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Amnesty International appeals for release of Al-Khaiwani - See page 2

Historic elections apparently successful

Iraq votes



Story on page 5

Iraqi voters queue outside a polling station in the capital Baghdad Jan. 30. Millions of Iraqis flocked to vote in a historic election Sunday, defying insurgents who killed 25 people in bloody attacks aimed at wrecking the poll. Iraqis, some ululating with joy, others hiding their faces in fear, voted in much higher-than-expected numbers in their first multi-party election in half a century. Election commission officials put the turnout at 72 percent. **Reuters**

Trial begins in New York City

Al-Moayad faces 60 years

NEW YORK, Jan 28 (Reuters) - A Yemeni sheikh and his aide planned to provide millions of dollars to al Qaeda and Hamas in an FBI sting operation set up in Frankfurt, the federal U.S. prosecutor said in opening statements at their trial on Friday.

But defense lawyers countered that Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad and Mohammed Mohsen Yahya Zayed were victims of entrapment in an "unfair and coercive" situation manipulated by the U.S. government.

Al-Moayad, 56, faces more than 60 years in prison if convicted of providing material support to the militant groups.

Zayed, 31, faces more than 30 years for his role in the conspiracy if convicted. Prosecutors say the pair were involved in a long-running effort to funnel cash to the groups.

Four days of videotaped meetings between the defendants and FBI undercover agents in a Frankfurt hotel in January 2003 formed the crux of the government's case.

"They talked about funneling millions of dollars to two of the world's most vicious terrorist organizations — al Qaeda and Hamas," said prosecutor Kelly Moore.

Moore said meetings, set up by the FBI in conjunction with German law enforcement, started with them putting their hands on the Koran "swearing silence." Moore said al-Moayad had ties to al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and had bragged about having "taught him about Islamic law."

The sheikh's lawyer, William



Al-Moayad

Goodman, said the operation and the case it spawned was like a bad television show.

"It was meticulously staged. They had actors, they had directors and they had sound technicians. In the end what they produced was a reality show," said Goodman, who also said his client only listened to the pitches from the under-

cover officers, who promised money for the sheikh's legitimate charities and for medical treatment for his severe diabetes if he supported Hamas and al Qaeda.

Jonathan Marks, lawyer for Zayed, said his client was set up by an FBI desperate in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks for victories in the Bush administration's

war on terror.

"Forget about all this smoke about how horrible terrorism is," said Marks, appealing to the jury to keep emotions out. "We all know how horrible terrorism is."

The government's case may have been hurt by several rulings and developments just before the trial.

The judge ruled that prosecutors could not display three items they planned to use as corroboration for taped conversations. And the prosecution decided against calling its main informant to testify. The informant, Mohamed Alanssi, set himself on fire outside the White House in November, in an apparent suicide attempt after claiming he had been mistreated by the FBI. The trial is expected to last about six weeks.

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After 18 days Saudi still hostage

BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Almost three weeks after taking him, armed tribesmen from the tribe of Suhar al-Sham in Sada'a continue to hold a Saudi citizen hostage.

They're demanding that he give them back money, some 400,000 Saudi Riyals, they claim they gave him when they were in Saudi several months ago.

The Yemeni authorities gave the tribes an ultimatum that ended last Saturday to release the hostage, Abdullah Mufareh al-Wad'ee, without any condition.

They have even taken 10 people of their tribe as hostages of their own, to pressure the release of the Saudi national who was on a medical trip to Yemen with his wife. His wife was freed immediately.

The tribesmen kidnapped Mufareh al-Wad'ee 18 days ago.

The chief of Suhar al-Sham Ali Abdullah Sabhan said that one of the tribesmen named Mohammed Mufareh went to Saudi Arabia and met al-Wad'ee and another person who is his nephew Naser Yahia Mufareh. Both are his friends.

They took the money and put it in the bank under the account of someone called al-Kahtani who is familiar

to the two Saudis, until the Yemeni tribesmen were to acquire a tractor.

When he wanted the money back, they kept lingering. He was fed up and went back to his tribe to ask for their support, which is a tribal convention.

The chief of the tribe refused to call it kidnapping. "It is not kidnapping, he was not kidnapped, he was seized and is given hospitality till the money is handed back," said Sabhan.

He said that he is with the idea that the hostage should be handed to the Yemeni authorities which should settle down the scores between the two parties. However, relatives of the kidnappers dismissed the possibility of releasing the hostage before getting the money back.

On their part, the sons of the hostage urged in an interview with The Yemen Times that the Yemeni and Saudi authorities set their father free.

They claimed that their father "has nothing to do with the money." They said that the issue should be settled through the law and the authorities in the two countries.

Sheikh Musfer Yahia Al Hussien from Wade'a tribe in Saudi Arabia told The Yemen Times that he tried his best to sort out the problem but to no avail. "We do not know about the ten hostages or their names," he added.

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Amnesty International issues an appeal for the release of Al-Khaiwani

Amnesty International, the international advocate for political opponents or common citizens who have been mistreated by their own or other governments for the political beliefs they harbor or for no reasons at all, or in violation of their civil and human rights, made an international public appeal for the release of Abdul-Karim Al-Khaiwani, Editor-in-Chief of the Al-Shoura Newspaper, the mouthpiece of the United Popular Forces party. In its article containing the appeal, issued in the February issue of Wire, which the Yemen Times got an advance copy of a background of the case was given, indicating that Mr. Khaiwani was arrested and tried without proper due process and was subjected to intimidation and harassment and roughing up in jail. Al-Khaiwani was alleged to have supported Al-Houthi and made some frank editorial comment vis a vis the ruling authorities. For this Al-Khaiwani was sentenced to a year in prison and his newspaper was shut down for six months. The case has aroused widespread condemnation from local and international human rights watch-dog organizations and has caused most independent Yemeni journalists to seek his release, including staging a demonstration in front of the President of the Republic, Ali Abdullah Saleh.

AI believes that Mr. Al-Khaiwani is subject to undue excessive treatment by the Government for his beliefs and regards him as a conscientious objector. This is what AI had to say about

the case and why it feels that the case warrants the concern of AI and all freedom loving people and human rights activists and supporters throughout the world:

"AI is concerned at reports that Abdul Karim al-Khaiwani has been beaten on at

least two separate occasions by other prisoners. AI calls on the authorities to ensure that he is protected from harm and to launch an impartial investigation into the allegations. Colleagues were reportedly refused permission to visit Abdul Karim al-Khaiwani until December 2004, over three months after his arrest and subsequent detention. His appeal, set for the beginning of December, was delayed until January. At the time of writing, the outcome of his appeal was unknown. Seven other journalists working for al-Shura were reportedly summoned to court for questioning in connection with articles they had written and are awaiting the court's verdict.

Please write, calling on the government to release Abdul Karim al-Khaiwani or charge him with a recognizably criminal offence and give him a fair trial including the right to appeal. Call on the authorities to allow him access to lawyers, visits and medical assistance if necessary.

Send appeals to: His Excellency Dr Rashad Muhammad Al-Alimi, Minister of the Interior, Ministry of the Interior, Sana'a, Yemen. Fax: + 967 1 332 511

In Sana'a, Hajja and Saadah Zaidi clerics persecuted

BY MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Dr. Sheikh Al-Murtadha Zaid Al-Muhawwari, director of Badr Centre for Islamic Studies expressed his deep sorrow over arrests and the pursuit of some Zaidi clerics especially in Sana'a and Saadah, a province northwest Sana'a, for celebrating Al-Ghadir Day (The Day of the Brook), one of the religious festivals of the Shi'ite.

He told the Yemen Times, "What does it mean when the state prevents the celebration of a religious occasion which Muslims have been celebrating since ancient in history all around the world? Where is religious freedom and the freedom of faith claimed by Yemeni officials?"

He further exclaimed: "Why are we denied conducting our own religious rituals in Yemen while all other religions and creeds are practicing theirs including Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism? Why is this hostile stand against Zaidism (a sub-sect of Shi'ite)?"

Dr. Muhawwari added, "We know well who benefits from this hostile stance and mischief against Zaidism. They aim to strike at the national solidarity. They are the Wahabi groups besetting the president and the prime minister. It is they who implant troubles and crises in this country, not only now, but since long ago. If they keep doing the same thing, the country would fall down the brink."

Fiery his statement was, yet he was hopeful that president Saleh's wisdom would contain the situation and "give directives to address the problem."



Dr. Sheikh Al-Murtadha Al-Muhawwari

Well-informed sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, supplied the Yemen Times with names of religious figures detained to pledge not to celebrate the Ghadir Day.

The data says: "On January 22, a number of Sana'a mosque imams and preachers, including clerics Abdul-Karim Allahiji, Hafidh Al-Sayyani and Mohammed Al-Ghathi, were summoned to the headquarters of the Political Security (national intelligence body) to promise not to celebrate the Ghadir Day."

According to the same sources, security elements stormed the Zahra'a Woman Awareness Center in the old city of Sana'a, which is managed by scholars Mohammed Al-Mansour and Hamoud Al-Moayad. The security was led by head of the Penal Prosecution. They ran

sacked the center, seized several documents and shut it down. They also screamed abuse at women.

The list extends to cover Hajja province where, the sources said, cleric Hassan Al-Na'ami and student Yasser Al-Khazzan were arrested for allegedly preparing to copy a religious pamphlet to be distributed on the Ghadir Day. A number of other religious personalities were summoned by deputy governor of the province who forced them to write down pledges not to celebrate the occasion in the future.

And in Saadah, where the situation is fiercest, security and military forces were deployed in many areas. Checkpoints were set up on roads and in densely-populated zones, particularly those which saw the clashes between followers of Hussein Badr Addin Al-Houthi and state's forces, causing thousands of deaths from among civilians and the armed.

The September 26 Newspaper, organ of the military forces, published a decision it described was issued by an official, to prohibit celebration of the Ghadir Day on the basis that such a festival is contrived is not originated in the Islamic Holy Book or Sunna.

The sources quoted the newspaper as saying: "The so-called Ghadir Day is one of the destructive notions alien to the Islamic creed and the Yemeni people who adhere Allah's Book and the Prophet's Sunna. The Yemeni people reject any practices incongruous with their convictions. Besides, such practices engenders mischief and breaks national unity."

Readers' Voice

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

This edition's question:

Now with elections in Iraq over, do you have more hope that Iraq will have a democratic and stable future?

Yes, I have more hope. No, I don't have more hope.

last edition's question:

Do you think that the pledge of President Saleh to protesters to speed up the trial of Al-Khaiwani would yield results?

No 70% Yes 30%

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

Gas cylinder crisis in Taiz

People in Taiz are suffering a bitter crisis in finding domestic gas cylinders, after the price for the gas refilling went up YR 500 per cylinder, to YR 1000 during the Eid days.

General Secretary of the Local Council and Taiz Governorate Deputy, Mohammed al-Haj, had stated that the Ministry of Petroleum had decreased Taiz's share of gas from 12 to 7 trailers.

GATD to hold medical conference

Taiz - The General Authority for Tourism Development (GATD) is due to hold a medical investment conference in the coming month of February with the participation of a number of Italian and Yemeni physicians.

Sadiq Salah, Director General of the GATD, said that the conference will discuss a number of work papers, studies and researches forwarded by the participants concerning the injuries of traffic accidents and their consequences.

The participants also discussed the most important techniques employed in treating injuries.

The conference is to adopt the idea of performing surgical operations in a number of Taiz hospitals with the help of some skilled Italian physicians.

Salah emphasized that the conference will be a medical opportunity for tourism promotion in the governorate through the arrangement of field visits.

The GATD is preparing to host the conference as well as to repair the tourist hotels and provide visitors with adequate accommodation.

Groom dies at his wedding

TAIZ BUREAU

Happiness was changed into tragedy last week in Al-Damgha Jabal Saber when the bridegroom Mondher A. Al-Sabri, 25, was killed by electric shock on the second day of his wedding.

Mondher was in an attempt to remove the lamps used as an ornament for his wedding party but he lost his life due to an electric shock. Afterwards the groom was transferred to the Republican Hospital so that he could be saved but of no avail.

The happy marriage changed into tragedy for the bereaved bride and relatives of the groom.

826 terror suspects to be tried

More reform for extremists

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Dialogue Committee is preparing to begin its fifth round of dialogue to meet with followers of Hussein Al-Houthi.

Al-Houthi was killed last September after three months of fighting between his armed supporters and government forces in north Yemen.

According to Judge Hamoud Al-Hitar, head of the Dialogue Committee, in the last round 176 out of 350 Al-Houthi followers renounced extremist views and were released.

"The Dialogue Committee is for everyone, all those that have the wrong belief

in Islam," said Al-Hitar. "Those that are charged with committing a crime are turned over to the prosecution."

The Yemeni government accused the radical Muslim cleric Al-Houthi of promoting violent, anti-US, anti-Israeli protests and secretly training his followers to form an armed militia. Al-Houthi established a rebel group, "The Believing Youth," which were involved in violent protests against the United States and Israel at mosques. Government authorities faced armed resistance when they tried to arrest the cleric last June which led to hundreds of people being killed in the fighting.

Judicial sources said a week and a half

ago that the Yemeni government will put 826 terror suspects on trial soon after the end of Eid Al-Adha. Eight hundred suspects, which are planned to go through court proceedings in groups, belong to "The Believing Youth."

Twenty six of the extremists are reported to be alleged Al-Qaeda members who were involved in the bombing of the French oil tanker Limburg off the coast of Yemen in 2002 and other attacks in the country over the last two years. Two of the suspects are said to have been extradited from Saudi Arabia and one from Kuwait in 2004.

In August, a Yemeni court jailed five men convicted of being involved in the

attack for ten years. Nine others were also sentenced to prison terms for plotting to attack Western embassies while one was sentenced to death convicted of killing a Yemeni police officer. The Yemeni appeals court will announce the final verdicts of the suspects on February 5.

The appeals court said in January that the final verdicts of militants found guilty and sentenced to death or prison terms last September for the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 is scheduled to take place on February 26.

The Dialogue Committee was established in the fall of 2002 and focuses on persuading extremists to believe in tolerance and people of different faiths living

together in peace.

Late last year, 113 detainees believed to have been members of the Al-Qaeda international terrorist network were freed.

The French Foreign Ministry has invited Al-Hitar for a five-day visit in Paris to share the Dialogue Committee's philosophy and experience to fight terrorism. Countries from around the world have shown interest in the method being used by the Committee. Al-Hitar traveled to Great Britain twice last year to share his experience holding dialogue with suspects of radical Islamic groups. He was also invited last spring to attend the conference of Higher Council for Islamic Affairs in Cairo.

Course on marine security

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
ADEN BUREAU

In cooperation with the US Coast Guard, a training course on the marine security was held last week at the building of the Yemeni Coast Guard in Aden.

Seventeen officers from different Yemeni coastguard sites took part in the course which was attended by Ahmad Al-Dela'e Undersecretary of Aden Governorate, Staff Colonel Ali Subaihi Director General of Coast Guard

Authority in Aden and Staff Colonel Abdullah Qairan Aden Security Commander and a number of senior government officials.

Ali Subaihi delivered a speech in which he congratulated all the attendants as well as the participants on the occasion of Eid al-Adha.

The course is due to last to Feb. 23.

The course aims to qualify the coast guard officers in their careers and in guarding ports and the regional waters. It also aims to stop the phenomenon of

smuggling and prevent infiltrators from the Horn of Africa from entering the country.

The course was preceded by several other courses on the international law and other relevant fields. The course is considered part of the supports extended by the USA to Yemen via a series of agreements signed between the two countries.

The participants are expected to receive information on how to operate boats and the way of implementing security tasks.

World's Fifth Social Forum finishes today

The Arab Sisters Forum for Human Rights (ASFHR) is participating in the World's Fifth Social Forum, being held Jan. 26-31 in Brazil.

As many as 70,000 participants from around the world are taking part in the forum, under the slogan "Another World is possible".

