 80 percent of China's oil and gas.

In 2005 the Bush Administration pressed India to counter the rise of China by joining an alliance with South Korea, Japan, and Australia. As a quid pro quo for coming aboard, Washington agreed to sell uranium to India, in spite of New Delhi's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement. Only countries that sign the Treaty can purchase uranium in the international market. The Bush administration also agreed to sell India the latest in military technology. The Obama administration has continued the same policies.

China and India have indeed beefed up their naval forces in the Indian Ocean

and South China Sea. Beijing is also developing a "string of pearls"—ports that will run from East Africa to Southeast Asia. India has just established a formal naval presence in Oman at the entrance to the strategic Persian Gulf.

According to Bhadrakumar, the growing U.S. rapprochement with Myanmar and Sri Lanka is aimed at checkmating China's influence in both nations, and cutting off efforts by Beijing to reduce its reliance on ocean-borne energy transportation by constructing land-based pipelines. China just opened such a pipeline to Central Asia.

"The U.S., on the contrary, is determined that China remain vulnerable to the choke points between Indonesia and Malaysia," writes the former Indian diplomat.

Checkmating China would also explain some of the pressure that the Obama administration is exerting on Pakistan.

"The U.S. is unhappy with China's efforts to reach the warm waters of the Persian Gulf through the Central Asian region and Pakistan. Slowly but steadily, Washington is tightening the noose around the neck of the Pakistani elites—civilian and military—and forcing them to make a strategic choice between the U.S. and China," writes Bhadrakumar.

This would help explain the increasing tension between China and India over a Himalayan border region that has sparked a military buildup in Chinese-occupied Tibet and India's Arunachal Pradesh state. Former Indian Air Marshal Fali Homi told the Hindustan Times that China was now a bigger threat than Pakistan, and former Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra predicts an India-China

war within five years.

"Energy security" has been at the heart of U.S. foreign policy for decades. The 1980's "Carter Doctrine" made it explicit that the U.S. would use military if its energy supplies were ever threatened. Whether the administration was Republican or Democratic made little difference when it came to controlling gas and oil supplies, and the greatest concentration of U.S. military forces is in the Middle East, where 60 percent of the world's energy supplies lie.

Except for using Special Forces and supplying weapons, it is unlikely that the U.S. will intervene in a major way in Yemen. But through military aid it can exert a good deal of influence over the Sana government, including extracting bating rights.

The White House has elevated the 200 or so "al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" members in Yemen into what the President calls a "serious problem," and there are dark hints that the country is on its way to becoming a "failed state," the green light for a more robust intervention.

However, as Jon Alterman, Middle East Director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, argues, "The problems in Yemen are not fundamentally problems that military operations can solve."

But then the "problems" of Yemen may be simply a prelude for a much wider and potentially dangerous strategy focused on China.

"The U.S. cannot give up on its global dominance without putting up a real fight," says Bhadrakumar. "And the reality of all such momentous struggles is that they cannot be fought piecemeal. You cannot fight China without occupying Yemen."

Impressions of Yemen

By: Kevin Drum
Mother Jones

I've kept silent about Yemen so far because I don't want to even begin to pretend that I know anything about the place.

But, like everyone else, I've been reading about it, and I have to say that this paragraph from Richard Fontaine and Andrew Exum is probably the most enlightening one I've seen so far:

Yemen's economy depends heavily on oil production, and its government receives the vast majority of its revenue from oil taxes. Yet analysts

predict that the country's petroleum output, which has declined over the last seven years, will fall to zero by 2017. The government has done little to plan for its post-oil future. Yemen's population, already the poorest on the Arabian peninsula and with an unemployment rate of 35%, is expected to double by 2035. An incredible 45% of Yemen's population is under the age of 15. These trends will exacerbate large and growing environmental problems, including the exhaustion of Yemen's groundwater resources. Given that a full 90% of the country's water is used for agriculture, this trend portends disaster.

So Yemen's population has tripled since 1975 and will double again by 2035. Meanwhile, state revenue will decline to zero by 2017 and the capital city of Sanaa will run out of water by 2015 — partly because 40% of Sanaa's water is pumped illegally in the outskirts to irrigate the qat crop.

Bizarrely, even after writing this, Fontaine and Exum follow up with this:

Given the threat posed not just by terrorism but by the potential for nationwide instability, the United States should move toward a broader relationship with Yemen, still focusing

strongly on counter-terrorism but also on economic development and improved governance...Over the weekend, Obama pledged to double aid to Yemen, but this money must be spent strategically. Several areas are ripe for foreign help, including training and equipping counter-terrorism forces, bolstering border security and building the capacity of the coast guard, expanding counterinsurgency advice to the Yemeni government and expanding programs focused on basic governance and anti-corruption.

Even though they say that economic development is important, nearly their entire list is dedicated to military

aid of one kind or another.1 But it's hard to see what good that will do to help a country with a soaring population, no revenue, and a rapidly dwindling water supply. Frankly, it's a little hard to see how anything is likely to have much impact on a country with problems that severe. And until those problems are addressed, it's also hard to see how even the best designed and executed counterterrorism program can have more than a very limited effect. More here from Marc Lynch, who basically seems to agree: "So what should the U.S. do? Pretty much what it's been doing in the Obama administration, which has

in fact been thinking seriously about Yemen all year and which has quietly been working there in some constructive and some unconstructive ways. It's never as satisfying as a morally pure call to battle. [...] But the administration shouldn't fall into the trap of thinking it must "do something" to fend off political harping from the right and end up over-committing... or taking steps which ultimately make the situation worse."

There's more detail in the policy brief that their op-ed is drawn from, but it's still focused almost exclusively on military and counterterrorism programs.

