

'Forum for the Future' meeting, Morocco:

Yemen reiterates commitment to reforms

By Yemen Times Staff

Rabat, Dec 15 – The 'Forum for the Future' meeting held in Rabat, Morocco on Dec. 11, has proposed the creation of a Democracy Assistance Dialogue organization to promote the consolidation of democratic institutions in the region.

Yemeni Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Abu-Bakr al-Qirbi, and Finance Minister Alawi al-Salami, reaffirmed Yemen's commitment to the democratic reforms that began with unification in 1990. Participants welcomed their initiative and affirmed their commitment to work with civil society.

Representatives from Yemeni civil society organizations expressed their expectations that Yemen lead as an example in implementing democratic and legal

reforms.

"The laws that regulate civil society organizations need to be revised and enhanced to allow greater freedom of NGOs and remove any obstacles that may hinder their efforts to better serve the community in the grassroots level." Mr. Izzeddin al-Asbahi, head of the Human Rights Information and Training Center told The Yemen Times.

The conference called for the Forum to provide "an informal, flexible, open and inclusive dialogue, devoted to strengthening democracy and the participation of civil society, to developing skills training, and to encouraging the growth of modern economies that generate wealth and that are well integrated into the global economy."

Continued on page 4

'Forum for the Future' one day meeting in Rabat, Dec. 11. Arab, Muslim and Western nations gather in Morocco on Saturday in an effort to promote economic and political reform in the Middle East that is widely seen within the region as U.S. meddling.
 REUTERS

Claim they were tortured

Terror suspects deny all

By MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Defendants in the case of the French oil-tanker Limburg and other terror operations have denied their involvement in the 2002 blast.

The defendants, who were convicted last August, said in court that the confessions they made earlier were the result of their beatings and torture.

They have also now disclosed to Sana'a Counter-Terrorism Appeal court Judge Saeed al-Qatta'a that they reached an agreement with cleric Hamoud al-Hittar, head of the dialogue committee with extremists, to give up their fanatic views and take the path of tolerance.

"Please help us; we do not have any devastating ideas," Ibraheem Huawaidi told the judge while reading his appeal. He refuted all allegations made by the prosecution against him. "I do refute and deny all allegations about my involvement in an armed gang or attacking Western embassies or the US embassy," he said.

Continued on page 4 Terror suspects awaiting trial

Arab Women's Forum wraps up

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The first democratic forum of Arab women concluded its activities at the Sheraton Sana'a Hotel on Dec. 13 2004. The women who participated in the forum met with the President of the Republic who highly appreciated holding the forum confirming the higher position attained by Yemeni woman in all democratic issues as

well as all decisions and recommendations thanking the Yemeni participants who organized for the forum.

The forum was organized from by the Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF) under the patronage of Amat Al-Aleem Al-Souswa, Minister of Human Rights, operating under the slogan that "women's empowerment is necessary step for political reform in the Arab

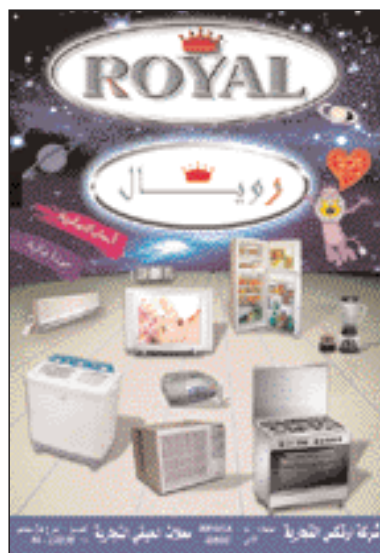
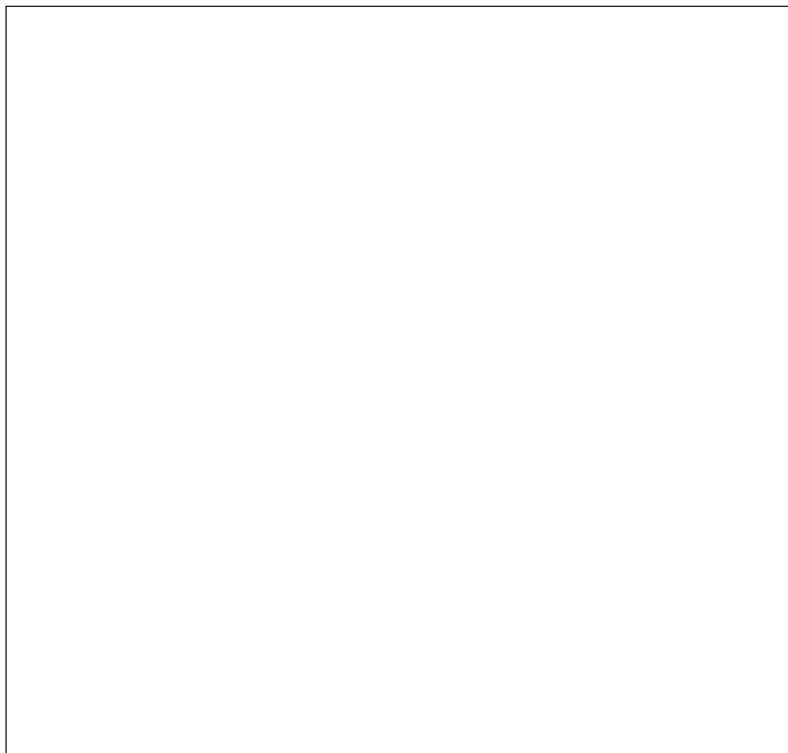
world." The forum held several sessions and workshops examining political, legislative, cultural, and social challenges for women in the Arab world.

The opening celebration was attended by al-Souswa, Netherlands Ambassador Johan F.L. Blankenberg, head of SAF Amal Al-Basha, and a number of personalities and journalists interested in human rights issues. After reciting some verses from the Holy Qura'an, Amal Al-Basha initiated the celebration commenting on the ambitions and all Arab women regarding their rights in participation in decision-making positions.

Khadijah al-Roukani spoke after that about the Moroccan experiences in women's rights. Khadijah Habashinah

presented a clear picture about the situation of women in Palestine. Johan F. L. Blankenberg delivered his speech showing the audience the serious support of Holland for issues of human rights in general and women rights in particular. He reinforced that despite being in its infancy, Yemen has made significant progress.

The leading figures presiding the forum while the opening celebration



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Japan supports development in Sana'a and Ibb

FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The Government of Japan has decided to extend grants to the sector of rural water supply in Sana'a Governorate and to Al-Fara'a Local Council in Ibb Governorate under the scheme of the "Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects", which aims at supporting small-scale community based projects to be implemented by local governments and NGOs.

The former of the two grants amounts up to USD82,032 and shall cover the expenses of improving the water supply system in Dar Al-Shareef in Jihana District. In the presence of Mr. Abdulwahed Al-Bukhaiti, Governor of Sana'a, the agreement to

this effect is signed today in Sana'a by Mr. Yahya Ismael Shuga Al-Deen, Director General of Sana'a Agriculture Office and Mr. Yuichi Ishii, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Yemen.

The latter of the two grants is for the project for construction of a health unit in Al-Fara'a District in Ibb Governorate. The project that amounts up to USD24,987 will be implemented by Al-Fara'a Local Council and shall provide essential primary health care to the inhabitants of that area. The agreement concerning this grant is signed between Mohammed ben Mohammed Ayyash, Chairman of Al-Fara'a Local Council and Mr. Yuichi Ishii, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic

of Yemen.

It is worth mentioning that Japan extended last August the grant amounting up to USD50,000 under the same scheme to improve water supply systems in five rural villages in Sana'a Governorate and that Japan extended two grants under the same scheme amounting approximately up to USD155,000 as contribution to the improvement of medical services in Yemen this year.

During the current Japanese fiscal year (April 2004-March 2005), thirteen projects, including above-mentioned two projects, have been so far financed in Yemen amounting up to USD865,685 in total under the above-mentioned Japanese scheme.

Yemen Celebrates the World AIDS Day

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Ministry of Public Health with the support of several United Nations Organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, WHO, UNHCR), has celebrated the World AIDS Day on Saturday, under the theme of "Women, Girls, and HIV/AIDS.... Better Education and Equal Rights to Prevention, Treatment and Care."

The celebration included statements by the National AIDS Programme (Dr. Fawzia Gharama) the UN Theme Group (Dr. Solofo Ramarason on behalf of Dr. Ramesh Shrestha), and the Minister of Public Health Dr. Mohammed Al-Noami. Young people from Sana'a orphanages participated in an inspiring music show on the rights

of AIDS patients, which was followed by songs from school children calling for people to support AIDS patients.

At the end of the ceremony, UNICEF held an art gallery that reflected the work of two famous Yemeni artists, Mazher Nizar and Nasser Abdullah, focused on the rights of AIDS patients, the importance of breaking the silence around the disease and the right of young people to receive information. UNICEF also launched the 2005 calendar which follows the theme of young people and HIV.

The ceremony was attended by government officials from ministries, religious leaders, local and international NGOs working in Yemen, and diplomatic missions in Sana'a.

Financial Services Volunteer Corps Visits Yemen

By Yemen Times Staff

Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC) has sent a team of senior-level experts to Yemen this week to consult with leading public and private sector counterparts in the financial sector to examine ways to bring financial sector operations in line with international standards.

The group, led by Salvatore Pappalardo, FSVC's Managing Director for Global Program activity, is under the auspices of the US Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) program announced by President George W. Bush and former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The team, which arrived in Sana'a Dec. 3, is meeting with senior-level officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, members of the Shura Council, the Central Bank of Yemen, and other government agencies as well as public and private sector commercial banks.

FSVC is a non-profit private-public sector partnership that channels expert assistance to countries seeking to build stronger financial systems and market economies. FSVC sends volunteer pro-

fessionals in the fields of commercial banking, central banking, and capital markets on assistance missions to countries that request assistance. FSVC also brings professionals from these countries to the United States, Europe and other locations for training and internship programs at counterpart institutions. The organization has worked in over thirty emerging market countries since its founding in 1990.

Yemen-China ties getting stronger

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a lecture delivered on Dec. 3 at the Yemeni Center for Strategic Studies (YCSS), the Chinese ambassador praised the efforts of the Yemeni president in promoting international dialogue and democratization.

He discussed Chinese economic and political development. He described Chinese foreign policy as independent and adhering to the prin-

Readers' Voice
Yemen Times features "Readers' Voice" a popular way for our readers to interact with us. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

This edition's question:

Do you think Arab Women's political empowerment would help achieve progress in the Aab society?
Yes
No

last edition's question:
Considering Yemen's drop in global ranking of corruption, what do you think is the main cause of corruption here.

The government	64%
Cultural attitudes	32%
YHPHQ's Third World status	4%

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Saudi Universities holding Scientific Days

Under the auspices of H.E. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic, the Yemeni Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education are organizing the Scientific Days of Saudi Universities in the Yemeni Universities between Dec. 13-19.

The event coincides with the sixteenth cycle of Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council and is part of the festivities of Sana'a as the Arab Cultural Capital of 2004.

Forty-five Saudi academics and scientists are participating in the event. There are also nine exhibitions, including the university book exhibition, palm trees planting and production, and exhibition of water and environment and the scientific innovation.

The Scientific Days includes seminars, implementation of surgeries, poetry, stories, plays and some scientific and cultural exhibitions. All the activities are taking place in the different faculties of Universities of Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Hodeida.

Peace House gets technological support

In line of the impressive and vital role played by the Netherlands in supporting peace and development efforts in Yemen and on the World Tolerance Day, Mr. Marc Mazairac, the second Secretary for Commercial & Economic Affairs in Netherlands' embassy in Sana'a, thankfully extended a valuable support to Peace House Social Organization for Compacting Revenge.

This support provided highly advanced technology sets worth of about US\$ 12,220 as a contribution to our unique, educational activity among tribal circles all over provinces of Yemen.

It is the first splendid initiative in type, impressively reflects the well-understanding of the donors towards the significance of peace and development support in Yemen especially envisage the fact that most important obstacles blocking the way of development are of revenge violation, extremism, arms misuse and poor awareness herein. It quite nonsense to refer to

development without having social peace and tracing its grounds.

Therefore, our Organization might be the only or the most struggling and impressive one targeting the tribal circles. Since founded in 1997, it has been adopting a vital, serious initiative represented through targeting the tribal society within different activities and ultimate potentiality. We tell no secret by saying that we have managed to attract and receive respect and trust of most of tribal chiefs and public thanks to our endless efforts herein.

It is worth mentioning that over 500 victims per annum in Yemen are plagued by arms misuse and other hundreds for tribal disputes.

Observers argue that supporting any overall development in Yemen evolves from such inclination. It is the optimal way to make this promising experience a big success and incite other counterparts to break into this challenge for putting an end to this unhealthy, uncivilized phenomenon for better, real development prospects in Yemen.

Bajel Cement Factory increases capacity

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The capacity of Bajel Cement Factory has increased production to 330,079 tons of the ordinary and anti-salt cements, a 134 per cent rise compared to last year.

Mansour al-Sarari, Director of the Bajel Cement Factory, said that the factory has produced 229,000 tons more than expected. The factory tends to raise its capacity for the coming period to 1,400,000 tons by the establishment of a new production line, which is considered the third, working with the dry method based on the modern technology. It is about to develop the second production line to apply the dry method of production. The factory will develop working in furnaces. Besides, the dry method contributes to decreasing the fuel consumption by 50% of the current consumption.

Republic of Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population Health Reform Support Project (HRSP) Credit 3625 Credit Administration Unit (CAU) Announcing Vacancy for the Post of Accountant of the CAU

The World Bank financed Health Reform Support Project (Credit 3625) seeks applicants for the position of **Accountant** at the CAU. The **Accountant** will report and be accountable to the financial Management Specialist and Credit Administrator, and will work closely with other staff of the CAU, relevant departments of the Ministry of health and Population, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and the Ministry of Finance.

The accountant will be responsible for the following:

1. Collect and file all supporting documentation on all financial transactions of the project under CAU management.
2. Record on a daily basis all the financial transactions after ensuring that they have been properly authorized and in accordance with the budget and the CAU procedures of internal control.
3. Prepare bank reconciliation between the bank's account and the Special Account (SA) withdrawals, on a monthly basis to reflect the monthly receipts and disbursements from the SA.
4. Prepare quarterly project financial statements under CAU direct management, and liaise with the procurement officer, to include procurement quarterly results and project's physical progress of activities as measured by project's indicators.
5. Prepare quarterly Project Financial management Report (FMR) to be submitted to the PSC, World Bank, and other relevant bodies.
6. Prepare the credit withdrawal applications with supporting documentation and submit it to the CAU Administrator for approval and then submission to IDA for replenishment of funds as needed.
7. Follow-up on all financial matters with the relevant departments of the Ministry of Public Health and Population, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the Central Bank of Yemen.
8. Ensure that the project is audited annually according to the requirement of the project.
9. Assist the external auditors in performing their annual audit of the project by providing necessary documentation, written procedures, and annual financial statements.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of five years of private sector accounting experience preferably with auditing or accounting firm.
- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in accounting or auditing.
- A good knowledge and use of the generally accepted accounting principles.
- The ability to operate accounting software, keep updated accounting records and books of accounts, and generate project's financial statements and other reports as needed by the Project's management.
- Proficiency in speaking and writing in Arabic and English.
- Familiarity with the government and World Bank financial and accounting procedures and guidelines.

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 29th December 2004. Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.

**Credit Administration Unit
Health Reform Support Project
4th Floor - Ministry of Public Health and Population
P.O. Box 1330 - Al-Hasabah - Sanaa - Republic of Yemen
Tel: +967 (1) 252224 - Fax: +967 (1) 251622 Email: hrsp@y.net.ye**

Kingdom, Yemen sign historic deals

M. GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN,
ARAB NEWS

In a historic move for two Arab neighbors, Saudi Arabia and Yemen signed a series of accords here yesterday to strengthen political and economic cooperation, while renewing the pledge to combat terrorism.

