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Medicine needed: PM

By MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajamal says that Yemen's economy is sick and has to have medication, even if it is bitter and sour.

Bajamal who was speaking at a press conference Saturday stressed that his government is committed to carry out on the economic reform package, adding that price reform is very necessary to avoid any further deterioration and is meant against corrupt crooks.

Bajamal who was expected to comment on the price hikes of the oil derivatives which have been the main talk of the people recently did not say clearly when this step would be commenced.

He rather went on praising the steps taken by his government despite the criticism of the World Bank.

He said that the situation after the

civil war of 1994 was very bad where the inflation rate soared to 77% , budget deficit 17% and unemployment 33%.

He pointed out that price reforms will be coincided with some reforms in the financial aspect like the customs system as well as the local governance, adding that some ministries and other government institutions would be restructured.

Meanwhile, according to UPI, Yemen's ruling General Popular Congress party accused the opposition of stirring anti-government sentiment in a dispute over economic reforms.

A party source charged Saturday the "misleading campaigns carried out by the so called opposition parties against the government are aimed at inciting strife and violence."

The source accused the eight opposition parties represented in parliament of "being the symbols of corruption"

Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajamal says the government won't back down from price hikes. (Yemen Times photo)

and of opposing imminent economic reforms "for personal reasons and interests."

Meanwhile, this comes as opposition members of parliament boycotted the vote on the 2005 state budget, which passed two days ago by a majority of the

ruling party, the General People's Congress. The boycott was a protest of the anticipated economic dose and a symbol of the opposition's rejection of the proposed cuts in the government fuel subsidy and other basic commodities.

UK embassy to remain closed until Tuesday

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The UK embassy in Sana'a is to remain closed due to security concerns probably until next Tuesday, a reliable source at the embassy told Yemen Times.

The embassy had suspended services last Wednesday following a warning of potential terrorist attacks against Western targets in the country.

"We remain closed probably until Tuesday. However, the suspension of the services might be prolonged," the source said without giving any further information.

"There is a high threat from terrorism. As of January 6th, there is specific information that terrorists are in the final stages of planning attacks against British targets and other Western interests in Yemen," said an updated advisory issued on January 7.

Britain has urged around 200 British nationals living in Yemen to be vigilant in places frequented by foreigners.

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New report addresses ...

Yemen's suffering kids

Yemen's children are among those at risk of global trafficking problems. (Yemen Times photo by Peter Willems)

By PETER WILLEMS
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Millions of people, mostly women and children, are trafficked around the world each year, and local officials are now trying to get a pulse on how many are from Yemen.

Forced labor, begging and sexual exploitation are the experiences of some 1.2 million children trafficked annually, according to The International Labor Organization's 2003 report.

"There is absolutely a child traffic problem in Yemen. What we are doing now is trying to survey those districts

and see whatever we can do there," said Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Managing Director of the Social Fund for Development during a two-day conference on the issue that began Jan. 8.

Last spring, UNICEF released a study that showed half the African countries see trafficking of people as a serious problem. The United Nations estimates that the growth of worldwide child trafficking now rivals other illegal

businesses, such as the sale of drugs and weapons.

Although a lot of work needs to be done to deal with child trafficking in Yemen, some see the conference, the first ever here, and the study it released, as important steps of tackling the problem.

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109 MPs are absent from vote

2005 budget approved

BY MOHAMMAD BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Parliament approved the 2005 general budgets of state on Jan. 5.

That included the central authority, the local authority and projects of independent and additional budgets as well as special funds and the budgets of the economic units for the financial year 2005.

The majority of votes, that is 161 members, approved the budget, including 25 members from the opposition, but six from a total number of 192 attending members boycotted, while 109 were absent from the session.

The overall amount of the general budget revenues for the financial year 2005 were estimated at \$ 4.1 billion, but that's short of expenses, so the budget deficit was estimated at \$ 400.6 million.

The Parliament also issued a number of recommendations to be fulfilled by the government along with the 2005 budget

approval.

They include:

- Establishing economic policies to concentrate on growing the alternatives of exhausted oil resources in the promising and renewed economic sectors, including fisheries, tourism, and exploitation of natural gas in the local consumption as well seeking external markets for exporting them.

- Reconsidering the financial, tender and purchase laws and the uniformed accounting system so as to overcome the current shortcomings.

- Reconsidering the law of the Central Organization for Control and Auditing to ensure its effectiveness and monitoring role according to the international, transparency and interrogating criteria.

- Establishing a stock market as an alternative for the policy of treasury bonds.

- Completing the establishment of the medical centers related to the treatment of

heart diseases, cancer and kidney failure, equipping civic and military hospitals with modern facilities, and training their staff with the aim to limit the rate of traveling abroad for treatment.

- Reducing the rate of external loans.
- Taking strict procedures to prevent the phenomenon of customs and tax smuggling and to control the land and sea outlets.

- Reducing the rate of current expenditures and increasing the rate of investment-related expenditures.

- Working hard for the purpose of upgrading education standards and scientific acquisition through developing the educational aids.

- Lessening the customs' fees in all the imported goods and providing additional resources for the social insurance network.

- Exercising the principle of reward and punishment as well as interrogating corrupts and violators.

Iman University files suit against PGC

Tuesday, Jan. 8- The Eman University files a suit against the People's General Congress (PGC), the ruling party because it published in its website on Dec.30 2004 lies and fabrications that harms its reputation along with its Rector Sheikh Abdulmajeed Al-Zandani.

The university issued a report on Jan.1 2005 denying all what has been done by the PGC and resorted to the judiciary.

Al-Zandani's Office stated that Sheikh Al-Zandani behaves in a transparent and civilized way and realizes that such fabrications should be closely

investigated.

According to Al-Zandani, the judiciary is the only way to follow in order to proceed against some media means that seem to be unaccountable for their wrongdoings.

The University denounced such acts that interfere with the human dignity and occasion conflicts among people.

The university officials call on seniors at the PGC to order to prevent their recruits at the website from behaving in this way. They added that the website is thought of as a media outlet of the ruling party, so, it should abide by regulations of the Yemeni judiciary.

Japan-funded schools in Taiz and Ibb completed

Ceremonies to celebrate the completion of 30 schools built by Japanese Assistance in various areas of Taiz and Ibb Governorates were held today. The Government of Japan provided 11 million US dollars of grant assistance to the Government of Yemen to help achieve MDGS in the field of basic education. By use of this Japanese grant aid, 13 schools have been already built in Taiz Governorate and 17 schools are newly completed in Taiz and Ibb Governorates.

Japan's assistance to Yemen in the field of education is not limited to

building schools. It is extended to the field of capacity building for increasing girls' school-enrollment. Taiz Governorate has been chosen as a priority area for this new project.

Mr. Yuichi Ishii, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Yemen, H.E. Mr. Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi, Minister of Education, Mr. Mohammed Al-Haj, Vice Governor of Taiz/Secretary General of the Local Council, Mr. Amin Al-Warafi, Vice Governor of Ibb/Secretary General of the Local Council and other officials attended the ceremonies.

Training for medical supervisors

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A training course organized by School Service Administration wrapped up at Ne'emah Rasam School recently.

The course, financed by the Social Fund for Development (SFD), targeted the medical supervisors in Taiz schools. It was attended by 76 male and female teachers.

They received theoretical and practical exercises for a week in the fields of

first aid, medical awareness, protecting environment and other topics.

The course aimed to provide the trainees with significant knowledge about ways of protection from AIDS and dental health showing the role played by the school in practicing such objectives.

This course came as a result of the cooperation between the SFD and Taiz Education Office represented by its manager, Mahdi Ali Abdulsalam.

Cole hearing delayed ... again

BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Sana'a Counter-Terrorism Appeal Court decided to postpone the final hearing in the USS Cole bombing case to next Saturday.

During the hearing Jan. 8, the court judge Saeed al-Kattaa listened to the argument made by the defendants advocate Abdulkaziz al-Samawi against the allegations of the prosecution. Al-Samawi argued that the trial of the 6 defendants was not performed in accordance with the law.

"I confirm that the trial was not carried out according to the law. These defen-

dants were arrested for four years without any legal warrant or investigation, only two weeks before the trial started. The law says that imprisoning people for over 24 hours without interrogation is something illegal," he argued.

He added that both "the prosecution and the intelligence should respect law and order," adding that the prosecutor is defending "groundless procedures."

He reiterated that his clients were subject to physical torture and psychological pressure."

The preliminary court verdict was based on confessions made by the defendants under threat and pressure; they were even interrogated without any advocacy," he claimed. He said that the prosecution wants to present the defendants as an escape goat, adding that the prosecution influenced the court to the extent that it issued verdicts that it was not convinced with.

The prosecutor demanded in the last hearing session that the appeal made by the defendants advocate should not be accepted and that the defendant Fahd al-Qis'e should be sentenced to death as well as intensifying the jail sentence against Morad al-Sorori and Mamoon Amswah.

The Sana'a Counter-Terrorism Court sentenced September 28th Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, held in US custody and Jamal al-Badawi, to death for orchestrating, plotting, preparing and involvement in the bombing of the US warship.

Judge Najib al-Qaderi sentenced Fahd al-Qis'e to 10 years in jail for filming the bombing. The court said that al-Qis'e had traveled to Afghanistan in 1997 to train at an al Qaeda terrorist camp.

The fourth convicted person Mamoon Amswah received an eight-year prison term for delivering money used in prepar-



Second prime suspect Jamal Al-Badwi (Photo by M. Al-Qadhi)

ing and executing the attack and playing a close role in assisting al-Badawi.

Ali Mohamed Murakab and Morad al-Sorori were both sentenced to five years in prison for forging identification documents for Hasan al-Khameri under the name of Abdullah Ahmad Khaled al-Misawa, one of the suicide bombers.

The six men were all charged with belonging to al Qaeda and playing various roles in the attack on the Cole, which was carried out by suicide bombers Ibrahim al-Thawr, Hasan al-Khamiri, and a third unnamed person who rammed an explosives-laden boat into the destroyer. Al-Thawr and al-Khameri traveled to Bangkok and received \$36,000 from al-Nashiri for the terrorist operation. The court judge said it was clear to him that the convicted six militants were found guilty, setting up an armed gang to carry out terrorist acts, including the attack on the USS Cole.

NCICC discusses war crimes

Members at the National Coalition of the International Criminal Court (NCICC) met on Thursday at the Sana'a International Hotel to discuss the case file of war and anti human criminals in the Middle East and Africa.

As many as 44 members and representatives from different civil society organizations attended the meeting after being invited by the Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights.

Mrs. Amal Basha Regional Coordinator of the International Criminal Court for the Arabian and Middle East reviewed the latest developments of the court procedures in respect of suspects of war and anti-human crimes in Congo and the North of Uganda.

She explained to the new members the tasks and specializations of the

court.

The meeting came up with the formation of a committee to make a draft for the annual strategy of the coalition. The committee was formed of six people, namely they are: Abdulbari Taher, Nabeela Al-Mofti, Khalil Al-Magalih, Ahmad Arman, Shakeeb Al-Hakimi and Abdullah Al-Saqqaf.

Members at the meeting called on Yemen to agree upon Rome Statute of International Criminal Court and to release the prison of opinion, Abdulkareem Al-Khaiwani. They emphasized that his imprisonment interferes with the democratic orientation of the country.

After the meeting was over, a number of the coalition members visited the Sana'a Central Prison for the sake of knowing about the conditions of prisoners.

Pamphlets call for assassinations

An Islamist group recently published pamphlets which call for implementing the assassination plans that target a number of high ranking officials in Taiz.

Rumors concerning the plans are widely spread among citizens.

The pamphlets started being published in the town of Rahida and then Damna. There are numerous pamphlets passed out among people in mosques in the city of Taiz.

The obtained information reveals that the security authorities are closely investigating into the phenomenon in order to identify the sources of the pamphlets that attempt to shake security and stability in the country.

Continued from page 1

UK embassy to remain closed

The British embassy was attacked using a hand grenade in October 13, 2000, just one day after the attack on the USS Cole destroyer took place in Aden.

However, a Yemeni government official had played down the warning, saying that the Yemeni authorities had not been informed of any specific threats and that it was a "routine procedure" by some embassies in order to stay on alert for any possible threats.

The UK decision to close down its embassy in Yemen came some days after a similar warning was issued by the US embassy to its citizens to avoid traveling to Aden in fear of terrorist attacks on the eve of the Christmas against Aden Hotel. Aden Hotel decided to sue the embassy for the losses and damages the warning caused to the hotel's image and tourism activity.

Readers' Voice

Yemen Times features 5HDGHUQRice" a popular way for our readers to interact with us. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

This HGLWLRQ Question:

Do you believe child trafficking is a serious problem in Yemen?
- Yes, LW@serious
- No, LW@not serious

last HGLWLRQ Question:

Do you think that opposition campaign to the dose would succeed?

No 75%
Yes 25%

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

Egyptian Bazaar staged

By Yemen Times Staff

Under the auspices of Mr. Ahmad Al-Kuhlani, State Minister & Secretary General of the Capital and Dr. Mohammad Badr El-Din Ambassador of Egypt to Yemen, the first Egyptian Charitable Bazaar was opened on Thursday January 6 at the Embassy Premises in Gamal Abdul Nasser Street, lasting from 7 a.m. till 10 p.m.

The Bazaar contained Egyptian hand-made articles, foodstuffs, clothes and make-ups.

There were valuable prizes in money and in kind including air tickets and electronic devices.

The Bazaar also featured Islamic and Pharaoh arts and many other articles.

Two free air tickets to Cairo were given by the Yemenia Airways to the lucky visitors.

The event was sponsored by several well-famed companies including Yemenia Airways, Adhban and Al-Fatih Groups and September 26 Newspaper.

HOPE IN THEIR HANDS VACANCIES

An organization of Yemeni women's handicraft producers will open a cooperative shop for their products in January 2005. Two positions are being crated for women.