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Nadia Abdulaziz Al-SakkafCEO
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Editors

Yazeed Kamaldien
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Editorial Staff

Ali Saeed
Malak Shaher
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Offices

Aden Bureau:
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596
Fax: +967 (2) 347056
Email: ytaden@y.net.yeTaiz Bureau:
Imad Ahmed Al-Saqqaf
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,
Telefax: +967 (4) 217157
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The Government of Republic of Yemen has received grants from the International Development Association towards the cost of: (i) The Emergency Safety Net Enhancement Project (EC-financed Global Food Crisis Response Trust Fund), and (ii) the Social Welfare Fund Institutional Support Project, and (iii) is in the process of receiving a third grant for the Nutrition Focused Conditional Cash Transfer Pilot Program Funded through Rapid Social Response MDTF, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of these grants for the recruitment of Accountant and MIS Specialist.

The Social Welfare Fund (implementing agency for the project) now invites qualified individual applicants to apply for these two positions.

Project MIS Specialist

Duties and Responsibilities: The MIS Specialist will: (a) coordinate with and assist the long-term advisor and MIS expert/s responsible for the establishment of a functional MIS, (b) advise on and implement IT related issues, IT training and capacity building of SWF staff, (c) support the project teams in maintaining and using IT systems, (d) develop IT equipment specifications and assist in procurement and installation, and (e) undertake other related activities as assigned.

Qualifications and Experience:

- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in management information systems, computer science, or related field;
- At least 5 years of demonstrated experience in the information systems. Performance in earlier assignments would be a key factor;
- Excellent knowledge of information technology, communication and database tools, applications, and the industry; and
- Good written and verbal communication skills with proficiency in Arabic and English.

Project Accountant

Duties and Responsibilities: Under the supervision of the Financial Specialist, the Accountant is in charge of recording all financial transactions, retaining supporting documentation, preparing financial reports of the project as required by government regulations and the Legal Agreement, and preparing annual and interim project financial statements to reflect the financial position of the project and for auditing purposes. The accountant is also responsible for preparing withdrawal applications and monthly reconciliations in accordance with the project Financial Manual.

Qualifications and Experience:

- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in accounting;
- At least five years of accounting experience, preferably with World Bank projects or international organizations. Performance in earlier assignments would be a key factor;
- Proven spreadsheet (Excel), typing, word-processing and the ability to operate accounting software; and
- Proficiency in Arabic and English.

Applications in the form of detailed CV should be submitted by individual consultants to the address below, indicating that they are qualified and would be able to perform the services. Short-listed candidates shall be interviewed to finalize the selection.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures for selection of individual consultants as set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (May 2004; revised October 1, 2006 and May 1, 2010)

Applications must be delivered to the address below on or before **5th February, 2011, 17:00 hrs - Yemen Time.**

Social Welfare Fund (SWF)

Noqem Beside Control .

Phone: (+967-1) 544014

Fax: (+967-1) 544015

Attn: Mr .Mansour Al Fayadi

Email : alfeadi4@gmail.com

Proisp1@yahoo.com

VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT

Search For Common Ground - Yemen, an International NGO based in Sana'a is recruiting for the following positions:

Outreach coordinator

- Overseeing & implementing all aspects of local participation in project by individuals intended for project and coordination of efforts with local partner organizations
- Responsible for community outreach and participation aspect of project
- Coordinating the project activities with the local partners
- Recruitment of volunteers to be involved in project
- Supervision of participants involvement and intended purposes in project
- Responsible for scheduling, organizing and supervising workshop and debate events for project across governorates
- Timely reporting on project status and activities
- Minimum Bachelors degree required, Proficiency in Arabic & English a must

Media Coordinator

- Coordinating the work with Radio & TV production agencies
- Coordinating with the community outreach coordinator on relevant activities
- Responsible for connecting the organization with media sources
- Analyze statistical information to determine the best media plans for the project
- Work with production staff to determine most effective advertisement of project
- Attend to the needs of TV & Radio production
- Minimum Bachelors Degree required, Proficiency in Arabic & English a must

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

- Design and implementation of a monitoring framework to track development of project goals
- Analyzing data collected during workshops/debates and training sessions under monitoring framework to assess progress and possible areas of improvement
- Provide regularly updated reports on implementation status of project goals
- Ensure all sub-projects and events are aligned for delivery of project goals
- Advise project director on current status of monitoring and evaluation efforts
- Minimum Bachelors Degree required, Proficiency in Arabic & English a must

Administrative Assistant

- Manage information and communication efforts within the office
- Plan and schedule meetings and appointments for the office
- Organize and maintain paper and electronic files for the office
- Manage communications with partner organizations or consultants outside of the office
- Must have computer proficiency and be able to conduct simple research operations
- Minimum Bachelors Degree required, Proficiency in Arabic & English a must

Please send cover letter and CV in English to aalshageri@sfcg.org . SFCG is an equal opportunity employer & encourages all those qualified to apply for the positions. Closing date **Monday 31st of January 2011.**

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المعزون

مؤسسة يمن تايمز للصحافة والطباعة والنشر

Dr. Ahmad Asafani speaks to the Yemen Times:

“Yemenis are more interested in qat than food”

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

Many Yemenis are not concerned about their health, especially regarding food and exercise. Indeed, most Yemenis have no culture of caring about their health and know nothing about the ways of preventing disease, Dr. Ahmad Asafani told the Yemen Times.

Asafani works for Al-Askari Hospital in Sana'a as a consultant and as head of the department of internal medicine. He receives dozens of patients every day who have different serious diseases caused by negligence and carelessness.

“Syphilis, gonorrhoea, diabetes, liver failure, AIDS and different serious diseases are becoming rampant among Yemenis,” he revealed.