The participation of the Arab Sisters Forum comes in the framework of the International Network for Rights of

Housing and Land Ownership.

The Forum presented five approaches in five symposiums organized by the International Coalition of Woman Fight for Ownership. Another symposium entitled the Arab-Israeli Conflict and associated with the developmental alternatives for woman was organized by Dawoon Organization.

A third symposium on violence and Rome's basic discipline for the

International Criminal Court was organized by the International Network for the birth health.

Additionally, two symposiums, one on violence against women and the other on detention and torture issues were organized by the Amnesty International.

The ASFHR has partaken in the International Women Forum and the World's Fourth Social Forum that was held last year in Bombay, India.

34 traffic accidents over Eid in Taiz

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

A number of traffic accidents resulting in death tolls and loss of properties occurred during the vacation of Eid al-Adha.

Col. Abdulkareem Wohaish, Deputy Director of Taiz Traffic Administration, said there were 34 traffic accidents in Taiz over the holiday.

He pointed out that the number of accidents this year was less than that of the previous year due to efforts exerted by the traffic administration in spreading awareness among people and

instructing them how to abide by traffic regulations.

Three males and a female died in the accidents.

The loss of properties reached YR 2.7 million.

Wohaish added that the reasons behind such accidents are high speed driving and carelessness on the part of drivers as well as pedestrians.

He demanded drivers not to drive at break-neck speed and not to expose themselves and their cars to danger.

He hoped drivers to abide by traffic regulations either during vacations or other days.

HAIER warehouse burns in Taiz

TAIZ — Early in the morning of Jan. 23, a large fire erupted at Haier equipment warehouses belonging to Abdul Ghani Ali al-Herwi Company, on Osaiferah Street in Taiz.

Televisions, washing machines, refrigerators and other costly goods were turned to ashes.

The estimated value of the loss is YR. 20 million.

The Fire Brigade team ensured that fire did not catch the neighboring commercial places.

Security authorities are investigating.

Some homeless persons used to shelter themselves on the footpaths and in front of the commercial enterprises closed doors, during the Eid holidays.

Many of them used cartons and other flammable plastic materials, during the same period.

Fire crackers in the area were also used by children.



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To last until 2015

Strategy on judicial reform

By ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni Minister of Justice, Adnan Al-Jefri announced a new strategy for developing and updating the systems of Yemeni judiciary due to last up until 2015.

The strategy focuses on providing a comprehensive system of legislations associating with the commercial judiciary as well as establishing specialized courts for the commercial judiciary, and public property and juvenile courts.

The strategy aims at upgrading the systems of prosecution and judicial investigations and enhancing women participation as well as activating the role of women and giving them jobs in the judicial institutions.

Al-Jefri said that the strategy aims to train and qualify judges and other workers in the judiciary and prosecution. It also aims to update the compe-

tent bodies that may help limit the rate of prolonged court procedures and ignore the traditional habits reflected in the negative concepts of the judiciary and social culture that obstruct justice and court procedures.

The Minister said, "The plan of upgrading judiciary is not limited to the judicial procedures and the list of the appointment of judges, rather it intends to tackle the cultural issues that surround judiciary, rectify the prevailing thoughts about justice and reinforce the status of the judiciary."

The strategy stresses that the judiciary should be independent and well organized in addition to having judiciary police.

According to the strategy, the system of judicial inspection should be activated and the specialized courts should be supported, particularly those associating with the commercial judiciary. The strategy included the international trade

to guarantee the provision of law-abiding environment safe for investment in Yemen.

The Minister confirmed that the judicial move issued recently included the appointment of 615 members for preliminary prosecutions and 420 members in the general and appeal prosecution.

In addition, 1,000 judges were handed jobs in the Supreme Court and other appeal and preliminary courts in all Yemeni governorates.

The Minister denied that the Supreme judiciary Council endorsed such appointments before being issued by a republican decree.

He added there were some competent and experienced judges who have been fired from the judiciary institutions for several years. But now they are taking jobs in the judiciary, and the country is expected to benefit from them in the reform and development of

judiciary.

According to the minister, 22 judges were sacked because committed several violations that warranted their dismissal as well as denying them the judicial immunity. The minister therefore refused to mention their names.

Concerning the participation of Yemeni woman in the judicial institutions Al-Jefri said: "the judicial move included the appointment of five women as court chief magistrates, specifically in the juvenile courts, and eight women were chosen as members in the general and appeal prosecutions. There are 161 women who are currently working in the judicial body and no obstacles against women have ever been realized."

He noted: "The Higher Institute for Judiciary is ever open for women who graduated from different faculties of law and desire to pursue their higher education."

Addicted to misery

Qat is a waste of time and money

By ABDULWAHAB AL SOFI
abdulwahab_alsofi@yahoo.com
HODEIDAH
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Today is bad. It is really bad, a man said. It doesn't deserve to come here today. Noting is there to buy. It is only for goats today. Another one replies angrily, despite that it is very expensive. Something is worrisome, He added. One shouted, we want Qat for eating, chewing, not for the opposite. What can we do? Where do we go? There is no good Qat.

Other passes by us without any comment. They seemed to be absentminded. They are incapable of giving disappointment as if they were caught by catastrophe. Qat was not good and not enough available.

Misery, melancholy and frowns are read on their faces. This weird debates happened at the entrance of Qat market. In fact I was powerfully impressed, so that I stood up there among the swarm of people who were entering and coming out at the entrance of the market.

They are like ants looking for their food. Unlike, people were looking for Qat instead of their food. Although this panorama made me laugh I was very sad and hopeless. I was laughing because, I was looking at confusing people in Qat market changed into waifs and strays.

They woo to Qat sellers to gain their satisfaction for getting a small bundle of Qat. I was sad and hopeless; because I realized that we were extremely inflicted by these green pastures. People adhere to buy a bundle of Qat before thinking of



A Yemeni man with his qat.

their family's food.

They pay YR 1000 or more for a small bundle of Qat which is finished three hours later. Moreover, this amount does double three times during Eid's holidays. This really whets our soul. In my opinion, I believe that it is difficult to stop chewing Qat, but the most difficult, is how to get rid of this bad tree in our country.

Those people who could buy a bundle of Qat were smiling and optimistic. They give a salute and wide smile to each other

and directly go home. Their hard problems are solved as soon as they start chew Qat.

On the contrary, people who come back without Qat, but with frown face are certainly sad and even angry. It is strange to see sad people can not buy Qat, but the strangest is to see them refuse going home without Qat.

Not only has this, but also some people sit down in the market for hours waiting for an incoming fresh Qat. They do not

convince to buy an available Qat in the market. It is believed among Qat eating's people that expensive Qat is produced to lofty manhood and good esteemed people.

Therefore, many persons are devoted to chew expensive Qat. They do not only prefer to buy expensive Qat, but also they boast of chewing the best one. It is not the matter that person has afforded the day food for his family, the matter is to save Qat cost first. At one o'clock, the Qat market in which swarm of people coexists is full of many kinds of Qat. In Hodeidah province, there are many kinds of Qats. Two of these, called Shami and Thihla Qat, are the best.

The former is brought from Al Sham Mountain in the west north of the country in Al Mahabisha area In Hajjah governorate. The later is the second type which comes from the middle high land in Yemen. These two kinds of Qat that are often bought by rich people are the most expensive.

A small bundle of Qat may cost YR 5000 where as, the other kinds which are usually bought by ordinary people, are also adequate. It costs between YR 300 and YR 1000.

Simply I can say that Qat destroys the native Yemeni person's income. This is aside from being it causes many diseases to human beings such as liver virus and it loses the appetite.

This is because Qat is always blended with insecticides sprayed during growing.

Finally, whatever people say to justify chewing Qat, it is harmful for health. It also affects people income and wastes time and money.

The group plays different instruments of percussion as well as violins.

Hadhrami music as played by Sey'un Popular Arts Group fits very well into the programme of the Festival as it displays many similarities to the taarab music of Zanzibar and indeed migrating Yemenis are known to have contributed to the original form of this style of music.


Also some of the songs in the group's repertoire contain pieces of Swahili in their lyrics as well as traces of East African rhythms.

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF


A musical band from Sey'un is to off to Zanzibar to take part in the Sauti za Busara (Sounds of Wisdom) Swahili Music Festival, taking place 10th to 13th Feb.

They will play at the festival on 13th Feb. and will stay for a week during which time it is hoped that they will make some recordings for German Radio and also some other recordings for a future CD release.

Sey'un band to play in Zanzibar



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Hertz Yemen honours employee of 2004

DUBAI — Hertz Yemen has named sales and marketing supervisor, Mohammed Al Aswadi, as its 'Employee of the Year' for 2004.

Al Aswadi received his award from Alwan Saeed Al Shaibani, Chairman of the Universal Group of Companies, the Hertz international franchisee in Yemen.

Saleem Sheikh, General Manager of Hertz Yemen, said "Mohammed has shown dedication, hard work, loyalty and honesty, which are qualities that help ensure we provide our customers with the best level of service in the market".

Offering a wide range of economy, mid-level and luxury vehicles on a self-drive as well as chauffeur-drive basis, Hertz Yemen operates from a head office in Sana'a and also has a branch in Aden.



Pictured (from left) are Mohammed Al Aswadi, Sales & marketing supervisor, Hertz Yemen, Alwan Saeed Al Shaibani, Chairman of the Universal Group of Companies and Saleem Sheikh, General Manager, Hertz Yemen.

Youth Parliament carries clout

By ISMAEL AL-GHABERI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Sources in the General Secretariat of the Youth Parliament say that Prime Minister Abdul Qader Ba-Jammal has directed numerous ministries to carry out actions for children's rights, which includes free education.

As mentioned in a statement by the Democracy Institute, the Prime Minister has directed four ministries (Finance, Planning & International Co-operation, Education, and the Labor & Welfare) to carry out the recommendations of the Youth Parliament that contained the constitutions and legislations for giving children free education, and to punish parents who don't enroll their children for learning.

The Principal of the Democracy Institute, Jamal al-Shamy, has clarified that the General Secretary of the Youth Parliament is expressing thanks to H.E. the Prime Minister for his response and help in children contributing effectively



Members of the Youth Parliament debate issues.

in political participation.

The Youth Parliament has finished its third session in the last month by a public demonstration.

As well, they recommended con-

structing special passages for handicapped children in the schools, and constructing special institutes for the deaf, and also to teach them foreign languages and computer skills.



أجمل التهناني والتبريكات للشاب الخلاق
ياسين أحمد الأصبحي
بمناسبة دخوله القفص الذهبي
فألك ألك مبروك
المهنتون :
مؤسسة يمن تايمز للصحافة والطباعة والنشر

Psychiatric Hospital concludes 40-day course



Under the auspices of Al-Shura Council Chairman Abdulaziz Abdulghani, the Psychiatric Hospital in Sana'a concluded the fourth course in the field of Psychiatric Nursery. The course lasted from Dec.4, 2004 to Jan.14 2005 in cooperation with the Embassy of the United Kingdom.

The concluding ceremony started with the recitation of some verses from the Holy Quran and then a welcoming speech was delivered by Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Hospital Dr. Hamid Zeyad.

In his speech Dr. Zeyad pointed out the support offered by HE President Saleh as well as the health services offered by the Hospital to those psychiatric patients.

Dr. Ahmad Makki Al-Shura Council member delivered a speech on behalf of Abdulaziz Abdulghani to conclude the ceremony.

Top students and talented as well as other participants numbering up to 63 received recognition certificates and in-kind prizes at the end of the ceremony.

The course aimed at upgrading the level of health services and training specialists in all the Yemeni governorates.

The ceremony was attended by a number of

personalities of distinction as well concerned representatives from the British Embassy based in Sana'a.

After the ceremony was over, Dr. Fahmi Al-Hakimi General Manager at the hospital noted: "the course comes in the framework of the comprehensive development adopted by the political leadership represented by HE the President Saleh.

For the purpose of deepening such concept, the policy of the hospital aims to improve the level of performance and upgrade the standard of health services.

The course was funded by the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Sana'a.

Prior to this, three courses were held, two of which in cooperation with the British Embassy in Sana'a and the other one was sponsored by the Islah Charitable Society.

Expected outcomes of the course are as follows:

- Increasing the realm of knowledge on the part of nurses and trainees on how to treat psychiatric patients.
- Improving the nursery experience of the participants.
- Raising the awareness of nurses in dealing with psychiatric patients.
- The exchange of experience between workers in this field.

The Yemen Times apologizes to the Psychiatric Hospital for the unintentional mistake occurring in the 7th line of the advertisement in the issue No. 809 in which was mentioned the Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Whereas it should have been The Embassy of the United Kingdom. Our apologies to all concerned.

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Iraqi voters stream to polls; 33 die in attacks

BAGHDAD, Jan 30 (Reuters) - Millions of Iraqis flocked to vote in a historic election on Sunday, defying insurgents who killed 33 people in bloody attacks aimed at wrecking the poll.

Voters, some ululating with joy, others hiding their faces in fear, cast ballots in higher-than-expected numbers in their first multi-party election in half a century.

Election officials estimated the turnout at 72 percent, a figure that — if confirmed — would enhance the legitimacy of a national assembly that will choose Iraq's new leaders. But in parts of Iraq's Sunni Arab heartland, where the insurgency has been bloodiest, some streets and polling stations were deserted.

Militants struck mainly in Baghdad, rocking the capital with nine suicide blasts in rapid succession. The Iraqi wing of al Qaeda claimed responsibility.

Casting his vote in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi urged his countrymen to face down the insurgents.

"This is a historic moment for Iraq, a day when Iraqis can hold their heads high because they are challenging the terrorists and starting to write their future with their own hands," he told reporters.

A low Sunni turnout could raise questions about the credibility of the first election since Saddam Hussein was toppled in a U.S.-led invasion in April 2003.

Many fear that instead of quelling the anti-U.S. revolt, the poll could foment sectarian strife by further alienating Sunnis, delaying any withdrawal of American-led forces from the country.



Iraqi voters queue outside a polling station in the capital Baghdad Jan. 30. Millions of Iraqis flocked to vote in a historic election Sunday, defying insurgents who killed 25 people in bloody attacks aimed at wrecking the poll. Iraqis, some ululating with joy, others hiding their faces in fear, voted in much higher-than-expected numbers in their first multi-party election in half a century. Election commission officials put the turnout at 72 percent. REUTERS

Despite draconian security measures imposed by Iraq's U.S.-backed interim government, militants waged a sustained assault to try to frighten people away from the polls.

Suicide Bombings

At least 27 people were killed in Baghdad attacks, including suicide bombings carried out by a Syrian and a Chechen, interim Interior Minister Falab al-Naqib told Reuters.

The deadliest attack was when a man

with explosives strapped to his body blew himself up in the queue at a polling station in east Baghdad, killing six people, an official said.

Another suicide bomber killed four people at a voting centre in the Sadr City slums, a Shi'ite stronghold. A suicide bomb also killed three people in a bus carrying voters south of Baghdad, Polish military in the area said.

Despite Sunday's violence, election officials said by mid-afternoon that turnout had been far above expecta-

tions, though they gave no voter numbers. The government had set a target of at least 50 percent of Iraq's 13 million registered voters as the barometer of success.

With international monitors mostly staying away for fear of kidnapping, it was impossible to assess the fairness of the election or validity of the turnout figures.

Polling stations officially closed at 5 p.m. (1400 GMT), but officials said people already in line could still vote.

Voters formed long queues in Shi'ite areas and the Kurdish north, where officials said turnout topped 90 and 80 percent, respectively. Many chanted and clapped. Some walked for miles.

"This is a wedding for all Iraqis. I congratulate all Iraqis on their new-found freedom," said Jaida Hamza, dressed in a black Islamic robe, in the Shi'ite shrine city of Najaf.

Even in Falluja, the battle-scarred Sunni city that was a militant stronghold until a U.S. assault in November, a

slow stream of people turned out, confounding expectations.