Applicants are invited to apply for the following:

Shop Manager:

Duty hours: 10am - 1.30 pm and from 3.30 pm - 7:00pm, Saturday to Thursday.

The activities/responsibilities will include:

- Preparing payroll, monthly inventory of stock, cash accounts, distributing the monthly sales income to producers, coordinating volunteers and ordering new stock;
- Capacity to negotiate impartially with the producers, and transparency in negotiations at all times;
- Employees supervision;

Required Qualifications:

- The manager will have a background in accounting and some experience in running a small retail outlet;
- Proficiency in both Arabic and English languages;
- Excellent communication skills.

Shop Assistant:

Duty hours: 10am - 1.30pm and from 3.30pm - 7.00 pm, Saturday to Thursday.

The activities/responsibilities will include:

Assist customers with enquiries, display the handicrafts in an orderly manner, and carry out duties as assigned by the shop manager.

Qualifications:

- Proficiency in both Arabic and English languages;
- Good presentation and professional manner.

Women candidates with the above qualifications are invited to present their CV (in both Arabic and English) by the 20th January at the following address:

Mrs. Poldi Sanfelice di Monteforte
Safiah Janubia
P.O. Box 1152, Sana'a

"Together towards distinctiveness"

Ghee and Soap Company holds celebration

By YEMEN TIME STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

Under the slogan 'Together towards distinctiveness', Yemen Company for Ghee and Soap (YCGS) organized the Annual Workers Company in the hall of Islamic Sciences Faculty.

Shawqi Ahmed Hayel, Deputy Manager of the Industrial

Administration in Hayel Saeed Anam Group of Companies, explained such meetings with workers reinforce direct contact between the company and its staff.

He appreciated that YCGS is the first to organize these meetings to award creative, hardworking, and distinguished workers.

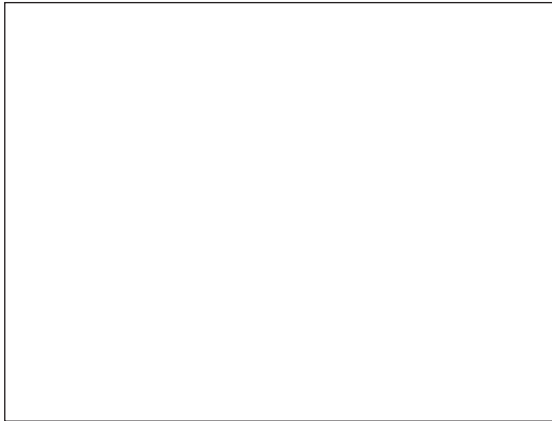
"This celebration concluded a year of work with various bright stations letting the company achieve different accomplishments that wouldn't have been achieved unless the efforts of all workers were unified."

Shukri Al-Furais, General Manger of YCGS, said "the company is qualitatively getting developed either in the productive capacity, the administrative performance, qualifying human resources, use of modern technology or the high quality of the

products in the internal and external markets allowing it to be first Yemeni company to have the World Quality Certificate (ISO 9002 and 9001), giving our products the passport to go to many Arab, European, Asian and African countries.

"The company obtained 94 per cent in the exchange enzyme system that aims to implement the international standards, ensuring a healthy atmosphere for workers. It also attained 97 per cent in the Enzyme Monitoring System which secures protecting workers from harms. That was after being studied and evaluated by the French Uniliver Company."

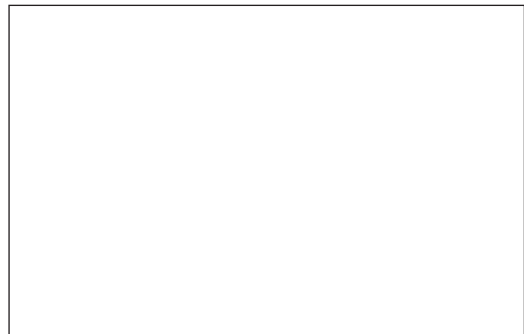
Al-Furais unveiled that there will be a celebration soon on the occasion of receiving the certificate of "Good Industry Practice" by Yemen



Company employees.

Standardization, Metrology and Quality Control Organization (YSMO).

Concluding the celebration, Al-Furai, Hani Abduljabbar, Deputy General Manger, Mohammed Abduwase'e, Deputy General Manager of Yemen Company for Packing Materials, awarded the Best Workers of 2004, and the YCGS Person of 2004, who is Mukhtar Al-Faqeh, Marketing Manager.



Employees receiving recognition.

JOB VACANCY

Oxfam works with others to overcome poverty and suffering. Oxfam's program in Yemen has expanded which requires new areas of work with new specialization. We are looking for dynamic people to work as part of the Oxfam Sana'a team. The Staff member appointed will be based at the Sana'a office.

Job Title: Campaigns Officer

Key Competencies and requirements:

- University degree in social science or relevant fields.
- Proven knowledge, skills and experience in campaigning on issues for social change related to ideas, attitudes and practices and preferably in gender related issues
- Understanding and sensitivity to development issues and context
- Well developed management skills to support, develop and build capacity of staff and partners in campaigning
- Ability to mentor and support national staff to build local capacity
- Excellent communication skills
- Demonstrable creative thinking, and problem solving
- Flexibility, responsiveness and sensitivity to the needs of the local context and culture and listening and supportive attitude
- Experience of working with media and sound understanding of messaging and public positioning and adapting it to the needs of the local context.

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 Program Manager, Oxfam GB
Yemen P.O. Box 1045, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Fax no: 01 445 650 Or email: 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.

Continued from page 1

Yemen's suffering kids

"We are looking into the causes, recommendations on solutions, what children are used for after being sent and what are the effects on the children," said Al-Arhabi, adding that "this is the beginning of the process and we will be able to coordinate and cooperate with authorities to alleviate this problem."

"For example, we can build more schools, try to create some activities, see if we can get the areas some additional cash transfers through the welfare fund and try and build awareness. It is important to mobilize people in those districts to undertake a campaign of awareness within those districts and families. It's also important to study more what the problems are in those districts and see what we can do to help and improve the basic services to improve the living conditions."

The conference was based on the Rapid Assessment of Child Trafficking in Yemen, a study carried out by the Yemeni Center for Studies and Labor Research and under the guidance of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and brought together different ministers and representatives of UNICEF.

Awareness in Yemen on child trafficking has been growing in the last year, and the study was the first conducted to create a clearer picture of the problem.

Some claims of children being victims of trafficking have ranged from 1,000 to 50,000. The research team, which carried out its study in Hajja and Al-Mahweet governorates - the two areas believed to have the highest concentration of where child trafficking originates - found that gathering exact figures are out of reach.

The problems of coming up with accurate numbers include the lack of facilities at borders required to determine children being sent abroad to work, the vast border region with Saudi Arabia which makes smuggling difficult to control, and few reports coming from families. Another difficulty is trying to distinguish between children traveling with their families or relatives and those being trafficked.

"It is not clear how many children are trafficked at this time, so the study is based on samples in order to know more about the phenomenon itself," said Al-Arhabi. "We cannot know the numbers

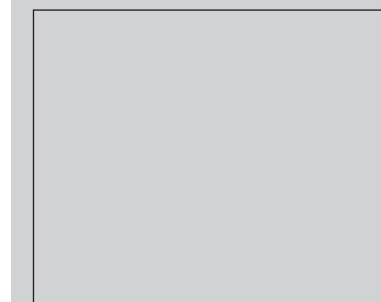
because there is no information system on the border that we can rely on to acquire the number of children trafficked."

"The most important feature of the report was to raise the issue of child trafficking, to show people that there is a problem," said Ramesh Shrestha, Representative of UNICEF based in Yemen.

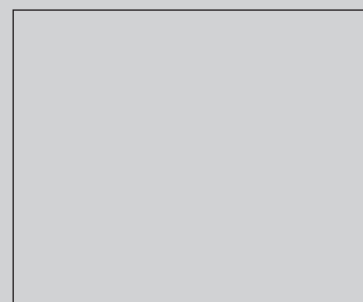
"It was to bring knowledge to the public and to policy makers to highlight the existence of the problem and how action can be taken. Children that are trafficked lose their early and adolescent lives, such as being educated, which is supposed to pave the way for having a fulfilling adult life."

With the issue of child trafficking brought out in the open recently, there have been controversial estimates on how many children are sent to neighboring countries, predominantly Saudi Arabia.

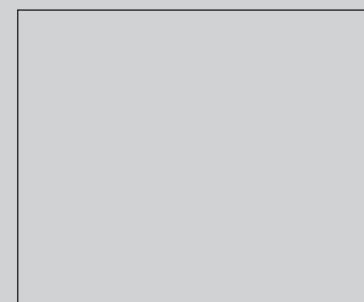
Some hold that the number of children being trafficked is not the issue, but that the existence of the business in Yemen needs to be dealt with since trafficking is a violation of children's rights, such as being physically separated from the family, being exploited - possibly sexually -



Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, said that the workshop on child trafficking "is a healthy process to address the issue and problem, and it reflects the awareness of the communities and the concerned authorities."



Amat Al-Aleem Al-Soswa, Minister of Human Rights: "The study is the first step towards addressing the sensitive and critical issue which is a concern to all levels of the government."



Ramesh Shrestha is the Representative of UNICEF based in Yemen which teamed up with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to carry out the first study on child trafficking.

(Yemen Times photos by Peter Willems)

facing abuse, and not having a chance to be educated.

"The study is the first step towards addressing the sensitive and critical issue which is a concern to all levels of the government," said Amat Al-Aleem Al-Soswa, Minister of Human Rights, in her speech at the opening of the workshop. "Although we don't agree on the numbers of children being trafficked - we should distinguish between illegal immigrants and trafficked children - child trafficking is an important issue. Even if only one child is trafficked, it is an issue that needs our attention."

Most believe the primary cause of child trafficking comes from many families living in harsh economic conditions.

"Child trafficking is one of the bad symptoms of people suffering from poverty," said Al-Soswa. "If the families happened to be well off, the parents would not have let their children go to another place and be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. It is poverty, and we should fight it if we want a radical solution for this problem."

The study shows that over 60% of the children sent abroad come from families with eight or more members. The majority of families live on less than \$108 a month, and some that were interviewed or were involved in group discussions during the study said that there are very few

opportunities for work in their hometowns. The study also pointed out that in some cases, children working abroad can increase the family income significantly, even as high as doubling what a family can live on.

"Lack of labor or potential for work, unemployment and low pay push the parents to send their children to work," said an official in Haradh, located in the Hajja governorate, while the study was being carried out.

Although the government is in the process of implementing reform, economic growth has been faltering. According to The World Bank's most recent report, the country's gross domestic product has slowed from 4.1% in 2001 to an estimated 2.5% last year. It is estimated that around 42% of Yemenis live below the poverty line, while 25% live just above being poor. The Population Reference Bureau, a private organization based in the United States, calculates that Yemen's population grows around 4% annually.

"We need more than economic growth that matches population growth to reduce poverty," said Al-Arhabi. "We need much stronger economic growth to be able to reduce poverty, such as six, seven or eight percent of economic growth, or else economic growth will just maintain poverty."

A large number of families that allow their children to be taken to work else-

where, which includes begging or becoming street vendors, are unaware of the risks the children have to face and that they become vulnerable to abuse while not living under the protection of their parents. The report suggested that raising awareness in communities where child trafficking mostly takes place is important because "lack of information and awareness of what the threats are that children are facing during the process of trafficking enhances more trafficking to take place."

Over 25% of deported children that were interviewed said that they faced threats, such as hunger and getting lost, and it is reported that a large number of children were beaten and robbed while being trafficked. It was also found that nearly 65% of children trafficked had no place to stay and ended up living on the streets. The study was unable to carry out a complete assessment on sexual exploitation.

The report also recommends that child trafficking needs to be a part of the Yemeni Child Law and the Penal Code so that traffickers can be apprehended and charged appropriately.

"There is a need to review the criminal code to include trafficking, which will make trafficking a criminal action and deter traffickers from carrying out these activities," said Shrestha.



Iraq hit by deadly car bombing, abductions

BAGHDAD, Jan 8 (Reuters) - A suicide bomber killed four people near a checkpoint south of Baghdad and militants abducted three senior Iraqi officials on Saturday amid fears of an escalating insurgency aimed at sabotaging a Jan. 30 election.

Guerrillas continued to press their campaign of intimidation despite President George W. Bush's pledge that the U.S. military would do everything possible to safeguard Iraq's first national ballot since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

But with three weeks left, Bush

acknowledged that four of 18 provinces were still not secure enough for Iraqis to vote.

In the past week alone, Sunni insurgents have killed nearly 100 people in bombings, ambushes and assassinations mostly targeting fledgling security services they regard as collaborators with U.S.-led forces that invaded in 2003.

Under pressure to quell the violence, the U.S. military said it had captured a key leader of an Islamist group headed by al Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, responsible for

most of the bloodiest attacks.

It said the arrest marked "significant progress in the inevitable destruction of the ... Zarqawi terrorist network" in the volatile northern city of Mosul.

South of Baghdad, a suicide car bomb tore through a petrol station in the village of Mahaweel, killing four people and wounding 19 others who had been queuing up at the fuel pump, police said.

The blast, in a lawless area known as the "Triangle of Death", struck near a roadblock manned by police and soldiers.

Sunni officials kidnapped

Three Sunni officials from Saddam's hometown of Tikrit were abducted on a road south of Baghdad while returning from the Shi'ite holy city of Najaf where they held talks with Shi'ite leaders to bridge sectarian divisions over the elections.

The delegation included the head of the northern Salaheddin provincial council, the deputy to the provincial governor and the dean of Tikrit law school, police and tribal sources said.

Some leaders of Saddam's once-

privileged Sunni minority have called for a delay in the vote, saying persistent attacks in the Sunni heartland would scare away many voters and skew the results in favour of the long-marginalised Shi'ite majority.

But interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, a secular Shi'ite, has rejected any postponement of the vote, which is expected to cement the Shi'ites' newfound political dominance.