Twenty-eight percent of Yemenis have hepatitis B that has been contracted via sexual intercourse, using other people's shavers and by other means.

“Serious diseases pass quickly and easily from one person to another among some Yemenis. They don't care about the consequences of their actions at all. They have sex with several partners randomly without even using anything to protect themselves against disease,” he said.

Asafani indicated that many Yemenis are infected with HIV, which they only discover by accident, especially when they want to donate blood.

“Ignorance about the prevention of diseases has caused some diseases to spread widely among Yemenis. Malnutrition, chewing qat and inactivity are major causes of these



Dr. Ahmed Asafani.

diseases as well. Unfortunately, the most important thing for most Yemenis is qat, and the less important thing in their life is food,” he said.

“I noticed that most of those patients are uneducated. I always advise them to improve their health because they really need more attention to their health than others,” he said.

Many Yemenis accidentally discover that they are infected with HIV

Common diseases among Yemenis Typhoid, hepatitis, and dysentery are

diseases that spread rapidly in Yemen. Spoiled food and dirty restaurants are important sources for these diseases.

Typhoid is a very common disease in Yemen caused by eating spoiled food. Common symptoms of typhoid are diarrhea, vomiting, severe abdominal pain, fever, rashes and headaches. The disease also may cause bacteremia (the presence of bacteria in the blood) and transmission of bacteria to the brain, liver or bones.

“People who are infected with this disease may have had the bacteria for a long time. This bacteria is found in raw eggs, meats, unpasteurized milk products and poultry,” Asafani said.

Food poisoning is common amongst

Yemenis as well. The poisoning is caused by bacterial toxins and pesticides that are used randomly in the planting and growth of fruits and vegetables. Toxins can also be found in food cans that have been stored badly. Food poisoning can cause severe diarrhea, acute abdominal pain and can sometimes lead to death.

“Health awareness about nutrition is absent in the majority of Yemenis. They ignore personal hygiene and don't check the cleanliness of restaurants,” he said.

Asafani criticized the lack of careful observation of those restaurants that cause many diseases. He called for the concerned bodies to verify that the workers in restaurants adhere to health standards.

“Environmental health regulators must make sure that all equipment and facilities of restaurants are clean, such as dishes, ventilation systems, dining halls, and food tables. Moreover, they should issue certificates periodically

Twenty-eight percent of Yemenis have hepatitis B

for those restaurants and carry out regular inspections of restaurants,” he said.

Asafani stressed the importance of preventing food and drinks being sold in the street and in punishing people who sell their food amidst sand and flies.

“I advise Yemenis to choose their food carefully and avoid contaminated foods or foods exposed to the air. They should also keep away from foods that displayed under the sun,” he said.

Yemen's hidden alcohol problem

By: Judith Spiegel
The Media Line

It's nine o'clock at night on a busy road on the outskirts of Sana'a and a man is waiting in the shadows. Samir, a 22-year-old university student, has been cruising in his car with his mates and has been engaged in a constant mobile phone negotiation with this man until finally, a location for the deal is made.

Samir halts his car. The man emerges from the shadows and quickly passes him a plastic bag containing two bottles of Stolichnaya vodka, wrapped in local newspapers and asks for the money. Samir gives him 12,000 Rials (USD60) for both bottles.

In an Islamist country where alcohol is largely forbidden, just a simple transaction for a couple bottles of vodka has a sinister nature of black alley contraband and fear. As much as alcohol is taboo, treating alcoholism is even more challenging since it exposes its sufferers to stigmas.

Smir, who spoke on condition his last name not be revealed, says he does not consider himself to be an alcoholic. He just has “to drink a few beers in the evening to be able to sleep.” A student at one of the Yemeni capital's prestigious universities, Samir says he often skips classes to drink and was “stressed out” because of his father's high expectations from him to get high marks and take over his family business. He both adores and fears his father and says his fear of not living up to his expectations makes him seek daily solace in alcohol.

He is not alone. According to Dr. Hisham Alnabhani, a psychiatrist at Al Amal psychiatric hospital, about six cases like Samir's cross his door every month seeking treatment for alcohol abuse.

“They usually come after drinking for three of four years,” Alnabhani told The Media Line. “Most of them have high economic status, are the sons of military officers or businessmen have money and therefore access to alcohol.”

Alnabhani said most of them had

lived in Saudi Arabia for extended periods.

“This is where they picked up the habit of using alcohol. I know it is even more forbidden there than in Yemen but people tend to hunt after forbidden things,” he added.

Yemeni law prohibits drinking alcohol in public or being drunk in public. If caught, violators are sent to prison and not to treatment centers like the Al Amal hospital. What happens in private homes, however, is another matter and police do not as a rule search houses for alcohol. Unlike in Saudi Arabia, there are no religious police enforcing Islamic ban on alcohol.

“If people drink at home, this is between them and Allah, not between them and the Yemeni law,” Dr. Hisham says.

Ironically, alcohol is relatively easy to obtain in Yemen. There is a locally brewed vodka, called Balladi, named after the Arabic word ‘bilad’ which means country. Vodka, whisky, beer and gin is also smuggled in from Ethiopia or Djibouti and then sold through dealers. There are even towns such as Haima and Amran where whole streets are lined with little shops selling booze behind their iron doors. At first glance the shops appear like the average Yemeni grocery with cans of beans, washing powder and cigarettes lining the walls. But they have a clandestine side room where crates of Heineken beer and bottles of whisky of assorted brands can be found.

The shops are known by many, including government officials. A recent Wikileaks report quoted President Ali Abdullah Saleh joking with US Gen. David Petraeus that he loathed drugs and weapons coming from Djibouti, but whisky, on the other hand was fine, as long as it was good whiskey. Curiously, the report did not receive much media attention in Yemen despite fears in the foreign press that it could lead to a “Whiskey Controversy.” (<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2033511,00.html>)

Yemen denied the quotes were made and the government-controlled newspapers and television channels

ignored it.

