

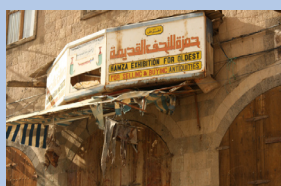
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Poor education system feeds children labor in Yemen

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Dec. 13 — While poverty in Yemen has always been, and continues to be blamed as the main culprit behind the high rate of children dropping out schools, Yemeni experts confirm that the poor education system in Yemen has forced many children into the labour market.

Ali, 13, stopped going to school after he failed the sixth grade twice. His father owns a grocery store and two stockrooms.

"Now I'm helping dad in running the grocery. It's better than going to school, where teachers were always across at me. Here dad is proud of me," Ali said.

"Though I failed in maths in school, here I can count well. I can deal with complex digits," he said with wide smile.

Ali is just one of the many children who drop out of school and join the labour market.

"We found out that not just children who belong to poor families are working and leaving school to enter the labor market, but also children belonging to the middle class," said Mona Salem, Chairwoman of the Child Labor Unit in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

"Children and parents are often disappointed by their failure to gain good, or even passing marks at schools, and some parents believe that their kids are not intelligent or cut out for education so they are better off working and earning some money instead of learning," said Salem, confirming that much of the



School dropouts are the most serious issue impeding education in Yemen. Education system in Yemen in dire need of a complete overhaul in order to stimulate and retain the interest and intellect of today's Yemeni students

problem can be traced back to the education system, particularly the new curriculum that has been taught since the mid-nineties.

"As a mother, I face difficulties teaching my child, as I can't understand the new textbook. I wonder how the children whose parents are illiterate can understand without help, especially those who study in public schools," she wondered.

According to the report, the repeti-

tion and dropout rates are quite high at five percent among boys and 4 percent among girls.

Studies on child labor in Yemen indicated that 15 percent of working children are not enrolled in primary education, and 97 percent of working children have illiterate parents and are from poor families.

Children work in difficult, dangerous and non age-appropriate jobs, including stone bearing, working in iron workshops, and street-vending, to name a few. As a result, children may be exploited by gangs, and learn anti-social behaviors such as smoking and chewing qat, according to a report issued by The Yemeni Children's Parliament in 2008.

Higher expectations and hard reality

"We had high expectations which did not coincide with our reality," confessed Khaled Al-Jubari, director of the Syllabus Department at the Ministry of Education. "We want students to participate and become active, instead of being just passive recipients of information. For example, in science we want the students to reach the conclusions, and the scientific results through their own observations. However, we had to consider that not all teachers are qualified enough to deliver such lessons, and most schools lack the resources such as labs, learning materials, and libraries to carry out such research," he noted.

Jubari pointed out that the curricula have been going through a constant and gradual change, since the nineties. "The change in curriculum was invertible after Unification in 1990, as there was a need to streamline and unify the education system."

Based on academic review and consultation, the changed in the syllabus took place in 1993, and started being taught in 1994.

In a study published in 1998, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that the number of children aged between 10 to 14 years in the workforce was 2.2 million in 1994 compared to 1.6 million in 1991.

"It was a mistake," according to al-Jubari, not to consult the teachers about the curriculum.

"Two months ago, we had a meeting with 110 teachers belonging to

different governorates to discuss the issue of the curriculum."

Too many exercises in maths, typos, linguistic errors, intensive materials in social studies, unstructured lessons, and other issues have been found in the new curriculum, which burden the teachers as well as the students.

"There are few qualified teachers, however the majority, even those who have bachelor degrees, can't deal properly with children and cannot cope with the sudden changes that have occurred in the textbooks," said Sadaq Almajri, who is a teacher in one of the private schools. "Teachers themselves need training," he added, confirming that he has begun using the "stick" as a tool for disciplining the students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

"The situation is worse in public schools where teachers, have to deal with overcrowded classes."

Though physical punishment and psychological mistreatment of pupils has been illegal since 2001, this law has never really been applied, said Al-Jubari.

The educational system in Yemen is composed of three stages. The primary stage begins from the first to the ninth grade, then the secondary stage

is from the tenth to the twelfth grade and the final stage is the university stage, and it is for four years at least.

Still, school dropouts are the most serious issue impeding education in Yemen, which suffers high illiteracy rates, currently standing at 29.8 percent for men and 62.1 percent for women.

Nearly half of all children are not attending primary school, according to the Ministry of Education's Comprehensive School Survey for 2006. 46 percent of Yemen's 7.4 million primary school aged children do not attend school, leaving 3,971,853 in primary school. Altogether, 4,497,643 of children of all ages attend schools.

Al-Jubari said he has no idea if there is a link between the increased dropout rate and children joining the labour market, but he admitted that the education system in Yemen is suffering from a variety of maladies, starting with families, who pay far too little attention to their kids' education, right on through to teachers, many of whom are not qualified, and ending up with the curriculum, which is in dire need of a complete overhaul in order to not only try to keep up with international standards, but also to stimulate and retain the interest and intellect of today's Yemeni students.

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Bride free after divorce

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Dec. 13, — After 25 days in captivity, a bride who was kidnapped last month by tribal men was forced to divorce her husband and finally released.

The story goes back to October 21, when Saher Al-Riami, of Al-Riami tribe, was abducted from her house in Rada'a province, by her cousins, in a bid to prevent her wedding party—which was supposed to be October 29.

She was taken to her uncle's house in a remote tribal village in the same province, which is in the Al-Bidha governorate, where weapons are common, and life is ruled by tribal norms.

Sahar graduated from the Department of English last year. She was engaged for one and a half years ago to Ahmed, who belongs to different tribe in Sana'a. Ahmed also belongs to different social class, known as "Qabial," which is considered to be lower than Sahar's class, known as "Sadah."

Saher arrived to Sana'a for medical tests "I'm suffering pain on my ear due to the blow I have received on my face the day that kidnapped me," said Saher.

For 25 days Saher was locked in a small attic room was built to be a sniper room that tribal men use in tribal conflicts. "It was very cold, the wall was full of holes of gun shots, there was no furniture but the quilt I slept on. I

rejected to eat their food, as they might put some drugs or anything, I used to have canned food," Saher said.

"I wasn't alone though, old women of the village used to surround me. I think they aimed to insure that I didn't hide any communication tool, like a cell phone. They allowed me to use the phone few times to contact my brothers," she added.

Though her relatives, represented by her brothers and brothers-in-law contacted the securities to release Saher, their efforts were unsuccessful because of the power of the tribe.

"Then we decided to ask other sheikhs to interfere and asked the cousins to release Saher. Unfortunately the power of the tribes overpowered the state and the law in Yemen," commented Mohammed Hamid al-Deen, Sahar's relative who lives in Sana'a.

Her elder brother Abdulsalam, who has been considered her guardian since her parent's death, said he had to accept the sheikh's condition in order to get his sister released.

"The condition was to get divorced from her husband," said Hend, Saher's sister-in-law. "In our tribe, women can not marry from lower class," she noted. Abdulsalam signed a paper where he canceled the mirage contract and pledge to pay the groom the dowry back.

According to the marriage law in Yemen, women are typically prevented from controlling their own marriage

contracts. Women's male guardians—the father, brothers, uncles and cousins are the ones who put together this contract.

Traditional tribal law continues to have a direct impact on women's standing in Yemen, despite the government's attempt to promote women's rights, said studies.

Tribal law generally reflects the strongly patriarchal nature of rural society; it considers women to belong to men in their paternal lineage prior to marriage, and to their husband's family following marriage.

Tribal law typically denies a woman any inheritance of tribal lands if she marries outside her tribe in order to prevent lands passing from one tribe to another through intermarriage. Still, in many Yemeni tribal regions, the law permits women the same right of divorce as men, though this right is not normally granted to women without an extensive legal process.

Saher is going back Rada'a soon, where she will try to forget the tragedy she passed through, and move on her life. However, she said she is not sure if she can survive the psychological scars of her divorce. "Though we asked a religious sheikh about the legitimacy of this divorce, and his answer confirmed the forced divorce is not accepted. It's not legal. However, I don't think I will come back to my husband, because I'm afraid [my cousins] will harm him," she concluded.

Yemen seeks to improve tourism despite hardships

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, Dec. 12 — Amid security problems, crimes of kidnapping tourists and the country at war with rebels in the north, Yemen tries hard to improve its economy.

The Yemeni Ministry of Tourism held on Saturday its fourth consultative meeting to tourist leaders across the country to evaluate and promote the tourist sector, on which it depends to boost its economy.

"Yemen gives tourism great concern as a vital and promising sector," said Deputy Prime Minister for Interior Affairs Sadiq Abu Ras in the opening ceremony of the conference. "The country has taken practical steps ensuring stability and tourist growth to promote its economy."

He made it clear that the tourist sector is a promising economic sector in the framework of the five-year development plan besides agriculture, fishery wealth, oil and transference industry, in addition to enhancing institutional and legislative building which is suitable to tourism.

Abu Ras talked about the problems facing tourism in Yemen, saying kidnapping, terrorist acts, piracy, sabotage acts and rebellion hinder Yemen's tourist aspirations.

But he talked about improvement in government tourist performance through the Ministry of Tourism and about growth in tourism activity coming to Yemen in the past three years, despite these problems.

The meeting is annual convention to which all tourism leaders of public and private sector are brought together from across the country to discuss issues concerning the aspirations and concerns of tourism in Yemen. The conference also includes Yemen's tourism partners from France, Germany and Japan.

The conference discusses points of the Tourism National Strategy 2010-2025 and the strategic vision Yemen has agreed on with the International Tourist Organization and United Nations Development Program.

The two-day conference also discussed



Tourists dance "Bara'a" (A Yemeni traditional dance for men) during their visit to Wadi Dhar outside Sana'a city.

new projects to promote tourism for the year 2010 and the following years, the performance of offices of tourism in country's governorates and enhancing partnership between parties of tourist work from public and private sectors and professional organizations.

"The conference embodies communication between tourist leaders on national level and enhance partnership between tourist activity in public and private sectors and professional organizations," said Minister of Tourism Nabil Al-Faqih.

He said that Yemen's vision to tourist development is based on integrated and organized strategic planning and on Yemen's natural, historical and cultural components which enable Yemen to improve a sustainable tourist economy.

The strategy focused on completing and improving the institutional and legislative structure of the tourist sector and sustainable development by completing tourist infrastructure to attract investments. The strategy also focused on improving tourist facilities, promoting quality of services, raising tourism management skills, developing human resources and working on providing a safe tourist environment to

ensure tourists' safety.

On expectations on how the conference will serve tourism in Yemen Al-Faqih said the conference will do that by setting up scientific foundations to develop tourist sector on the basis of a vision extended to 2025 that falls in line with country's strategic vision.

"We hope from the conference will come applicable decisions, and we hope to implement the cabinet's decisions concerning tourism so that it can be promoted," said Chairman of Yemeni Tourism Union, Yahya Mohammad Abdullah Saleh.

The conference's first and important session, chaired by Al-Faqih, discussed a number of work papers on enhancing tourism, sustainable development of a tourist product, encouraging tourist investments, improving tourist facilities, improving tourist quality of tourist services, developing human resources, improving tourist awareness, enhancing tourism security and improving marketing and tourist promotion.

The other five sessions discussed new projects, surveying tourist facilities, manpower and the development of the performance of offices of tourism in governorates.

NGO, with Mareb communities work on development ideas

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, Dec. 12 — With support from the Pathfinder Organization, The Social Guidance Foundation (SGF) started its "Religious Leaders Project" (RLP) to spread development ideas in Mareb governorate last month.

The project, which may spread to other governorates if it succeeds, empowers preachers and religious scholars to help spread development ideas and play a significant social role in their communities.

Religious leaders from 14 Mareb districts will work with religious schools, local councils, sheikhs, dignitaries, and

local media spreading development ideas and enhancing community participation in development work.

The first of RLP's four stages will include field studies investigating the issues surrounding development in each community and how to include religious leaders in local development. Religious experts and preachers will use the results in the second stage: preparing a guide for messages on development. During the third phase, preachers and community leaders will study how to spread development concepts. The fourth stage will include campaigns with media pamphlets, sermons, theaters, media outlets, and religious preachers

and guidance groups.

SGF Executive Director Ammar Al-Najar explained that foreign experts will train preachers how to convey development messages.

"The idea of the project is targeting religious scholars to convey development messages to locals" he said. "The project will last for a complete year in Mareb. It depends on research and studies on people's needs.....If the project succeeds in Mareb, it will be implemented in several governorates in the country...."

Al-Najar said RLP is starting in Mareb because the governorate has the greatest of all needs for development ideas.

Child soldiers used by both sides in northern conflict - NGOs

SANAA, Dec. 10 — (IRIN) - The huge poster hanging in the press conference shows a Yemeni boy dressed in a traditional brown robe, holding a detonator in one hand, while with the other he lifts his gown to reveal packages strapped to his legs.

He looks just like what the local media reported him to be: a child suicide bomber. Above the poster the Arabic reads: "No, to the exploitation of children for destructive operations and terrorism."

Akram, the nine-year-old boy in the poster, stands up in front of the microphones and before the assembled crowd of officials, children's rights groups and journalists gathered in Sanaa last month for Yemen's first open discussion on child soldiers, and delivers his message: "To use children in war is wrong."

Rights groups estimate several thousand child soldiers have been involved in the war between government forces and Houthis rebels in northern Yemen since 2004.

The day after the press conference, Akram's father told IRIN his son never carried explosives. "Bomb? There was never any bomb. There were 30 detonators, but no explosives," he said.