Also on Saturday, the U.S. military said it had captured a key leader in Zarqawi's insurgent network in late

December.

It identified the man as Abdul Aziz Sa'dun Ahmed Hamduni, also known as Abu Ahmed, and said he had assumed command of "terrorist operations" in the volatile northern city of Mosul after the cell's chief was arrested earlier in the month.

In other violence on Saturday, gunmen shot dead two Iraqi National Guards south of Samarra, and the bodies of three Iraqi contractors who worked with American forces were found near the northern city, security officials said.



U.S. Army Sergeant Eddie Mathis from the 1-278th Regimental Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division carries his sniper rifle during a patrol through the town of Balad-Ruz, north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, in this photograph released on Jan. 7. U.S.-led multinational forces have detained a key leader in the Muslim militant network in Iraq headed by al Qaeda ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the U.S. military said on Saturday. REUTERS

Emirates

Washed off the map, Acehnese chart uncertain future

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia, Jan 8 (Reuters) - Drive south from this devastated city and the road just stops.

Ahead lies territory whose features have been erased — just like the hopes and plans of hundreds of thousands of its residents left homeless by the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Tarmac is peeled off roads for kilometres down the western coast of Aceh province, on the northern end of Indonesia's Sumatra island, which bore the brunt of the tsunami's force.

Old maps of these parts no longer apply.

There is water where once was land, flat earth where once were town. Plans are now being laid for new communities and new names on maps.

"If I went back, I don't know if I could even find my street. Nothing's there. If I was to say 'that land is mine', I couldn't prove it.

Where are the boundaries?" said Budi, 50, of Banda Aceh, waiting for a military flight to the city of Medan, some 450 km (280 miles) to the south-east, away from the destruction.

In Banda Aceh, the provincial capital of some 300,000 people, a line was carved diagonally, southwest to north-

east, by the massive waves triggered by a magnitude 9.0 earthquake on Dec. 26.

North of the line, roughly half of this city, known by Indonesians as "The Veranda of Mecca" because of its staunchly Muslim population, is a wasteland.

No homes.

No suburban streets. Just a flat expanse of mud, splintered wood and twisted metal as far as the eye can see.

Residents who survived the killer water now huddle by the thousand in makeshift refugee camps and on road-sides.

Ibnu Katsir, in his mid-30s, said he now lives in a tent with 40 other people but the daily food ration was only enough for 10.

"If I have breakfast, I won't have lunch or dinner," said Katsir, who said he lost two sons and his mother in the disaster.

The United Nations and Indonesian authorities have begun preparing relocation camps that could eventually hold up to 500,000 people as new permanent communities are built.

"I prefer a new place. The old place is too scary," said 25-year-old Eka Irmaingsih, referring to their former

residence in the city's waterfront area, hit hardest by the killer waves.

"I don't fear the corpses, but I'm scared of the sea. Before the tragedy, I loved the beach. I liked to stroll along the port with my husband. Now it's a frightening area," she said, as she washed her two children at the refugee camp.

Back to business

The United Nations and Indonesian government hope to open the first relocation camps by next week, starting with four in the Banda Aceh area.

"We will start with temporary relocations.

But, at the same time, we have plans to set up community development settlements, compounds for the more permanent settlement for the internally displaced persons," said chief social welfare minister Alwi Shihab.

U.N. officials stress the process must be voluntary.

"No person should be displaced by force. It must all be done on a voluntary basis," said Michael Elmquist, the U.N. coordinator for humanitarian assistance in Indonesia.

Many of the children in the camps giggle, smile and are eager to talk, but

others are solemn, their eyes filled with fear.

Muslihpanman, 13, who lost both of his parents, says he still thinks about the terrifying minutes caught up in the waves, but adds: "I still want to go to school.

David Agnew, president of UNICEF Canada, said the U.N. body was providing help so schools can reopen in a couple of weeks.

"We are working hard to recruit new teachers because so many were killed," he said, adding that in one school, 40 out of 50 teachers were swept away by the waves.

Parts of Banda Aceh have already returned to a semblance of normality.

Food markets are open, traffic lights are working and many shops and restaurants are doing a roaring trade, even as other parts of the city rely on the massive flow of international aid arriving at the airport.

But outside, the situation remains desperate, with some areas yet to receive aid nearly two weeks after the killer waves.

Pilots and aid workers running helicopter missions down the west coast say in some parts even the geography

has changed.

Areas that used to be land have been reclaimed by the sea, new contours that feature on no maps.

In some places, officials say whole towns, where almost the entire population and all infrastructure are gone, may

have to be abandoned.

"The only way to describe some of the villages is 'extinct'," said Scott Cohick, a U.S. marine helicopter pilot.

"The roads are gone and they won't be able to plant rice there for a very long time."

An Acehnese man accused of stealing a mobile phone is surrounded by tsunami survivors at a camp in the tsunami-hit city of Banda Aceh on the Indonesian island of Sumatra Jan. 8. The United Nations and Indonesian authorities have begun preparing relocation camps that could eventually hold up to 500,000 people as new permanent communities are built. The cardboard sign around his neck reads "I am a thief".

REUTERS

Paradise lost for Thai island devastated by tsunami

KOH PHI PHI, Thailand, Jan 8 (Reuters) - It's more like a scene from "Apocalypse Now" than "The Beach".

Once the paradise-isle backdrop for the Leonardo DiCaprio backpacker movie, Koh Phi Phi now looks like a war zone.

Huge fires blaze behind the rubble-strewn Thai beach, rescue helicopters clatter over the broken coconut palms and sunken fishing boats litter the azure waters of the bay.

The beach — only two weeks ago a heaven on earth — has become a beach-head, a front line in Thailand's frantic efforts to clean up after the Dec. 26 tsunami which claimed more than 156,000 lives around the shores of the Indian Ocean.

Army amphibious landing craft sit on the sand as hundreds of troops wander through the rubble of what used to be beachside bars or holiday bungalows.

The search for survivors ended long ago.

Now, the soldiers look only for bodies even though hundreds of victims, most of them young European tourists, have already been recovered from the wreckage.

The stench of rotting flesh suggests there are more to be found.

"We pulled one guy's body down from up there," said John Matthews, a burly Londoner who had lived on Phi Phi for the last eight months, pointing to the top of a palm tree.

Making what he says is his final visit to the Andaman Sea island — to collect his air ticket — he passes a silted

Local resident Hassan Pootpong, 54, walks through the destroyed streets of the Thai resort island of Koh Phi Phi, Jan. 7. Hundreds of people died on the island after it was hit by a tsunami on December 26.

REUTERS

passage-way behind a budget guesthouse.

"I found a little baby under here, and wrapped it in a pillow-case," he said, the tears welling up in his eyes. "I think her mother found the body the next morning."

Mechanical diggers are already tearing down the damaged buildings, preparing the way for the recovery and reconstruction the Thai government has promised will happen.

Whether Phi Phi will ever recover its innocence remains to be seen.

Most locals are too scared to return. Besides another wave, they also fear the restive spirits of the dead they now believe are trapped on the tiny, jungle-clad island.

"I heard some foreigners calling out to me last night, saying 'Come on,

come on, come and join our party,'" said Prajit Sumta, a carpenter who is one of the few Thais to have stayed behind. "But then I looked round and realised I was all on my own."

At night, car batteries can be heard exploding in the fires, breaking the eerie silence that falls over the island.

As Matthews climbed a hill to his old guesthouse room — a climb which saved his life two weeks ago — he was confronted by a reminder that not everyone is working selflessly: the windows had been forced open and looters had ransacked his belongings.

Thankfully, his ticket back to Britain and most of his clothes had not been stolen.

"At least they didn't take my trousers. They probably didn't fit," he said.

9 villagers flee fire at gas field in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Jan 8 (Reuters) - Hundreds of families fled in panic on Saturday when flames leapt into the sky at a gas field in northeastern Bangladesh where experts were conducting new tests, officials and witnesses said.

"They are running away out of fear as scorching heat from the blazing field has reached neighbouring villages," said one witness.

Several wood-and-tin-roofed houses nearby were badly damaged while some brick walls also cracked, others said by telephone.

The field, developed under a joint venture by Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company (BAPEX) and Canadian firm Niko Resources Ltd., was abandoned in 1982.

But experts from the two companies resumed a joint exploration at the field last year, believing it contains gas reserves that can be exploited, a BAPEX official told Reuters.

"The Tengratila (eds. correct) gas field in Sunamanj district caught fire early Saturday while experts were testing it.

The fire has spread over a large area," State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources A.K.M. Mosharraf Hossain said.

Energy officials estimate the field may have 300 billion cubic feet of gas reserves.

"Every effort is being made to control the fire, which was believed to have started by an accident," he said, adding that experts from Australia, Canada and India were expected soon to help fight

the blaze.

The rig and other equipment have been burnt, energy officials said, adding that Niko had invested more than \$15 million in the field.

"Heat can be felt as far as four km (2.5 miles) from the burning field while the fire is leaping hundreds of metres into the air," a local reporter said.

"The fire has spread quickly over a large area and is leaping towards the sky. It is difficult for anyone to get close by.

Villagers are running away for safety," Sunamanj civil administrator Zafar Siddik said by telephone.

Local reporters say about 10,000 people live in villages around the gas field. No casualties have been reported.

"The fire has engulfed the well's inside," M.A. Based, managing director of the state-run BAPEX, told Reuters by telephone from Tengratila, 250 miles (400 km) from Dhaka.

"An expert from the U.S. oil firm Unocal Corp. has already arrived here from Dhaka," he said.

In June 1997, a similar fire damaged a gas field during drilling by U.S. oil firm Occidental Corp. at Magurchhara in Srimangal, also in the northeast, causing nearly \$2.5 billion in losses, said energy officials.

The country, which produces gas from 13 out of 22 discovered fields, has 15.33 trillion cubic feet of proven and recoverable gas based on current estimates, officials said.

Opposition leader arrested in Guinea

CONAKRY, Jan 8 (Reuters) - Police in Guinea have arrested an opposition leader hours after the West African country's new prime minister pledged more open dialogue with political opponents, opposition officials said late on Friday.

Antoine Soromou, head of the National Alliance for Development (AND), was arrested after meeting Prime Minister Cellou Dalein Diallo and was being questioned about a plot to destabilise the country, a security source told Reuters.

"Soromou was arrested on Wednesday afternoon by the police a few hours after we met with the prime minister," said Mamadou Ba,

spokesman for the Republican Front for Democratic Change, a coalition of Guinea's opposition parties.

"We have not yet been able to see him because he is being kept at a secret location," he said.

Guinea, which holds a third of the world's known reserves of bauxite, the raw material used to make aluminium, has been shaken by riots in several towns in recent months over price rises for items such as rice and electricity.

Security forces have clashed with protesters in the towns of Pita, Dabola and Fria, in the centre and north of the country, killing at least two people and injuring several.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have cut off most aid to the country, where inflation has officially risen above 25 percent and the average income is around \$36 per month.

Guinea has nonetheless been seen as a bulwark against the chaos of its neighbours Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory Coast, all of which have experienced recent civil wars.

But human rights groups say its stability has come at a high cost.

President Lansana Conte, a diabetic chain smoker whose declining health has prompted worries of political upheaval in the country, seized power in a coup in 1984 and has brooked

little dissent since.

He appointed a new prime minister in December after the previous one flew to France saying police repression of the opposition made his task of repairing strained ties with international donors difficult.

The new premier pledged on Wednesday to open dialogue with the government's opponents but the arrest of Soromou did little to help his cause.

"This arrest proves that this regime cannot change.

Everything they do is to try to impress the outside world to unblock financing," said a senior member of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) opposition party.

CARE International in Yemen

Request for Proposals

CARE International will conduct a gender and empowerment research initiative from February 2005 for 6 weeks. CARE is seeking female candidates for the position of:

Team Leader

Requirements: senior gender research specialist; participatory research; evaluation; team building; excellent analytical thinker and writer in English and Arabic; . Please submit CVs with an "expression of interest" in receiving the request for proposal to: care.programme@y.net.ye

Only short listed candidates will be contacted. Final application date is 17th January 2005

Death toll in Italy train crash rises to 14

CREVALCORE, Italy, Jan 8 (Reuters) - The number of people killed when a passenger train and a freight train crashed head-on in fog-shrouded countryside in Italy rose to 14 on Saturday, officials said.

More than 50 people were injured in Friday's crash, the country's worst rail accident in nearly 25 years.

The body of a man believed to be the last victim was extracted from the wreckage early on Saturday afternoon, some 24 hours after the crash.

Rescue workers had seen the dead body on Friday night but had to cut through the wreckage to reach it.

Gabriele Golinelli, chief of regional fire brigades, said he believed there were no other victims in the wreckage.

The crash was believed to have been caused by a switching problem which sent the trains onto the same track.

The impact derailed one of the engines, while one carriage was thrust into the air and crashed down onto the other train.

The freight train was carrying heavy iron construction girders, and the impact of the crash hurled girders like spears into one carriage of the inter-regional passenger train, which was carrying about 100 people.

A video shot shows rescue teams operating on a wrecked wagon after a train crashed between two small towns north of Bologna, Italy, Jan. 7. A passenger train and a freight train crashed in fog-shrouded countryside in northern Italy on Friday, killing at least 10 people and injuring more than 50, authorities said. One of the WUDL locomotives derailed in the violent impact, while another carriage was thrust into the air and came to rest on another part of the other train, television pictures from the scene showed.

Troops kill rebels in battle near Russia's Chechnya

NAZRAN, Russia, Jan 8 (Reuters) - Russian troops killed four rebels hiding in a house in the Russian city of Nazran, 30 km (20 miles) from the border with Chechnya, in a firefight on Saturday, officials said.

Automatic gunfire and explosions started in the early morning in the town close to the border with Chechnya, where rebels have fought Russian rule for a decade.

The RIA Novosti agency said five armoured vehicles and more than 100 servicemen took part in the battle to subdue four men who refused to show their documents to police.

