

Government at it again:

More journalists get jail sentences

By Mohammed bin Sallam
Yemen Times Staff

Southwestern Sana'a Court issued four suspended imprisonment sentences of between four and six months on Dec. 26 against four Yemeni journalists and writers for criticizing the Saudi regime.

The group includes Abdulwahid Hawash, editor-in-chief of Al-Ehla'a Al-Arabi newspaper, organ of the Nationalist Socialist Arab Ba'athist Party; Dr. Abdulrahman Abdullah (currently hospitalized in Jordan), editor-in-chief of Al-Tajamaa newspaper, organ of the Unionist Yemeni Assembly Party; Abduljabar Sa'ad, Secretary of

Hodeidah Customs Authority (sacked from his job by high level orders); and Nabil Subai'a. All sentences are subject to suspension.

International condemnation resumed

In response to this latest development, prominent international organization Reporters Without Borders condemned on Tuesday the suspended prison sentences passed on the five journalists. It said that this development culminated a year in which at least 24 press freedom violations have been registered in Yemen and the harassment of journalists by means of summonses, prison sentences or phys-

ical attacks has become common.

"These frequent crackdowns on the press create a climate of intimidation that makes it extremely difficult for journalists to work," the press freedom organisation said.

Firmly condemning the use of imprisonment to sanction press offences, Reporters Without Borders pointed out that the latest suspended sentences were in complete contradiction to President Ali Abdallah Saleh's promise in June to "work to put an end to prison sentences for press crimes."

"As a result of these violations, the Yemeni parliament recently named a commission to investigate the closure of several newspapers by the govern-

ment and the information ministry's respect for the law. Questioned during the most recent parliamentary session, on 26 December, information minister Hussein Al Awadhi claimed that there have been no press freedom violations and that all decisions have been taken in accordance with the law."

The court headed by judge Mohammed Al-Raymi ordered journalists not to publish articles against the Saudi regime.

Advocate Jamal Al-Ja'abi, member of journalists' defense team, showed his surprise at the judgments since the defense had not tackled the subject matter of the suit.

Continued on page 3



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Yemen on alert for Asian quake's high waves:
Tsunami quake affects Yemen

Yemen along with Oman were on alert Monday, warning fishermen and people not to venture out to sea after high waves caused by the massive Tsunami quake in Asia caused damage along the southern coastline.

At least three fishermen near the southern city of Mukalla were injured Sunday when a five meter high wave struck the coast, the official SABA news agency reported.

Yemeni authorities then warned fishermen to stay out of the water and immediately report any high waves in the region.

However, panic among some Yemeni circles resulted in rumors that a potential earthquake related to the Tsunami is to hit the Arabian Peninsula within this week. The reports were attributed to earthquake research centers in Canada. But Yemen Times could not confirm or deny such

rumors. But experts in Dhamar's earthquake monitoring and warning center said that this is unlikely.

Meanwhile, Irena Knehtl, a regular contributor to Yemen Times was in direct contact with the Arab association in Singapore. Yemen Times learned from the Yemeni and Arab community there that there were no effects of the Tsunami in Singapore. However, the association told Irena that the northern part of Malaysia had about 44 deaths, which is few in comparison to the lives lost in Thailand, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Irena is also in contact with Maldives to obtain first hand information.

The extraordinary loss of lives from Sunday's quake and tsunami waves is prompting Asian governments to consider developing a more comprehensive and effective warning system.



Acehnese women search for their missing relatives in Banda Aceh in Indonesia's Aceh province, Dec. 28. Nations bordering the Indian Ocean from Indonesia to Sri Lanka clawed through the wreckage of a devastating quake-triggered tsunami for bodies to bury on Tuesday as fears grew the toll would far exceed the 36,946 now reported killed. REUTERS

President Saleh calls
Horn of Africa together

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

President Ali Abdullah Saleh has invited three countries to join the Sana'a Grouping of the Red Sea and Horn of Africa in an effort to bring peace to the area at the coalition's summit in Khartoum last Monday.

"I call to admit Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea into our Sana'a Group as this will be of benefit to all of us and will realize security and stability to our people," said Saleh during his speech at the opening of the forum.

The Sana'a Group, which was established in October 2002, includes Yemen, Ethiopia and Sudan.

Saleh stressed the need for dialogue to ease continued tension and bring security, stability and development to the region.

"Yemen believes that disputes and misunderstandings can only be resolved through dialogue," said Saleh. "Only dialogue, not other means, like media campaigns and interference in

the affairs of others, can overcome problems."

There have been strained relationships between Eritrea and both Sudan and Ethiopia. After a two-and-a-half year war over a border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a cease-fire has remained fragile. Ethiopia turned down a demarcation proposal established by an independent border commission last September and Eritrea warned that the rejection could lead to more fighting in the future.

Saleh offered to launch an initiative to normalize relations between Eritrea and its two neighbors if each of the three countries accepted to participate.

"The Yemeni government is the one that is taking the initiative to stabilize the Horn of Africa," said a foreign diplomat based in Yemen. "These are important steps because stability in East Africa helps to sustain security in the Middle East and other parts of the world."

At the summit, Sudanese President

Omar Al-Bashir announced that the government and the prominent rebel group in the south of the country will sign a peace agreement in the coming days to end a civil war that has lasted for over two decades.

"The final peace agreement will be signed during the remaining days of this year," said Al-Bashir.

Continued on page

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Vanunu Mordechai:

“Israel is a racist apartheid state”

The Yemen Times was able to obtain the statement of Vanunu Mordechai, the renowned former Israeli nuclear physicist, in which he complained about the ill treatment he received while trying to go to the Holy City of Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. Mordechai, who was recently released from Israeli imprisonment after 16 years in jail, was hoping to celebrate Christmas in the City of the Nativity (Vanunu converted from Judaism to Christianity). In an email letter written to a friend (in Cairo) he has apparently been communicating with for some time (and who elected to remain anonymous) describes the duress he endured from the Israeli police as he set out to celebrate Christmas where Jesus, the Messenger of Peace, was born.

The exchange of correspondence started with a request by Vanunu that his friend spread the word about his difficulties with the Israeli security chasing him and preventing him from going to Bethlehem.

He stated that the Israeli police warned the Bishop of the Church he was staining in sanctuary not to take him to Bethlehem or anywhere else. When the Israeli police found him after he resisted the ban and took a taxi to take him there, knowing full well that they would come and stop him. They arrested him to the Police Precinct in Jerusalem and then took him to the Police Precinct in Tel Aviv. There, he was interrogated and asked to give his reason for defying their restrictions on him from going anywhere outside the Church Sanctuary, with out their permission. He insisted that there was no reason to restrict him from celebrating Christmas where he sees fit and that the ban on his going was merely a sign of the contempt that the Zionist State has for worshippers who profess other than the Jewish faith. He suggested that Israel is a state that adopts the apartheid ethnic and religious discrimination policy and non-Jews are not accorded any rights if they happen to live in Israel. The text of the exchanges between Vanunu and Anonymous may be found in full in last Monday's web edition of the YT (Issue 802). We have reproduced below his description of the ordeal.

From: Vanunu Mordechai
Date: Sat, 25 Dec 2004 19:08:48 +0000

To: Anonymous (in Cairo)
Dear Anonymous

Last Night, on Christmas Eve, I tried to go to BETHLEHEM to celebrate my first Christmas in freedom, and to see Bethlehem, but the police was searching for me and waiting for me, so they arrested me, took me to a Tel Aviv police station for questioning.

They warned me before not to go to Bethlehem. But I decided not to respect these restrictions, (of those) who are not respecting me as a human being, so I tried to travel by taxi. The bishop too was warned by the police not to take me with him to Bethlehem. So I took taxi, and the police stopped me and took me to the police station, in Jerusalem, and then to Tel Aviv for questioning. My answer (to them) was I am not respecting Israel restrictions, because the State of Israel is a racist apartheid state; if you are not a Jew you don't have rights here. So I was ready to let them prove to the entire world how Israel can not tolerate a man who is going to celebrate Christmas. All this arrest was not about security, or NWs (nuclear weapons); it was about freedom and democracy for all the people not only for the Jews.

They arrested me at 21:00, released me at 01:00 with house arrest for 5 days, back in St George, again prevented me from celebrating my Christmas, and again believing they can bring me back to the life of Jewish people...

My conclusion I can wait until my total freedom, and know if there is any future nuclear conference.

(Otherwise) under such conditions I can not act as a free man. Happy Christmas.

vmjc

Vanunu Mordechai, (alias) John Crossman, Kidnapped from Rome by Israeli secret agents Sept. 30, 1986. Served 18 years in prison for revealing Israel's Dimona nuclear weapons secrets. Elected Rector of Glasgow University Dec' 2004.

In sanctuary at St. George Cathedral, My address. St George Cathedral East Jerusalem.

Dutch provide SCER with \$1.7 million

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Sanaa, Dec 28 - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Sana'a announced last Tuesday that the Government of Netherlands is contributing the amount of more than USD 1.7 million to the second phase of the Electoral Support Project for the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda (SCER).

Mr. Johan Blankenberg, the Ambassador of the Netherlands in Sana'a and Ms. Flavia Pansieri, the UNDP Resident Representative in Yemen signed the cost-sharing agreement with Mr. Khalid Al-Sharif, the Chairman of the SCER represented in the signing ceremony that took place last Tuesday.

The UNDP office said, "the Dutch contribution will provide support to ensure the conformity of legal and institutional framework to the international standards related to increased public participation in electoral processes in Yemen. The contribution will support components of the project during the period between December 2004 and December 2006."

The last parliamentary elections held



A Yemeni-Dutch meeting while signing agreements of support.

in April 2003 had witnessed several violations, particularly in rural areas and were reported to be unsatisfactory by a number of local and international election observers. The agreement comes in part to enhance the capacity of the SCER and help boost the standards of future elections.

However, a number of legal experts believe that unless the SCER body is totally independent, international support may be in vain. They believe that

the funds that go to the SCER and how they are utilize and the developmental activities within the SCER should be transparent and reflect a true intention to enhance the standard of free elections.

They also urge international donors and bodies concerned with democratic development to empower independent and unbiased civil society organizations to enhance their own capacity in monitoring elections and raise awareness about the elections process.

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 that any repercussions of the Asian Tsunami quake would affect Yemen in the near future?
- No
- Yes
- It remains to be seen

last edition's question:
For Yemen, do you think 2005 would be better or worse than 2004?

It will be worse 55%
It will be better 25%
Let's wait and see 20%

Go to our website at: yementimes.com/#poll and have your voice heard!

Meeting between President and Al-Rizami fails

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Sources have told the Yemen Times that Abdullah Al-Rizami returned to Sa'ada last Sunday after the failure of the meeting arranged by some mediators between him and President Saleh.

The sources mentioned that the President had insisted on the presence of Badraddin Al-Houthi, the father of rebel Hussein Al-Houthi who was killed by government forces a few months ago, who is currently hiding at Al-Rizami's house. The father of Hussein Al-Houthi claims the authorities must give him the corpse of his son in order to bury it.

Al-Rizami is to be responsible for organizing the Believing Youths after the death of cleric Al-Houthi.

The mediators succeeded in convincing Al-Rizami and some of his followers to come to Sana'a to negotiate with the authorities on possible alternatives to war.

However Al-Rizami and his supporters still insist on chanting the slogan "death is for America and Israel", necessitating negotiations being held in the capital.

Abdullah Al-Rizami is still receiving treatment at the Military Hospital in Sana'a after his thigh was badly injured during the fighting in Sa'ada.

In related news, the first session of the punitive court was held last Sunday concerning the trial of Al-Dailami and Sheikh Mohammad Miftah for allegedly having links with Sa'ada rebellion.

Al-Dailami allegedly sparked violence and formed an association without a government permit.

Al-Dailami and Miftah were detained by the Political Security Office immediately after the events in Sa'ada for their affiliation to the Zaidi movement in Yemen.

The advocate of the defendants sent a letter to the President stating that the trial is politicized and that his clients have never had any links to violence.

Japan supports Yemen in different areas

HE. Mr. Yuichi Ishii Ambassador of Japan to Yemen discussed with Governor of Hodeida Mohammad Shamlan a number of matters related to the projects offered by the Japanese Government to Hodeida.

The projects offered by the Japanese Government include that of cleanliness due to be implemented according to special specifications along with many other projects that help lessen the rate of employment.

Shamlan paid a visit along with the Japanese Ambassador to the Information Center recently established to connect all the districts in the governorate and the governmental offices with the computer network.

The Ambassador expressed his pleasure at the project emphasizing the different means of support extended by his government.

Japan has extended a number med-

ical devices related to eye diseases worth of about \$ 80,000 to Al-Thawrah General Hospital as a gift to the Government of Yemen.

On the other hand, the Government of Japan has decided to extend a grant aid amounting up to US\$ 73,080 (Seventy three thousand and eighty US Dollars) to Hubeish Local Council in Ibb, under the so-called scheme "Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects".

The grant is to cover the cost of implementing the second phase of the project for Irrigation of Farmland for the purpose of improving women's income in Hubeish District, Ibb. A protective wall (Gabion) will be built to store sufficient rainwater for watering many kinds of plants, which in turn will allow women time and an access to education.

Mr. Yuichi Ishii and Ahmad Al-Baseer, Chairman of Hubeish Local Council have signed the agreement of this project in Sana'a on Tuesday Dec. 28.

A press release issued on the same day by the Japanese Embassy in Sana'a said the Japanese Government grant aid to the first phase of the project, signed in March this year, was for establishing a network of water pipes for the irrigation of farmland.

Besides, the Japanese Government is due to conduct a study on the Formulation of Water Resources Development & Management Master Plans in two Yemeni governorates. The study will be conducted in cooperation with the National Water Resources Authority and is expected to create additional areas of mutual cooperation between Japan and Yemen in the field of water.

YSP warns against new reform dose

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Central Committee of Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) has warned against the government's insistence on implementing the new economic dose and lifting its subsidies over oil products that is being discussed in the parliament. They say that the impact of this would be too harmful on people's lives.

The committee stressed its rejection of the dose calling upon the parliament, political parties, nongovernmental organizations and people to reject this dose and cancel it democratically. They argue that the solution to the economic crisis should not be at the expense of

poor people and that new economic policies are required to fight corruption, theft, tax evasion, and improve the national economy.

The committee also discussed "the ongoing limitations against freedoms and democratic margin, the successive deterioration of the people's living standards, the increase of poverty and unemployment, the decrease of services such as electricity, water, education, and health."

They issued a pamphlet calling for the removal of the consequences of the 1994 war as well as the previous political struggles in order to strengthen national unification and the democratic transition.

Japan Supports rural girls in Taiz

TAIZ BUREAU

Efforts encouraging rural girls learning in Taiz districts are currently being carried out by the Education Bureau and the Japanese government. The program follows several field visits from Japanese delegations, which highlighted the hindrances to female education and the reasons causing women to abstain from learning. The Education Bureau in Taiz has received help from the Japanese government with five schools.

Conclusion of Sudanese Cultural Days

By ISMAIL AL-GHABERY
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Sudanese Cultural Days festival has concluded, lasting from Dec. 25-27 and as part of the Sana'a, Arab Culture 2004. The events included a Sudanese book fair, plastic arts, photographic displays, artistic performances and lectures. The lectures examined the contemporary plastic art movement, and the Sudanese media.

Abu Ammar commemorated

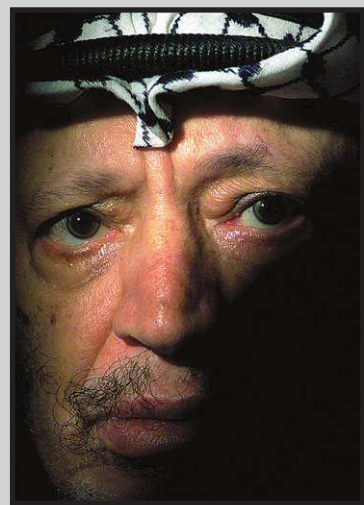
By MOHAMMED BIN SALAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Palestinian embassy in Sana'a conducted a ceremony to commemorate the passing of the fortieth day since the death of the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat at Sana'a University on Dec. 25.

The commemoration was attended by a number of official figures, including Sheik Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, Speaker of the Parliament, Hussein Taher Bin Yahya, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Arab, African, and Asian Countries, a corps of Yemeni intellectuals, and representatives of diplomatic missions in Yemen.