Samir recalls how he and others seeking an alcoholic drink had ventured to the Russian Club, a nightclub in Saana playing outdated music but where alcohol flows freely, provided one is a foreigner. The club denied Samir and his mates entry since they were Yemenis.

“This is not up to the guy at the gate, it is up to us, for heaven's sake,” Samir says angrily, recalling they went home and ordered a bottle of gin from a dealer.

Dr. Alnabhani believes that the ones coming to his clinic with an alcohol problem are only the tip of the iceberg and that the phenomenon is much more wide spread than the Yemeni public wants to admit.

“We only see the complicated issues where families bring the man to our hospital,” he says. “It is always men. I have never seen a woman here. They usually are brought after he starts beating up his wife, his sons, his neighbours and the family was desperate for treatment.”

“It is there so why deny it? The first step to treatment is acknowledgement but in our society this is taboo. Furthermore, everyone in Yemen who seeks psychological or psychiatric help is considered insane, so this does not motivate people to go to a psychiatric hospital either,” he says.

AlAmal hospital checks in alcoholics for a two-week treatment, during which they receive medication, group and behavioural therapy. After they leave, they continue to receive medication and psychological treatment.

“But it only works with people

who come voluntarily,” Dr. Alnabhani laments. “Those who are forced here by their families usually fall back again.”

The Al Amal hospital is funded by the Charitable Society for Social Welfare, a Yemeni charity founded by Sheikh Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, an influential Yemeni religious leader who is also on the United States lists of terrorists. This doesn't bother Dr. Alnabhani or his colleagues since their goal is to deal with alcoholism, and stay away from religious politics.

Because officially there is no alcohol, there are no campaigns or any other public awareness programs. People only know about treatment programs such as the one at Al Amal hospital due to word of mouth. For years, Dr. Alnabhani and his colleagues have tried to publicise their care, but they are not supported by the government.

“So we can only sit here and wait for people to come to us,” he says, adding sardonically that knocking behind the closed doors of Sana'a would likely lead to a seven-fold increase in alcoholism patients.

Meanwhile, young men like Samir continue to titter on alcoholism which raises the question: Would it not be better to legalize it and just sell it in the supermarkets so things can be controlled? Dr. Alnabhani is not so sure.

“First of all, access would be easier so we will have more drinkers,” Dr. Alnabhani says. “Secondly, people think that if this were the case then Yemen would no longer be an Islamic country. As long as it is hidden, they simply think the problem does not exist.”

HEALTH WATCH

By: Dr. Siva



This weekly column disseminates health information to readers in Yemen and beyond. Dr. Siva currently works at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Lifestyle diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and naturopathy are his passions.

Include these health checks in your New Year's resolutions

Many tests and screenings are available to improve our health and the quality of our lives. For 2011, take action if you're overdue for any of these tried-and-true health assessments.

1. Height and weight

Height and weight provide important information about our health and development from infancy to old age. We lose an average of 0.4 inches in height every decade after age 40, and even more after age 70. Most of this loss is a normal effect of drying and compression in the discs between the vertebrae, but sometimes it's caused by vertebral compression fractures that may be the first sign of osteoporosis.

Weight is even more important. Unintended weight loss can be a sign of serious illness. Excess weight, especially in the abdominal area, raises your risk for diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Body mass index (BMI), a measure of your weight in relation to height, indicates whether you're overweight (a BMI of 25 to 29) — or obese, meaning a BMI of 30 or more. Measure your waist circumference (at navel level) for signs of excess fat within your abdominal cavity; a waist over 35 inches (for women) boosts risk even if BMI is normal.

How often: Periodically, at routine office visits.

2. Fracture risk

Osteoporosis, a disease characterized by low bone mass and fragility of the skeleton, can lead to hip and other fractures with minimal impact. Bone mineral density (BMD) declines with age, generally at a quicker pace in the years just following menopause. Dual energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA) testing uses a small amount of radiation to measure BMD in the hip and spine. If you take steroids or you have any other reason to suspect accelerating bone loss, you may be screened as often as every two years.

3. Blood pressure

High blood pressure (140/90 mm Hg or higher) is present in about 70% of people having a first heart attack and 77% of those having a first stroke. But the effects on the heart can be felt even at lower levels. Today, a level of 130 to 139 mm Hg systolic pressure — or 80 to 89 mm Hg diastolic pressure — is termed pre-hypertension and regarded as a risk factor for heart disease.

Don't smoke or drink caffeine before a blood pressure measurement. Sit quietly for a few minutes before testing, and breathe normally during the measurement.

How often: At least once every two years; annually, if your blood pressure is above 120/80 mm Hg.

4. Lipid levels

First heart attacks and strokes are often fatal, especially for women, and the risk may depend on the level of fats in your blood. Total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, and triglycerides (an especially important cardiovascular indicator in women) are easily measured with a blood test called a lipid panel or profile.

How often: At least every five years; more often if you're being treated for unfavorable lipid levels.

5. Blood sugar

Type 2 diabetes damages your blood vessels and can lead to heart disease, kidney failure, and blindness. It becomes more common with age, especially in the late 60s and early 70s. The key indicator is a high level of glucose in the blood, which can be tested for after you fast for several hours (fasting glucose) or at intervals after you consume a precise quantity of sugar (glucose tolerance test). A newer test, glycated hemoglobin A1c, may be more informative, because it provides a snapshot of average blood sugar levels over the preceding months.

How often: Every three years.