By the end of the battle, the house lay in ruins, its red-brick walls shattered and roof caved in.

White smoke rose from the wreckage. "During the (house-to-house document checking) operation, the bandits showed armed resistance," said Yuri Smolyaninov, spokesman for the FSB security service.

"They opened fire from automatic weapons and threw grenades. In the course of the battle, they were destroyed. No civilians were injured."

A policeman who asked not to be named said local residents recognised two of the four killed men as Ingushetians.

The streets of Nazran, normally packed with people on a Saturday, were deserted and Russian border troops guarding a base in the city were on full alert.

Nazran, the largest town in the region of Ingushetia, has been rocked by a spill-over

of violence from neighbouring Chechnya and was devastated in June by a rebel raid that killed more than 90 people, mainly police.

Ingushetians are closely related to the Chechens, and in recent years a growing part of the Muslim region has joined the fight against Russian rule which has battered Chechnya.

Successful "Forum for the Future" held in Rabat

The Forum for the Future, held in Rabat Morocco starting on December 11th 2004 ended successfully. The first meeting of the Forum provided further encouragement to the partnership of cooperation between the Eight Leading Industrial Nations (the UK, Canada and, France, Germany, Italy, Japan Russia and the United States and the states of the Greater Middle East and North African Region, in terms of facing the challenges to reform. The objectives of the meeting were led by the creation of an appropriate climate for extended dialogue between the transatlantic partners and the states of the region. The Greater Middle Eastern and North African participants in the Forum also confirmed their commitment to undertake political, economic and social reforms. The Big Eight Industrial States also confirmed their support for the states in the region that pursue such reforms. Bahrain also announced that it is willing to accommodate the next meeting of the Forum in 2005 in Bahrain.

The Forum was attended by high level delegations from both the Big Eight and the Greater MENA Region states. In addition, representatives of civil society made critical and frank proclamations that were of paramount significance. As stated by the German Foreign Minister, Euschka Fischer, "the major challenge is how to involve the region in globalization and to make it a beneficiary of globalization. He also proclaimed Germany's intention to announce an initiative for Bilateral Mutual Cooperation in Education, in which Germany shall be cooperating with its Arab partners. It is expected that Germany shall present this initiative during the next meeting of the Forum.

French journalists defend right to report in Iraq

PARIS, Jan 8 (Reuters) - French journalists defended their right to report from Iraq on Saturday after President Jacques Chirac urged them to stay away following the disappearance of a journalist working for French newspaper Liberation.

The daily said it had still not heard from Florence Aubenat and her Iraqi interpreter Al Saadi since they left a Baghdad hotel on Wednesday morning.

It is not clear whether they have been kidnapped.

"The day there are no journalists in Baghdad, U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and al Qaeda representative in Iraq Abu Musab al-Zarqawi will be the main sources of information," Serge July, the head of Liberation, wrote in an editorial.

"If the doors remain half open, we owe it to the handful of journalists without whom the country would become a blind area," he said under the headline "An indispensable witness".

July said Liberation always reviewed security when sending journalists to dangerous areas such as Iraq and underlined that Aubenat, 43, has plenty of experience working in danger zones.

She has also reported from Rwanda, Algeria and Afghanistan.

Chirac advised journalists at an annual New Year ceremony in Paris on Friday not to go to Iraq.

The Foreign Ministry declined comment on Saturday other than saying French authorities were doing all they could to find Aubenat.

A French diplomatic source has said Aubenat could have been killed, injured, kidnapped or arrested.

Foreign Minister Michel Barnier said the reason for her disappearance was not clear.

Her case has raised the prospect of France facing a new hostage crisis in Iraq just over two weeks after two of its journalists — Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot — were

freed after being held by Iraqi militants for four months.

Their capture by a militant group in Iraq on Aug. 20 shocked France, which opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

Chesnot defended the right to report from dangerous areas but said journalists must be careful.

"We must continue to cover events in Iraq, it's clear, but must learn the lessons from the dramatic experience we went through.

The longer a journalist stays, the easier he is to find and therefore

more vulnerable," Chesnot told Liberation.

Robert Menard, secretary general of Paris-based media rights watchdog Reporters Without Borders, also said journalists were more at risk if they stayed a long time in Iraq but added: "The worst thing would be if there were no more journalists in Iraq."

More than 120 foreigners have been kidnapped in Iraq since April 2004, of whom more than three dozen have been killed.

Socialists lead Portugal opinion poll

LISBON, Jan 8 (Reuters) - The opposition Socialists have a strong lead ahead of Portugal's Feb. 20 snap elections and could win a rare parliamentary majority, an opinion poll published on Saturday showed.

The Socialists, under new leader Jose Socrates, lead the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) by 46 to 33 percent, according to the Eurosondagem survey in Expresso newspaper.

They are followed by the Communists with 6.9 percent, the right-wing Popular Party, the PSD's coalition partner, with 6.3 percent, and the Left Bloc with 4.5 percent.

The poll results indicate the Socialists would win 115 to 119 seats in the 230-seat parliament, against 81 to 89 seats for the PSD, led by centre-right Prime Minister Pedro Santana Lopes.

The inability of a single party to win a majority of seats has hampered the last three governments.

A majority would give the Socialists more clout to deal with economic problems including sluggish growth and a stubborn budget deficit.

Eurosondagem surveyed 2,010 Portuguese over 18 years old between Monday and Wednesday, and the margin of error is 2.19 percent.

President Jorge Sampaio dissolved parliament last month and called elections, citing instability in Santana Lopes's coalition government.

Santana Lopes, previously number two in the PSD, took over as premier when Jose Manuel Barroso left Portuguese politics in July to head the European Commission.

9 VACANCIES AT CARE

CARE is looking for staff for a new, EC funded project "Food security and ZRP HQ Empowerment" in Hajja Governorate. The following vacancies are now open

- 1 Project Manager
- 2 Nutritionist
- 1 Engineer (small civil works)
- 1 Project Accountant

All positions are based in Hajja. The project is approximately \$1.2 Million and lasts 33 months. For detailed job descriptions please apply to CARE International Yemen, 68 Arwa School Street, or e.mail care@y.net.ye, subject heading "Hajja Food security Project". Applications must be received by January 31st 2005. Only those short listed for interview will be contacted. Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

Words of Wisdom

Gentlemen, Yemen does not need more money! It needs a system. Yemen need accountable officials, and it needs people with some decency in the way they work. If the IMP, World Bank and other organizations pump loans into Yemen, where will it go? More importantly, how will it be paid?

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

OUR
OPINIONSaudi relations
could improve

When I think about it, I feel it is truly ironic to have visited most Arab countries, All Western Europe, the Americas, Africa, East Asia and not visit our neighbor Saudi Arabia.

Then came the moment when I met my ambitions and made my first ever visit to our neighboring kingdom, and it was truly a spectacular visit.

When I arrived to Jeddah upon an invitation by Okaz Newspaper, I made my first journey to the Holy Islamic sites in Mecca where I had the opportunity to do Umra, something that Muslims all around the world hope to do.

I felt lucky and satisfied to have seized the opportunity to experience the inner satisfaction of approaching the holiest Muslim sites of all, and to be as close to God as can be.

But then again, the visit as a whole had another impact on me. The visit enabled me to feel truly un-politicized love of Saudis to Yemenis. This feeling was sensed throughout the neighborhoods I visited and I also felt it in various levels from the people in the street to high-ranking Saudi individuals.

During our talks with staffers and management of Okaz Newspaper and also those at the Saudi Gazette, I felt that Saudis have a special connection with Yemenis. This connection has been steady for so many years ever since the foundation of the kingdom. Yemenis used to be welcome as if they were regular countrymen. They would own property, start investments, and live their lives with ease and comfort.

But politics sometimes is merciless.

The unfortunate 1990 Second Gulf War and the consequences of the war in the return of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, and the subsequent new laws that were imposed on Yemenis, have all contributed to putting Yemenis in many troubles and made them lose a lot of privileges they had in the past.

One could say it is the bill of Yemen's stance in that war, others would suggest that such a thing would have happened any way sooner or later, but now that 14 years have past, there is little use of blaming one side or the other.

After the Jeddah treaty of 2000, relations started improving radically, and Yemenis were able to work more freely and with less restrictions.

However, the future is what matters the most.

Yemeni immigrants in Saudi Arabia are now suffering from a potential loss of many jobs if the current plan to turn over most of the jobs taken by foreigners to Saudis. The reason is that most of those jobs are being held by Yemenis, some who don't even know their country and have been living in Saudi Arabia for many decades.

There are risks that many Yemenis would be affected by certain reforms that the kingdom may apply.

Nevertheless, it is us who need to develop solutions and long-term plans to avert a possible disaster. That is why I felt from the Saudi officials whom I met that the priority now is to take Yemen's hand and lift the country from its economic stagnancy so it could develop its won investments and provide its own employment opportunities.

Our Saudi neighbors have pledged to create investment opportunities by pouring capital into our country and hence revive many economic sectors.

It remains to be seen whether this will be done, but Yemenis everywhere hope that the word would be kept, and our neighbors would value - as they always did - the ties and historic relations with their neighbor.

The Editor



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Some words have lost meaning

Arab leaders and
regional reform

BY PROF. ABDULAZIZ AL-TARB
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

A mid controversy over reform in the Arab World, it has become clearer that the word "reform" has detached itself from reality.

People against and people with reform are actually taking stances against or with certain regimes. The word "against" may not mean much, and may mean too much. It implies a stance supporting external intervention in the affairs of a regime to impose full democratic elections, or topple or change a regime.

"Against" may also mean opposition on fundamentalist grounds.

Opposition may also be motivated by ethnic reasons and others aiming to oppose the state itself and not only the regime. Other types of opposition do not acknowledge the legitimacy of the state.

In the Arab world, such confusion has affected the concept of "civil community" too. The civil community has lost its power and significance, becoming like a piece of decoration and a synonym for NGOs.

As democracy has been Arabized as "reform to the advantage of its advocates," civil community has also come to know what it did not mean in Europe: society's reproducing itself according to laws independent of the rules of force and coercion which are characteristic of authority which enables the society to produce the state conceptually by the social contract, instead of being produced by the state as subject to the ruler.

After being adapted in the Arab world, this concept no longer means social relationships resulting from free exchange in market, or the urban community outside profit relationships, as defined in later stages of concept formulation.

If "civil community" is understood and used when necessary for the democratic transformation, it will be a really important concept. In such a case, NGOs would derive their significance as they would understand their role in this race: making the society, state and democratic transformation instead of trying in vain to take on or replace the concept of civil community.

However, if a concept replaces another or an establishment thinks its role can compensate for the functions of the civil community in terms of being able to reproduce itself outside the frame of the state and interact with it, then the democratic transformation would be adversely affected. Such transformation, after all, is the paramount goal of the Arab people.

If the aim of reform is not to remove anti-democracy economic and administrative obstacles in the system of the state and social and cultural hindrances and establish the principles essential to democratic transformation, then there is no need for this kind of reform, for it now only serves as an ornament for the regime and absorbing outside politically-based pressure.

I am afraid that there are elements who have advantages in modifying the connotations of such terms as reform, civil community and freedom of expression. There are two reasons: the first being the fact that what appears to be imported from the West is opposed in the Arab World for rea-

sons of protecting cultural distinctiveness. Different coalitions come to light and the regime is compelled to reconsider them on the base of plurality. Therefore, plurality gets fostered but it is in fact anti-democracy (e.g. what happened in the wake of Yemen Reunification). It is then claimed that supporting plurality is an integral part of reform, but it includes a strong current hostile to reform and change which should be considered by the reform movement.

There are fundamentalist (religious) forces which oppose democracy. They suddenly realized that reform is the gateway to find a harbor of safety. So they adopted reform and produced themselves as moderate forces for discussion and coalition with local and foreign sides.

The Arab citizen does not find a scene deserving to be watched as he sees what takes place in Gaza, and Iraq or the attack against the sovereignty of Syria. The Arab people get frustrated as they know they are forced to accept a reform void of democracy or dignity.

The American policy, which claims that it is the motivating force behind reform even with intimidation and blackmailing, is the real obstruction in the way of reform- the reform towards democratic transformation and not reform as a fashion or industry.

I can discern that reform has become as a fashion to the extent it is used as a slogan for anti-democracy forces to reach governance. Currently, the Arab rulers have not lost control despite prolonged talk about reform because they manipulate reform to stay in power only.

There is some impression that the crisis lie deep down at the core. It is an ethical problem. He is not democratic who does not practice what he preaches who agree to the propositions of the majority and implement what he wishes when this majority is tired, erecting and worshipping the statute of reform for the purpose of a coming month.

Thus, we should study experiences accurately apart from friction. We should give a chance for NGOs to participate without fear and restriction. We, in Yemen, are now in need more than ever for transparency in local and parliamentary elections so as to reflect an image to the external world confirming our own ability to make the surprise and they have only to see.

Arab rulers should make use of the lesson and incorporate appropriate modifications, and give opportunity to new faces able to stabilize the system. They also have to prepare for new experiences socially and economically as well as in terms of peaceful transfer of power.

"When will we ever understand the lesson?" I wonder.

Yemen needs reforms

BY RAIDAN ABDULAZIZ AL-SAQQAF
R_saqqaf@yahoo.com
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

I find it ironically amusing what is going on in the Yemeni political scenario. On one side, the ruling party is trying to explain how important the upcoming reforms for the future of Yemen are, and on the other the opposition parties are raising red flags and screaming as loud as they can against the implementation of these reforms.

It's like two kids fighting and giving each other the finger - metaphorically speaking.

Each side has a loud argument. I've never seen Yemeni press as loud as it is today; opinions are harsh either with or against the coming reforms.

Such a debate represents our gov-

ernment's success in encouraging democracy and empowering the press enough to stand against the government itself and its plans. However, the downside is represented in losing the focus on the issue of reforms; taking this argument from a healthy debate into a personal attack, the opposition is required to generate better ideas to assist reforms not withstand them.