They also inked two other deals under which Riyadh will extend a loan facility of SR75 million to Yemen's Social Fund for Development and SR50 million as grant for developing Aden Hospital, a premier health facility in that country.

A total of 11 bilateral agreements were signed on the sidelines of a meeting of the Saudi-Yemeni Coordination Council, which called for bolstering political, economic and investment cooperation besides joint efforts to combat terrorism.

The meeting of the council was chaired by Prince Sultan, second deputy premier and minister of defense and aviation; and Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Qader Bajammal. The agreements were signed by the respective Saudi and Yemeni ministers.

The meeting was followed by a royal reception hosted by Crown Prince Abdullah in honor of Premier Bajammal. "Crown Prince Abdullah and Bajammal also held wide-ranging talks, which focused on the whole range of regional and international issues," said diplomatic sources here last night.

The sources said that the reception was attended by Prince Sultan, Ahmed Mohammed Sofan, Yemen's deputy prime minister; Prince Abdul Aziz ibn Abdullah and Prince Dr. Bandar ibn Salman ibn Mohammed Al-Saud, advisers at the crown prince's court.

Prince Sultan, who led the Saudi side at the meeting, highlighted the strong and historic ties between the two Arab countries. "Our nations have proved that their special ties will always lead them to agreement on all matters, realizing the interests of both states," the prince said.

The council meeting saw the signing of an MOU for waste processing, a bilateral agreement for transportation of goods by land and sea, a customs cooperation agreement and agreements in the fields of Islamic affairs, oil and mineral resources, cultural cooperation, sports and youth welfare, postal service and agricultural cooperation.

Prime Minister Bajammal, who led the Yemeni side, underscored the significance of the council's meeting in promoting Saudi-Yemeni ties. "The meeting offers a good opportunity to strengthen cooperation in all areas," the Saudi Press Agency quoted Bajammal as telling the meeting.

Saudi Arabia and Yemen signed a historic border treaty on June 12, 2000, ending a six-decades-long dispute and opening a new chapter in relations.

At that time, the two countries signed a contract worth \$986 million with German firm Hansa Luftbild to stake out their common border in

detail.

Bajammal, who came at the head of a high-level delegation, extended greetings from President Ali Abdullah Saleh to Crown Prince Abdullah. The Yemeni premier spoke on the vast investment opportunities in his country and his government's plan to carry out infrastructure projects especially in the areas of health, water, electricity and education.

Bajammal said at the closing session of the two-day meeting that the viewpoints of the two countries "were identical and in line with the resolve of the two peoples."

The diplomats from Riyadh and Sanaa have evinced keen interest to boost commercial relations. Moreover, there are investment opportunities especially in oil and gas sectors and downstream industries as well as in tourism, telecommunications, energy, transportation, agriculture and fisheries in Yemen, said the diplomats.

On the bilateral front, the two countries have forged closer relations. The Kingdom recently made available over SR28 million for a technical institute in Sanaa. The project is part of a financial aid package of SR188 million from Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) to set up 19 technical institutes in several of Yemen's provinces.

Another project named after Prince Sultan, which will be adjacent to the Military Hospital in the Yemeni capital has been funded by Prince Sultan himself. The total cost of the seven-story Prince Sultan Center is SR17 million.

Judge Hamoud al-Hitar praised:

The Dialogue Committee is known internationally

BY PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

It was announced this week that the head of Yemen's Dialogue Committee Judge Hamoud Al-Hitar has been invited to travel to Paris.

Hitar, who has been the chairman of the Dialogue Committee since it was established in the fall of 2002, said that the French government has asked him to share information on the committee's method of working with detained militants.

"France has shown interest in fighting terrorism through dialogue," Al-Hitar told the Yemen Times. "Their interest in our method asserts the importance of using dialogue, which shows that using dialogue is one of the strongest ways to fight terrorism."

A number of countries are showing interest in the approach being used by the Dialogue Committee in Yemen. Al-Hitar said that he is being contacted by governments from different parts of the world to inquire about the committee's practices. Al-Hitar traveled to Great Britain last February and May to share his experience holding dialogue with suspects of radical Islamic groups. He was also invited last spring to attend the conference of Higher Council for Islamic Affairs in Cairo.

"It is our objective while visiting France or other countries to share our methods, results and benefits of using dialogue," Al-Hitar said.

The Dialogue Committee aims at steering extremists away from violence and accepting tolerance and people living together in peace. A militant is released if persuaded after going through a number of sessions of dialogue.

Last month, the Yemeni government released 113 detainees allegedly being a part of the Al-Qaeda international terrorist network, including at least five who were accused of being involved in the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000.

Fifteen suspects convicted last August

Judge Hamoud Al-Hitar

of being involved in the attack on the USS Cole at the port of Aden, which killed 17 US sailors, were not released. In the same month, five militants were found guilty of participating in the bombing of the French oil tanker off the coast of Yemen in 2002 that killed one crew member and unloaded 90,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Aden.

Since the Dialogue Committee was established two years ago, 346 suspects have been released.

Around 175 followers of the Believing Youth, a renegade organization once founded by radical cleric Hussein Al-Houthi who was killed last September after three months of fighting between his followers and government forces in north Yemen, are expected to be released in the near future. Al-Hitar said that the members of the organization have been persuaded to reject violence, but the Yemeni government is still following up on investigations to guarantee no criminal acts have been committed. It has been reported that up to 350 members of the Believing Youth are being detained.

"Al-Hitar is a brave man to carry out dialogue with suspects, someone we definitely respect," said a foreign diplomat based in Yemen. "It seems that the process has some success."

Government security monitors those that have been released, and the Dialogue Committee carries out follow-up sessions once detainees have been freed. The committee is also putting together a program that will help those released reintegrate into society. The assistance program will offer help in finding jobs and adjusting to be reintegrated into society.

The Dialogue Committee's unique method of working with suspects believed to be sympathetic to Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups has been operating at the same time the government has been increasing security nationwide. Since the government joined the United States to fight terror soon after the attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001, security forces have rounded up hundreds of terrorist suspects, including key members of Al-Qaeda.

World Children 2005 report launched

BY FAHMIA AL-FOTIH
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

UNICEF has released an annual report every year to highlight the plights of children globally. Each year the report focuses on key areas that negatively affect the lives of children.

Yemeni Deputy Minister of Information, Hussain Basaleem and UNICEF representative Ramesh Shrestha, launched the State of World Children 2005 report on Dec. 11.

This year's report focused on the lives of children impacted by poverty, armed conflict and spread of HIV infection. The English and Arabic version of the report is available now.

Mr. Ramesh said, "the convention on the rights of the child now adopted by all countries around the world except two, offers a new definition of childhood based on the principles of human rights... Yet in many countries around the world, children are under constant threat of being marginalized, exploited and are exposed to violence mainly due to growing poverty and

conflict. In many countries there is added insult due to the exposure of children to HIV and AIDS."

He further said "The report that we are launching here today was globally launched earlier this week by UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy in London with this launch here Yemen joins 150 countries of the world whose state of the world's children is launched nationally to share import facts and figures on development efforts dedicated to children and what can be done collectively to realize the rights of the child everywhere."

Tribal revenge must end

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Peace House Social Organization for Compacting Revenge (PHSOCR) calls upon H.E. the President of the Republic, to help achieve a general settlement in matters of tribal revenge.

PHSOCR is currently preparing for the third national campaign in 2005, with the aim of creating a society free from revenge, by targeting seven governorates by raising awareness and education about the dangers of revenge, the destructive impact misused weapons,

and the impact of violence and bigotry, on the country and on the individual.

Our campaigns, which will continue throughout 2005 will include academics and the media to raise awareness within the community, and will be accompanied by around 150 theatrical dramas, nearly 300 artistic and photographic exhibitions, the distribution of over one million publications, and about 1500 lectures in collaboration with Yemeni scholars.

It is worth mentioning that PHSOCR has previously sent a message to President Saleh on Dec. 12, asking for his intervention in the battle between

Al-Manari and Bani Sa'ad clans in Yareem, Ibb.

The letter stated that a previous struggle between the two clans and there was a sentence issued against the people leading both clans, but that sentence didn't completely solve the problem.

The letter suggested to urge the leaders of this battle, the Sheiks of the clans, to abide by law in order to contain the problem. The letter pointed out that Bani Sa'ad clan has paid YR 4.5 million to the arbitrators for solving the problem and the organization has a suggested solution to it.

Corrections on interview with Dr. Mohammed Mottahhar

Due to technical difficulties during the editing of the interview with Dr. Mohammed Mottahhar, Vice Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, some of the editing inputs that should have been put in were inadvertently omitted in the switch from Microsoft word to Macintosh 5.1. We regret the errors and herewith present some of the points that were omitted:

• In introduction: In addition to teaching at Sana'a University, primarily in the area of education, soon after the establishment of Sana'a University of Sana'a (late 1960s), he was Vice Rector of Sana'a University

during the years 1976-1981.

• He also undertook consultancy work in education for such organizations as the UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Yemeni Government.

• ... soon after the establishment of Sana'a University of Sana'a (late 1960s), he was Vice Rector of Sana'a University during the years 1976-1981.

• Interview text: All these programmes (within the NPT component) are geared to foster the improvement of higher education institutional capacity and quality improvement. Furthermore, these programs are inter-linked or coordinated with the World Bank project for higher education

development.

• ... in the future we intend to include the private higher education institutions in such programmes.

• the first phase of the ICT component, the focus was on the development of an ICT Master Plan for the National Higher Education ICT Network and draw up a master plan for ten higher education institutions (seven universities and three community colleges), to be followed by an implementation stage of such a Master Plan.

• In the near future, there will be a donors' conference on the ITC implementation phase sponsored by the MHESR.

The Embassy of The United States of America announces for an immediate job opening within its organization.

“Commercial Assistant”

The position is located in the American Embassy, Sana'a under the supervision of Economic and Commercial Officer (ECO). The incumbent will conduct economic and commercial research, make and maintain business and government contacts, analyze and report on commercial developments affecting U.S. trade and commercial objectives in Yemen, and provide guidance to U.S. businesses about investing in Yemen.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Bachelor's degree or equivalent in economic, business, accounting, marketing, or related field is desirable; otherwise, employee should have some college and an appropriate amount of progressively responsible job-related experience.

Prior Work Experience: Two to four years of progressively responsible experience in sales, marketing, banking, economic research or other closely-related field. When job-related experience is substitute for educational requirements, an additional amount of total work experience is required.

Language Proficiency: Level IV (Fluent) English is required.

Knowledge: Incumbent must have a good working knowledge of Yemen's industrial and business sectors, economy, and business and trade practices, restrictions, organizations, laws and customs; of FCS internal reporting requirements and operating procedures; and USG trade objectives in Yemen.

Abilities: Incumbent must be able to develop and maintain effective contacts in the government and private sector, and must be able to obtain and evaluate data and prepare accurate and precise reports. Incumbent must have good computer skills to draft correspondences both in English and Arabic, send and receive emails, and develop reports and basic statistical tables.

Grade/Salary: *EFM/MOH/Non Ordinarily Resident: FP-5 (to be confirmed by Washington)

Ordinarily Resident: FSN-09

How to apply: All Interested nationals should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualifications and requirements of the position, as listed above, and send it to the Human Resources Office, American Embassy, Dahr Himyar Street, P.O. Box 22347, Sana'a. Yemen, Tel: 303-155, Fax: 303-182 no later than December 18, 2004.

NOTE: ALL ORDINARILY RESIDENT APPLICANTS MUST BE RESIDING IN COUNTRY AND HAVE THE REQUIRED WORK AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION.

More coordination needed:

Conference on Yemeni island investments

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALY
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The first international conference of financial resources and investment opportunities in Yemen's islands has concluded after the presentation of 40 work papers.

The recommendations confirmed the significance of exploiting the facilities offered by the Yemeni Investment Law for investors, on issues such as tax and customs exemptions.

The work papers pointed out that the number of permitted investment projects since the Investment Authority was established, is 5166 projects, worth a total of YR 1,003 billion, of

which only 57 per cent were executed. The recommendations welcomed further studies by the General Authority of Developing Islands to give investors in the islands better privileges.

The papers discussed fishery investment requirements in Yemeni islands, including the basic aims of fishery sector in islands.

A paper by Dr. Faraj Mohammed Ba'athar focused on the importance of developing Socotra Airport because the island is a link between three continents.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Abdulla Sheik concentrated in his paper on the scientific research on medical plants in Yemen islands. He said that Socotra has more than 800 kinds of medical

plants of which 230 are found only in Socotra.

The paper of Dr. Salem Rabe'e entitled "the best biographical exploitation for islands of Hadramout coast," highlighted the islands' resources and potential role in breeding programs.

Abduljabbar Naji presented his paper on the "possibilities and opportunities of development and coast investment in Yemeni islands". The paper reinforced the possibility of exploiting Yemeni islands for tourism.

The international conference recommended coordination and cooperation between Yemen and the private sector in other Arab countries in exchanging information to build investment opportunities in Yemen's islands.

Continued from page 1

Terror suspects deny all

Kasem al-Raimi requested the court to order the prosecution bring evidence of its charges against him. Five other defendants refused to comment on the appeal of the prosecution without having advocacy.

The court will listen next Saturday to the appeals of other defendants.

During the second appeal hearing, on Dec. 4, nine defendants declared repentance, asking for forgiveness.

The same court sentenced August 28th one to death while 14 others

received prison terms of three to 10 years being found guilty of forming an armed group and carrying out attacks on Yemeni and Western targets. Hizam Mujali was sentenced to death for killing a security man named Hamid Khasroof at a security checkpoint.

Omar Saeed Hasan Jarallah, Fawzi al-Wajeeh, Mohammed Saeed Ali al-Amari, Fawzi Yahia al-Hababi, and Yasser Ali Salem (tried in absentia) received ten years in jail for bombing the Limburg. The two brothers Fawaz

al-Rabee and Abu Bakr al-Rabee were sentenced to 10 years in jail.

The other five militants (Ibraheem Mohammed al-Huwaidi, Aref Saleh Ali Mujali, Mohammed Abdullah al-Dailami, Abdulghani Ali Hussein Kaifan, and Kasem Yahia al-Raimee) were sentenced to five years in prison. The two defendants-Khaled Ahmad al-Jalob, and Saleem Mohammed Ali al-Dailami, were sentenced to three years in prison for falsifying documents relating to the various attacks

Yemen reiterates commitment to reforms

Yemen also reiterated its commitment to carrying out several pending economic reforms and stated the need for continued progress in establishing free trade areas.

The Yemeni delegation welcomed the creation of an enterprise development fund at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) designed to provide technical support and financial assistance to small private enterprises in the Middle East and North Africa. The participants set an initial funding goal of \$100 million for the IFC. There has already been a total of \$60 million pledged by a number

of countries and the Islamic Development Bank.

Government officials also endorsed the conclusions of the business dialogue group stating the need to establish higher standards of governance in the region, including greater transparency, respect for property rights, the rule of law and effective, independent judiciaries.

Despite several small protests against the US government and the idea of externally promoted reform, the event witnessed no serious incidents.

The leaders gathering in Rabat also agreed to meet again at the second Forum

for the Future to be held next year in Bahrain. The majority of the region's foreign ministers will also have another opportunity to discuss the implementation of reform plans at the March 2005 meeting of the G8 and Arab League ministers in Cairo.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said that while the initiatives discussed were not necessarily a radical departure from previous bilateral and multilateral programs, the Forum for the Future "is way of bringing it all together and coming up with a solid plan of what the needs are for each of these countries."