During the celebration, the Palestinian ambassador, Dr Khaled Sheik, delivered a speech saying: "the life of Abu Ammar was the history of a nation; his sincere [approach] to the issue of his nation made him a [genuine] character."

"Palestine was his compass... he was a hero of struggle and peace." Dr Khaled said. "His attitude was to demand that the international community not drop the olive branch from his hand. He convinced his nation with the peace and justice of brave



Yasser Arafat

people. Peace for him was gaining his nation's full right to its lands, returning home and building their new independent home with Al-Quds its capital."

"Despite that, the horseman was tired, he was eager at any chance to be a martyr and to plant with his blood in the sand of Palestine, protesting the pressures and sieges. He refused to surrender but insisted on his nation's rights whatever the price."

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The position is based in Sana'a with some travel to the field.

Suitable interested candidates can send their CV with a cover letter within 2 weeks of this publication to the following address:

P.O. Box 19404, Sana'a, or fax 01-510010
Only short-listed candidates will be contacted

The Women's National Committee

Up for debate

By Peter Willems
Yemen Times Staff

The Women's National Committee (WNC) in Yemen is seeing some positive signs while pushing for a law that would require women to fill decision-making positions in the government.

Rashida Al-Hamdani, Chairperson of the WNC, told The Yemen Times that Yemeni political parties and members of the Parliament are now discussing a possible quota system, which would assist women to enter the political arena by establishing a minimum of twenty to thirty per cent of the seats in the local councils and the parliament to be filled by women. The issue now up to debate could lead to a decision being made in the not-too-distant future.

"Everybody is now debating the quota system," said Al-Hamdani. "It is a good sign that it is out there being discussed and being debated in the political parties and in the community. This was not happening a year ago, so it is a positive sign. Many agree in principle, but it has to be discussed on how to apply it."

The WNC received a proposal from the ruling party, the GPC, which offered the political parties to recruit women to become candidates for elections. The WNC has doubts about the proposal because it would be a guideline parties should follow instead of a law that would be enforced.

"Agreements in the past have been only talk to support women entering into politics," said Mohamed Moghram, Professor of Law at Sana'a University, who participated in researching a legal solution to bring women into the political arena. "Very little has been implemented in the past to include women in politics. We found that the quota system is the best remedy."

Moghram also cited that a number of Scandinavian countries have been successful using a quota system implemented by law, and that such a law can be flexible to change once women have established their places in political positions.

Some people are not convinced that a law bringing women into the political arena is the best option, however.

"I support that women should be involved in politics, but this should come from the will of the political parties," said

a Yemeni government official. "It is also important that women become more active and prepared to take positions. If they are more active first, they will receive real representation."

But many believe that a law giving women a minimum number of positions is essential, over the last decade, the growth of women receiving representation in the government has not only been stagnant but has actually been reversed.

"If you had asked me about the quota system 15 years ago, I would have said no we don't want or need a quota system because we were full of hope that for the first time women were able to vote and become government officials at the same time," said Amat Al-Aleem Al-Soswa, Yemen's Minister of Human Rights. "But we have witnessed the last three elections in parliament and the first in local councils and the outcome has shown us what is happening in the development of political thinking and political parties dealing with women's issues are still far from their agenda."

Two women took seats in the parliament in the 1993 and 1997 elections. After elections in 2003, there is now only one woman as a member of the parliament

working with 300 male parliament members. In 1993, 41 women ran in the parliamentary elections, but in 2003 there were only 11. In local councils, women occupy only 37 positions out of the 6,000 across the country, which is less than one per cent.

The struggle for women to enter the political arena is spread across the Middle East. In a United Nations report released this year, it showed that Arab women in national parliaments in 2003 took up 5.8% of seats, a lower percentage than in sub-Saharan Africa (15.1%) and Asia (14.5%). The highest representation in parliament was in Syria (12%), the lowest being in Yemen (0.3%), while Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have parliaments made up entirely of men. Last October, Saudi Arabia decided to ban women from voting or running for office in the country's first municipal elections held next spring.

The first Democratic Forum for Arab Women held in Sana'a earlier this month called on Arab countries to give women more power in decision making. The final statement of the three-day conference, which brought together 70 women from 21 Arab nations, demanding that women be given at least 20 per cent of decision-making positions in governments. It also called for political reforms, multi-party political systems and the peaceful rotation of power.

"There is a chronic problem of absence of democracy in this culture," said Amal Basha, Chairwoman of Yemen-based Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF), which teamed up with the government of the Netherlands to organize the women's forum. "One of the symptoms of this is the elimination of women from decision-making. Some countries are claiming that they are democratic. Democracy as we know it is the ruling of the people, and who are the people? They are men and women. So it means that just half of the people are the rulers who are making our destiny. Since we are talking about democracy, it means that everybody

Quality of life survey
Yemen: fifth worst country

By Raidan A. Al-Saqqaf
For The Yemen Times
R_saqqaf@yahoo.com

In a recent study carried out by Mercer consulting (www.mercerhr.com) measuring the overall quality of life, Yemen was ranked among Congo and Iraq as the worst fifth country in the world, dropping one place from 2003. The study also ranked Yemen's capital, Sana'a, the world's fifth least attractive capital for expatriates and investments.

Along with the World Bank's warning of the collapse of Yemen's Economic reforms, Yemenis are experiencing the worst standards of living in the country's recent history.

The survey examined the availability of consumer goods, the economic environment (currency exchange regulations, banking services, etc.), housing standards, health services, the natural environment, the political and social environment, public services and transportation, recreation facilities, schools and education.

When analyzing the case of Yemen, blame must be given to the successive government officials, who took charge of the country's affairs during the last four decades. They are responsible.

It is those crooked officials who have caused our country to go down

hill over the years. With their endless greed and desire to maintain their power for as long as possible, and with their shortsightedness and very limited understanding of the demands of the changing world, those individuals have consistently used bad approaches to tackle Yemen's problems. Above all, they have blocked the way to new ideas, qualified people and efficient systems that might have undermined their selfish thirst for power.

They are directly responsible for the mess we are in today, and for leading Yemen to such a shameful rank among other nations in terms of corruption and the quality of life. They can now rest assured that they have indeed succeeded in putting Yemen among the worst places to live and have contributed to the virtual economic collapse. Yet, their conscience seems to have died and they are yet to know what they did wrong.

All signals point to the need for some serious overhaul in our system, and if our officials keep on ignoring the need for serious change, then this foreseen economic catastrophe might unfortunately be inevitable, and could make anything positive in the future 'too little, too late'.

Let's hope that my message in this article reaches out to someone who cares.

UNICEF 2004 report on children:

Children threatened

Yasser al-Mayasi
Yemen Times Staff

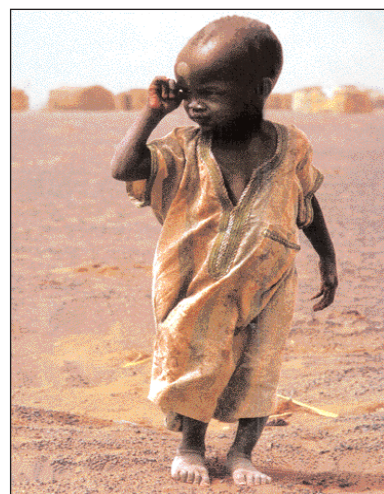
The 2004 report issued by UNICEF highlights the biggest challenges of children throughout the world in the coming year.

The 2004 report is titled "Threatened Childhood" and places poverty, armed conflicts, and HIV at the top of the list of challenges.

The report emphasizes the many dimensions that poverty takes saying that children who live in destitution are deprived of basic rights such as health, nutrition, education, and the protection from harm.

There are more than a billion children suffering from a lack of nutrition, water and basic medical services. Sexual discrimination is now also accepted as a major factor of deprivation that causes lack of equality for children. Poverty deprives 121 million children of primary school age of school attendance.

The report suggests the participation of



A poor child weeping and suffering from poverty and malnutrition

points out that children are most affected by armed conflicts, either directly or indirectly, with the destruction of cities and buildings considered to be the main reason for depriving children of basic services like education and medical care. Children's education may also be suspended because of the absence of teachers or because of landmines and explosives.

The report states that there are no statistics on the number of children used as soldiers in armed conflicts, but estimates there to be hundreds of thousands. They are willingly recruited, kidnapped or pressured into joining the armed forces.

The report confirms that the threat of armed conflict has increased since 1995, and that there are currently 59 conflicts in 48 parts of the world. It estimated that about 90 per cent of those killed are civilians, many of them women and children.

The third challenge is the threat of AIDS (caused by HIV). The report indicates there are about 201 million children below the age of 15 who are carriers of the deadly virus.

all authorities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The second challenge is armed conflicts in which children are often exploited as soldiers or sexual slaves. The report

Continued from page 1

More journalists get jail sentences

"The defense team will make an appeal during the legal duration on behalf of the journalists except for Abduljabar Sa'ad who accepted the sentence on the basis that it is political and the lack of fairness in the trial."

The Yemen Times contacted Abduljabar who has received a 6-month jail sentence with suspension. He said "the judgment is oppressive and does not represent [any] jurisdiction whatsoever. But it represents politics and its means. It should be known that we have spent around eight months in the trial... The charges are not on the indictment list and the court and prosecution have not found any evidence, yet they have invented false accusations."

Abduljabar added "earlier, before the sentence was issued, I had submitted a memorandum to the President of the Republic to clarify things, and that nobody was able to affect the trial course without his personal intervention as though the case lies with the President and not the judge."

When asked about the kind of measurements to be executed after the trial, he replied "I am ready to accept the sentence even if it includes effective imprisonment. It is better than lingering at the doors of courts that prevent justice and flout Shari'a. I have been suspended from work, or as Al-Thawra described it, sacked on alleged

offence. After judgment, I will have to try to get my post back as efforts have failed to convince the court to separate the public post from the court suit. With the judgment issued, the government will be convinced that my being sacked from the post is an unlawful arbitrary act."

Abduljabar Sa'ad intends to apply for lift of procedures imposed against him and to be reinstated in his former post, but if rejected he will "rely on God and go to get bread from another walk of life. He who takes care of mujahidins in Iraq while beset with evil powers will take care of us."

Abduljabar Sa'ad had written a letter to the head of Southwestern Sana'a Court saying:

"I have been informed of your unjust six month jail sentence with suspension. Due to many reasons related to the judgment and to myself, I have decided to accept the judgment without making an appeal. I have the following reasons:

* The sentence came after a delay of several months, during which I received no response to our repeated requests to set case the case motion.

* The sentence came immediately after resorting to the President, head of the Supreme Judicial Council, and not before that...

* My belief is that appeal, whatever its results will not serve justice but rather...

oppression.

* Finally, my suspension from my post was linked to the trial. I could not obtain from you any response to separate this from that and direct the government to cancel this arbitrary action since publication cases are not related to my public post. Fearing the continuity of the situation, and hoping to reach a settlement with responsible authorities regarding the post, I accept this oppressive sentence with contentment."

President media aids protest
Meanwhile, a number of senior media employees at the Presidential office had protested a decision taken by the Presidential Office Manager for being transferred from the Presidential office to the Ministry of Information.

Among the four employees was Abdulrahim Mohsin who had been serving in the presidential office since 1994. Mohsin told Yemen Times that he sent a protest memo to President Saleh asking him to interfere and order their return back to their original post.

"We request the President of the Republic to Interfere and the General local and International public to condemn such action and support us in our efforts to retain our rights through the judicial system," the memo said.

President Saleh calls Horn of Africa together

The civil war, which has been the cause of two million deaths mostly from famine and disease, came from the Sudanese government fighting rebels trying to achieve a larger share of political power and wealth. Fighting in western Darfur region has brought the death toll up to 70,000 people while at least 1.8 million people have been displaced.

Saleh also called the African Union or the United Nations to send peacekeeping forces to help the new Somali government establish security and stability so that the war-torn country could unify and rebuild itself in the future.

"We call for sending African Union or United Nations troops to Mogadishu for restoration of peace and stability in Somalia," said the President.


Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was sworn in as Somalia's new president in Nairobi, Kenya last October. Fighting between warring factions has continued since the country's dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was ousted in 1991. Up to one million Somalis have died in the civil war due to fighting, famine and disease, and around two million have fled the country. Mogadishu, the capital, remains divided between tribal leaders with an estimated 60,000 armed men still roam-

ing the streets.

Saleh was the only leader of a Middle East country to have attended the ceremony of the new Somali president taking the oath of office. The Yemeni government has called on the Arab League to establish an Arab fund that would assist Somalia rebuild itself after its 13-year civil war.

At the end of the summit, leaders of the three countries pledged a commitment to establishing peace, security and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa and Southern Red Sea regions and to cooperate with the international community to fight terrorism.

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Israeli missile hits car, militants escape

GAZA, Dec 28 (Reuters) - An Israeli drone aircraft fired a missile into a car carrying two Hamas militants in Gaza on Tuesday but both escaped without serious injury, witnesses said.

Some passersby suffered minor wounds, they said, in the incident in the city of Khan Younis, a bastion of militants who often fire mortar bombs and rockets at nearby Jewish settlements in the occupied territory.

Palestinian militant sources said the Hamas men were apparently en route to staging an attack on part of the fortified Gush Katif settlement bloc nearby when they were spotted by a patrolling drone and targeted.

In a statement, the Israeli army said aircraft had fired on gunmen blamed for mortar attacks from Khan Younis, including 40 in the past week.

Israeli tanks and troops have raided Khan Younis repeatedly to kill or capture militants behind constant rocket and mortar salvos against settlements.

But the attacks by the elusive, mobile mortar squads have persisted, although they only rarely cause casualties.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon intends to evacuate all 8,000 settlers from among 1.3 million Palestinians in Gaza next year under his plan to "disengage" from conflict in some occupied territory, but vows to smash militant groups first.



Palestinians stand near damaged car after an Israeli aircraft fired a missile into it in Khan Younis refugee, camp south Gaza Strip, Dec. 28. An Israeli drone aircraft fired a missile into a car carrying two Hamas militants in Gaza on Tuesday but both escaped without serious injury, witnesses said. REUTERS

Turk PM pledges active diplomacy over Cyprus

ANKARA, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Turkey plans to take "courageous" steps to achieve peace in Cyprus, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday, but rejected opposition claims that he planned to "sell out" the Turkish Cypriots for EU membership.

The European Union took a historic decision earlier this month to open entry talks with Muslim Turkey next October, but EU member Cyprus, represented by its internationally accepted Greek Cypriot government, could still veto those negotiations.

"We cannot protect Turkish interests on Cyprus... by staying passive... Turkey must always be one step ahead and take the initiative with courageous steps," Erdogan told parliament.

Erdogan did not spell out what measures Turkey planned to take to break a deadlock in efforts to reunite the island that has been divided on ethnic lines since 1974.

But he said the United Nations should revive stalled peace talks between the majority Greek Cypriots and minority Turkish Cypriots, adding that the EU also had a role to play in bringing the two sides closer.

It was Erdogan's second public pledge in just a week to work hard towards a Cyprus settlement, highlighting his concern that the issue could derail Turkey's long-awaited EU entry talks.

At the EU summit on Dec. 17, Turkey agreed to move towards extending an

existing protocol it has with the bloc to cover 10 new members which joined last May, including Cyprus.

Ankara insists this will not amount to diplomatic recognition of the Greek Cypriot government, saying this can only come as part of a comprehensive peace settlement.

Turkey recognises only the break-away Turkish Cypriot statelet in northern Cyprus, while the rest of the world, including the EU, views the Greek Cypriot government as the sole legitimate authority on the island.

Erdogan made clear Turkey was ready to resume the proactive, pragmatic diplomacy which earned it much praise in the last U.N.-brokered peace talks aimed at reuniting Cyprus.

Those talks culminated in the Turkish Cypriots voting in favour of a U.N. peace plan in an April referendum while Greek Cypriots, their place in the EU already assured, rejected it.

Deniz Baykal, leader of the nationalist-minded People's Republican Party (CHP), accused Erdogan of preparing to betray the Turkish Cypriots in order to keep Turkey's EU bid on track.