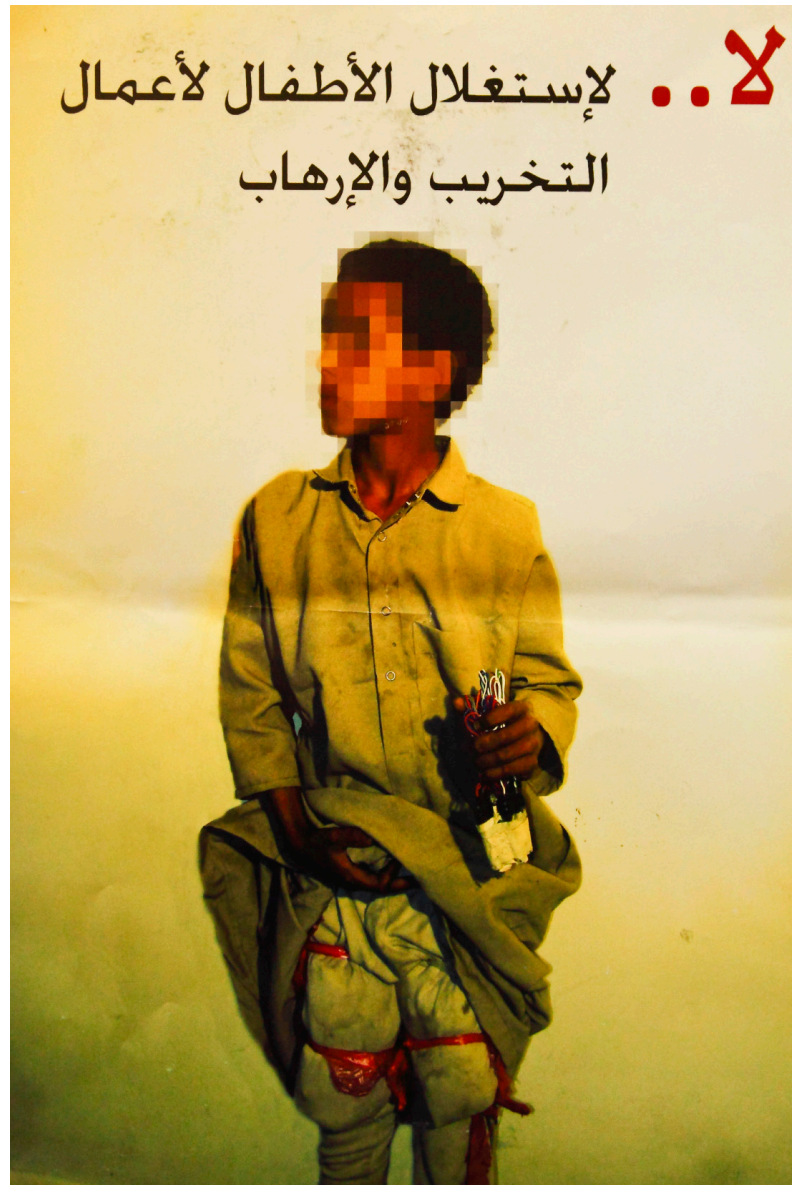
Akram said he was asked by a distant cousin to deliver a package of wires to a friend in Saada's Old City. "He said, 'This is just wires.' He tied the bags to my legs and put something in my pocket," said Akram.

Children in conflict

Whatever the truth about what Akram was carrying, his exploitation as a child soldier in Yemen is far from unique. A culture of under 18s carrying arms is ingrained in Yemen's tribal society.

"We have a saying here," said Ahmed al-Gorashi, chairman of Seyaj,

a local NGO working to prevent the use of child soldiers: "If you are old,



"No to the exploitation of children for destructive operations and terrorism," reads the poster of Akram.

Journalists and bloggers train on promoting human rights protection

By: Ali Saeed

BEIRUT, Dec. 12 — Around 30 journalists and bloggers from Arab countries, including Yemen, are participating in a five day regional workshop on human rights starting Saturday December 12.

The participants come from Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, UAE, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen.

The workshop was organized by the Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC), in cooperation with the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to enhance the role of the media in educating societies on human rights issues.

"This workshop comes within the objectives of the HRITC and especially educating people on human rights concepts," said Ezeldin Al-Asbahi, director of the center.

"We believe in the role of media in awareness and promoting values of tolerance and equality for all," he added. The organizers for this workshop

include bloggers, and the trainers' list recognized the important role new media is playing in the Arab world.

There are already more than twenty blogs about Yemen, most of which are politically related. Five of those blogs have been censored by the Yemeni government because of their outright attack against the government and public figures.

Most of the audience of the electronic media is below 35 years old, according to media experts, and advocating for human rights through the internet would influence the way of thinking of the future generations and make them more involved in social justice, democracy and human rights, according to Al-Asbahi.

During the opening of the workshop, Mukhaiber Ghasan, reporter at the human rights committee at the Lebanese Parliament said that promoting the culture of human rights and revealing violations are the duties of the media and through the new tools and techniques.

"We should encourage journalists and bloggers to report about human

rights issues and violations in order to exert pressure on decision makers," said Mukhaiber.

During the training participants will learn about the international legislations in human rights and how to create online campaigns to support human rights issues. "I have a blog and the motto of my blog is 'I blog for human rights,' but I do not know the legal background in this field," said Shahinaz Abdusalam, a blogger from Egypt.

"This workshop will help me to know about the legal issues in order for me to be more professional in my work and not become an easy target for those who carry out human right violations," she added.

The HRITC is a non-governmental organization and it was established in 1995 with the mission of enhancing human rights values in Yemen and in the Arab World.

The center is based in Yemen in Taiz city and it works with other NGOs in boosting the human rights situation to a better.



In Brief

SANA'A
Sri Lankan former President leaves Sana'a

The former President of Sri Lanka Chandrika Kumar left here on Thursday after a few days visit to Yemen.

Sri Lankan official took part in promoting women's political participation through dialogue which held on 7-9 December in Sana'a.

The workshop dealt with the best ways to enable women to contribute to decision making and reach Parliament and other governmental institutions.

Civil aviation delegation heads for Abu Dhabi

[12/December/2009]
SANA'A, Dec. 12 (Saba) - A delegation of the Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority headed on Saturday evening to the United Arab Emirates to participate in international conference for air observation to be held on Monday in Abu Dhabi.

Deputy Director of Sana'a International Airport, head of the delegation Mohammed al-Qarasi told Saba that the conference would discuss subjects

relating to observing problems and coordination among the participating countries in the fields of flight safety and increasing air movement in the Middle East.

\$ 35 mn in WB 'climate change aid' for Yemen

Yemen will get \$ 35 million in WB support for projects related to adapting with climate change in areas such as agriculture, water and coasts, the Alwaha newspaper reported on Wednesday.

Yemen was chosen among four other developing countries, given priority by donors in this regard, at the grant program in Britain last October.

The program is aimed at reducing disasters that happened and could happen because of climate change in these countries.

Yemen will also be one of nine Arab states where specific programs to adapt with climate change would be executed.

The country, in particular, is expected to face negative impacts by climate change including heatwaves and torrential rains that could badly affect main developmental sectors such as agriculture, health and coasts.

Yemeni peace official heads for Libya

Chairman of the Yemen Council for Peace and Solidarity (YCPS) Hasan Macki headed Saturday to the Libyan capital, Tripoli, on top of a delegation to attend the 23rd meeting of the Arab Solidarity Committees to start on Monday.

Upon departure, Macki told Saba that the Yemeni delegation will clarify current situations in Yemen to the meeting and the country's efforts being exerted to confront rebellion, terrorism and destruction actions in Saada governorate.

He also noted that they will review cooperation of Yemen with world countries with respect to counter-terrorism work to strengthen peace and stability in the region, in addition to discussing a number of related issues to the situations in the Arab region.

Scores arrested amid fears thousands more of Africans to arrive in December

Yemen arrested over the last two days more than 182 Africans, mainly from Ethiopia, who arrived in the country in last surge of illegal migrants.

23 women were among the migrants who were held in the provinces of Taiz, Mareb and Abyan.

The arrests took place amid fears thousands more of refugees from Horn of Africa countries would arrive at Yemen coasts this month.

83 of the infiltrators, aged 25-40, were arrested in Mareb, 33 including 15 women were arrested in Taiz and 66 including 8 females were seized in Abyan.

The arrested were gathered and handed to the authorities in Sana'a and Taiz and others sent to a refugee camp in Abyan.

The authorities expected about 14,000 people will arrive in Yemen this month within an unabated displacement of Africans.

Yemen received in November this year 2690 refugees, most of whom came from Somalia and Ethiopia.

They arrived in Hadramout, in the east, Taiz, Hajjah and Hodeida in the west and Aden in the south, on smuggling boats whose owners usually force passengers to swim in deep waters to Yemeni coasts.

In this regard, Yemen said about 120 Africans died in the year when overcrowded boats sank or as smug-

glers threw refugees far in deep sea to avoid marine patrols off Yemen.

Dozens of thousands arrived in Yemen in 2009, according to official reports, which also noted that the number of the Africans who have already arrived in the country in recent years exceeded 700,000 people.

HAJJAH
CARE preps study on displaced conditions

Assistant Undersecretary of Hajjah province Ismail al-Mohiam discussed here on Thursday with Care International Organization's expert Wolf Gang the humanitarian situation of displaced people due to the insurgency war in Saada province.

In the meeting, the Care's expert pointed out that his current visit to Hajjah province aims at carrying out a field study on the displaced conditions to help the organization to intervene in light of this study which is to be started next week.

He expressed the organization's readiness to present a number of humanitarian aid through a number of programs to help displaced receivers outside the camps in some districts.

In this regard, al-Mohaim reviewed efforts exerted by the local authority and humanitarian organizations to provide the humanitarian aid for the displaced during the past period.

He affirmed the local authority's readiness to offer all needful facilities to the Care organization and the other international organizations so as to contribute to reducing displaced people suffering.

The discussions dealt with the necessary needs for the displaced, especially those who are outside the camps in al-Mezraq area in the province and the possibility of organization's support to them and to the people who lodge them outside the camps.

LAHJ
2 injured as separatists take advantage of Lahj motorcyclist march

A civilian and a soldier were seriously injured when separatists detonated a bomb during a walk by motorcyclists in Yemen's southern province of Lahj, the Almotamar website reported.

The march, which started early Tuesday night in Lahj's capital, Hawta, for a fourth straight day turned violent as the fans of the southern anti-government movement took advantage of it, local officials said.

The bomb was exploded from an alley and coincided with rioting as police tried to open Sana'a-Aden road and a nearby subway that were closed by saboteurs.

Saboteurs blocked the roads by burning tires and putting rocks in them.

Motorcyclists in the province protested holding their motorbikes by the province traffic authority under a cabinet decision calling for numbering motorbikes and drive licenses.

Lahj is one of the south provinces experiencing unrest by those seeking better rights and the fans of southern anti-government movement.

Protestors attacked the people and public properties, clash with police and sometimes commit terrorist attacks.

Scores were killed this year, including 89 people and soldiers in Dhale, in south rioting, according to official reports.

ADEN
2nd World Conference on 'Women, Science, and Development' starts

The second International Congress on Women, Science and Development began on Saturday in Yemen's commercial capital of Aden.

About 12 countries are taking part in the three-day event being organized by the Women Center for Research and Training at the Aden University in cooperation with the Yemeni Women Association for Science and Technology and the Women's Foundation in Developing countries.

72 work papers would be presented in 12 sessions that deal with the social gender issues in areas such as economy, education, health, sciences and technology, rights and gender empowerment.

The conference is being held under the auspices of Prime Minister Ali Muhammad Mujawar.

At the opening, speeches were delivered by ministers of Human Rights Huda Al-Ban, rector of the university Abdul Aziz Saleh Bin Habtoor and chairperson of the Women Center for Research and Training, with all underscoring the importance of the meeting.

They said it is landmark and comes as a natural result of strides the women in developing countries have made.

At the opening, some donor organizations, such as the Dutch Project and the UN Population Fund were honored.

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A plastic art exhibition for twelve artists from Aden was launched on the margin of the meeting as well.

MUKALLA
Foundation stone laid for Sheikh Khalifa residential city

Hadramout Governor Salem al-Khanbashi alongside with UAE ambassador to Yemen Abdullah Al-Mazrouei laid the foundation stone on Saturday for building 200 residential units within the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zaid Al Nahyan City project for flood-affected people in the province.

The governor expressed thanks and appreciation of Yemeni government and people for the humanitarian aid presented by UAE during the heavy rains and floods disaster witnessed by provinces of Hadramout and Mahrah in October, 2008.

Al-Khanbashi said that this position by UAE affirms the depth of brotherly relations between the two countries, praising what has been presented and the field activities carried out by the

Red Crescent Society of UAE after the disaster.

For his part, the UAE ambassador pointed that this residential project for the flood-affected people comes on the directives of the UAE President. He hoped completion of this project within the specified period of time.

Executive Director of Fund for reconstructing flood-affected areas in Hadramout and Mahrah provinces Abdullah Mutaafi told Saba the project of city for flood-affected people in Hadramout, being funded by The UAE Red Crescent, includes 1000 residential units on a total area of 600,000 square meters.

He pointed out that the fund has assigned the preliminary works of infrastructure, including roads, water, electricity, telecommunications and sewage systems, to local contractors as a prelude to the actual start of the construction work to build this integral project in February 2010, which is expected to be completed in March, 2011

Their News

A Jihad Against Violence: Muslim Women Struggle for Peace on International Human Rights Day

New York, NY, December 10, 2009. As the world comes together today to celebrate the 61st anniversary of International Human Rights Day, we, the women of WISE (Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality) demand that violence against Muslim women come to an end.

Violence against women not only affects women and their families, but also the communities and societies we live in. Violence impedes women's development, access to education and health, and equal rights in the family which in turn hinders the progress and development of communities and societies. As the World Economic Forum's 2009 Global Gender Gap Index points out, 18 of the 25 lowest-ranking countries are Muslim-majority countries. It is time to end the violence against Muslim women and allow our communities to flourish in peace.