Our prime minister isn't the devil, he is trying to implement good reforms, and I stand beside him in support of reforms.

Today we will have to pay the price for our own reforms, I know that the current government will not lead us to the expected results, yet I sincerely feel these reforms will secure a relatively better future of our children in the long run.

And aren't they worth it?

Letters to the Editor

Yemen's men
are the obstacle!

This is in response to the article "Population Bomb". The complete an utter disregard for family planning and contraception in the article demonstrates just how little will be done to stop the population explosion.

At a growth rate of 4% of population there is no way that the economic development of Yemen will ever keep pace with the population increase. The situation gets worse as time passes because the population growth is exponential, not linear.

The only way to reduce population (and this has been true in every country) growth to manageable levels is to promote contraception and family planning. This however will empower women at the expense of men.

Women will determine if they have a child, and will determine the size of the family (even if she is happy with just having one girl). Yemeni men will not be comfortable or accept this.

Therefore, as the article stated, people will talk about economic improvement, and education (note: not education that gives women control) and will ignore the issues that are so hard to deal with culturally for Arabs. And in the end there

will be famine and a crumbling society because birth rates will not decline while at the same time economic prosperity will.

Richard Rubright
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There's still some hope

God bless what you do at Yemen Times and many thanks for having so many bright minds. When I read your online edition I feel there is hope.

Happy New Year to all of you in Yemen.

Saeed Alkhulaidi
saeedco50@hotmail.com

Memories of Yemen

I enjoy reading your newspaper on the Internet at my home in the Rocky Mountains of America. It was my great privilege to visit Yemen in 2001. The country was fascinating and the people were friendly and warm. I enjoyed my time there very much and hope that someday I will return. I miss very much the rich heritage that is so abundant in Yemen.

I was part of a filming crew making a film on the famous Incent Trail. We were in Marib on September 11, 2001 and had to return home early because of the international problems. I must say that after September 11, our guides and

guards were more than thoughtful for our feelings. I love the way they were so sensitive to us.

How can I ever forget the great expressions of love and concern given to me? Yemen is a great country, but largely unknown by the rest of the world. I made great friends there, one of whom was a soldier and student at the University of Sanaa named Sameer Rawa. One of the most impressive people I have ever met. I love him very much and consider Sameer one of my greatest friends. Unfortunately, with the sad conflict in the world, I have lost contact with Sameer. I hope, God willing, that somehow I may once again have the joy of talking and writing to my great Yemeni friend. I send to all the people of Yemen my best wishes for your happiness and joy.

Peter Johnson
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Reiterating the motives
behind Iraq's war

If anyone is in doubt that the United States has invaded Iraq for its oil, they should look at headlines in today's news in the US. "U.S. Threatens Russia Over Ukos" What's this? Well, when the old USSR collapsed, the oil mafia based in the US rushed

to claim the Russian people's oil wells. And they got them. Now, after over a decade of bleeding the Russian people and refusing to pay taxes on their fat gains, Putin puts a halt to it and essentially nationalizes Ukos.

And who do you suppose is complaining about it? Fat Capitalists in the USA who initially stole the oil! They don't like the idea of sharing wealth with the people who own the wells, the citizens. So, you can expect after slaughtering a few hundred thousand Iraqis, Mr. Bush will have his Iraqi oil, too.

There is no chance that Iraqi citizens will be able to share in the wealth of Iraq. Mr. Bush will see to that so his friends become richer and richer and richer. There is only one chance for Iraq and that is for the Resistance there to boot out Mr. Bush and his oil mafia. A slim chance they have against helicopter gun ships, tanks and cluster bombs. It would appear that any country in the Middle East with good natural resources had better join up with Iran and Pakistan because the only thing Bush respects are nuclear weapons. Otherwise, kiss your resources goodbye.

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COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Abu Mazen didn't
say anything wrong

If Abbas Abu Mazen was to be able to relate to his fellow Palestinian listeners during his campaign for the Chairmanship of the Palestine Authority, about the only common factor that will put him at par with his listeners is that they are all victims of the transgressions of a state founded on demagogic chauvinistic principles. No one should forget that the state founded on the principles of Zionism, as it is called by its founders and advocates, came into being only after the indigenous people of Palestine, including Abu Mazen were all uprooted from their homeland. Let it be remembered also that to this very day the Zionist state is exerting all its energy towards eliminating any real hope of a Palestine state in one of the most brutal systematic ethnic cleansing campaigns of modern times. Thus, it is difficult to see the rationale for the outcry by the Zionist state and its worldwide network of supporting media against the reference made by Abbas Abu Mazen to the "Zionist enemy", because both words are still very much applicable to the facts on the ground in Palestine. Zionism has not been denounced by anyone within the Zionist state nor by any of Israel's supporters and the animosity towards the Palestinian people is manifested by the terrible persecution the Palestinians are being victimized by under Israeli occupation of the little that remains of Palestinian territory, which continues to shrink day by day. Surely a sweetheart would not be behaving in the manner that the Israelis have behaved ever since the Zionist state came into being. Surely the aggressive use of massive force against a relatively unarmed population, under different pretexts, but in the end leading to clearly defined Zionist objectives, has yet to find the sweet terms to describe it that will render it obsolete.

When one looks at the appalling descriptions of the anti occupation resistance is given in the Israeli official statements and the not very much differing language followed by the pro Zionist media in the west, no one hears criticism of the continuous association of resistance to occupation with terrorism, which is in fact one of the fundamental modus operandi of Zionist ideology. One is led to discern from Zionist propaganda that the Palestinians should have no gripes for being driven from their homes or for facing such harsh occupation policies that the whole world has time and again condemned. How many civilian Palestinians have been eliminated by so called retaliatory or "defensive" acts unleashed against helpless farmers, urban civilians or schoolchildren on their way home? Are these the acts of a friendly neighbor? Israel continuously calls the Palestinians and their leaders "terrorists" day and night, when the whole world recognizes that a cruel Israeli occupation is the root cause of Palestinian resistance. Israeli arrogance and insistence on its right of manifest destiny in the Holy Land can only be expected to lead to a legitimate right to defend whatever rights that the Palestinians still have a very fragile hold of. As such, unless Israel abandons its insistence that whatever it does against the Palestinians is right and legitimate and ignores any rights of the Palestinians, even as ordained by international law, then it can only be viewed as an enemy by the poor victims of this tortuous humiliating occupation.

If Abu Mazen did not say anything nice about the Israelis, then it is because there is really nothing nice to say about them from the perspective of the Palestinian constituents, who daily watch as Israeli tractors mow down donoms of their olive groves, without any consideration to the consequences of this on its owners, who are supposed to be cuddly with their "good neighbors", whose neighborhood has no territorial limits. So, people whose livelihoods are eliminated by a systematic campaign to disenfranchise them, not only of their human rights and civil liberties, but also of their right to dignified lives.

It should be borne in mind that there is nothing in Israeli attitude or behavior that is not inimical in spirit or deed and the fact is undisputed that such attitude or behavior is surely manifest of an engrained animosity embedded by Zionist doctrine and philosophy and ruthlessly interpreted on the ground by the most ferocious and inhumane tactics. So, if Abu Mazen, being the moderate that everyone likes to make out of him says the "Zionist enemy", he has clear justification by continued Israeli intransigence and arrogance and contempt for the rights of others against his people, who have already lost so much, especially nowadays, thanks to the unabashed stubborn Likudnik mentality that continues to prevail in the Israeli Government.

How sensitive the Israelis are to words uttered out of the frustration implanted by continuous Israeli aggression and how insensitive they are to the thousands of innocent lives that have fallen by Israeli ordnance and bullets. How sensitive are the Israelis to any criticism of their outrageously disproportionate "measures of retaliation or self defense" and how insensitive they are to the thousands of confined prisoners they are holding without due process and mostly without due cause (not to mention that the whole population of the West Bank and Gaza are all practically prisoners per se under a ruthless occupation that has no precedence ever since the days of the Nazi occupation of Europe.

Until the Israelis abandon their animosity towards the Palestinians and show that they are truly interested in a lasting peace, whether under Arafat or under Abu Mazen, then every Arab and Moslem at the grassroots level, and not just the Palestinians, will continue to view the Israelis as 'Zionist enemies', simply because that is how their actions define them and their attitude translates them. After all, it is they who forcefully implanted themselves on land that is not theirs by any edict, Divine or human and it is they who continue to unleash their systematic aggression against a helpless defenseless people, which can only be viewed as acts of animosity and surely do not connote any friendly inclinations perceived on the part of the Zionist enemy.

East and West

BY JAMIL ABDUL KARIM

When suffering doesn't make sense

Ever hear of the poor guy who kept pulling his own hair out because he was so worried that he was going bald? Ever feel like him? I do. After all, life can be uncertain, and when one feels very fortunate, there is always opportunity to worry that one's treasures might somehow, someday, all be lost.

Maybe I'm a bit like Job. You know Job. This ancient Middle East figure had everything, but in a strange twist of fate, lost it all overnight. His children, his vast riches, and finally his health: gone. All Job had left were so-called friends, and his wife, who told him to curse God and die, or at least fess up that he was being punished for some secret wrongdoing.

Interestingly, this timeless story begins by noting, like the man pulling his hair out, that what Job greatly feared is what eventually fell upon him.

In my case, I fear surgery. Of course, anyone else's surgery can be interesting. In the outback of Congo, I was once rather intrigued while photographing a Canadian doctor perform a surgery with only the early-morning sun for light.

The surgery I fear, however, is another type. In my better moments, I know there really is no need

to worry (for tomorrow has enough worries of its own.) But lately, maybe like you, I've been reminded of how dreadful this surgery can be, by the terribly-unexplainable tsunami disasters in southeast Asia.

It's the surgery of suffering.

In our more honest moments, we not only fear suffering, we have this terrible knowledge that we can't really avoid it. True, we can cause our own suffering. Smoke, and get cancer. Don't exercise, and get heart disease. But cancer and

heart disease can also strike anyone. Yes, suffering has this ugly, lurking randomness. We innately know if it didn't come like a killer wave in 2004, it will hit in '05 (Happy New Year), or in '06, or some other inopportune time. How disturbing.

Lost jobs, lost relationships, lost health, it can be one type of shattered dream or another. That's not 150,000 dead, but it still registers on our Richter scale as an incredibly brutal upheaval.

this should also help us deal with wonky people who claim that victims of disasters, especially natural disasters, are being divinely punished for their moral waywardness.

Regarding the tsunami disaster, as recently noted by Yemen Times publisher Walid al-Saqqaf, this is what some Muslim preachers here are telling the masses. (Not unlike some Christian leaders elsewhere, talking about, say, AIDS.) How incredible that these

Muslim clerics then still vilify the U.S., as usual for its foreign policies, while America is among the largest deliverers of aid to tsunami victims who happen to be largely Muslim. As Walid says, "How bizarre."

No, life is rarely so black and white. In fact, there's a mystery that says this life is like a hazy mirror. We can't see everything clearly, yet. Job was never told exactly why he had to suffer. Similarly, people in the developing world, already impoverished, may never know why they're the members of the human family who get more than their share of natural disasters. Sadly, this may even increase, as population and migration patterns move more of the world's poor closer to dangerous fault zones.

Yet, another mystery says "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Maybe this is why, in my observation, people in the Third World tend to have more humility, and even joy, than those in the "I-have-it-all-together" west. It seems that's what heart surgery does.

Maybe it can do the same for us spectators. No matter how much we may fear it all.

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Surgery, which can be an apt metaphor for human suffering, being performed in the early-morning light in Congo.

(Yemen Times photo by Jamil Abdul Karim)

In fact, if your experiences are like anything mine, you feel like you're being stretched, arms spread open, for some unseen force to rip into your insides and do things that you don't think are really all that necessary.

Thankfully, Job's misguided friends were wrong. When he finally got his personal meeting with the Almighty, Job was vindicated by a powerful yet loving God who blasted the others for their rotten advice. During our own hard times, this can be comforting. And

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An official source confirmed presence of security, and that media stories are mere lies

Iraq

By Samer A.

Reflections

By Yahya Al-Olfi
alolfi@hotmail.com

Iraqi and Palestinian elections

Real democracy or an American-made formula?

First and foremost I would like to express my condolences for all the victims of the typhoon-flood which was originated by the Indian Ocean's Tsunami earthquake, and thank endlessly nations and individuals doing anything to alleviate this human tragedy.

I also congratulate the safe release of the two French journalists and cannot wait to hear their real story and wonder whether France gave ransom or concessions, how and to whom. It remains a big unanswered question. I doubt that the French shall reveal its true ins and outs. Anyhow this is a digression from the subject which I would like to discuss today.

As we all know following 9/11, all Arab rulers were extremely shaky and afraid in that the USA shall keep its word, be serious and mad enough to impose real democracy on their cracking regimes. Now, almost three years have gone and nothing is in the offing. But on the contrary, Arabs now, have become entirely convinced that such an American intent was merely a chitchat and that America is better off with the current lucrative mode.

Paradoxically, America shall be soon put to the test, for elections are underway in the Israeli occupied Palestinian territories and in Iraq.

Many Mid-Eastern experts are already convinced that there be "elections" or "no elections" the result is already decided.

Allawi shall be the winner with regard to Iraqi Elections and in like manner Mahmood Abbas Abu Mazin in Palestine. If this is to happen the mistrust in American intents shall be enhanced even more because although both leaders are qualified for the job, they do lack the charisma and popular support. Iraqis refer to Allawi as an American puppet and Palestinians look dubiously at Mahmood Abbas Abu Mazin considering him an Israeli-American collaborator.

The Palestinian mistrust is mostly authenticated by the fact that Abu Mazin, when he was in office as the Palestinian head of government, merely gave concessions to Israel in return for nothingness. Remember his Sinai address which obviously cannot be reversed because he recently lambasted Israel as the "Zionist enemy" following the Israeli savage extermination of a Palestinian Farmer Family sinistery by means of three Abrams Tank-Shells while the poor souls were tilling the land.