"Nobody has the right to sacrifice Cyprus. The nation will sacrifice you (the government), it will not sacrifice Cyprus," Baykal told parliament. Cyprus was divided in 1974 when Turkish troops invaded the north after a brief Greek Cypriot coup engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

Rebels strike Iraqi forces after bin Laden call

BAGHDAD, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Guerrillas killed 17 Iraqi policemen and tried to assassinate a National Guard general with a car bomb on Tuesday, hours after Osama bin Laden called on Iraqis to boycott next month's election.

The series of attacks on Iraq's U.S.-backed security forces and an endorsement from bin Laden of militant mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq may be aimed at wrecking Washington's hopes for the birth of a democratic government that is seen as legitimate at home and abroad.

Hours after the purported bin Laden audiotape was broadcast on Al Jazeera television, calling anyone who voted an "infidel", insurgents mounted several raids on police, killing 13 officers in one station alone in Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit.

It seemed possible a single group was responsible for the attacks, over about two hours along 80 km (50 miles) of highway.

The timing seemed coincidental in a daily round of violence that claimed several other lives already on Tuesday.

But it was a reminder of the potency of the alliance between international Sunni Islamists, like the Jordanian Zarqawi and

Iraqi nationalists from Saddam's Sunni Arab minority, who see elections handing power to majority Shi'ites.

"They attacked with many weapons," police Major Ali al-Tikriti told Reuters in Tikrit. It was not clear if the guerrillas suffered any casualties.

In Baghdad, a general in the National Guard survived a suicide car bomb attack as he left for work, police said. Six people were wounded. Major General Mudher al-Mula was a Shi'ite staff officer in Saddam's Sunni-dominated armed forces.

Guerrillas view those who join the National Guard are viewed as traitors. Four were wounded in a roadside bomb attack on their convoy in Baquba, north-east of Baghdad, an officer said.

ELECTION CONUNDRUM

If violence and intimidation keeps a disproportionate number of the 20-percent Sunni minority at home on Jan. 30, it is not clear what Washington can do to make the resulting assembly and government appear legitimate to most Iraqis, injured to decades of rigged politics under Saddam's iron-fisted rule.

The most prominent Sunni religious group, the Iraqi Islamic Party, pulled out

of the election on Monday, saying violence in the Sunni north and west meant it could not be fair.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said any assembly should at least give a nod to the substantial Sunni minority when it appoints a new government.

"For the government to be representative and for the government to be effective, the transitional national assembly would certainly have to take into account the ethnic mix," Powell said.

At a news conference, he brushed aside speculation and matters for Iraqi officials suggestions floated in Washington that Sunnis could be given extra seats or guaranteed some level of representation in the assembly itself.

Many Sunni leaders want the election postponed. But the 60-percent Shi'ite majority is keen to express itself, seeing a prospect of power for the first time in many decades.

INSURGENT FORCE

U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on a Christmas visit to soldiers in Iraq last week, stress the need to expand and improve Iraq's security forces as a means

of ensuring U.S. troops, now numbering 150,000, can go home.

But the performance of Iraqi forces has been patchy and they are prone to infiltration by militants like the suicide bomber who killed 21 people in a U.S. mess hall in Mosul a week ago — the bloodiest single incident of the war for the Americans.

Large, paramilitary assaults on police posts have become a feature of the increasingly sophisticated insurgency in recent months. In the northern city of Mosul, most of the U.S.-trained police fled and many stations were destroyed last month while U.S. forces were fighting in the rebel bastion of Falluja.

That has left Iraq's third largest city in near anarchy, making elections there highly problematic.

The attack on Falluja was intended to quell the insurgency before the election. But though statistics are not easily available, rebel attacks appear to have picked up after a lull.

A suicide car bomb killed nine at the Baghdad headquarters of a major Shi'ite party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, but missed its leader Abdul Aziz al-Hakim.

U.S. commanders now concede guerrilla



An Iraqi policeman surveys the damage in the Dejlah police station after it came under attack by insurgents in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, Dec. 28. Guerrillas killed 17 Iraqi policemen and tried to assassinate a National Guard general with a car bomb on Tuesday, hours after Osama bin Laden called on Iraqis to boycott next month's election. REUTERS

leaders, including Zarqawi probably fled Falluja, some of them perhaps to Mosul. U.S. forces clashed with fighters late on Monday.

In Falluja, most of its 250,000 or more residents are still living as refugees in

bleak conditions, although a few thousand have been allowed to return to the battered city. The episode has not endeared U.S. tactics to many Iraqis, especially Sunnis — and again could mean many displaced residents cannot vote.

Bin Laden says fighting in Iraq Muslims' duty-Web

DUBAI, Dec 28 (Reuters) - An audio tape purportedly from al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden urged Muslims to wage holy war against U.S. forces and the government in Iraq, saying they would be committing "a grave sin" if they failed to do so.

Bin Laden urged Muslims to support the fighting with their lives or with money, saying al-Qaeda spent about 200,000 euros (\$272,000) a week on Iraqi operations.

The tape purportedly from the Saudi-born al-Qaeda leader was posted on a Web site used by Islamists on Tuesday, a day after U.S. officials said it was probably genuine.

Arabic Al Jazeera television aired excerpts of the tape on Monday, in which bin Laden told Iraqis to boycott Jan. 30 parliamentary elections or be branded "infidels".

He also praised al-Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Washington's number one enemy in Iraq, and acknowledged him as the militant network's leader in Iraq.

"Jihad (holy war) in Iraq is a duty and shirking it is baseless," the speaker on the tape said. "Take advantage of this rare opportunity to carry out this grand duty... those who fail to do so are committing a grave sin."

"Happy is he who takes part in this war with his wealth or his body and happy is she whose sons take part in this battle for Islam," he said. "As...the expenses of al-Qaeda in Iraq are 200,000 euro a week, not counting the expense of other groups."

Insurgents, mainly Sunni Muslim groups, have mounted scores of deadly attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq and the U.S.-backed administration in recent months.

The bloodiest group has so far been Zarqawi's Al-Qaeda Organisation for Holy War in Iraq, which has claimed several suicide bombings and beheadings of foreign hostages.

U.S. Supporters "Apostates"

On Monday, hours after Al Jazeera aired the bin Laden tape,

guerrillas killed 17 Iraqi policemen and tried to assassinate a National Guard general with a car bomb.

Bin Laden told Muslims to conduct more suicide bombings in Iraq, plant more land mines, target oil and agricultural facilities, and "assassinate the owners of companies that supply the enemy, be they in Riyadh or Kuwait or Jordan or Turkey."

"Those who support America or the apostate government of (Iraqi interim prime minister Iyad) Allawi... are themselves apostates and must be killed," he said.

The speaker also told Muslims to help Palestinians waging an uprising against Israeli occupation "until their land is liberated from the infidels".

He branded leading Palestinian presidential candidate Mahmoud Abbas an "apostate" and denounced forthcoming presidential elections as blasphemous.

The undated tape appeared to be recorded within the last two months as it referred to Zarqawi's October alliance with al-Qaeda and the U.S.-led offensive against Falluja.

Iraq Sunnis fear bombs not bin Laden on poll day

BAGHDAD, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Plagued by violence and fearing reprisals, many of Iraq's Sunni Muslims said on Tuesday they had resolved to stay at home on election day long before Osama bin Laden said anyone who voted was an infidel.

With only a month to go until Iraq's first free poll, many Iraqis in the Sunni north and west said they would not vote while U.S.-led troops remained on Iraqi soil anyway. Even those who once dreamed of casting their ballot now say they are too busy trying to stay alive to think about the Jan. 30 poll.

"It makes no sense to put your life in danger to vote when the Americans will put whoever they want in power anyway," said Mohammed, a Baghdad resident who refused to give his full name. "Whatever Bin Laden says, people had already made up their minds not to vote. I didn't even register."

An audio tape purportedly from the al-Qaeda leader was aired on Monday, urging Iraqis to boycott the poll and saying anyone who took part was an infidel.

But Iraqis dismissed the Saudi-born militant's threats as outside interference. They had more pressing worries.

"I'm not bothered about the election; all I want is to return to Falluja and for violence to stop throughout Iraq," said Said al-Dulaimi, 42, who fled last month's U.S.-led offensive in the western

Iraqi city.

"Bin Laden knows nothing about Iraq; he is an extremist who lives in caves. He lost 75 percent of his support in Iraq by making everyone who votes in elections an infidel."

Most of Falluja's population is still sheltering outside the city after the U.S. attack aimed at crushing foreign fighters led by al-Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

U.S. and Iraqi officials admit some Sunni provinces are still not ready for elections. The possibility that they will be excluded has raised fears over the legitimacy of a poll in which only Iraq's 60-percent Shi'ite majority in the south and Kurds, who already have autonomy in the north, take part.

Marked for attack

In Mosul, Iraq's third largest city, extremists have stuck posters up in mosques warning those who vote will be punished. Last month, insurgents overran police stations in the city of three million and most officers deserted. People feel they have no authority to turn to.

In Samarra, 100 km (60 miles) north of the capital, rebels have distributed leaflets warning residents to keep away from polling stations because they were marked for attack.

Three officials from Iraq's Independent Electoral Commission,

which is organising the poll, were dragged from their cars in Baghdad this month and killed in broad daylight.

Northern polling stations have been attacked with rockets.

"I won't participate in the election because I am scared," said Omar Selham, 29, a businessman from the northern city of Mosul, whose population is mainly Sunni Arab with some Kurds.

"Anyway, the American presence in the country gives you the impression that the election is false and unfair."

U.S. officials are pushing for Iraqis to give Sunni Arabs, who make up 20 percent of Iraq's population, government posts even if they win few seats in the election because their constituents could not or would not vote.

On Monday, Iraq's leading Sunni party said it was pulling out of the election because violence in Sunni areas meant it would not be fair to the minority which dominated the country under ousted president Saddam Hussein.

That left even those who were willing to brave bombs and bullets to take part with few choices to vote for.

"We would participate if the Muslim Clerics' Association and Iraqi Islamic Party ran, because they are our guidance," said Sheikh Mohammed Abdul Hadi, 55, a preacher from Falluja. "But they pulled out of the election so we will not take part."

Dead litter streets, Indonesia toll may hit 25,000

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Dead bodies littered the streets of Indonesia's Aceh province on Tuesday as fears rose that more than 25,000 people may have been killed in the country by Sunday's earthquake and tsunami.

Decomposing corpses spread a foul smell over the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, on the northern tip of Sumatra island, and fresh water, food and fuel were in short supply.

Many parts of Aceh had not yet been heard from or reached by rescue crews. The mayor of Meulaboh, on the western coast of Sumatra about 150 km (90 miles) from the quake's epicentre, said 75 percent of his city had been washed away.

"We can't calculate it all now, but a rough estimate is tens of thousands dead," Tengku Zulkarnaen told El Shinta radio.

Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, speaking in the North Sumatra capital Medan after flying over the western coast, earlier estimated about 5,000 to 10,000 people had died in Meulaboh, and said the total Indonesian death toll could reach 20,000-25,000.

"I just returned from checking the west coast of Aceh province. The city Meulaboh is totally damaged. Almost

all the houses are damaged," he said.

The latest official toll, from the Health Ministry, put confirmed deaths at 5,700.

Fear was mixed with anger as residents in Banda Aceh queued outside the few open shops guarded by soldiers.

"Where is the assistance? There is nothing. All the government are asleep," said Mirza, a 28-year-old resident.

Soldiers and volunteers collected corpses for mass burial in several towns and cities in a bid to prevent disease in the province, where troops are stationed to combat a rebellion that began in 1976.

Whole battalions of soldiers and police are among the dead and missing, and separatist rebels have announced a ceasefire while people search for loved ones.

Foreign aid agencies were granted permission to enter the area on Tuesday and the United Nations said it would target some 500,000 for aid in the province of four million people.

In Banda Aceh, on a field about four times the size of a soccer pitch, more than 1,000 bodies lay where they died while watching a sports event on Sunday.

"I was in the field as a referee. The

waves suddenly came in and I was saved by God — I got caught in the branches of a tree," said Mahmud Azaf who lost his three children.

Families frantically sought loved ones. Thousands of others were traumatised, fearing fresh quakes and tsunamis.

A military official said resources were stretched.

"Many bodies are still lying on the streets. There just aren't enough body bags," Lieutenant Colonel Budi Santoso told reporters.

Refugees on the move

The wall of water up to 10 metres (33 ft) high that followed the magnitude 9.0 quake has killed more than 27,000 people across Asia.

Hundreds of panicked residents huddled at the airport in Banda Aceh, trying to leave the city. People wounded by debris in the huge waves lay on the ground moaning.

"We haven't eaten for two days. We have to get out of here," said Irawan, 35, whose optician practice was destroyed.

Roads in the city were filled with people marching, carrying boxes and bags, trying to leave.

A bulldozer covered over a mass

grave of 300 people after a hasty ceremony near the airport. Power cuts mean Banda Aceh will be virtually blacked out when night descends.

Aceh, some 1,700 km (1,000 miles) northwest of Jakarta, is under civilian

emergency rule as part of efforts to quell the separatist insurgency.

Leaders of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), based in Sweden, have declared a unilateral ceasefire with government forces to allow people to

search for loved ones.

The United Nations has warned of epidemics within days across Asia if health systems cannot cope, saying the effects of disease could be as bad as the tsunami itself.



The bodies of Acehese victims of the tsunami that hit on Sunday lie in a mass grave in the Lambaro district in the Indonesian city of Aceh Besar Dec. 28. Dead bodies littered the streets of Indonesia's Aceh province on Tuesday as fears rose that more than 25,000 people may have been killed in the country by Sunday's earthquake and tidal wave. REUTERS

Zimbabwe's Mujuru acing president on Mugabe break

HARARE, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Zimbabwe's first woman vice president Joyce Mujuru has been appointed to run the country's day-to-day affairs while President Robert Mugabe takes his annual leave, the official Herald newspaper reported on Tuesday.

The temporary appointment — which in the past had gone to co-vice president Joseph Msika, who like Mugabe is in his 80s — adds weight to speculation that Mujuru is being prepared to succeed Mugabe on his expected retirement in 2008.

Mugabe appointed Mujuru as one of Zimbabwe's two vice presidents

earlier this month, two days after his ruling ZANU-PF endorsed her for a similar party position.

Her appointment came in the aftermath of party wrangling which saw seven top ZANU-PF officials suspended after they allegedly convened a secret meeting to push for Speaker of Parliament Emmerson Mnangagwa's candidacy for the post.

Mugabe demoted Mnangagwa, once seen as his heir apparent, when he appointed a new-look ZANU-PF politburo inner cabinet a fortnight ago which also saw several senior officials dropped.

Mugabe has since commenced his

year-end leave and state media reported on Tuesday that he would spend part of it in Asia before resuming work on January 8.

Mugabe has defended the appointment of Mujuru — formerly Water Resources and Infrastructure Development minister — as being in line with a 1999 resolution to elevate a woman to the vice presidency of ZANU-PF.

Mujuru, 49, who fought as a teenager in Zimbabwe's 1970's guerrilla war of liberation, is one of only four officials retained from the first cabinet Mugabe appointed when he assumed power at independence in 1980.

Some 800 bodies found in Khao Lak area-French radio

PARIS, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Thai rescue workers have recovered some 800 bodies in the Khao Lak area, a Europe 1 reporter told the radio station on Tuesday after visiting the site of a hotel where hundreds of foreign tourists had been staying.

Anthony Dufour said many bodies had been found in the rooms of the devastated Sofitel hotel at Khao Lak, an establishment run by France's Accor group on the north of the popular tourist island of Phuket.

"There is a totally apocalyptic landscape before us this morning," Dufour said.

The entire Khao Lak area, renowned as a paradise, is completely devastated. The Sofitel hotel where I am now is completely destroyed, only a few walls remain.

"The army is still bringing out bodies from the rooms, because most of the tourists and staff of the hotel who were there were trapped by the wave which completely swamped this hotel.

"The soldiers told us they have retrieved 800 bodies in the zone," Dufour added.

Accor representatives said they were still looking for some 250 clients and the number of staff missing was unknown.

On Monday Accor, the leading European hotelier, said it had no news of around 500 tourists and staff at its hotel, but that around 100 people had



A Thai military airplane conveying injured tourists from Phuket island arrive at a military airport in Bangkok Dec. 28. Nations on the Indian Ocean from Indonesia to Sri Lanka struggled on Tuesday to find and bury their dead and help the survivors of a tsunami triggered by an earthquake as fears grew the final toll would far exceed the 29,000 people reported killed. REUTERS

been transferred to Bangkok.