Hizbollah TV says French ban politically motivated

BEIRUT, Dec 14 (Reuters) - The television channel run by Lebanon's Hizbollah guerrillas said on Tuesday France's decision to ban it on grounds of anti-Semitism was politically motivated and promised to pursue its case to get back on air.

On Monday, a French court gave the France-based company Eutelsat 48 hours to end broadcasts by al-Manar television beamed from its satellites to Europe, saying the channel had violated a ban on hate speech.

French ministers said the court decision must be respected, but Al-Manar said the decision was made under pressure from Israel and Jewish lobbies.

Head of news Hassan Fadlallah said it was unfair to close a channel because of one guest who, while live on air in November, said there were Zionist attempts to spread diseases including AIDS to Arabs — comments that sparked the latest court action.

"This is a political decision, not a legal decision," he told Reuters.

"How is it possible in a country that proclaims freedom and says its laws and constitution uphold the right to free speech, that they shut a TV station on the basis of one person speaking on the telephone?"

The conservative government in France and Jewish groups have pressed for about a year for a ban on al-Manar, one of several Arabic-language stations popular among France's 5 million

Muslims.

Paris has expressed concern about Islamist influence among disaffected Muslims and anti-Semitic views it says are spread by Hizbollah, a group that fought Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon and describes itself as Islamic resistance.

France has said al-Manar could return to the airwaves if it modified its content to satisfy French law.

Justice Minister Dominique Perben dismissed the complaints about the station's ban, telling LCI television: "We are faced with a situation ... where the means of communication have become the tools of war, so let's not be naive."

Eutelsat chief Giuliano Berretta told France's Europe 1 radio that his company would enforce the ruling. But Eutelsat was only one of four currently broadcasting al-Manar in Europe, he said. Without the cooperation of the other companies it would be "very, very difficult" to halt al-Manar broadcasts to Europe.

Fadlallah said al-Manar would have meetings with France's CSA broadcasting authority. He said an agreement that al-Manar would not incite hatred drawn up between the channel and the CSA after a previous court case in November was still valid.

Al-Manar says it has not breached that agreement, apart from the one November incident three days after it was signed.

"Without a doubt there will be more legal proceedings," Fadlallah said.

Abbas calls on Palestinians to drop armed struggle

GAZA, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said his people should drop their weapons in the struggle for a state, marking out a clear change of strategy for peace with Israel after Yasser Arafat's death last month.

Abbas, near certain to win a Jan. 9 election to succeed Arafat, made the comments in an interview published on Tuesday, two days after militants showed their muscle with the deadliest attack on Israeli troops since May.

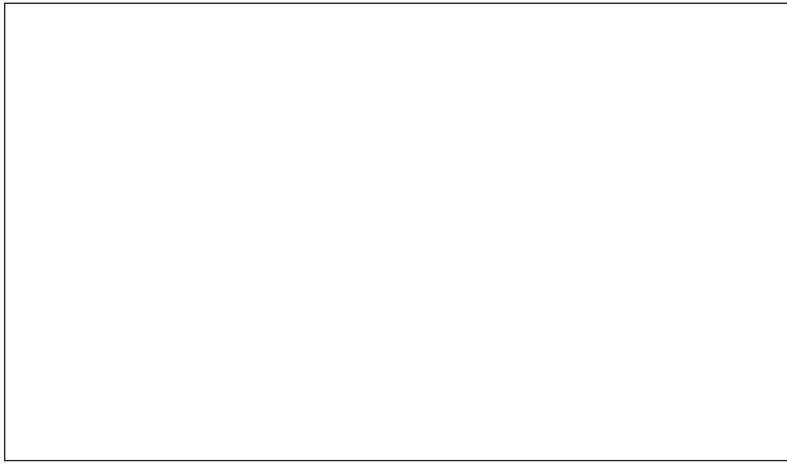
The U.S.-favoured veteran leader had previously shown his opposition to armed attacks in a 4-year-old uprising, but not in such strong terms since Arafat's death on Nov. 11.

"The uprising should be kept away from arms because it is a legitimate right of the people to express their rejection of the occupation by popular and social means," Abbas told the pan Arab Asharq al-Awsat newspaper.

"The use of arms has been damaging and should end," said Abbas, who took over as head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation after Arafat's death.

Despite Abbas's stance, growing violence in the occupied Gaza Strip has dampened hopes of a peace breakthrough after Arafat's death. Israel ordered more efforts to target militants after an attack that killed five Israeli troops on Sunday.

Touring the ruins of the army post blown up on the Gaza-Egypt border,



The new PLO Chief Mahmoud Abbas (C) and Kuwait Minister of Information Mohammad Abulhassan (R) attend a press conference after the Palestinian officials arrived in Kuwait, December 12. New PLO head Abbas, on the first visit to Kuwait by a top Palestinian official since Iraq's 1990 invasion of the Gulf state, apologised to his hosts on Sunday over the Palestinian position during the war. REUTERS

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said Israel would keep fighting until the Palestinian Authority began to act against the armed groups.

"We will continue this fight against terror until someone else fights the terror," he told reporters.

Growing violence in Gaza

Troops blew up seven homes in the southern Gaza refugee camp of Khan Younis after telling residents to leave,

Palestinian witnesses said. The army said it destroyed buildings used as cover for firing rockets and mortars at Jewish settlements.

Israeli tanks later rolled up to Gaza City's Shijaia neighbourhood, a stronghold of Islamic militant groups sworn to destroying the Jewish state. Gunfire erupted between soldiers and militants who rushed to the scene.

Violence in Gaza has soared ahead of a planned Israeli pullout next year from the

territory captured in the 1967 Middle East war, but the latest bloodshed has also sent a strong message to Abbas and other new Palestinian leaders.

The idea of giving up weapons was dismissed by a spokesman for Hamas Islamic militants, who joined with a group from Abbas's own dominant Fatah faction to launch Sunday's attack.

"I believe the consensus of the Palestinian people contradicts these statements," said Sami Abu Zuhri. "The strategies of the Palestinian people should be discussed through a serious and comprehensive dialogue."

Hamas has called for a boycott of the presidential election and a low turnout could damage the credibility of Abbas if it comes to disarming militants.

Israel has promised to help ensure that the vote goes smoothly, but that there could be no talks with Palestinian leaders unless they managed to rein in armed factions in a way that Arafat failed to.

Regardless of any negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon plans to abandon the Gaza Strip and four of 120 settlements in the West Bank next year under an initiative to "disengage" from the conflict.

Palestinians fear Sharon's real aim is to strengthen Israel's hold on the West Bank in exchange for giving up impoverished Gaza, though Western countries support the plan as a possible step to peace.

Iraq to try Saddam aides in election run-up

BAGHDAD, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Iraq will put some of Saddam Hussein's lieutenants on trial next week, a month before an election many hope will lay the ghosts of his regime, interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi announced on Tuesday.

But Allawi warned the temporary National Council the vote might not kill off an insurgency among Saddam's Sunni Arab minority.

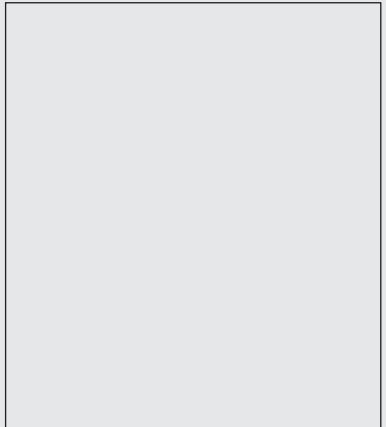
Hours earlier, the second suicide car bomber in 24 hours struck one of the entrances to the government compound where he was speaking, wounding 12 people and possibly killing several.

"I will tell you clearly and specifically that next week, God willing, the trials of the symbols of the former regime will begin," Allawi said, adding that a cousin of Saddam had now been arrested. Officials have said the 67-year-old former leader, captured a year ago, will be among the last to face justice.

Recording a blow against the insurgency, which has drawn in foreign Islamists to join Iraqi nationalists who once supported Saddam, Allawi said Iraqi police had killed an aide to Jordanian al Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and captured two others.

He also announced the discovery of a new mass grave in Kurdish northern Iraq, which may form evidence against Saddam.

Putting the old regime on trial in the election campaign, something Allawi has long said he hoped to do, seems intended to rally all Iraqis behind the new, U.S.-backed order, though some have warned



Iraqi interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi speaks during an interim National Council meeting in Baghdad Dec 14. REUTERS

it could inflame ethnic and sectarian divisions.

The Sunni Arab minority did well under Saddam. Elections will favour the long-oppressed Shi'ite majority and some Sunni leaders have called for a delay or a boycott of the Jan. 30 poll, saying violence in Sunni areas makes voting impossible.

Sunnis on ballot

The most prominent Sunni grouping, the Iraqi Islamic Party, said it was among 79 parties and blocs that have submitted lists of candidates for the ballot before a Wednesday deadline.

But it said it had yet to decide whether to campaign.

A resurgence of violence in the Sunni

stronghold of Falluja, west of Baghdad, has put pressure on the U.S. Marine force in the region, which suffered two more casualties, bringing to 10 the number of Marines killed in action in three days.

Richard Myers, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said "pockets" of guerrillas were active in Falluja, preventing residents going home. He said during a visit to Baghdad an increase in U.S. troop numbers to protect the election would be reversed after the vote — depending on the course of events.

President George W. Bush approved a 10-percent increase in troops to 150,000. Myers said failure to hold the election on time would be "a victory for the insurgents".

Allawi warned, however, that a successful election would not kill off the revolt. "We shouldn't think this will all stop on Jan. 30. We are facing a battle between good and evil," he said.

He urged Iraqi politicians to continue "making sacrifices", saying one or two people from his own party were being "martyred" every day as it struggled to organise for the ballot.

Parties have one day left to register their lists for the poll, in which Iraqis will elect a 275-seat National Assembly charged with drafting a constitution and appointing a new government. The full lists, with candidates' names, will be made public on Dec. 20, an Electoral Commission spokesman said.

Iraq's top Shi'ite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has issued a religious edict demanding Shi'ites cast a

ballot.

Shi'ite politicians have agreed on a list of 228 candidates that brings together Iraq's two main Shi'ite parties, Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, as well as Iraqi Hizbollah and several secular Shi'ites.

Allawi, a secular Shi'ite returned from exile in Britain and appointed in June in a process overseen by U.S. forces, has said his Iraqi National Accord will present a list on Wednesday.

Suicide bomber

A suicide car bomber struck an entrance to Baghdad's Green Zone government compound, 24 hours after an identical attack at the same checkpoint on the anniversary of Saddam's arrest.

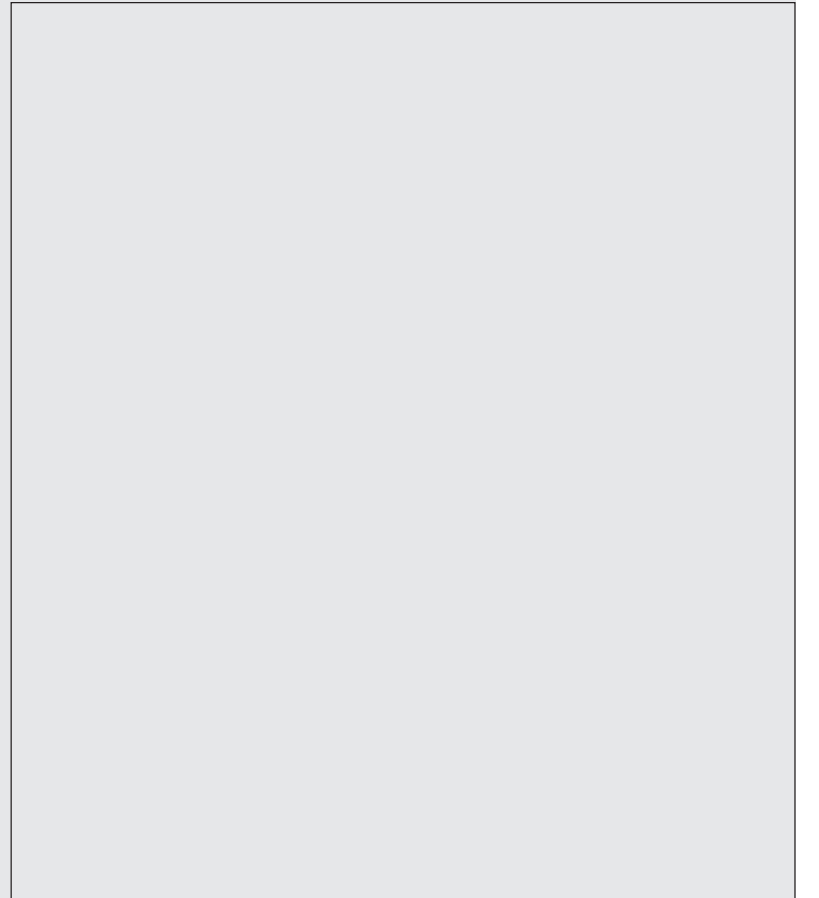
Hospital staff said 12 civilians were wounded, five of them seriously. Some of the wounded spoke of others blown to pieces.

No Americans were hurt, a U.S. military spokesman said.

"I saw a Kia car drive through the checkpoint and it exploded," said bus driver Mohammed Kathem as he lay wounded at the civilian Yarmuk hospital.

"Two of the people standing next to me were killed. I saw them cut to pieces," said another wounded man, Feras Saher, a labourer who was lining up to go to work in the Green Zone.

At the scene, mangled wreckage littered the area in front of a gate into the sprawling compound, once Saddam's presidential palace. It now houses the U.S.-backed interim government and the U.S. and other embassies.



A farm caretaker looks down the hole where former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was discovered hiding one year ago in the village of Ad Dawr, December 14. Iraq will put some of Saddam Hussein's lieutenants on trial next week, a month before an election many hope will lay the ghosts of his regime, interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi announced on Tuesday. REUTERS

Saudi Arabia executes convicted murderer

RIYADH, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia beheaded on Tuesday a Saudi national convicted of shooting dead a man after an argument, the Interior Ministry said.

Abdullah al Ahmari was beheaded in the south western city of Abha, raising to at least 26 the number of people put to death this year in the kingdom where Islamic law is strictly enforced.

Saudi Arabia executes convicted murderers, rapists and drug smugglers, usually by public beheading with a sword.

Egypt, Israel, US sign partial free trade deal

CAIRO, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Egypt, Israel and the United States on Tuesday signed a partial free trade deal described as the most important economic agreement in two decades between the original Middle East peace partners.

The agreement on Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs), which opens the U.S. market to goods produced in Egypt with Israeli inputs, promises jobs for Egyptians while offering Israel a symbolic economic foothold in the largest Arab nation.

The Egyptian government says it is the first step towards a full free trade deal with the United States and that in the meantime it will help tide Egypt over when US quotas for imports of textiles and clothes — which favour Egyptian producers — expire in January.

It also has a political significance as part of Egyptian overtures to persuade Israel to go ahead with plans to withdraw from Gaza in coordination with the Palestinian leader who will succeed late President Yasser Arafat after January elections.

"It goes far beyond the ... business and

the trade. This is another statement by two major forces in the Middle East that they are looking forward to greater cooperation," said Israeli Trade and Industry Minister Ehud Olmert.

"Economic interests are not the only goals... It is our deep belief that the Qualified Industrial Zones protocol will contribute to a just and comprehensive peace," added Egyptian Foreign Trade and Industry Minister Rachid Mohamed Rachid.

Rachid, Olmert and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick signed the deal in a ceremony at the Egyptian cabinet office.

The United States has been promoting QIZs in the Middle East to help Israel break out of its economic isolation.