6. Hearing evaluation

About 30% of people ages 65 and over, and 14% of those ages 45 to 65, have some type of hearing loss, which not only can be isolating but also may interfere with cognitive skills. Your clinician may have you complete a hearing questionnaire or see how well you understand words whispered from a short distance. A formal hearing test involves a 30- to 60-minute session with a certified audiologist.

How often: It depends on your age and other factors, such as exposure to hazardous noise levels at work.

7. Eye examination

Aging is a risk factor for several sight-robbing conditions, including glaucoma (increased pressure inside the eye that damages the optic nerve), cataract (clouding of the lens), macular degeneration (the breakdown of cells responsible for central vision), and diabetic retinopathy (which damages the light-sensitive cells at the back of the eye). A comprehensive visual exam screens for all these disorders.

How often: Start at age 50 and return as often as your clinician advises — generally every two to four years until age 65 and every one to two years after that.

8. Colorectal cancer screening

Everyone over age 50 should be screened for colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancers and precancerous growths called polyps can be detected with colonoscopy, an inspection of the entire colon with a viewing tube inserted through the rectum, and abnormal growths can be removed during the same procedure. For all these tests, the colon must be cleaned out beforehand with dietary restrictions and strong laxatives, enemas, or both.

Stool tests are designed to specifically detect blood from the colon.

How often: For people over age 50 who are at average risk for colorectal cancer, stool testing annually, sigmoidoscopy every five years, or colonoscopy every 10 years.

9. Breast cancer screening

For women over 50, professionals agree that mammography, a specialized x-ray of compressed breast tissue, helps detect breast cancers at their earliest and most treatable stage. In addition, a breast exam by your doctor, called a clinical breast exam (CBE), may find a lump not visible on x-ray.

Digital mammography detects more tumors than standard mammography (especially in dense breasts) and may deliver less radiation per examination. If you find a breast lump, tell your doctor, even if you're scheduled for a mammogram soon or have recently had one.

How often: Mammography every one to two years; CBE annually.

10. Cervical cancer screening

Screening for cervical cancer is a major preventive medicine success story. A Pap smear taken from a swab of the cervix can detect cancerous or precancerous cells, and those cells can be removed. A test for cancer-causing strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV) has become available and can be performed at the same time as the Pap test in women who need it. Mortality from the disease is highest in women who've never been screened. You don't need Pap tests after a hysterectomy, unless your uterus was removed because of cancer or your cervix was left intact.

How often: Pap every two to three years if you've had three normal annual Pap tests in a row. You can stop at age 70 if you've had three normal Pap tests in the last 10 years.

(Reference: Harvard Health Publications)

NEXT WEEK:

Get a copy of the Yemen Times for a special report on World Leprosy Day which takes place on January 30.



Over the past 10 years, DNO Yemen AS, with its country headquarters in Sana'a and its Field Operations in the Hadramout Governorate, has played an important role in the onshore Exploration and Production of Oil and Gas.

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The position, which is only open to Yemeni nationals, reports direct to the HR Manager.

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Should you wish to develop your career within our developing operations please, in the first instance, e-mail your resume, along with an introductory letter detailing as to why you should be considered for this position to: careers@dnoyemen.no

Please include your chosen specialty in the "Subject" box and attach one integrated MS Word file. Applications with attachments in excess of 1MB in size, cannot be accepted. We regret that we can only respond to those applicants who meet the above criteria.

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JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Oxfam, an international NGO working with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering, has been working in Yemen since 1983. Oxfam announces the following vacancies for its Programme

Finance Assistant

Contract Ends: 31 March 2011
Location: Sayoun

You will be responsible for the overall aspects of cash management including monthly cash forecast and verify all payment requests and ensure completeness and accurateness of supporting documents and release payments on timely manner. You will input transaction in cashbooks and upload them into Oxfam's financial system on weekly basis and ensure proper filling system is in place.

We are looking for someone with at least degree in finance related subject or professional accountancy qualification, and two years financial and accounting experience in a similar role. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated communication skills and the ability to work well with others and as part of a team. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills in both English and Arabic and sound computer skills.

Human Resources Assistant

Contract Ends: 31 March 2011
Location: Haradh

In this role you will have proven experience in Human Resources and proven knowledge of day-to-day HR business processes. You will be responsible to maintain HR system, collate information and draw from a variety of information and sources.

We are looking for someone with at least 2 years of demonstrable progressive experience in HR. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated communication skills and the ability to work well with others and as part of a team. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills in both English and Arabic, and will possess good computer skills.

To apply

If you believe that you have the qualifications and skills to excel in either of these positions, please send a copy of your CV and a cover letter, clearly stating the job you are applying for, to yemenjobs@oxfam.org.uk or send a fax to 01 450170.

Closing date for applications is 31st January 2011

Please apply immediately as we will be interviewing suitable candidates before the closing date

VACANCY

"MARIE STOPES INTERNATIONAL - YEMEN is a non for profit UK based INGO working in Reproductive health, Family Planning, training and Health Education in Yemen.

MSIY exist in Yemen since 1998 based on the cooperation agreement between the Government of the Republic of Yemen (Ministry of Planning & Development) and MARIE STOPES INTERNATIONAL.