Militant groups, including al Qaeda's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, had declared war on democracy, vowing to kill any "infidel" who voted.

Interim Defence Minister Hazim al-Shaalan said Sunday's violence would have been much worse if there had not been stringent measures banning private cars from the streets, which prevented even deadlier attacks with car bombs.

Tight security

To try to prevent violence, streets were barricaded, borders sealed, airports closed and only official vehicles allowed out.

Iraq's 60 percent-majority Shi'ites, oppressed for decades under Saddam, were expected to dominate the polls. Kurds, who make up nearly a fifth of Iraqis, want a result that enables them to enshrine their autonomous rule in the north.

Several Sunni parties are boycotting the polls, saying the insurgency raging in their areas and the presence of more than 150,000 U.S.-led troops make a fair vote impossible.

A Shi'ite alliance formed under the guidance of top cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is almost sure to win the most votes for a 275-seat parliament. But Allawi, leading a secular alliance, could be a consensus candidate to stay in office.

Iraqi police and soldiers were out in force but U.S. and British forces stood back to avoid the impression of Iraqis voting under occupiers' guns.

Officials expect preliminary election results in six to seven days and final results in about 10 days.

EU lacks desire to resolve nuclear power row: Iran

TEHRAN, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Iran's Supreme Leader accused EU nations on Saturday of not showing a desire to resolve a row over whether Iran is pursuing nuclear arms.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Iran was committed to talks with Britain, France and Germany, but signalled frustration that they were making little headway.

The EU countries have urged the Islamic Republic to drop its insistence on having nuclear fuel in return for economic help amid fears Iran is developing nuclear fuel for a nuclear weapons programme. Iran says it has no military nuclear ambitions.

"Europeans should also be serious and they should show that they are really looking to find a solution.

Unfortunately it has not been so up to now," he said in remarks broadcast on state television.

"If Iran feels that the Europeans are not serious in their negotiations, the current process will change," he added.

Negotiations hinge on whether Iran will surrender its right to produce its own nuclear fuel, enriching the uranium it mines in its central desert.

Iran says this nuclear fuel would be used in power stations such as the one it is building at the southern port of Bushehr. Washington charges that Tehran will divert the fuel into a weapons programme.

Khamenei insisted upon Iran's right to develop a civilian nuclear programme.

"They (Americans) want Iran's ener-



A file picture shows Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivering a sermon during the morning Eid prayers at Imam Khomeini grand mosque in central Tehran Nov. 14. REUTERS

gy to always depend on oil which is influenced by the policies of the great powers. Iran will not accept this," said Khamenei, who has the last word on all state matters in OPEC's second biggest producer.

Israeli troops kill Palestinian man in Gaza

GAZA, Jan 29 (Reuters) - The Israeli army shot and killed a Palestinian man in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, medics said.

It was the fourth killing in the past week in the West Bank and Gaza where violence has largely abated since Mahmoud Abbas was elected Palestinian president earlier this month.

Witnesses said the 35-year-old man, who was said by local residents to be mentally retarded, approached the Israel-Gaza border fence near the town of Khan Younis and was shot by troops on the Israeli side of the border.

An Israeli military source said the army was unaware of any such incident on Saturday.

Armed Palestinian security forces have taken control of areas within the Gaza Strip in the past week and Abbas has persuaded militant groups to observe a de facto truce and stop rocket and mortar attacks on Israel.

The Israeli army also said on Friday that it would reduce its military operations in Gaza and the West Bank in response to the efforts by Abbas to end attacks on Israelis.

The latest in a series of meetings

between senior Israeli and Palestinian officials to discuss security matters is due to take place later on Saturday when Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz meets senior Palestinian official Mohammed Dahlan.



Palestinian security forces patrol between the destroyed houses at the border between Egypt and Rafah refugee camp southern Gaza Strip, Jan. 29. Armed Palestinian security forces have taken control of areas within the Gaza Strip in the past week and new President Mahmoud Abbas has persuaded militant groups to observe a de facto truce and stop rocket and mortar attacks on Israel. REUTERS

Fuad Hammad

China imposes security for funeral of purged Zhao

BEIJING, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Hundreds of mourners braved police checks on Saturday to attend a low-key invitation-only funeral for Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Communist Party chief purged for opposing the army crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen protests.

Nervous the ceremony might spark protest, China's leaders had wanted to permit only a quick funeral for Zhao who, as premier in the 1980s, launched market reforms that turned the country into a fledgling economic powerhouse from a centrally planned backwater.

However, in a nod to the seniority of a man whom the party had effectively made a non-person by keeping him under house arrest for the past 15 years, China's number four leader, Jia Qinglin, joined mourners filing past his body at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery.

A dozen police checked identity documents and invitations of mourners and turned away non-mainland Chinese from the funeral for Zhao, who died in a Beijing hospital on Jan. 17 aged 85.

"My heart is heavy. I did not expect so many people to show up," said mourner Shi Yijun, an author on party history.

Weeping mourners bowed three times before the body, which lay on a dais shrouded in a Communist Party flag. They shook hands with family members

clad in black mourning dress as funeral music played. His ailing widow, Liang Boqi, was not present.

A banner in Chinese characters above the body read: "Ceremony to bid farewell to Comrade Zhao Ziyang's remains." Photographs were banned at the ceremony, which took place without the fanfare normally accorded a top leader.

In a rare omission that reflected possible differences between the family and the party on how to assess Zhao's role in Chinese history, no eulogy was read.

However, the Xinhua news agency issued the first official commentary on the fallen leader in 15 years, recognising his "valuable contributions" to economic reforms but saying he made "serious" mistakes in handling the Tiananmen protests.

The report was read on China Central Television, the first time state television had reported Zhao's death.

"In the political turbulence which took place in the late spring and early summer of 1989, Comrade Zhao committed serious mistakes," Xinhua said without elaborating.

Zhao was fired after being accused of splitting the party by challenging paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's decision to send in troops to crush the Tiananmen



Chinese police guard the graveyard in Beijing Jan. 29, where hundreds of mourners braved police checks and heavy security on Saturday to attend the funeral of Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Communist Party chief purged for opposing the army crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen protests. REUTERS

protests. Hundreds were killed.

The nervousness of the leadership to avert protests was underscored by the

posting of police vans at every corner of the main Changan Avenue that bisects the capital.

HISTORY UNFAIR

Petitioners in traditional white mourning headbands wailed and unfurled a banner outside the cemetery reading "Ziyang's spirit will live forever". They were dispersed by police.

"He was our good general secretary," said one. "We don't even have the right to mourn him. Where are China's human rights?"

Zhao was later cremated, but his family has not decided on a final resting place for his ashes.

Premier Wen Jiabao, one-time aide to Zhao, did not attend. But some retired senior leaders and contemporaries sent flowers.

Another aide, Bao Tong, the most senior official jailed for the Tiananmen protests, was allowed to pay his respects to Zhao's remains in private at the Beijing Hospital, a family member said.

Floral arrangements were sent by former parliament chief Qiao Shi, former vice chairman of parliament Tian Jiyun and Yang Baibing, a People's Liberation Army general and younger brother of the late Yang Shangkun, president during the 1989 crackdown.

Several mourners brandished Zhao's photo as they left.

Zhao's successors have long feared his death would evoke memories of the

crackdown and spark unrest by disgruntled jobless workers and poor farmers envious of wealthy urban residents.

The funeral took place on a day when public attention was focused on the first non-stop flights in 55 years between China and its political adversary, Taiwan. That event, unlike Zhao's funeral, was covered live on Chinese television.

Official newspapers have made only brief mention of the death of the man the Communist Party tried to erase from history.

Zhao's political ghost haunts the party, which has monopolised power since the 1949 revolution and now grapples with problems from rampant corruption to a widening wealth gap.

Democracy campaigners, liberal intellectuals with no history of activism and bereaved relatives of Tiananmen victims were barred from leaving their homes to pay their respects.

"I may light a candle in the evening," said Jiang Qisheng, a student negotiator jailed for years for his role in 1989.

The funeral was delayed for days with Zhao's family and the party deadlocked over what honours would be appropriate for a man who once led the party and government.

Indian Kashmir holds first civic polls in decades

SRINAGAR, India, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Muslim rebels trying to derail Indian Kashmir's first municipal polls in almost three decades killed a candidate hours before voting began on Saturday.

Rebels fighting Indian rule in the Himalayan region, at the centre of tensions between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan, have called for a boycott of the elections to choose town councils and mayors for the first time in 27 years.

Voting is taking place over several days amid tight security, just a week before leaders of India and Pakistan are due to attend a regional summit in Bangladesh.

"It is an historic election, now people will have more participation in governance," said Mehbooba Mufti, leader of Indian Kashmir's ruling People's Democratic Party.

The candidate was killed and another wounded in separate attacks on Friday night, police said.

On Thursday, 26 people were wounded when separatists fired grenades at an election office on the outskirts of Srinagar, Kashmir's main city.



Kashmiri Muslims carry the coffin of Ghulam Rasool Dhoobi, a civic poll candidate, after he was shot dead, in Pampore 15 km (9 miles) south of Srinagar, Jan. 29. REUTERS

India accuses Pakistan of stoking the revolt in Kashmir, a charge Islamabad denies.

The neighbours accused each other

this week of violating a nearly 14-month-old ceasefire along the Line of Control dividing Indian and Pakistani Kashmir.

Anthrax kills 18 hippos in Ugandan national park

KAMPALA, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Anthrax has killed 18 hippos at a Ugandan national park where nearly 200 of the animals died in the worst mass wildlife deaths from disease three months ago, a government official said on Saturday.

Last year's anthrax outbreak littered the Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth Park with rotting hippo carcasses and forced the temporary suspension of popular tourist boat rides while heavy cranes hauled the huge bodies from the water.

The park, which is home to about half Uganda's 10,000 hippos, attracts many of the tens of thousands of foreign tourists who visit the east African country every year.

But officials at the Uganda Wildlife Authority say that while its outbreak struck at the height of the tourist season, there had been no significant drop in visitors.

Nicholas Kauta, chairman of the Ugandan government's anthrax task-force, told Reuters after returning from the park: "Eighteen hippos in total have died in the space of about two weeks, but in the last few days we have only recorded one death."

He said hippo bodies had been recovered from Kisenyi and Kasenyi landing sites, as well as from the Kazinga Channel, which links Lake George and Lake Edward, about 350 km (220 miles) southwest of the capital Kampala.

Anthrax occurs when animals eat remnants of vegetation in the driest months of September and October, absorbing bacterial spores that can live for decades in dry soil.

Wildlife officials in the area have warned the public not to touch any dead animals. They rejected a report by a Kampala radio station that said two villagers had died after eating infected hippo meat.

The cause of last year's outbreak was not clear.

But officials say similar weather patterns may have sparked simultaneous cases of the disease that also killed hundreds of big game animals in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

VACANCY

Internal Auditor
for the Basic Education Development Project
(IDA Credits & Multi-Donors Trust Funds)

The Basic Education Development Project (BEDP) at the Ministry of Education (MOE) seeks applicants for the position of Internal Auditor. Under the general direction of the Project Director, the Internal Auditor will be responsible for ensuring that procedures are implemented which all key project participants can respect and follow.

Main Tasks:

To assist with this process an internal auditor will be appointed to the Project Administration Unit (PAU) to ensure adequate control systems and procedures are put in place and that people in all Governorates Education Offices (GEOs), Ministry of Education (MOE) Centre and the PAU follow these agreed procedures. In general terms, the internal auditor will ensure that the provisions of the Operations Manual and Development Credit Agreement are implemented. But, in particular, the internal auditor will be in charge, but not limited to:

- Ensure that the information system, control procedures, and control environment that are put in place at the PAU, MOE Centre, and GEO's comply with the provisions of this Operations Manual for project implementation matters, and BEDP's Development Credit Agreement;
- Suggest amendments to the Operations Manual to ensure that it reflects the systems and procedures developed by the Internal Auditor and approved by the IMSC Sub-committee from time to time;
- Monitor the compliance of the PAU, MOE Centre, and GEOs to the maintenance of the implemented systems and provisions of the manual;
- Suggest changes to procedures and this Manual as needed which will result from Project implementation experience;
- Track payments to GEO engineers and other project personnel to ensure they are receiving their correct allowances for supervising the construction of works and refund of expenses for other project activities; and
- Prepare quarterly and Ad-Hoc reports to the PAU Director outlining major internal control issues, deviations from the established systems and procedures, and recommendations for amendments to established systems and BEDP's Operations Manual which will result in more effective compliance and greater efficiency in the implementation of the Project.
- Coordinate with external auditor to ensure comprehensive coverage of the audit process either through internal or external audit.
- Conduct field visits to ensure various management assertions (completeness, existence, valuation, presentation and rights and obligations) are fair.
- Prepare and annual plan for the internal audit function. The plan should be divided into 4 quarters and detailed to reflect activities, time, duration, etc.
- Review the quarterly FMRs released 45 days from the end of each quarter. This review should be completed before the end of the 45 days.
- Perform any other activities as directed by project director within the internal audit scope.

Qualifications and experience

The likely qualifications and experience of the internal auditor will include the following:

- University degree in financial accounting and preferably qualifications (or a major area of study) in internal auditing;
- Member of an acceptable professional accounting or auditing association would be a plus;
- Experience in a similar position in private enterprise or government, and experience with geographically diverse development projects in Yemen;
- At least seven years experience as an internal or external auditor;
- Strong interpersonal skills and writing ability
- Satisfactory references from previous employers; and
- Computer literacy and proficiency in both Arabic and English.

All Applications along with a detailed resume and supporting documents should be submitted by **Wednesday February 9, 2005**, to the following address:

Basic Education Development Program
Nouakchott St. South of the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum
Tel:200-472/470-271, Fax: 403-572

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following positions within its project "Electoral Support for the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda"

Project Assistant

Assist the project experts to liaise with UNDP country office, local partners, authorities and Non-Governmental Organizations and support the Chief Technical Advisor and the Electoral Expert to provide specific technical assistance on electoral matters, in their respective areas of responsibility and

Secretary / Admin. Support

Ensure timely settlement of bills and local payments, implement payments for the local staff of the project, ensure the timely provision of office supplies, provide administrative support, as well as to make all necessary arrangements for international experts and evaluation missions, including travel, accommodation and appointments and

Driver

Drivers for the project and carries out all assignments as requested, responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the assigned vehicle, checks oil, water, battery, brakes, tires, etc. performs minor repairs and arranges for other repairs when necessary and ensures that the vehicle is kept clean.

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at:

<http://www.undp.org.ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed terms of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to the 'Human Resources Unit' and response will be made to short listed candidates. UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and female candidates are encouraged to apply.

UNDP, P.O. Box 551 Sana'a / Fax: 448841 / E-mail: (registry.ye@undp.org)
The deadline for receiving applications is Thursday 10th February 2005



DAVOS-G20 ministers unite in fight for fair trade

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Ministers from G20 developing countries said on Saturday they had held positive talks in preparation for a fight with richer countries over changing trade rules in favour of the poor.

The group's leader, Brazil, called for unity within the diverse group, which agrees on freeing trade in agricultural goods but differs on opening markets in services and manufactured products.

Brazil's minister of foreign relations, Celso Amorim, told Reuters the talks on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos had been "excellent".

"The most important thing overall is to keep the unity and the momentum within the G20," he added.

Kamal Nath, India's commerce and industry minister, said the group was committed to concluding global trade negotiations.

"The meeting was very useful and we have decided that the next G20 meeting will be held in New Delhi on March 18-19," he said.

Nath added that agricultural subsidies would remain the focus for the talks with ministers from the developed world later in the day, although other issues, including services, would also be on the agenda.

India, a key G20 country along with China and Brazil, is concerned that removing distortions in agriculture markets is overshadowing all other issues in the Doha round of trade talks. It also wants to ensure liberalisation of the service sector.