Therefore, in order to divert more hatred and more extremism the Americans shall be wise enough to avoid implementation of democracy in both cases, according to the usual

Arab Style where only the accustomed 99.5% was merely lowered a bit here and there and believe it or not such lowering led to inter-Arab tensions. It is fairly presumable that even if both guys do get a 51 per cent win, still both peoples and all Arabs and for that matter Muslims would be doubtful concerning the veraciousness of such results.

I do believe that Palestinian figures such as Haydar Abdulshafi, Hannan Ashrawi and many others would fit for the post in the Palestinian case, if Americans and Israelis are seriously interested in resolving this loathsome conflict, although Abbas boasts Fatah Support.

As for Iraq I remember that my first article in Yemen Times was about this dilemma and I still think that my judgment is still valid, although I hope that the Iraqis can prove being more in advance of that opinion i.e. instead of power distribution along ethnic and sectarian lines a "secular governance policy".

Be that as it may, these two imminent events shall for sure shape up the few coming years of Mid-East events either to the best or to the worse. Can Bush and his aides disappoint everybody's expectations! I hope so, although based on the balance of probabilities I doubt it.

West has bloodied hands

By ERIC MARGOLIS
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Who was the first high government official to authorize use of mustard gas against rebellious Kurdish tribesmen in Iraq? If your answer was Saddam Hussein's cousin, the notorious "Chemical Ali" — aka Ali Hassan al-Majid — you're wrong.

The correct answer: Sainted Winston Churchill. As colonial secretary and secretary for war and air, he authorized the RAF in the 1920s to routinely use mustard gas against rebellious Kurdish tribesmen in Iraq and against Pashtun tribes on British India's northwest frontier.

Iraq's U.S.-installed regime has just announced al-Majid, one of Saddam's most brutal henchmen, will stand trial next week for war crimes.

Al-Majid is accused of ordering the 1988 gassing of Kurds at Halabja that killed over 5,000 civilians. He led the bloody suppression of Iraq's Shias, killing tens of thousands. These were the same Shias whom former U.S. president George Bush called to rebel against Saddam's regime, then sat back and

did nothing while they were crushed.

The Halabja atrocity remains murky. The CIA's former Iraq desk chief claims Kurds who died at Halabja were killed by cyanide gas, not nerve gas, as is generally believed.

At the time, Iraq and Iran were locked in the ferocious last battles of their eight-year war. Halabja was caught between the two armies that were exchanging salvos of regular and chemical munitions. If the CIA official is correct, the Kurds were accidentally killed by Iraq.

But it's also possible al-Majid ordered an attack. Kurds in that region had rebelled against Iraq and opened the way for invading Iraqi forces.

What's the difference between the U.S. destroying the rebellious Iraqi city of Fallujah and Saddam destroying rebellious Halabja? What difference does it make if you're killed by poison gas, artillery or 2,000-pound bombs?

"Chemical Ali" was a brute of the worst kind in a regime filled with sadists. I personally experienced the terror of Saddam's sinister regime over 25 years, culminating in threats to hang me as a spy.

Saddam Hussein and his

entourage should face justice. But not in political show trials just before U.S.-"guided" Iraqi elections nor in Iraqi kangaroo courts. They should be sent to the UN's war crimes tribunal in The Hague, where Saddam should be charged with the greatest crime he committed — the invasion of Iran, which caused one million casualties.

Britain, the U.S., Kuwait and Saudi Arabia convinced Iraq to invade Iran, then covertly supplied Saddam with money, arms, intelligence, and advisers.

Up to their ears Who supplied "Chemical Ali" with his mustard and nerve gas? Why, the West, of course. In late 1990, I discovered four British technicians in Baghdad who told me they had been "seconded" to Iraq by Britain's ministry of defence and MI6 intelligence to make chemical and biological weapons, including anthrax, Q-fever and plague, at a secret laboratory at Salman Pak.

The Reagan administration and Thatcher government were up to their ears in backing Iraq's aggression, apparently with the intention to overthrow Iran's Islamic government and seize its oil. Italy, Germany, France, South Africa, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Brazil, Chile

and the USSR all aided Saddam's war effort against Iran, which was even more a victim of naked aggression than was Kuwait in 1991.

I'd argue senior officials of those nations that abetted Saddam's aggression against Iran and supplied him with chemicals and gas should also stand trial with Ali and Saddam.

What an irony it is to see U.S. forces in Iraq now behaving with much the same punitive ferocity as Saddam's army and police — bombing rebellious cities, arresting thousands, terrorizing innocent civilians, torturing captives and sending in tanks to crush resistance.

In other words, Saddamism without Saddam. A decade ago, this column predicted that when the U.S. finally overthrew Saddam, it should know how Saddam is controlling his army from his prison cell, and the under the nose of the Americans.

Finally, let's not forget that when Saddam's regime committed many of its worst atrocities against rebellious Kurds and Shiites, it was still a close ally of Washington and London. The West paid for and supplied Saddam's bullets, tanks, gas and germs. He was our regional SOB. Our hands are very far from clean.

Vacancy

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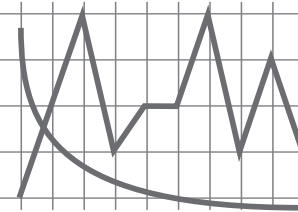
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Please, Make sure that your CV contains all required personal and Qualification information.

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YT Business



Many prices could rise

Lifting diesel subsidy has various implications

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	186.1300	186.3400
Sterling Pound	350.8600	351.2500
Euro	246.9700	247.2500
Saudi Rial	49.6300	49.6900
Kuwaiti Dinar	637.4100	638.1300
UAE Dirhem	50.6800	50.7400
Egyptian Pound	31.2300	31.2700
Bahraini Dinar	493.6900	494.2500
Qatari Rial	51.1400	51.2000
Jordanian Dinar	262.5000	262.7900
Omani Rial	483.4500	483.9900
Swiss Franc	159.3100	159.4900
Swedish Crown	27.3400	27.3700
Japanese Yen	1.7883	1.7904

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF
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Yemeni people are praying that the government would spare them the imposition of a fresh dose of price reforms in 2005, including the lifting of subsidiary on oil products.

Some are performing prayers pleading that the crisis between the authority and the opposition would end.

Amidst tension between citizens and politicians, economic experts say that rise in diesel prices would make people uneasy because diesel is an essential commodity. They use it daily in their farms, and work, as well as in passenger buses and other forms of transportation.

Farmers use diesel in their cars and also for water-pumps and ploughing machines.

In addition, companies and traders use this commodity in operating transport buses. Prices from everything from machines, telephones, communications, food and medicines, water, construction materials and imported commodities could all be affected with a rise in transport costs.

The Yemeni government is determined to lift subsidiary of diesel soon and that would result in the rise of prices of all

needs of the Yemeni citizen.

The Yemeni oil company, authorized for providing local market needs of oil products, says it buys diesel at a price of 69 YR a litre, which is a world price as the government says. But the company sells it to consumers for 17 YR.

The Yemeni government covers the difference in price that is about 52 riyals per litre. According to official the government pays more than YR 7 billion a month as subsidiary. The opposition considers that as a rightful right of the people from the share of the government of local production of oil.

Official reports point out that the volume of diesel subsidiary during the last month amounted to 75-85 billion YR, while they expected that the subsidiary could reach 110- 120 billion YR this year.

The Yemeni government says it has prepared plans for alleviating what it bears because of the yearly subsidiary for the diesel that has increased in late years.

Such plans include lifting the subsidiary. It is looking for solutions for the economic and social damage to be inflicted on the citizens and farmers for implementation of those plans.

Economic sources expect an increase in diesel prices by 80 to 100 per cent.

Yemen imports large parts of its diesel consumption at world price that is 50 riyals for a litre while it is sold for 17 riyals a litre.

That has created a large gap between the two volumes of supply and demand. Economic sources add that local consumption demand has doubled the problem due to its rise from 70 to 148 tons.

The sources confirm economic reforms would not be confined to the price value but would extend to taxes and customs also.

The negative impact would be focused on agriculture in the first place, while the government says it would take measures to alleviate those negative effects by implementing a strategy of fighting poverty that is dependent on support and aid of a fund for helping farmers and also discussion of exempting agriculture machines from customs and raising employees salaries.

The government also says it needs those amounts of money, offered for subsidizing oil products, to invest them in areas of development and enhancement of the national economy and the state budget.

It says that lifting the subsidiary would also bring the state huge resources enabling it to finance its projects without the need of loans.

The ordinary citizen, however, would not understand such justifications whether brought forward by the government through media or mosque preachers and others.

He wants to find an improvement in his living circumstances and drop in prices of consumer goods to be proportionate to levels of his income and purchasing power.

Restaurant standards discussed

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

TAIZ Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a meeting on issues of hygienic nutritional services for consumers in Taiz on Jan. 5.

The meeting included the General Manager of Health and Population bureau in Taiz, Abdul Nasser al-Kabab, who emphasized the necessity of finding solutions and treatments for whole issues facing the owners of restaurants and buffets to improve the nutrition services which are offered to the consumers.

Issues and difficulties in connection with the owners of the restaurants and buffets licenses of practicing the profession, the workers health card, and

the issue of uncovered food sold by the wandering sellers were discussed, as uncovered food is a source of disease.

The General Secretary of Restaurants and Buffets Owners Union, Abdul Fattah al-Sam'ey, has clarified that the Union has carried out numerous activities during the last period of its establishment, a part of which workshops were conducted aiming to acquire skills and upgrade standards.

Also in attendance were the General Manager of Public Works bureau, Hussain al-Qaladhy, the Director of Environment Health, Mansoor al-Abyadh, the Chairman of General Association of Crafts and Trades Unions, Abdul Alem al-Amery, the Head of Restaurants and Buffets Owners Society, Jameel al-Shaibani, the Management staff, and also members of the society.

A range of issues

The challenges of education in rural Yemen

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

One of the educationists said that the main barrier against the educational process in the rural areas in Yemen is the appointment of illiterate school principals. They are appointed on the base of tribal and political distinctions.

As education in the rural areas goes on the opposite direction, its outputs will be negative. Students usually go to work in the fields and the rural girl is prevented from continuing her education owing to social factors.

All these barriers hinder education in such areas and make its pace very slow and unable to cope with the technological advancements.

Lack of teachers

We met Sultan Al-Sabri, a teacher at Al-Nor School in Arhab District and he talked about education barriers in the area where he works. He said in brief, "Our school suffers from the lack of teachers and when a single teacher is responsible for teaching many classes, he will not be able to give the student adequate information."

There are many other barriers facing education in the rural areas such as the lack of restaurants to provide the teachers with meals. Due to this, the teacher resorts to embarrass himself and assigns some of the students to bring food from their homes to teachers at the school.

Another great barrier is reflected in the lack of visual aids that help the teacher carry out his duty easily and conduct some of the cultural activities that in turn develop the students' minds.

Education is a perseverance

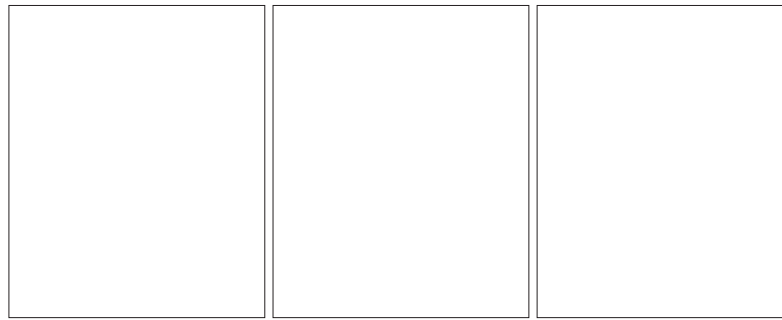
Nadeem Hizam, a teacher at Shaheed Yahya Ghaifar School, Hajjah Province, talked on the matter by saying: "Development in Yemen should be based on the provision of specialized teachers in the rural areas, specifically the scientific majors. Schools in such areas have to be equipped with labs that are thought of as the pillar in the practical respect."

In the rural areas, education is perseverance as libraries are not available and students are not controlled during the periods of the study. Discipline is important, particularly in the stages of primary education and books are not provided to the students as early as possible. To sum up, parents usually enroll their children even though they are still under the school age. This has its negative impacts on the educational process as the under school-age children can not understand the presentation of the teacher well."

Abdullah Ahmad Ali Saif, a teacher at Hittine School in Ibb said, "If we want to know the reality of education barriers, first we have to look at the reasons and backgrounds. The reasons can be attributed to the fact that teachers work in the opposite direction. We find that a geography teacher is teaching Arabic. Partisanship has its role in the appointment of school principles and this is counted one of reasons behind the deterioration of education."

Food for certificate

Ashjan Sa'eed, a female teacher at Shaheed Othman School in Saber District, Taiz noted, "When the students, both males and females, come on foot from remote distances, they feel bored and play truant." She also said that students can not have the books in the beginning of the educational year and this slows the



Abdullah al-Silwi

Mohammed al-Aliili

Nadim Hezam

pace of the educational process.

When the teacher waits for the students to bring him food, how the result will be. Undoubtedly it will be negative. In other words, the teacher will feel himself compelled to allow many students a chance for success even they do not deserve so.

Halima Sa'eed Al-Udaini from Al-Asrum says, "schools are not large enough to absorb the enrolled students. Students often sit on the floor, particularly in the primary stages. Schools in such areas suffer from the lack of teachers, specifically in the scientific specializations."

Kayed Al-Mansri working at Khauzaija School at Maghbana said, "the family can be thought of as one of the education's barriers because when the student engages himself with matters other than education, this hampers the process of development. The student can not attend the school but at the end of the educational year, he wants a certificate."

Besides, many teachers who have just graduated from university seem not to be qualified enough to bring up a successful generation; they can not communicate with younger children in a better way. We find that a female teacher comes from the city while being pregnant and pursue her work at one of Maghbana schools and then return home on the same day. How

can this woman do her duty?

