

Five dead in clashes amid crackdown on arms:

Marib suffers bloody crackdown

BY REUTERS & YEMEN TIMES STAFF

At least five men died and 10 were wounded in a shootout provoked when the Yemeni army tried to stop tribesmen in a remote tribal region in the north of the country carrying arms in public, witnesses said on Tuesday.

The Yemeni authorities are trying to impose a ban on illegal weapons in the Marib province near Saudi Arabia.

It was not clear what started the shootout but at least one soldier was killed, the witnesses said.

This comes in a time Riyadh is battling a wave of militant violence blamed on Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network, has been working with Sanaa to stop arms smuggling over its long, porous border with Yemen where weapons are widely available.

Violence in Yemen is quite common due to the high number of firearms held by civilians, which is officially estimated at more than 60 million pieces, i.e., an average of more than three weapons per person. A disarmament law is yet to be approved by the Yemeni parliament to limit the number of weapons in the hands of citizens.

An attempt was made in September 1999 by the Ministry of Interior to establish security checkpoints in the



Marib has been a scene for frequent clashes between state's forces and armed tribesmen. YT photo archive

main streets to inspect cars and confiscate unlicensed weapons. At the time, tens of thousands of light arms were confiscated and it was declared that unlicensed weapons would not be

allowed in main cities.

The Minister of Interior then confessed however that it was not possible then to launch a countrywide disarmament campaign due to the fact that most

tribes think that this process is against their traditions, and because the sources of these weapons are still open. Hence, a confiscated weapon is still available for smugglers, and importers.

France to grant Yemen 8 coastguard boats

Mohammed al-Qadhi
Yemen Times Staff

The French government will be granting Yemen eight military boats next month to enhance the capacity of the Coast Guard Authority that was established with American support, an official source said.

The source said that the overall cost of this batch is around Euro 8 million and that "they would be a good addition to the

coast guard capacity building as the boats are equipped with modern radars and airfields for helicopters."

The official source said that another batch of eight boats would be delivered later on by the US government, which is the main contributor to the Coast Guard Authority.

The US already granted Yemen seven boats that arrived to the Aden port in April 2004. During the handover ceremony, the former US ambassador to Yemen Edmund Hull promised that his country would grant Yemen another eight boats to enhance the capacity of the Yemeni coast guards to patrol Yemen's porous border. He said that his country would present other eight specialized patrol boats at the cost of USD 8 million, according to official media reports.

The US is Yemen's main partner in the coast guard project as it believes that Yemen's long coastline (over 2400 kms) has to be secured for the interest of Yemen's security as well as that of the whole region as it would make it possible to crack down on terrorists and stop any act of piracy in Yemeni waters. The coast guard project cost is expected to mount up to \$ 60 million and will need around 150 boats in total.

The first 600 graduates of the coast guard authority had graduated in 2004.



Good economic news from Central Bank

BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen's inflation is down, and its economic growth is up.

Inflation declined to 10 percent last year compared to 13.5 percent in 2003, according to a recent report of the Central Bank, which also reported that economic growth reached 4.0 per cent, compared to 3.2 per cent the year before.

They were good news items in a report that the bank says are signs of government policy that's working.

The report also credited higher oil revenues and the development of other economic sectors including fisheries and other industries.

The report added that the price of

Yemeni currency was relatively stable during the year 2004 as the exchange rate for dollar was 185.2 YR compared to 184.2 in 2003.

The monetary supply came at 13.7 percent, rising from YR 786 billion to YR 894 billion. The rate of exchange to the monetary supply went down from 35% to 32%. This indicates an improvement in the banking sector that witnessed remarkable vivacity during the past year.

The external savings of the Central Bank of Yemen of foreign monetary rose to \$5.6 billion compared to \$5 billion at the end of 2003 and the overall budget of the commercial and Islamic banks reached YR 675 billion last year compared to YR 562 billion in 2003.

Continued on page 4



www.porsche-yemen.com

Evolving Perfection. 911 Porsche

natco
Porsche Centre Yemen
Mobile: 00967 71999911
E-mail: info@porsche-yemen.com



Wealthy nations called to help Global poverty hits harder than tsunami

BY PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A report sponsored by the United Nations released last Monday said it is possible that 500 million people living in poverty can improve their living conditions and lives of millions of mothers and children can be saved in the next 10 years if more aid is provided by the wealthiest nations.

Investing in Development, a 3,000 page report put together by 265 experts, said that up to now the goals set five years ago by the United Nations have not been reached. The millennium development goals for 2015, established at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, included reducing the one billion people living on \$1 a day by half, improving education, reducing child and maternal mortality, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and cutting by half the number of people living without clean water and basic sanitation.

"The system is not working right now, let's be clear," said Jeffrey Sachs, the lead author of the report and head of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. "The overwhelming reality on our planet is that impoverished people get sick and die for lack of access to basic practical means that could help keep them alive and do more than that - help them achieve livelihoods and escape from poverty."

The report recommended that well-governed poor nations should be

viewed as "fast-track" countries and be able to acquire an increase in aid for development in 2005 and initiate a poverty-reduction plan.

Yemen, along with Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mali, Ghana and Burkina Faso, was mentioned in the report as a possible candidate to receive more aid.

Yemen has been listed as one of the world's 30 least developed countries. According to the United Nations, roughly a third of the Yemenis, and around two-thirds of those living in rural areas, do not have access to drinking water. Due to the lack of well-developed healthcare, over one in 10 children die before the age of five. More than 45% of the 19 million Yemenis live on less than \$2 a day.

The report said that the financial support required to carry out the plan determined in 2000 is available among the world's wealthiest nations. It estimates that the economies of the wealthy countries are worth \$30 trillion, as the United States takes up \$12 trillion. In 1970, those nations agreed to donate 0.7% of their gross domestic product (GDP) to assist development in poverty-stricken areas. Up to now, only five countries have followed through on their commitments, while six other nations have promised to match the targets they set by 2015. Even though the United States has increased providing aid in recent years, it now only contributes around 0.15% of its GDP.

Continued on page 4

Second Major Bids Open for New Promotional Blocks

Republic of Yemen
International Bid Round

The Ministry of Oil & Minerals of the Republic of Yemen is hereby calling for tenders for exploration and production opportunities on the following seven open blocks :

Contract Model

Name	Area, km ²	Basin
Block 7	Barqa	4939 Sabatayn Basin
Block34	Jeza	7016 Jeza- Qamar Basin
Block37	Marait	7221 Jeza- Qamar Basin
Block39	Damqawt	5237 Jeza- Qamar Basin
Block 55	N/Antufash	7563 Tihama Basin
Block 74	Qusa	1307 Masilah Basin
Block 75	Markha	1045 Sabatayn Basin

The contract model to be used is a Production Sharing Agreement (PSA).

Latest standard PSAs will be available with data exposure .