"We have to make sure this is the Doha round and not the agriculture round," Nath said.

The G20 ministers will now meet ministers from key industrialised states, which negotiators hoped would outline steps to keep Doha on track.

The schedule for the trade round has slipped badly after a robust defence by less developed nations of their trading interests stalled progress.

World Trade Organisation members agreed last July to end agricultural export subsidies. That deal breathed new life into the Doha talks, but tough negotiation on the details lie ahead if a final agreement is to be reached.

"I don't want to say it's a done deal. But it's doable — it's doable in 2005/2006," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick told a panel at the World Economic Forum.

The goal is to have a draft deal ready to agree at the Hong Kong meeting in December.

Service dispute

Zoellick and European Union Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson will represent the rich world's most powerful trading blocs at Saturday's "mini-ministerial".

An EU official said Mandelson would press ministers to agree to a roadmap of how to proceed towards the Hong Kong meeting.

"We want WTO members to commit to a balanced agenda including services, agriculture, market access for manufactured goods and trade facilitation," the official said.

Negotiators have hardly begun to settle differences in the service sector, with the WTO warning that failure to make



Anti-WEF protesters carry a large cardboard dollar sign as they pass the security checkpoint in Fideris, Switzerland, Jan. 29. After being controlled by the police they went to protest in the nearby Davos where the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) is taking place. REUTERS

progress in this area, which includes banking, insurance and information technology, could scuttle the whole Doha round.

The deadline for updated offers on

services is May 2005 and the EU says it is disappointed with responses so far. It put out a revised request this week in an effort to stimulate progress.

On Friday, world leaders reminded negotiators that the Doha Round was intended to focus on developing nations, using trade liberalisation as one means to promote economic growth and reduce poverty in the poorest nations.

"The interests of developing countries should be fully taken into account," said China's Executive Vice-Premier Huang Ju.

"Countries should further open their markets, press ahead with trade facilitation and remove trade barriers of all forms."

Tidende.

Kazem Said Ahmad, a prominent Muslim community spokesman, has organised a gathering of 25 imams, who plan to issue an anti-government message at next week's Friday prayers.

A Gallup poll this week showed initial broad public backing for Denmark is dropping, with 63 percent now wanting either an immediate withdrawal or at least a timetable for a pullout.

Rasmussen's coalition, which pushed the Social Democrats out of power in 2001 after a campaign focused on curbing the influx of foreigners to Denmark, has vowed to keep forces in Iraq as long as necessary and wanted by Iraqi authorities.

British support for EU constitution low: poll

LONDON, Jan 29 (Reuters) - British voters would reject the European Union constitution if a referendum were held tomorrow, according to a poll published on Saturday.

Forty-five percent of people surveyed would answer "no" to the question the government will ask in a referendum, according to the YouGov poll for the Daily Telegraph newspaper.

Some 24 percent of those polled would give a positive answer to the question: "Should the United Kingdom approve the treaty establishing a constitution for the European Union?"

But the poll also found that only 51 percent of those surveyed had made up

their minds already, while 38 percent would only decide nearer the time of the referendum, which is expected next year.

The opposition Conservative Party edged ahead of the ruling Labour Party when voters were asked which of the main three parties best represented their view on Britain's relations with the EU.

Twenty-four percent said the Conservatives were most representative, while Labour trailed with 20 percent of the vote and the Liberal Democrats polled 12 percent.

YouGov questioned a sample of 1,943 voters over the Internet between Wednesday and Friday.

Bin Laden sent Iraqi arrested in Germany

BERLIN, Jan 29 (Reuters) - An Iraqi arrested in Germany on suspicion of plotting an al Qaeda suicide attack in Iraq said he was sent on his mission by Osama bin Laden himself, a German magazine reported on Saturday.

German state prosecutors believe Ibrahim Mohammed K., a 29-year-old Iraqi believed to be a high-ranking al Qaeda figure, recruited Yasser Abu S., a 31-year-old stateless Palestinian from Libya, as a future suicide bomber in Iraq.

The two men were arrested last Sunday in the western city of Mainz, which U.S. President George W. Bush is due to visit next month. However, prosecutors said there was no indication the two had planned an attack in Germany.

Der Spiegel magazine said the Iraqi had told the other man he had been sent by bin Laden personally to Germany. It gave no details on the date or location of the meeting.

"Yes, he sent me to work, to sell and buy," the magazine quoted him as saying, citing a conversation from their Mainz apartment that investigating authorities recorded.

Authorities believe the terms refer to the recruitment and placement of volunteers for Jihad, or "holy war", the magazine said in a preview of an article due to appear on Monday.

Prosecutors said on Sunday the two planned to pretend that Yasser Abu S. had been killed in a car accident in Egypt and claim over 800,000 euros (\$1.04 million) from a life insurance policy to fund the suicide bombing and other operations.

Federal Prosecutor Kay Nehm said the Iraqi also had sought to acquire nuclear material for use in an attack. The suspect had been in contact with a group in Luxembourg which had nuclear material, but Nehm said it was not suitable for a bomb.

The prosecutor's office said the Iraqi had visited al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan many times before the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States in 2001 and remained for a year afterwards, fighting U.S. forces there.

In this time, Nehm said he had contact with Osama bin Laden and other leading al Qaeda figures, such as Ramzi bin al-Shaibah, who is now in U.S. custody.

Prosecutors said the leaders persuaded the Iraqi suspect to recruit suicide bombers in Europe. With his German travel documents, he was able to travel across the continent, arriving in Germany in September 2002, they said.

The Iraqi's name does not, however, feature on published FBI or United Nations lists of al Qaeda members.



Vacancy Announcement

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in the Republic of Yemen would like to make the following vacancy announcement available immediately for employment according to the following terms of reference. Preference will be given to equally qualified female candidates:

Post Title: Public Information Associate
Post Level: G-7
Deadline: 10 February 2005

Under the direct supervision of the Director, the immediate duties and responsibilities of the incumbent will be, but not limited to, the following:-

Duties & Responsibilities:

Administers key elements of and operationalizes UNIC's communication and advocacy strategies, utilizing multimedia including internet electronic and print media; proposes and implements activities, initiatives and programmes to promote public awareness of, and access to UNIC information and publicity materials. Effectively liaises with the government, donors, local media, NGO's, civil society and other partners to this end; provides technical advice to the Organization on advocacy and communication activities for the Office, compiles, and monitors and implements agreed areas of communication and advocacy work plan; plans, arranges and facilitates briefings and promotional opportunities, utilizing the national and international news media, accompanies media teams, donors and other special interest groups, writes related articles, coordinate and contributes to arrangements for special events; compiles, summarizes and digests background information, communications and other promotional and advocacy materials for use by the national media. Drafts, edits article, press releases and other information materials and reports; writes press releases and drafts summary reports or press reviews covering all important developments in Yemen to be sent to UNHQ; completes all reporting duties to UNHQ on time; produces periodic publications (electronic/hard copy) ON UNIC in-country activities for distribution to partners; formulate and monitor media strategies, outcomes and outputs; develops with other UN agency communication officers support to join UN system media events and advocacy initiatives; contributes to the elaboration of the resource mobilization and advocacy strategies and work plans as well as to their follow up and evaluation; assembles and compiles information to the CO website after its launching; maintains administrative and substantive files on UNIC's activities; implements personal development and learning plan.

Minimum Qualification:

Education: University degree in journalism and/or communication/ public relations, international relations, or equivalent university diploma, a graduate degree in one of the relevant fields would be an asset.

Experience: Extended experience of at least five years in public relations and advocacy in particular related to development issues at the national or international level. Experience with international organizations would be of particular importance.

Skills: Excellent knowledge of computer and internet use including mastery of word processing and databases, Excellent drafting and communication skills, Excellent interpersonal skills.

Language Requirements: Full fluency in both Arabic and English with excellent drafting skills in both languages, with special emphasis on the ability to write and translate news stories and/or features.

Corporate Responsibility & Teamwork:

Serves and promote the vision, mission, values and strategic goals of UNIC and the UN; plans, prioritizes and delivers tasks on time; participates effectively in a team-based, information-sharing environment, collaborating and cooperating with others; responds flexibly & positively to change through active involvement; accepts additional responsibilities as required by the demand of service.

People Skills:

Recognizes & responds appropriately to the ideas, interests & concerns of others; gives credit to the contributions of others; establishes clear performance goals, standards & responsibilities; manages them accordingly; promotes a learning environment; facilitates the development of individual and team competencies.

Results-Orientation:

Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals in a strict timely manner.

Innovation & Judgment:

- Contributes creative, practical ideas and approaches to deal with challenging situations.
- Pursues own personal and professional development.

Communication:

- Formulates written information clearly and persuasively.
- Presents oral information clearly and persuasively.

Job Knowledge & Expertise:

Demonstrates substantive and technical knowledge to meet responsibilities and post requirements with excellence; executes day-to-day tasks systematically & efficiently on a timely manner; uses information technology effectively as a tool resource; motivated & demonstrates a capacity to pursue personal development & learn.

Interested applicants should submit their CVs to UNIC Office. For more information, please contact the Centre at telephone no: 274000/41

Artists urge Danish troop pullout from Iraq

COPENHAGEN, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Around 300 intellectuals and artists, including film director Lars von Trier, called for Denmark to pull its troops from Iraq on Saturday on the eve of elections there and just days ahead of a Danish poll.

The artists, whose call echoed a demand from a Muslim leader, urged the pullout of Denmark's about 500 troops in an advertisement in the newspaper Politiken, and called for a demonstration next week.

Amid waning support among Danes for a military presence in Iraq, the advertisement came after a Muslim cleric urged around 150,000 Muslims

living in the Nordic country to vote against the ruling centre-right government in the Feb. 8 election in protest at tough Danish immigration laws and support for the Iraq war.

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who is comfortably ahead in opinion polls, reacted sharply to the Islamic leader's intervention.

"They should keep their fingers out of politics," news agency Ritzau quoted Rasmussen as saying.

The opposition also distanced itself from the religious leader.

"The imams (Muslim clerics) must learn to separate religion and politics," Social Democrat political spokesman Frank Jensen told daily Berlingske

Bolivia rebel province takes next step to autonomy

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia, Jan 28 (Reuters) - Protesters demanding more autonomy for Bolivia's Santa Cruz province on Friday agreed to set up a provisional committee as a step toward independence, but stopped short of electing a de facto governor, which could trigger a constitutional crisis.

After nearly three weeks of protests over provincial autonomy and fuel price hikes, President Carlos Mesa yielded by offering a referendum and regional elections to try to defuse a conflict threatening the fragile democracy of South America's poorest nation.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators carrying Santa Cruz's green and white flags converged on a plaza in the regional capital where they held a popular assembly to decide on steps toward autonomy. Initial police figures estimated the rally at around 100,000 people.

"Do you agree to establishing a provisional assembly that will represent us and lead us through the process toward autonomy?" protest leader Ruben Costas shouted from a stage to screams of "Yes" from the crowd as fireworks cracked overhead.

Costas said the provisional committee would work on how to transfer certain powers from the central government before regional elections are held, probably in April.

Protest leaders had suggested earlier that they would create a committee to secure their autonomy demands, a step toward independence. But they had left

open the option of defying the central government by electing a governor.

Under the constitution, the president must appoint Bolivia's nine provincial prefects or governors. Mesa had called on the protesters to reach an accord through constitutional means. He also further scaled back fuel price hikes to ease protests.

Civic leaders in Santa Cruz, an energy-rich region and the country's economic powerhouse, had said the government's last-ditch concessions were a victory. But they plan to keep fighting to reverse the gasoline and diesel price increases that triggered the initial demonstrations.

"This is where the fight starts. We have achieved something with the election offer," said Marco Antonio Alba, a laborer attending the rally earlier Friday. "Now we are going to have our own resources and be able to administer them ourselves."

The Santa Cruz protests have underscored deep divisions in Bolivia, where the riches of natural gas, mining and farming are controlled by European-descended elite in the East while in the western Andean region most of the indigenous majority scrambles to survive on less than \$2 a day.

Many people in the wealthy East believe poorer Indians are gaining more political power and swaying the government to strengthen state control over massive natural gas resources.

Counter protests, calls for unity

Poor farmers and Indian groups, who

back more autonomy and joined initial rallies against fuel prices, blocked roads near Santa Cruz on Friday to protest what they said were attempts by the province's rich "oligarchs" to protect their own interests while ignoring the plight of the impoverished.

Rural workers blocking a highway in nearby Montero clashed briefly with Santa Cruz demonstrators. But there were no reports of injuries. In La Paz and other cities, protesters held counter marches calling for unity.

The Santa Cruz protests are the latest challenge to Mesa, a political novice who has faced a tough task since coming to power after a bloody October 2003 revolt and indigenous uprising toppled the previous president.

Demonstrations broke out soon after Mesa ordered the gas price hikes at the start of the year. Mesa, a former TV news anchor with little support in Congress, later bowed to some of protesters' demands by scaling back fuel price increases and canceling a foreign-owned water contract.

But rallies grew in Santa Cruz, an affluent farm region 550 miles (900-km) from La Paz, where a conservative elite blames Mesa for ruining the economy and wants to exercise more control over its local affairs.

Leaders of the Santa Cruz movement believe they should have more say in provincial politics and the budget because of the hefty contributions the region makes to state coffers. Santa Cruz makes up one third of Bolivia's economic output.

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-Sagqaf (1951-1999)
Founder of Yemen Times

OUR
OPINIONDubai's festival
is world-class

An inspiration, a success story, a pioneer step, and a remarkable achievement... All of those described to me the world's largest festival of its kind, the Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF) 2005.

Time and again, I get the feeling that Dubai of the United Arab Emirates is changing for the better. It is expanding, becoming a more attractive location, and is now appealing to the world with its fascinating and remarkable temptations and attractions for investors and tourists alike.

The DSF this year was yet another example why Dubai is so much more successful than all other Arab ports. And here is how I arrived this conclusion.

When I stepped into the Global Village, which is one of the most extraordinary landmarks of the DSF, I saw thousands of people touring the different segments with joy and amusement. For me, this marked 'success' and the true understanding of real value of sharing with others.

It was truly a fascinating experience with people from the four corners of the world gathering in one place to celebrate the theme of 'one family'. The organization was close to perfection, and all of that happened on Arab soil, making me proud of being an Arab, and setting an example to the world.

Honestly speaking, I thought that the administrators and coordinators of the DSF 2005 would be extremely happy and excited for the results, but I found them still unsatisfied and eager to present, learn, and listen to the comments and complaints of visitors.

This shows the degree of dedication the staffers had to this magnificent project.

Even though the Global Village is the largest and most exciting component of the DSF, the other attractions of the festival constituted of many other sites and activities that involve entertainment, shopping, and chances to change lives by unprecedented raffles.

The DSF 2005 was an opportunity to redefine the phrase 'successful marketing'. Because when I asked about the cost of the festival and everything associated to it, I realized it was around Dhs 90 million (USD 25 million). Yet the money circulating in all the different activities during the festival would by far exceed that by many folds, and the benefit that this festival has brought the emirate and the country are priceless.

In its 10th year, the event was even richer and more glamorous. The number of nations represented, the festivities carried out, and the diversity of visitors made this year's DSF another plus for the wise leadership of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates.

When I attempted to ask the media center hospitable staffers about the source of inspiration and success in the DSF in general, and the DSF 2005 in particular, I got the same answer over and over again: "wise leadership".

The vision that Dubai's ruler H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is resembled in one finely tuned word: 'facilitate'. This secret recipe is behind Dubai's success, and consequent success of all its activities, including the DSF.

The perfect integration of the different elements of Dubai in its police, government, companies, public, and DSF have demonstrated the excellent harmony established to ensure that everything is done perfectly, smoothly, and with ease. But how they were able to achieve this level of ease and smoothness is again attributed to one of the elements that are given top priority in Dubai, and that is 'efficient administration'. This could not have been achieved without human resources to do things in the proper and most efficient manner.