"This is the most important economic agreement between Egypt and Israel in two decades," Zoellick said in a statement.

Under the agreement, similar to one between Jordan, Israel and the United States, companies in seven designated



Israeli Minister of trade and industry Ehud Olmert (L), Egyptian Minister of Foreign Trade and Industry Rachid Mohamed Rachid (C) and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick sign a trade agreement in Cairo December 14, REUTERS

zones can export to the United States without duty or quota restrictions if the goods contain at least 11.7 percent Israeli input.

It is expected to benefit mostly textile companies but other sectors could also take advantage of the incentives.

"American script"

The reaction has been mixed within Egypt, where relations with Israel remain controversial 25 years after Cairo signed

a peace treaty with the Jewish state.

Companies outside the seven zones are lobbying to be included, arguing that exclusion could lead to factory closures and layoffs, the Egyptian government said on Monday.

But a small group of Egyptians opposed to economic globalisation protested in central Cairo under the slogan "Egyptian workers are not for sale".

The protesters said the "script" for the industrial zones was American, the man-

agement Israeli, the finance from the Gulf and only the workers Egyptian.

The new Egyptian government, which took over in July with promises of economic liberalisation, said the deal would create new jobs in Egypt, where unemployment is a major grievance.

"QIZs will be instrumental in Egypt's efforts to encourage growth, increase exports and attract foreign direct investment. QIZs are expected to deliver tangible benefits to ordinary

Egyptians in the form of job opportunities, an improved standard of living and peace," a government statement said.

"The government believes that such international trade agreements will not only facilitate ... global integration but will act as important catalysts to domestic reform," it added.

The seven zones include four in the Greater Cairo area, two near the Mediterranean port of Alexandria and one in the Suez Canal city of Port Said.

Congo insists its troops fighting Rwandan forces

KINSHASA, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Congo's government denied on Tuesday that rival army factions were fighting each other in the mineral-rich east of the country and insisted the clashes were between Congolese and Rwandan forces.

"The Rwandans have sent soldiers to reinforce the positions they never really left in North Kivu (province)," Democratic Republic of Congo Information Minister Henri Mova Sakanyi said.

Local army commanders have said Congolese troop reinforcements have been fighting factions loyal to the Rwandan-backed RCD Goma former rebel group. Rwanda has repeatedly insisted its troops are not involved.

"There are no Rwandan forces in the Congo. If there are any clashes there it is a Congolese affair. They should sort it out themselves," Richard Sezibera, Rwanda's presidential envoy for the Great Lakes region, told Reuters in Kigali.

A five-year war in Congo, which drew in six neighbouring states, was officially declared over last year but the vast country remains fragile, particularly in the lawless east.

An international aid agency reported last week that the war had killed 3.8 million people, mostly from hunger and disease.

"The Congolese army has been

Congolese people carry belongings in Kayna in the northern town of Kanyabayonga some 180 km (110 miles) north of Goma, after fleeing their homes to escape fighting between factions loyal to the Rwandan-backed RCD Goma former rebel group and Congolese troops Dec. 12. Congo's government spokesman denied on Tuesday that rival army factions were fighting each other in the east of the country and insisted the clashes were between Congolese and Rwandan forces. The Rwandans have sent soldiers to reinforce the positions they never really left in North Kivu (province) said an Information Minister.

fighting the Rwandan army which was sent into Congo to reawaken the sleeper cells of the rebels they used to support," Sakanyi said. "It is not a question of a mutiny."

Fighting in the past two days has centred around the town of Kanyabayonga, some 180 km (110 miles) north of Goma, the capital of North Kivu.

Last month Rwanda threatened to

send troops into its much larger neighbour to hunt down Rwandan Hutu rebels it accuses of cross-border raids and involvement in its 1994 genocide.

Congo said it would send some 10,000 extra soldiers to the east to prevent incursions.

Despite widespread reports of their presence, no one has been able to say definitively whether Rwandan troops entered Congo.

Burundi once again delays constitutional poll

BUJUMBURA, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Burundi has once again delayed a referendum to ratify a new constitution citing concerns over irregularities in the voters' roll, but election officials said on Tuesday vital voting tools had arrived from South Africa.

Election officials did not set a new date for the referendum, initially scheduled for Nov. 26, and then moved to Dec. 22. The constitution is seen as a vital springboard to the country's first democratic elections in over a decade.

Last month the tiny central African country postponed the referendum blaming a lack of basic voting tools such as ballot boxes, polling booths and voter registration cards for the delay.

"The major reason of this new delay is the problem of electoral list, we want to avoid cheating," Paul Ngarambe, the chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) said.

"The final list will be published on December 18, we will give 15 days for the verification, after 15 days, the IEC will announce a deadline for (the) referendum," he told reporters.

It was not immediately clear whether the delay would affect presidential and general elections set for early next year.

He said more than three million voters had been registered, but the figure had been disputed by Tutsi parties.

The IEC said 7,000 ballot boxes, 7,000 lots of indelible ink, 3,500 lots of office equipment and 28,000 stamps had been supplied by South Africa for the referendum.

The road to a new constitution has been beset by political fighting between Hutus and Tutsis, who initially boycotted the constitution on the grounds it gave Hutus too much power.

If approved, it will set up power-sharing arrangements between the majority Hutus and the minority Tutsis who have dominated politics since Burundi's 1962 independence from Belgium.

The constitutional vote and ensuing elections for the nation's political offices are the fruit of a 2000 peace accord, designed to end a decade of ethnic war that killed 300,000.

Burundi held its first democratic elections in October 1993, but the elected president was assassinated three months later by extremist Tutsi soldiers, plunging the nation into a civil war which lasted more than 10 years and killed mainly civilians.

The country's second democratic presidential election is scheduled for April. Local elections will take place in February followed by parliament and senate elections in March.

If the constitution is affirmed by voters, it will take effect after the presidential elections.

Hopes of peace were raised after the former main Hutu rebel movement, Forces for the Defence of Democracy, signed a peace deal with the Tutsi-led government in November 2003, which it joined. But the Forces for National Liberation (FNL) Hutu rebel group is still refuses to join the peace process.

Pakistan, India discuss nuclear confidence steps

ISLAMABAD, Dec 14 (Reuters) - South Asian rivals Pakistan and India began two days of talks on Tuesday aimed at agreeing on measures to build confidence about their nuclear and conventional arms programmes.

The talks in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, between foreign ministry experts are part of a cautious peace process relaunched under international pressure early this year.

The two sides will discuss proposals aimed at building mutual confidence about each other's nuclear arsenals to avoid any miscalculations and will try to formalise an agreement to notify each other in advance of missile tests — a practice they already follow informally.

"I look forward to a result-oriented process which will be in the interest of both our people and our governments," Meera Shankar, additional secretary at the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, told reporters.

Analysts do not expect any major breakthroughs.

On Monday, Pakistan objected to India raising Pakistan's plans to acquire conventional arms from the United States as an issue, given India's own arms-buying programme.

India said last week any U.S. arms sales to Pakistan would affect its relations with the United States, and the slow-moving India-Pakistan peace process.

At a news conference on Monday, Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman Masood Khan called the Indian statement "disturbing".

Khan called Pakistan's programme "modest" compared with that of India, which was spending tens of billions of dollars to acquire sophisticated

weapons from around the world.

"We do not want to match India gun-for-gun, missile-for-missile, aircraft-for-aircraft," he said.

U.S. Aircraft

India's comments came after the Pentagon last month notified the U.S. Congress of three proposed arms sales to Pakistan worth \$1.2 billion, including eight P-3C Orion surveillance aircraft. Pakistan is also seeking U.S. F-16 aircraft.

While India sees the surveillance aircraft as a threat, Pakistan says they would be used in the hunt for Islamic militants on its western border.

Pakistan and India, which have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, alarmed the world when they went to the brink of a fourth in 2002 over the Kashmir region.

The neighbours conducted tit-for-tat

nuclear tests in May 1998.

On Wednesday, as part of the composite peace process, experts will hold talks about their conventional arsenals in Islamabad.

Indian has proposed an agreement on maintaining a ceasefire in divided Kashmir and more military links.

Pakistani anti-nuclear activist Pervaiz Hoodbhoy described the talks as a cosmetic attempt by the neighbours to show they were responsible nuclear states, but noted there were no plans to discuss cuts in arsenals or a shared nuclear doctrine.

In separate talks in Pakistan on Tuesday, officials from both countries were to discuss a dispute over their southern border at Sir Creek. India says the boundary is in the middle of the 104 km (65 .mile) creek. Pakistan says it is the east bank.

Pakistani (R) and Indian border security guards take part in the daily border closing ceremony at Wagah border near Lahore Dec. 14. South Asian rivals Pakistan and India began two days of talks on Tuesday aimed at agreeing measures to build mutual confidence about their nuclear and conventional arms programmes.

KAMPALA, Dec 14 (Reuters) - At least 22 people drowned when their boat capsized during a storm off the Ugandan shore of Lake Albert, which lies on the east African country's border with Congo, police said on Tuesday.

The motor-powered boat with about 40 passengers, mostly Congolese traders, sank about 30 kilometres (18 miles) from shore on Sunday night, they said.

"We have now recovered 22 bodies, but we believe there were about 40 people on the boat," the deputy regional Police Commander Francis Mindra said by telephone from the lakeside.

"They were mostly Congolese, and some of their relatives have arrived here to take home the bodies," he told Reuters.

Police said no survivors from the boat had been found and that they expected the death toll to rise.

The boat was travelling from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Uganda's Nebbi district when it capsized, Mindra said.

Forty people drowned in a similar incident in Uganda's part of the same lake in February. Dozens die in boat accidents on Uganda's lakes every year, and police blame poor maintenance and overloading by boat owners.

Afghan forces catch Mullah Omar's security chief

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Afghan security forces have captured Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar's personal security chief as he travelled in a van to the southern city of Kandahar, provincial officials told Reuters on Tuesday.

The capture of Toor Mullah Naqibullah Khan, who headed Mullah Omar's household security, could help U.S. and Afghan forces track down his boss, one of the most wanted fugitives in the U.S.-led war on terror.

Osama bin Laden, who ran his al Qaeda network in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban, is also believed to be at large in the region.

"We have arrested top Taliban figures Toor Mullah Naqibullah Khan and Mullah Qayoom Angar on the way between Arghandab and Kandahar. They were carrying a satellite telephone and some important documents," said a senior Kandahar security official, who requested anonymity.

The official said eight more Taliban fighters were arrested in Kandahar after the two men were caught, unarmed, on Monday evening. A cache of remote control bombs, time bombs and several other explosive devices and radios was also seized.

"We are hopeful we will arrest more Taliban figures and we hope that we can arrest their leader Mullah Omar," he said, though he would not venture what the chances were of finding either Mullah Omar or bin Laden.

Khalid Pashtun, spokesman for the provincial government, confirmed the arrests.

With the latest captures, security forces have picked up at least 27 militants since Saturday night, including the brother of a former Taliban governor of Kandahar.

The security official said they were picked up following a tip-off from a Taliban insider.

Mullah Omar's Taliban militia have been waging an insurgency in the south and southeast of Afghanistan since they were driven from power in late 2001 by U.S. and Afghan forces after al Qaeda attacked the United States on Sept. 11.

The Taliban's most senior military commander played down the significance of the arrests.

"Maybe they are ordinary Taliban," Mullah Dadullah, one of the move-

Security guards for Afghan President Hamid Karzai guard a school hosting a ceremony for the National Children Conference, aimed to promote better life and education conditions for Afghanistan's children, in Kabul Dec. 14. Afghan security forces have captured the Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar's personal security chief as he travelled in a van to the southern city of Kandahar, provincial officials told Reuters on Tuesday.

REUTERS

ment's 10-member leadership council, told Reuters by satellite telephone.

But Pashtun said Naqibullah Khan was a dangerous killer who was still in charge of security for Mullah Omar.

"During the (October presidential) election this man killed nine government intelligence agents in the Meyansheen district of Kandahar province," he said.

The commander of U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, Lieutenant General David Barno, said last week intelligence showed the Taliban in turmoil over whether to give up their fight and accept an offer of reconciliation from President Hamid Karzai.

Karzai, who won a strong mandate in the country's first presidential election on Oct. 9, has offered to let Taliban fighters resume a peaceful life.

"We see indications that there are arguments even among the leadership about whether it's time to accept reconciliation with the Afghan government," Barno told Reuters last Thursday.

That optimism was shared by former president Burhanuddin Rabbani,

whose own government collapsed in the mid-1990s amid a civil war that paved the way for the Taliban's takeover.

"I think the Taliban problem will be solved through the negotiations started by the government ... I think there will not be big problems," Rabbani told Reuters on Sunday, adding that traditional tribal councils could play a role.

Some Taliban figures will be shown no clemency because of the gravity of their crimes against the nation, officials say. The government, with input from U.S. authorities, is expected to draw up a list of militants who will not be accepted back in the fold.

Last week, U.S.-led forces launched a winter offensive called "Operation Lightning Freedom" aimed at preventing the Taliban from regrouping to pose a threat to a parliamentary election due in April, after their failure to disrupt the presidential poll.

There are about 18,000 U.S.-led troops in Afghanistan helping Afghan security forces hunt down Taliban guerrillas and some rare al Qaeda remnants still in the country.

Uganda police say at least 22 dead as boat sinks

Romania's Iliescu offers olive branch, gets rejected

BUCHAREST, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Outgoing Romanian President Ion Iliescu on Tuesday offered an olive branch to his successor and rival Traian Basescu, proposing a joint government of leftists and centrists to lead Romania into the European Union.

But the gesture was rejected by the winner of Sunday's hotly contested presidential runoff in the Balkan country, which formally concluded EU entry talks in Brussels on Tuesday.

Basescu, the tough talking and popular Bucharest mayor, led a pro-business alliance of Liberals and Democrats to victory in presidential polls on Sunday. But parliamentary elections two weeks before had failed to give any party a majority.

Romania needs a strong government to press harsh reforms in the two years leading up to its planned entry into the EU along with neighbouring Bulgaria. Brussels made clear on Tuesday that negotiations may have

ended but much remained to be done.

The failure of Iliescu's hand-picked successor, Prime Minister Adrian Nastase, to win the presidency has made the prospect of forming a government even more distant, with political parties now reconsidering possible alliances.

"The wisest thing is to find solutions to form a larger structure of cooperation," Iliescu, who plans to lead once again the ruling ex-communist PSD party, told a group of foreign reporters.

The founding father of the PSD said all parties in parliament, except the extreme right Greater Romania party, should participate in a government that will push for Romania's EU accession in 2007, as planned.

Much to be done

Brussels has pointed out much needs to be done to improve the judicial system, root out endemic corruption 15 years after the fall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, and to improve

the business environment if Romania wants to join without delay.

Basescu, an ex-oil tanker captain who campaigned on an anti-graft platform, ruled out any deal with the PSD after his election and his alliance confirmed his stance on Tuesday.

"We can not fight against corruption and structures inherited from Ceausescu's communist era if PSD is included in the government," said Calin Tariceanu, the alliance's designated prime minister if they manage to form a government.

All eyes are now on the ethnic Hungarian party, the small Humanist PUR party and 18 independent deputies, all necessary to both PSD and the alliance to ensure a parliamentary majority.

The parties said that although they had previously declared their preference for a PSD-led government, they were looking at all options after Basescu's election.

In his overtures to the alliance, Iliescu, who will be a PSD senator

after he steps down as president, said Basescu had won the election because of his affable approach.

"He's very open to people and gives the impression of a firm man. He's very direct. His main advantage is his frank speech to the people," said Iliescu.

Asked if he was disappointed in his protege, Nastase, and Foreign Minister Mircea Geoana, who was the PSD's designated premier, Iliescu said: "They disappointed the citizens."