Today, WISE women leaders around the world are reclaiming the rich legacy that Muslim women have had in the history of Islam in order to end violence against women. Using their Islamic faith to justify and inspire Muslim women's empowerment, WISE women aim to build a cohesive, global movement of Muslim women that will reclaim women's rights in Islam, enabling them to make dignified choices and fully participate in creating just and flourishing societies. A universal declaration for Muslim women and the cornerstone of the WISE movement,

the WISE Compact highlights the basic rights of Muslim women. In particular, it focuses on the need to end violence against women and as its signatories, members of the WISE community commit themselves to the realization of this endeavor, 'We are dedicated to protecting and promoting life by promoting the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health of Muslim women and by eliminating violence against Muslim women.' Similarly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the importance of life and security for all individuals in Article 3; 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.'

WISE is working in several areas to end violence against women. WISE's Shura Council, a global council of Muslim women scholars, activists and specialists, recently launched their campaign Jihad against Violence, which uses religiously-grounded arguments against violence. In addition, WISE is collaborating with a number of women's organizations around the world, including in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt to improve women's rights and end violence against women. WISE women from the Noor Educational Centre in Afghanistan are creating the first holistic gender-sensitive Imam training program in Kabul and surrounding areas. In Pakistan, WISE women from the organization Bedari are organizing advocacy efforts including outreach material and street theater performances in an effort to raise awareness about domestic violence against women. WISE women from the organization Egyptian Association for

Society Development have developed an economic incentive and religious education project to end Female Genital Cutting (FGC) practices in surrounding neighborhoods of Cairo.

For more information, please go to www.wisemuslimwomen.org.

The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) is a program of the American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA) and the Cordoba Initiative (CI). ASMA aims to elevate the discourse on Islam and foster environments in which Muslims thrive through interfaith collaboration, youth and women's empowerment, and arts and cultural exchange. The Cordoba Initiative works to improve relations between the Muslim World and the West by offering innovative, viable, and sustainable solutions with concrete outcomes.

Join the Copenhagen Rapid Response Team

During the Copenhagen climate negotiations, Dec. 7-19, the Energy Action Coalition, its partners, and youth delegates in Copenhagen will be coordinating rapid response efforts in the United States so that the movement can receive breaking updates and collectively engage in the negotiations.

With your help, we'll assemble a Rapid Response team of hundreds of people so that on a moments notice we can generate thousands of phone calls, get our message out to the media, and effectively mobilize together.

The goal of this rapid response team is no small task: to affect the U.S. ne-

gotiation position. But if enough of us engage in a timely way together, we can do just that by:

- Using the media to paint a picture of Copenhagen and our expectations for the negotiations and the Obama Administration
- Demonstrating grassroots support for bold action

As part of the Rapid Response team, you'll be expected to devote 1-2 hours of your time at least every other day to mobilizing around the negotiations. You'll receive breaking updates through emails and phone calls from youth delegates in Copenhagen (who are setting up a phone (skype!) bank).

All of the actions will be focused on demonstrating that there is an active group following and concerned about the negotiations, and that they are actively shaping public opinion of the Obama administration by talking to lots of people and inspiring them to take action and sharing the story of Copenhagen through social and earned media. We'll be submitting LTEs, generating thousands of phone calls, and using social media to get the message out.

To sign up, and make climate change history, visit: <http://www.powershift09.org/rapidresponse>

SEVEN Fund announces photography competition

The SEVEN Fund is pleased to announce the 'I Am an Entrepreneur' photography competition. This competition recognizes the outstanding use of photography to tell compelling stories of role model entrepreneurs from

around the world. Anyone is welcome to participate in this competition.

The competition will award twelve (12) prizes, one per month, over a period of one year. Each month, one finalist will be selected and will receive a prize of \$100.

The grand prize winner (selected from among the 12 finalist photographs) will receive \$1,000 at the end

of the year.

Important Dates: The competition will run from January 2010 to December 2010. The first of eleven finalist prizes will be awarded on January 30, 2010. The grand prize will be awarded on January 30, 2011.

Submission: To submit a photo or learn more, please visit: <http://www.sevenfund.org/entrepreneur-image/>



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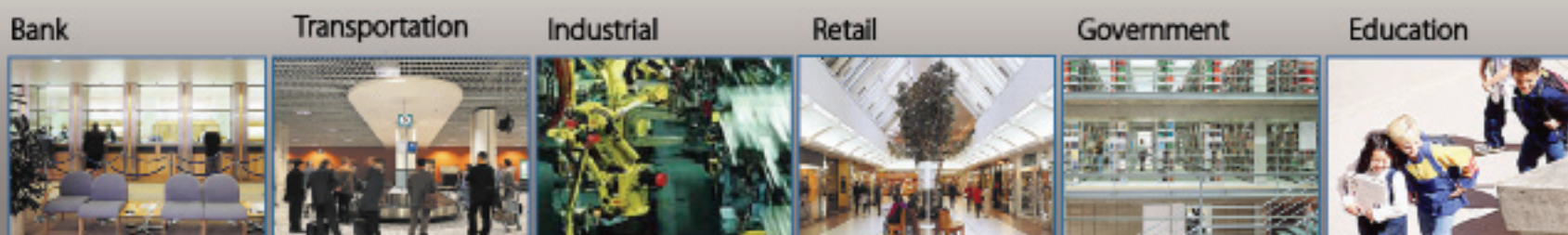
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Noor al-Deen Sabr : Prison for the innocent and crazy men

By: Nisreen Shadad
For the Yemen Times

On October 2, Sana'a Police arrested Noor al-Deen Sabr (18), and Saleem Mosfir Hasan (30), in al-Wahdah, Sana'a. Never showing evidence to support their charge that the young men planned on delivering fuel for Houthis, the police released the two on November 20. Noor al-Deen Sabr about their detention talked about their detention

"They asked us questions once at the beginning, then left us for fifty days. The condition for freeing us was a personal guarantor (someone who would ensure authorities in another area address the crime and suspect)... My father brought a guarantor, the Sheik of our tribe, the deputy of the Ministry of Health, and the officer of al-Horia Police Office in Sana'a. But they refused. After forty



Nor Al-Deen (left) and his father Salem Hasan.

days, they accepted this guarantee."

In prison

Sabr confirmed that the authorities released prisoners who admitted they were related to al-Houthis, while keeping him and Saleem without evidence.

Sabr recalled his experience staying with prisoners suffering from mental illness: "I wonder why they are kept with us. I really pity them, but it is not right for us to be together. They make the room dirty, and there is no cleaning staff. We asked the officers to be in a different room, but they refused. Even the toilets are not cleaned at all. We get sick because of the dirty place we live in. It is torture to live in such a dirty place."

Sabr explained that prisoners can pay 100 R.Y. to have someone clean their room, but no one will clean the bathroom.

"My mental state worsened day after

day. The days I spent in the prison lead me to believe that the oppressed are imprisoned and the criminals released," Sabr said bitterly. "The Yemeni government doesn't respect the laws," he added.

"There are no blankets, prisoners whose families send them blankets can protect themselves from the cold weather, but those who are ignored from their families are ignored as well in the prison. When we get sick, we tell them to transfer us to the hospital and we would pay for everything, but they reply 'die'. The only thing we do when we get sick is give them money to buy pain relievers like aspirin."

Noor al-Deen works with his brother in a telecom center and Saleem Hasan drives a taxi.

Saleem left Sa'ada to sell pomegranate in Sana'a. Afterwards, he spent three days with relatives in Dahamar. Sabr rode with Saleem on his way back; On the way, Saleem bought 12 empty

barrels at 30,000 R.Y from the Matna area, at the borders of Sana'a." The police stopped the car in al-Sabaha.

Saleem offered to bring the gasoline barrels when he learned that carrying them is illegal. The officers refused and arrested them and a 7 year-old boy. Sabr's father picked up the child the next day.

According to the information HOOD received (the executive security of HOOD organization for defending rights and freedoms, Ahmed Arman said there are many people arrested because they are from Sa'ada or driving a car demonstrated it is from Sa'ada, in addition to the barrels, police arrested the men because the license plate number (10), demonstrated it is from Sa'ada.

Sabr now plans on leaving his work in Sana'a to find a job in the village. Although he will not have the convenience of a capital, safety is more important to Sabr now.

JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE CAPITAL (9)

Red alert for tourism



By: Judith Spiegel
For the Yemen Times

The Old City of Sana'a is crowded with tour groups. Spanish, English, Italian, French and Dutch can be heard in the shops and at the hotel desks everywhere. In Manakha the diwan of the hotel is full of clapping people, enjoying the local music and dance. Tomorrow, they will travel to Hudeyda and then to Kamaran for some diving. Next week, they will go to Shahara and Sada'a in the North.

This was once. Now, when there is a power cut, the hotel manager in Shibam does not turn on the generator because the hotel has only one guest. In Kawkaban the hotels are empty. In the Old City of Sana'a, hotels offer foreign students rooms for 240 USD a month. The bus to Hudeyda only has one foreigner in it. In Manakha, the dancers in the hotel dance for three guests. In Thulla, the only visitor of the day is being jumped on by tens of vendors trying to make some business. The diving centre at Kamaran is deserted and the North is off limits altogether.

Mohammed Al Nuzaili, a travel agent who has been working in the tourist industry for over fifteen years, says that this the worst crisis tourism ever suffered in Yemen. "We had crises before, like the civil war in 1994. But the war ended on 11 July and on the 1st of August we started to get groups again, like nothing happened. Now, it is almost down to zero, even 9/11 did not affect us like this".

Things started to change when the kidnappings turned from rather friendly affairs into frightful situations in which the hostages sometimes were killed. Al Nuzaili explains that this triggered the European countries to put Yemen in the "red zone". He means the travel advices issued by the ministries of foreign affairs of the countries of the European Union and the US.

These advices are indeed hardly encouraging. They all say to refrain from any non-essential travel to Yemen. For example, the website of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office makes the average traveller think twice before buying a ticket to Sana'a. It reads: "There is a high threat from terrorism in Yemen, including against Western, and British, interests. The renewed conflict in Sa'ada has further heightened tensions". It continues by stating that "you should avoid places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers, including in Sana'a and other urban centres"

Michele, a retired Italian architect who is travelling in Yemen for 15 days, decided to go anyway. Smoking a cigarette under the trees of his hotel in Khawkha he says that before going, the Italian ministry of foreign affairs made him sign a paper in which he waives the call for assistance of his government in case he is kidnapped. Smiling, he shrugs and says: "So I did. I now have to pay for my ransom myself". Michele did not feel threatened during his trip at all. "I do not believe this country is dangerous because of these kidnappings, if it is dangerous it is more because of the lack of road safety than anything else".

How did Yemen's image become the way it is today? Is it really that dangerous? If one compares the problems which countries like Egypt or Indonesia faced with attacks against tourists, this seems hard to believe. Perhaps other factors play a role as well? Mohammed Al Nuzaili believes this the case. "As opposed to other governments like the Egyptian, our government does not care about tourism.

They do not care about the 20,000 families that directly depend on this industry. There is no gain for them, they will still be corrupt and get the same salaries. So they no longer work on safety, they abandoned this because they now have a new game, the war in Sa'ada."

AlNuzaili means that the government does not try to clarify the safety situation, wherever in the country. The government does not point out where one can travel and where not. Nor do they give any guarantees of safeguarding security anywhere. "Of course, they cannot guarantee 100% safety, but no country can." Without having a realistic picture, or any picture at all, the embassies could thus only advise their home offices the way they did, Al Nuzaili explains.

The shops in the Old City of Sana'a selling tourist items such as jewellery, cloth and handicrafts are mostly deserted. The once colourful postcards of Yemen's highlights are now faded and sad looking. Most of the shop owners still open their shops every day, which they spend dusting off their items. By the end of the day, usually no tourist has visited. Abdollah Suaid, owner of one of those shops: "I do not spend so much time in my shop anymore as I used to do because there are no tourists." When asked for the reasons for this, Abdollah points out that security is not the real issue. "It is politics."

The question now is what can be done to change the situation. Al Nuzaili no longer believes that private initiatives by the tourist industry itself will help. "Reduction, excellent

service, it no longer works. We need someone from outside. For example the United Nations. They should organise a conference on tourism. Then the Yemeni officials will attend, they must, they cannot escape. And then they must be transparent about the security situation. If they convince us that Marib is unsafe, fine, we change the itinerary and do not go to Marib. There are plenty of other places. But they must be clear, now nobody knows".

Which is why, according to people like Al Nuzaili and Suaid, Yemen is now sharing the 'red zone' advices with countries like Iraq or Afghanistan. Which is why people working in the tourist industry have lost their incomes without being able to do anything about it. They are not the ones who can change the travel advices from the foreign countries. They actually understand these advices. They just do not understand why their government does not try to help them by presenting a realistic picture of the situation to the foreign embassies.

What this picture is? Probably something between the website of the Yemeni Tourism Board, which shows nothing but good news, and the dark red travel alerts of the foreign embassies.

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- Draft routine correspondence and translations; act as interpreter when required.
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- Act as custodian for management of office stationery supplies including maintenance of stock list of stationery, distribution of stationery as required by staff and keeping a log of distribution;
- Liaise with UNDP Yemen to ensure accreditation of international staff;
- Research and retrieval of statistical data from internal and external sources; preparation of statistical charts, tables and reports;
- Arrangement of vehicle transportation;
- Perform any other relevant duties as assigned by the OCHA Admin officer and/or Head of Office.

The Successful candidate should have:

- Education:** Secondary education and three years working experience as office/team assistant or related position;
- Language:** Fluency in oral and written English is essential, with excellent drafting and presentation skills; working knowledge of Arabic is preferable;
- Other Skills:** Basic knowledge of institutional mandates, policies, and guidelines related to humanitarian affairs; a good knowledge of United Nations system institutions. Ability to work independently with minimum supervision, with efficiency, competence, and integrity, with people of different national backgrounds.

Interested Candidates may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for to: UNDP Office (att: OCHA), P. O. Box 551, Sana'a (Yemen), Fax: 01 448892. *The Deadline of the advertisement is 24th December 2009.*

UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. Only short listed candidates who meet the requirement will be contacted.



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Words of Wisdom



In the final analysis, it is in the hands of the people in charge of this country to make our transformation towards democracy real and meaningful. It would be unfortunate if the change in Yemen remains merely a show or something superficial. Our politicians need to believe in preparing for the 21st century. To do that, they have to internalize some new values.