My impression of the DSF 2005 was that Arabs could indeed excel and lead by example if they wanted to.

I believe that Dubai has set up a model that we don't necessarily need to duplicate, but which we can learn from and share experiences with.

It is all done with hard work and determination, and as a token of appreciation to the organizers of the DSF, I must say, "Thank you for setting an example, and thank you for raising our heads up high... and in giving Arabs self esteem and confidence."

The Editor



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Investigate it yourself

Manartv News:
no terrorism here

BY ALAN BALBONI, Ph.D.
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

After reading in early December that the French Interior Ministry, responding to complaints from the Council of Jewish Organizations in France, had charged that al-Manar, a television station affiliated with the Lebanese resistance organization Hizbullah, was both terrorist and anti-Semitic, I decided to take a look at what al-Manar was presenting so that I might better judge the accuracy of such serious charges.

Even before I found a website [www.manartv.com] that allowed me to receive Manartv news in English, the French Prime Minister had announced his fundamental agreement with allegations against al-Manar and within a few days the Conseil d'Etat, the supreme administrative tribunal of France, banned al-Manar from satellite channels which had attracted a significant audience of mostly French citizens of Arab ancestry.

I must confess that I did not enter this investigation totally neutral. I had long regarded the decision of American policy-makers to place Hizbullah on a list of terrorist organizations as a serious error.

Hizbullah is not a perfect organization, no human organization is. Yet, it is an organization that empowered the men and women of occupied south Lebanon to resist Israeli occupation of their land. Quite substantially because of the resistance efforts of Hizbullah, the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, formerly chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, made the wise and moral decision to withdraw Israeli occupation forces from south Lebanon.

So, I began my research with a tentative view that while al-Manar producers may have made some errors in the content of what they aired, allegations of support for what legitimately might be described as terrorism and anti-Semitism—each a serious charge in itself—were probably exaggerated.

No sooner had I watched my first Manartv news program than did the United States State Department announce that al-Manar was a terrorist affiliated station and would not be allowed to broadcast its programs by satellite to American audiences. No great surprise in this regard as the Zionist lobby has long been quite pow-

erful in the United States and indeed, President George W. Bush has spoken more than once in glowing terms about Ariel Sharon, referring to him at least once as "a man of peace."

Immediately I wondered if now I would not be able to access the Manartv news programs at the website. I was, and still, as of this writing, am able to do so, though the news program that is available is sometimes dated by a few days.

While I cannot judge directly whether someone associated with an al-Manar production did or said something anti-Semitic [a term which has come to mean anti-Jewish in the western world] or supportive of terrorism at some time or another, I can state that Manartv news in English is far more fair and balanced than the FOX 5 News organization, whose owners have the temerity to describe their chauvinistic and emotional reporting and commentary as fair and balanced.

Indeed, it provides a much needed antidote to heavily biased reporting of the days' events by almost all western-based media organizations, and does so in much the same fashion as the Qatari-based al-Jazeera. Perhaps it is no idle speculation to suggest that had the Israeli Defense Forces occupied part of Qatar and then faced successful resistance by the local population which eventually forced its withdrawal, al-Jazeera might well have been banned from broadcasting to French and American audiences.

Yes, al-Manar newscasters refer to the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank as exactly that. Yes, the commentators refer to the Palestinian resistance forces and Israeli occupying forces.

Such references are in accord with international law; yet the American mainstream media rarely if ever uses such terms. Usually American commentators choose words and phrases to hide from listeners and viewers that the Israelis are occupying Gaza and the West Bank and that many Palestinians are resisting the occupation by a variety of methods ranging from holding signs at demonstrations to using military means.

Never, never do American mainstream media commentators suggest to their audiences that the Palestinians are doing what the Catholic Irish did time and time again during almost 700 years of British occupation or indeed what some French did during almost 5 years

of Nazi German occupation.

At the same time, al-Manar commentators and producers often give viewers direct quotes from top Israeli officials, often provide viewers with direct quotes from what might be most kindly termed the interim government officials of Iraq, and indeed provide viewers with the arguments of French officials in favor of banning al-Manar on satellite networks serving France.

Also, al-Manar newscasters may quote articles in the New York Times—hardly a terrorist or anti-Semitic publication! Indeed, when I accessed the documents [with a click of the computer mouse] section of the al-Manar website on January 11, I found a report on the good wishes that Israeli, American, Russian, and European Union officials sent to Mahmoud Abbas upon his election. This is not the sort of document one would expect to find at the website of an entity that the U.S. State Department has condemned as supporting terrorism. The news reports of January 10 and 11 focused on the election and gave viewers a variety of perspectives on the election and what lay ahead for Abu Mazen.

Among the perspectives offered were not only those of Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and what might be termed the Palestinian man or woman on the street but also statements by American, Iranian, and Israeli officials. Once again, not what one might expect from a news organization which is part of a media entity, al-Manar, that has been deemed anti-Semitic and pro-terrorist.

The more extreme among Israeli officials and among Zionists in France and the United States do not want al-Manar news available to thinking men and women precisely because many of such people would begin to rethink their views on not only the Israeli-Palestinian dispute but also on other issues of world affairs.

Their charges of supporting terrorism and disseminating anti-Semitism, at least in reference to al-Manar news service, are merely a smokescreen for trying to control what thinking men and women might hear and see. In closing, I must affirm that I was unable to review a representative sample of al-Manar programs, and focused entirely on the al-Manar news service available on www.manartv.com

I urge all readers with access to a computer to visit the website and draw their own conclusions.

Letters to the Editor

Responding to Don
Barrick

Mr. Don Barrick (Yemen Times letters) seems to think there is little or no evidence for my descriptions of U.S. war policy. Mr. Barrick states "Mr. Lindh has absolutely no particular political or philosophical leanings, other than an attempt to instill fear and hatred." Well, Mr. Barrick, when it comes to instilling "fear and hatred" I defer to your Mr. Bush, the undisputed master of "shock and awe", the murderer of 100,000 Iraqi men, women and children, the destroyer of the Iraqi infrastructure; all while hunting for weapons of mass destruction that don't seem to exist.

I would remind Barrick that the United States invasion of Iraq was, in the words of President Bush (who claims to get his orders from God), "a Crusade". When it comes to instilling fear and hatred Mr. Bush obviously needs no help, but I am not the less inclined to proffer descriptions of such publicly ordained Christian adventures. Mr. Barrick further states "Moslems are not beheaded in Washington; they are not lined up and shot in New York; they are not bombed in Los Angeles". Such generosity! Too bad it is not extended to Fallujah.

I would remind Mr. Barrick that, whether or not he likes it, those who are working for the defeat and

humiliation of the U.S. in Iraq are very likely going to succeed with the result of bloody civil wars, regional destabilisation, and another few hundred thousand deaths. What say you then, Donny? "Mission bloody well accomplished"?

Robert Lindh
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Exporting a deeply
flawed democracy

This is an excerpt from an article by Russell Whitehead that I want to share with you:

We have constantly been touting the virtues of democracy as loudly as we can to all who will listen and even some that won't.

Now, make no mistake about it, there is certainly much good to say about a properly functioning democracy. But it is no panacea. Even in the rich and highly educated United States it faces serious challenges that, if unchecked, could lead to collapse under its own weight. And it is not real clear how it will do in poor nations. I will not try to address these comparatively minor items.

But there is an issue that demands an immediate answer because it exposes an existing fatal flaw in the concept of democracy as we know it. The question is this: How did a tiny little country 2% of the size of the big, rich and powerful United States gain full control of our

democracy? Obvious corollary questions are: Can it be prevented from happening again? If so, how? That is what changes in the structure of our democracy need to be implemented to make its recurrence impossible?

Meanwhile we are out selling a deeply flawed product to other countries, forcing it down their throats if they show reluctance to buy. Shouldn't we at least fix this critical problem before foisting democracy off on other nations? Or do we purposely sell it that way because we know the secret formula for buying off democracies and it's to our advantage? I truly wonder.

Mario Caldaron
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About Yemeni-Saudi
relations

I heartily endorse the article written in regards to Saudi-Yemeni relations. The conduct of these two nations at this time could become an inspiring template for relations between neighboring countries.

It is in a larger, richer and more powerful nation's interests for their neighbors to prosper. The entire region would benefit if the larger players took an active interest in the smaller states and their peoples.

I believe the Saudi leadership is employing advanced thinking regarding its neighbors and that it will pay long-

term dividends for all involved. Hopefully, other Arabian Peninsula nations will be quick to follow the Saudi lead.

John Shannon
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Prayers....and politics

Commenting on Nadwa's recent article published in Yemen Times on religious prayers against the Jews...etc, I must say that I am surprised you forgot the fact that it is the Palestinians women who are actually widowed and children orphaned. The Israel's continuously occupy Palestinian land persecute, tortures and kills people with the help of the U.S. administration.

While Israel has all the enormous military machine the Palestinians has nothing but their fellow Muslims to pray Almighty God to liberate them from the intruders. The main reason for increased hatred against USA is its continuous assistance to Israel and vetoes against all U.N. resolutions recognizing the agonies of the Palestinians. Go back to Deir Yassin massacres and see how horrible and brutal Jews were to Muslims. Infants' heads smashed on the walls. What do you expect Muslim feelings will be! What prayers will be appropriate to recite?

Mohamed B.
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COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Who should
we believe Bush
or Cheney?

On Inauguration Day, George W. Bush was giving us the gist of his messianic convictions and his visions of a world free from all sorts of oppression, etc. Very nice indeed. But no matter how one may regard the authenticity of Mr. Bush's convictions, he has not spoken to the world about what it is that the observer and most conscientious thinkers of the world wanted to hear. What is happening in Iraq and is there a way out of the predicament, for both the Americans and of course the Iraqis. Where is America heading for over the next four years, domestically and internationally and is it safe to assume that there is really no light at the end of the tunnel with a new Bush Administration. Oh sure, there were those commentators who claimed that this was one of the best Inauguration Speeches ("top four or five"). But are these paid commentators (it is hard to tell these days in US media land) or really opinion makers who know what is in store for the rest of humanity to ponder about as But then one cannot blame Mr. Bush. He has inherited so much mess leftover from his previous term, which apparently a good size of the American electorate failed to ponder about, when they went to the polls, so what need is there to lay them out now. No matter, it is easier to get into a world of visions then to delve into reality, because no really takes visions seriously anyway.

Even the Vice President of the United States saw no reason to put any emphasis on his boss' nice talk, because Mr. Cheney was more concerned with assuring the Israelis that no matter what Bush says, what is important for US foreign policy is that the Israelis get all the leeway they need to set out the right course for American foreign policy. On Inauguration Day, according to the Los Angeles Times of January 21, 2004: "In bluntly threatening terms on Inauguration Day, VP Dick Cheney removed any doubt that in the second term the Bush Administration intended to directly confront the theocracy in Tehran."

In other words if Israel has any worries, that is how US foreign policy will be dictated no matter who wants or does not want to be free! It was Israel that got the United States into the mess in Iraq and now Israel wants the mess to grow into a regional apocalypse. The neo-con agenda sees no split from Israeli visions for the region and thus any hopes for a shift in Administration policies will have to come from Tel Aviv and not the White House.

The tone was already set before (see Common Sense, YT Issue 809) and now Mr. Cheney wanted to assure the Israelis, especially as the world prepares to be reminded about Auschwitz and the "world that did not lift a finger" to stop the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

Back to the LAT article: "The startling reference to an Israeli attack (against Iran) was the kind of strong language that will get their attention in Tehran" said one allied diplomat in Washington, who spoke ... anonymity" (Why the fear? Never mind!) But then we have those who will clarify what the outlook for the next term is really all about: "There's a rhetorical escalation here: They've ratcheted up the threat level by bringing Israel in," said Henry J. Barkey, a former Clinton State Department official. How these people somehow get lifted into prominence, when they never got there in their tenure has always intrigued this observer. Again, the key to remember is that the Israelis are going to lay out the visions for the Bush Administration, because the agenda that started in Afghanistan, made a hurried turn to Iraq and probably, as some American 9/11 probers seem to think originated with 9/11 was all part of the same computer simulations played out by the Cheney group. In short: Israel knows these orient lists better and therefore what she says goes. Israel is having a field day in the world as all the world leaders focused their attention on remembering Auschwitz and forgetting all the havoc that the Israelis have caused in the Holy Land.

Of course the horrors of Auschwitz are unforgivable, but to tell the world that "no one lifted a finger", as Israel Shamir says, is really a sign of ingratitude. How many millions of Russian soldiers and thousands of American soldiers gave their lives before Auschwitz was liberated? That is not important, the whole world could have been victimized by Hitler and the other fascists of the day, but the world will only forever remember the horrors at Auschwitz, just so the horrors of Deir Yassin and Qana and Sabra and Shatilla would not be put to mind. The latter are massacres perpetrated by the Israeli Defense forces or their agents and they are excusable by the Cheney group, which now has its own horrors to worry about as it sets out on its liberation agenda for the world.

One really thinks that it is time for the Americans to ask if there is agreement between the President and Vice President and that when Bush talks, it will be Cheney who will really lay out on the line. No, freedom is not the mission of the Bush Administration, because Israel does not have anybody's freedom in mind, except the freedom for Israel to do as it pleases and nobody "should lift a finger" to stop it. The scenario is not complete yet!

Killing growth in Russia

By YEGOR GAIDAR

I want Russia to be a boring country – at least for the next few decades. In the twentieth century, Russia set an unquestionable record for all sorts of upheavals and social experiments that attracted the world's attention. A time-out is essential.

This objective seemed to be entirely within reach – or at least possible – until the first half of 2003. Foreign correspondents accredited in Moscow complained that nothing was happening in Putin's Russia. Investment in the Russian economy was growing fast. Unfortunately, Russia's rulers are not accustomed to leaving the country and the rest of the world for long without something surprising to gawk at.

Instilling a feeling of insecurity is the best way to scare your population into submission and frighten away potential investors. How democratic or undemocratic a regime is usually doesn't bother investors. All they need and care about is stable, predictable rules.

Indeed, the watchword among major investors is inertia. It takes time to reach a decision on whether or not to invest in a project, and once an invest-

ment decision is made, it becomes rather difficult to stop the process quickly. Russia's government is now doing its best to prove that, while difficult, it is possible to defy the laws of business physics and kill investments that are already in the pipeline.

When Mikhail Khodorkovsky and other executives of Yukos, his oil company, were arrested last year, corporations investing or interested in investing in Russia were prepared to interpret the crackdown as an isolated incident brought on by the political agenda of the company and its CEO, who should have known better. Never mind that by the second half of 2003, it had become obvious that the government intended to use legal means – in the form of massive tax claims – to destroy the company.

When only one company faced legal and financial problems, investors who had made a decision to put their money in Russia were ready to ignore this kind of development. "This must be an exception," they kept repeating, like a mantra or a prayer. I've heard something similar when Russian problems are discussed: "Just finish this Yukos affair. We don't care how it goes, just put an end to it."

Unfortunately, the genie has been let out of the bottle. Throughout 2004, it became abundantly clear that Russia's internal security apparatus had gained the upper hand in deciding how to manage economic and political problems. Security structures developed a taste for this kind of work, and welcomed new responsibilities. In many ways, they began to see fighting big business as akin to fighting terrorists. And, indeed, they share one thing in common: the fight never ends.

More and more tax claims are being produced, and not only against Yukos. Tax claims against the telecommunications company Vimpelkom (one of Russia's leading firms, and the first to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 90 years) send an unambiguous signal to investors: no one is safe.

In fact, official documents have now even started questioning the legitimacy of the privatization of the leading Russian companies in the 1990's, which has opened the way for discussions about revising the outcomes of these privatizations. Similarly, British Petroleum, which has invested more in Russia than any other company to date, has recently discovered that its rights



to the Kovytkino gas field are not guaranteed at all. This property, it now seems, could be reclaimed by the state at any moment.