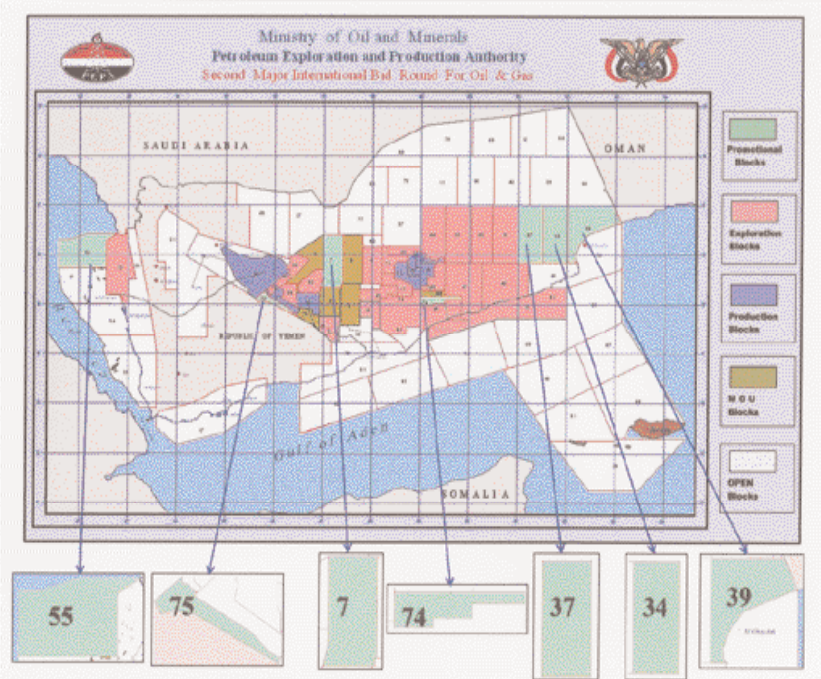
Application Deadline

The deadline for applications is MARCH 15,2005.

All interested oil companies must submit with their request for exploration and production in any of the above blocks the following documents :

- 1- Company profile .
- 2- Technical and Financial reports for the last two (2) years.
- 3- Latest Audit report.

A database and other information will be available for qualified companies after the application deadline.



Please send applications to the attention of :

H.E. Dr. Rasheed Baraba'a
Minister of Oil & Minerals

E-mail: pepa-expo.com@y.net.ye
Phone : +967-1-442630/444741/444743
Fax : +967-1-442632/444742
CC : Nabil AL-Qawsi

President of PEPA , Chairman of Negotiation Committee
P.O. Box : 7196 - Sana'a

LET'S TALK ABOUT CARS AGAIN.

407 PEUGEOT

The Tehama Trading Company
Head Office: Hodeidah - Tel. (03) 200 149/50, Fax: (03) 200146
Showroom: Sana'a - Aljazair St. Tel: (01) 400269, Fax: (01) 208926
Aden - Tel: (02) 248973/ 241974, Fax: (02) 241736, Taiz - Tel: (04) 245623/4, Fax: (04) 245622
Mukalla - Tel: (05) 325902, Telefax: (05) 325901

Calvalley Petroleum: stock options granted

CALGARY— Calvalley Petroleum Inc. is a Calgary-based oil and gas exploration and development company with current activities in the Republic of Yemen. Calvalley's Class "A" Common Voting Shares and Warrants are traded on the TSX Venture Exchange.

The company announces that on January 5, 2005 the Board of Directors authorized the granting of options to consultants to the company to acquire 345,000 common shares of the company at \$1.60 per share. The options vest over a three year period at one-third each year and expire January 5, 2010. The company further announces that the Board of

Directors previously authorized, in August 2005 the granting of options to acquire common shares of the company as follows. To officers of the company on August 3 and 9, 2005, 150,000 and 50,000 shares at \$1.28 per share and \$1.40 per share respectively. The options to acquire 150,000 shares vest over a three year period at one-third each year and the options to acquire 50,000 shares vested immediately. To a director of the corporation on August 24, 2005 options to acquire 150,000 common shares at \$1.40 per share which options vested immediately. All options expire on their fifth anniversary date.

Will child trafficking cease?

By MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni census has determined that the number of the children smuggled to Saudi Arabia Kingdom to beg, work in the sex industry and for other purposes, during 2004 has increased to

39,000 female and male children.

The study prepared recently by the Yemeni Center for Social Studies and Labor Research showed that child smuggling is not new in Yemen but it has spread out increasingly since the second Gulf War, due to the increased poverty and the lack of laws on the issue.

The study found that 59.3% of the children are between 13 and 16 years in age, 74.6% of whom were schools students. The study also said that 62.8% of the children are not working for their own profit, but to maintain old persons or handicapped family members.

In brief

Husband kills wife, commits suicide

Muhammad AbdulGhani, 42, a local man from Mashra'a, murdered his wife Azizah from Al-Nadera, Ibb, and then shot himself, committing suicide.

Yemen Times has been told that the man had two wives, and while traveling with his second wife to spend the vacation of Eid al-Adha, he committed the crime.

Mohammad has children from both wives, and Mashra'a's Police Administration are still investigating the reasons for the crime.

Three killed over Eid holiday

The holiday of Eid Al-Adha witnessed a number of manslaughter cases in Taiz, some as the result of domestic disputes.

In the Al-Qarf area, Taizi district, Qaid Ahmed Qaid, 40, was stabbed to death by his brother Abdullah because of domestic quarrels. The culprit is currently in custody.

In Sabir Al-Muadem, Mohamed Hamoud was shot dead by a relative who has been also captured.

In Al-Janadia Al-Ulia district, 17-year-old Zakaria Abdul-Rahman, was gunned down by Omar Ahmed Ghaleb, 30, who shot him in the stomach. The victim was transferred to Taiz Al-Thawra Hospital where he died.

Family disputes result in death and injuries

Domestic disputes in Shamiir, Taiz Governorate, have left two dead and another three wounded. Ahmad Salem Al-Abd, 45 and Awadh Ali Rashed, 25, were killed because of domestic disputes between their families. Abdu Munasser Ubadi, 65, Mohammad Qayed, 60 and Rania Abdu Nasser Ubadi were also badly injured.

The authorities have arrested the suspects Mohammad Abdu Khalid, 23, along with his brother Waheeb and transferred them to be charged.

Beast devours girl

Twenty-one year-old Anisa Ali Ahmed was reportedly attacked by an animal a few days ago, in Dimnat Khadir, Taiz wounding her seriously.

The girl was rushed to the hospital but doctors could not save her life. Local authorities are still investigating to confirm the cause of death.

Yemen invited to anti-terror conference

By PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The first global anti-terror conference will be held from February 5 to 8 in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Representatives from 49 countries are planning to attend.

Yemen, along with 14 other Arab countries, has been invited to participate in the forum. Delegates from the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia will be at the conference, and officials from 14 Asian countries, including Japan, India, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia, will also be attending.

A number of international organizations, such as the United Nations, Arab League, European Union, Organization of the Islamic Conference and the African Union, will have representatives participating in the conference.