France Info radio on Tuesday said 15 French nationals who had been staying at the hotel had been flown to the capital Bangkok.

An Accor spokeswoman declined to comment on the Europe 1 report but confirmed the hotel had been hosting 350 guests and 250 staff when the

catastrophe struck.

Dufour also described a scene of utter devastation in Khao Lak, with bodies lying on road sides and in the trees.

The best hope for finding survivors was a small hospital away from the coastline where some may have found shelter, he said.

India, Pakistan end talks without breakthrough

ISLAMABAD, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Nuclear-armed rivals Pakistan and India ended two days of talks on Tuesday, saying they had narrowed some differences and agreed a rough schedule for future discussions, but without any significant breakthrough.

A joint statement after the talks in Islamabad between Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar and Indian counterpart Shyam Saran reported no progress towards a solution of the issue at the heart of their rivalry, the divided Himalayan state of Kashmir.

The two sides also failed to complete an agreement to notify each other formally before testing ballistic missiles, although the statement said they had "narrowed further their differences" and agreed to work towards early finalisation.

The statement said the foreign secretaries had agreed that meetings on six issues, including border disputes, counter-terrorism and drug trafficking, and economic cooperation should be held on dates to be agreed between April and June.

They also agreed that meetings on trade and border security and more dialogue to build confidence on their nuclear and conventional arsenals would be held between January and June.

The statement confirmed that the foreign and prime ministers of the two countries would meet during the South Asian summit in Dhaka next month and that Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh would visit Islamabad in February.

The foreign secretaries, meanwhile, planned to meet again between July and August to review overall progress in the peace process, which was relaunched last January.

Talks on Kashmir brief

Tuesday's talks on Kashmir lasted just a hour.

As expected, they produced no breakthrough given that the sides remain far apart on an issue that has caused two of their three wars since independence in



Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar (R) greets his Indian counterpart Shyam Saran before their second round of talks at the Foreign Ministry in Islamabad Dec. 28. Top diplomats from Pakistan and India met on Tuesday for talks on their most contentious dispute, Kashmir, but no breakthrough was expected on the issue at the heart of the rivalry between the nuclear-armed nations. REUTERS

1947 and nearly triggered a fourth in 2002.

The statement said the officials had agreed that discussions on Kashmir should continue in the light of a joint statement by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New York in September.

The two leaders said then they should explore options for a peaceful negotiated settlement to the dispute "in a sincere spirit and purposeful manner", but progress has proven elusive.

Islamabad, which wants progress on Kashmir in tandem with other bilateral issues, has suggested demilitarising the territory while a compromise is sought over its status. It says this could include joint control, some form of U.N. control, or independence.

But India rejects any redrawing of its

borders or further division of Kashmir.

Saran ruled out any quick breakthrough on Monday.

"If you are looking at a solution that is visible on the horizon, that is not the case at this point in time," he told a news briefing.

"Given the complexity of the situation, it is difficult to just sit down and find a solution over the next couple of days." Nevertheless, the South Asian neighbours have come a long way in patching up ties since going to the brink of a fourth war in 2002.

This followed an attack on the Indian parliament in late 2001 that India blamed on Pakistani-backed Islamic militants.

Diplomatic ties have been normalised, with some rail, road and air links restored and sporting ties resumed.

A truce along the military line dividing Kashmir has held for over a year.

Waves kill at least 10 in Tanzania, police say

NAIROBI, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Turbulent swells generated by the Asian tsunami killed at least 10 people in Tanzania, police in the East African country said on Tuesday.

The 10, aged between 12 and 20, were swimming off beaches in the port city of Dar es Salaam on Sunday when they were swept away by strong seas, police contacted from neighbouring Kenya said.

"On Sunday, between two and five in the afternoon, there were very strong waves and 10 people who were swimming were drowned," said Alfred Tibaigana, regional police commissioner for Dar es Salaam.

"The anchors of two oil tankers cut off and they drifted to the high seas, but were brought back after the storm."

The biggest earthquake in 40 years hit southern Asia and triggered a massive wall of water that raced across the Indian Ocean, bringing devastation and death to Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Indonesia.

More than 28,000 people are reported killed but officials said the final toll could rise above 55,000.

Tibaigana said there were complaints of lost boats but no fishermen had been reported missing.

"We have asked Dar es Salaam residents to avoid swimming at beaches during this period. The police have intensified security to prevent people from getting into the water," he said.

At least 38 people have been killed in

Somalia by the waves and the United Nations has said it was checking reports that as many as 62 may have died in the Somali region of Puntland.

Beaches along Kenya's Indian Ocean coast, popular with tourists from across Europe and America, were closed on Sunday but began reopening on Monday though coast guards had warned tourists to stay out of the water, where a holidaymaker from Nairobi was killed on Sunday.

مرحباً ملوك
أجمل التهاني والتبريكات لأخ
إبراهيم عبد الله شاحط
بمناسبة إرتزاقه المولود الجديد والتي أسماها / ملوك
المستقبل /
عبدالله أحمد - محمد على الدعي
محمد وعبد الكريم ويحيى وخالد شاحط
وجميع الأهل والأصدقاء
وأختك اغاثية شيماء



UAE leader Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan died on November 2nd, 2004, at the age of 90, and after 33 years of governance



Thousands of Palestinians gather in Ramallah to witness the funeral of their leader Yasser Arafat on November 12.



Abu Ghraib prison's scandal. REUTERS

Main event of 2004

ASIAN TSUNAMI DISASTER

GALLE, Sri Lanka, Dec 28 (Reuters) - The sea and wreckage of coastal towns all around the Indian Ocean yielded up tens of thousands of bodies on Tuesday, pushing the toll from Sunday's tsunami past 50,000.

The apocalyptic destruction caused by the wave dwarfed the efforts of governments and relief agencies as they turned from rescuing survivors to trying to care for millions of homeless, increasingly threatened by disease amid the rotting corpses.

"Why did you do this to us, God?" wailed an old woman in a devastated fishing village in southern India's Tamil Nadu state. "What did we do to upset you? This is worse than death."

"The enormity of the disaster is unbelievable," said Bekele Geleta, head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Southeast Asia.

Sri Lanka and Indonesia reported death tolls around 19,000 each and expected them to keep rising.

India's toll of 11,500 included at least 7,000 on one archipelago, the Andamans and Nicobar.

On one island, the surge of water triggered by Sunday's cataclysmic undersea earthquake killed two-thirds of the population.

At magnitude 9.0, the tremor was the biggest in 40 years. The chasm that it tore in the seabed off the Indonesian island of Sumatra launched a tsunami that raced across the Andaman Sea and struck Sri Lanka, southern India, the Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar and resorts packed with Christmas tourists in Thailand.

The surge battered thousands of miles of coastline in a vast arc from Indonesia to Tanzania. Fishing villages, ports and resorts were devastated, power and communications cut and homes destroyed, in the port city of Galle, strewn with the wreckage of buses and toppled buildings.

"I wish I had died. There is no point in living."



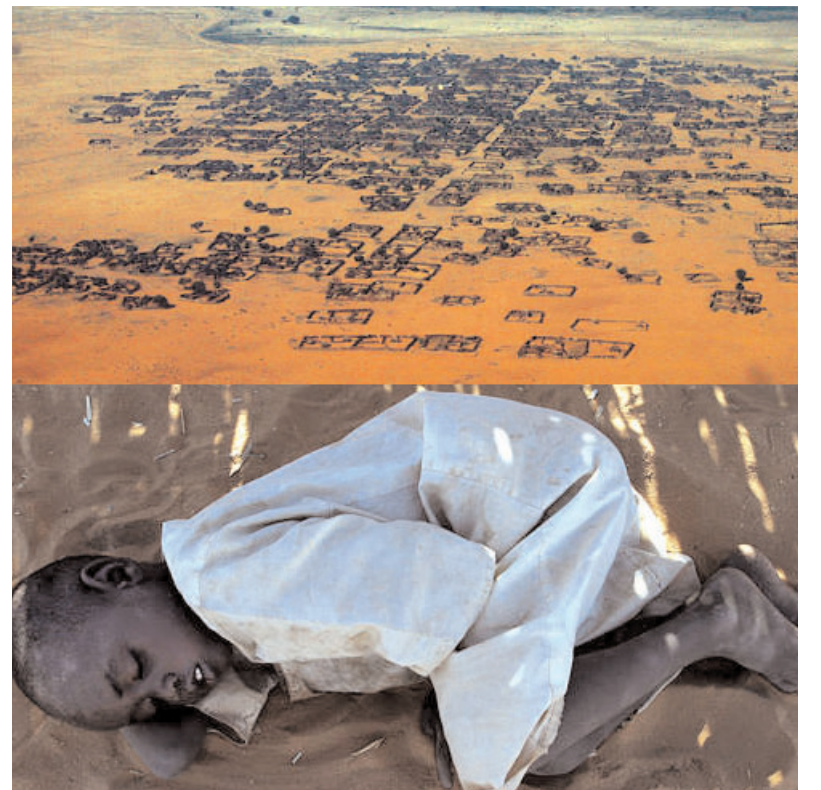
Debris are scattered on a narrow section of Phi Phi Island where bungalows formerly stood at Ton Sai Bay, Phi Phi Island, Dec. 28. Nations bordering the Indian Ocean from Indonesia to Sri Lanka clawed through the wreckage of a devastating quake-triggered tsunami for bodies to bury on Tuesday as fears grew the toll would far exceed the 50,000 now reported killed. REUTERS



U.S. Army soldiers examine the destruction following a deadly explosion in the dining facility at a U.S. military installation December 21 in Mosul in this handout photo released Dec. 24. A suicide bomber in Iraqi uniform blasted the mess tent on Tuesday, killing 22 people, 18 of them Americans. It was the costliest single incident for Americans since the start. REUTERS



George W. Bush (right) prepares to give a victory speech after winning the US Elections on Sep. 3, John Kerry (right) in another speech conceding defeat. REUTERS



top: deserted villages in Darfur. bottom: A Sudanese boy in Darfur struggling to stay alive. REUTERS

Words of Wisdom

The fall-out from technology advances, notably globalization, is clearly ahead of us. We need to grapple with this and the sooner we assess the issues and decide on what we need to do, the better prepared we will be. A main component of globalization is liberalization.

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

OUR
OPINIONWhen science
is abandoned

The catastrophe of the massive tsunami that affected South East Asia has indeed devastated millions of people in this region. Described to be as high as 10 m, this natural phenomenon has swept away shantytowns, coastal resorts, and caused misery for so many people.

However, what I heard in the BBC about the fact that so many casualties would have been prevented if there had been a center for early earthquake and tsunami warning research center, I felt truly sad.

It does take time for the waves to reach the shores, and even if they could not have been prevented, there still would have been chances to save millions of souls from injury or death.

Scientists in developing countries have usually been neglected and scientific and research centers are rarely invested in those countries. The magnitude of devastation and loss in lives in this region was attributed indirectly to the lack of will of developing countries to invest heavily in science and scientists, paving the way for such misery.

Coming to our case in Yemen, just recently we witnessed another set back in terms of limiting investments in science. Just a few days ago, an official announcement had cut the budget of scholarships for Yemenis to study abroad. This step was meant to help the Yemeni economy recover, but in my opinion, it is the worst step that one could take to help our country recover neither in the economic front, nor in any other.

Many calls have repeatedly been addressed to Yemen from international organizations, human development experts, and strategic thinkers asking the regime to focus on investing in people, particularly in health, education and science. Nevertheless, we end up finding that the authorities decided to cut the education-related salary and continue to spend massive amounts on military installations and weaponry.

I believe abandoning science and discouraging education will result in long-term repercussions in the future of the country. In a time we need to have our younger generation attain the maximum quality of education standards—something they cannot have in Yemen—, we are pushing them back to diminish their ambitions and lose hope in academic achievement and broader knowledge.

The tsunami of Sunday should be a hint to us that there are certain things that science can do, which is to aid governments to see the dangers of natural disasters and act swiftly to prevent damage as much as possible, that military might and arms race cannot. Hence, more emphasis on science on the part of developing countries could definitely help avoid preventable damage in the future.

I hope that our Arab governments, and in our case the Yemen government, would begin to focus more on education and science and less on arms and weapons when considering fiscal budgets. This is important to push for better development in our country and a brighter future for our children.

The Editor



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First English Newspaper in Yemen, founded in 1991
by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief:
Walid Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

Head office:
Telephone: +967 (1) 268-661
Fax: +967 (1) 268-276
P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a

Email: yementimes@yementimes.com
Website: http://www.yementimes.com

Branches:
Aden Bureau Chief:
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed
Tel: +967 (2) 347-457, 346596;
Tlx: 605330
Fax: +967 (2) 347-456
Email: ytaden@y.net.ye

Taiz Bureau Chief:
Imad Ahmed Abdullah
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156
Telefax: +967 (4) 217-157
P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz
Email: yttaiz@y.net.ye



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Saudi Distribution Co.
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"The mother of all political gambles"

Is Iraq really moving
to democracy?

By ADEL AL-KHAWLANI
adelkhwani@yahoo.com
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

What is both laughable and lamentable is the majority of Arab leaders who hold the view that Iraq has gotten rid of a totalitarian regime and now lives under the umbrella of democracy.

Not only keeping silent, they still accuse the former Iraqi leader of being oppressive and support the implantation of the US illusionary democracy. According to only a great number of fools, the US came to democratize Iraq.

Women are abused, innocent children are killed, and others are living in a lifeless desert because the occupier has abolished their houses. The wounded cannot be hospitalized and their lives cannot be saved. Hospitals constantly suffer from the lack of medical facilities and their staff is killed. Cities to the west of Baghdad experience the shortage of basic needs, with no food, no water and no electricity.

Other tragic things we neither see nor hear due to the occupiers' silencing of the media, which is one of the essential components of the foolishly imposed democracy. Bureaus of some televisions are shut down and media personnel are prevented from reporting the tragic facts.

What worsens the tragedy further is the belief of many Muslim jurists issuing their fatwa that resistance is unlawful considering it a kind of terrorism.

Undoubtedly, a UN sanction can be passed on only if it is imposed on the Arab and Muslim regimes. Bombing after bombing and killing after killing, this is what is experienced in the cities of Rafidain lands. By looking at the situation in Iraq with all the U.S. troops still over their with their lives in danger daily, we can see that this is important to get these troops back.

These attacks are not only demolishing Iraq, but it destroys everyone involved, both mentally and physically.

There also have been accusations that "the war in Iraq is about oil." Many



The way they are democratized: Two of thousands of innocent victims of the foolishly imposed democracy.



American writers and politicians believe that is true - but for reasons different from those who advance that argument. Clearly, if Iraq was not an oil producer, the United States would not have the same interest in that country. At the same time, no country without energy would have an interest in developing weapons of mass destruction.

The United States has several alternative sources of supply, and despite its dependence on imported oil, it is one of the world's greatest energy producers. Since, unlike the other advanced Western economies, the United States also has the capability of developing other sources of energy - shale, natural gas, hydroelectric, solar and so on - it is a canard to assert that the United States is going to war to dominate Iraq's oil resources.

If the United States pretends to use some of the funds from Iraqi oil to pay for rebuilding the country after the war and the costs of occupation, Washington acknowledges that it is exploiting the situation for controlling Middle Eastern oil for its own purposes or setting up a colonial regime in Iraq.

There is no need to provide an example of democracy to the Arab world. New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman calls Bush's plan for regime change: "the mother of all political gambles. ... It could help nudge the whole Arab-Muslim world onto a more progressive track."

There is nothing in the character of Iraq, or any other nation for that matter, that

predetermines its attitude to democracy and human rights. Have Iraqis turned to democracy after the war? Who knows? Rightly, there will be numerous calls for democratic reforms. Nations could not make progress on the human and economic development fronts in the absence of such reforms, a simple lesson that most Arab countries seem reluctant to learn.

The end result is a compromise at best. And yet again, this analysis does not take into account external parties who might have set views on the threats and virtues that come with a democratic Iraq.

Similar problems to those that beset Iraq at present have been seen in the past in that country. Equally, other nations have experienced similar trials and tribulations, interspersed with good times as well.