It would be wrong to draw long-term conclusions from short-term economic information, even if this information confirms reality. The alarming tendencies we are seeing today may be short-lived and with no serious conse-

quences. Post-socialist growth is a process that cannot (and should not) be easily stopped.

If, however, the authorities continue their efforts to destabilize the Russian economy, today's disturbing tendencies may actually take root. Russia can then forget about attaining the fast, sustainable growth that China has achieved. Instead, we Russians will

find ourselves trying to avert an impending economic crisis.

Of course, no one can predict when such a crisis might occur. But one thing is certain: we will know which path the country's leaders have chosen sooner rather than later. Indeed, this year could be Russia's most fateful yet.

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Cultural values and conduct

Understanding the honour code

By Bertram Wyatt-Brown and Victoria C. Fontan

It's too late to win Iraqi hearts and minds. The purpose of Saddam Hussein's overthrow was to modernize and democratize the Middle East. Instead, we have disillusioned those whom we "liberated."

One of the major mistakes of Americans, especially national leaders, is their ignorance of the cultures and ethics of foreign peoples. We assume that people abroad should possess the same ideals that we acknowledge.

Indifference about social, political and religious differences has led to tragedies in Vietnam, Iran and elsewhere. Before engaging in further illusory adventures, we had best understand the societies we seek to reform. Otherwise, nuclear-prone Iran or Baathist Syria might furnish new scenes of disaster.

Pentagon war planners have argued that Arab countries only respect brute force and that they supposedly shrink from being abjectly shamed. That assessment is only partly true.

Rather, traditions of honor undergird loyalty to family, clan and tribe, not to secular nation. The opposite of honor - shame - is to be avoided. An unwillingness to take account of the psychologi-

cal depth of such convictions has already cost us dearly in lives, treasure and worldwide reputation.

The honor ethic, long disregarded in the West, is ancient and sacred. It predominates in Islamic countries. A man's reputation - not inner precepts - determines not only his place in the social order but also his self-image.

Maintaining prestige for virility and personal, familial and group honor requires immediate retribution for insult or deathly aggression, whether against another tribe or foreign foe. Iraq's social structure, for example, embraces 2,000 clans within 150 tribes.

If they occur, the Jan. 30 elections will reflect the fragmented tribal constituencies. Yet U.S. officials chiefly rely on weapons, both ours and those of Iraqi forces, to ensure a nationwide, not a piecemeal, provincial and patrimonial election result. A major motive for suicidal assault, such as the mess hall bombing in Mosul that killed 22 Americans, is the fierce desire to re-establish a vital sense of tribal honor.

Self-sacrifice against hated Western invaders becomes an act of supreme heroism. Only occasionally do we learn that U.S. Army officers or Marines use diplomacy to preserve the honor of local sheiks and citizens.

An example: At Mosul, Capt. Bill Jacobsen of the 24th Infantry Battalion

quickly learned to show respect for Iraqis' honor, saying he learned in three months that diplomacy mattered more than military force, according to a news report. As a result, U.S. forces received more vital anti-insurgent information, and better U.S.-Iraqi relations were stimulated. Tragically, he died in the mess hall explosion.

Three blunders in which indifference toward Iraqi honor played a role in creating the current chaos:

* The now universally discredited Pentagon disbanding of Mr. Hussein's army and bureaucracy May 16, 2003. The edict grossly violated the Sunni tribes' sense of themselves. Some Baathist members of the police and army lost sharaf, or honor, as applied to group cohesion. Though once respected, these well-trained professionals could no longer provide a sense of security.

Many more were stripped of ihtiram, or deference. Without weapons, they lacked the means to shield their women from possible assault and rape. Throughout the Islamic region, protection of women's honor, ird, inflames men to near obsession because women are judged to be the center of male possessiveness. In the Middle East, to re-establish family honor, relatives may kill the victim of rape, regardless of extenuating circumstances.

* The anti-Baathist edict deprived hundreds of thousands of people of incomes needed to support their families. Continuing joblessness further degrades self-identity, an emotional deprivation inciting outraged, violent resistance.

* The Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Not only Iraqis but also Middle Easterners generally learned how our government could humiliate the helpless. Shaming men sexually erases self-respect.

* A Yemeni in Fallujah before its fall confessed that photos taken at Abu Ghraib had propelled him from driving a taxi in Yemen's capital, Sana'a, to the ranks of the insurgents. A reliable Fallujah householder told one of us that invading soldiers "had no shame. They ... touched our women, stole our savings and took us away."

By showing little regard for Iraqi honor, we have annihilated Middle Eastern respect for us and our values.

President Bush envisions a free, democratic Middle East, with Iraq as the first attempt to change age-old cultures there. Yet to save their sense of honor and retaliate against abject humiliation, that fractured assemblage of Iraqi tribes - and those in neighboring countries - might find other means to reinvigorate their self-image. They could promptly reject middle-class, secular democracy

and embrace an intolerant Islamic theocracy. Occupation armies seldom impose democracy on any unwilling nation, least of all one that adheres to the truculent honor code. American lives, money and reputation should be better spent on more-promising, humane efforts toward peace.

Bertram Wyatt-Brown, a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins University, is working on a book, *Honor and America's Wars*. Victoria C. Fontan, a sociological researcher currently in Iraq, is a visiting assistant professor at Colgate University in New York.



By Yahya Al-Olfi
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Reflections

Attack Arabs at weakest point

Israel's clever request

I was extremely amused by looking at a picture published in the Kuwaiti Newspaper "Al-Arabi" showing a small number of Israelis distributing leaflets calling for Arab Regimes Change. The Israelis could not have done better! They wanted to maintain portraying Arabs as uncultivated and primitive, because this stereotype is dwindling, they knew our leaders' weakest point.

The lack of freedom in Arab countries and the non-existence of real democracy, for domestic Arab newspapers cannot speak the truth or criticize the recurrent daily excesses. All this makes us understand why corruption instead of being battered and beaten is simply praised and poems are written about it.

Therefore, any Arab investor in the media cannot succeed if he does not praise day and night, or else his newspaper shall be closed down under many pretexts. Such an investor can today seize the moment and adopt the golden advice which is already known to many but unnecessarily ignored.

This advice can also serve Arabs who do possess moneys and are perplexed in how and where to invest them. I tell them just look at the Arab clever journalists who have become filthy rich all of a sudden not in practicing genuine journalism but in exploiting the profession in order to gain and accumulate huge amounts in hard currencies.

Everybody knows that all Arabs are being ruled tyrannically and this is why the Israelis were so clever and malicious, by starting a barely small gesture represented in a small pulpit in front of the recent Berlin Arab Book Fare where they distributed leaflets calling for Arab Regimes Change.

As if they wanted to say look how weak and vulnerable you are! Some

Arabs like Israel knew the weak point of Arab Regimes and how they can get Arab leaders. Thus, some of them established newspapers / TV stations, magazines and started publishing a bit of the endless scandals of Arab leaders and as Arab leaders cannot close down those newspapers because of the real democracy in places such as London and Paris, the profit is guaranteed.

Indeed, within less than a week or so, the owner would be unavoidably approached by the relevant embassy in order to strike a deal regarding how much that embassy has to pay for the paper to stop publishing their dirty infamies, and may in certain instances request attacking another Arab leader or country.

Such investors are mostly based in London and Paris and easily without much fuss and mess reap millions. In like manner, Arab writers in their own countries are not free to say what they want so some of them opted to stay abroad where they can express themselves freely. Unfortunately, most of them are now known to receive regular payments in order to keep their mouths shut and in order to praise the non-existent achievements or receive hush prizes under the pretext of merited innovation.

So it is very easy to know if Arab countries are changing to the best or to the worse. The thermometer for that, is plainly the financial position of an Arab Newspaper or an Arab intellectual/journalist based in Paris or London. If the newspaper/TV/Radio, journalist or poet becomes richer and richer then you would know for sure that autocracy and repression in Arab countries is in bloom, while on the other hand if they become poorer, it is a clear indication that Arab countries are abnormally on the right path towards wider freedoms like other self-respecting nations.

Appeasement revisited

By Václav Havel

I vividly remember the slightly ludicrous, slightly risqué, and somewhat distressing predicament in which Western diplomats in Prague found themselves during the Cold War. They regularly needed to resolve the delicate issue of whether to invite to their embassy celebrations various Charter 77 signatories, human rights activists, critics of the communist regime, displaced politicians, or even banned writers, scholars, and journalists – people with whom the diplomats were generally friends.

Sometimes we dissidents were not invited, but received an apology, and sometimes we were invited, but did not accept the invitation so as not to complicate the lives of our courageous diplomat friends. Or we were invited to come at an earlier hour in the hope that we would leave before the official representatives arrived, which sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. When it didn't, either the official representatives left in protest at our presence, or we left hurriedly, or we all pretended not to notice each other, or – albeit on rare occasions – we started to converse with each other, which frequently were the only moments of dialogue between the regime and the opposition (not counting our courthouse encounters).

This all happened when the Iron Curtain divided Europe – and the

world – into opposing camps. Western diplomats had their countries' economic interests to consider, but, unlike the Soviet side, they took seriously the idea of "dissidents or trade." I cannot recall any occasion at that time when the West or any of its organizations (NATO, the European Community, etc.) issued some public appeal, recommendation, or edict stating that some specific group of independently-minded people – however defined – were not to be invited to diplomatic parties, celebrations, or receptions.

But today this is happening. One of the strongest and most powerful democratic institutions in the world – the European Union – has no qualms in making a public promise to the Cuban dictatorship that it will re-institute diplomatic Apartheid. The EU's embassies in Havana will now craft their guest lists in accordance with the Cuban government's wishes. The shortsightedness of socialist Prime Minister José Zapatero of Spain has prevailed.

Try to imagine what will happen: at each European embassy, someone will be appointed to screen the list, name by name, and assess whether and to what extent the persons in question behave freely or speak out freely in public, to what extent they criticize the regime, or even whether they are former political prisoners. Lists will be shortened and deletions made, and this will frequently entail eliminating even good

personal friends of the diplomats in charge of the screening, people whom they have given various forms of intellectual, political, or material assistance. It will be even worse if the EU countries try to mask their screening activities by inviting only diplomats to embassy celebrations in Cuba.

I can hardly think of a better way for the EU to dishonor the noble ideals of freedom, equality, and human rights that the Union espouses – indeed, principles that it reiterates in its constitutional agreement. To protect European corporations' profits from their Havana hotels, the Union will cease inviting open-minded people to EU embassies, and we will deduce who they are from the expression on the face of the dictator and his associates. It is hard to imagine a more shameful deal.

Cuba's dissidents will, of course, happily do without Western cocktail parties and polite conversation at receptions. This persecution will admittedly aggravate their difficult struggle, but they will naturally survive it. The question is whether the EU will survive it.

Today, the EU is dancing to Fidel's tune. That means that tomorrow it could bid for contracts to build missile bases on the coast of the People's Republic of China. The following day it could allow its decisions on Chechnya to be dictated by Russian President Vladimir Putin's advisers. Then, for some unknown reason, it

could make its assistance to Africa conditional on fraternal ties with the worst African dictators.

Where will it end? The release of Milosevic? Denying a visa to Russian human rights activist Sergey Kovalyov? An apology to Saddam Hussein? The opening of peace talks with Al Qaida?

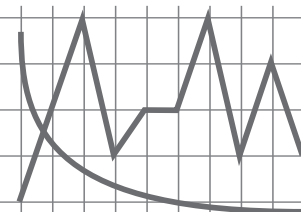
It is suicidal for the EU to draw on Europe's worst political traditions, the common denominator of which is the idea that evil must be appeased and that the best way to achieve peace is through indifference to the freedom of others. Just the opposite is true: such policies expose an indifference to one's own freedom and pave the way for war. After all, Europe is uniting in order to defend its freedom and values, not to sacrifice them to the ideal of harmonious coexistence with dictators and thus risk gradual infiltration of its soul by the anti-democratic mindset.

I firmly believe that the new members of the EU will not forget their experience of totalitarianism and non-violent opposition to evil, and that that experience will be reflected in how they behave in EU bodies. Indeed, this could be the best contribution they can make to the common spiritual, moral, and political foundations of a united Europe.

Václav Havel is Former President of the Czech Republic.

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YT Business



Industrial, agricultural and economic obstacles

By DR. AHMED ISMAIL AL-BAWAB

The economic obstacles that hinder agricultural industry in our country is ascribed to the failure of the implementation of successful agricultural policies that lead to profusion of production depending on the right selection of

the planted categories.

The selection of categories should consider the environmentally suitable lands taking into account the use of modern technologies. Moreover, there should be easy procedures to facilitate distributing these products as well as gaining acceptable revenues that undoubtedly encourage keeping on improving this sector.

The crops categories in Yemen are

not determined on scientific bases and field studies that deal with production, marketing and climate. On the contrary, most farmers plant some types as soon as they hear about the other farmers' success in planting these specific types haphazardly without taking into account the nature of the soil and suitability of climate and the right choice of the new types. They don't actually real-

ize that there are specific ways of cultivation that led to success of this agriculture in a consuming markets being in need for this production.

So, the accumulation of similar types of agricultural crops is the result of the blind imitation and competition in producing the very products leading to stagnation of these products in the markets. Therefore, there should be some measures to be taken by the concerned authorities represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation including all its administrations. This is to guide the farmers to the selection of the suitable types to be planted so as to insure the fresh consumption and agricultural industry. The farmers then are to get benefit from the official directives before indulging in planting their lands which protects them from failure and loss.

That is clear, the development of the agricultural work is one of the main bases of the national economy in our country. That's why it should be encouraged to exchange scientific experiences and the results of the agricultural and industrial researches for the sake of developing and adapting with the use of the modern technologies and collecting information on marketing.

All this data should be analyzed entirely coming out with a clear picture of the strategies and orientations of markets with their capacities putting them in the hands of the workers themselves in order to agriculturally and industrially revive the agricultural sector. In this case, we reach to form complete productive plans that help develop this sector providing

the local, regional and international markets with enough quantities of products.

Not only that, they also help us decide the standards and qualities of agricultural products leading to specifying the categories that are suitable for the food industry.

Of the concerns of the Agricultural Researches Centers in our country is distributing the results of such studies among the dealers in the agricultural sector and the agricultural charitable societies and authorities to apply them to their works and produce the industrially suitable food products.

These centers should make some researches to specify the types of soil suitable for the required categories of crops suggesting the ways of service and protection and identifying the times of growing and reaping them. They do guide the farmers to use the best ways of storage, reservation, canning and transporting products. Besides, the farmers should get familiar with the assigned standards of the local industrial products comparing them to the other regional and international ones.

All these are considered positive factors that do contribute to developing the Yemeni agricultural sector

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	186.4000	186.7100
Sterling Pound	351.1500	351.7300
Euro	244.2900	244.6900
Saudi Rial	49.7000	49.7900
Kuwaiti Dinar	638.3600	639.4200
UAE Dirhem	50.7500	50.8400
Egyptian Pound	31.8400	31.8900
Bahraini Dinar	494.4300	495.2500
Qatari Rial	51.2200	51.3000
Jordanian Dinar	262.9100	263.3400
Omani Rial	484.1500	484.9500
Swiss Franc	157.8900	158.1600
Swedish Crown	26.9500	26.9900
Japanese Yen	1.8079	1.8109

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

and providing the categories of products required for developing the food industry and the canned goods in particular. The agricultural products used in food industry should be increased in order to achieve self sufficiency while the surplus is to be exported as soon as possible otherwise they will expire making a loss not merely on the farms level but on the country's level.

When great amounts of the agricultural products such as fruits and vegetables were subjected to expire, they should have been industrialized to keep the national wealth because there's a close connection between agriculture and the food industry the thing that keeps both sectors.