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- Well developed interpersonal and team skills and proven ability to be flexible in demanding situations.
- Previous work experience, ideally with non-governmental organizations would be an advantage.
- Good written and spoken English is essential.
- Sympathy with the aims and objectives of Marie Stopes International.
- Commitment to humanitarian principles and action.
- Competent IT skills and data base management
- Well organized and can work under pressure

2. Finance officer for the MSIY

The ideal candidate will have :

- Good understanding of budgeting, internal controls, payments and procurement process, preparation of accounts, dealing with internal/external auditors, preparation of different financial presentations and reports
- Preferably Master degree holders or Graduate in accounting field 4-5 year experience in finance, accounts and audit field
- Well developed interpersonal and team skills and proven ability to be flexible in demanding situations and learning attitude.
- Previous work experience, ideally with non-governmental organizations would be an advantage in relevant filed.
- Good written and spoken English is essential.
- Sympathy with the aims and objectives of Marie Stopes International.
- Competent IT skills and accounting software's, sun systems etc
- Well organized and can work under pressure with flexible time2 verifiable

Deadline for CVs and Cover letters in English is 29 January 2011. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

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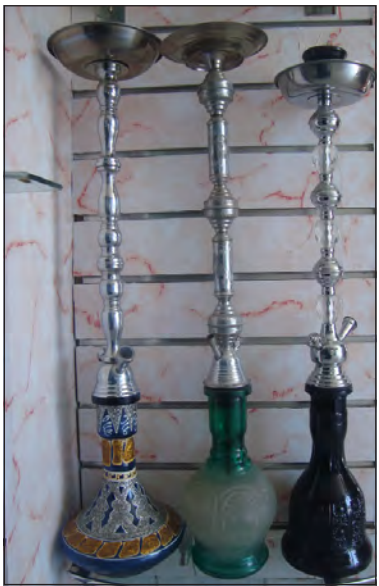
Smoking increasingly popular among Yemeni girls

Story and Photos By:
Shatha Al-Harazi

In Yemen men and women who do the same thing are often looked upon differently. Smoking is a prominent example. Among men smoking is considered a habit that might harm one's health, but it is not at all inappropriate. However, when people see a woman having a cigarette they forget about her health and instead concentrate on her reputation: many will even think of her as a whore.

Although smoking can damage a woman's reputation, having a cigarette and sharing a shisha with friends has become fashionable pastimes among Yemeni girls. In fact, women in Yemen smoke more than ever before, both in public and private.

Emad Mohammed, who owns The Smokers World Store for Shisha, confirmed this trend. He told the Yemen Times that more than 20 girls a day visit his shop and buy cigarettes, tobacco and other items related to smoking. Most of Mohammed's female customers are over 20 years old.



Larger shisha pipes have usually been used at homes but these are not easy to take to qat sessions.

Restaurants that serve shisha also benefit from the growing fashion. Despite the fact that such establishments do not have the best name and conservative families do not allow their women to go there, it is not uncommon today to see a group of ladies in such a restaurant having a smoke together.

Yemen Times visited one of the establishments that is known for serving shisha to women as well as men. Unfortunately, the owner of this Egyptian restaurant was afraid to lose his good reputation and denied this.

"We don't allow women to smoke here at all, as we were told we will face many troubles if we do," he said.

"When we first opened people from the area told us that if we allow women to smoke we will ruin our reputation and we will have problems with the Yemeni security services," he added.

While the claim that the security services chase female smokers might be an exaggeration, women who light up in public areas are certainly looked down upon by fellow Yemenis.

Najla'a Abdarhman is a woman who does not fear to smoke openly. She shared one of her experiences with the Yemen Times.

"I once had a fight with the hairdresser. When I started smoking she told me to get out of her place because I would ruin its reputation," she said.

While more and more women smoke in public, Najla'a's behaviour is still the exception rather than the rule. Most female smokers told the Yemen Times that they smoke secretly and only within a small circle of friends.

Private qat sessions are the most popular occasion for girls to have a smoke. Some of them bring their own shishas and show off with the fancy style or material that it is made of. Instead of water they often use different kinds of juices that usually match the taste of the tobacco.

The girls' parents often do not know that their daughters smoke or even own a shisha. The new small shishas that come in small boxes help them hide their secret.

Maha Ahmed is a high school student who smokes shisha and cigarettes almost every day. She has her own equipment but keeps it at her friend's place so that her parents would never suspect she smokes. She visits her friend almost every day and they have a shisha together.

"I smoke because I like to figure out what people like about smoking," Maha explained.

Smoking to socialize

According to university student Shahed Hussein, smoking has become an important way of socializing among young women. Herself a non-smoker, Shahed increasingly feels like an outsider among her fellow students.

"My friends don't invite me to Qat sessions or social gatherings any more. They used to before but as I always refused to try the shisha they stopped inviting me," said Shahed. She fears that her social life will suffer if she does not start smoking herself.

"I need a social life. Most of my friends are smokers and there is no alternative way to socialize with them," she complained.

Girls take up the habit of smoking for various reasons. Some of them simply want to fill their spare time while others imitate their mothers. Many get a first taste of smoking when preparing their mother's shisha.

Reem Mohammed has been smoking for more than eight years. She said that some of her friends are already addicted to smoking.

"Smoking shisha has become a normal habit for girls," she said, adding that going from shisha to cigarettes is only a small step.

"Among ten girls you will definitely find three who smoke cigarettes as they are too busy to prepare the shisha. In addition, cigarettes are easier to hide," Reem explained.

A smoker as a bride?

The secret popularity of smoking among young women has not improved the reputation of female smokers in Yemeni



New smaller shisha sizes come with small carry boxes and most girls use these as it is easier to hide in public.

society. Mohammed Bahajry works as a pharmacist and would never marry a smoker.

"A girl who smokes is someone who doesn't have good manners," he told the Yemen Times.

Bahajry believes that smoking among women is the first step towards more indecent behavior.

"It is dangerous when a girl thinks she can do anything she wants. I personally consider female smokers as whores," he said.

Bahajry believes that it is society that has made him think this way. It is therefore not surprising that his views are widely shared among the male population. Around 20 men that were asked by the Yemen Times about their views of women smokers reiterated Bahajry's statements.