"Unfortunately the PSD had no other alternative," he added.

Praised for Romania's economic recovery, PSD was punished for persistent poverty and graft. Basescu's pledges of tax reforms to boost business and a real battle on corruption paid off, mainly among the budding middle class eager for progress.

The president-elect will also attend the Dec. 16-17 EU summit in Brussels for the formal conclusion of entry talks.

Supporters of Romania's president-elect Traian Basescu celebrate his victory in central Bucharest Dec. 13. in front of a huge marble palace built by late communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu before his December 1989 execution and known as "House of the People". Romanian centrist Traian Basescu scored an upset presidential win on Monday and vowed to replace the ruling ex-communists with a reformist team in the run-up to European Union entry in 2007. REUTERS

Ukraine PM denies sought troops to halt protesters

KIEV, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich on Tuesday denied a report he had pressed Ukraine's outgoing president to deploy troops against demonstrators backing his rival in this month's re-run of a rigged presidential election.

Yanukovich and opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, back in the campaign after doctors diagnosed him as a victim of dioxin poisoning, face each other in the new Dec. 26 vote.

The Supreme Court, citing mass fraud, threw out the results of the original ballot which had declared the prime minister the winner. Vast crowds poured into the street before the ruling to back the Western-leaning Yushchenko's allegations of cheating.

Yanukovich was responding to a report in Britain's Financial Times that he and presidential chief of staff Viktor Medvedchuk had pressed outgoing president Leonid Kuchma to use force against mass rallies denouncing electoral fraud.

"Let me just say that this information is false. I only asked that order be restored," Interfax Ukraine news agency quoted Yanukovich as saying in the port of Sevastopol, part of a tour of Crimea, where he enjoys solid support.

"There was no talk of bringing in troops. Rather it was about ensuring order properly and observing the Ukrainian constitution."

Speaking later in nearby

Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich (R) greets supporters during a rally in Ukraine's Black Sea port of Sevastopol, Dec. 14. Yanukovich on Tuesday denied a report that he had pressed Ukraine's outgoing president to deploy troops against demonstrators backing his rival in this month's re-run of a rigged presidential election. REUTERS

Simferopol, Yanukovich said he, unlike Kuchma, had lacked powers to halt two weeks of rallies that "damaged Ukraine's whole economy. Our laws and constitution should not have been violated at the behest of a mob."

Back in Kiev, Medvedchuk, who is seen as embodying Kuchma's rule, told Ukrainian media he was stepping down, but said this had long been his intention as the president leaves office after 10 years.

Kuchma's time in power was

marked by scandals and charges of corruption and favouritism.

Pressure on the president

The Financial Times cited Western diplomats as saying Kuchma had come under pressure to deploy troops.

"I know that many representatives of the (state) apparatus lobbied the president to impose a state of emergency. They said it is time to use state power, Vasyl Baziv, deputy head of Kuchma's administration, was quoted as saying.

Madrid suspect seen at bomb-making site - paper

MADRID, Dec 14 (Reuters) - A witness has identified a suspect extradited from Italy as having been present at a house where the bombs used in the March 11 Madrid train attacks were made, Spanish media reports said on Tuesday.

The witness placed Rabei Osman Sayed Ahmed, also known as "Mohamed the Egyptian" and considered to be one of the masterminds of the bombings, at the house before March 11, according to El Pais.

A judicial source would say only that the result of an identity parade in which Ahmed took part on Monday had been "very positive".

Ahmed was extradited last week from Italy to Spain, where he is accused of 191 counts of murder and membership of an armed group.

The morning rush-hour bombings on commuter trains killed 191 people in the most devastating attack in modern Spanish history, just three days before a general election.

During 13 hours of questioning by High Court Judge Juan del Olmo on Monday, Ahmed showed that he knew and had links to several other suspects in the case, the judicial source said.

Ahmed listened to wiretaps made by police at his home in Italy.

Ahmed said he recognised his voice in one taped telephone conversation played to him by the judge, but did not acknowledge recordings made from listening devices at his

home because he questioned the legality of the way they were made, the judicial source said.

The Italian daily Corriere della Sera published excerpts from telephone conversations tapped in June in which Ahmed, a former Egyptian army explosives expert, purportedly urged others to carry out suicide attacks.

"We young people must be the first ones to sacrifice ourselves ... because God puts us all to the test, he tires us out, he tests the faith of us all," Ahmed was quoted as saying. "There is only one solution, to join al Qaeda."

Ahmed was quoted as referring to the Madrid train attack as "a project of mine".

The prosecutor requested that new translations be made of hours of Ahmed's intercepted conversations.

Ahmed is due to return to court on Thursday for further investigation.

Del Olmo has formally accused more than 30 suspects who are either in jail or under court supervision out of some 60 people who have been arrested. Most of the accused are North Africans who the judge said were engaged in an Islamic holy war against the West.

Ahmed's role is believed to rank alongside those of a Tunisian and a Syrian who were among seven prime suspects who blew themselves up in a suburban Madrid apartment when surrounded by police on April 3.

Gunmen kill 4, seize weapons in Russia's Caucasus

MOSCOW, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Islamic militants killed four anti-drugs unit members and seized more than 170 submachine guns and pistols on Tuesday in an attack on the unit's offices in Russia's volatile Caucasus region.

A militant Islamist group, calling itself "Yarmuk", claimed responsibility for the attack, branding the unit a "criminal organisation" that had caused people to become drug addicts. The gunmen set fire to the building after stealing 36 submachine guns, 136 pistols and a large amount of ammunition during the night-time attack in Nalchik, capital of the Kabardino-Balkaria region, local media reported.

"The attackers handcuffed them (the four members of staff), took them into the basement of the state drug-control building and shot them there," Interfax news agency quoted a spokeswoman for the region's drugs control department as saying.

In a statement on Chechen rebel Web site www.kavkazcenter.com, the Yarmuk group said its fighters were behind the raid, which killed three officials and a driver.

The group has previously claimed responsibility for other attacks includ-

ing killing two policemen in September, in what was seen as a sign of the Chechen war spreading to other mainly Muslim Russian regions.

"Thanks to the efforts of this criminal organisation (the anti-drugs unit), the number of drug addicts ... in the Nalchik and Maisk regions of the republic has grown bigger than the average of the Russian Federation," the statement said.

"According to Shariat (Islamic law), illegal production and distribution of drugs is punished by the death penalty."

Officials earlier said they suspected Islamic extremists, called Wahhabites in Russia, were behind the attack.

Wahhabism is a puritanical type of Islam practised in Saudi Arabia and now a by-word for Islamic radicalism in Russia. Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev has branded the entire North Caucasus region a "breeding ground for Wahhabism".

Many senior Chechen rebels and fighters — responsible for a string of deadly attacks across Russia during the past decade of conflict with Moscow — are strongly influenced by radical Islamist ideas. Russian officials accuse them of links to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda movement.

Proud France inaugurates world's highest bridge

MILLAU, France, Dec 14 (Reuters) - President Jacques Chirac inaugurated the world's highest bridge on Tuesday, a creation taller than the Eiffel Tower, longer than the Champs Elysees and designed to end a traffic bottleneck in southern France.

Conceived by British architect Norman Foster, the slender white viaduct in the picturesque Tarn Valley will provide a new motorway link between Paris and the Spanish border, easing congestion in the Rhone valley during the busy summer months.

Chirac unveiled a simple commemorative plaque before plunging into a throng of white helmeted construction workers, as an air display team flew past the bridge trailing red, white and blue smoke — the colours of the national flag.

He hailed the viaduct as a "marvel of art and architecture", a monument to French engineering genius that was a "miracle of equilibrium" and projected a bold, successful, modern image.

"The Millau Viaduct is a magnificent example, in the long and great French tradition, of audacious works of

art, a tradition begun at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries by the great Gustave Eiffel," Chirac told a reception.

The highest of the bridge's seven concrete pillars stands at 343 metres (1,125 ft), 19 metres (62 ft) higher than the Eiffel Tower. At almost 2.5 km (1.5 miles), it is longer than the Champs Elysees and slightly curved to afford drivers a dramatic view of the surrounding countryside and the ancient town of Millau with its medieval bell tower.

"The whole thing looks impossibly delicate," Foster said in a telephone interview of what he called his "sculpture in the landscape", a 394-million-euro (\$523 million) project financed by construction firm Eiffage.

"It is a dialogue between nature and the man-made," he said.

Elegance

The engineering feat has drawn rapturous praise for its elegant lines, which allow it to blend seamlessly into the surrounding region famed for its gorges, medieval villages and

Roquefort cheese.

"We were attracted by the elegance and logic of a structure that would march across the heroic landscape and in the most minimal way connect one plateau to the other," said Foster, who designed the glass dome that tops Germany's Reichstag parliament building in Berlin.

"We were driven by the scale of the idea and the shared passion for the

poetic dimension of engineering and its sculptural potential," he said in a statement.

The Millau viaduct has drawn thousands of visitors since construction was started exactly three years ago.

The bridge will open to traffic at midnight on Friday and is expected to channel an average of 10,000 vehicles per day, with peaks of 25,000 during the summer holidays.

The "Patrouille de France" release colored smoke featuring French flag overflights the Millau Viaduct, Dec. 14. Designed by the English architect Lord Norman Foster. REUTERS

Presented by Mohammed Khidr

Main Headlines

- Discussed in the Yemeni-Eritrean summit, Security and stability of the southern Red Sea region and solving pending problems between their countries
- Attending the Future Forum, Yemen looks forward to an international support to develop small enterprises and offers an initiative for establishment of a center for democratic dialogue,
- Saudi authorities seize Yemeni smugglers and fifteen children
- Empowering the woman politically, First regional conference begins its meetings in Sana'a
- Afwerqi in Sana'a to encircle his differences with neighbours
- In its hitting Iraq, America used internationally-banned chemical weapons
- Syria sets free 112 political prisoners
- Soldiers from American occupation forces conduct mutiny
- Al-Qassam succeeds in destroying a number of Israeli military equipment
- Yemeni demand for detainees in Saudi Arabia
- Sixty-two Yemeni arrested in Afghanistan
- Gunmen attack American consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- New American scandals and ugly acts perpetrated in Iraq
- Asking them to follow suit Europe, President Saleh calls on neighbouring countries to open their markets to Yemeni products
- Gulf States advice of not hastening up in signing security agreements
- Yemen and Eritrea discuss situations in the African Horn and the Red Sea
- Yemeni-Malaysian committee to meet in Sana'a
- Successful Yemeni-Eritrean talks establishing for developed fraternal relations
- Receiving and handing over border sites from Ras al-Muaj to A'kifa on 28 December
- During his meeting with director of the UNDP, President Saleh lauds the support the program offers to Yemen
- Eleven economic and development agreements to be signed by the Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council

SKETCHED OPINION

By Samer A.

some GCC committees, there is a trend led by one of the states to hinder Yemen's accession seeing it as not qualified yet for that. In a relevant stance, observers have played down the importance of latest statements made by the Saudi foreign minister before the Gulf Dialogue Forum regarding facilitation of Yemen's full membership of the GCC after what he described of its cooperation in developing its relations with the Gulf countries. Observers considered those statements as not more than repeated ones and not very serious. Those statements came with the approaching date for holding the GCC summit in the latter half of this month, expecting that meetings of the Gulf summit would lead to more ignoring of Yemen's joining of the grouping and might be leading to cancel its membership of some of the GCC committees.

The policy of doses, borrowing and increasing taxes would increase the state of poverty; development would stop and would distract investors. It would double suffering of the citizen, opening the doors to crime. It is hoped that the parliament would stop this rashness and to get free of party directives and take a stand biased to their people to drive away their disaster. They are owners of decision and not merely followers.

Columnist Mohammed Mohammed al-Zubairi says in his article that democratic work, of whatever kind is a system whose links reflect outputs of the nature of its composition and contents of its pot and defines proportions and levels of its success. The local councils, in this democratic context, represent with their results an image of this experiment that reveals the existence of regulations, law and council bodies as a general framework for the experiment, but according to scientific criteria, it has lacked the conditions of its success.

Al-Jamaheer weekly, organ of the Arab Baath Socialist Party, 8 Dec. 2004.

Main headlines

- Manipulation of specifications aborts projects of Development Fund in Amran
- Parliament members voice their resentment about the draft budget
- Amidst demand for his punishment, Director-General of civil service in Taiz stands trial
- Information campaign on Sana'a basin inaugurated
- Final recommendations of women rights in Islam and social justice symposium

The more important is that the government has contributed greatly to failure of this experiment and its bodies, as they did not complete the infrastructure. Many districts are still lacking of offices for branches of some ministries and the specialized cadres to enable them perform their work. Thus, there is some one who is beneficiary from the attempt to abort the experiment. It was expected that the GPC would deal with transparency, disclose, and render accountable of those causing that. The future of the experiment is associated with the government help in spreading the electoral awareness among the citizens and completes the institutional construction and granting of authorities.

Main headlines

- Tribal vengeance acts claims lives of tens of people in Jawf, flares up in Hajjah
- Islah bloc at local councils criticize local councils third conference
- Islah parliamentary bloc criticizes the speed with which the 2005 budget was referred to the specialized committee
- Parliamentary committees for services and development and oil recommend refusal of a \$ 26 million loan
- Journalists stress the necessity of taking pressuring steps for the release of Al-Khaiwani

Columnist Zaid al-Shami says in his article all indicators affirm failure of the policy the government is following, that has been clarified by the prime minister in his report on results of the five-year plan. This is confirmed by what the government has presented in the budget of 2005, as public services would witness a retreat as well as job opportunities and investment. To deal with this shortcoming the government has resorted to adding a new dose to prices of oil products and after-sale tax and headed for borrowing.

The government began in warning about depletion of oil wealth, even before the people have not enjoyed its revenues even after the rise in oil prices worldwide.

During time of election campaigns, and when the government seeks confidence of the parliament, it sows the land with flowers and talks of gigantic accomplishments. However, when its appetite is open to starve the people and impoverish them, it would admit that the situations are in very bad condition.

22 May weekly, issued by the General Peoples Congress (GPC), 9 Dec.2004.

Al-Thawri weekly, organ of the YSP, 9 Dec. 2004.

Al-Wahdawi weekly, organ of the Nasserite Unionist Organization, 7 Dec.2004.

Al-Sahwa weekly, 9 Dec.2004.

Main headlines

- Justice Minister: The strategy for modernization of judiciary to be implemented next month
- Planning minister Soufan: We are committed to carrying out goals of the millennium
- Parliament questions deputy minister of works and postpones discussion of the State's final accountability
- Strict measures to limit entering of expired insecticides and fertilizers and organization of continued inspection campaigns to seize violators

Columnist Iskandar al-Asbahi wrote an article saying at the time it is intended for spoliating the Arab Homeland, the intra-Arab dialogue becomes more than we are in need of; a dialogue to start by intelligentsia and thinkers. The intellectual dialogue would constitute an introduction to political dialogue and prepare the road for dialogue among leaders and rulers.

The challenges the Arab nation is facing imposes on it to find out and reach a joint Arab ideology, a new Arab thought capable of understanding and dealing with changeables of the time and its challenges as well as preserving the identity and active presence in the Arab and international arena. We want a new style for the Arab joint action, new in the way of thinking for our Arab institutions are still following a style of consultation. We need it to be procedural, think and act.

The Arab-Arab dialogue is not a luxury; it is a life necessity of the nation that is threatened to be taken out of history. The Arab thought is well capable of dialogue with the self and with others and capable of renewal and development.