There is no food industry without agriculture and there's no economically sustainable and successful agriculture without receiving the benefit of industrializing products and the surplus. Achieving the economic growth in the agricultural and food industry sectors requires the great care about the profitable deal with all casual results of these sectors.

This article ran originally in 26th September Weekly, Issue No. 1170



Yemen's agricultural industry needs a scientific approach to crops for it to be successful.

Natural gas for South Korea

Yemen LNG close to huge deal

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

South Korea is coming close to choosing who will provide natural gas and it looks like Yemen LNG is in a good position to be one of the winners.

On January 10, Yemen LNG submitted its offer to state-run Kogas, the world's largest buyer of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The bid included three contracts totaling six million tons of natural gas for 20 years. The South Korean government is expected to make its decision in February.

Last September, Yemen LNG put in a bid to supply natural gas after the

South Korean government sent invitations to nine countries to bid for gas projects. It is reported that around five of those that put in bids are now being considered to be suppliers, and South Korea will probably use several to carry out the projects.

According to Jean-Francois Daganand, General Manager of Yemen LNG, Yemen aims to capture more than one market. Along with South Korea, Yemen is pursuing China, Japan, India, the United States and European countries.

"We want several customers," said Daganand. "The processing plant will be able to deliver to several buyers."

After the Asian economic crisis in

1997, Yemen LNG had difficulties finding a market. But with economic growth back on track and demand for natural gas rising, Yemen LNG is now optimistic.

"Two years ago it was very difficult to see opportunities in the energy market," said Daganand. "But in the last 12 months, the energy market has become very favorable. Consumption has climbed in the Far East, China realized that it was in need of energy and the United States became aware that their reserves were not good enough."

It is estimated that Yemen has 16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas below its surface. In the Marib province,

Yemen Hunt Oil Co. extracts more than 3 billion cubic feet of gas per day, strips out 22,000 barrels of liquids to add to crude oil then re-injects gas back into the ground.

Once there is a customer, Yemen LNG will build a 320 kilometer pipeline that will carry gas from Marib to Bal Haf, a site on the coast west of Mukalla where a liquefaction plant will be built.

Shareholders of Yemen LNG (France's Total, state-owned Yemen Gas, US Hunt, and South Korea's SK and Hyundai) will pump over \$2 billion into the project if there is a buyer, and the pipeline and plant will take around 43 months to be completed.

عبروك الخطوبة

أجمل التهاني والتبريكات نهديها الأخ

رشاد سليمان محمد الصلوي

بمناسبة الخطوبة وقرب الزواج

المهنتون: سفيان سليمان الصلوي، ليلى سفيان الصلوي،

عبد الجليل عبدالعزيز الصلوي وجميع آل بيت الدعيدع

Expression of Interest

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Yemen Office, seek professional service of an external health consultant for a joint pilot programme.

The assignment will be accomplished within one month contract with the Federation.

Expertise Required

- Health/Social sciences with related post graduate degree
- Public health care experience/planning community interventions
- Five year professional experience in relevant activities
- Knowledge of country and culture
- Experience in writing program proposals
- Fluent English/Arabic
- Able to travel for extended field visits
- Yemeni national would be an asset

Candidates can request Term of Reference and submit CVs to Mr. Peter Kurlandsky, Federation Representative ifrcye02@ifrc.org, fax no. 01-481871, P.O. Box 5456

Workshop on WB strategy

Balancing reform with social needs

By FAHMIA AL-FOTIH
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, in collaboration with the World Bank, held a workshop on Jan. 11 to discuss the social analysis for Yemen.

The workshop called for paying more attention for the social dimensions of economic reform.

The participants from the governmental sides, the civic society organizations, academic and researches

institutions, development partners along with representatives from the social insurance networks showed the importance of integrating the social development within economic reform.

They called for more support in social development in all levels and sectors.

Dr. Muathar AL-Abassi, the deputy of the ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, along with Dr. Mustafa Rowias, the World Bank representative, presented two papers in which they discussed the aim of the workshop and the practical visions to

merge the social, cultural and institutional dimensions.

They pointed out that the program of social analysis that would be run during this year by Yemeni and international researchers would help gather data in a number of rural areas in Hodedia, Sana'a, Thamar, Ibb, Lihj, and Hadramout governorates, besides some minor targeted provinces such as Zabeed, Amran, Tareem, Yareem and Ataq.

Analysis will prepare the third 5th Plan for 2006-2010 and contribute in setting up the strategy that the World

Bank has been carrying out to support Yemen in future.

Al-Abassi also that the government would organize consulting meetings and workshops and working groups to analyze Yemen's growing economic issues to help providing job opportunities and education particularly for girls.

Health and infrastructure and public management are also issues on the table.

Yemen is one of the selected countries that the World Bank has chosen to do the analysis.

Training is crucial

Yemen needs a national media strategy

By ABDULLAH A. AL-ZALAB
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

In the last few years, the media has proven itself to be the most prominent global factor behind change in politics, economics, academia, art, and culture. But what is being realized in the Arab world generally, and particularly in our country, is that technological advancement and the new modern drive of specialized media have resulted in ethical questions and challenges for media that assist in accomplishing developmental goals.

Education and training in new information technologies have become a major interest of decision makers in media establishments, especially in a time of global competition and increasing use of the Internet. Possessing and mastering technology have hence become the first priority for media tycoons. Meanwhile, the cultural and social aspects in the media have been getting less attention. This subsequently led to pulling out the humanitarian characteristic from the media. A negative impact of this is resembled in more focus on material interests and neglecting the human aspect of media coverage.

What we see today is the transformation of the media from establishments that promote humanity, cultural and social values, to mere tools that use new media technologies to reach the masses and deliver programs that are driven by popular demand of viewers regardless of their intellectual value.

Thus, these factors have resulted in the emergence of specializing media that focus on certain lines of entertainment, news, and other programs, and try

to reach maximum quality standards in those specific lines.

This is the global picture, and it is also the situation observed in the private Arab media. But it is unfortunate to see that this has also caused a big gap between those specialized networks and the official Yemeni TV, which seems to be least popular among viewers, and looks confused and weak in quality.

Meanwhile, one needs to admit that despite the injustices we see happening daily in Palestine, Iraq, and other zones in the Arab world, the Arab media is unable to defend their countries and seems to be weak in confronting the much stronger Western influence that drives global public opinion against Arabs and Muslims.

The status of Arab media seems to have surrendered to the Western media influence and simply report on incidents happening here and there with little genuine input and opinion making globally.

Part of this is due to the lack of the professional establishments in media training such as colleges, media departments in the universities, and specialized training institutes, which should have played a vital role in using the potentials of the Arab youth and intellectual abilities to bring an opinion that could balance Western influence.

Media training is a must

From what has been described above, we find that there is a necessity and practical requirement to consider and push for more media training efforts. Furthermore, it is the broadcasting field in particular that requires condensed training because it has possessed that power to influence and change public opinion more than any other form of

media.

It is hence important to rehabilitate both the management and cadres of broadcasting companies in the Arab world to be up to the standard that would allow them to present professional media that can convey a strong message in the Arab world and globally and set up the stage to change the negative image portrayed in the West.

Yemen's case

For Yemen in particular, urgent steps need to be taken to lift the standard of TV broadcasting in a professional way according to the international requirements of the current era. In fact the public TV enterprise should even consider future requirements by setting the platform for a new generation of innovative and creative reporters and media personnel who can adapt to an ever-changing world in terms of technology and new media.

To narrow the huge gap between Yemen's media standards and international standards, we need not to apply hasty or random one-sided intervention. But we need to rather start strategic planning based on current factual studies and analysis based on scientific indications and experimented methods. After completing the planning stage, a slow but gradual phase of change should take place taking into account the difficulties and challenges that could accompany this phase.

In my opinion, the pressing challenge that we need to overcome before we can apply appropriate reforms to the public TV establishment in Yemen, contrary to some may think, is not the lack of sufficient financial resources or technical or human capabilities, but is resembled in the following three main points:



Talking about media issues at the Mass Communication for Qualifying and Training Institute.

- The lack of a clear vision of how we want Yemen's media to be. This requires proper planning by media experts who know the reality on the ground and understand the direction that the media should be going..

- The incomplete understanding of the outdated and backward mentality in running the media. This mentality with all its negativities should be analyzed, understood and taken into account, so as to have it changed gradually.

- The unawareness of the singular and plural vision to the whole world around us and in all its different levels and segments.

Hence, there is an urgent need for the formation of professionally structured establishments that can cope with the global developments in the media sector and can accept change and in fact become innovative and apply things that may have not yet been applied elsewhere.

Such establishments are the true media laboratories that can develop a more effective, fourth authority' in the Arab world that can assist in spreading awareness and provide content that is of cultural value to the community.

This step cannot be achieved unless humans are trained, educated, and put in

the right positions to implement their knowledge and set up those establishments. But focusing on humans needs a courageous decision from Arab countries, whose strategy needs to be clear and goals need to be well defined. They need to establish a strategic vision that puts human development in the center of their priorities.

The current situation

The obvious weakness in the media-training sector in the Arab world is linked to a number of cultural, economic and political sectors. Those factors seem to be overwhelming to a degree that makes governments unable to take a decisive and clear decision to put training in their list of priorities.

Furthermore, an increasing capital coming from Arab investors, particularly Gulf investors is going for the establishment of specialized media that would ensure maximum profit using communication technology (SMS messages, requests, etc.). This resulted in concentration on overall attraction of the programs produced rather than investing in the cadres working in those media establishments.

Hence, in order to get the Arab media from its current defective state to professional international standards, it is

essential to invest in training facilities and establishments, sending students for scholarships in media-related academic fields, and providing proper media education in university departments throughout the Arab world.

Otherwise, the gap between the Arab media and the international media will continue to grow, and that is something that will have long-term implications on the future of our countries.

To conclude, it is important to emphasize on the establishment and development of media qualifying and training institutes with new and comprehensive strategies that revolve around the human being as its receiver, sender, producer, and consumer. Only then will our media enterprises would be able to convey a message that can be respected by the world. This is imperative to achieve any real development in their performance of Arab or Yemeni media to combat the challenges and obstacles of the present and the future.

* Dr. Abdullah A. Al-Zalab is the General Manager of the Media Training and Qualifying Center in Sana'a. He is a prominent writer and intellect who has written a number of books on media and other issues and contributed dozens of articles to the local, Arab and international press.



Arab youth need the tools to help shape global opinion.

Animal sacrifices cost

Eid had plenty of sadness this year

By ABDULWAHAB ABDULQAWI AL SOFI
ABDULWAHAB_ALSOFTI@YAHOO.COM

HODEIDAH — We as Moslems celebrated Eid Al Adha at the time we wished to reach that an immaculate place, Arafat Mountain. In Yemen governorates generally and in Hodeidah especially people did not receive Eid Al Adha as happy as the year before.

The prices of new clothes for their children and all demanding requisites and needs of Eid were very heavy on the shoulders of families. They are really exhausted of high prices bodily and even mentally as well.

In this Eid people came back to their home somewhat unsatisfactorily after they had performed their Eid prayer in the oratory. Their gladness was blended by sadness, because the majority of people notably did not sacrifice for Eid Al Adha (not slay goats or sheep). Sheep and goat are very expensive.

A goat for sacrifice costs approximately YR 25000. Therefore, people rushed to the butchers who have in turn raised the price of meat. A kilo of meat costs YR 1200.

In addition to that, the bad news commenced in this year upset a lot of people. It is the advent dose, which

gnaws the Yemeni poor people.

Children only do not care of this misery. They are very happy as they get the new clothes and electrical games to practice their innocent childhood in the garden and the seacoast.

In fact, parent are obliged to go to park, gardens and the sea coast by their children who do not understand what the dose means. Otherwise, they prefer to stay at their homes.

Yet, people have to celebrate Eid and visit their relatives. People shake hand each other and embraced their relatives in this occasion comes once in year. They did keep smiles compulsorily, but they did tread on their hearts forgetting the bad situation at the same times.

They enjoyed Eid by going to various charming place, at least for relieving their feelings. All their subjects discussed in a Qat sitting or at gardens, park and houses, are about the soared pieces of food and necessary items.

In short, people performed all religious rituals but with absentmindedness. The difficult livelihood's costs are worthy to kill joy of human beings. Prices are soared up every year. As far as the prices of food and necessary items soar, poverty cases increase enormously.

What dose the Eid mean? In my opinion, it means joy and happiness. It

means stability in everything including food items prices. It also means the health for every one. How can we enjoy things without inner joy and happiness?

Gladness emerges from that joy inside our hearts. Suffering for sustenance and struggling for survival do not only lose happiness but also they affect the mentality of persons consciously. Nothing is harder than people stretch their hands for begging to feed their children.

That is why; it is absurd that our government creates a new dose of prices every year. Native Yemenis are quite accustomed for things to go from bad to worse every year but the hits of dead ones are surely a sin. Our government usually plays a trick on Yemeni people. On the other hand, our responsible really tantalize us because of their false promises.

Instead, they should think how to decrease the prices of necessary food items and do for prosperous Yemen. It is unfair the government treats us like this. The news of the incoming dose amongst poor Yemeni people struck chill into many hearts and made anxious.

Finally I can say Yemeni people are condemned to suffer a life of pain, aren't they?



VACANCY

The British Council in Sana'a has a vacancy for a Receptionist.

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The software of life

By ANTOINE DANCHIN

Being alive, we tend to think that life is easy to grasp. In the accepted classification of sciences, mathematics is thought to be the queen, and the most difficult to grasp, followed by physics, chemistry, and, finally, biology. But this scientific hierarchy is false and misleading: we now know that biology contains more mathematics than we ever imagined.

When molecules entered the scientific understanding of life with the discovery of DNA, biology climbed one step up the scale, to chemistry. Then, with recognition of the abstract schemas dictating how genes are expressed, biology climbed even closer to mathematics.

Today's buzzword in the study of life is "systems" biology. For a long time, those who studied the nature of life and heredity were divided into two camps: *epigeneticists*, who emphasized environmental influences on living organisms, and *preformists*, who stressed the similarities between parents and progeny. The *epigeneticist* view was clearly wrong, because *something* stable had to be transmitted across generations. But the *preformist* view that the entity transmitted across generations was the whole organism was contradicted by the impossibility of segmenting objects infinitely.

What had to be transmitted was not the final organism, but the recipe to make it. Consider the old metaphysical puzzle: is a wooden boat whose planks are gradually replaced as they decay the same boat after all the planks have been changed? "Systems" biology is biology that recognizes that what remains the same is the design of

the boat – that which determines the relationships between the planks.

This thought paved the way for the concept of a "genetic program," akin to a computer program – a metaphor that became almost self-evident when the structure of DNA was discovered, because DNA could be visualized as a linear string of symbols, which is exactly what computers read as a program. Like a computer program, DNA does not preserve the final state of what it codes for; rather, it embeds in a symbolic but concrete way (it is a real "text") the relationships between all the objects and agents that it specifies and controls.

A remarkable observation supports this analogy: viruses behave like individual pieces of programs, using the cell as the machine needed to make them multiply and subsequently propagate (often by destroying the machine). When computer programming became widespread, pieces of software were found to behave the same way, and were thus called "viruses." And when it became possible to manipulate DNA in vitro, the metaphor of a "genetic program" appeared even more precise: scientists could construct experiments that corresponded to the reprogramming of cells merely by working on symbols in silicon.

The metaphor comes from the famous mathematician and computer scientist Alan Turing, who, along with John von Neumann and other theoreticians, uncovered the link between the mathematics of whole numbers and logic. Turing proposed that all computations and logical operations could be performed by a simple machine, which he called the Universal Turing Machine, reading and modifying a linear sequence of symbols. This required only the

physical separation of the symbols (visualized as a tape) handled by the machine and the machine itself. Moreover, the tape carried the data that allowed the machine to proceed. So the data could be split into two types: a program that embedded the "meaning" of the logical sequence recognized by the machine, and the pure data that provided the context for the program to run.