"We have invited all countries that have suffered from terrorism to the conference and all have agreed to take part," said Prince Turki ibn Muhammad, Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs at Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry.

Saudi officials have said that the aim

of the conference is to pull international efforts together to fight terror. Discussions will include the roots of terrorism, relations between terrorism and drugs, the culture of terrorism, and the links between terrorism and smuggling arms and money laundering.

"It looks like the conference will be an important step to fighting terrorism worldwide," said a foreign diplomat based in Yemen. "A more coordinated effort could make a big difference in fighting terror, especially now that terrorism is a threat worldwide."

Since May 2003, over 150 people have been killed resulting from terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia. Saudi authorities hold the Al-Qaeda international terrorist network responsible for the recent increase of attacks. It is estimated that the threat of worldwide terror has risen since the attack in Washington, D.C., and New York on September 11, 2001.

Yemen, the ancestral homeland of the alleged mastermind of the Al-Qaeda network Osama bin Laden, joined the United States to fight terrorism soon after the attacks on US soil nearly three and a half years ago. Hundreds of terror suspects have been rounded up, including key Al-Qaeda members.

After three months of fighting, Yemeni forces defeated armed followers of radical Muslim cleric Hussein Al-Houthi in the north Yemen last year. The last significant terrorist attack in Yemen was the bombing of the French oil tanker Limburg near the port of Mukalla in October 2002 which killed one crewmember and unloaded 90,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Aden.

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 last month that the verdicts of militants found guilty and sentenced to death or prison terms last September for the bombing of the USS Cole is scheduled to take place on February 26.

The US destroyer was attacked in October 2000 as it was refueling in the port of Aden. Two men attacked the destroyer in a dinghy loaded with 500 pounds of explosives killing 17 US sailors and wounding 33 others.

Yemeni judicial sources said recently that 826 terror suspects will be put on trial in the near future.

Twenty six of the extremists are reported to be alleged Al-Qaeda members who were involved in the Limburg bombing. Two of the suspects are said to have been extradited from Saudi Arabia and one from Kuwait in 2004.

The other 800 suspects belong to the organization called "The Believing Youth" which was established by Al-Houthi.

Readers' Voice

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

This edition's question:

Do you believe that the success of the Iraqi elections would slow insurgency down?

- Yes, it will
- No, it will have no effect
- No, on the contrary it would increase

last 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 62%
- No, I don't have more hope 38%

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

Yemeni environmental health improves

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen has been ranked higher than previously on efforts to protect the environment in the annual survey prepared by experts at Yale and Columbia universities in the USA.

The New York Times said last Monday that the U.S.A. was ranked 46th, after Japan, and Yemen was put at number 71, and was among countries such as Taiwan, Haiti, Kuwait and Iraq. Yemens's rank in 2002 had been significantly lower, at 87.

The New York Times added that the study classified 146 countries, and the top ten positions were given to seven European countries and three Southern American countries for their success in protecting environmental resources such as water and air, and promoting environmental awareness. The study also looked at the percentage of live births, fertility averages, diseases, the level of the carbon monoxide in the air, and acidic rain levels.

New archaeological discoveries in Ibb

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Recently, a number of old architectural buildings dating back to the first century B.C. were discovered in Ibb Governorate. Antique stones, metal, bones and pottery pieces were found from the Sheba Kingdom.

A reliable source from the

Antiquities, Museums and Scripts Bureau in Ibb told news agencies that a team of specialists have been conducting explorations for the last month, east of the historical Dhofar town.

The results showed that the location in question was deserted by its inhabitants, perhaps due to a natural disaster,

International convention for disabled people

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Under the patronage of Mr. Abdulkareem al-Arhabi, Minister of Social Affairs, the Caring and Rehabilitating Disabled Fund (CRDF), the and Human Rights Ministry, a workshop was held on Jan. 17 to discuss the international convention on rights for disabled people.

Abdullah Ahmed al-Hamdani, Executive Manager of the CRDF, said in a statement to The Yemen Times, "this workshop is mainly to discuss the international convention related to the human rights and dignity of disabled people."

Ms. Raja al-Masabi, the head of Arab

Institution for Human Rights said "we want to come up with a national vision about the international convention for protecting the rights of disabled people and we have several suggestions."

Saleh Ahmed Ali, the Deputy Minister of Social Affairs, commented that "the government pays a lot of attention to the disabled sector and provides them with different services in all fields. There is special fund to take care of disabled people and gives services through different social institutions and organizations. There are various rehabilitation centers for all kinds of disabilities, although we hope for further developments in this area."



British Embassy
Sana'a

The British Embassy-Sana'a would like to invite applications for the post of Projects Officer- Political, Economic and Development

The British Embassy-Sana'a is seeking an enthusiastic self-starter to fill the position of Projects Officer (Political, Economic and Development). The job holder will be working under the direct supervision of the Political, Economic and Projects Section, British Embassy and, for some projects, under the guidance of the Department of International Development. The project Officer will be responsible for:

- Networking with the local donor community and acting as a focal point for project proposals
- Analysing and preparing proposals and sending them to London for approval where appropriate
- Maintaining accurate financial reports for different types of projects and reporting on monthly basis
- Monitoring and Evaluation of projects
- Preparing regular reports
- Providing representational assistance to the Political, Economic and Projects Section when necessary

We are looking for candidates who have:

- Some Experience in development and in particular with project analysis
- Experience of dealing with budgets and some financial management
- Fluent Arabic and English
- Good computer skills and knowledge of word & Excel
- Political insight-some of the projects have political goals
- Integrity, commitment and respect for diversity
- Resilience and willingness to travel within Yemen and occasionally abroad

The starting salary for this post is subject to previous experience but be in the range of US\$850 per month. If you are interested in applying, please send your detailed CV along with a covering letter stating why you would be good at this job to BritishEmbassySanaa@fco.gov.uk. Deadline for receipt of applications is 16 February 2005. Only candidates who fulfil the job requirements will be shortlisted and contacted for an interview.

Kuala Lumpur & Jakarta package special offer

Hotel Names	City	07nights 08days	Single room	14nights 15days	Single room	Accommodation bed & breakfast
Istana hotel	Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia	\$ 760	\$ 970	\$ 990	\$ 1340	Category *****
Corus Hotel	Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia	\$ 710	\$ 830	\$ 890	\$ 1170	Category ****
JW Marriott	Jakarta Indonesia	\$ 945	\$ 1295	\$ 1295	\$ 1645	Category *****

Conditions:
Price per person on twin sharing (min 2 person per departure)
Child under 12 years of age sharing parent room at 50% of the package fair
Infant 10% of the package fair
Round trip ticket Sanaa Kuala Lumpur Sanaa - Sanaa Jakarta Sanaa
Accommodation at the hotel mentioned above on bed & breakfast.
Transfer airport hotel or V.V. \$ 30 sedan car. (2adult + 01child)

Bazara Travel & Tourism
AlZubairi Street
Sanaa
Phone: 286364 - 285865
279235 - 295699
Fax: 289568
email: bazara@y.net.ye

Mass weddings help ease financial strains

SANA, 1 February (IRIN) - A mass wedding involving 800 brides and grooms tying the knot in Tamar province, 100 km south of the Yemeni capital, Sana, was recently held to assist families who could not afford the huge cost of a traditional wedding.