Tribal school administrations

Teacher Abdullah Al-Saiwi noted, "reasons leading to the obstruction of the educational process in the rural areas in Yemen are primarily ascribable to 1) lack of awareness among students' parents about the importance of education, 2) students' work in farms due to the deteriorated living standards, 3) for the sake of success, students rely on their knowledge and relationship with the teacher, 4) the failure of the school administration to control the students because of the tribal climate, 5) lack of competent teachers due to the long distances, and 6) the educational inspectors do not visit such primitive areas to report what is going there."

Ahmad Hassan Principal of Abdullah Bin Rawah School in Mawyah explained, "schools in the rural areas suffer from the lack of books which are not provided on time, and it is realized that a single book is shared between more than two students. Students' parents form the primary reason behind the deterioration of education in the rural areas as they do not take care of their students."

He added, "The majority of students look at those who graduated from universities but are unemployed and

feel demotivated to continue their education.

Syllabuses and qat

Concerning the obstacles of education, Mohammad Al-Aili, one of the senior workers in the educational field and currently an inspector upon a number of schools in Taiz explained that the current syllabuses form great barriers for education. Many teachers find themselves unable to answer the exercises attached after every lesson. Most of the school principals are

qat sellers and this stands against the school administration.

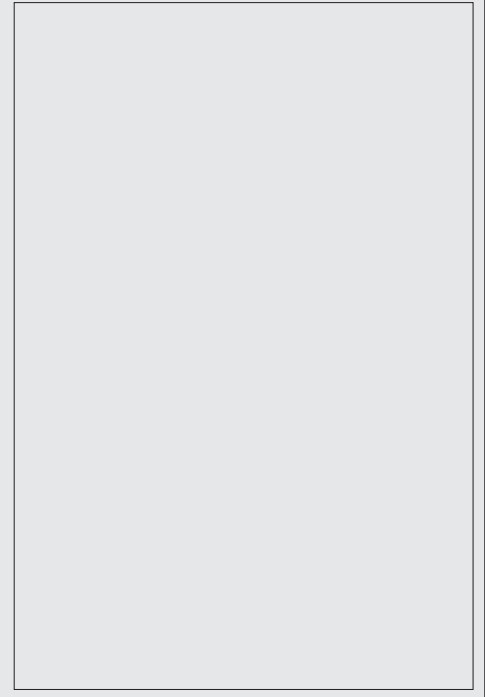
To sum up, the lack of educational measures in the appointment of school principals, either in the rural areas or in the cities forms a tremendous obstacle against the educational process in Yemen.

Concerning the distribution of teachers, nobody can move to the area he desires unless he pays YR 50,000. In a great number of schools, we find that many teachers are massed without work.

New book brought out

A book titled "The Interpretation of Ibn Al-Amir Al-Sana'ani" has recently been published by Al-Kalema Attaiba Center for Research and Studies. The two-volume work is a scientific thesis submitted by late female researcher Huda Mohammed Sa'ad Al-Qubati under the supervision of Dr. Adbulkarim Zaidan. The preface was written by judge Ismael bin Ali al-Akwa'.

The book is on the Ibn Al-Amir's interpretation of the Holy Quaraan and is considered to be a valuable reference.



Don't celebrate ...

The sugar season

By KAARE R. NORUM

For much of the world, the holiday season just past has been a time for festivity, and usually of overeating. But the rampant consumption of sugar that marks this time of year is nothing to celebrate.

In fact, this seasonal upsurge in sugar consumption is just part of a huge transition in world health that is now underway. Many countries, especially developing countries, are facing the consequences of huge changes in lifestyle: modifications in diet, lower levels of physical activity, and increased tobacco use.

These changes are determined, to a large extent, by the globalization and expansion of food markets, and by ever-greater levels of urbanization. Both of these factors incite sedentary behavior at home and at work, as well as profound alterations in dietary habits.

So it should be no surprise that noncommunicable diseases (NCD's), including cardiovascular diseases (CVD's), obesity, diabetes and cancer, now kill roughly 33 million people around the world each year, and cause almost 60% of total deaths. Indeed, they account for almost half the global burden of disease.

By 2020, that contribution is expected to rise to 73% of all deaths and 60% of the global burden of disease. Moreover, more than 60% these deaths occur in the developing world, and here NCD's increasingly appear in younger age groups, which can have huge implications for how productive a country's workers are.

Recent data from China reflect the

extent of the problem. In China's rural areas, with more than 800 million people, NCD's account for more than 80% of deaths.

Many countries are now afflicted by a double burden of diseases. Countries that still struggle with malnutrition and illnesses like malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, now must contend with an explosion of CVD's, diabetes, and obesity, as well as soaring rates of high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

Indeed, five of the 10 leading causes of death worldwide are related to diet and physical activity: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, low intake of fruit and vegetables, high body mass index, and insufficient exercise. Clearly, effective strategies to tackle the NCD burden require a critical examination of what people are eating and their levels of physical activity.

The World Health Organization, together with a group of international experts, has developed a global strategy on diet, physical activity, and health over a period of 18 months through an extensive series of consultations in more than 80 countries, and with the input of United Nations bodies, civic groups, and food producers. One of the strategy's key conclusions is that reducing the burden of NCD's requires a multi-sectoral approach. Like a toolbox, the strategy provides WHO members with a comprehensive range of policy options from which to choose.

Governments can act. Transport ministries should provide safe roads so that children can bike to school. Finance ministers could tax unhealthy food and subsidize healthy food. Education ministers should demand

healthy school meals.

Many countries are already developing their own national strategies. Most of what WHO is recommending has been endorsed by public health officials for many years. But we face a global problem, with many international stakeholders, and this requires an urgent and worldwide response.

Of course, there is considerable debate about what precisely makes for a healthy diet. This debate is both welcome and to be expected; improving diet and finding ways to increase physical activity is a complex issue. Moreover, there will always be groups with their own interests, using arguments that we do not have sufficient evidence to act. But there has been no challenge to the strategy's recommendations from the global scientific or public health community.

The strongest critique has come from sugar associations, who claim that the upper limit of 10% on caloric intake from sugar is not based upon scientific evidence. However, more than twenty national and international reports from around the world by scientific bodies governing dietary recommendations set similar or lower targets for sugar intake.

The growing NCD and CVD burden is a time bomb for world health. The implementation of the WHO's strategy could lead to one of the largest-ever positive shifts in human health, putting populations throughout the world on pathways to lifelong and sustained improvements in well-being.

Kaare R. Norum is Professor of Medicine and Nutrition, University of Oslo.



Department of English, Faculty of Languages, Sana'a University,
organizes a symposium on ...

Globalization, Yemen and the English language

FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The symposium opened with recitations from the Holy Qura'an. Prof. Tariq Al-Jenabi, Dean, Faculty of Languages welcomed the guests and delegates. In his address Prof. Jenabi explained the significance of the theme. He said the whole world has become a global village and this new situation calls for a readjustment. He felt happy that the English department has organized a symposium on this topic. He appreciated the efforts made by Prof. A. K. Sharma and Dr M A Shamsher and hoped that in future the department will be able to organize still bigger events. Dr Shamsher in his brief intervention explained how the arrangements for the symposium were made within record time.

Introducing the theme Prof. A K Sharma, Head, Dept of English, presented his paper on Globalization, Yemen and the English Language. He observed that the term globalization was used in several senses, but we must accept that this phenomenon has significantly influenced the society and higher education of every country and the Republic of Yemen is no exception. He further said that the importance of English language has considerably increased in the wake of globalization. We may now call it a global language. He noted that the myth of the 'native speaker' has been demolished and now the important criterion is that of intelligibility and comprehensibility. He ended his paper with the hope that this symposium would discuss the present status of English in Yemen in view of globalization.

It should also discuss the present and future needs of English in Yemen and whether the English departments in different universities in Yemen in their present form are capable of coping with and catering to the changing and expanding needs of English in Yemen. The discussion should also focus on whether the objectives of ELT need to be re-determined, curricula reframed, materials recast, methodology reviewed and the quantum of teaching increased. He also stressed that a large scale and broad-based analysis of the needs of English in Yemen is required and another highly focussed symposium needs to be organized to explore the issue further.

Prof D Thakur, Chairman, Dept of English, Faculty of Arts, delivered the Presidential address. He recalled how, when he joined Sana'a university, he found only a few students interested in English. He noted that the situation has completely changed. Now there is a

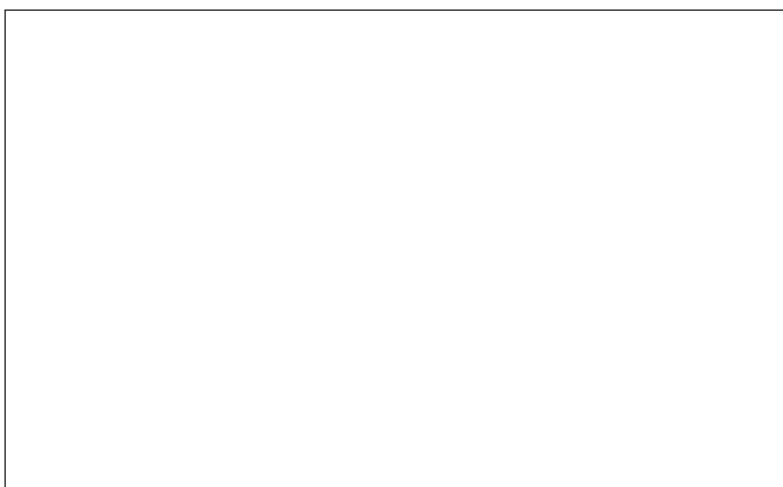
huge rush for admission to the English courses. By means of a fairy tale he underlined the importance of setting the goals and defining the objectives called for in the context of globalization. He said that English is now in the hands of the vast majority which uses it in the world. He added that almost one-third of Indians speak English. He said Yemen should produce its own teaching materials in English and develop a national text in accordance with the local needs.

Prof R.S Sharma read a paper on English studies in Yemen under the global perspective. An outline of the paper had been published in Yemen Times in July 2004. He explained the global perspective through a diagram and outlined the various aspects of English language teaching in the expanding perspective of Yemen, the Arab world, developing nations, and the global frame work. He made an attempt to describe the salient features of world English. Such as r-pronouncing, syllable distinctive and multi-choice. He made a strong plea for the inclusion of eminent authors from four groups -African, Caribbean, African-American and Indian-Pakistani. He argued that these authors can make an intimate appeal to the Yemeni students because their society and cultures are close to Yemen -historically, culturally and socio-economically.

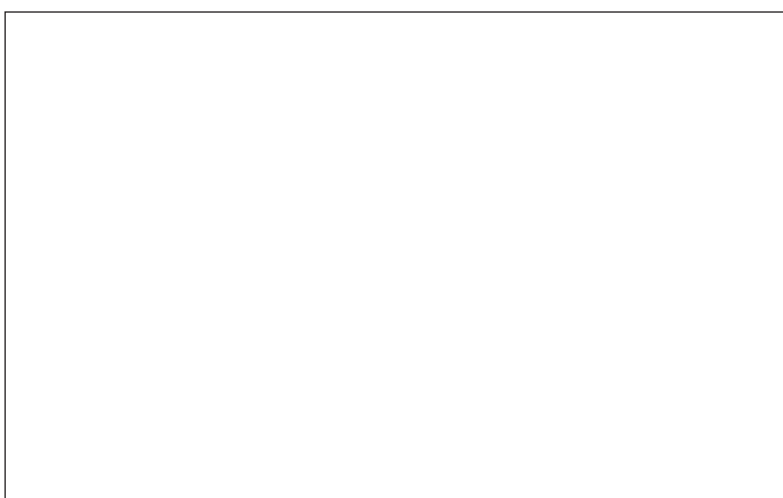
The next speaker was Prof Talib Abdul Rahman. He noted that the publication of ELT materials is a thriving industry and hinted at the vested interests. He observed that the factors behind the rise of English must be taken collectively. The most important thing is that English is the medium of the internet including the search engines which now can display required matter in thousands of internet pages. All this knowledge is accessible through the medium of English. We must prepare ourselves and the students of English for exploiting the vast resources of knowledge made available by the electronic media.

Dr Ayed Sarhan contended that globalization is something to be reckoned with and we cannot wish it away. He discussed in detail the positive and negative elements of globalization and felt that the local culture was under erosion and several topics in the text books of English, such as family planning, had no relevance in the Yemeni society.

Next speaker Prof R K Jayaraman attempted a close analysis to expose the link between capitalism and globalization. He pointed out that the project of Council of Europe in English teaching has been widely accepted under the com-



L-R: Prof. A. K. Sharma, Head, Prof Abdul Rahman Abdrabou, Dr M A Shamsher, 9ice Dean on the dais.



L-R: Dr. A. K. Sharma, Head, and Prof D. Thakur listening to the deliberations in rapt attention.

municative approach, although the syllabi do not answer the requirements of Yemen. He laid emphasis on very careful planning and well-thought-out language policy. He further said that English is chiefly required by us as library language and so much for oral communication.

Dr Mohammed Othaman Naif contended that the process of globalization cannot be stopped. We must adapt ourselves to the new situation and concentrate on acquiring English for use in business career advancement.

Ms Najat Ali Al-Badani enlarged the scope and the format of the discussion by highlighting some of the ideas of Chomsky. She said language defines the very process of thinking. She added that English is the language of world community and, as part of the world community, we must assign a central place to English in our studies. She observed that the task of learning English in the context of Yemen is fraught with difficulties such as lack of competent teachers and teaching aids. We must develop a fresh attitude to English. She suggested that English teaching should be made learner-centered and teachers should also realize their responsibility.

Next speaker Hanan Khusrouf expressed the opinion that globalization was full of challenges and also uncertainties. She agreed that English has become the working language of mass communication but there was also unwholesome Americanization vis-a-vis the native culture.