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, (1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times

OUR
OPINIONUsing multimedia
in the political war

It is quite fascinating to see how various websites of Yemeni media are stepping up their aggression towards each other through the use of multimedia. The government and opposition websites are using video and audio clips to prove their point, or mainly to prove that they are right and that the other side is wrong.

Sometimes they are serious clips that reflect what is happening in the war zones such as Sa'ada. The angle at which the video was made tells the story from one point of view. Many times the clips are accompanied by explanations or a small right up that manipulates the reader to think in a certain way. There was a clip in an official state run website showing a veiled Yemeni woman holding a Kalashnikov and promising to kill any Houthi that comes near her. She was interviewed by a person who referred to her as . Who this woman is, God only knows. Was she told to say these things or was she genuine. I have a question whether she is really a woman, no offense but I could not see anything but her hand carrying the weapon and hear her rough threatening voice.

Another video clip shows a number of Yemeni men supposedly Houthis standing with their backs against the wall. A commentator explains that they were somehow brainwashed and told to fight the government by the Houthis. Some of them looked really young, perhaps younger than 18 years old. You can see them standing with blank faces, staring at the camera photographing them and telling the world that those men were criminals and that the state captured them and through interrogation found out how they were recruited by the Houthis. I felt sorry for them more than anything else and was wondering whether this is legal. The whole clip just shows them standing there against the wall, some fidgeting and some getting tired of being displayed or rather showcased.

Videos from the opposition give a totally different point of view. They show destroyed houses and say in these homes normal citizens were living and the state destroyed and killed its occupants. Another video in the Houthi related website shows dead bodies, some were of children and some were body parts. You have to have a strong heart to be able to see those. The narration tells you that those were the victims of the state. But then again you can never know.

Other videos show you a live attack, you see armed men attacking and shooting at others hiding behind buildings or running across a rural terrain. None of the sides are wearing uniform. This could have been any two tribes and nothing relating to the Sa'ada war. It could even be a long time ago or even in Afghanistan for all I know.

The point is that you see these multimedia examples from only one point of view and only a limited few get to show you. It is either the government or the opposition. If only independent media can get access to conflict zones and tell the story through their camera, then only I would understand and believe what is really going on.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Cleanliness: people's responsibility

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
maged_thabet@hotmail.com

What do we call feelings in which there is a desire for crying and laughing at the same time? The scenes of most cities make one feel terrible because of the rubbish and dirt spread in the main streets. The government sometimes launches campaigns for cleaning at least the main streets some cities. Cleaners work day and night on these projects. But the cleanliness never lasts long because there is no real sense of responsibility among members of the society.

Sometimes, authorities show responsibility, while the citizens themselves show only carelessness and indifference. This makes one cry and laugh at the same time. Crying for the beauty, the environment, and for health, which are daily assassinated by the people themselves. And the laughing is at some, if not all, of the people's behavior, and lifestyles that assume such a crucial issue is a joke. Mixing tears and heartfelt smiles was an indication of extreme happiness. Now it is an indication of extreme sadness.

Walking in the streets, one may not realize they are dirty. This is not because they are clean. But because one is used to seeing rubbish decorate the places. As a result, one may get allergy if once sees the streets clean. Some people may not realize the rubbish and dirtiness because they throw the rubbish into the streets. They are used to doing so. And they never feel that they are doing something wrong.

Sometimes, I am surprised to see the cleanliness inside some people's homes. They cannot stand to see anything dirty at home. They clean ev-

erything, but they feel their only duty to carry the rubbish out of the home. They consider themselves to be serving their families and their homes. And they must be thanked for that.

They step out of their homes, carrying that rubbish, keeping in mind that it is a shame to throw it in front of their homes.

One should respect such people, for they feel and think that homes and also the space in front of their homes reflect their personalities. But they should be kicked out because they never think that streets and elsewhere reflect the whole homeland.

A person may curse and condemn the dirtiness of those places, meanwhile, he may throw qat or other rubbish into the streets. Sometimes he feels angry for seeing such dirty streets. At the same time, he feels happy about throwing everything everywhere because that does not cost him time or anything else.

It really happens to every one of us, dear readers. There are no restrictions on waste, as in some other countries. And sometimes there is no sense of nationality, or respect for the homeland. If nobody punishes people for such immoral, and irreligious behaviors, everyone needs to take responsibility for the problem.

People change when they travel abroad. There, the streets may look clean. A person might behave in a different way. Then he condemns the state of his homeland, and behaves in a way that keeps everything clean. He keeps his rubbish, and never throws it anywhere but in special places. He enjoys this and never complains. The only thing he does is condemn the state of his homeland.

But the moment he comes back, he starts another daily routine. He talks to his friends about the cleanliness there, comparing it with the cursed state of dirtiness here. Meanwhile,

he drinks water and throws the bottle onto the street.

We should feel ashamed when we find foreigners respect our country more than we do. They do their best to keep it clean, feeling that it is a duty that everyone should do, anywhere in the world.

A real story astonished me. In one of the universities, in one of the halls, there were two or three rubbish cans. But there were empty water bottles, cans, tissues, and plastic bags spread everywhere in the hall. The students, as well as the Yemeni teachers did not notice this. They took no action or interest.

This is in a university, where you are supposed to find the most educated and cultured class of people. In comparison, we can imagine how bad the situation is in the schools, other institutions, and streets.

The university students were ashamed of themselves when a foreign doctor went into the room, dropped his handbag and collected the rubbish. The students were ashamed of themselves. They could not stop the doctor, for he was doing his duty.

The behavior of the doctor taught some of us a lesson on how to keep our homes, streets, and everywhere else clean. We know duties for homes. But there should be more duties for homeland.

I wrote this article not to acquit myself and accuse others. It is, however, to make myself and everyone else feel the responsibility, and to get used to keeping our country clean. We all should deal seriously with the matter, under the motto that it's rubbish to throw rubbish in the wrong place. Do not be angry, dear readers. I may use harsh words, but I am sure, and I hope, you will support me if you look at the matter through the mind's eye.

Copenhagen: The last chance

By: Diana Mukkaled

Polar icecaps melting into the sea...
Barren land and black smoke...

These are just some of the actual and overstated scenes that we have seen in art and drama, but they show a true picture of what will happen after just a few years if drastic steps are not taken to forestall the phenomenon of global warming, which is increasingly affecting the world day by day. These scenes come with a flood of information and statistics that reflect the threat against the planet and which have been circulated in western media from reports and special coverage or ads that came out prior to or during the 2009 Climate Summit in Copenhagen [that began Monday 7 December] and which aims to take decisions and actions that will contribute to reducing global temperatures.

But what began as general and concerted effort on the part of the

European and western media subsided and disappeared when it came to the Arab media, which has not changed its news priorities, with each following its political calculations and agenda.

It is true that the biggest polluters (the United States, China, India, and the European Union) are more responsible than others for the rise in global temperatures, but the implications of the carbon emissions of the industrial countries do not exempt the Arab regimes, society, or media, from the responsibility of limiting the impact of this disaster.

Global warming is something that threatens the world at large, and exacerbating this phenomenon will literally result in the death of more people in the future due to temperature increases and the rise in sea level, the spreading of diseases, and an increase in hunger and poverty, which is something that millions of people in our countries are already suffering from.

The target of the final outcome of the Copenhagen Climate Summit is

not to have an immediate and direct impact [on climate change] but there is hope that outspoken and unified voices – like those that took part in the opening [session] representing 56 newspapers in 45 countries – will remind the politicians and negotiators that life as we know it hangs in the balance, and they must transcend all differences and deals that have cost mankind and continues to cause harmful damage.

It is true that articles and information are being circulated on the internet and in Arab publications with regards to the dangers of this ecological disaster. Nevertheless, the general tendency is one of indifference or a fleeting interest before indulging once again in the divisions and crises we have grown accustomed to following, in the process forgetting that Arab nations and societies will unwillingly pay dearly as a result of this ecological disaster.

There are only a few who are actually optimistic about the results of the Copenhagen summit. Some people have not even tried to hide their fear that possible settlements and bargains might be reached that would allow rich and industrial countries to continue releasing large amounts of harmful gases after paying compensation to poor countries, and that would be also be a catastrophic situation.

A quick look at the figures on the reality of Arab states and societies reveals the exorbitant cost Arabs would pay if they do not act fast. There is no room now to question the facts and figures in order to delay making such tough decisions. Desertification and flooding are not the only disasters we need to worry about if world leaders fail to start acting on containing the problem.



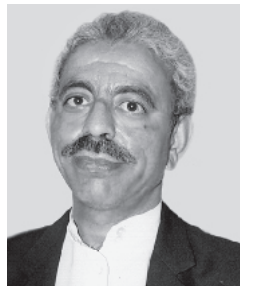
By: Hamid

Source: Ashraq Al Awsat

COMMON SENSE

Unhappy Arabia:

Where the Hot Wind Blows



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

The War in Sa'ada has now practically turned into a full blown regional confrontation with the balance of power seemingly in an awkward position. It is now certain that the leaders on both sides of the "international" divide that represents the de facto border between the Republic of Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have stumbled into a fiasco that reflects their poor intellect at knowing their own strengths. Time and again, this observer has warned that this kind of spontaneous decision making only leads to disaster and more chaos than both of the regimes in Riyadh and Sana'a have ever conjured up throughout the years of their unholy existence and they have indeed been the source of havoc in more than one region and not just country. It is inescapably unforgivable to sit and watch these two regimes plunge the good peoples of both Yemen and Saudi Arabia into relentless warfare that satisfies the drives of no one except the ever hungry warlords of both countries, who never seem to have enough of anything. It is easy to see that these warlords have eaten a lot of the good resources of this bountiful peninsula and shed the blood of its inhabitants and the inhabitants of other lands in fruitless adventures from New York City to Kandahar, not to mention the Wars in Iraq, Chechnya, Somalia and every little niche where so called Al-Qaeda and other corny named clandestine operatives are unleashing their blood poisoning verve of hate, sadism and masochism. One cannot help but wonder at the might of the Al-Mighty as he has turned this sanctified Peninsula into a graveyard for those who seek to turn it into a bastion of evil when the Lord Al-Mighty had ordained that it should be a land of holiness, spiritual respite and eternal peace. No, this is not an attempt to cry wolf in support of any particular ideology. These are inescapable observation of the facts of life that are unfolding daily to show that those who forget the true might of the Divine and seek to arrange an unholy partnership of their scheming with the wonderful workings of the Lord have no place in the destiny of mankind as the Lord Al-Mighty had laid out when the First Man laid his feet on this Earth after ignoring the Early warnings of the Al-Mighty to those who set aside God's warnings of the evil inclinations of Satan and their own ignorance.

Now that the War in Sa'ada is beginning to penetrate to the inner depths of the Saudi Kingdom, it is time to recall that reason is better than the reliance on spontaneous whims driven by narrow-minded interests that have no regard for the right of human beings to live in peace. These vagabonds have ignored the rights of all the inhabitants of this richly endowed peninsula to enjoy the unlimited wealth and bounty the Lord has exclusively granted to the Holy Land where His prophets trekked and toiled as they strove to bring humanity onto the right path He has solely ordained for humanity to trek on. It is sad to think that these misfits have thought that they can bear the banner of Allah Al-Mighty and kill and plunder in His name without being subject to accountability by their very Creator. But the ignoramuses who have been spreading the evil work of the devil far and wide have always been the worst victims of their own undertakings as the wrath of the Al-Mighty is unleashed upon them from where they least expect it.

One is bound to keep one's eyes open wide as the events of the next few weeks and months unfold as one watches the folly of human judgment reap its unholy harvest against those who have forgotten that mankind deserves to be spared the horrible renditions of running the affairs of their own kind, which they have adopted for no one's sake except to fulfill their ego driven inclinations of infidelity to the teachings of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Holy Quran throughout this world. Yes, the War in Sa'ada is proving to be more than just a mere rebellion of a gang of "Believing Youth" or "Infiltrators". Whether they liked it or not, the instigators of this most phenomenal of confrontations have dug their own inescapable pits of the folly of their doings as they suffer defeat upon defeat by unusually highly skilled heretofore unknown masters of the Art of War, which the rulers of Sana'a and Riyadh are the last to know about mastering, although they purport to be its sole masters and propagators.

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years. He may be blogged at: <http://com-senfromyem.blogspot.com/>

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Yemen Press Review

The war in Sa'ada

Again the war in Sa'ada was the leading news in Yemeni press this week, although the news differed relatively according to which media was reporting and its affiliation to the government or the opposition.



Al-Motamar Net talks about destroying a weapons warehouse in Matra district in Sa'ada and surrounding the Houthi rebels in Al-Malaheeth and in the old city of Sa'ada.

The site reported that an attempt by the Houthis to infiltrate the army lines and enter the city through Jabal Qais was stopped and many Houthis were killed as a result.

The media also illustrated an example of a Yemeni woman carrying a Kalashnikov and fighting the Houthis. According to the video in the site which is also posted on Youtube, the veiled woman described the atrocities carried out by the Houthis and that they are targeting citizens and destroying their properties. She proudly held the weapon and explained that she is willing to lose her life defending her home and properties against the Houthis and fighting alongside the army.

Al-Motamar Net also reports that

deputy minister of interior Saleh Al-Za'ari denied the accusations by the opposition media which accused the army and its supporters of ransacking public and private properties and detaining civilians on no grounds.

Another related news in this media was the capturing of eleven Houthi rebels which was also posted through a multimedia video clip. It shows the army chasing after rebels and taking them in.



Al-Sahwa Net which is affiliated to the conservative Islah Party also discussed the issue of Sa'ada although it approached it from another angle. The paper reported on the Joint Meeting Parties position towards the war in Sa'ada demanding that it should stop immediately. The media stated that the first most loser in this war is the nation and the people.

Hadramout JMP office issued a statement in this regard appealing to all decision makers to spare the country more bloodshed.