Main headlines

- Military expenditure tops the list of the state budget, a silent dose under implementation
- In a consultative meeting about al-Khaiwani imprisonment, Head of the YSP bloc at the parliament discloses about pressures inside parliament
- Report warns of environmental pollution in Sana'a basin
- Demand for allocating 5% of oil revenues for Mareb
- Human Rights activists accused of violating human rights

Tawakul Abdulsallam Karman says in an article day by day the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate proves to be feeling a sense of responsibility towards the entire world journalists regardless of their race and colour. Its statements, which contain tithes of solidarity or condemnation, makes one feel it is at a high level of sense of responsibility.

Here in Yemen, there is a syndicate without borders, refusing to have artificial political or geographical boundaries that may preclude it from expressing solidarity with and feeling pain for the journalist wherever he is. The only condition is that you are not a journalist in Yemen or a member of the syndicate. We say to those offering solidarity to Journalist Allouni as out of charity, your colleague al-Khaiwani in the Central Prison in Sana'a has more right to your solidarity. He is a live human, even though he is held inside a cell not good for human use.

Addressing the members of the YJS, the writer urges them to work for not having their colleague al-Khaiwani or any other colleague in prison. It is a stand surpassing issuance of statements or protesting. It should be a practice of protest in word and action.

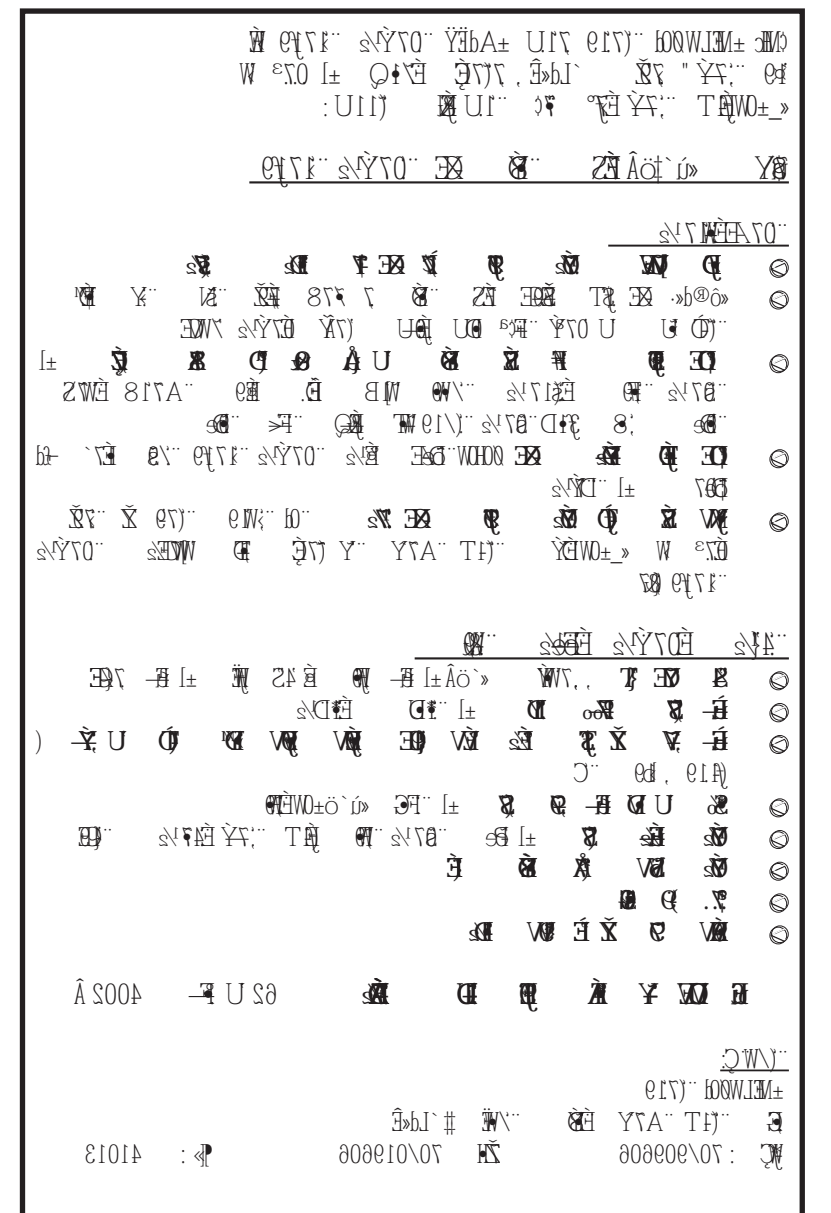
- News leaderships of the NUO in the capital, Taiz and Mahweet
- Yemenia hires two Airbus planes for \$ one million and 200 thousand a month
- Al-Zagheer and his wife killed in mysterious circumstances
- Economists: The state budget, random estimates and wrong figures
- Bani Hushaish tribes gather before Ibb governor house demanding the killer of one of their sons
- A program in solidarity with al-Khaiwani
- A journalist accuses Yemeni authorities of providing the Federal Bureau with wrong information on al-Mouayad
- One of Saddam's relatives asks the president to grant her right to political asylum

Columnist Ahmed Said writes a front page article that it seems there are acute differences threatening the Yemeni-Saudi relations on the

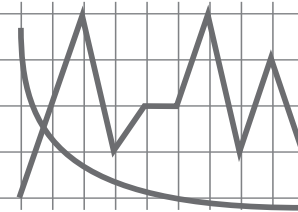
one hand and the Yemeni-Gulf relations on the other hand especially with what is going on reality of incomprehensible Gulf haughtiness and ignoring of the southern gate of the Arab peninsula that possesses many components qualifying it to become a major player in the region.

Observers expect the region would in the next days witness more political tense, especially with the Gulf states showing non-comprehension of the world variables and the attempt to upgrade the form of the GCC to include all states on the Arab peninsula, including Yemen as it is considered in possession of civilization asset and a geographical situation most of those countries are lacking.

Despite that, some GCC states have the desire to Yemen's unconditional acceding of the GCC, since its joining



YT Business



Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	185.3500	185.5500
Sterling Pound	356.8800	357.2700
Euro	247.3800	247.6400
Saudi Rial	49.4200	49.4800
Kuwaiti Dinar	628.9200	629.6000
UAE Dirhem	50.4700	50.5200
Egyptian Pound	29.8700	29.9000
Bahraini Dinar	491.6400	492.1700
Qatari Rial	50.9100	50.9700
Jordanian Dinar	261.4200	261.7100
Omani Rial	481.4200	481.9400
Swiss Franc	161.3900	161.5700
Swedish Crown	27.5300	27.5600
Japanese Yen	1.7835	1.7854

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

More coordination needed:

Conference on Yemeni island investments

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF
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The first international conference of financial resources and investment opportunities in Yemen's islands has concluded after the presentation of 40 work papers.

The recommendations confirmed the significance of exploiting the facilities offered by the Yemeni Investment Law for investors, on issues such as tax and customs exemptions.

The work papers pointed out that the number of permitted investment projects since the Investment Authority was established, is 5166 projects, worth a total of YR 1,003 billion, of which only 57 per cent were executed. The recommendations welcomed further studies by the General Authority of Developing Islands to give investors in the islands better privileges.

The papers discussed fishery investment requirements in Yemeni islands,

Conference panel chaired by Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal

including the basic aims of fishery sector in islands.

A paper by Dr. Faraj Mohammed Ba'athar focused on the importance of developing Socotra Airport because the island is a link between three continents.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Abdulla Sheik concentrated in his paper on the scientific research on medical plants in Yemen islands. He said that Socotra has more than 800 kinds of medical plants of which 230 are found only in Socotra.

The paper of Dr. Salem Rabe'e entitled "the best biographical exploitation for islands of Hadramout coast," highlighted the islands' resources and potential role in breeding programs.

Abduljabbar Naji presented his paper on the "possibilities and opportunities of development and coast investment in Yemeni islands". The paper reinforced the possibility of exploiting Yemeni islands for tourism.

The international conference recommended coordination and cooperation between Yemen and the private sector in other Arab countries in exchanging information to build investment opportunities in Yemen's islands.

Economic partnership between Yemen and Saudi Arabia

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen and Saudi Arabia have signed eleven agreements at the final meeting of the Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council in Riyadh. The Saudi Social Development Fund assigned \$150 million for developmental projects in Yemen, and \$100 million to help fund Saudi exports to be used in these projects.

The Saudi Social Development Fund will also offer SR 75 million to its Yemeni counterpart, and SR 50 million towards a project at Aden Hospital, and a grant of \$1.5 million has been allocated to the second phase of the National Mine Action Program in Yemen.

The agreement also included understandings in the oil, minerals, fisheries and agricultural sectors. The two states have agreed on land transportation of passengers and goods, marine transportation and postal services, and have undertaken to combat malaria, and to increase the number of Saudi medical teams visiting rural areas in Yemen on a regular basis.

The success of the Coordination Council meetings, chaired by the

Yemeni PM Bajammal and the Second Deputy of the Saudi Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz, is the culmination of several previous efforts.

Relations between the two states have improved since the border agreement of 2002 permitted the resumption of the Yemeni-Saudi Coordination Council meetings to discuss cooperation against terrorism and in other security and economic issues.

Canada to boost investments in Yemen

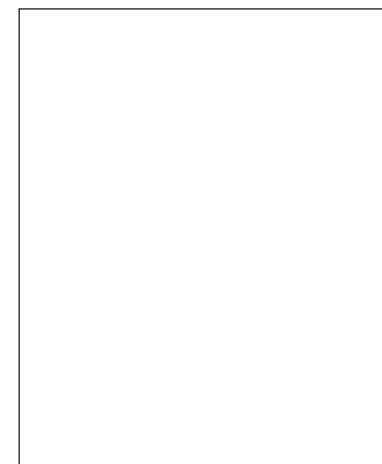
BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Canadian commercial delegation, visiting Yemen under Mr. Mark Iykeng PM and head of the World Commercial Committee for Developing Mark Iykeng, promised to encourage Canadian businessmen to invest in Yemen. They also declared their enthusiasm for Yemen as a tourist destination.

At a press conference held in Sana'a last Sunday, Mr. Mark Iykeng said that Yemen has many opportunities to increase tourism, which can be assisted by Canadian investors. He was confident that this could also enhance trade partnership between the two states, referring to the successes of the Canadian Nexen Oil Company in Yemen.

"We are to promote the image of Yemen in Canada," said Mr. Mark Iykeng in a statement to the Yemen Times.

He added at the press conference: "Some Canadians know that Yemen



Mr. Mark Iykeng

had a glorious past and a phenomenal history. They also realize its key role in the region. However some news coming from here reflects sometimes a bad image. Now we will return to tell the community that Yemen is a safe place to invest your money in and a fascinating place to visit as a tourist."

Dr. Abdulwali Nasher, Yemeni ambassador to Canada said the delegation had their attention focused

on three major areas: Parliamentary, governmental, and commercial issues.

"They stated that Yemen has not much of oil but it has attracted Canada by virtue of its democratic approach, wise governance, and good human rights record," he added.

President Saleh discussed his readiness to support Canadian investments with the delegation, pointing out significant access that is already provided to foreigners by Yemeni investment laws and guarantees for foreign investors.

Dr. Khalid Sheikh, Minister of Industry and Commerce, said that Yemen has opened the door to foreign investments including those from Canada and highlighted the availability of trading and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Sources at the Yemeni Chamber of Commerce and Industry agreed that the meeting with the Canadian team represented a great opportunity to enhance the already close links between Yemen and Canada, particularly in the fisheries, minerals, and oil service sectors.

Yemen presents economic reforms in Morocco

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Alawi al-Salami, has presented a paper at the Future Forum in Morocco on using micro-industries as a strategy to reduce poverty and improve living standards.

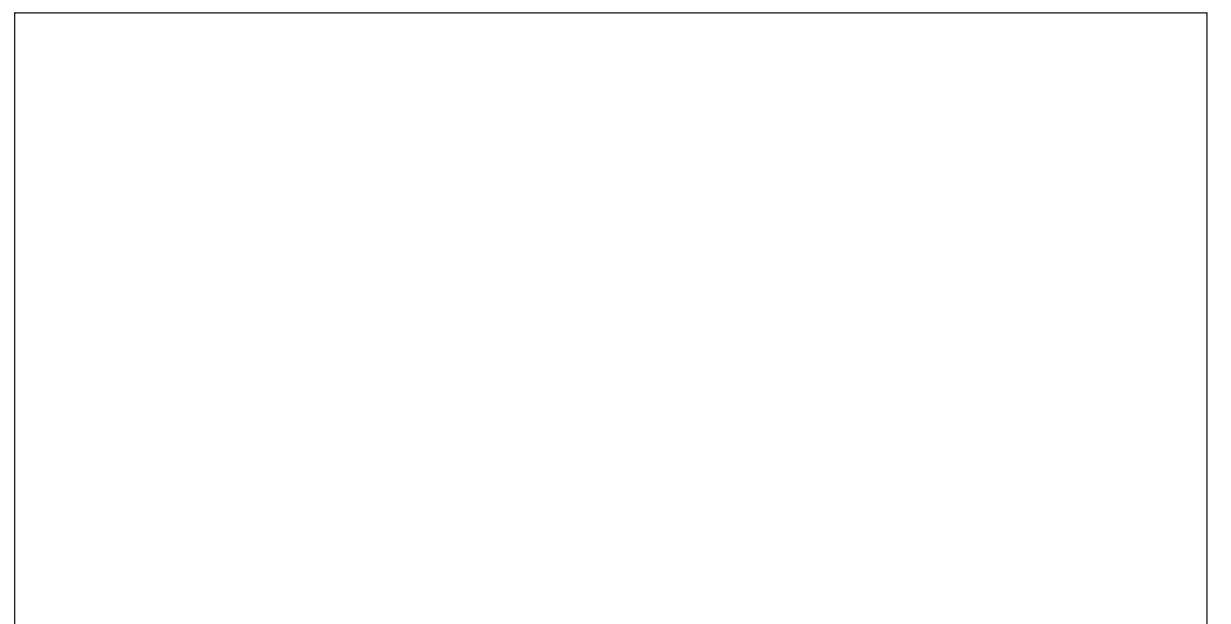
The Forum discussed the efforts

of international organizations and donor countries to direct financial assistance to the less developed countries, including Yemen. Al-Salami discussed economic development, financial and administrative reforms in Yemen, following President Saleh's recent calls for an international fund to combat terrorism and fight poverty in developing countries.

The Forum approved the

establishment of Democratic Dialogue Center in Sana'a and valued Yemen's decision to host the forthcoming conference on government dialogue with NGOs.

Twenty ministers of finance participated in the forum, along with representatives of the Great Industrial Countries (Group Eight). They stressed that reforms must respect the sovereignty of each state.



Canadian delegation holding a conference along with Yemeni ambassador

Philosophy of Education

By NASIRA866@HOTMAIL.COM

The word education has been derived from the Latin word Educare, which means to train, to bring up, to train, to bring up, to nourish.

To me, education means to cultivate manners, discipline, respect for the truth, and an analytical approach in every aspect of life. Education tells us how to live wisely but not wildly. Education distinguishes the man. It helps him to understand the problems of life and to tackle the obstacles of nerve wrecking frustration of life.

It is education that promotes religious messages and one can select or analyze

once own path of life. Education creates the urge to analyze the things critically in every sphere of life. As a teacher I believe that a child is like a crude material and a teacher can do the work of Leonardo di Vinci.

As I think, a forest can grow by itself naturally but a garden cannot. Birds and animals require little teaching or training to lead a successful life. But people's intellectual growth depends on many outside factors and cannot attain maturity without long and deliberate efforts.

God created the entire world, but man managed it with education and learning process. God created the night, but man created the lamp or electricity. God creat-

ed nature everywhere, man made the axe to mow it down. God created the clay, humans created the cup. God has created the deserts, hills and meadows, man has created avenues, flowerbeds and gardens.