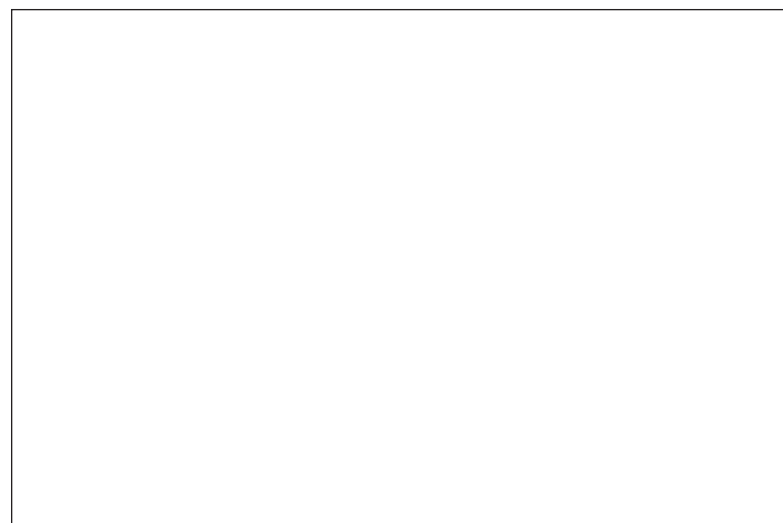
In his brief remarks Prof Thakur observed that the world was changing fast and we must adjust ourselves to the new situation.

The second session began with Prof Abdul Rahman Abdrabou as Chairperson. The first speaker Dr U K Mishra dwelt at length on the problem of standardization of Global English. He argued that like democratization, Globalization is serving a purpose. He observed that English is used very widely and quoted McArthur to suggest that different varieties of English will co-exist for some time. He enumerated the process that are contributing to the development of Global English and that the earlier attitude of chauvinism has disappeared.

Dr Saleh Ahmad Saif traced the development of English language and its expansion throughout the world. In the modern age, English is used widely in many countries and it has enriched itself

by tapping various sources. English was introduced in the south of Yemen much before it reached north Yemen. He pointed out the problems like poorly equipped teachers and low-quality students. He pleaded for an intensive course for weak students.

Next speaker Dr Rajesh Kumar



L-R: Prof. Jayaraman, making his presentation. Prof. A. K. Sharma, Head, Prof D. Thakur on the chair.

focussed his attention on teaching writing skills. He said, on the one hand, globalization promoted the use of English and on the other English has become an instrument of globalization. Globalization, according to him, demolished the national barrier and what is needed is to restructure and modernize writing courses in accordance with the new needs generated by globalization. Teachers are also expected to adjust themselves to the new situation. He ended by suggesting that, instead of regarding English as a foreign language, we must treat it as an additional medium.

Dr M A Shamsher mooted the proposal of partnership between the university and western NGOs so far as the teaching of English was concerned. He explained that this will make it easier for the university to procure native teachers and modern teaching aids free of cost. He also informed the audience about the progress already made in this direction.

Dr. Abdul Hamid A M Shuja'a dwelt on the teaching of business English which is the call of the day because many multinationals have set up their offices and centres in Yemen and thus have given a new perspective to the requirements of English as a medium. There is a need, he

A letter to the teachers of English: 71

Teaching a poem in the secondary class (1)

DR. M.N.K. BOSE
(BOSE@y.net.ye)
Associate Professor of
English,
Faculty of Arts, Ibb.

Dear Fellow teachers,

Teaching a poem is more difficult than teaching a prose passage but the benefits of teaching a poem are great and so we have to teach poems to our learners. With this in mind, a poem has been included in the CECY PB 6. Before we look at how to teach this poem interestingly and effectively to our students, let's discuss something in general about poems and the teaching of poems.

A poem is the gentlest way of expressing one's personal feelings. A poem is the mildest outburst of mighty emotions. Like mercy blesses the giver and the taker, a poem enlivens the writer and the reader. We speak of poetic language, when we are touched by whatever we read, prose or poetry. Poems do have a soothing influence on human beings. We still hear in our inner ears the lullabies of our mothers that put us to sleep, when we were children. We are aware of the folksongs in our countryside that are sung on various occasions for various purposes. As some one said, we live with songs from birth to death.

One can wonder if our students need to learn poems in a foreign language like English; aren't the poems in their mother tongue enough? Enough, but isn't it good to learn the expressions of personal feelings in another language? Doesn't the reading of poems in English make us better human beings with the exposure to poetry in another language that is used worldwide? Arabic, being an ancient language, is rich with poems and folksongs; Arabs have poems and songs in their blood. The variety of dances and songs that are present all over Yemen is a big proof. We, as teachers of English, should make a capital out of this inherent characteristic of Arabic learners of

English. We should nurture this love of poetry in our learners and make the best use of it for developing in them a love for poetry in English.

In addition to exposing our learners to the personal feelings of the poets, poems stick in our learners' minds without conscious effort because of their rhythmic pattern of sounds and words. Poems provide our learners with significant things, such as nobility, virtue, mercy, war, nature etc to talk about, either in English or Arabic. Exposing our learners to a range of poems may be a motivation to write poems in English. My observation over these eight years in Yemen is that more students are bold enough to try writing poems, some very good ones, even if their understanding of the poems they learn in the classes is not satisfactory. There is hardly an issue of the Yemen Times Education page without a poem by a Yemeni student; girls often outwit the boys in their contributions. Similarly, the periodic magazines produced in the Departments of English in most of the Universities are full of poems written by the students.

In this favorable atmosphere, teaching a poem should be a pleasant experience to the teachers in schools and colleges. But what spoils the experience in the colleges is the careless selection of poems. Most of the selections are outmoded and archaic; some of them are against the culture of the students. I remember one of my students telling me that her friends in another department raised their eyebrows in surprise and dislike, when they heard her discussing a particular poem taught in her class with her classmates in her leisure. This is just one example; some of the selections are found interfering with their accepted norms in life, creating cultural shock. On the other hand, students at a higher level do enjoy poems in English and attempt to develop their creative abilities writing poems in English. More to come in the next letter.

Yours fraternally,
Dr.M.N.K. Bose.

said, to make the teaching of business English need-oriented. In his words, efforts should be made to bring the job market to the class-room.

Mr Khalid Al-Mawery focused his

speaker.

As a concluding item the participants agreed on certain recommendations and proposals to be treated as the final achievement of the symposium. It was suggested that these proposals be submitted to the university for consideration. The following recommendations deserve to be mentioned:

- Ability to use English is necessary for taking full advantage of globalization for Yemen.
- Necessary precaution must be taken in order to minimize the adverse effects of globalization in the Yemeni society and culture.
- Minimum general intelligibility of English must be ensured.
- Systematic efforts toward language planning must be undertaken.
- English as library language needs to be strengthened at various levels.
- Need-based courses should be framed especially at higher levels.
- Departments of English should enter into a partnership with suitable NGOs.
- Involving the market in the teaching of English in Yemen should be considered as an option- this includes industry-sponsorship of English courses.

Winding-up the proceedings, Dr Abdrabou in his Presidential remarks appreciated the efforts of Dept of English and praised the participants for their important contributions.

Dr M A Shamsher presented the vote of thanks in which he lauded every one who made a contribution to the success of the symposium. He especially mentioned Tadhamon International Islamic Bank, Sana'a which generously provided financial support without which it would have been impossible to organize the event.

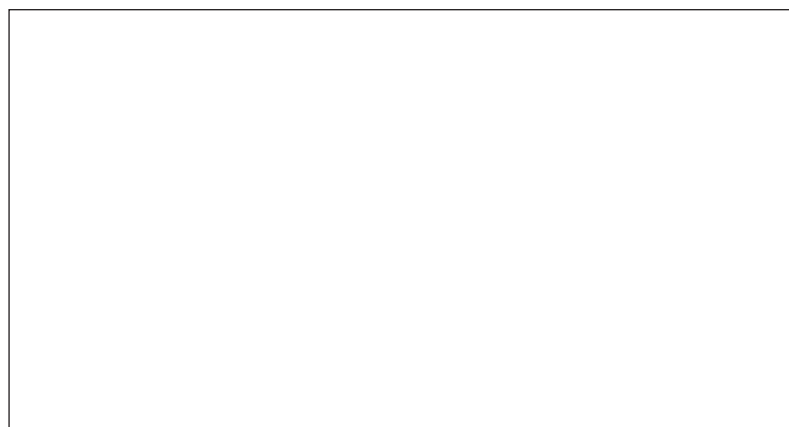
Childhood friend

Goodbye to you my trusted friend,
We have known each other since we were four or five.
Together we climbed hills and trees,
Learned of love and A, B, C,
Stunned our hearts and skinned our knees.
Good bye, my friend!
It is hard to die
When all the birds are singing in the sky.
Now that the spring is in the air
Pretty girls are every where

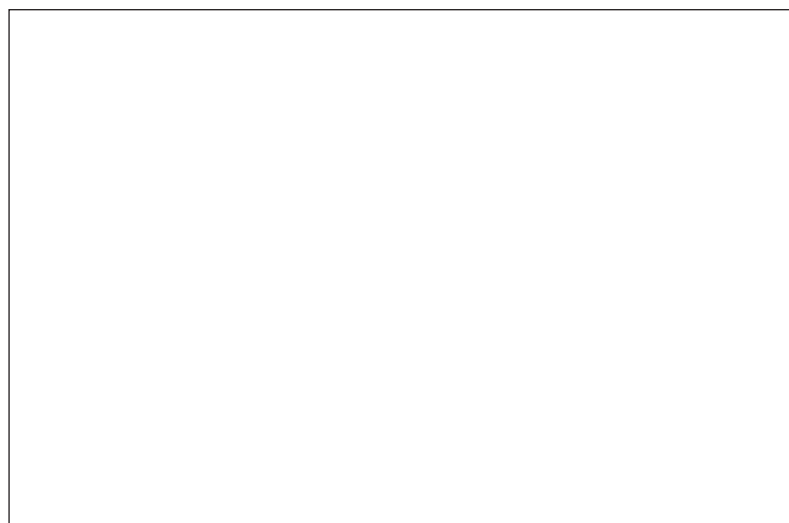
Think of me and I will be there.
We had joy, we had fun, we basked happily in the sun,
But the hills that we climbed were just out of tune.
With the flowers everywhere I wish that we could both be there.
Good bye, my childhood friend,
You gave me love,
Which helped me find the sun.
Every time that I was down you would always come around.
And get my feet back on the ground.
With the flowers everywhere I wish that we could both be

there.
Good bye, Papa, please pray for me.
I was the black sheep of the family.
You tried to teach me what's right and what's wrong
With too much juice and too much song, I wonder how I got along.
Little children everywhere,
When you see them I will be there.

By Ekram Abdallah
Level 3, Faculty of Education
University of Science and
Technology, a



L-R: Prof. A. K. Sharma, Head, giving his address as Prof. Mohammed Jenabi, Dean, and Prof D. Thakur look on.



Prof Abdul Rahman Abdrabou (R) addressing the assembly as Prof. A. K. Sharma, Head, listens intently.

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Tsunami aftermath

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

As is everyone, we are shocked in saddened by the great loss of life and the suffering of the survivors in the Indian Ocean region.

There are not many news reports about the effects in Seychelles and Mauritius, but we have been receiving several communications from both countries and are pleased to report that the situation there is nowhere as serious as elsewhere.

Mauritius escaped relatively unscathed. There was some flood damage in low-lying areas and on nearby island of Rodrigues, but few injuries and no loss of life.

Because of the distance from Sumatra, the tsunami had about eight hours to spread its force out over a very large area and so the Seychelles were not hit by a huge wave, although there were very large tides of about two to three meters that flooded low-lying areas of the Inner Islands. Although there was a fair amount of water damage on Mahe and Praslin, the tourism industry was only inconvenienced. Two resorts have been closed temporarily but all others remain operational.

Reports are that tourists are helping residents with the cleanup and are otherwise still enjoying their holidays. Almost all other infrastructure is in good working order. The outer islands suffered no adverse affects at all as they

are in the open ocean not in the Seychelles Shelf. The country's death toll currently stands at between one and three, depending on reports. The Seychelles depends on its tourism industry and so one of the best ways is to support the country is to visit it.

In the Maldives, there are more than 100 people reported dead or missing after huge tsunamis battered the atoll nation. With the

death toll expected to rise as the full extent of the damage on remote atolls in the tourist paradise becomes clear, residents say that a whole island was underwater.

President Mamoun Abdul Gayoum has declared a state of disaster throughout the low-lying coral islands scattered about 800 km across the equator.

The tiny airport island of Hululle was reopened earlier today, with

workmen pumping out water that inundated the runway and clearing the way for a stranded Sri Lankan airlines airbus to take off. The entire island of Dhiffushi, a prime tourist destination, was submerged and would have to be rebuilt from scratch. We also learned that at the nearby Thulusdhoo island there was no electricity and food.

The deadly waves have devastated the archipelago noted

for its unspoiled beauty across 1192 coral fringed islands that are a popular tourist destination. Hundreds of foreign tourists are still stranded there. Two Pakistani navy ships joined relief efforts, evacuation hundreds of tourists stranded on an island by tidal waves. They evacuated tourists and local stranded in Mino atoll, which is considered to be the worst hit area.

From Sir Lankan city of Galle we hear about the high level of

cooperation among survivors. The current death toll is expected to rise and many will remain unaccounted for.

The Arab Association in Singapore, has told the Yemen Times that they are organizing help and assistance to all those within their reach.

The Yemen Time is extending warm greetings of the season to Yemeni communities and their families throughout South East Asia.

Acehnese men burn wreckage of a tsunami-hit ship in the provincial Indonesian capital of Banda Aceh Jan. 4. Aid workers cleared landing strips flooded tsunami-hit regions to start flying food, clean water and doctors to hungry and injured survivors, but the global relief operation continued to struggle on Tuesday. REUTERS



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