"This is a very important event as it really facilitates the cost of the wedding and makes it easy for young men and women to get married, otherwise they would not be able to afford it alone," Abdulwahab al-Dorah, Tamar Provincial Governor, told IRIN. He added that his governorate organised such events with help from NGOs, after identifying that it was too much of a burden on impoverished local people in the district.

"We are now planning to set up a special fund for facilitating marriages in the governorate," he added. The cost of weddings has risen, particularly in big cities, where poor people try and keep up with the wealthy by trying to offer the best for their loved ones when organising the big day. Recently people have started to hold weddings at large venues, which are very expensive when providing a full meal and drinks for hundreds of guests. This has become a cultural norm, but many simply cannot afford the expense.

This particular wedding was held in the grounds of a local school in the al-Hadda district of the province and organised by a local NGO called the al-Saleh Social Foundation for Development (SSFD). An estimated 42 percent of the country's 20 million inhabitants live below the poverty line, according to UN statistics. In addition, a recent World Bank report cited that the country's GDP growth slowed from 4.1 percent in 2001 to an estimated 2.5 percent last year.

The celebrations took place at a minimum cost but the atmosphere was



A row of grooms on their wedding day.

worth a million dollars, according to those who tied the knot. All the brides and their grooms wore traditional colourful wedding attire decorated with fresh flowers. A sea of colour could be seen across the school grounds as 800 couples and their family members converged for the Islamic ceremony.

In order to cater for thousands of people at the wedding, some 120 bulls were slaughtered to be served with traditional Yemeni rice and vegetables. The cost of a wedding varies from one city to another in Yemen but is cheaper in rural areas where the income is generally lower.

Once the families of the couples agree on the marriage, according to Muslim culture which is followed in Yemen, the father of the bride may ask for a dowry of 300,000 Yemeni rials (YR), (US \$1,650), excluding the expense of the marriage ceremony. The bride may also then expect the groom to pay the cost of the wedding in some cases. The size of the dowry differs

between families but can be as high as \$6,000.

Groom, Mohammed Ali told IRIN that his marriage would cost him approximately \$8,000, which had to be paid to his future wife's family, along with another \$2,200 for the wedding celebration party. Some happy couples said they probably would not have been able to get married if it wasn't for the mass wedding. "It [would] cost me almost 500,000 YR [\$2,751] to have an individual wedding party, but here I have to spend only 100,000 YR [\$550]. You can see the difference," Ali told IRIN at his wedding.

The huge financial strain prompted some NGOs to start the mass weddings in the mid 1990s. The idea has quickly grown in popularity because of increasing poverty. The Yemeni government is alarmed by the problem of overspending on wedding parties and President Ali Abdullah Saleh earlier last year advised the people to get "rid of these bad habits that accompany weddings".

Traditional Japanese theater art in Sana'a

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Sana'a University, the Embassy of Japan is organizing a Japanese theater art performance known as "NOU" to be played by a group of "Sensu."

Performances will be held at Sana'a University on 5 Feb, at 11:00 a.m. at the Big Hall of Al-Sharia Faculty, with a short lecture, and in the open yard of

the Sana'a Culture Center on 6 Feb. at 7:30 p.m.

There are 5 types of traditional Japanese theater arts, which are still performed today: Bugaku, NOU, Kyogen, Kabuki and Bunraku. The NOU art with dance and music, which was established in the 14th century, is one of the oldest professional theaters in the world. In 2001, UNESCO announced that Kyogen and NOU arts are a part of World Heritage.

This is the first cultural activity of

the Embassy of Japan this year. Last year, the Embassy organized many cultural activities, including the Days of Japanese films and Chura traditional dance performance, in addition to the Graphic Art Exhibition at the House of Culture.

Through these events, the Embassy of Japan hopes that Yemenis will enjoy watching the culture and the life of the Japanese people and that the mutual understanding between Yemen and Japan will be developed.

Course on banking and money laundering

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A training course on combating money laundering, using electronic banking processes, and investment funds was held on Jan. 30 at the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY).

Around 120 participants from different banking sectors, financial institutions, exchange and insurance companies attended the courses, which were organized by the CBY and the Arab Investment Company.

The course concentrated on money laundering considering it one of the biggest issues threatening some international trade and exchange compa-

nies. Money laundering has a significant negative influence on the economic activity in the Arab World.

A comprehensive study on money laundering, based on several reports from reputed international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the Economic Cooperative Organization, was also reviewed during the course.

No reason why women shouldn't drive More ladies behind the wheel

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

It seems it has become normal to see a veiled woman driving a vehicle, something that was impossible before two decades ago.

Salwa, a girl staff drawing a monthly salary of YR.5000/- only said that she desires to possess and drive her own vehicle, so, she deprives herself from a lot of things, even women jewels, and saves monthly one half of her salary for a vehicle.

She said, with warmth, that she suffers much of her transporting in taxi or buses. Among the inconvenience caused by the driver and the passengers are filthy words and with strange looks given to her.

In addition to the crowd, she also finds herself disturbed by the smoking. So getting a car has become a first priority, even before the university graduation certificate.

Moreover, it has become her dream night.

But are women capable of tackling the vehicles problems and its needs? What will happen in case the car goes out of order, and how will the community look at her?

Na'elah, a staffworker in a bank, says that she does not feel of any strange



A lady driving her car in one of Taiz streets.

staring of the people at her - this act has become so normal to her, in spite of few women in Taiz who own vehicles.

She adds that she drives her car inside the town and doesn't go out of the town. In case the vehicle goes out of order, she leaves it there and goes to fetch a mechanic, or she contacts one of her relatives or colleagues.

Nadiyah Muhammad, a staff in Aden, says that Aden is contradictory to all the other Yemeni governorates. Any woman who has a car can drive so freely.

In the past, the people used to look at any woman driving a car as abnormal thing, but now, and due to the increasing number of women drivers, it has become so normal, she said.

And she mentions that some people are so cooperative to the women. If a woman has problems or is stuck, some people will cooperate with her to solve

the problem.

She said that once her car got stuck and as a result she consulted one of the pedestrians who advised her what to do and how to repair the simple defect that looked like a big one at first.

Hanan Ali in Taiz says that she drives the car well and roams in Taiz as she likes, but, due to so many streets in Taiz she doesn't drive through any of them as she is scared of getting lost.

Centuries ago, during the reign of the King Luis the 15th, in France, women raised the driving issues, when insisting they wanted to drive carriage by herself in Paris streets.

That caused traffic problems due to men's looking at the women, so, the king issued a decree forbidding women under 30 from driving.