Education needs deliberated efforts. A flower is pretty by itself but a diamond requires a lot of cutting and polishing before it will sparkle with thousands of colours. Humans are like rough diamonds, needing filing and polishing before all the faculties of the human personality can reach its full development. It enables one to lead a better life physically, mentally and spiritually. Each individual student is the most important person in the classroom. I do believe that a teacher should

not be a teacher only he/she should be a doctor, a father or a mother, a psychologist, a friend and a whole model of balanced life.

I had experiences with certain pupils who were supposed to be dull minded. I kept them under close observation. One of the students her name is Alia Jilani. It was reported by other teachers that if you assigned her any task, she would take it for granted and she would not pay heed to any advice or instruction. I called her in my staff room, and then I offered a cup of coffee to her, and she became familiar with me. Later I started probing in her personal life. I came to know she was upset due to her financial problems because her father

divorced her mother. So I consoled her by putting forward a fee exemption application to the principle. Then I encouraged her at every stage and she started taking interest in her studies. She later attained the first position in ninth grade.

I dislike dealing with deadly weapons. I abhor operating mechanical devices, but I love to train soft minds of children. I want to train the soft recesses of angelic hearts, which is why I selected this sacred profession, teaching.

To me, to forget the importance of education is to be a brook without source, a tree without roots, a clock without hands, a body without soul. Education is jugular vein of human life.

Taiz tourist film

By YEMEN TIMES
TAIZ BUREAU

The Tourist Development General Authority (TDGA), the Local Authority and the Taiz Culture Office have cooperated to produce a film about 46 historical and natural tourist attractions in the area.

Mr. Shawqi Ahmed Hayel, head of Development and Planning Committee in the local authority, has devoted his efforts to editing and directing this film and hopes that it was bring investment and strengthen the infrastructure surrounding the attractions.

Nurah in traditional Yemeni buildings

By ISMAIL AL-GHABERI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The standing palaces reach proudly into the sky, they are made of clay, which is shaped as sun-baked blocks. They are colored with a white substance similar to blaster that is called nurah. It has been known and used by our forefathers for thousands of years. Nurah and ash are considered key elements of constructing buildings and strengthening water tanks, dams and many other daily purposes. This substance is derived from a type of mountainous stone.

Raw materials and resources:

Making nurah is difficult, time consuming, and is an inherited skill. The makers take the brown sedimentary stones, called Rukbah, from the valleys near to where they live.

Nurah ovens:

They are not like normal ovens and are made specifically for this purpose, they are circular in shape and are made of clay. Each oven is nearly three meters in diameter and five meters in height. The oven is narrower at the top and it has a hole in one side attached with the fire-room for providing the oven with fuel. There is another hole (Al-Jafnah) that is large enough for a person to enter and place the stones.

First step

The stones are organized inside the oven by putting the bigger ones at the bottom. The process may take two days because space needs to be made between the stones in order to let oxygen enter.

Plenty of oil needs to be prepared for the process, an amount of wood worth YR 50,000 are required each time the stove is used.

After preparing the components and the oven, about five men feed the oven

with wood and oil for nearly 26 hours. The stones become highly fragile and they are then beaten in order to make them like the flour.

Cooling nurah:

After burning the stones, they should be left for enough time to cool. The longer they are left, the better their quality. They are then transferred to the place of "syatah" (beating), Al-Mahqat or Al-Rasa'ah.

Al-Syatah (beating):

When the stones get cold, they are put in Al-Mahqat to beat them. Al-Mahqat is a 2x2.5 meter area that is set with middle-sized stones. One or two workers with fireproof shoes spray water on stones with pipes and the stones break apart.

One or two other men beat the nurah for nearly 12 hours. The quality of nurah is proportional to the time spent beating it.

Syatah is considered on of the most

important qualities of nurah. This step is carried out with a machine. After Syatah, nurah is taken to bigger basins water to be left for four months. It can be used for clay walls and sometimes appears like Chinese marble.

Nurah in traditional architecture:

Nurah is widely used in traditional architecture. A huge quantity is con-

sumed when painting the clay houses. Nurah is sometimes mixed with smooth sand to make the nurah strong.

People have used nurah for a long time in places like WCs, roofs of houses and other places where water is found. It is often very decorative if it is used for coating around windows, verandas, and ventilation and light

holes that are placed above the windows.

The house is left for a week or more until the step of "Rashushah" in which a brush made of palm leaves is used to spray the wall with nurah twice. Rashushah is mixed with sugar and salt to make the nurah permanent. Red sugar is preferable for its quality and strength.

Invitation for Bids Republic Of Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population Health Reform Support Project HRSP Credit 3625

SUPPLY, TRANSPORTATION and INSTALLATION of PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT, VIDEO & AUDIO EQUIPMENT and COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT for HEALTH EDUCATION & INFORMATION CENTRE

This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in United Nations Development Business (UNDB) issue no. (607) on 16th May 2003, Al-Thawra Newspaper issue no. (13944) on 28th May 2003, and Yemen Times issue no. (641) on 12th June 2003.

The Republic Of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of Health Reform Support Project, and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for Supply, Transportation and Installation of office equipment.

The Credit Administration Unit (CAU) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for Procuring Equipment Consisting the following lots:-

- LOT (1) : Production equipment.**
- LOT (2) : Video & Audio equipment.**
- LOT (3) : Communication equipment.**

Bidding will be conducted through the national competitive bidding procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Credit Administration Unit (CAU) and inspect the bidding documents at the address below from 8:00 am to 3:00pm.

A complete set of bidding documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of USD\$ 50.00 The method of payment will be in cash. The document will be submit by hand.

Bids must be delivered to the address below by **11.00 a.m on 16th January 2005**. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of minimum 2.5% of bid price. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at **11.00 a.m on 16th January 2005**.

Dr. Naseeb Qirbi
Credit Administration Unit
Health Reform Support Project (HRSP)
Ministry Of Public Health & Population
P.O. Box 1330 - Al Hasabah - 4th Floor Sana'a - Republic of Yemen
Tel: + 967-1-252224 - Fax: +967-1- 251622 - Email: hrsp@y.net.ye

Women with breast implants have higher suicide risk

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - A new study adds to evidence that women with cosmetic breast implants have a higher rate of suicide than other women and shows, for the first time, that they may be more likely to have a history of psychiatric illness as well.

Whether the elevated rate of psychiatric conditions explains the higher suicide risk is not clear from the findings. However, the study does give weight to the belief that it's not the cosmetic procedure itself that is behind patients' suicides, according to Dr. Joseph K. McLaughlin, president of the International Epidemiology Institute, a Rockville, Maryland-based research center founded by scientists from the National Cancer

Institute.

"There is no evidence that breast implants, per se, increase the risk of suicide," he told Reuters Health.

Mounting evidence indicates that, for whatever reason, there is a "small subset" of breast-implant patients who are at risk of suicide, according to McLaughlin. His team's study adds to past research that has consistently found a two- to three-times higher risk of suicide among women with cosmetic breast implants compared with the general population.

The "new twist" from this study, McLaughlin said, is the additional finding on psychiatric hospital admissions. Compared with women who underwent either breast reduction or other cosmetic procedures,

those who received breast implants were 70 percent more likely to have a history of admissions for psychiatric illness.

The findings are published in the current issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine.

The study included nearly 2,800 Danish women who underwent cosmetic breast-implant surgery between 1973 and 1995, as well as more than 7,000 women who had breast reduction and 1,700-plus women who had other types of cosmetic surgery within the same time period.

The researchers used national records to gather information on the women's death rates and causes of death through 1999, and on their history of hospitalization for psychi-

atric illness prior to having cosmetic surgery.

Overall, McLaughlin and his colleagues found, 14 women with breast implants committed suicide. While that number is small, it makes for a suicide rate that's three-times higher than the norm, according to the researchers.

In addition, eight percent of the women with breast implants had had a psychiatric hospital admission — a "hard" measure, McLaughlin noted, that indicates mental illness and not problems such as poor body image. That rate of hospital admission compares with a roughly five-percent rate in each of the two comparison groups.

The researchers also found that women who underwent breast reduc-

tion had a higher-than-expected rate of suicide — a finding McLaughlin called "surprising."

However, he pointed out that this increased risk was "barely significant" in statistical terms, and therefore could be a chance finding.

"It certainly needs further evaluation," McLaughlin said.

On the other hand, he added, the suicide risk among women with breast implants seems to be a solid finding. McLaughlin said that with all the research that has looked into the possible links between breast implants and serious illness, including autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, the only risk that has consistently emerged is the risk of suicide.

"It's unexplained for now," he

said.

Still, given the new findings on psychiatric illness, McLaughlin said it may be a good idea for plastic surgeons to "take a closer look" at breast-implant candidates and possibly refer those with signs of a psychiatric problem for evaluation.

The study was funded by the Danish Cancer Society and the International Epidemiology Institute, which received support from the Dow Corning Corporation, once the world's largest maker of silicone gel breast implants. The company no longer makes the implants, having been hit in the 1990s with thousands of lawsuits claiming that the devices caused health problems.

SOURCE: Archives of Internal Medicine, December

Heart patch pulses like the real thing: study

WASHINGTON, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Pulsing transplanted heart cells with electrical current helps them grow into mature cardiac cells, bringing doctors closer to a grow-your-own heart patch, U.S. researchers said on Tuesday.

So far tests have only been done on rats but the researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University say they hope to find a way to repair tissue damaged when people have heart attacks.

"We have been trying to engineer a patch of tissue that has the same properties as native heart tissue, or myocardium, that could be attached over injured myocardium," said Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic of both Harvard and MIT, who led the study.

"Think of it as a patch for a broken heart," she added in a statement.

Vunjak-Novakovic and her colleagues have been working for years to find ways to make tissue patches for hearts, new blood vessels and other organs. Simply transplanting cells does not work, because they do not grow into the right layers and often do not produce the compounds that cells native to organs do.

The researchers have found that by growing cells under conditions that mimic the living human body and pressures, they can make them behave more like the desired tissue.

After growing the rat heart cells for a week with regular electrical pulses coursing through the lab dish, the cells

started to look and pulse like mature heart cells. They also produced heart proteins such as the myosin heavy chain and cardiac troponin I essential for normal heart function. "The real advance here is we mimicked what the body does itself and got it to work," said Robert Langer, who also worked on the study.

One key goal is to get the cells to contract in a synchronized way. "We don't want them beating at different rates," said researcher Hyoungshin Park.

The eventual hope is to take a few cells from a heart attack patient, grow them in the lab under the right conditions and then retransplant them to the injured area.

Study sees risk in two-drug hypertension treatment

CHICAGO, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Women treated for high blood pressure with a drug combination that included a calcium channel blocker had a higher risk of death than those given other drug therapies, a study said on Tuesday.

The overall risk of heart-related death was low among the more than 30,000 post-menopausal women included in the six-year study, but the highest mortality rate was among the 1,223 women taking both a calcium channel blocker and a diuretic.

Thirty-one of the 1,223 women on that drug combination died from cardiovascular disease, representing an 85-percent higher risk of death compared to women taking a diuretic and a beta-

blocker. Diuretics and beta-blockers are older classes of hypertension drugs.

Also included in the study were women taking ACE inhibitors, a newer class of hypertension drugs, which did not carry an elevated mortality risk when taken in combination with a diuretic.

In many cases, doctors prescribe different classes of blood pressure drugs in combination, one often a diuretic that increases urine flow and flushes the system.

A little more than one-third of the women in the study were taking a single drug and their risk of dying from cardiovascular disease was lower than those taking the diuretic-calcium channel blocker combination.

"A woman should go to her doctor and ask, why am I on this particular combination, and is this the best combination for me?" said Sylvia Wassertheil-Smoller of the Albert Einstein College of

Medicine, author of the study in this week's issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

She said two drawbacks to the study were that it was observational, not controlled, so the drugs were not assigned randomly; and all the participants were women aged 50 to 79 so its conclusions might not apply to younger patients.

Roughly 50 million Americans have high blood pressure, a condition that stresses the cardiovascular system and can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Last week, another study that examined a calcium channel blocker in combination with an ACE inhibitor was stopped early because the drugs offered patients a much better chance of avoiding heart attack and stroke than older pills. That study was sponsored by drug maker Pfizer Inc.

Every other year may be enough for mammogram-study

WASHINGTON, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Every other year may be enough for women over 50 to have a mammogram, U.S. researchers said on Tuesday.

A study of nearly 8,000 women showed that those who let a two-year interval slip in between mammograms were no more likely to have advanced cancer if they did develop a tumor than women who had mammograms every year.

But in women in their 40s, when cancer may be more aggressive, there was a higher risk that when a tumor was detected it would already be at an advanced stage.

"Mammography screening may reduce breast cancer mortality by detecting cancers at an earlier stage," Emily White of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle and colleagues wrote in their report, published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

"However, certain questions remain, including the ideal interval between mammograms," they added.

They studied women to see if those who only had mammograms every other year were more likely to have advanced cancer when diagnosed. They compared 2,440 women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer after

a two-year interval between mammograms with 5,400 women diagnosed with breast cancer after a yearly scan.

"In summary, we found little evidence that indicates that women who undergo mammography screening every 2 years have an increased risk of late-stage breast cancer compared with women who undergo annual screening, except for women in their 40s," they wrote.

"However, because breast cancer incidence among women aged 40 to 49 years is less than half that among women 50 years of age or older, the benefit of annual screening for younger women is small and the cost per year of

life saved is high," they added.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends mammograms every one to two years while the American Cancer Society recommends every year.

In Europe, most countries recommend that women be screened every two years and concentrate their recommendations on women age 50 and older.

About 1.2 million people a year are diagnosed with breast cancer globally and the disease kills 40,000 women and men in the United States every year.

Danish kids drunkest in Europe, Turks most sober

STOCKHOLM, Dec 14 (Reuters) - Danish youngsters get drunk most, their Czech peers like to smoke cannabis, the Irish are more prone to binge-drinking and young Turks are the cleanest-living in Europe, according to a new survey.

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD), looking at the drinking, smoking and drug-taking habits of youngsters around the age of 16 from

35 countries in 2003, was released on Tuesday.

The poll showed that 36 percent of Danish kids had been drunk 20 times or more in their lifetime, with the next highest being the Irish at 30 percent.

Fifty percent of Danish youngsters had also consumed alcohol 40 times or more in their lifetime, compared with 48 percent of young Austrians and 46 percent of young Czechs.

The Netherlands topped the league

of those who had drunk alcohol 10 times or more in the last 30 days, at 25 percent.

Binge drinking, defined as five drinks in a row, was most common in Ireland with 32 percent of respondents, followed by the Dutch and Germans at 28 percent and Britain and the Isle of Mann at 27 percent.

Czech youngsters were most likely to consume cannabis, at 44 percent, followed by the Swiss at 40 percent.

The most abstemious youngsters were in mainly Muslim Turkey, which came lowest in consumption in most of the categories.

The survey, coordinated by Sweden's Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, was done via questionnaires filled in anonymously by students in the classroom.

The sample size varied from 555 in Greenland to 6,000 in Poland. The average age was 15.8 years.



Hertz yemen honors "Employee of the year 2004"

Mr. Alwan Al-Shaibani (c) handing Mr. Mohammed Al-Aswadi (l) a certificate of honor, with the presence of Mr. Saleem Sheikh.

Universal Rent a Car - the Hertz International Franchisee in Yemen, as a gesture of identifying and appreciating the best employee of the year 2004, awarded the "Employee of the year 2004".

The certificate was issued from Hertz Europe and presented by the Universal Group of companies chairman Mr. Alwan Saeed al-Shaibani to Mr. Mohammed Al-Aswadi, the Hertz YPHQ's Sales & Marketing Supervisor.