The paper also discussed in another news item the various armed conflicts taking place on more than one front in Sa'ada governorate. The news reported that casualties have been reported from both sides and clashes in Sa'ada city

are entering their sixth day with no progress on either side. It gave a description of where the government was in control compared to where the Houthis are gaining grounds.

The media also talked about the involvement of Saudi air forces in the war especially on the border between Yemen and KSA in Al-Miqash, Mahdha and Al Oqab.

Supplementary parliamentary elections

Another major headline that was repeated in many media during the course of last week was about the supplementary elections for eleven parliamentary seats that became vacant due to the death or resignation of the members of parliament.



The independent Al-Hadath Website narrated the point of view of the ruling party in reference to the opposition's refusal to participate in the elections. A news story about the reaction of the GPC through its head of media unit Tarq Al-Shami condemned the boycotting and accused the opposition's Joint Meeting Parties of stalling the democratic process and not respecting elections as a right of the people.

He said that the JMP keeps having new demands and not sticking to the agreed document signed in February this year when postponing the parliamentary elections for two years. The news story also discussed what Sultan Al-Barakani, head of the party's political unit and how the opposition missed out again on an opportunity to be represented in the parliament.



Nass Press, the media supportive of the Islah conservative party took a totally different approach to this topic especially that its party was among the opposition coalition boycotting the elections. In a report on supplementary elections it accused the ruling party of using favoritism and spending public money to make its nominees win. The report said that the result of the elections were defined before hand and that in essence these elections are unconstitutional because the opposition and the ruling party had an agreement to postpone the parliamentary elections until 2011.

The report went on to name some of the candidates who have controversial relations with the president and authority figures and that their candidacy was a show and not a real representation of what their people wanted. The report finally concluded that these elections

not only are illegal, they also help increase the disputes between the ruling party and opposition in a time when Yemen does not need any more problems.

Media - News Yemen website in trouble

Another common topic in the various media was the condemnation against what the independent news website News Yemen has gone through and the hacking of its source code. This was a topic that all, government, independent and opposition media agreed on.



Al-Wihdawi media of the Nasserite Unionist Party had two news stories on this topic. Its first news was a reflection of a demand from the National Forum for Human Rights which called on media and civil society organizations to intensify the rejection of the hacking on the website and to create a civilian movement through a protest or a petition demanding investigation and holding the culprits accountable.

The other news story was about the National Organization for Defending Human Rights known as HOOD, which

announced that it stated its support for News Yemen and that the media has the right to sue whoever it felt is responsible for this breach and that HOOD will support it legally and indefinitely.

The news went on to say that this is a new level of targeting independent media in Yemen and that it is an indication of the chaos and lack of order in the country.



Al-Wasat's independent newspaper's also reported on News Yemen's plight and that its publisher Nabil Al-Sofi announced that he would stop the news site as well as Abwab, an Arabic magazine until something is done with regards to his ordeal. Al-Sofi said that by losing the contents of News Yemen site he has lost more than 40 million Yemeni Riyals, and that he personally and his staff have received several threats before this happened.

He also said that he is in no position to work on the magazine which has published 13 issues so far because so much has been lost and there is no protection for media in Yemen. He demanded the Ministry of Telecom to step up its act and take responsibility.

Financing the Fight against Climate Change

By: George Soros

It is now generally agreed that the developed countries will have to make a substantial financial contribution to enable the developing world to deal with climate change. Funds are needed to invest in new low-carbon energy sources, reforestation and protection of rain forests, land-use changes, and adaptation and mitigation. But there is no similar agreement on where the money will come from.

The developed countries are reluctant to make additional financial commitments. They have just experienced a significant jump in their national debts, and they still need to stimulate their domestic economies. This colors their attitudes. It looks like they will be able to cobble together a "fast-start" fund of \$10 billion a year for the next few years, but more does not fit into their national budgets. This is unlikely to satisfy the developing countries.

I believe that this amount could be at least doubled and assured for a longer time span. Developed countries' governments are laboring under the misapprehension that funding must come from their national budgets. But that is not the case. They have the money already. It is lying idle in their reserve accounts at the International Monetary Fund. Spending it would not add to any country's fiscal

deficit. All they need to do is to tap into it. In September 2009, the IMF distributed to its members \$283 billion worth of Special Drawing Rights, an arcane financial instrument, but one that essentially constitutes additional foreign exchange. They can be used only by converting them into one of four currencies, at which point they begin to carry interest at those currencies' combined treasury-bill rate. At present, the interest rate is less than 0.5%.

Of the \$283 billion worth of recently distributed SDRs, more than \$150 billion went to the 15 largest developed economies. These SDRs will sit largely untouched in the reserve accounts of these countries, which don't really need any additional reserves.

I propose that the developed countries - in addition to establishing a fast-start fund of \$10 billion a year - band together and lend \$100 billion dollars worth of these SDRs for 25 years to a special green fund serving the developing world. The fund would jump-start forestry, land-use, and agricultural projects - areas that offer the greatest scope for reducing or mitigating carbon emissions, and that could produce substantial returns from carbon markets.

The returns such projects could generate go beyond addressing carbon emissions. Returns from land-use projects, for example, could also include the po-

tential to create more sustainable rural livelihoods, enable higher and more resilient agricultural yields, and generate rural employment.

This is a simple and practical idea, and there is a precedent for it. The United Kingdom and France each recently lent \$2 billion worth of SDRs to a special fund at the IMF to support concessionary lending to the poorest countries. At that point, the IMF assumed responsibility for the principal and interest on the SDRs. The same could be done in this case.

I further propose that member countries agree to use the IMF's gold reserves to guarantee the interest payments and repayment of the principal. The IMF owns a lot of gold - more than 100 million ounces - and it is on the books at historical cost. Thus, at current market prices, it is worth more than \$100 billion over its book value. It has already been designated to be used for the benefit of the least developed countries. The proposed green fund would meet this requirement.

This means that the developed countries that lend the SDRs would incur no interest expense and no responsibility for repayment. There are some serious technical problems involved in offsetting the interest income against the interest expense, particularly in the United States, but the net effect would be a wash. These technical difficulties stood in the way

of previous attempts to put the SDRs to practical use, but they do not apply to the proposed green fund.

There are three powerful arguments in favor of this proposal. First, the green fund could be self-financing or even profitable; very little of the IMF's gold, if any, would actually be used.

Second, the projects will earn a return only if developed countries cooperate in setting up the right type of carbon markets. Establishing a green fund would be an implicit pledge to do so by putting the gold reserves of the IMF at risk.

Finally, this money would be available now, jump-starting carbon-saving projects.

For all these reasons, the developing countries ought to embrace my proposal. The key point is that it is possible to increase substantially the amount available to fight global warming in the developing world, by using the existing allocations of SDRs, with interest payments on them guaranteed by the IMF's gold reserves.

All that is lacking is the political will. The mere fact that tapping SDRs requires Congressional approval in the US ensures that nothing will happen without public pressure - including pressure from the developing countries. Yet it could make the difference between success and failure in Copenhagen.

www.project-syndicate.org

The Euro's Greek Tragedy

By: Edin Mujagic

When the euro was introduced in 1999, European countries agreed that fiscal discipline was essential for its stability. While the common currency has benefited all countries that have adopted it - not least as an anchor in the current economic crisis - the failure of euro-zone members to abide by their agreement risk could yet turn the euro into a disaster.

Indeed, too many members simply behave as if there were no Stability and Growth Pact. The state of Greek public finances, for example, is "a concern for the whole euro zone," according to European Commissioner for Monetary Affairs Joaquin Almunia. Greece's fiscal deficit is expected to reach 12.7% of GDP this year, far exceeding the SGP's 3%-of-GDP cap.

Of course, every euro-zone country is breaching the SGP's deficit ceiling as a result of the current crisis. But consider the Netherlands, which will do so this year for only the second time since 1999. When the Netherlands first exceeded the SGP limit - by only 0.1% of GDP - the government immediately took tough measures to rein in the deficit. Germany and Austria behaved the same way. Those countries are already working to reduce their crisis-inflated deficits as soon as possible.

Down in southern Europe, things look very different. Exceeding the SGP's deficit cap is the rule rather than the exception. Indeed, throughout the euro's first decade, Greece managed to keep within the SGP limits only once, in 2006 (and by a very narrow margin).

Moreover, the Greek government turned out to be untrustworthy. In 2004, Greece admitted that it had lied about the size of its deficit ever since 2000 - precisely the years used to assess Greece's application to join the euro zone. In other words, Greece qualified only by cheating. In November 2009, it appeared that the Greek government lied once again, this time about the deficit in 2008 and the projected deficit for 2009.

Italy also has a long history of neglecting European fiscal rules (as do Portugal and France). Like Greece, Italy was admitted to the euro zone despite being light-years away from meeting all the criteria. Public debt in both countries was well above 100% of GDP, compared to the SGP's threshold of 60% of GDP. Italy did not fulfill another criterion as well, as its national currency, the lira, did not spend the mandatory two years inside the European Exchange Rate Mechanism.

Ten years later, it seems as if time has stood still down south. Both the Greek and Italian public debt remain almost unchanged, despite the fact that both countries have benefited the most

from the euro, as their long-term interest rates declined to German levels following its adoption. That alone yielded a windfall of tens of billions of euros per year. But it barely made a dent in their national debts, which can mean only one thing: massive squandering.

That is evident from their credit ratings. Greece boasts by far the lowest credit rating in the euro zone. Standard & Poor's has put the already low A- rating under review for a possible downgrade. Fitch Ratings has cut the Greek rating to BBB+, the third-lowest investment grade. Indeed, those scores mean that Greece is much less credit-worthy than for example Botswana and Malaysia, which are rated A+.

What if Greece gets into so much trouble that it cannot service its debt? That is not impossible. According to calculations by Morgan Stanley, with relatively low long-term interest rates, Greece needs a primary surplus of at least 2.4% of GDP each year just to stabilize its national debt at 118% of GDP.

Current European rules prohibit other European countries or the EU itself from helping Greece. But recent history teaches us that European rules are made to be broken. Already, many (former) politicians and economists (no prizes for guessing whence they mostly hail) are proposing that the EU issue its own sovereign debt, which would alleviate the problems of countries such as Greece and Italy.

But such schemes would come at a high cost. They would punish fiscally prudent governments, as interest rates would inevitably increase in countries like the Netherlands or Germany. Just a 0.1% increase in borrowing costs would mean hundreds of millions of euros in extra debt-service payments a year.

Moreover, even if the plan for EU sovereign debt never takes off, fiscally prudent euro-zone countries will face higher borrowing costs. As financial integration in Europe deepens, the lack of fiscal discipline in one or more euro-zone countries will push up interest rates throughout the currency area.

A member of the euro zone cannot be expelled under current rules, allowing countries like Greece to lie, manipulate, blackmail, and collect more and more EU funds. In the long term, this will be disastrous for greater European cooperation, because public support will whither.

Europe should therefore consider bearing the high short-term costs of changing the rules of the game. If expelling even one member could establish a more credible mechanism for guaranteeing fiscal discipline in the euro zone than the SGP and financial fines have proven to be, the price would be more than worth it.

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Marwa killer gets life; Egypt, Arab World and Germany look for peace

CAIRO: After nearly four and a half months, the Marwa el-Sherbini saga has come to a conclusion of sorts after a German court sentenced the man who stabbed the "veiled martyr" 17 times inside the court in July to life in prison without possibility of early release. Egyptians, Arabs and Germans alike have welcomed the verdict and hope Europe and the Middle East can begin to heal the wounds of the killing and move "toward a better future."

By: Joseph Mayton - Bikya Masr

For many, it is time to move on and look to the future. Speaking via telephone from Berlin, German journalist Henrich Egger told Bikya Masr that he believes justice was served to a man who "employed more racism than the overwhelming majority of Germans. We are all pleased to see this man go to prison for the rest of his life, but it won't be the end if we Germans and Egyptians cannot begin to understand how to deal better with our differences," the journalist said.

Back in Cairo, Dalia Yussif, a 35-year-old mother of two, believes Alex Wiens, the murderer, should have gotten the death penalty, but "the life sentence will let him suffer more, maybe. We know that not all Germans are racists and that many of them are our friends. It is just disappointing that this kind of discussion had to have Marwa die before we talked openly about the cultural struggle between Europe and us."

Wiens had confessed to killing the woman, who has been dubbed the "veiled martyr" by Arabic media.

"It is true that I am hostile to foreigners but that was not the motive," Wiens said in a statement read by one of his lawyers on November 4.

Prosecutors, including an Egyptian delegation from Cairo's Lawyers Syndicate, had said that the man was driven "by a pronounced hatred of non-Europeans and Muslims."

Sherbini was killed only minutes after winning a court case against the man for defaming her after he had called her a "terrorist" and demanded she return home on a Dresden playground.

The murder stimulated a cultural battle between Europe and the Arab world, with a number of Arabs claiming the murder was part of a larger problem facing European society, namely, racism and hatred of Muslims and Arabs.

"We have seen that Europe is growing more and more conservative by the day, so the killing was a shocking example of what some people will do in order to

try to make us go back to where they think we come from," said 27-year-old German-born Hana Jabar. The Tunisian-German artist, who has lived her entire life in Berlin, says that there are undercurrents within society that are very hateful toward Arabs.

"They don't realize that there are Christian Arabs, that many of us were born here and are German citizens. They fear what they don't know," she added.

For el-Sherbini's family, the tragic loss of their daughter led to a campaign against all things German. In Alexandria, local pharmacy's called for a boycott of German products, but the movement fizzled out with little success. However, they did manage to get the Egyptian culture ministry to cancel two performances by the Dresden Symphony Orchestra.

In Europe, experts were quick to point to Egypt's own problems with racism, arguing that they had no place to talk of Europeans failings while Africans and black people are "treated with such disregard it is appalling," as one Geneva-based intellectual told Bikya Masr last summer.

But some Germans said that the cause behind the murder were well-founded within German, and European society. One student, who had traveled throughout the Middle East, said that it "is common in German press to downplay the

existing racist and neo-fascist activities."