Things have changed since then. Colonel Abdullatif al-Musry, the Director of Hodeidah Traffic Bureau sees no difference between the man and the woman in driving the vehicles by saying:

"When the Traffic Law No.46 FY 1991 and its by-laws provisions and procedures of obtaining the driving license were issued it didn't point out that these provisions are restricted to men excluding the women, but it was only the community customs, the ethics and nature of woman that restricted them.

School Administration Development Inauguration

TAIZ BUREAU

The Education Office in Taiz Governorate inaugurated the training program for School Administration development

on 31 Jan., which was attended by 1234 secondary school principals and superintendents from 12 districts in Taiz Governorate. The course will continue for 11 days. Doctor Mehdi Abdul

Salam, General Manager of Education Bureau in Taiz Governorate, said that the program comes within the national strategy for educational development.



Mahdi Abdulsalam

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

انتقل إلى رحمة الله الوالد الخبير الزراعي السويسري

عبدالله عبدالله مونس
(جان داري مونس سابقاً)

وذلك يوم الأحد الموافق ٢٠٠٥/١/٣٠

وبهذا المصاب الجلال نتقدم بعظيم المواساة إلى

الأخ/ محمد عبدالله مونس

وجميع آل مونس

سائلين المولى عز وجل أن يتغمد الفقيد بواسع رحمته وعظيم غفرانه ويسكنه فسيح جناته ويلهم اهله وذويه الصبر والسلوان، وإنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

الأسيفون:

جميع الأهل والأصدقاء

وجميع آل بيت مونس وآل أبو طالب

"Every soul should have a taste of death"

We convey our condolences and profound regrets to

Mr. Mohammad Abdullah Monsch

and Monsch family

on the decease of their father

Abdullah Abdullah Monsch

(former name was Gian Dari Monsch),

who passed away after serving

the country as an agricultural expert.

We pray to Allah to have mercy upon him

and place him in Paradise among His faithful slaves. Amen.

Mourners: All relatives and friends, the Monsch and the Abu Talib families

"To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return"

Announcement

Invitation to Tender for the Supply and Delivery of One Twin Screw

Fast Pilot Launch

Yemen Port Authority (Port of Aden) intends to announce for the above tender. The tender documents are available to bidding companies at a cost of US\$150.00. Quotations are to be submitted on Tuesday 22nd March, 2005. For collection of tender documents or more information, please contact:

YPA - Head Office,
Tawai - Aden,
Tel: 967-2-202669 / 201541
Fax: 967-2-205805 / 205802
Email: ddg@yemen.net.ye and ypaplaning@y.net.ye

The handicapped hope to marry

FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

A handicap is a disability in either the body or mind. Handicapped people have the same human rights that other people have to marry, have children, and live a normal daily life.

There are many wonderful examples throughout history of people who were handicapped yet attained high positions with their great abilities. They did not merely reach prosperous positions but the lived much more successfully than those who are not deformed. Being handicapped was not a psychological hindrance in the way of the dreams; Al-Quraiti, Kushk, Beethoven, and Roosevelt, to name but a few.

Handicapped people in deformed societies:

In many backward communities that are suffering from the lack of development, handicapped people are denied certain human rights, such as the right to marry.

Communities often look down on disabled girls, considering it impossible to accept her as a person with all normal rights and duties. Therefore, young people are less likely to marry someone with a handicap. The Yemen Times asked some young people at Taiz University how they look at people with disabilities.

Mohammed Ahmed A. Ghaleb, 22, Faculty of Sciences, said: "The kinds deformity are different from one to another. They are deformities in sight, listening, and mind and those caused by



Ashwaq Abdullah Ahmed



Fares Ali Muthana



Ahmed Hasen



Hamid al Nahary



Mohammed Shugaalddin



Abdurraqib al Gailani

accidents and burning which are not natural. I consider the latter is not harmful because they are not to be inherited to children. So, I frankly say that I accept to marry a deformed girl on the condition that her deformity is partial."

His friend showed his willingness to marry a handicapped girl, Abdurraqeb al-Ganadi, 21, Faculty of Computer Sciences, said that "I would marry a deformed girl only because I sympa-

thize with her but she would be a secondary wife not the main one."

"It is not the end of the world to marry a crippled girl that can do her duties excellently. It's not logical to be limited to looking on the deformity of either a boy or a girl since marriage in this case is not deformed," Mohammed Ahmed Shuja'addin, a 23 year old student said. He confirmed that a disabled girl is like any other girl: both have feelings that should be taken into account. "Therefore, there is no objection to marry a deformed girl, but rather it's a great honor," however, his economic status prevents him from doing so.

Hamid Al-Nihari, teacher, an MA student of Islamic Education, Faculty of Arts, said that, "the Islamic rules give specific references to a disabled person including marriage of handicapped people. This thing can't be conducted but by a sacrificing person. I think a few number of men can do so. They are of those who want to have more than one wife and are able to be fair. The man who has the abilities to make the disabled girl live a normal life can marry her then. It's worth mentioning that many handicapped people with great determination could challenge and defeat their disabilities."

We also asked women from the university how they would feel marrying a handicapped man. Eman Abdu Ahmed Ghanem, Faculty of Arts, pointed out that: "a handicapped is a human being with all rights of which marriage is one of them." She said she does not mind marrying a handicapped

man. "Disability is not a psychological block in front of the handicapped, because he can achieve his dreams but other people should stand by him. Disabilities can be found even in the healthy people," she added.

Meada Jalal al-Shaybani, Computer Sciences, 19, said: "Yes, I would accept marrying a deformed man if his deformity was physical not mental. Physical handicaps do not harm the marital life, but mental handicaps do because they can be inherited by the children."

Sadiqah Ali Saeed, 21, Faculty of Medicine, had another viewpoint, saying "I would a marriage with a handicapped man even though I know that many handicapped people made history like Taha Hussein, Al-Baradoni, and Beethoven." She said she feared shouldering all financial responsibilities alone if the man was not able to work.

Jihan M. S. a 22-year old single officer, who declared that she could never marry a deformed man because she is "like other girls, hopes to marry a healthy man like her. The disabled man can't be blamed for his disability, but marrying a handicapped man is a decision which requires a lot of courage."

A group handicapped people have campaign to ask the Al-Saleh Establishment for support from the official authorities to help them get married. Some members of this group also showed concerns over their official treatment, treatment by the community and NGOs.

The Yemen Times conducted several interviews with the members of the Disabled Training Society, to see their views about marriage. Fares Ali Al-Rae'e, 25, secondary degree and some technical and vocational qualifications holder, talked to us cheerfully about his attempts to get married all of which were in vain. He said that: "I tried to break celibacy five times and more than ten times were destroyed before going to the first step. In 1996, I proposed to a girl but a TNT explosion affected me and doctors decided to cut my leg off. As soon my fiancé's family heard that, they called me while I was still in the Al-Thawrah Hospital to break the engagement."

"My second attempt was when a girl rejected me when she realised that I am crippled.