Genetic engineering rests on the manipulation of DNA molecules (whether real or artificially constructed) in order to reprogram foreign cells. As a result, many bacteria today produce human proteins. But this represents only a small part of the genetic program. Transfer of genes between organisms is widespread. Nuclear cloning, illustrated by the sheep Dolly, has made the Universal Turing Machine a highly revealing, if not all explaining, model of the cell.

If we take this metaphor at face value, there is a surprising consequence. It has been shown that, the outcome of some computer programs is at once entirely deterministic, innovative, and unpredictable. The computer metaphor thus implies that living organisms are material systems that, facing an unforeseeable future, arrive at improbable solutions so that some of their progeny can survive in unpredictable conditions. Life is inherently creative.

However, the metaphor is limited by a simple fact: computers do not make computers. The challenge for the new biology is to understand how they would.

Antoine Danchin is Professor and Director of Genetics of Bacterial Genomes at the Institut Pasteur in Paris.

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The environmental effect of tsunamis

By ARNE JERNELÖV

Reports about the tsunamis that devastated Southeast Asia barely a month ago have understandably been dominated by tales of death, suffering, and the physical destruction of infrastructure. But man was not alone in feeling the impact. Ecosystems and other species were also hit.

To be sure, photographic and video images relayed by the media have shown trees swept away by waves and water-drenched lands. Other reports have mentioned wildlife that escaped the destruction, as some sort of instinct seemed to tell them to seek higher ground prior to the arrival of the tsunami waves. And yet the full scope of the tsunamis' environmental impact remains under-reported, despite its obvious importance for the recovery of the affected areas and the well being of the survivors.

Experience from previous tsunamis and other major floods suggests that the environmental damage they inflict is linked to saltwater intrusion in ground water and to the disappearance or relocation of beaches. Tsunamis may make small, low islands uninhabitable. Vegetation in large stretches of lowland can be hurt substantially as saltwater-tolerant mangroves and grasses take over from other species. For rare animals with specific reproduction sites, like marine turtles, the tsunami's effects could spell extinction.

But whereas the damage to the environment on land can be seen, the ravages imposed on the marine

environment are hidden. Obviously, when extremely strong waves hit coral reefs, some coral breaks off. But this is a comparatively small problem. The surface of coral is highly sensitive, and will now be exposed to major damage from all sorts of silt and debris carried back by water receding from flooded land.

At the same time, the material brought back from land to sea include nutrients and trace elements that cause a boom among plankton, which in turn feed other marine biota. Locally, but sometimes still at a grand scale, the shock waves cause major sediment slides on steep underwater slopes such as those of the continental shelves.

Closer to the shore, many natural ecosystems, most notably coral reefs and mangroves, act as natural shock absorbers and wave breakers. During the past several decades, these ecosystems have been damaged and reduced in most countries along the Indian Ocean. Indeed, the damage from the tsunami waves was far more devastating than it would have been had they still been intact.

Wildlife may fare better than the physical environment. This is particularly true of fish stocks, owing to large-scale destruction to fisheries. More than 13,000 fishermen were killed and another 5,000 evacuated in Sri Lanka alone, with 80% of the fishing fleet lost or severely damaged. On the Thai coast, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 4,500 fishing vessels were smashed, jeopardizing the livelihoods of 120,000 people in fishing villages there.

The situation on Sumatra is similarly grim, and it is perhaps

even worse in the Maldives, Laccadives, Andamans, and Nikobar islands, where not only fishermen and boats were lost, but harbours were ruined. Along the coast of the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, some 30% of the fishery capacity was lost. Mozambique, Somalia, and Tanzania on the African side of the Indian Ocean have also reported severe damage to their fishing.

Such major losses in fishing capacity, with their far-reaching negative socio-economic consequences on the human populations affected, are bound to have major, mostly favourable, effects on the fish stocks. The reason is simple: with most fish populations nowadays hit hard by over-fishing, fewer fishermen will mean more fish. Another factor that will help fish stocks is a religiously motivated hesitation by the public in some areas to eat marine fish, as they are perceived to have fed on human corpses washed to sea.

It may seem cruel or cold-hearted to focus on such environmental outcomes in the wake of vast human loss and suffering. But as the world attempts to mount a civilized response to Southeast Asia's human tragedy, it must also confront the humbling amorality of nature, and thus comprehend the environmental effects that will shape the lives of survivors and their descendants.

Arne Jernelöv is Professor of Environmental Biochemistry, an honorary scholar and former director of the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna, and a UN expert on environmental catastrophes.

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Request for Expression of Interest for Consulting Service For Preparation of Technical Studies and Bidding Documents for the Performance Based management and Maintenance of Roads (PMMR)

Republic of Yemen
Rural Access Program – Phase II
Consulting Services
Credit No (3514-Yem).
Project ID No.
Expressions of interest

The Government of the Republic of Yemen has received for a credit (No 3514Yem) from the International Development Association (IDA) for the upgrading of Rural Roads and provision of technical assistance, training, and studies under phase I of the Rural Access Program, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Credit to the consulting services for the **Preparation of Technical Studies and Bidding Documents for the Performance Based management and maintenance of Roads (PMMR)**. A total length of 900 km of the Main Road network and rural access roads is expected to be maintained by (PMMR) Contacts during the period 2005-2010.

These contracts may be financed by a possible Phase II credit for the Rural Access Program. The services would mainly include the following tasks: (i) definition of a generic system of service levels for Yemeni roads and preparation of cost estimates for maintaining roads to those levels; (ii) preparation of road specific studies including condition surveys, definition of service levels for these roads, evaluation of contractors' capabilities packaging of PMMR contracts prequalification of contractors, and preparation of cost estimates for each contract; and (iii) preparation of bidding documents and support to the Road Maintenance Fund in the bidding and bid evaluation process.

The Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH), represented by Road maintenance Fund (RMF) now invites eligible consultants to indicate their interest in providing the above services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc.) Consultants may associate with other consultants to enhance their qualifications.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* (current edition). Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours 9:00 to 14 hours, Sat-Wed.

Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by **2:00 PM Feb 15, 2005**.

Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH)
Road Maintenance Fund (RMF)
Atten: The chairman for road maintenance fund.
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Villa No. 33
Phone: 967-1-441842/4/6
Fax: 967-1-441847
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Serena sets sights on top spot

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Serena Williams has her sights set on regaining the world number one ranking after staging a miraculous comeback to beat Lindsay Davenport 2-6, 6-3, 6-0 in the Australian Open final Saturday.

The younger Williams sister looked certain to lose after throwing her back out and damaging a rib during the opening set of the all-American final, restricting her ability to move and serve at full speed.

Trailing 4-1, the 23-year-old was in severe pain and many others might have been tempted to quit but Williams is clearly made of sterner stuff. She called an injury break, told the trainer to snap her back into place and promptly bounded back on court to run away with the match.

"I never, ever think that I have to give up, even in the most dire situations," Williams said.

As remarkable as her comeback was, it was still no real surprise to see Williams win.

Two years ago when she won her first Australian Open to complete her grand slam collection, she saved two match

points in a semi-final against Kim Clijsters. History repeated itself when she saved three match points in her semi-final win over Maria Sharapova.

Lingering doubts

Her latest comeback gave Williams a seventh grand slam title and first since Wimbledon in 2003, removing any lingering doubts her power game might have been in decline.

It was soon after that Wimbledon victory that Williams endured a bleak period in her life which included the death of one of her sisters, the separation of her parents and an extended layoff following knee surgery.

She slipped to seventh in the world rankings but has climbed back to second after winning in Australia. Her next target is to take the top spot from Davenport.

"I'm almost to my goal and it feels great," she said. "I've always considered myself the best and the top. I never considered that I was out of it."

Safin, runner-up in 2002 and last year, had dropped just one set in his first four matches before beating the seemingly invincible Roger Federer 5-7 6-4

5-7 7-6 9-7 in a heart-stopping semi-final.

"I believe in destiny. I believe that everything that happened before to me, it had to happen," Safin said.

Zimbabweans Wayne Black and Kevin Ullyett upset second seeds Bob and Mike Bryan 6-4 6-4 to win the men's doubles.

The fifth seeds broke the Bryan twins once in each set to clinch their second grand slam title together, completing victory without dropping a set in the tournament.

Ullyett is also through to the mixed doubles final with his South African partner Leisel Huber after their semi-final win over Max Mirnyi and Martina Navratilova.

They will lock horns with Australians Samantha Stosur and Scott Draper, who also made his professional golf debut this weekend.

Draper was saved the agony of choosing between his two favourite sports, however, when he missed the cut at the Victorian Open after shooting rounds of 79 and 74.



Serena Williams has her sights set on regaining the world number one ranking after staging a miraculous comeback to beat Lindsay Davenport 2-6 6-3 6-0 in the Australian Open final. REUTERS



Seventh seed Serena Williams of the U.S. celebrates her victory over top seed and compatriot Lindsay Davenport at the final of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne Jan. 29. Former number one Williams overcame a painful rib injury to win the Open women's singles title on Saturday when she beat fellow American Davenport 2-6, 6-3, 6-0. Photo by David Gray/Reuters

Fisher looks towards NASCAR for chance to drive

LEXINGTON, N.C., (Sports Network) - Three-time IndyCar Most Popular driver Sarah Fisher will drive a Bill McAnally car in the NASCAR Grand National West Series this season.

She also hopes to run one or two Busch Series events with Richard Childress Racing who along with the NASCAR "Drive for Diversity" program is supporting her efforts.

Fisher competed in the IndyCar Series between 1999 and 2004. During that time she made 48 starts earning one pole (Kentucky - 2002) and a best finish of second at Homestead in 2001.

Last year, Fisher made just one start, finishing 21st at Indianapolis.

"I gave my heart and soul to the IRL," said Fisher to NASCAR.com. "I really believed in what they were doing. I gave five really good years of my life to them. I'm ready for a new challenge. I see this as my long-term life. I want to be a part of a family."

"Richard Childress knows how to develop a racecar driver," Fisher continued. "I'm sort of on his time frame. What he advises me to do, I'll be there."

"I figured if there was a lady out there not scared of speed like the way she run those IndyCars," Childress said, "she could jump in this thing and do really good."

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Greece-Egypt connection

Myth of Atlantis lives on

By YEMEN TIMES NEWS SERVICES

The story of the Isle of Atlantis first occurs in Plato's two dialogues the "Timaeus" and the "Critias." Plato's story centers on Solon, a great Greek legislator and poet who journeyed to Egypt some 150 years earlier. While in the Egyptian city of Sais Solon received the story of Atlantis from priests. The priests respected Solon's reputation and cordially welcomed him.

They also respected the Athenians, whom they regarded as kinsmen, because they believed their deity Neith to be the same deity as the Greeks called Athena. Therefore, she was believed to be the patroness and protector of both Greece and Egypt.

The story that the priests told Solon was unknown to him. According to ancient Egyptian temple records the Athenians fought an aggressive war against the rulers of Atlantis some 9,000 years earlier and won.

These ancient and powerful kings or rulers of Atlantis had formed a confederation by which they controlled Atlantis and other islands as well. They began a war from their homeland in the Atlantic Ocean and sent fighting troops to Europe and Asia.

Against this attack the men of Athens formed a coalition from all over Greece to halt it. When this coalition met difficulties their allies deserted them and the Athenians fought on alone to defeat the Atlantean rulers. They stopped an invasion of their own country as well as freeing Egypt and eventually every country under the control of the rulers of Atlantis.

Shortly after their victory, even before the Athenians could return home, Atlantis suffered catastrophic earthquakes and floods until it disappeared beneath the sea. All of the brave men were swallowed up in one



day and night of horror according to legend. This is why the Egyptians were ever grateful to the Athenians.

Also in the story Plato gives is a history of Atlantis that shows how the rulers eroded to such a state were they wanted to conquer everyone. This history had been recorded by Solon in notes that were handed down through his family.

According to Solon's notes the history of Atlantis began at the beginning of time. It was then that the immortal gods divided the world among themselves and each ruled their proportion. The god Poseidon received Atlantis, an island larger the Libya and Asia combined. He chose for a wife the mortal woman Cleito, and with her began the royal family of Atlantis.

Poseidon built Cleito's home on a

high hill at the very center of the island. The home overlooked a fertile plain bordered by the sea. For his beloved wife's protection Poseidon surrounded her house with five concentric rings of water and land. He carved the rings with the ease and skill of a god. He made hot and cold springs come from the earth. With the development of a future city his descendants never lacked for water.

Cleito bore Poseidon ten sons, five sets of boys. Atlas the first son of the first set of twins, was made king over the vast territory by his father. His brothers were appointed princes and each ruled over a large section of the territory that was distributed to him. The most valuable section of the kingdom remained his mother's home on the hilltop and the land surrounding it.

This was given to Atlas. Atlas himself had many sons with the succession of the throne always passing to the eldest son.

For generations Atlantis remained peaceful and prospered. Almost all of the population's needs were met from the island's mines, fields and forests. Anything that the kingdom did not produce was imported. This was possible because a channel was eventually built which traversed all the rings from the ocean to the center of the kingdom, or the acropolis. On this stood the royal palace near the original home of Poseidon and Cleito. Each succeeding king tried to out do his predecessor in building a greater kingdom. Finally the splendid city Metropolis and the outer city of Atlantis existed behind a great outer wall.

Poseidon sat down laws for Atlantis that the rulers were to follow. The ruling body was to meet regularly. It was to consist of ten rulers that represented the first rulers — Atlas and his nine brothers — who reigned with absolute power of life and death over their subjects.

These meetings occurred in the temple of Poseidon where the first rulers inscribed the laws on a pillar of orichalcum. First, as required by ancient ceremony, pledges were exchanged. Then a sacred bull was captured and killed. The body was burned as a sacrifice to the god. Then the blood was mixed with wine and poured over the fire as an act of purification for each man.

The rulers were served wine in golden cups, each poured a libation over the fire and swore by oath to give judgment according to the inscribed laws. When ending his vow each drank his wine and dedicated his cup to the temple. This was followed by a dinner that preceded the rulers putting on magnificent blue robes in which they judged matters concerning the kingdom according to Poseidon's laws.

As long as they judged and lived by Poseidon's laws they and the kingdom prospered. When the laws began to be forgotten trouble began. More of the rulers eventually began marrying mortals and started acting like foolish humans. Soon pride overtook the rulers who soon began grasping for greater power. Then Zeus saw what had happened to the rulers. They had abandoned the laws of the gods and acted in an evil coalition as men. He assembled all the gods of Olympus around him and was to pronounce judgment on Atlantis. This is where Plato's story stops.

Whether Plato intended to end his story of Atlantis so abruptly or whether he intended to extend it no one knows. Just as no one knows whether Plato believed in the real existence of the island or whether it was purely a mythical kingdom. Many have said they believe that Plato believed in the island's existence because he exerted so much detail in its description, while others reject this by claiming since the story was purely fiction Plato could put in as much detail as he wanted, it does not prove a thing.

Also in doubt is the time period of the story. Solon writes the island existed 9000 years before. This would

place the time period in the Early Stone Age. In this period it is hard to imagine the type of agriculture, architecture and sea navigation as described in the story.

One explanation for this time period inconsistency is that Solon misinterpreted the Egyptian symbol for "100" for "1000." If this be the case then Atlantis would have existed 900 years before. This would place the Atlanteans in the Middle Bronze Age where they would possess the tools and equipment needed for the development described within the story.

To collaborate this 900 year theory

there is geological evidence showing that roughly about 1500 BCE there was a gigantic volcanic eruption which caused half of the island to sink into the sea. Also a lost city has been said to have sunk in the Bay of Naples. At the time several rich and luxurious seaside resorts were located in the area. In the retelling of the story of Atlantis it is easy to see how one of these cities could be associated with it.

The story is still being told which enthralled hundreds, as archaeological digs are conducted to unearth evidence of the real Atlantis. Until then the myth remains



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