A look at the history of Britain, with its civil wars and conflicts, including two world wars in the twentieth century alone, illustrates the process that nations go through as they evolve.

The tumultuous upheavals that Britons endured in the 16th and 17th centuries (Industrial Revolution, civil wars, end of feudalism, etc) led, in some vague way, to the emergence of the British Empire.

And the two world wars from which Britain was victorious, coincided with the loss of its empire and set that country on a radically different path. The process of transformation, however, was a long time coming. It was caused by numerous factors, and not simply their debilitating world wars.

Challenges of development and globalization

Yemeni civil society in
an international context

By SAWSAN AL-REFA'IE
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Civil society in Yemen is in crisis. Although hundreds of civil society organizations are registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, these organizations do not reflect the genuine right of free association. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have failed to revive the economy, empower marginalized groups, enhance the role of women in development, or take bold steps towards genuine political reform.

The problems facing civil society are the result of an absence of democracy within the organizations, as most Yemeni CSOs are still under the control of one person.

Staff members generally do not have a say in the organization's operations. Furthermore, most staff members lack the basic skills and knowledge vital to properly implement projects, such as English language, computer, and project management skills.

CSOs compete with rather than complementing each other and many organizations work in the same fields, targeting the same groups, working only to obtain donor funding while ignoring their supposed development mandates.

CSOs also often do not get along very well with the government and the laws pertaining to civil organizations. Accusations of a lack of cooperation are routinely passed back and forth between CSOs and the government. The government believes that civil organizations fail to meet their minimum operational requirements and manipulate funds for their personal interests, the same organizations are haunted by the idea that the government is constantly trying to dominate them.

Unfortunately, international governments and donors are also part of the problem facing Yemeni civil society. Donors tend to insist on providing finance only in certain fields, regardless of a country's needs. Why should all projects be politicized to win funding? Aren't health, education, and human rights, all political? Why should our needs be globalized to conform to the wishes of the international community? Aren't we in the best position to judge our local challenges?

Several donors in Yemen have failed to focus on the long-term impacts of the projects that they fund, focusing only on the immediate outputs of projects including media coverage, and political propaganda.

It is bizarre that even efforts to increase dialogue between CSOs and donors end

with even more dispute over directions and vision and representation of grassroots requirement remains very low in the decision making process. Recommendations developed during these meetings generally remain only on ink on paper and are not implemented. Dialogue in most cases, ends in trading accusations in an attempt to prove that "someone" is the problem, rather than working together to find what the problems really are.

The very low levels of confidence governing the relationship between CSOs and donors are unhealthy. On one hand, there are some CSOs that seek funding for big development projects that do not coincide with their internal capacities. On the other hand, donors abstain from funding grassroots organizations because some organizations are not qualified enough to administer the projects. This has resulted in the failure of some development projects on which a lot of money has been spent.

CSOs, government, and international donors must engage in sincere dialogue to achieve sustainable development. We are all responsible for improving basic education enrollment rates, providing better access to primary health services, and the alleviation of poverty. No matter what the global needs are, these are our needs. Together, we should work to fulfill them now.

Letters to the Editor

terrorist by USA State Department as well.

A. R. Balboni
balbolv@yahoo.com

I have high hopes
in Yemeni women

I am very proud and happy that the rights of women, especially Yemeni women are being voiced and issues are raised. Best wishes to all that are involved in the hard

work and never-ending task of advocating for women's right in the Arab World.

Asyah Ali
asyah_a@yahoo.com

Somaliland

I can't help asking what was the point of the article in support of the independence of so-called "Somaliland". I am really surprised that Yemen

Times allowed such one sided revoking view appear on their site.

Nevertheless, I do believe that Somali can live together once Somali Federal Government is established.

Let us not forget one tribe cannot be a country.

If Northern Somalia (including Las Anood, Boorama, etc) residents vote on succession then we, the rest of Somalia, don't have a

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Increasing awareness
in the countryside

Yemeni cities are continuing to absorb many of the rural Yemenis, who have come to feel that their rural habitats are unable to provide the means of sustenance, or those who may come to believe that modern life can only come to dwellers of urban metropolises. It goes without saying that there is a clear inequity in the lives of the urban and rural dwellers and the access to many social services or the amenities of modern life is almost non-existent for the rural dwellers in many of the remote areas of the country. Over the last twenty years, this massive migration from rural to urban areas has become a foundation for the rise of many social ailments Yemeni society was lacking as traditional rural norms managed to keep family life stable and people were content with the sustenance that traditional farming eked out for them.

The development process in Yemen unfortunately focused its projects and programs on making the large cities the beneficiaries of most of the efforts to provide social services and even markets were encouraged to concentrate in urban areas, thus leaving the rural countryside untouched by the rapid strides that the major cities of Yemen have taken. On the other hand, the cities have neither been prepared for this influx of rural dwellers nor capable of sustaining continued urban growth in light of the absence of adequate sustainable water supplies in the basins that provide them with their potable water requirements. Yet, the influx continues and the cities are forced to absorb a lot of people, who are neither prepared for city life or even have a feeling of the adjustments they need to make, socially and culturally if they are to realize the quests they hoped to pursue in the cities they have come to.

Part of the problem is that the public media, especially television and radio, has very little broadcast room for making the rural population aware that the cities are not going to be the paradise they envision and that they should pursue means of developing their own areas. This is a consequence of the slow efforts at decentralization of government authority and the reluctance of the central government to empower local habitats to have a say in how they run and use their local resources or how they manage their development projects, if they have any that are directed towards them. Thus, if such projects are undertaken, it is usually administrators from the central government that are assigned the tasks of designing and implementing these projects, often with very little input from the beneficiaries. These projects, in many cases are usually finished and almost abandoned right afterwards, or turned over to local authorities or traditional leaderships that are ill prepared in their operation and maintenance. Thus, there is a lot of waste of investment funds that are often provided by loans and many of these projects turn into empty facades or dead rusty metal that never serves the purposes intended for them.

Because the rural countryside relies on broadcast media for most of the information that is available to it about the rest of the world or as a possible source of cultural development, one would hope that the broadcast media would allocate certain air time to helping the rural population finding means of making their present habitats by providing programs that educate the rural population that rural areas can also become modern habitats that provide all the services that may be found in cities and can attract merchandise and goods that provide some of the amenities of modern life as well. This would of course mean educating rural populations on the way to administer themselves, without having to rely on central government authorities to provide the services they need (although they should contribute to the funding of the establishment of such services and provide some technical backup).

The best way is to make the rural population feel that they are free to organize themselves into cooperatives that are independent of any government control and that are able to determine the activities they will sponsor based on their needs. In many ways this can be done through teaching rural people how to set up community action teams that can pursue different projects and manage them independently in a fully transparent manner. Yet, so much air time is wasted on meaningless programs that are not only not directed to the rural citizens, although they still make up some 70% of the population, but even city dwellers find them to be useless or lacking in any form of culture so as to enrich their lives or direct them to the path to better living.

The government is spending a sizable chunk of its budget on sustaining various forms of public media, especially radio and television. The people in the countryside are hungry for knowledge, especially on how they can better their lives where they are living rather than join the mass exodus to urban centers that are neither ready to accommodate them or become the dream world they hope to become a part of. On the other hand, the public media should also point out to the rural population the difficulties they will face in cities and the social problems that will counter their peaceful and serene rural lives.

Much of the inhabited rural countryside are areas of scenic beauty and may often be suitable for developments as attractive tourist havens. The public media can help introduce programs that educate rural residents how they can work to provide the facilities that tourists need to make their areas attractive to them. This means that rural areas need to set up basic accommodation facilities, rest areas for tour groups and protection for sites that have a historical or aesthetic value.

The public media should start to reach out to the rural people because they have truly been victims of neglect long enough. This is not only important for the rural dwellers, but for the already congested metropolises that are becoming hotbeds for social degeneration and urban squalor.

being a drug, just wake up and smell the coffee, i.e., see what it has done to Yemen. Qat is a type of narcotic, which is banned in USA, and most of the European Union except UK. Look how backward Yemen is because of qat. Even the gulf countries banned it and they have achieved some sort of development. It is time to get rid of this cancer which has destroyed the people, the economy and scarce water and the wealth of the country.

Abdigan Hussein
abdigan.gao@yahoo.com

Responding to
Why is qat a drug?

I would like to respond to Ashwaq Al-Gose, who wrote a letter to the editor saying that Qat is a nasty drug, if you are in doubt that qat not

Abdulaziz Alkebsy
a_alkesby@yahoo.com

Yemeni Press,

A week in review

Presented by Mohammed Khidr

The editor of "Yemeni Press, A week in review" wishes all readers of the Yemen Times **Happy New Year** and the best in the year 2005.

Main Headlines

- Popular movements to reject it, Islah MP: opposition does not refuse the dose
- Solidarity activities abroad demanding the release of al-Khaiwani
- YSP requests the government to free its properties
- Writers in Russia appeal the release of Khaiwani and other prisoners of opinion
- Differences at the GCC summit because of Bahrain
- Yemen government share of oil revenues rose this year
- Optimism about Yemen joining the WTO
- Vehement political and popular rejection of the killing dose
- International report:
- Yemen; a democratic system outwardly, country's politics governed by the ruling party
- GCC summit wrapped up without any mention about Yemen
- Palestinians refuse Abbas call, stick to resistance
- Yemen adopts a reconciliation initiative
- between Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia
- The President complains of much mediation, demands investigation into corruption issues
- Defence minister discusses aspects of cooperation with the Palestinian ambassador and Australia's non-resident ambassador
- Deadliest operation against American forces in Mosul, Iraq by resistance
- Parliamentarians demand disclosure of volume of foreign debts
- Harvard experts' recommendations on fighting terror in Yemen and Horn of Africa
- Yemen; dangerous information on supporting Jihad in Iraq similar to Afghanistan
- Astrologer predicts assassination of Bush, attacks on America and London and emergence of a new Saddam
- Muslim Brotherhood IMovement refuses Mubarak accusations, accuses the authorities of practicing terror against them



assurance instead of those of fear that prevent the citizen from practicing his right. Moreover, elections could not be realized under circumstances of American occupation, dominating over all political and economic syllabuses and pushing outputs to be identical to its goals.

Boycotting the elections in Iraq by many Iraqi political parties may be in confirming this fact. Thus, and under this state of affairs, make those elections as not legitimate in accordance with the international law and may lead to dangerous adverse results on Iraq. The occupation forces aim at, in this election process, driving each party against the other, in a step to be construed as to create an internal sedition enabling the American troops to avoid blows of the resistance and to be able to exploit Iraq's economic riches. An action of this kind forms a danger leading to partition Iraq into three parts, in line with the American understanding.

much talk about crimes of the American troops and coalition forces in Iraq in a manner causing one to wonder. Every time the spokesman for the White House tries to give preponderance to the unintentional individual side of those crimes, claiming they were not intended by their troops. The American official used always to describe the scandals of Abu Ghraib prison as being individual acts committed by personnel who are irresponsible. Only a few weeks have elapsed and then the same events were repeated at the same prison. However, the news leaked about investigations mentioned that al those who had perpetrated the crimes had received orders from the Pentagon.

The American soldiers who had entered a mosque in Falluja and opened fire at the unarmed citizens was also an individual behavior, according to the point of view of the American official spokesman, destruction of the city of Falluja was also individual act as the spokesman sees it.

During the year and seven months, since the beginning of the American invasion of Iraq in March 2003, 166 Iraqi university professors and scientists from Sunnis and Shiites were assassinated. That great number clarifies who is behind that liquidation of the Iraqi people scientists. The plot is very clear and big and the aim behind it is that the great Iraqi people, who represent the spearhead in confrontation with the Zionist scheme against the Islamic nation, should not rise up again.

26 September weekly, organ of Yemen Armed Forces, 23 Dec. 2004.

Held in Khartoum with participation of



Al-Sahwa weekly, 23 Dec. 2004.

Main headlines

- JMP: The dose dangerous to the people and stability
- Oil trade unions leaderships call for speeding up investigation into corruption issues and recovery of Jaheef oil installations
- University professors threaten with all-out strike
- Students Union threaten with raising lawsuit against the University of Sana'a
- British company Dove signs an agreement for taking part in oil production
- WB finances a study for a project of waters and sewage in Aden

Columnist Zaid al-Shami says in his article about the price "dose" that it is a nightmare instigating horror in the hearts of the Yemenis because it means an increase in their suffering. It is an act that would tighten the grip around their living life and its results would be fighting agriculture and undermining the national industry, in addition to increasing the number of the poor and expansion in the area of corruption. The price dose would leave negative impact, socially, and morally and that would lead to disturbance and absence of security and spread of crime.

We do not refuse the doses for merely of practicing rejection, as some would like to depict the stance. Refusing doses does not mean we want the state to be run without budgets, but we are ambitious that the budget to be upgrading the economy and public life. We ask for a budget of human and social development, focusing on investment and to pay attention to the essential matters and postpone the formalities and not to become just consumer expenditures. It the doses are the ideal solution, the previous ones could have produced benefits.



Al-Nahar weekly, 23 Dec. 2004.

Main headlines

- Security arrangements delay ceremony for honoring winners of the President Award
- Sacking 22 judges, interrogating eight and more than a hundred pensioned
- Activity of a woman society in Abs

- banned
- Dahlie governor gives directives for halting the fencing of tourist lands
- Principal of Maqabli School commits violations
- Planning ministry organizes an annual conference for non-governmental organizations beginning of next year
- Koreans seek trade partnership with Yemen

Columnist Abdulbari Tahir discusses in his article the role of the Yemeni woman. He says there is no area more apparent where deterioration of the Arab human rights than that of the deterioration of the situations of the Arab woman, especially in Yemen. Since the fifties, specifically in the colony of Aden, Yemen has witnessed the emergence of a woman activity through the woman participation in the political movement and joining political parties that were formed beginning of the fifties of the last century. The woman there had had worked in press and took part in intellectual, literary life, and political forums.

After the September revolution in the north, the woman there began to feel her way towards the participation in public life. The seventies were the beginning of openness and emergence of some examples calling for formation of woman societies and organizations in major cities. If the Yemeni unity in 1990 represented a great national gain and advanced step at all levels, it has acted as a setback with regard to the woman rights. All unifying legislatures in the new republic were advanced except for the law of the family; it has been drafted in a backward characteristic abolished all democratic rights the woman in the south has gained. The new law restored the spirit of despotism and discrimination regarding the woman rights. Advance or backwardness of any society or people is measured by the attitude towards the woman.



Al-Tagamou weekly, organ of the Yemeni Unionist Congregation Party, 20 Dec. 2004.

- Difference inside the state customs enterprise leads to sacking three of its deputies
- Aden at the brink of water catastrophe
- YSP holds authority responsible for impeding the holding of its conference

Writer Mohammed Thabit says in his article these days the cultural activity pulls us to the great efforts the official,

partisan and popular circles in our country are exerting to portray Sana'a city Capital of the Arab Culture. It is the term some Arab capitals have circulated under desire of the UNESCO, the major supporter of this activity and its political and cultural goals.

While we are approaching the end of the culture year, we have no doubt that our country and official parties would achieve the highest degrees of benefiting from that process if they worked well in investing the external support in activating means of culture in a well-studied orientation for enhancement of bases of culture development. That of course is closely related to comprehensive development at all levels. Culture in its genuine dimension is a civilization and human issue connected with people's advanced life and the level of the social involvement. The Yemeni reality in this regard does not provide us with such a fact, as it is still groaning under the burden of backwardness and cannot move to a state of cultural progress depending on human and his mature mental effort. Such a change must be based on development, mainly that of the human and recruit their energy for taking part in the process of construction through depending on their great capabilities for creativity and innovation as means enabling the new forces to work with efficiency.



Al-Jamaheer weekly, organ of the Arab Baath Socialist Party, 22 Dec. 2004.

- Main headlines
- Gang in Thamar attacks communications workers
- Teachers in Khamr stage strike
- Journalists sue Spacetel Yemen
- 15 members from Aden local council in Dar Saad district intend to resign
- 52% of Americans against the Secretary of Defence.

In its editorial, the newspaper says free democratic elections reflect desire of the people in electing those who would represent them rightfully in the political decision of the state. Elections, however, would not be right and correct but with the participation of all the people and their live political forces. They are greatly connected with the state o stability that helps urge the voter to go to ballot boxes.