The third try was when I engaged a girl for a long time, her father called me telling me to forget the matter without any explanation. My fiancé's neighbors played a key role in convincing her that

I was disabled, and would therefore have to be a beggar. My fourth attempt was with a girl from Taiz. She was happy when I proposed to her, her family they told me to pay 300,000, which I was compelled to agree to. That was in order to let me reconsider this idea. Friends of mine informed me that what I paid was returned and I was asked to cancel everything." Fares said he does not get depressed at all and he will try a thousand times.

Ahmed Mohammed Hussein Al-Ghaithi, a 22-year-old disabled man, said the main reason behind marriage difficulties for handicapped men is the fathers of girls who refuse to marry their daughters to a disabled man even though they realize that any man can be injured in an accident. He proposed to a girl that loved once but saw that her family was so unconvinced. He withdrew his proposal to study instead. Ahmed advised the families that have handicapped members to train them in training centers to improve their skills and to be confident.

In the Blind Training Center, we met Saleem Mohammed Al-Hassani, 25, who said that he relied on himself collecting a sum of money without waiting for others' help. He decided to get married to a girl not from the same society but to one who was also blind, her family refused saying that blind men either sit at home or beg in mosques. The second time was a success his wife's family insuring that he was able to walk and work therefore they accepted his proposal. Saleem said that he loved his wife so much because she understands his status and stands by him.

Disabled girls look at marriage from different prospective. Some of them consider themselves not qualified to be wives, but some think of it a normal.

Kefayah Mahyoub Al-Khulaidi, 24, who joined the Disabled Society eight years ago, could not complete her study. Many men have proposed to her and every time she refused because she thinks that healthy men who propose to handicapped girls sympathize with her or target the salary she receives from charitable societies.

Khairyah Ali A. Othman, 20, Taiz University, says that she is engaged to a young man working for the society and they are preparing for their marriage. She suffers from a slight deformity and she blames the society that still discriminates between handicapped and healthy people. She said it happens that deformed men marry healthy women while the opposite rarely happens.

Ashwaq Abdullah Ahmed, 21, with her visual deformity said: "In reality, the society looks down on the handicapped and it is rare to find a young man thinking of marrying a disabled girl. Personally, many men proposed to me. I refused because I feel that they would only sympathize with me, which hurts me."

Yasmin Ali Nassir, psychologist, said: "the social attitude towards the handicapped is getting better, but when talking about marriage, it is still inferior for many reasons of which the family's fear about the transfer of the deformity to children is one. This is not true of course."

Mawadah Mohammed Saeed, Social worker in the Disabled Society, said that it is normal for the handicapped to get married but some families believe that handicapped people are. They do not expect that they may be creative and successful in life. The right of marriage is a human matter and a blessing from Allah to anyone.

A FREE PHONE CARD



helps me get closer
to my loved ones

Send money
to your
loved ones
and get a
**FREE
PHONE
CARD***
with every
transaction!

uniting people with possibilities

WESTERN UNION
MONEY TRANSFER

No bank account required... The Receiver does not pay any fee.
Over 190,000 agent locations across 193 countries and territories worldwide.
Offer valid until 10th February 2005 or until stocks last.
For terms and conditions, call (01) 407 160 or visit our website.
* value of telephone call is YR 10

Continued from page 1

Global poverty hits harder than tsunami

The report said, "The required doubling of annual official development assistance to \$135 billion in 2006, rising to \$195 billion by 2015, pales beside the wealth of high income countries - and the world's military budget of \$900 billion a year."

Some argue that although a boost in foreign aid is important, other measures need to be taken for the goals of 2015 to be reached.

"More aid will make a difference, but in some countries money does not solve all the problems," said Naji Abu Hatim, Senior Rural Development Specialist at The World Bank based in

Yemen. "There are countries that are in need of capacity building to be able to deliver by implementing projects and offering better services to the people."

Other recommendations in the report include rich nations opening their markets to developing countries, starting a coordinated effort between developed and developing countries to save millions of lives through health-care development, donor countries assisting scientific research to deal with health, agricultural, energy and climate, and poor countries putting together strategies to improve on good

governance and human rights.

Sachs said that simple steps being implemented could make a big difference. "We have the world's eyes focused on the tsunami of the Indian Ocean, but the world continues to overlook the silent tsunami deaths from malaria which take every month the number of people that died in the Asian tragedy," said Sachs.

"Every month, 150,000 children in Africa, if not more, are dying from the silent tsunami of malaria, a largely preventable and utterly treatable disease."

Good economic news from Central Bank

The rate of deposits in the banks amounted up to YR 555.8 billion during the year 2004 and this in turn enabled the banks to attract more savings and deposits to employ them in developmental purposes.

The report mentioned that the eco-

nom performance made up for the State's general budget with 3 percent out of the overall gross domestic production.

The rate of Arab and foreign investments numbered up to 276 entrepreneurial projects at a total cost of YR 90 billion distributed among sectors of industry,

tourist services and fisheries.

This made available 800 job opportunities and helped decrease the rate of external loan by \$36 million, reaching \$5.3 billion compared to \$10.5 billion when the State started to practice the economic reforms in 1995.

تهانينا لصدام و خليل
أجمل التفاني والتبركات مع أطيب الأمانى لشهدتها للأخوين
صدام و خليل عبد الفتاح الشميري
بمناسبة دخولهما القفص الذهبي
فألف ألف مبروك
المتمننون /
أحمد سيف الهاللي - محمد سيف الهاللي - عبد الله سيف الهاللي - عبد الفتاح الهاللي
و بن اخوكم زوفيق عبد الفتاح الشميري
وكافة الأهل والأصدقاء

Kuwait MPs pass arms law after militant clashes

KUWAIT, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Kuwait's parliament passed a law on Tuesday giving police wide powers to search and seize illegal weapons to tackle a wave of al Qaeda-linked violence, deputies said.

Kuwaiti security forces on Monday killed five al Qaeda militants and captured three others, including a suspected leader, marking an escalation in the fight between authorities and militants bent on destabilising the oil-rich U.S. ally.

"Parliament unanimously passed this law on weapons collection, which is valid for two years," one lawmaker, Abdullah al-Roumi, told Reuters.

After an upsurge in militant violence over the last month, a government draft was rushed through parliament procedures that often take months.

Kuwait introduced similar legisla-



Kuwaiti police search the bullet-ridden rooftop after a bloody gunfight with Islamic militants in Kuwait, Jan. 31. Kuwaiti security forces killed four al Qaeda militants and captured three others, including a suspected leader, during clashes on Monday in oil-rich Kuwait which is battling a surge in al Qaeda-linked violence. REUTERS

tion in 1992 to deal with a proliferation of arms since the 1990-1 Iraqi occupation of the Gulf Arab state. But parliament rejected an extension of that law in 1994, saying possession of weapons was a right.

Kuwait, which controls a tenth of global oil reserves, has stepped up security around oil installations after an attempt by militants to launch an attack near the country's largest oil refinery and a U.S. military camp.