One of the main factors that caused much angst among Egyptians and Arabs was the international media's apparent lack of attention given to the murder. It was not until the anti-German chants began at the Alexandria protest days after the killing that major news networks began following the story. By then, it was too late, with Egyptians demanding a reason for what they called the "double standards" of Western news.

"If it had been a Christian white woman killed in an Egyptian courtroom, it would have been the lead story, then there would have been a discussion of how the Middle East hates America and the West, but in this case, there was nothing until a few Egyptians chanted against Germany," said one Egyptian activist at the time, who was participating in the protests at German government buildings in Egypt.

In the end, the back and forth war of words died down and the German judicial system took charge of the case, which left the vast majority of Arabs at ease, but the cultural friction created by the murder continues still, as media have once again put Marwa's picture back in the limelight.

Bikya Masr was the first English language publication to report Marwa's murder in July.

MTN Yemen sponsors seven clubs and grants tickets for the 2010 World Cup



MTN Yemen signed the mobile phone company signed sponsorship deals recently with seven sports clubs for the sports season 2009 – 2010. These clubs are: Wihdat Sana'a Club, Al-Shula Club in Aden, Hodeidah Crescent Club, Salam Club in Al-Gurfa Sayoun, Ibb Union Club, Al-Yarmouk Club in Sana'a and Youth Club in Al-Baidha.

MTN Yemen Director of Public Relations and Advertisement Mr. Malek Bassam Al-Kusa commented that the company continues to sponsor and support sports in Yemen and encourage youth to enhance Yemeni athletes' skills. The company also continues to support the state's efforts in caring for youth and encouraging them to progress.

This was announced during a ceremony held by the company on Thurs-



day, December 10, 2009 marking the handover of tickets to attend the World Cup 2010 to the fifth winner. This lucky winner's trip to participate 2010 World Cup in South Africa will be covered entirely by MTN Yemen similar to the previous four winners.

Al-Kusa noted that the company used the fact that MTN-International is sponsoring the World Cup which will be held for the first time in the African continent, and invited a number of fans and football lovers in Yemen to attend the celebrations that will be carried out on this occasion.

A number of lucky winners from Yemen will also be able to attend the championship.

In the celebration held by the company to award the fifth winner which was Mr. Essam Abdo Saeed Abbas Hammadi, it also awarded another seven lucky winners with a "Sony Bravia" 32 inch TV monitors each as well as many other in-kind prizes for other winners.

The winners who get to go to South Africa will be granted airline tickets, tickets to attend the matches live and also some pre designed tourism tours for several cities in the country, in addition to accommodation expenses.

MTN Yemen is carrying out a draw every week in order to determine winners for the World Cup as well as others who get in-kind valuable awards.

Expression of Interest

**Secondary Education Development and Girls Access Project (SEDGAP)
Credit No. 4401-Yem & Grant No. TF-94223 & KFW 2007 65 404**

These requests for expression of interest follow the General Procurement Notice for this project that appeared in the UND Business and DG Market dated April 13, 2009.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA), Multi-Donors Trust Fund and Kfw Grant towards the cost of Secondary Education Development and Girls Access Project and intend to apply part of the proceeds of this credit & grants to payments under the contracts for the below-listed consulting services.

The Project Administration Unit now invites eligible Individual consultants, to indicate their interest for conducting the following Technical Assistances (TAs):

- i) **To Assess Capacity of the MoE's General departments (Information System & Communication, School Mapping, Planning and Statistics) and at the level of 4 (pilot) Government Education Offices (GEOs) and Identify the Related Training Needs.**
- ii) **To Review the Existing Learning and Teaching Materials and Identify Additional Requirements and Develop Learning and Teaching Materials Standard Lists and Technical Specifications.**

Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.)

The selection of the consultants will be in accordance with the procedure set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: "Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers, May2004 and revised October 2006" Interested consultants may obtain further information during working days Sat.-Wed. form 8:30AM to 3:00 PM the address below to which the expression of interest must be delivered by Dec 28,2009

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Can Yemen reduce qat expansion?

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

Qat is one of the biggest problems facing Yemen's development and a grave threat to ground water tables, as it has consumed nearly 35 percent of water reserves. Qat chewing has steadily increased over the past two decades. In the past, the custom of chewing qat was restricted to a few men and far fewer women from the elite class. But today it has become a phenomenon which can even include children as young as six or seven years old.

According to a recent study conducted by researcher Dr. Ahmad al-Mutarreb, 87 percent of Yemeni males and 13 percent of females chew qat; 38 percent chew qat daily and 53 percent of the total qat chewers chew qat occasionally.



Qat farms in Wadi Dhahr. Despite growing concern about water and other agriculture products qat fields are expanding because qat is a financially rewarding cash crop.

Expansion in qat cultivation

According to recent studies, qat cultivation is growing by 10 percent annually and is spreading at the expense of other important crops like grains, fruits and vegetables. Qat cultivation consumes 47,000 hectares of agricultural land.

Qat producers and farmers find the plant more profitable than any other crops, which encourages them to expand qat cultivation in valleys and fertile lands used for growing important fruits like bananas.

Two years ago, for example, farmers in Same' district, Taiz governorate, uprooted trees of bananas, guavas and papayas from a whole valley in a water rich area called Sarraibat and planted qat trees instead.

Local farmers believe that, selling qat is more profitable to them than selling these fruits.

Difficult task for the government and World Bank

Because qat production plays such a significant role in the economy, contributing 10 percent of gross domestic product and providing work opportunities for more than 14 percent of the population (33 percent of farmers produce qat), it is extremely challenging for the government and the

World Bank to convince people to stop qat cultivation.

The government and the World Bank have established a partnership to reduce qat consumption. The World Bank has a complete program to limit demand on qat called Integrated Qat Demand Reduction Agenda. In the first workshop held early last November, the government, and the WB, along with representatives of Civil Society Organizations and concerned bodies, discussed the effects of chewing qat and its expansion and possible means of reducing demand on qat.

Good examples of uprooting qat

With support from the Leader of Bohra, who visited Haraz area seven years ago, farmers in Haraz uprooted qat trees and replaced them with coffee trees. Haraz is an area famous for coffee cultivation, but some people had uprooted the trees and replaced them with qat in the past. When the leader of Bohra visited the area on a religious visit to Haraz to perform rituals he argued with people there to uproot the qat trees and supported them with hundreds thousands of dollars as incentives. Farmers considered these directions as religious teachings and

uprooted qat trees.

Last year, farmers in Jahran flatlands, Dhamar governorate uprooted qat trees and replaced them with vegetables. According to the General Director of the Agricultural Office in Dhamar, the ministry of agriculture provided alternatives to farmers who uprooted qat trees from their lands. He said these alternatives were improved seeds for potatoes and onions.

Farmers want alternatives to uproot qat trees

Some farmers have begun considering growing other plants to replace qat and a few of them have started believing that growing qat is not good. "I believe that qat trees will be replaced with other trees in the future," said farmer Mohammad Mahyoub, a qat farmer in Same', who is not satisfied with growing this plant.

"If I get alternatives or financial support to cover my daily needs, I will stop qat production because I believe this tree is not good," said Mahyoub, who wants to grow almond trees on his farms.

Olive and almond trees the best

alternatives

Many observers believe that olive and almond trees are the best alternatives to replace qat trees in Yemen.

"We have future aspirations to expand in planting olive trees to replace qat trees," said Hamid Al-Bishari, the Director of the Horticulture Department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. He stated that the ministry has cultivated 8, 00,000 (is this 8 hundred thousand 800,000 or 8 million 8,000,000?) olive trees across the country since the early 1980s.

Engineer Nabil Al-Kawkabani believes that cultivating almond trees is the best alternative to replacing the qat plant. He said his cousins have almond trees in Kawkaban area, Mahweet governorate and that they sell a kilo of almond nuts for YR 13,000.

World Bank's anti-qat program is not enough

The World Bank's program to reduce demand on qat consumption will not succeed if there is no real support for farmers and it is only focusing on creating awareness campaigns for qat chewers.

"There must be enlightenment campaigns for people, especially young people in universities and schools, on the health effects of qat consumption," said World Bank's Director of Qat Dialogue Task, Goly Floria. She hinted that the role of the WB in the reduction of qat consumption is only to help in generating awareness campaigns in this field.

She avoided several times speaking directly about material from the bank which would support farmers, but she said there is support from the organization to finance workshops and fund awareness campaigns. She said they have plans in the future to provide material from the bank to support farmers.

"Change must come from below. There must be participation and commitment from concerned parties to help the country in this issue," the WB official said. She believes that farmers in Haraz were convinced to uproot the qat only when they were informed by their religious leader that qat is "Haram" or (illegal).

She believes that it is difficult to uproot qat trees in Yemen and that the uprooting of qat will be a gradual process that will require a long time. But she does not believe the idea that this process need be a political decision.

She indicated that in her own country, Thailand, people used to consume a plant similar to the green leaves consumed in India, but with awareness campaigns and alternatives, as well as support to farmers in cultivating rice, people eventually abandoned this habit and stopped consuming the plant.

Concerned officials viewpoints about reducing qat consumption

Concerned officials and interested personalities, who were invited to attend the first workshop on reducing qat consumption organized by the World Bank and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation last November, have different viewpoints on how to rid the country of this habit and uproot the plant.

"Qat is a social, economic and ecological problem. We can say qat is a problem threatening our very

lives," said Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdul-Karim Al-Arhabi.

"Qat is great tragedy in Yemen. It consumes 35 percent of ground water and it is cultivated on more than 47,000 hectares of agricultural land," said Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Abdul-Malik Al-Thawr.

"The uprooting of Qat requires political will and providing alternatives for farmers. The process necessitates programs, and plans which would include organizations combating the chewing of qat," said Mohammad Saleh, the Director of Regulatory Department at the Agricultural Cooperative Union.

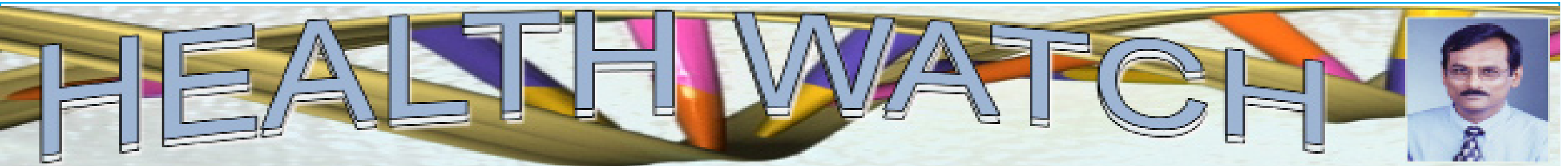
"Efforts must be steered in other directions, such as changing cultural concepts, finding suitable alternatives to qat sessions and filling the free time of the chewer with activities that stimulate and keep him or her occupied and interested," said Saleh Hassan, the Official of Enlightenment on Qat Dangers in Lifemakers Forum.

"Uprooting qat requires a strong will and giving farmers substitutes and enough support to replace qat trees, as well as alternatives to qat chewers like areas for practicing sport and parks," said Deputy Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Abdu Al-Hakimi.

"It is not easy to eradicate qat and this will entail having a long term plan. Qat is the sole arbiter in the life of many Yemenis and its effects begin from the early morning till the end of the night. Qat and smoking are the main reasons behind spread of heart diseases in Yemen," said Dr. Dhaif Al-Muttareb, Heart Professor at Sana'a University.

The program of reducing qat consumption which covers countries producing and consuming qat (Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Yemen) recommends the following:

- Containing the use of qat through interventions such as restricting the sales of qat to the under-aged, limiting opening hours of qat retail outlets and increasing taxes on qat.
- Conducting advocacy and awareness campaigns among a wide audience, including key decision makers in the government, parliament, criminal justice systems, and religious leaders.



This weekly column by Dr.Siva is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr.Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and Naturopathy are his passions.

Your health is in your hands!

Hand washing is the twenty second solution to protecting yourself from many illnesses. Washing our hands is a lesson we all learned as children, but when we're busy or in a hurry, we tend to rush or forget to do it. We think our hands are clean, but they're not if we haven't done it right.

Many outbreaks of food borne illness are traced to unwashed or poorly washed hands. Sneezing and coughing can spread cold germs into the air, but most colds are caught and spread through germs on people's hands.

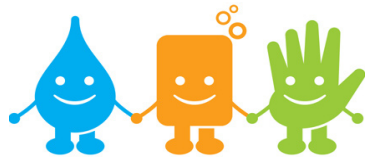
The germs that cause the flu, SARS, hepatitis A and many kinds of diarrhea can also be picked up and spread by your hands. If these germs are on your hands, touching your mouth or nose to eat, sneeze or cough can make you sick.

Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness. Hand washing requires only soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer — a cleanser that doesn't require water. Find out when and how to wash your hands properly.

When to wash your hands?

As you touch people, surfaces and objects throughout the day, you accumulate germs on your hands. In turn, you can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose

or mouth. Although it's impossible to keep your hands germ-free, washing your hands frequently can help limit the transfer of bacteria, viruses and other microbes.



Logo used for Global Handwashing Day around the world. Shown in the image are water, soap, and hand.

Always wash your hands before:

- Preparing food
- Eating
- Treating wounds or giving medicine
- Touching a sick or injured person
- Inserting or removing contact lenses

Always wash your hands after:

- Preparing food, especially raw meat or poultry
- Using the toilet
- Changing a diaper
- Touching an animal or animal toys, leashes or waste
- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Treating wounds
- Touching a sick or injured person

- Handling garbage or something that could be contaminated, such as a cleaning cloth or soiled shoes
- If you are living in Yemen and enjoy chewing qat, remember to wash the qat leaves well so as to clean not only adherent chemicals, but also the flu virus. The best way is keep qat immersed in a mild detergent solution for about 15 minutes, rinse it in running water, and mop it dry. Of course, it's also important to wash your hands whenever they look dirty.

How to wash your hands?