What is happening in Iraq does not rely on a scientific rule due to its lacking of the factor of stability and security that provide the elector with the opportunity to take part in atmospheres prevailed by



Annas weekly, 27 Dec. 2004.

Main headlines

- The president wonders why railroads were not built in Yemen
- Justice Minister al-Jifri: Radical changes in the judiciary reform course
- Teaching staff of universities back off from comprehensive strike
- Endowments minister accuses a judge of plundering pieces of land, promises to subject him to accountability
- Khartoum hosts Sana'a gathering summit

Columnist Dr Hosni al-Jawshaie says in his article recently there has been



26 September weekly, organ of Yemen Armed Forces, 23 Dec. 2004.

Main headlines

- Held in Khartoum with participation of

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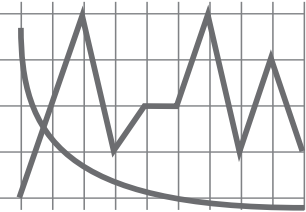
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YT Business



2004 was a year of uncertainty and doubt:

Financial outlook for 2005

By IBRAHIM AL-HASHEDI
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Investors were perturbed by the oil prices, which nearly doubled between January and October. The US benchmark WTI crude oil price rose from a little under \$US30 per barrel to nearly \$US56 per barrel. This price surge not only implies a loss of purchasing power for consumers but also calls into question the longevity of world economy growth.

While geopolitical uncertainties continued to pay a significant role in these developments, other events also cast shadows over the future. For Example, the well publicized difficulties encountered by the Russian oil giant Yukos raised doubts as to its capability to continue production.

Also, the repeated strikes in Nigeria and Norway hampered oil production, not to mention the bad weather conditions in the Gulf of Mexico, which halted production. The resulting low levels of world oil stocks as well as significant speculative positions also constituted additional destabilizing factors. While oil prices have eased from their highest levels they remain high by historical standards.

Further, the March 11 Madrid bombings brought terrorism back to the foreground, undermining the rebuilding of investor confidence following the events of September 11 2001.

Has the Chinese economy failed with its soft landing?

Another uncertainty began to worry investors at the end of the first quarter when the Chinese government declared its intention to slow the pace of economic growth. Chinese demand was one of the main engines of economic growth for the rest of Asia

between 2002 and 2004, and sharp slowdown in Chinese growth, which was running at an estimated nine per cent in real terms, could have significant negative repercussions for the global economy.

All of these events have gradually eroded analysts' confidence in the continuing economic growth for 2005, particularly in the US, and while 2004 looks set to be a very acceptable year in terms of earnings growth, investors are now focusing their attention on revising the 2005 earnings forecast.

The main equity markets have traded within a relatively narrow band of +5% to -5% during the greater part of the year. Emerging markets fared significantly better, with the notable exception of China, which recorded a negative performance as from mid-April.

For most of the year, equity markets did not favor and particular sector although after the summer a significant difference began to emerge as the energy sector posted a relatively strong performance. At present the best performers are those sectors whose 2004 and 2005 earnings forecasts have received the strongest upward revisions.

After reacting to signs of stronger growth in the US during the first half of the year, bond markets anticipated the economic slowdown, as they interpreted the rise in oil price as being a factor of slowing demand rather than of a general rise in consumer prices.

As a consequence of this interpretation, US long rates were at the same level in mid-November as they were at the beginning of the year (4.2% for 10 year Treasury bond) despite an estimated GDP growth of at least 4% for 2004 in real terms, and four successive hikes in interest rate by the Federal Reserve which raised the intervention rate



from 1% to 2%. At the same time, long rates in Europe fell by around 50 basis points (0.5%) thus highlighting the persisting gap between US and European growth.

The US Dollar remained weak during the major part of 2004. Despite an appreciation of the US currency against the Euro during the first half of the year when it moved from 1.29 to 1.18, it remained relatively stable in the 1.20 to 1.24 range until October when significant weakness again appeared and it broke

through its previous record low of January/February 2004.

Economic growth is expected to return to normal levels in 2005.
We expect economic growth to return to normal level in 2005 and should be close to the potential growth level in most developed countries. US growth is expected to reach at least 3% in real terms while in the Eurozone, economic conditions are expected to continue to improve gradually with GDP growth of around

Interest rates likely to come under tension

Despite an expected slowdown in the world economy for 2005, long rates are not yet at a level of equilibrium. The yield on 10-year is well below 4.5% while nominal growth is at least 5.5% i.e. GDP growth of a little more than 3% in real terms plus inflations of 2.5%. It is therefore likely that interest rates will tighten rates over coming months. Although the economic environment in continental Europe does not necessarily call a similar movement, it is possible that European long rates will follow, at least in part, the US example. The overall context therefore, calls for a certain amount of caution with regard to long bonds over coming months.

Turning to the equity markets, these seem attractive relative to the bond markets in terms of valuations

2%. A slowdown is likely to be more pronounced in Japan where, after a year driven by strong external demand in 2004, growth might fall from 4.2% to 2%. Although consumer prices are like to rise faster in coming months, inflation is anticipated to remain under control at around 2.5% in all the main developed countries. China appears to have managed to stabilize its growth and should continue to be a strong center of activity.

Under these conditions, earning growth will probably slow somewhat. Corporate earnings could suffer from a "scissors effect", with slower growth in sales and pressure that should remain moderate, on production costs. Thus, after reaching levels of 15% to 20% in the US and Europe this year, earning growth is likely to slow to between 8% and 12% in 2005.

Possible obstacles

Apart from geopolitical events, which are difficult to factor into a forecast, any major dollar crisis would also call the above markets scenario into questions. The large US deficits require a constant inflow of foreign capital, which a sudden fall in the dollar could bring to a halt.

Under present conditions however we think that such a crisis is unlikely. First, the US Federal Reserve will continue to tighten its money policy. At present dollar short rates are identical to euro short rates despite having been lower for more than three year. The interest rate differential is therefore less unfavorable to the dollar.

Second, Asian central banks wish to keep their currencies relatively weak against dollar and they will therefore continue to finance the US deficits over the coming months.

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial		
Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	185.6000	185.8200
Sterling Pound	356.8200	357.2400
Euro	249.7200	250.0200
Saudi Rial	49.4900	49.5500
Kuwaiti Dinar	629.7700	630.5200
UAE Dirhem	50.5300	50.5900
Egyptian Pound	29.8000	29.8400
Bahraini Dinar	492.2900	492.8700
Qatari Rial	51.0000	51.0600
Jordanian Dinar	261.7800	262.0900
Omani Rial	482.0800	482.6600
Swiss Franc	161.7900	161.9800
Swedish Crown	27.6900	27.7300
Japanese Yen	1.7862	1.7883

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

as compared to 2004, when the increased appetite for risk focused more on emerging market bonds rather than equities.

Price/earnings ratios on the main indices are at reasonable level on a historical basis, and a moderate rise in long bond yields could be absorbed. Like economic growth, the equity markets' performance could return to its historical level of around 10%.

Yemeni banks' foreign assets rise

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni banking apparatus' foreign assets has risen to one over trillion and 90 billion riyals, compared to over one trillion and 60 billion riyals at the end of last September. According to an official report published in al-Thawra newspaper economic supplement, the increase has totaled YR 29.2 billion.

The report says that the foreign assets of the Central Bank, during the same period, had rose to around trillion 23 billion riyals covering more than 16 months of imports, compared to nearly one trillion and two billion at the end of last September.

The report has also mentioned that the total amount of the unified budget of the commercial and Islamic banks has, at the end of October, reached 665 billion riyals with an increase of two per cent compared to September.

Foreign assets of those banks reached 909.2 million riyals whereas in September they amounted to more than 161 billion.

The report has also states that the total amount of monetary reserves has dropped by YR 1.8 billion at the end of last October to reach 99 billion riyals against 100.8 billion at the end of September.

A report issued by the Central Bank

mentioned that at the end of October, the total credit presented by private sector banks amounted to more than 178 billion riyals against 167 billion at the end of September.

As for treasury bonds and banking dealings operations with commercial banks, they have amounted to 149.9 billion riyals at the end of October, in comparison with 149.1 billion at the end of September. While on the other hand, the total amount of deposits at banks rose to 555.2 billion riyals

against 542.8 billions during the same period.

The report also added that the monetary supply had risen from 872.4 billion riyals at the end of September to 879.5 billions at the end of October. The report has also indicated that until the end of October 2004, the net of government debts registered a permanent asset of an amount of 42.4 billion riyals. Against that the debts of the private sector had risen to YR 179.7 billion.



Islamic Bank of Yemen, Sana'a

Slovenian magazine features Yemeni business opportunities

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A prestigious Slovenian business magazine, Podjetnik/The Entrepreneur (www.podjetnik.com) features in its December issue an exclusive and lengthy interview with Irena Kneht*, an economist, researcher and writer about business and investment opportunities and prospects in Yemen.

The magazine mentions a number of business and investment opportunities and other possibilities for cooperation between the two countries. It also lists Yemen as a country that is friendly to female entrepreneurs and investors.

Slovenia, the newest EU member, is located in the heart of Europe, and enjoyed an impressive 6.1 per cent economic growth during 2004. This growth was the result of extensive and efficient reform programs.

*Irena Kneht is an economist and writer residing in Yemen. She is also a regular contributor to Yemen Times and had written tens of articles in issues ranging from culture and society to economics and technology.



An interview with Dr. Wahi Faruq Luqman

Blind Yemeni woman has doctorate

BY REDHWAN AL-SAQQAF
ADEN BUREAU

Dr. Wahi Faruq Luqman is not only a Yemeni blind woman who attained doctorate, but she is the first blind person that got a high degree after Taha Hussien. Dr. Wahi is now a staff member in King Abdulaziz University in Judah, Saudia Arabia. She is a professor in Law Department, Faculty of Economics and Administration.

She lost her sight while being in the end of the preparatory stage. She didn't give up, but went on joining the secondary, university and higher studies until she obtained the doctorate. She is now the first blind woman with this degree in the Arab World. She stands now in lecture halls in a very confidant and qualified manner to make her dream come true.

"I noticed that the years were passing and the light of my eyes was getting weaker and weaker. I realized the truth that I would be threatened on any day, but rather at any time, by the loss of the most important sense Allah gifts His slaves."

These were the words that Dr. Wahi started her speech with. In an interview ran by Yemen Times, she started narrating the story of challenge with the loss of vision but not insight.

Following are edited excerpts from an interview with her.

Q: What is the real challenge in your life?

A: I started facing the new life and creating it as all people without weakening or surrendering. I announced challenging all troubles that might encounter me throughout my life. The real test for me was defeating weakness and turning it to success and adapting the requirements of new condition. My sight was weakening when I was 12 and I lost it completely when became 18. Then my father tried to treat me through some

doctors who looked for medicine, but all of them failed and confirmed my loss of sight.

Q: Can you tell us how your study started?

A: I studied in normal schools till the secondary level when I got the prize of the Ideal Student. I decided to go to university; I went to the Faculty of Law, Sana'a University in which I had the bachelor degree with an excellent grade. Many people advised me to stop studying and to be satisfied with what I got, but I traveled to Amman to do my M.A. program after two years and a half. I stood in front of the judgment committee to discuss "the exceptional conditions that take place in a contract after being signed" in 1991 in Jordan.

I went to Cairo to go on my scientific life, to discuss my doctorate in law about the responsibilities of managers of personal and shareholder companies in Cairo University in 1994. I got the doctorate in 1998.

All people appreciated that study which its discussion was attended by the president of the university who insisted on staying until announcing the result and congratulate me as the first Arab blind woman to attain this degree and a recommendation for exchanging it with other universities.

Since I was a child, I have been carrying a strong desire for self-satisfaction. When I lost my sight, I didn't like to be helped by others, I did my work myself.

Q: What was the way you implement in reading?

A: I rely on close people to read for me or I receive recorded tapes to listen to them. I am fond of reading in all fields; the worst time is when I want to read but I don't find a person to read for me. I don't consider this state a



Dr. Wahi Faruq Luqman

defect and I feel proud when I achieve a goal or accomplish something.

Q: What's after the doctorate? Your work now, as we know, is in King Abdulaziz University in Judah. Why have you chosen teaching?

A: My having chosen teaching is based on reasons. Of those reasons that direct me towards university teaching is my desire for research and study. The university is the place that allows its academic staff members to

do and publish researches. I have also the desire to benefit others through presenting knowledge that I have been learning for years to them. I feel extremely happy when I could send information for others. Not only that, I feel that Allah grants me a humble ability of oration. I deliver lectures without being assisted by papers while lecturing; this is a blessing from Allah.

Q: After joining the academic work, how much you are content with it?

A: I think this the best field that is suitable for me and my circumstances, since I have the ability of improvisation. The other works require movements from a place to another or mostly they are administrative works. Therefore, the academic work and joining the university staff was an individual satisfaction that was based on logical reasons as I think.

Q: Haven't you once thought about practicing the legal profession?

A: I didn't choose the legal profession because the doctorate makes me occupy a degree in the university achieving what I have been dreaming of. I didn't have tendency towards the legal profession but I don't mind, however, to present legal consultations. I like to be consulted and to consult others; I offer my view about any topic and another lawyer present it in the court.

Q: How do you evaluate the relationship between you and your university students and colleagues?

A: My relations with my colleagues are well and they treat me respectfully. I always receive cooperation and recognition from them showing the high morality they have. I can't describe that; in short, I felt after a very short period that I'm an old staff member in the faculty. I say their respect for me is great in hearts and my respect for them is greater in my heart.

Q: What are your ambitions?

A: My ambitions are galore; each one has their distinctive expectations in all fields of life. In the field of my work, I'm about to make new researches to have promotions. I am now an assistant professor and I hope to have the degree of associate professor and then professor doctor if Allah wills. I have also the desire to open an office for the legal consultations if the circumstances allow me to do so.

Q: What are the difficult and embarrassing situations that you encountered?

A: There are no embarrassing situations. There are no situations that insult either students or the staff.

There's a repeating situation that needs clarification; it's the situation

when I reveal that I'm blind. The majority of my acquaintances don't realize that by themselves at the beginning. They say that my eyes and movements are normal, I think that's also of Allah's blessings to me first and it is attributed to my dear guide and sister Rahmah. Her treatment with me makes me behave confidently.

There is another situation that is repeated in every semester, it's the situation when I am asked to introduce myself to the students explaining my circumstances. There's a positive reaction when doing that; I show them that I am sure of their cooperation with me. That's directly reflected in their treatment with me; there remain no barriers between us all.

Q: What is the way you use in preparing and delivering the classes and in making questions and marking them? Whom do you ask for help?

A: I depend on the special reader while preparing for classes and on some previous lectures of famous law doctors that were recorded for me before that. I listen to the books that were also recorded.

Regarding marking the tests, the special reader or Rahmah reads the answers for me with the punctuation mistakes they include and I put the mark accordingly.

Q: How do you spend your day inside the university campus?

A: I almost spend my time in the university in classes, I have 18-hour weekly schedule besides some office hours when I meet my students answering their questions. I meet my colleagues whether in my faculty or other faculties. All this take place with the help of Rahmah who doesn't depart me, control the class if necessary, taking the attendance and seeing other documents I may be obliged to look into. I don't forget to say that even other demonstrators help me in doing that.

Q: How do you spend you time outside the university?

A: I leave the university at 3 pm and I work in my office at home from 5 pm. I read newspapers and magazines and then I start preparing for the lectures of the coming day till 9. I share the family the important TV programs than I go to bed. At the weekend, I visit some relatives and friends and I practice some sport exercises.

Customs & traditions of marriage in Yemen

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Rituals, customs and traditions of marriage in Yemen vary from one area to another. The diverse geographical terrains of Yemen have their influence on diversifying marriage-related activities.

Generally, customs and traditions of marriage seem to be similar in most of the Yemeni cities, as it starts with engagement.

The groom usually sends one of his relatives to the family of the girl he wants to be engaged to.

When the family of the girl consents, an date will be assigned for the bridegroom to bring his parents and some relatives to visit and see the girl and her parents.

Relatives of the groom usually carry with them some presents to the bride-to-be and some bunches of qat as a social habit associating such occasions.

Presents given to the bride differ from one place to another. A box of gold containing earrings, armlets as well as a sum of money is to be given to the family of the fiancée as an evidence of engagement.