Last week, U.S. and British embassies warned of more attacks in Kuwait, which rounded up al Qaeda militants during raids after two officers and two gunmen were killed in clashes earlier in January.

Kuwait, a transit route for foreign troops into Iraq, was a launchpad for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The Kuwaiti government has cracked down on Islamists opposed to the presence of some 30,000 U.S. troops.

Saudi executed for murder in northern town

RIYADH, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia executed a convicted murderer in the northern town of Buraida on Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's Interior Ministry said.

Saudi national Humoud al-Omar was sentenced to death for killing Sultan al-Harbi with a single shot from his pistol, the ministry said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia, which implements a strict interpretation of Islamic law, executes convicted murderers, rapists and drug smugglers, usually by public beheading with a sword.

Tuesday's execution brought to at least eight the number of people put to death this year in the conservative kingdom. At least 35 people were executed last year and 53 in 2003.

Syria, under pressure, changes tack in Lebanon

BEIRUT, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Syria, under international pressure to quit Lebanon, signalled a change of approach on Tuesday by sending an official to open dialogue with Lebanese politicians, even those opposed to its grip on their country.

Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed al-Mualem arrived in Beirut and held talks with Syrian-backed officials as well as a number of politicians who want an end to Syria's military and political role in its tiny neighbour.

The visit is heralded by loyalists as a shift in Syrian policy in Lebanon in line with international requests that Syria eases its interference in Lebanese affairs.

But opposition figures see the visit as nothing but a small step that would not lead to a quick withdrawal of Syria's 14,000 troops as demanded by a U.N. resolution.

"This is all an attempt to contain the international pressure...but I think there is no big decision for serious change," Rafik Khouri, political commentator in Al-Anwar newspaper, told Reuters on Mualem's visit.

"We can't speak of refraining the (Syrian) security arm in Lebanon...the whole Syrian regime is a security one."

Opposition to Syria's role, traditionally mainly among Christians, has widened to include some Muslim leaders such as Druze chieftain Walid Jumblat, once a key ally of Damascus.

Mualem said he would meet all political and religious leaders in Lebanon, including those opposed to Syria's presence.

"I assure you that the decision of the President (Bashar al-Assad) is that Syria keeps the same distance with all of our Lebanese brothers," he told reporters.

Cosmetic

Syria has in recent months

redeployed some of its forces in Lebanon to the eastern Bekaa near the border area.

Some of Lebanon's anti-Syrian groups have been buoyed by Security Council Resolution 1559 last September calling on foreign troops to pull out of Lebanon, a reference to Syria.

International and local critics say the presence of Syrian troops and security forces makes Syria the dominant force in Lebanese politics, while the government says Syria's presence ensures stability in the country after the 1975-90 civil war.

Day-to-day contacts between Syrian authorities and Lebanese officials had been conducted through Rustom Ghazaleh, head of Syrian intelligence in Lebanon who is based in the Bekaa Valley.

But his role has come under increasing criticism by many Lebanese opposition politicians in recent months.

Lebanese official sources said that in response to the sharp criticism, Assad recently asked Mualem to handle the "Lebanese file" and all political contacts with Beirut.

Gibran Tueni, a fierce anti-Syrian Christian opposition figure, said the move carried a positive aspect but he doubted that Syria would change its policy in Lebanon.

"I hope that Mualem's visit is not cosmetic and the sort of manoeuvre that we have gotten used to...over the past quarter of a century," he told Reuters.

Syria has been under increasing pressure over its role in Lebanon. U.S. and French officials routinely demand a Syrian pullout and an end to interference in Lebanese affairs.

Both have warned against Syrian influence in Lebanon's parliamentary election, expected in May. The current 128-member assembly is mainly pro-Syrian.

Iraq pursues vote count despite al Qaeda threats

BAGHDAD, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Iraq began compiling election results from around the country on Tuesday and eased security measures surrounding its historic poll despite al Qaeda's vow to pursue "holy war" after failing to deter millions from voting.

Vote totals were being checked, then added up by computer after first tallies were completed by hand at polling stations nationwide and truckloads of ballots from Sunday's election were shipped under guard to Baghdad's fortified Green Zone.

The final results, expected to be released early next week, are certain to put Iraq's Shi'ite Muslim majority in power for the first time, marking a sea change in the nation's politics after eight decades of rule by minority Sunni Muslim Arabs.

Although Iraqis braved insurgent threats to stream to the polls in many places, turnout appeared low in the Sunni heartland where insurgents are strongest — highlighting the dangerous sectarian rifts facing a new government.

Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has urged rival ethnic and religious groups to unite after the country's first multi-party vote in nearly half a century.

But al Qaeda's wing in Iraq, whose leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had threatened voters with death in a bid to wreck the election, said on Monday it would pursue its war against U.S.-led occupying forces and Iraqis working with them.

"We in the al Qaeda Organisation for Holy War in Iraq will continue the jihad until the banner of Islam flutters over Iraq," said a statement posted on an Islamist Web site.

Despite the warning, authorities reopened Iraq's borders and flights resumed at Baghdad international airport.

The closures had been part of a security blitz, including an election day ban on civilian traffic and extended nighttime curfews, credited with preventing insurgents from making good on their threat to turn the poll into bloodbath.

Post-election violence

As the vote counting moved ahead, interim President Ghazi al-Yawar said some of the 170,000 foreign troops could begin leaving Iraq by the end of the year, a prediction already made by other Iraqi leaders as well as U.S. officials.

But Yawar said any drawdown of foreign forces would depend on how fast Iraq's nascent security services could be built up.

While the election day onslaught of suicide bombers and mortars was less bloody than expected, violence has persisted.

Two Iraqis were killed by a roadside bomb on Tuesday in the northern Kurdish city of Arbil.

Guerrillas also released a videotape on Monday purporting to show they had downed a British military plane with a missile near Baghdad in a crash that killed 10 people on Sunday — Britain's highest death toll in a single incident in Iraq.

The video issued by the 1920 Revolution Brigades, showed an explosion, then smouldering debris of what looked like a plane on the ground. Defence analysts said the wreckage on the video looked authentic but other



Members of Iraqi Independent Election Commission checking ballot containers from Diyala province collected at the "Warhorse" military base near the Iraqi town of Baquba, Feb. 1. REUTERS

parts were less convincing. British officials declined immediate comment.

Late on Monday, U.S. guards shot dead four detainees during a riot at a military prison in southern Iraq. The riot raged for 45 minutes before the Americans opened fire to quell the disturbance, a military spokesman said.

Leaders around the world hailed Iraq's election, regardless of whether they had supported or opposed the U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

War opponents France, Germany and Russia all praised Iraqis' bravery in voting and, in a sign of warming transatlantic ties, pledged to back U.S. efforts to restore stability.

In a televised speech, Allawi warned Iraqis violence had not ended just because the election had exceeded expectations and he urged rival factions to forge unity.

Allawi, who could be reappointed, is keen to build popular support after a poll in which election officials estimate 8 million Iraqis voted, confounding predictions many would be scared away by the insurgents' threats.