Mr. Saleem Sheikh, General manager, Hertz Yemen indicated "We continue developing the working environment of Hertz staff and motivate them to achieve still higher standards which in turn will reflect in our unbeaten customer services"

"Hertz yemen concentrates much on vehicles long term leasing with value added prices and I strongly hope that our fleet will be doubled in 2005 to cope-up with the ever increasing market demands" Saleem added.

Hertz yemen rents fine vehicles with self driven and chauffeur driven options and having the head Office in Sana'a and a branch in Aden.

In the second round of Group Two Competitions

Yemen loses 0-2 to Saudi Arabia, dreams of 17th Gulf Cup die away

BY ADEL AL-KHAWLANI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

DOHA- Tuesday evening, Dec.14 - Saudi Arabia won 2-0 over Yemen in the second round of the 17th Gulf Championship to grasp the three points of the encounter.

Through a ball sent by Al-Dokhi, Marzoq Al-Otaibi scored the first goal for Saudi Arabia in minute 34 of the first half to push his side one goal ahead. The first half ended with Saudi Arabia leading Yemen 1-0.

The second half opened with a penalty kick for Saudi Arabia through which Ibrahim Soweid added the second to increase his side's advantage to two goals.

Coach of Yemen Rabeh Sa'adan replaced Asa'ad Al-Qumashi by Ahmad Al-Zuraiqi in the fifth minute of the second half and in minute 21 of the same half he placed Ibrahim Al-Kuhali as a substitute for Nashwan Aziz, but nothing new changed the result in favor of Yemen.

The third substitute was Saleh Al-Shehri replacing Nashwan Al-Hajjam who has never been seen in the field till the moment of his substitution.

In the first quarter of the first half, Yemeni striker Ali Al-Nono lead some offensives and proved to be the source of annoyance for the Saudi goalkeeper. Skilled midfielder Nasser Ghazi also had a great role and could penetrate the

Saudi hurdles several times.

Dutiful Mua'adh Abdulkhalik, goalkeeper of Yemen saved his net from several Saudi balls particularly in the last minute of the compensation time.

The game opened with a wonderful dove hovering over the stadium and at the same time carrying the Yemeni flag.

Yemen & Bahrain

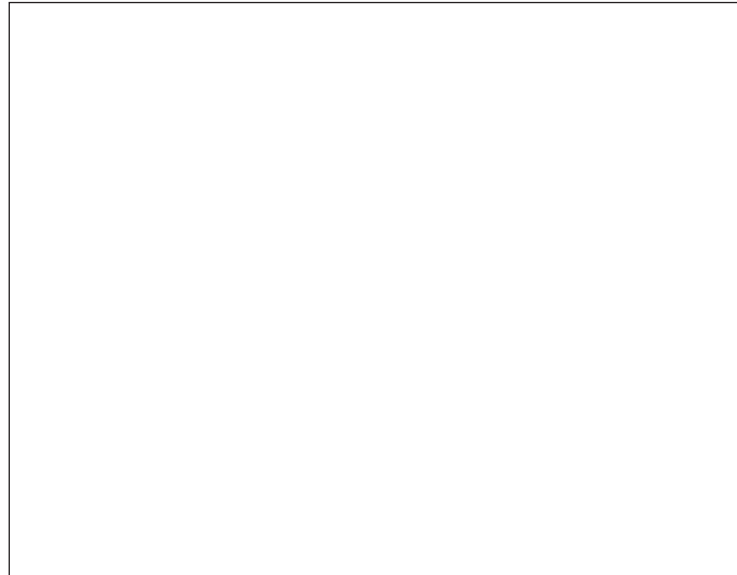
The Group Two opener of the 17th Gulf Championship, held on Dec.11, ended in a 1-1 draw between Yemen and Bahrain. The first half of the game was fast paced and ended with Bahrain having a one goal lead over Yemen. The goal was scored by the striker Talal Yousif after he penetrated the careless Yemeni defense.

In the first quarter of the second half, midfielder Nasser Ghazi answered for Yemen with a free shot from behind the penalty area.

Yemen's goal keeper Mua'ath Abdulkhalik played an unforgettable role in saving his net from many attacks. He was admired by supporters for his continual exertion despite being injured several times by the Bahraini strikers.

Yemen's footballers turned expectations upside-down and broke the ambition of Bahrain, who had assumed that they would win the match.

Sport analysts in and outside Yemen agreed that the draw was a victory for



Saudi Arabia's Mohammed Al-Shalhoub (left) fights for the ball with Yemen's Nashwan Al-Hajjam (right) during the 17th Arabian Gulf Cup encounter between Saudi Arabia and Yemen national teams at al-Rayyan Stadium in Doha on Monday Dec. 14

Yemen, which joins the championship for only the second time. It was a miserable loss for Bahrain, which has ever been present in the championship since it began in 1970.

The Yemeni team performed better and played more tactically than it has recently, however several golden opportunities were lost.

In a press conference held after the

match, the Yemeni coach R a b e h Sa'adan, said that despite the draw, the team still suffers from some gaps, particularly among the fullbacks.

He added that noticeable mistakes were committed by the Yemeni side, not because of the Bahraini pressure but due to the exertion made by the players who seemed to be

fatigued in the final minutes of the first half.

The Bahraini coach explained that his side played with less concentration in the second half than it did in the first; the main reason behind that was the early equalizer for Yemen.

Each Yemeni player was awarded \$ 1,000 by Sheikh Hussein Al-Ahmar, President of the Yemeni Football Federation. He met the players and congratulated them, specifically the goalkeeper, for their excellent performance.

Other competitions of the same group

Saudi Arabia & Kuwait
The play following the opener was staged between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The latter came back from being defeated with one goal by Yasser Al-Qahtani in the first half to win over the former 2-1. The meeting saw several yellow cards and a player from each side was sent off.

Kuwait & Bahrian
In the second round of Group One, Kuwait drew with Bahrain in spite of playing shorthanded for more than fifty minutes.

Receiving a ball from Badr Al-Mutaw'e , Mohammad Jeragh scored for Kuwait in the second quarter of the first half to prove his side's precedence over the opponent.

Kuwaiti midfielder Nawaf Al-Mutairi was sent off by the Emirates referee, Abdullah Al-Banna in the 41st of the same half. Kuwait played shorthanded for the rest of the game time and this enabled Hussein Ali from Bahrain to equalize the result in the last minute of the first half.

Being shorthanded, Kuwait played most of the second half's time in a cautious manner except for rare re-offensives. Kuwait used a cleverly planned consumption of time to close the encounter with a 1-1 draw.

Coach of Bahrain entered the game with the intention of making up for the draw he got while meeting Yemen.

First round of Group One Qatar & UAE

In Group One opener, Qatar, which hosts the competition, played against the UAE. The hosts recovered from a two-goal deficit to equalize in the compensation time. The game ended with a 2-2 draw. Despite the comeback, the Qatari coach and supporters were furious with the players.

Oman & Iraq

In the same group, Oman thrashed Iraq 3-1 grasping all the three points of the game.

Second round of Group One Oman & UAE

Oman reinforced its credit of points by defeating the UAE 2-1. The first half was the calmest in the 17th Gulf Competitions as there were no goals for either side until the last minute of the compensation time when the UAE's striker, Fahd Masaod exploited the mistake of an Omani fullback to place the ball in the left corner of Oman's net, announcing the first goal for his side.

In the 28th minute of the second half, the Omani equalizer came through the attacker Hassan Mudhafar. Supporters were surprised when Fahd Masaod got a yellow card for taking off his shirt when he scored the goal, while the Kuwaiti referee did not issue a card to an Omani player who also did the same thing. This sparked rage in the UAE supporters who were present at the stadium.

Through a very strong shot in the 40th minute of the second half, Omani Mohammad Saror added the second to put his side one goal ahead, making Oman the earliest qualifier for the 17th Gulf semifinals.

Iraq & Qatar

In a never before seen outcome, Iraq drew with Qatar 3-3. The former appeared the best in terms of attacking and annoying the Qatari goalkeeper. The Iraqi team relied mostly on strong shots from long distances and completely dominated the first 30 minutes of the game.

Razaq Farhan scored the first goal for Iraq from a corner kick in the fifteenth minute of the first half.

Qatar answered in minute 38 of the same half through its forward player Bilal Mohammad, and Waleed Jasim added the second for Qatar through a penalty kick, just eight minutes after scoring the equalizer. The first half ended with Qatar leading Iraq 2-1.

In the eight minute of the second half, Iraq retaliated through its skilled shooter Nasha'at Akram who equalized the result but Waleed Jasim put his side a head once again in the 11th minute of the same half. He exploited the carelessness among Iraqi defenders to reclaim his side's one-goal advantage.

In the second minute of the compensation time, which was counted at seven minutes, Iraqi player Haider Abdulamir equalized the result once again to end with a 3 all draw.

Team	No. of plays	Win	Draw	Loss	Goals it has	Goals scored in its net	Credit of points
Oman	2	2	—	—	5	2	6
Qatar	2	—	2	—	5	5	2
U.A.E.	2	—	1	1	3	4	1
Iraq	2	—	1	1	4	6	1

Group One Competitors

Team	No. of plays	Win	Draw	Loss	Goals it has	Goals scored in its net	Credit of points
Kuwait	2	1	1	—	3	2	4
K.S.A.	2	1	—	1	3	2	3
Bahrain	2	—	2	—	2	2	2
Yemen	2	—	1	1	1	3	1

Group Two Competitors

The above tables show that Oman is the earliest qualifier for the 17 th Gulf semifinals. It is the only team, which grasped all the points counted for the two encounters. It ranked first in its group and is anxiously waiting for meeting the second of Group Two. On the other hand, Kuwait from Group Two insured qualification for the semifinals but its ranking is still undetermined.

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

BY Eugenia

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)
Be a participant and you will be enriched by the experience. An opportunity will develop through a conversation with someone knowledgeable about a cause that interests you.

Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)
You GROW to make a decision until you feel confident that you are doing the right thing. RQW let someone push you into acting in haste. Do EDWs best for you.

Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)
Communication will be your lifeline today. Get in touch with old friends. An old romantic partner may still be interested

Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)
Changes made to your home will turn out remarkably well. Plan to entertain or at least prepare your home for upcoming events. RQW overspend.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)
If you KIDNAPed up to your promises expect to face someone who is disgruntled. This is no time to let someone down. Go above and beyond the call of duty.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)
Someone may unintentionally lead you astray. Check all facts before you proceed. Work-related matters will be dependent on the information given.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)
Put a little extra into any job you are working on and you will buy yourself some time later in the month. Someone RE like to know better will show interest in you as well.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
Prepare your home for any events that you may be holding this month. The more you do and the less said, the better. Your dedication will pay off.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)
Secrets may leave you guessing. Problems with authority must be avoided. Do what you can to help others, but GROWask for anything in return.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
Your ideas about work and how you see things going may be opposed by someone who is in competition with you. Believe in your abilities and stick to your plans.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)
ROBBERIES, HOSHOVUJHGEVOR give your dilemmas full attention. If someone is confusing you, back away or ask an objective friend to advise you.

Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20)
Travel plans may run amok. A chance meeting with someone who will enlighten you about a different way of life will make you think about your future.

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Ethiopia struggles to feed itself 20 yrs after famine

KOREM, Ethiopia, Dec 14 (Reuters) - A ragged band of children emerges ghost-like from mists in the highlands, thrusting bunches of carrots at a car full of foreigners.

"You! you! you! Give me a pen, give me money, give me your car," they chorus. Heads are shaken but the children, many wrapped in heavy scarves against the chill air, are undeterred.

"Okay, give me a small car," one of the older boys says, by way of compromise. Crunching on their unsold carrots, one after another sticks out a hand in an appeal for help.

For decades Ethiopia has made the same gesture to foreign donors as it struggles to feed a growing 70 million population, most of whom are peasants, amid poverty and recurrent drought.

The government says Ethiopia should stop leaning on other nations or risk being seen as a perpetual begging bowl.

"Aid dependency syndrome entered our culture and destroyed the dignity of our people. Some people sold their cattle, their sheep their goats to become eligible for food aid," said Teamrat Belay, a local official in northern Tigray province.

"It was shameful, a taboo. Now, we condemn this way of thinking. Now we have to look to our land, to our labour."

"Give me"

Ethiopians say the "give me" mentality stems from the 1984 famine, in which one million people died, many in or close to Korem huge feeding centre.

Shocked by images of emaciated peasants, whose bodies lay wasted away by hunger and malnutrition, the international community sent thousands of tonnes of food and raised up to \$1 billion to feed the dying.

Critics blame the former Marxist government of Mengistu Haile Mariam for ignoring the famine until it spiralled out of control. The crisis was precipitated by widespread soil erosion, consecutive droughts and disastrous land policies that gave little incentive to the individual farmer.

Twenty years on, the legacy is a cul-

Ethiopian children demands for goods and money near Korom, northern Tigray province, Nov. 24. Ethiopia has made the same gesture to international donors as it struggles to feed its fast-growing population of 70 million, 85 percent of whom are peasants, amid recurrent drought and deep poverty. Picture taken Nov. 24.

REUTERS

ture of dependence that the government is determined to end.

"We are looking at handouts anymore. We are determined to change the life of the peasantry," Minister of State for Information Netsannet Asfaw told Reuters.

"Our farming methods have not changed in 3,000 years. We still see oxen ploughing the fields. This has to change."

And it is changing, slowly. Manmade ponds — ditches reinforced with thick plastic sheeting to collect rainfall — and smallscale irrigation channels have sprouted across Tigray, one of the regions most affected by the 1984 famine.

Farmers have greater access to drought resistant and higher yielding seeds in a bid to be able to feed themselves.

Where once sorghum, maize and barley grew, some fields are now green with plump cabbages, potatoes, garlic and tomatoes as farmers try their hand at cultivating vegetables.

Calls for reform

Despite these small improvements,

aid agencies like Oxfam and World Food Programme say up to five million Ethiopians are chronically unable to feed themselves.

Many in the donor community say the government could do more to reform a land policy seen as a root cause of its food woes.

"Oxfam's position is that men and women should have long-term land tenureship so they can invest in that land and be able to use it to access credit for investment," Oxfam Country Director for Ethiopia Mandy Woodhouse told Reuters.

Farmers lease land from the government but cannot buy their small plots. Critics say lack of ownership sows the seeds of insecurity and discourages farmers from investing long-term.

The government disagrees. "If the land is sold in Ethiopia, we know the rich ones will grab it and go back in square one, living as serfs," said Netsannet, the information minister.

In the past, the government has grappled with its food problem by forcibly resettling Ethiopians from drought-prone highlands to more fertile lowlands.

An Ethiopian man examines his crop near Korom in northern Tigray province, Nov. 25. Ethiopia struggles to feed its fast-growing population of 70 million, 85 percent of whom are peasants, amid recurrent drought and deep poverty. Picture taken Nov. 25.

REUTERS

Once there, many found they did not have the right tools or knowledge to grow the kinds of crops suited to that area.

Ethiopia is again experimenting with resettlement, but on a voluntary basis this time, with a three-year plan to relocate 2.2 million people. Only time will tell if that effort can succeed where others have failed.

But even if it proves a success, it will have come too late for 60-year-old farmer Alamayoh Akeraw, who by Ethiopian standards is probably nearing the end of his life.

Standing barefoot in his field of maize, where Korem mountains descend into plains, Alamayoh's eyes are rheumy and his goatee silvery with age as he remembers how the famine of 1984 changed his life forever.

It does not matter if the government builds a dam for irrigating his crop, or if he is given special seeds that can withstand drought, Alamayoh lost all three of his children during the famine. Now he is waiting to die.

"Even if I have plenty to eat, without my children I am not happy. There's nothing to me," he said.