Afterwards, the bride's father invites his neighbors to attend the engagement session in order to assign an appointment for the marriage contract.

During the period between the engagement and the wedding party, the fiancé makes visits and offers different kinds of presents to his fiancée.

At the bride's home, the marriage dowry (a certain sum of money) is due



A groom carrying his sword among fans celebrating merrily his marriage

to be agreed between the two parties, and many bags of sweets will be offered to the host of attendants and the relatives of the bride as well.

Marriage rituals go on according to the facilities of the groom and many families prepare the feast at their home one day before the wedding party.

The evening prior to the wedding party witnesses that many friends of the groom dye his hands with henna.

On her wedding day, the bride wears a certain kind of clothes and this varies from one area to another; she seems to be covered entirely from her head to her feet. Besides, the bride is decorated with henna in various attractive forms.

The bride does not uncover her face until she arrives at the home of groom in the evening of the wedding party. After the bride's arrival, a huge ceremony will be organized including different kinds of dances and sings. The ceremony of men is separated from that of women.

On the following day, the bride goes to a beauty salon to organize her hair, dyes many parts of her body, wears a white dress and then immediately moves to the wedding hall. A number of invited women will be there in the hall before the bride's arrival.

On the other hand, the groom goes to another hall a long with a great number

of invited men. After the fall night prayer, the groom moves to stand in front of his house surrounded by all the invited and a band of singers for almost one hour.

On the day following the wedding party, the groom makes a visit to his father-in-law and mother-in-law to shake hands with them.

In some areas, the mother of the bride holds a ceremony for her daughter at her home.

In the western parts of Yemen such as Tihama, some traditions like the circumcision of the bride and the groom accompanies the wedding rituals.



The Filipino Community in Yemen
P.O. Box 22037
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Registration No. 07-001Y Series of 2004
Registered at the Philippine Embassy
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Filipino Community in Yemen (TFCY) celebrated its Pre-Christmas and New Year at the Taj Sheba Hotel on 16 December 2004.

We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude for the positive response and support to make this party a memorable one. The celebration of this festive event was successfully attended and participated by a number of people from different nationality.

The following list of sponsor made the event possible:

- Yemen Times
- Marib Cargo
- Occidental Petroleum
- Yemen Catering Services
- Technohaus
- DCC Compan
- Al Garasi Company
- Qatar Airways
- Canadian Nexen
- Nabors Drilling
- S&B International
- Taj Sheba Hotel
- Al Gharash Trading

TFCY congratulates the winner of Major Prizes Round Trip Ticket from Qatar Airways

1. Mr. Larry Santa Maria
2. Mr. Manny

Protection of the Environment in Yemen

By MARIT MANN AND MIRCO FRITSCHKE
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

While many people criticise the government for its record of environmental protection, the legal steps taken by the environment have passed unfortunately largely unnoticed.

Article 35 of Yemen's Constitution says that "the protection of the environment is the responsibility of the state and the society, and a national and religious obligation of every citizen." However, the constitution is not the only source for environmental law in Yemen. The Qur'an itself commands the preservation of the environment, and scarce resources. On the international level, Yemen is party to various conventions on habitat and biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land, waste and energy management.

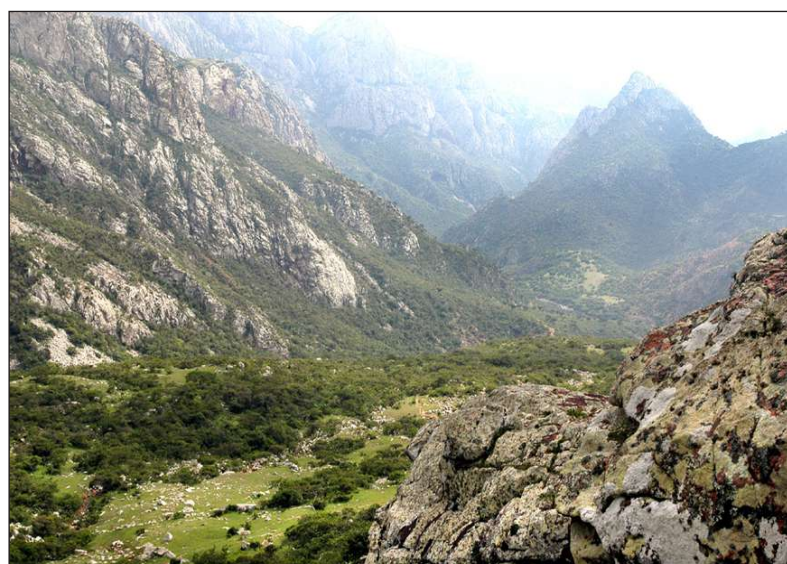
On the national level, protection of the environment is provided for in the Environment Protection Law, issued on 29 October 1995. This law, though largely unknown even among government officials, is an important

tool for the administration for preserving the environment and securing natural resources for the future of Yemen.

While the law on the one hand stresses the obligation of individuals, public and private institutions as well as of the authorities, to protect the environment and natural resources, to control pollution and to conserve wildlife and the marine ecosystem, it also establishes the right of every individual to live in a healthy and balanced environment. It provides rules concerning the protection of water and soil, the use of pesticides, marine pollution, on environmentally damaging activities and on the compensation for environmental damages.

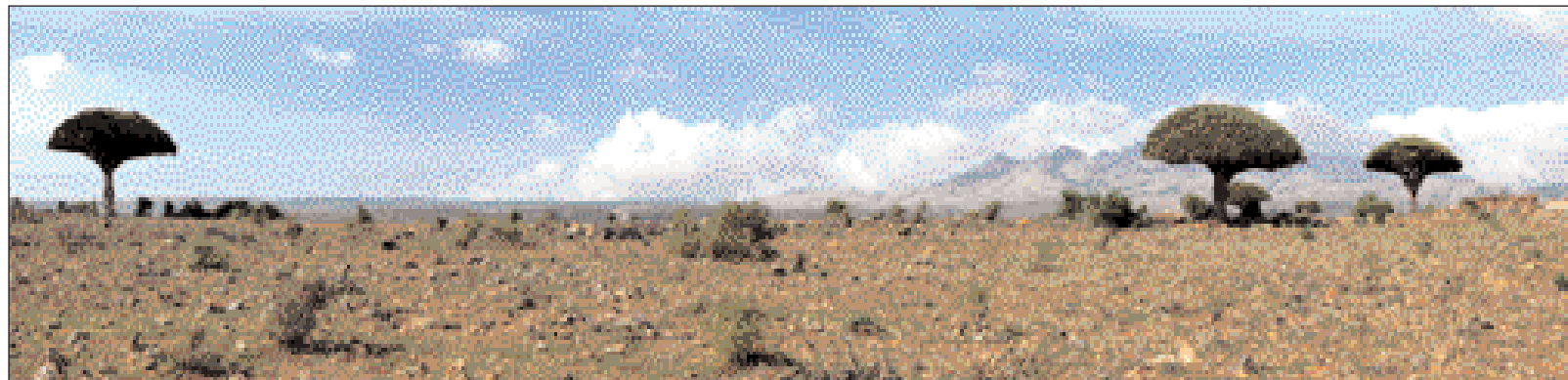
The most important innovation of the Yemeni Environmental Protection Law is the Environmental Impact Assessment, which is compulsory for all projects that are potentially a source of pollution or detrimental environmental impact. The Assessment is carried out by an independent contractor, and has to be approved by the Environment Protection Authority before the project can be carried out.

Another important aspect of the Yemeni Environment Protection Law



is that it establishes liability for damages to the environment. This liability includes the costs for the elimination of the damage, compensation for damage of property and a compensation for damage to the environment. Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge of environmental regulations and the lack of cooperation between the concerned bodies hinders the enforcement of the Environment Protection Law fully. Even government projects are often carried

out without an Environmental Impact Assessment, though the Ministry of Water and Environment does its best to promote and secure application of the law. An improved inter-ministerial cooperation and increased awareness of the law amongst key agencies and judicial staff are necessary to assure the protection of the environment, which is essential for both the economic development and the improvement of the standard of living in Yemen.



A photo for Socotra Island in which the dragon blood trees are standing with pride for a long time

Al-Ahli Modern Hospital inaugurated

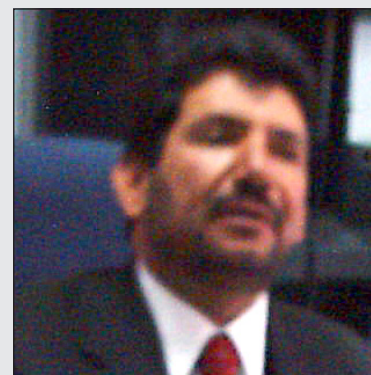
By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A- Under the auspices of Al-Shura Council Chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani and Secretary General of the Capital Ahmad Al-Kuhlani, Al-Ahli Modern Hospital was inaugurated Dec. 26.

On their arrival, Al-Shura Council Chairman and Secretary General of the Capital were received by Dr. Hamid Zeyad Chairman of the Board at the hospital, Dr. Abdulqawi Al-Shamiri General Manager and a number of doctors and employees working for the hospital.

Abdulziz Abdulghani along with Al-Kuhlani toured the different wings of the hospital, which consists of five storeys plus a basement.

Ahmad Al-Kuhlani pointed out that private-sector hospitals help lessen the burden on public facilities and offer good health services for patients traveling from all over the country.



Dr. Hamid Zeyad Chairman of the Board of Directors at the hospital.

Dr. Hamid Zeyad Chairman of the Board commented that "95 per cent of [the hospital's] staff are Yemeni nationals and only five per cent are from other countries.

We are trying to convince patients that high quality medical facilities and varied health services are all available with lower prices and there is no need for traveling abroad to receive treatment."

The five-storey building has a causality wing for males and another one for females plus X-ray and C.T. Scan units in the basement.



Al-Shura Council Chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani (R) and Secretary General of the Capital Ahmad Al-Kuhlani viewing the facilities in one of the diagnostic units.

JOB VACANCIES



Oxfam GB is looking for dynamic candidates to work as part of the Oxfam Yemen team to provide support in the implementation, delivery and management of the "Integrated Action on Poverty and Early Marriage" Project funded by the Danish Government for the period of 4 years 2005 – End 2008. The vacancies are as follow: -

1- Job Title: Project Manager

Key Competencies and requirements:

- University degree in social sciences or related fields.
- Proven knowledge, skills and experience in programmes/projects' management including human and financial management skills.
- Proven working experience in programme's related to women's economic and social empowerment.
- Research and training experience in gender issues.
- Well-developed writing skills in both Arabic and English.
- Strong analytical and advocacy skills.
- Action oriented, with the spirit of changing obstacles into opportunities.
- Strategic coherence thinking.
- Ability to work in a team and consult with a wide range of staff and alliance at different levels.
- Ability to travel to the field and outside Yemen.
- Flexibility, responsiveness and sensitivity to the needs of the local context and culture and listening and supportive attitude
- Ability to monitor and support national staff to build local capacity
- Excellent communication and leadership skills

2- Job Title: Livelihood Programme officer

Key Competencies and requirements:

- University degree in social sciences or related fields.
- Experience in and knowledge of livelihood issues in Yemen from a gender perspective
- Experience on management of projects/ programmes related to women's economic empowerment
- Proven knowledge on national policies related to

women's access to the market and employment.

- Ability to network and link widely with CSOs and government bodies working on women's economic opportunities and employment.
- Strong understanding of local socio-economic development issues, institutions and communities.
- At least 2 years of related mid-level project management experience, preferably with national/international organizations working for women's economic empowerment.
- Commitment to equal opportunities and the promotion of gender equity in all aspects of Oxfam's work.
- High degree of personal organisation, self-sufficiency and initiative.
- Demonstrable analytical, project appraisal, monitoring, impact assessment and reporting abilities;
- Research and training experience in gender issues.
- Well-developed writing skills in both Arabic and English.
- Ability to work in a team and consult with a wide range of staff and alliance at different levels.
- Ability to travel to the field and outside Yemen.
- Excellent communication and leadership skills.

3- Job Title: Field Coordinator (Hudaidah)

Key Competencies and requirements:

- University degree in social sciences or related fields.
- Experience in and knowledge of project implementation and monitoring.
- Experience on community projects, community mobilization and networking.
- Proven knowledge of the poverty context and women's situation in Hudaidah.
- Ability to network and link widely with CSOs and local government bodies working on poverty and women's

related issues.

- At least 2 years of related mid-level project coordination experience, preferably with national/international organizations in Hudaidah.
- Commitment to equal opportunities and the promotion of gender equity in all aspects of Oxfam's work.
- High degree of personal organization, self-sufficiency and initiative.
- Demonstrable coordination, monitoring and reporting abilities;
- Well-developed writing skills in Arabic (English is an advantage).
- Ability to work in a team and consult with a wide range of staff and alliance at local levels.
- Ability to travel to rural areas in Hudaidah and outside Yemen.
- Excellent communication and leadership skills

NB: Preference will be given for candidates based in Hudaidah

4- Job Title: Field Coordinator (Sayoun)

Key Competencies and requirements:

- University degree in social sciences or related fields.
- Experience in and knowledge of project implementation and monitoring.
- Experience on community projects, community mobilization and networking.
- Proven knowledge of the poverty context and women's situation in Sayoun.
- Ability to network and link widely with CSOs and local government bodies working on poverty and women's related issues.
- At least 2 years of related mid-level project coordination

experience, preferably with national/international organizations in Sayoun.

- Commitment to equal opportunities and the promotion of gender equity in all aspects of Oxfam's work.
- High degree of personal organization, self-sufficiency and initiative.
- Demonstrable coordination, monitoring and reporting abilities;
- Well-developed writing skills in Arabic (English is an advantage).
- Ability to work in a team and consult with a wide range of staff and alliance at local levels.
- Ability to travel to rural areas in Sayoun and outside Yemen.
- Excellent communication and leadership skills

NB: Preference will be given for candidates based in Sayoun

5- Job Title: Project Accountant

Key Competencies and requirements:

- University degree in accounting.
- Ability to implement office and finance systems
- Procedural and legal knowledge on various administrative and finance functions especially pertaining to the NGO sector
- Ability to handle administrative and finance matters and work to deadlines
- Ability to work with others and as part of the team
- Good Arabic and English writing skills
- Knowledge and skills in computer usage
- Willingness and fitness to travel for sustained periods of time
- Willingness and eagerness to learn about organizational and financial procedures.

Please send a copy of your CV latest by 15th January 2005 and clearly state on your covering letter the job you are applying for. Any covering letter which does not mention the job reference/title will not be considered.

The Country Programme Manager, Oxfam GB
Yemen P.O. Box 1045, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Fax no: 01 445 650 Or email:
melsanousi@oxfam.org.uk and habass@oxfam.org.uk

Oxfam GB is a development, relief, and campaigning organisation dedicated to finding lasting solutions to poverty and suffering around the world. We believe that every human being is entitled to a life of dignity and opportunity; and we work with poor communities, local partners, volunteers, and supporters to help this become a reality.

Chelsea face tough away tie

LONDON (Reuters) - Premier League leaders Chelsea visit in-form Portsmouth today while Arsenal and Manchester United also have tricky away trips in the middle of a busy holiday fixture list.

Second-placed Arsenal travel to Newcastle on Wednesday and United play Aston Villa the previous day in what will be the second match of four in nine days for some top-flight sides.

Portsmouth beat Crystal Palace 1-0

only shown glimpses of his skills for Manchester United since his 27 million pound move from Everton.

United have won seven on the bounce at home but have dropped vital points away and badly miss striker Ruud van Nistelrooy, who is out for at least six weeks.

Tenth-placed Villa were forced to field several youngsters at Chelsea because of injuries, which could aid United.

ed the need for defensive reinforcements, the Arsenal clash comes too early for the January sales.

Bolton will be looking to end a run of five league defeats when they entertain local rivals Blackburn Rovers and Tottenham will fancy their chances of extending their winning streak to six league games at home to third-bottom Crystal Palace.

Liverpool host Southampton and Middlesbrough, a point above them in



Premier League leaders Chelsea visit in-form Portsmouth on Tuesday while Arsenal and Manchester United also have tricky away trips in the middle of a busy holiday fixture list. REUTERS

away on Sunday in Velimir Zajec's first game in permanent charge and have lost only once in six league matches since Harry Redknapp left in November.