There are various shisha flavors and women interviewed said they usually prefer grape and even add grape juice to their shisha.

Amani Al-Thamari: Yemeni actress talks about the joys and challenges of her passion

By: Raghda Gamal

Amani Al-Thamari is a theatre and television actress. She started acting on the stage at the Cultural Theater in Taiz. Al-Amani has now been a regular actress in Sana'a for the last six years, appearing in both theater and television productions.

Can you speak a little about how began your career?

Good luck allowed me to begin my career performing in popular television productions such as 'Keny Meni' and 'The Trip', directed by Ha'el Al-Selwi, who also helped to introduce me to this industry from the outset.

I also performed in several successful plays during the early stages of my career, such as 'To Whom?' written by Mabhkhou Al-Nowaera and directed by the female director Ansaf Alawi. I can't remember all the plays that I have worked on. There are hundreds of them.

How old were you when you knew you could act?

When I was in the fourth grade I fell in love with the stage of my school theater. I used to act in school productions.

Did your family encourage you to do this as a career?

Everybody in my family encouraged me; my parents, brothers and even my uncles, who said to me, "We are with you, so keep on going".

My colleagues in the artistic community also have encouraged me a lot since I began. I remember when the actor Abdul-Salam Zalat said to me that, "You have to act and be serious about it". All,

without any exceptions, supported and encouraged me.

How do you think society views you as an actress?

Several years ago people's perceptions about acting were limited and to be a Yemeni actress was seen as shameful. These days however the situation is getting better, although it is still the case that some people do not accept the work of actresses. Nevertheless, provided that the audience is interested in art, the reactions are extremely encouraging, such as when people come up to take pictures with me and old ladies who encourage me when they see me at wedding parties. Such reactions make me feel happy that I was able to reach to the audience.

What do you think of the situation of the Yemeni actresses in general?

On a professional level Yemeni actresses may find very good opportunities to perform but on a financial and psychological level she gets nothing! Yemeni actresses have never been honored by government agencies such as the Ministry of Culture.

Take me as an example, I performed at the Culture Center theater every Wednesday and participated in most of the plays until it's became my second home. Yet I still didn't get any encouragement nor honored by officials.

Do you feel any regret at choosing this path?

I have never felt any regret because acting was my childhood dream and therefore long before I entered for this field I thought about the consequences of this decision. Acting is my love and I will never regret it.

You accepted the role of Amal in the

hit play 'Ma'ak Nazel'. Tell me about this.

When I received a call from the director Amr Gamal asking me to play the role of Amal in the last performance at Sana'a, I did not hesitate for one moment, even though I was afraid because of the success and popularity of the play. But Amr's trust in me made me decide to play the role perfectly.

So I traveled immediately to Aden to start the rehearsal which lasted for four days. The crew helped me all the time and made me feel as though I was an old friend of theirs. Their confidence in me led to the success of this role.

Also what helped me was that, despite the play's popularity, I did not watch the play before taking this role and this helped me to avoid imitating the original actress.

Thank God that everyone that saw the show praised us and we received good reviews from the media.

Do you think that the Culture Center let you down when it did not provide you with enough microphones, thus affecting the sound quality of that production?

Well, I felt bad at the beginning, but successful actors and actresses can adapt to the circumstances around them and deliver their voice to end of the theater. So I did not feel that this problem affected my performance.

Tell me about your role as Lauzon in the Yemeni version of Molière's play 'The Imaginary Invalid'.

The Yemeni version of Molière's play 'The Imaginary Invalid' was directed by Adel al-Hakim with the support of the French Cultural Center. We trained for this play for almost five months and performed for two days in Sana'a and also

in Aden and Ibb.

Despite the lack of support from the Ministry of Culture, we performed a wonderful work and we even performed this play at the International Festival of Theatre in Algeria. During this performance in Algeria I played the role of Lauzon as well as the role of Angelique, which was a surprise to the public, especially because of the different personalities between the child and girl, Lauzon, and the young lady in love, Angelique.

In Algeria we received an honorable mention for our special performance. We are also willing to perform this play in other countries.

What is your favorite role?

My favorite roles are those two that we have discussed; the role of Amal in Ma'ak Nazel and the role of Lauzon in 'The Imaginary Invalid'. Lauzon was a very strong role and the role of Amal in Ma'ak Nazel allowed me the honor of working with Amr Gamal.

It has been observed that in the theatre productions you and your fellow actors appear very talented in playing strong roles, yet in front of the TV cameras the strength of the performances appear lower. Why this huge difference?



Because the theater is always available for young actors. We can produce a play without incurring large costs. To present a hit play you only need passion and talented actors and we have both of these.

On the other hand, TV work is quite different. It's seasonal work that takes place in only one month of the year, so

you find the majority of actors trying to nail any role in any series without focusing on what really suits them.

Furthermore, the small working budgets do not help television drama develop. Till this moment you'll find TV actors not getting paid for their roles by the Yemeni TV channels and, of course, the Ministry of Culture as usual does not offer any financial support for actors.

It is true that the situation is getting a little better as we are now working with three cameras instead of just one. Yemen has very talented actors and creative directors but there are no governmental organizations that support art.

What role do you wish to play that you feel would give a meaningful message to Yemeni society?

I wish to play a role that discusses the issue of child labor. I want to play a role of a girl in the streets.

What is your next job?

The only thing that I'm sure of is that I'll keep performing to the audience at the best of my ability.

Do you have words of thanks to anyone that you would like to send through the Yemen Times?

I would like to thank all the wonderful directors who I've worked with, such as Abdulaziz Al-Harazi and Amr Gamal, and also to all those who helped me since the beginning.