It's generally better to wash your hands with soap and water. Follow these simple steps:

- Wet your hands in running water.
- Apply liquid, bar or powder soap.
- Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Remember to scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel or air dryer.
- Use a clean tissue to turn off the faucet.

Keep in mind that antibacterial soap is no more effective in killing germs than is regular soap. Using antibacterial soap may even lead to the development of bacteria that are resistant to the product's

antimicrobial agents — making it harder to kill these germs in the future.

How to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer?

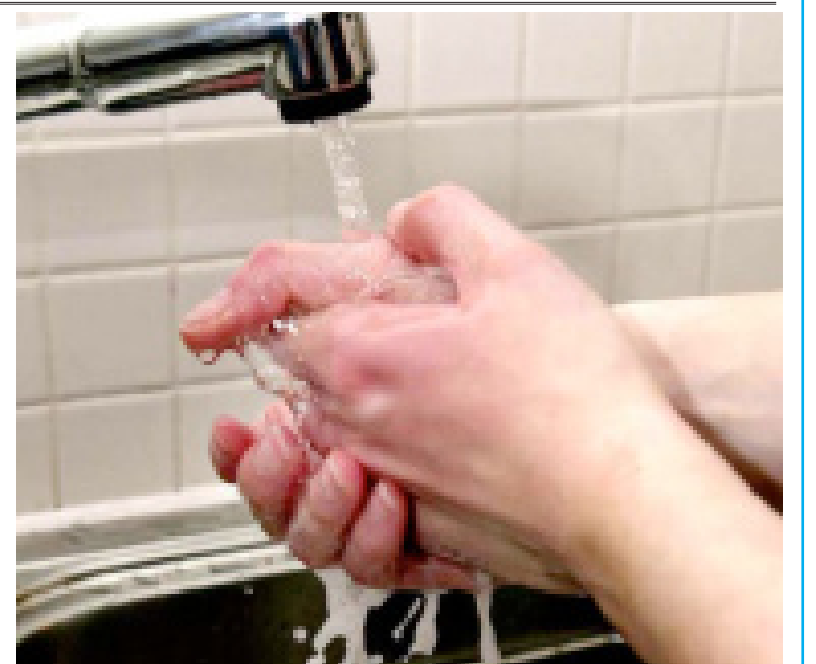
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers do not require water. So, they are an excellent alternative to soap and water. It is ideal in situations like when you are travelling by a taxi, alcohol based sanitizers can come handy. If you choose to use a commercially prepared hand sanitizer, make sure the product contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Then follow these simple steps:

- Apply enough of the product to the palm of your hand to wet your hands completely.
- Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces, for up to 25 seconds or until they're dry.

If your hands are visibly dirty, however, wash with soap and water. Antimicrobial wipes are another option, although they're not as effective as alcohol-based sanitizers.

Children also need to keep their hands clean

Help your children stay healthy by encouraging them to wash their hands properly and frequently. Wash your hands with your children to show them how it's done. To prevent rushing, suggest washing their hands for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. You might place hand-



washing reminders at children's eye level, such as a chart by the bathroom sink for children to mark every time they wash their hands. If your children can't reach the sink on their own, keep a stepstool handy.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are OK for children and adolescents, too, especially when soap and water isn't available. Make sure the sanitizer completely dries before your child touches anything. Store the container safely away after use.

Hand washing is especially important for children in child care settings. Young children cared for in groups outside the home are at greater risk of respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases, which

can easily spread to family members and other contacts. Be sure your child care provider promotes frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Ask whether the children are required to wash their hands several times a day — not just before meals. Note, too, whether diapering areas are cleaned after each use and whether eating and diapering areas are well separated.

A simple way to stay healthy

Hand washing doesn't take much time or effort, but it offers great rewards in terms of preventing illnesses. Adopting this simple habit can play a major role in protecting your health.



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Yemen Commercial Bank



The world appreciates and awards us for the distinguished achievements we accomplished in the monetary business



2008

For the second year in a row, Yemen Commercial Bank is awarded the international prestigious award as the best bank in Yemen through the Bank of the Year 2009 Award



2009

The distinguished accomplishments the bank has achieved in the past years have qualified us to winning the Bank of the Year Award in 2008, and again this year 2009 as a sign of our continuous excelling in providing the best monetary services in Yemen. The international banking and monetary organization "The Banker" has chosen YCB this year again for our renowned services and our ever developing strategy that aims at serving customer demands and competing to win clients' trust in the local market.

This award was given to YCB in the international ceremony that took place on 3rd December 2009 in London in the presence of distinguished banks from all over the world. This is an important annual event in the global banking sector and many banks around the world compete for this award.

The Bank of the Year Award is given to banks according to monetary performance according to a set of criteria specified and judged by an international committee from The Banker / Financial Times and the winning bank is recognized internationally for its high standard of services. Globally, 476 banks compete for this award and 145 banks have won this year representing and becoming the best banks in their respective countries.



An award well deserved

Mohammed bin Yahya Al-Rowishan the chairman.

commented that YCB has won this award for the second time in a row and this indicates the bank's commitment to excellence in the monetary industry and to client satisfaction. "We aim to please our clients and give them the best services. We want to make sure we are the best and provide the best. This award is well deserved for the hard work and continuous improvement in the Yemeni Commercial Bank."

Growth.. improvement. success

We believe in continuous growth and development and that through growth, comes improvement and success and these are concepts measured in quality and not quantity. This is how the YCB achieved this leading position and deserved this international award as the best bank in Yemen 2009.



We are proud with this award

Ayed Al-Mashni chief executive officer and general manager of the YCB

said that the management and staff of the bank take pride in this award specially that it reflects the hard work and achievements of the bank.

"This shows that we aim at continuous improvement to catch up with the latest in the banking and monetary sector."

Exceeding customer expectations

He added that the bank will always keep up with clients expectations and serve them to the best of its abilities. All clients are important and will be provided the best monetary services and products to ensure their satisfaction and YCB's position as a leading bank in Yemen.

YCB is in a list of giant Arab and foreign banks

"It is a great honor to win this award and be recognized internationally. We have competed with giant local and international banks operating in Yemen and we surpassed them in our performance and this is something to consider with pride."

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Cafeterias in Sana'a: A place for cheap food, socializing and a lot of fun

By: Ali Saeed

“Here the atmosphere is totally different from the restaurant formality,” said Sadam, a journalist in his thirties who was sitting in Lolowa cafeteria at the Misbahi on al-Siteen meters road while enjoying his snack with lemon juice.

A cafeteria is an informal food place where people have snacks and drinks such as tea, coffee and fresh juices at low prices. It is usually open very early in the morning at six am until eleven before midnight. Most cafeterias are exclusively for men by tradition, however, a few have created isolated covered space for families and women.

Although there are restaurants everywhere you go in Sana'a, but for the breakfast, employees prefer to have it in cafeterias.

You can sit there for hours sipping on a fresh orange juice between YR 100 to 250 according to concentration of the fresh oranges in the juice.

You can eat egg and cheese sandwiches, or beans peas. Some high level cafeterias mostly on Hadda Road provide more expensive dishes such as chopped meat, liver. And even fewer food places make what is known in Sana'a as Mutabak or shataer which is traditional bread like the Indian paratha cooked with eggs, green leaves and tomatoes.

They also offer a local delicacy called Masoob Malaki, “Royal mix”: bread with cream, honey, almonds, peanuts and cheddar cheese. It is eaten with a spoon, a plate serves one person and is around YR 300 (USD 1.5).

Magnona “Crazy meal”: made of jam, cottage cheese, boiled eggs, olives. It is a delicacy among the cafeteria crowd. In the cafeteria it is served in a plate and people eat it with bread, sometimes they could take it in a sandwich. A crazy meal is enough for two



people and only costs YR 250 (USD 1.25).

At any point of time you should find at least two people in a 25 square meters cafeteria on average. Some larger ones have an extension on the sidewalk where they set up tables usually under a large umbrella. Peak times are in the morning between seven to nine as government and private sector employees take their breakfast before heading off to work. And between seven and nine in the evening for a cheap dinner in a friendly atmosphere.

People who frequently eat in cafeterias find it easy to enjoy the fun atmosphere and joke with each other. Boredom has no place here as friends gather in groups to eat while joking.

It was eight in the evening, even on a workday you can hear the laughter echoing so loud from young friends whose dinner lasts longer than usual because they have nothing better to do and are enjoying the atmosphere. Two friends were sharing an Araise shake which is made of mango, apples, honey

and artificial juice, while teasing each other.

Any passer-by can notice smiles on the faces of customers and rarely sees a person frowning.

Grouchy people in cafeterias usually sit alone and leave within a few minutes.

Yet for many, even if they came alone they end up joining others and making new friends. And even those who started off in a bad mood usually leave with a smile on their faces. Most of the cafeteria crowd are high school and university students, employees, and daily laborers.

In the cafeterias, you see uniforms, men elegantly dressed and even those in shabby worn clothes. Few beggars even buy their meals from the cafeteria but they usually take their order out.

“In cafeterias, there are services and things that can not be found in average restaurants,” said Jameel Al-Asimi an engineer from Sana'a. He was referring to the music which is mostly religious songs, traditional Yemeni songs,

popular music and in some cafeterias you find Egyptian and Gulf songs.

In cafeterias the order comes very quickly, and the waiter always stands on the tables taking orders and making sure everything is ok. The tables turnover is very quick compared to restaurants where people take a long time to have their meals.

“In cafeteria, the waiters, the cook, and even the owner of the cafeteria care a lot of their customers more than restaurants do,” said Al-Asimi remembering how waiters in cafeteria engage in conversations with the customers especially the regular ones.

Because the cafeteria spaces are usually small, the interaction is higher among customers and the service providers.

A waiter greets customers the minute they enter the door which is widely open, he remembers the orders and shouts them right from where he stands. He has to shout in a funny tone which is common among waiters so that he is heard. If there are many customers, you hear the different waiters shouting orders all over the place.

For those who come from the countryside to Sana'a city for work, cafeterias become their second home in terms of socializing and feeling the comfort of others in the big city. Many stay between Magrib and Esha prayers in order to engage with the world around them instead of being on their own.

“We come to Sana'a for work and we can't afford to buy our daily food from restaurants, so we always have our food and our tea from cafeterias,” said Faysal Al-Shami, a plumber from Ibb.

Opening a cafeteria in Sana'a is a good business, which provides more than just food for the customers.

Chapter 7 – The Visitors

Written by Cathy Sewell
Illustrated by Blaise Sewell
Donated by The Curriculum Closet
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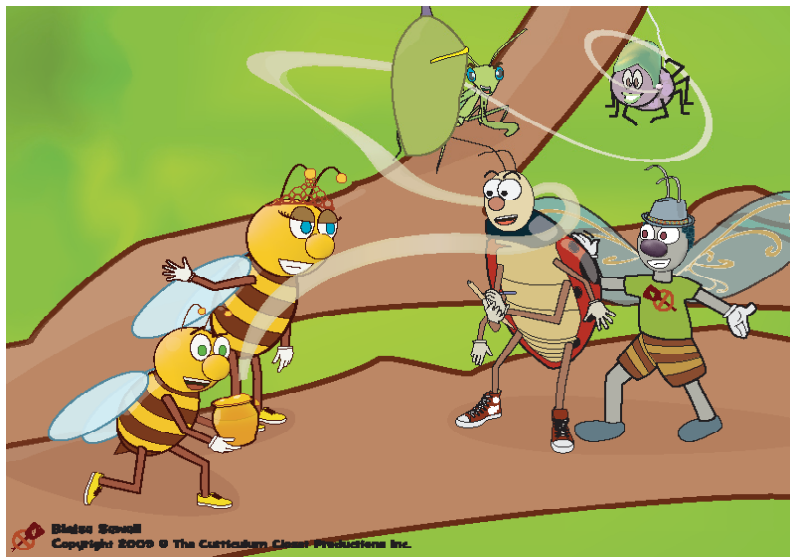
A loud, strange noise invades the newspaper office. Meanwhile, the team is working on their next edition.

The roaring BUZZ surrounded the newspaper office. Just when the fly and the ladybug were about to dive under a stack of recycled paper, the source of the loud noise appeared.

A pair of bumblebees came buzzing into the Journal office and landed right next to Jake. A timid, male bee stood quietly next to the crowned, female bee. A few hundred of their friends hovered just above the branch.

“Can we help you?” Jake asked.
“Well, we’ve been reading the Fly on the Wall Journal and we had an idea,” Sarah, the queen bee said. “It seems that we have some vacancies in our hive, you know... empty rooms. And, we’d like to put an ad in your newspaper to see if any other insects need a place to live.”

As she finished talking, the male bee quietly flew over with a small cup full of golden yellow honey. He sat it



down in front of José and Jake. As the smell of the honey wafted across the tree branch, the rest of the newspaper team slowly made their way over to the meeting. They all stared silently at the sweet, glistening nectar.

“We’ll pay you with honey,” Sarah continued, “a cup for each of you, if you run our ad in your newspaper.”

“We’re not really set-up for doing ads in our newspaper,” Jake said.

“But that doesn’t mean we can’t fig-

ure out a way to work with you!” José interrupted. He was not going to let the bees, or their honey, get away.

“How about if we help create the ad ourselves?” Sarah said. “I have a lot of hard-working bees in my hive, and we’d love to help with your newspaper.”

“But what about the hon...” José started.

“Don’t worry, we’ll still pay you with honey for our own ad,” Sarah smiled at José. “But we’ll find out what the buzz is around the park, and see if anyone else would like to buy an ad in your newspaper. We’ll be back!” Then Queen Sarah, her trusty servant and their entire entourage flew away, leaving the newspaper team alone, with the honey.

In a flash, the cup that just seconds earlier was filled with glistening honey, was completely empty and spinning like a top.

“This has to be the best honey I’ve ever tasted,” José’s mouth and legs were covered in the sticky goo.

Rocko tried to agree with José, but the honey stuck to the roof of his mouth.