Chelsea laboured to beat Villa 1-0 at Stamford Bridge at the weekend to stay five points clear and they will have to contend with Fratton Park's trademark swirling cold wind on Tuesday.

Dutch winger Arjen Robben set up Damien Duff for the only goal against Villa and the buy of the season so far will continue to worry defences with his control and direct running.

In contrast Wayne Rooney, the campaign's most expensive purchase before January's transfer window, has

Surprise package

Third-placed Everton won by the one goal again on Sunday and this season's surprise package, stuck in a relegation fight last term, also have a tough away day at Charlton Athletic, who have won five home games this campaign.

Arsenal appear to have recovered from the blip that followed the end of their 49-match unbeaten league run and have the luxury of an extra day off before taking on a stuttering Newcastle who remain a difficult proposition at home.

Manager Graeme Souness is struggling to find any consistency at Newcastle and while he has pinpoint-

fifth, play struggling Norwich. Manchester City entertain bottom side West Brom, who were thumped 5-0 at home by Liverpool on Sunday while Birmingham visit Fulham.

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French Spiderman climbs world's tallest building

TAIPEI, Dec 25 (Reuters) - Daredevil climber Alain Robert, known as the French Spiderman, defied stiff winds and rain to climb the world's tallest skyscraper, Taipei 101, in the Taiwan capital on Saturday.

Robert, dressed in a red rain jacket, tights and climbing shoes, shimmied up ropes hung down the sides of the 101-storey, 508-metre (1,667-foot) office tower, reaching the top in around 4 hours.

"It was a very big moment and I felt a lot of satisfaction as I was already so tired and nearly all of my muscles were painful. I felt completely

relieved," said Robert after taking the ride down in one of the tower's lifts, the world's fastest.

Several hundred onlookers and shoppers gathered at the base of the tower watching and cheering Robert's progress via live images beamed onto a large television screen.

At times he disappeared from view as clouds whipped past the top of the tower enveloping the upper levels.

The 42-year-old Frenchman has scaled scores of well-known structures around the world including the Empire State Building and the Eiffel Tower — often without permission or any safety equipment or ropes.

This time Robert was wearing a harness attached to safety ropes for the entire climb. He used the ropes to pull himself up most of the way, using his hands and feet to climb up the walls for only short sections.

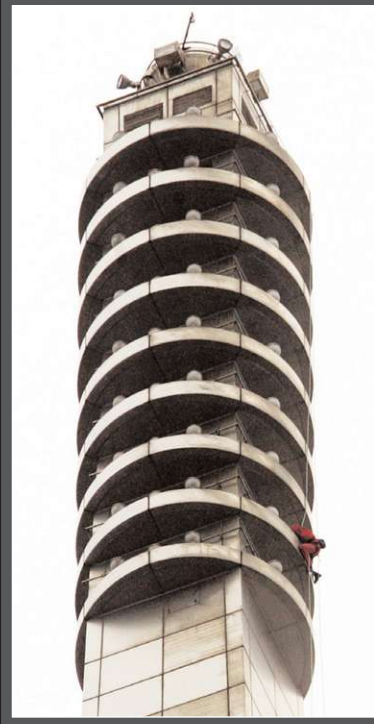
"Everybody knows me throughout the world for my ascents climbing free solo without using safety devices, just with my bare hands, but this time the game was a bit different," Robert said.

Robert said the management had requested he wear the ropes and safety equipment, which had also become necessary due to rain making the windows and frames very slippery.

Robert said he was hopeful of returning to attempt the climb without any ropes.

The \$1.7 billion Taipei 101 last year surpassed the twin Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, which Robert has also scaled, as the world's tallest building.

The shopping mall at the base of Taipei 101 has already opened for business, but the building will be officially opened on New Year's eve.



The tallest skyscraper, in the Taiwan capital. REUTERS



French "Spiderman" Alain Robert climbs Taipei 101, the world's tallest skyscraper, in the Taiwan capital Dec. 25. REUTERS

French coach Domenech leaves door open for Pires return

PARIS, Dec 28 (Reuters) - French coach Raymond Domenech says his dispute with Robert Pires is over and the Arsenal midfielder would be welcome back in his squad.

Pires began the row in October when he slammed Domenech's strategy as unclear and bitterly complained after he was replaced at the interval of the 2-0 victory over Cyprus in a World Cup qualifying match.

Pires, France's most capped player of the squad with 79 appearances, said that he felt uneasy with Domenech and accused the coach of treating the players like schoolboys.

Domenech responded by leaving Pires out of France's last match of the year against Poland in Paris in November.

"I don't have to forgive Robert for anything. If I did, it would mean that I have been hurt by his comments," Domenech said in an interview in sports daily L'Equipe published on Tuesday.

"I don't make up my mind about someone from what he says but from what he does," Domenech said. "And there is no reason for Pires not to make his comeback."

"When you are in charge of a national team you can't rule out someone for irrelevant excuses. I'm not a resentful character. I can't do this."

Domenech said he has not blacklisted any players, including striker Nicolas Anelka who has not played for France since he snubbed a late call-up from former coach Jacques Santini in November 2002.

Best players

"I'm looking for the best players I can have on my side. It is obvious that those who belong to top clubs, those who take

part in the Champions League, have an advantage when it comes to me setting up a list for an international," he said.

In an assessment of his first six months at the head of France squad, Domenech said he was neither happy nor disappointed by the team's performances.

The French are on an unbeaten run of six matches but they have only won two, against the Faroe Islands and Cyprus.

They were eliminated by Greece in the quarter-finals of the European Championship in Portugal in June under his predecessor Jacques Santini.

France have only scored five goals and conceded two from six games. They are level with Ireland and Israel in their qualifying group for the 2006 World Cup.

"I certainly should have taken more time to explain to everyone what my strategy was, what my ideas were," he said. "I should have set up more individual interviews with the players."

"But what is certain is that I know where I want to go and what I want to achieve. My stare is eastbound; towards Germany."

"I want everyone to realise that they have to work to qualify France for the next World Cup," he said.

Domenech called again on fans for patience, stressing that such influential players as retired Zinedine Zidane, Lilian Thuram and Marcel Desailly could not be replaced quickly.

"We are building up a new team. Things are getting better now. But it takes time and time is what we don't have much of."

It is worth mentioning that France will host Sweden in a friendly match in February in Paris.

Security among many risks for Dakar racers

DAKAR, Dec 28 (Reuters) - Ronn Bailey is a computer security expert but he is worrying more about low-tech threats when he takes part in the Dakar rally.

Like all the participants, the American millionaire adventurer is well aware that two stages of the 2004 rally were cancelled because of a planned attack by Islamic militants.

This month authorities in Mauritania said they had arrested a man with links to al Qaeda who was planning to attack Americans taking part in the 2005 rally, which begins this New Year's Eve in Barcelona and ends in Dakar on Jan. 16.

Wiretaps revealed the suspect was in touch with people connected to Osama Bin Laden's network in Saudi Arabia, according to officials in the Muslim West African country which is due to host six stages of the ultimate off-road rally.

The U.S. embassy has issued a note telling all Americans involved in the rally to exercise "special caution".

Bailey and his team, Vanguard Racing, have also been advised not to display any American flags or symbols on their custom-built vehicle.

"So we're not doing anything of that nature — we're not painting any bullseyes on our car," Bailey joked in a telephone interview from his staging base in Paris last week.

But the first-time Dakar participant knows the risks he runs could be serious. The final document he signed before leaving the United States was his last will and testament.

"There's a possibility that something could happen and I just considered it to be proper to put the right things in place so that it wouldn't be such a burden on my family and on my employees if something should happen," he explained.

That said, Bailey is most worried about the normal hazards that go with a gruelling course of more than 8,000 km (5,000 miles) which includes driving over Sahara dunes in blazing heat.

"I'm more concerned about the straightforward risk," said Bailey, whose previous adventures include driving a motorbike inside the Arctic Circle.

"I believe the number one risk, real-

ly, is dehydration."

Organizers sanguine

The organisers of the race, which began life 26 years ago as the Paris-Dakar rally but no longer starts from the French capital, believe the security threat is lower this time.

The Islamic militant group behind the threat in 2004, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, has been attacked by security forces in Mali and Niger and a rebel group in Chad.

The group's number two was captured by Chadian rebels in March and later handed over to his native Algeria.

"I believe some elements remain, very widely dispersed in the vast Sahara, of course, which is very difficult to control," said Etienne Lavigne, the race's director of organisation.

"But in the region where we are going," he added, "there is no concern at all."

The route for the 2005 rally snakes down from Spain through Morocco and stays on the western side of the Sahara desert in Mauritania and Mali before heading for the Atlantic coast and then finishing in the Senegalese capital.

Lavigne says he is in regular contact with authorities in Paris, where the secret service played a central role in foiling last year's plot in former French colony Mali, and the governments of the host countries to discuss security risks.

He insists the recent arrest in Mauritania should be seen as a good sign rather than a cause for concern.

"That reassures me more than it worries me because it shows the authorities have the means and the capacity to detect internal threats," he said.

Lavigne also points out that the host governments of countries such as Mali and Mauritania, which rarely get the chance to present themselves to a large international audience, have a big interest in ensuring the event goes smoothly.

"They are very sensitive to the fact that if there are threats, that's bad for them too. So they are very keen to ensure security for the Dakar," he said.

Ronn Bailey and the other competitors, racing through the emptiness of the Sahara, will be hoping he is right.

England openers crack 273

DURBAN (Reuters) - Marcus Trescothick and Andrew Strauss shared an opening partnership of 273 to earn England the lead and turn the tables in the second test against South Africa.

England were 281 for one in their second innings on the third day, 88 ahead, when bad light ended play 11 overs early.

Andrew Strauss was 132 not out after batting for more than six hours, facing 272 balls and hitting 16 fours.

South Africa scored 332 in their first innings in reply to England's total of 139, a lead of 193.

Trescothick made 132 in almost six hours at the crease in which he faced 261 balls and hit 20 fours and two sixes.

Trescothick and Strauss's partnership was the fifth-highest in England's history.

It was Strauss's fourth century in his ninth test and Trescothick's ninth in his 56th match.

The pair have now shared four century partnerships and each time they have forged past 150.

Tuesday's effort, their highest, also meant Trescothick and Strauss have become the 12th pair of England openers to share 1,000 runs in tests.

England resumed on 30 without loss and South Africa were armed with a ball just 11 overs old.

Violent Thunderstorm

A violent thunderstorm on Monday night was expected to change the character of the steadily flattening pitch.

The westerly wind that blew the storm in also provided cloud cover that should have helped the bowlers to swing the ball.

However, it was soon apparent that the pitch would probably be at its best so far in the match for batting.

Fast bowlers Makhaya Ntini and Shaun Pollock each began the day with a maiden over, but the batsmen were not tested and were able to settle on their own terms.

Strauss went to his fourth half-century in the 16th over of the day and two overs later Trescothick raised his bat to acknowledge the applause for his 25th half-century.

Their centuries came five balls apart before tea with Trescothick straight driving Ntini for four and Strauss sweeping spinner Nicky Boje for a single.

Neither opener was put under pressure by a South African attack that



Marcus Trescothick sweeps a delivery watched by South African wicket keeper AB de Villiers (L) and slip Jacques Kallis (C) during England's second innings against at Kingsmead in Durban on day three of the second Test December 28, 2004. REUTERS

failed to bowl with penetration. South Africa conceded the superiority of the batsmen over their pace attack

by introducing Boje in the 21st over of the innings. The breakthrough came in the fifth

over before the enforced close when Trescothick edged a delivery from Pollock and was easily caught behind.

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Socotra 2000

Czech developmental cooperation

The Czech Republic is one of the countries giving developmental assistance. On Sunday 19th December 2004 the presentation of bilateral Czech Project Socotra 2000 „Creating an ecological network and agroforestry, education and cultural doorway for sustainable development of Socotra Island (Republic of Yemen)” was realized in Sanaa.

Representatives of EPA MOWE, University of Sanaa – Faculty of Science, Czech Embassy and other guests took part in it.

The Czech team was represented by following experts: ecologists and zoologists Prof. V. Bejcek and Prof. K. Stasny, geologist Prof. F. Fediuk and coordinator of the project Ing. B. Prazan.

The Czech government gave by the Czech Project Socotra 2000 starting in 1999 the help realized on Socotra in spheres ecology, ecotourism, education, biodiversity and after prolongation of the project also in water management, liquidation and recycling of waste waters.



A panoramic scene of the ocean meeting the beach of Socotra

This help was realized by delivering two pilot waste water treatment plants (WWTP) for the complex EPA Socotra Branch and for new Hospital 22nd May in Hadibo.

In the frames of the activities Education the Czech team created the Permanent Exhibition „Nature of Socotra”. This exhibition is placed in two rooms of the Environmental Education Centre in the

building of EPA Socotra Branch in Hadibo. It is the first small museum not only on Socotra but in whole Republic of Yemen. 26 showcases are full of a lot of snaps nad 3D exhibits (birds and insects).

This exhibition demonstrates the interests of the government of the Republic of Yemen in the protection of Socotra as the important world nature heritage. It serves

for educational reasons not only for children, but also for adults.

In the frame of ecological net 7 invertebrate species were published for science as a new, other 17 species are waiting to be described against as a new for world science. The Czech team recorded the first time 4 new bird species: Darter, Herring Gull, Armenian Gull and Tuffed Duck. Bird are often used for bioindication of the environment.

Therefore bird communities were studied in 34 habitat types. The highest species diversity and population density were in bird communities inhabiting various types of forest habitats.

These communities are characterized by the high proportion of endemic species and subspecies.

On the other hand considerable simplification occurs in types of environment permanently disturbed by anthropogenic influences-especially overgrazed areas. Migrating and wintering species are usual components of these areas.



Socotra Island is home to rare species of birds, animals and plants

We created the maps of breeding bird distributions on Socotra (in quadrate grid 10 by 10 km) and also the maps of migrating and wintering species.

All zoological results will be published in the journal „Fauna of Arabia”.

17 ecoroutes in the most interesting parts of Socotra Island were created. Their orientation is created by the points according to the GPS. They are

supplemented by the way of movement, description of itinerary, nature rarities, timetable, strenuousness, and photodocumentation.

10 wetlands were suggested for the protection according to special criterias by Ramsar convention. They are unique ecosystems which host characteristic flora and fauna and serve as important sources of freshwater.

Published by YT in cooperation with FES

New Book on free media and development

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

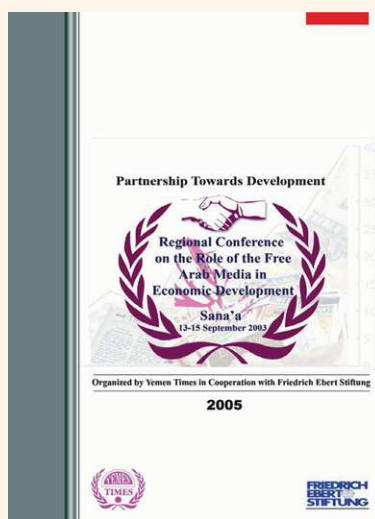
A book entitled "Partnership Towards Development: The Role of the Free Arab Media in Economic Development" has been published by Yemen Times in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and is due for distribution in early 2005.

The book is a compilation of the working papers presented during the regional conference on the same topic held in Sana'a in September 2003. It mainly focuses on the potential role that the free Arab media should play to assist government's implement

economic reforms needed to achieve economic prosperity and comprehensive development.

The book contains 13 working papers on topics such as the importance of support from the free media for development, how to make Arab media more active in economic growth, assisting media to tackle corruption and promote economic prosperity, and economic journalism and its impact on investments and growth.

Mr. Walid Al-Saqqaf, Editor-in-Chief of Yemen Times said that the initiative of the book was to discuss the role of the free media in assisting Arab countries manage their financial reforms and boost economic growth.



"We have chosen the motto 'Partnership Towards Development' due to our deep understanding that Arab governments and media could join hands and work collaboratively together to help pinpoint corruption, inefficiencies, mismanagement, and hence correct them leading to a more stable and progressive economy."

"The initiative to publish such a book is considered a pioneering step in the region and is expected to bring to the attention of decision-makers the need to look at media as potential associates that could help and not as enemies who are unconcerned with what is happening in the Arab world," he concluded.

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