إعلانات صبوبة

جول رحلات الهبوط المنتظم للخطوط الجوية اليمنية للموسم الشتوي حتى ٢٠١١/٣/٢٦

Table with flight schedules for Yemen Airways, including columns for flight number, route, departure, and arrival times.

Job Vacancy advertisement seeking a Yemeni female Secretary with B.A. and 3-5 years experience. Contact: Samer_Hassan@PPc.ae or Fax: 967 1 427406

Advertisement for 'شركة النمر للنقل البري الداخلي' (Nimer Transport) with contact information and services.

Three cars for sale advertisement listing Kia Optima EX V6 model 2005, Toyota Hilux 4-door model 2007, and Kia Carnival V6LS model 2006.

Advertisement for 'مبنى جديد دور أرضي شقة مكونة من ٤ غرف صالة ٢ حمام ومطبخ' (New building ground floor apartment with 4 rooms, 2 bathrooms, and kitchen).

Advertisement for 'مكتب المحاسب القانوني عبده صالح' (Lawyer's office) providing legal services.

Advertisement for 'بكالوريوس علوم حاسوب' (Computer Science Bachelor's degree) with contact details.

Advertisement for 'مطلوب مدرس لغة إنجليزية لتدريس في' (English teacher needed) with contact information.

Advertisement for 'مطلوب مدرس لغة إنجليزية لتدريس في' (English teacher needed) with contact information.

Advertisement for 'بيت اربع لبن في صنعاء شارع هائل خلف معرض القمعة للملابس حجر مسلح مكونة من ثلاثة طابق رياض ٧٢٤٩٩٥٠٢٢٢' (4-story house in Sana'a).

Advertisement for 'مركز تدريب وتعليم الكمبيوتر' (Computer training center) with contact details.

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Yemeni photographer receives an international award in Kuwait

By: Yemen Times Reporter

Ebrahim Al-Sharif, a 24-year-old Yemeni photographer who was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, won an international photography award earlier this month.

Al-Sharif was granted second prize in the Al-Sheikh Fahad Al-Ahmed International Award for Charity Work at the Courtyard Hotel in Kuwait City. He was honored by the Kuwaiti Prime Minister, Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah; the deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of State for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah; and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

But Al-Sharif was not the only one who walked away with gifts in his hand. He also handed trophies to some leaders, such as the Kuwaiti and the Turkish Prime Ministers.

The awards ceremony was attended by a few hundred sheikhs, government ministers, diplomats and business leaders.

Al-Sharif said that his "love for photogra-



Motherhood forces a weak and old woman to carry her disappointed daughter who is about 14 and unable to walk.

phy" kept him going and that to him "a picture is a cause, message, art and a language understood by all people despite their differences".

"Photography is extremely important, just like reading or writing," he said.

Al-Sharif said that this was the first time that he won an award for his photography.

"I started taking photos because of my sister, Amira, who helped me to discover my talent which is full of inspiration and creativity. Also, some of my friends felt attracted and affected by my photos which gave me a magic push with a sense of emotion in this field four years ago," he added.

"I love going on photographic trips with the Yemen Photographic Society members who all love photography. I love both free photography and a free press because these are means to represent our issues and cultural richness through pictures and articles."

Al-Sharif said that Yemeni photographers had a tough time locally though because many newspapers and the general public "don't appreciate their work".

"So often we face a bad situation as some newspapers ask to publish our photos for free which is very disappointing and frustrating because there is no care about their intellectual copyright. That is why I turned to the Internet to target a large network of interested people, where I can show my photos on Facebook, Flickr, photography websites and I have my own website that I use to show others all of my pictures, designs, and



Yemeni photographer Ebrahim Al-Sharif (second from left) receives his photo prize in Kuwait earlier this month.

articles," explained Al-Sharif.

Al-Sharif has participated in various international photography exhibitions and contests. His work has been exhibited in ten Yemeni provinces, three American states and in Kuwait City. Soon he will also exhibit in Istanbul.

Al-Sharif is also the secretary-general of the Yemen Photographic Society. He says this association "seeks to cooperate with all Yemeni and foreign organizations in the field of photography to support photographers in all areas".

Al-Sharif said what he liked most about photography was "visiting new places and documenting life".

"I photograph the beauty of nature because Yemen has a lot of nature. I also think that we need to photograph negative habits of society so that can be avoided and so that we can improve with time by showing them the right way to make our lives better. Pictures are moral weapons of mass destruction," said Al-Sharif.

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Al-Sharif said his dream would be to work as an underwater photographer because "there is no-one in Yemen to document the wealth of creation living in the depths of the sea".

But for now he is focusing on showing foreigners a picture of the Yemen that he loves.

"I was shocked when I knew that some people in the Middle East and North Africa who are Arabs don't know a lot or anything about Yemen. Once, in Montana, in the USA, my Algerian classmate Nacer told me that he thought Yemen was a desert country and that people live in tents and their transport is by camels and there is no internet," he said.

"Because of that, I decided to participate in international photographic exhibitions to show people abroad a view of Yemen from a Yemeni photographer's perspective."

He said that his trip to Kuwait was inspir-

ing. "Some people in Yemen describe me as crazy when I take photos, but in Kuwait no one asked me why I take photos. This encouraged me to do more photography," he said.

He said that he wanted to thank "all of my supportive family especially my sister, Amira, the first photojournalist in Yemen who won many awards and also did many exhibits".

"I also want to thank the photographers Salah Haider, the official spokesman of the Arab Union of Photographers; Abdullah Al-Harazi, a television cameraman; Fadhil Al-Amdi and a technical manager at Brand Company and all image lovers in Yemen," said Al-Sharif.

For more on Al-Sharif's work log on to www.ealsharif.com and for information about Yemeni photographers log on to www.yemeneyes.com



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