With the cup completely drained, all of the insects were enjoying the beginnings of a sugar coma. They were

licking the final bits of stickiness off of their legs, tentacles and bellies.

“You guys are disgusting,” Matty growled at the other bugs. “Look at how you attacked that honey, completely out of control!”

“Really, Matty?” Cindy laughed as she reached out and caught a giant drip of honey falling from Matty’s nose. “It’s a good thing you were able to control yourself.” And everyone laughed, including Matty.

“Seriously,” Jake said, ending playtime. “We need to get working on our next edition. How’s that puzzle coming along, Cindy?”

“We’re just about done!” Cindy said, proudly. “Matty is helping Rocko recreate the maze for the newspaper.”

“Excellent!” Jake told the Spider-Mantis team.

“And I finished the story about the exterminators,” José said proudly. “It seems that at least for now, they aren’t coming into the park. They’re just staying in the city.”

“OK, so we have the news story, and the puzzle, and the ad for the bee hive. Is that it for tomorrow’s edition?” Rocko asked.

“Sounds good to me,” Jake agreed. “I’m so proud of you Rocko. You really are getting the hang of this. We only needed one bandage this edition!” Cindy said, while gently smoothing out the gauze on Rocko’s forehead.

While putting the finishing touches on their newest newspaper edition, the team was in for another surprise. At first nobody knew what was happening. Was it an earthquake? The shiny, mysterious, pea-pod-like sack in the corner of the office started swaying.

“What is going on?” Matty shouted.

“I d- don’t know...” José stuttered.

“It looks like something is moving inside that thing!” Rocko squeaked, and all of the insects backed away. Even Ricky and the troops looked worried.

“Oh my...” Cindy whispered.

CULTURAL SERIES FACES & TRACES

Faces & Traces is a cultural series of concise biographies of local or international famous and obscure personalities in fields such as literature, arts, culture and religion in which these individuals contribute affirmatively. It is a short journey in contemporary history, attempting to tackle numerous effective characters in human civilization.

Fara, Abdullah F.

(A Yemeni Innovative Poet and Translator)

By: Eyad N. Al-Samman •
alsammanworld@yahoo.ca

Fara, Abdullah Fadhil, was a Yemeni poet, educationist, translator, critic, lecturer, diplomat and lyricist. He was born on December 15, 1926, in Al-Shaikh Othman quarter in Aden city. He received his primary education in Al-Shaikh Othman's schools and finished it in 1937. In Aden, Fara earned the High Certificate of Cambridge upon finishing his high school in 1946. He then traveled to Cairo, Egypt, in 1948 and attended the American University and graduated in 1952 holding a bachelor degree in social studies. Fara moved to the State of Kuwait in 1959 to work as a senior examiner in the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education. He was appointed deputy minister assistant of the Ministry of Education for the technical affairs and then a chargé d'affaires of the deputy minister from 1961 to 1968. Afterward, Fara went to the United Kingdom to pursue his postgraduate study. He enrolled at the University of London, Faculty of Education, and graduated in 1964 holding a high diploma in education. In the early 1970s, Fara studied in various universities including University of Victoria, New Zealand, University of Columbia, New York and University of Umm Durman, Sudan, and also studied administering and planning education with a fellowship organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

After his return to Yemen, Fara was appointed dean of the Supreme College of Education, Aden University, in 1970 and then a general manager for the higher education in the same year. He was selected as a second manager for culture in the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Sciences from 1970 to 1983. In the diplomatic field, Fara was appointed minister plenipotentiary in the Yemeni embassy in Tunisia in 1983 and stayed there until 1987. Fara worked also as the Yemen's delegate in the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Sciences from 1989 to 1993. Upon his return home in 1994, he was assigned to work as a cultural affairs' chancellor for the Aden University's Dean. His last work was a lecturer of translation in the Center of English Studies and Translation in Aden University.

Among his other cultural contributions are establishing the Cultural Club in Aden, working as a presenter for programs on Aden's Radio, holding the position of the first general secretary for the Yemeni Union for Authors and Writers in 1972 and working as an editor in "Al-Mus-

taqbal" (The Future) magazine which was published in Aden. He also was a member of various organizations and unions including the International Organization for Journalists, the Arab Union for Authors and Writers, the Asian-African Union for Authors and Writers, member emeritus of the Tunisian Union for Authors and Writers



and a member of the International Organization for Arab Translators.

The literary oeuvre of Fara includes a poetic divan, several lyric pomes and his contextual translations for many international works such as short stories, dramas and other books from several languages including English, French, Spanish, Persian and Russian into Arabic.

His sole poetic divan was entitled "Dawamat Al-Haba'a" (The Whirlpool of Dust) which is still handwritten and has never been published yet. In the translation field, Fara translated into Arabic in 2000 the book of the British writer, Tim Mackintosh-Smith, entitled "Yemen: Travels in Dictionary Land". He also was about to translate the book entitled "Perfumes of Arabian Peninsula" written originally by Major Jacob which was a British officer lived in Yemen in the 1920s. Among other literary works that Fara translated into Arabic are "Rubaiyat of Omar Al-Khayyam", "The Fifth Column", a drama written by Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) and "The First Collection of Japanese Haiku Poetry." The Arabian House for Book in Tunisia published a translated play by Fara entitled "Ma Aan Al-Awan" (The Time has not Come Yet) during his period of stay in Tunisia. Fara published in 1967 a collection of translated short stories and dramas in the Kuwaiti series of international dramas entitled "Askar wa Losoos" and among them was "Ned Kelly", a drama written by Douglas Stewart (1913-1985). In 2007, Aden University published a book contained Fara's translated short stories written originally by Ernest Hemingway and entitled "Men without Women." The book comprised 14 translated short stories into Arabic among them are "The Undeafened", "Hills like White Elephants", "Ten Indians", "An Alpine Idyll" and "Banal Story."

Several radio programs in Aden were also produced by him such as "Baraid Al-Adab" (Literature's Mail), "Min Huna wa Hunak" (From Here and There), "Fee Al-Turathain Al-Arabi wa Al-Engilizi" (Talking in the Arab and English Heritages) and "Mothakirat wa Dhikrayat Adabiyah" (Literary Reminders and Memories).

His famous lyric pomes have been sung by Yemeni singer Muhammad Murshid Naji such as "Ma Zilt Ahwak" (I Still Love You) and "Birohi wa Qalbi" (With my Soul and Heart). Among other Yemeni singers who sang for Fara are Ahmed Qasim, Muhammad Saad Abdullah and Ahmed Fathi who sang for him a national song entitled "Habibati Al-Yaman" (My Beloved Yemen).

Fara passed away on April 14, 2008, at the age of 82 and was buried in Aden city. He was a pioneer in the field of literary translation and a unique writer who loved poetry and other literary genres. He was a writer holding the identity of literature in general and an erudite in the science of language's philosophy. Fara once wrote: "The person gets wider horizon according to the languages that he masters. He also acquires a renewable savoir-faire and becomes more skillful when he understands the life's concepts and becomes proud of this life."

Reading Comprehension Questions & Activities:

- How did Sarah want to pay for their ad?
- What else did she offer to do?
- Why did Cindy say she was proud of Rocko?
- Why was everyone worried at the end of the chapter?
- How do you think the story will end? Write your own chapter eight.
- If you were to interview one of the characters from the story, what questions would you ask? Write a short news story from your interview.

Insect World:

Research the different kinds of bees and their role in the hive. Create a chart of your findings.

Newspaper Connection:

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The Legends of the Arabian Horse



Arabian stallion Kuhaylah, "Drinker of the Wind."

The final myth is the tale of Allah's creation of the Arabian horse from the winds; one story attests Allah calling on the south wind to condense and then creating the breed, the other relating how Allah harnessed the characteristics of all four winds to form the Arabian: the spirit of the north, the strength of the south, the speed of the east and the intelligence of the west.

Magnificent physic

The very form of the horse itself is subject to mythical interpretation. Only bay, grey, chestnut, black and roan are colors recognized by the Arabian Horse Association.

Physically, the bulging head, known to Bedouins as a "jibbah," is a sign of blessing; the "mitbah," the arching neck, a sign of courage, and the tail signifies pride.

But there is no doubt that the horse deserves its reputation.

The Arabian is globally respected. Indeed, their bloodlines are found in almost every modern breed of horse around the world.

Because Arabian horses have evolved and developed around people, often forming extremely close relationships with their Bedouin owners (as they invariably slept in their tents amongst their families for protection from theft and shelter from the cold desert nights) they have remarkable temperaments.

Now in Yemen, the heir to a rich equine history, the Arabian is enjoying something of a revival. Although the days of the Bedouin sheltering mares in their tents are long gone, with a thriving thoroughbred racing industry in the Gulf, horses and the culture surrounding riding, which has been imbedded in Yemen's psyche, is re-emerging.

Not only is this a country home to some of the finest Arabian specimens, which can trace their roots, both historically and mythically, to Yemen's antique past, but there are fantastic opportunities

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By: Fergus Argyle
Curtsy of Yemenia Magazine

Controversy over the origin of horse breeds as many mythological historians and researchers have discussed this issue in details coming out with several tales.

They even went so far as to mythologize the very breed's beginnings.

Somewhere in the inhospitable deserts of the Middle East, along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, developed a breed of horse so special that horse owners believed them to be a gift directly from God.

This is what we have come to know as the Arabian.

Now, in Yemen, one of the original crucibles of its creation and development, we explore the state of riding here; discussing the sport in Yemen with two of its biggest advocates; and delve into the past and present, history and mythology of this highly influential breed.

Horse Riding in Yemen

Riding in Yemen is currently undergoing a serious revival.

The main riding center in Sana'a is the Nadi Farousia, the Horseman's Club, a public club consisting of some 200 members split 25/75 foreigners to Yemenis.

Founded in 2000, the Nadi Farousia is run by the Captain Mohammad Al Kumali, an audacious rider, who divides his time between running the club and participating in competitions in the Gulf and Egypt (he is amongst the top five riders in Yemen).

Captain Mohammad also spends time-- giving lessons; but much of the tuition of foreigners is done by Captain Anis Al Hadrami, a banker, who spends his free time teaching riding, and Canadian expert Selena Pellizzari.

Three years ago, Captain Anis five year-old son encouraged him to ride, and after making rapid progress, he now offers lessons for all standards: anything from a gentle walk around the paddock for a beginner to advanced dressage tuition.

One of the most popular options for experienced riders are adventure trails across the stunning countryside sur-

rounding Sana'a. The opportunity to ride Arabian horses is itself a major attraction of the club, which keeps some 80 horses, the majority of which were owned by Sheikh Hashid Abdullah Al Ahmar.

The Arabian horse

The Arabian horse possesses a rich history.

As one of the world's oldest human-developed breeds, its origins are shrouded in mystery.

Indeed, it is hard to over-estimate the impact the Arabian has had on modern global horse breeding and sport; as its reputation and temperament have made it one of the most popular genetic strains.

The origins of the breed are a source of some controversy.

While some researchers, including the pre-eminent Gladys Brown Edwards, believe that the breed developed from one of the most four foundation subtypes; which had adapted specific characteristics based on their natural environments.

Others believe that the original horse was a "proto-Arabian," of oriental subtype.

These were the oriental horses, which appeared in ancient art throughout the Middle East, particularly Ancient Egypt, and in rock paintings as far back as 2500 BC.

Yet beside these quickly became essential for the survival of the Bedouin.

As such, it gained an almost mythological status within society and tribes created an oral history based on the genealogy and exploits of their horses.

They even went so far as to mythologize the breed's very beginnings.

Legends

There are four central mythological creation stories, connected to religious figures.

During an arduous journey through the desert, the Prophet sighted an oasis and let his horses loose.

They raced towards the oasis to slake their thirst, but as the herd neared, he called them back.

Only five loyal mares returned, and they became the chosen five, Al Kham-

sa, which are reputed to have begat the five choice strains of the breed.

Some breeders still attest to the fidelity of the tale.

An alternative story relates how the Queen of Sheba, whose role centralizes Yemen within Arabian mythology, gave King Solomon a stallion named Safanad (the pure).

Such were the abilities of the beast (who was reputed to be swifter than a gazelle, and that a hunt on him was never fruitless) that he was chosen to stud the Arabian line.

A further tale relates how the angle Gabriel woke Ishmael, the son of Abraham, with a "wind spout" that roared towards him.

As the cherub ordered the winds to stop, it scattered dust and rain, gathering itself into a powerful galloping horse.

The Bedouins thus named the first

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for beginners and experts alike to engage in a variety of riding disciplines.

I caught up with Selena Pellizzari, a riding coach and Equinologist, and Julia

Thielebein, a Cultural Heritage Advisor, down at Captain Mohammad's Horseman's Club, to listen to their views on Yemen's riding scene.

The Arabian Horse



A gray Arabian, note white hair coat but black skin. This is a pure-bred Arabiane stallion. LA MIRAGE

The Arabian or Arab horse is a breed of horse that originated in the Middle East. With a distinctive head shape and high tail carriage, the Arabian is one of the most easily recognizable horse breeds in the world.

It is one of the oldest horse breeds, with archaeological evidence of horses that resemble modern Arabians dating back 4,500 years.

Throughout history, Arabian horses from the Middle East spread around the world by both war and trade, used to improve other breeds by adding speed, refinement, endurance, and strong bone. Today, Arabian bloodlines are found in almost every modern breed of riding horse.

The Arabian developed in a desert climate and was prized by the nomadic Bedouin people, often being brought inside the family tent for shelter and protection.

This close relationship with humans has created a horse breed that is good-natured, quick to learn, and willing to please.

But the Arabian also developed the high spirit and alertness needed in a

horse used for raiding and war.

This combination of willingness and sensitivity requires modern Arabian horse owners to handle their horses with competence and respect.

The Arabian is a versatile breed. Arabians dominate the discipline of endurance riding, and compete today in many other fields of equestrian activity.

They are one of the top ten most popular horse breeds in the world. Arabian horses are now found worldwide, including the United States and Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, continental Europe, South America (especially Brazil), and its land of origin, the Middle East.