Shi'ites, about 60 percent of the population, are expected win the most seats in a 275-seat National Assembly, and officials in a broad Shi'ite-led coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance, have claimed a degree of victory.

Shi'ite leaders quickly declared they would bring the Sunni minority, dominant under Saddam, into the fold.

President George W. Bush encouraged Iraq's leaders to ensure the Sunnis are in the political process, and the White House brushed aside Democratic calls for a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal. A mounting U.S. death toll has increased public pressure for a clearer exit strategy.

Israeli govt ordered to stop Jerusalem land seizure

JERUSALEM, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Israel's attorney general ordered the government on Tuesday to rescind a decision to enforce a decades-old law under which large tracts of Palestinian land in Arab East Jerusalem could be confiscated, officials said.

The government invoked the 1950 Absentee Property Law last July and word leaked out this month, alarming Palestinians who feared an attempt to usurp their claims to East Jerusalem, which they want as the capital of a future state.

Israeli media said the move had angered the U.S. administration, which regarded it as an obstacle to new peace prospects raised by the election of moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Jan. 9 to replace Yasser Arafat.

In a lengthy legal opinion, Attorney General Menachem Mazuz told the government to cancel implementation of the law in East Jerusalem, saying it

violated obligations under international law and was sure to be overturned by the Supreme Court. "This decision cannot stand," Mazuz said in a four-page ruling on the law, which allows a state custodian to seize East Jerusalem property belonging to Palestinians in the West Bank.

A Justice Ministry source said Mazuz had determined the law would not withstand Supreme Court appeals. "If the Attorney General says it (the law) won't stand up (to appeal) then it means that yes, this law is illegal," the Justice Ministry source said. The government was obliged to adhere to Mazuz's decision, the source added.

Officials at the Finance Ministry, which is responsible for implementing the law, and at Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office declined immediate comment.

Law fell through the cracks

Haaretz said the decision was

approved at a June 22 meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem Affairs attended by only two members, both rightists.

Since there were no opposing votes in the meeting, the decision was automatically approved by the government two weeks later without a cabinet vote or a notation in cabinet minutes.

Mazuz said that due to a bureaucratic mishap, he was not informed of the decision and only found out by chance when legal complaints were made to his office.

He wrote that the Ministerial Committee had acted outside its powers and improperly applied the law, causing "numerous legal difficulties".

"These have to do with imposing the law and the reasonability of imposing it under these circumstances and with regard to Israel's obligation under international law."

Under the Absentee Property Law enacted two years after the country's

founding, land belonging to people living in "enemy countries" was confiscated by the state.

The measure allowed confiscation of the property of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who were displaced in Israel's 1948 independence war and scattered mainly to Arab states.

While technically applied to East Jerusalem after Israel captured it in the 1967 Middle East war, the law was never implemented.

The decision raised hackles among Palestinians already worried by Israeli plans to demolish dozens of houses near its West Bank barrier as well as plans to require East Jerusalem residents to obtain permits to visit the West Bank.

Some Palestinian landowners, according to their lawyer, have already received notices that their plots in the city have been seized under the law even though they live nearby — just outside the city limits in the West Bank.

Five killed in battle with Egypt bombing suspects

ISMALIA, Egypt, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Five people were killed on Tuesday in a gunbattle between Egyptian police and a group of Bedouin suspected of helping the men who bombed three tourist resorts in Sinai in October, police sources said.

Three policemen, one of the suspects and a bystander were killed in the clash, which is still going on near the Sinai town of Ras Sudr, 150 km (90 miles) east of Cairo, they said.

Police have sealed off an area in the hills near Ras Sudr after receiving information that two of the four bombers were hiding there, they said.

At least 34 people — Egyptians, Israelis, Russians and Italians — were killed in the three bombings, which

appeared to target east Sinai resorts frequented by Israelis. Police have said the other two bombers were killed by their own bomb.

Police said in October they had arrested five men, all Sinai Bedouin, as accomplices in the bombings. Most of them were from the north coast town of El Arish, near the Israeli border.

They named the two fugitives at the time as Mohamed Ahmed Saleh Fulayfel and Hammad Gumaa.

Police had concentrated their investigations on the El Arish area, where human rights groups say they have detained up to 2,500 people for questioning for varying periods, subjecting many of them to torture. The authorities deny the torture.

Indonesia cleric Bashir says disapproves bombs

JAKARTA, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Radical Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir said on Tuesday the Bali nightclub and Marriott Hotel bombings in Indonesia did not follow the rules of the holy war he advocates because they did not take place in conflict zones. Bashir, wearing a grey blazer and Muslim skullcap, told his terrorism trial that he supported the Islamic holy struggle, or jihad, but that violence should take place only within areas such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Philippines.

"I disapprove, if they were regarded as jihad, because they were executed in peaceful or non-conflict zones," Bashir said in court, responding to questions about the bombings.

Prosecutors have charged Bashir with inciting the bombings of nightclubs on Bali in October 2002 that killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists, and the 2003 bombing of the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta that killed 12.

The 66-year-old cleric is also charged with leading Jemaah Islamiah, a shadowy group seen as the regional arm of al Qaeda and which has been blamed for a string of attacks in south-east Asia, including those in Indonesia.

"If the aim were to attack the interests of the United States, the country that has clearly violated and attacked Islam, they should have taken up arms



Indonesian Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir raises his hand as he leaves a court in Jakarta Feb. 1. Bashir said on Tuesday the Bali nightclub and Marriott Hotel bombings in Indonesia did not follow the rules of the holy war he advocates because they did not take place in conflict zones. REUTERS

in Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Philippines or other such places," Bashir said.

Bashir has consistently denied wrongdoing, saying the charges are a result of Western pressure. A former interpreter for U.S. President George Bush testified earlier that Washington had pressed Indonesia to secretly detain and hand over Bashir shortly before the Bali bombings in 2002.

Bashir was first arrested shortly after

the Bali blasts, but attempts to convict him of leading Jemaah Islamiah failed.

He did, however, serve 18 months for immigration violations and was re-arrested using anti-terror statutes in April.

The new trial began in October. If found guilty, Bashir could be sentenced to death.

The court was adjourned until Feb. 8, when prosecutors expect to announce their demands for sentencing.

India's new army boss wants to win Kashmiri hearts

NEW DELHI, Feb 1 (Reuters) - India's army, which has been hit by a barrage of complaints about alleged rights abuses in Kashmir, will focus on winning the hearts and minds of people in the Himalayan region, the new army chief said on Tuesday.

Hundreds of thousands of troops are deployed in Kashmir to quell a 15-year-old separatist revolt against New Delhi's rule which has killed more than 45,000 people.

"If you don't harm innocents, you are winning hearts and minds," General Joginder Jaswant Singh, India's first army chief from the Sikh community, told reporters a day after he took over the world's third largest army.

"We need to use minimum force and ensure minimum collateral damage so innocents are not harmed," he said. "If people have a positive image of soldiers, it is more important than the number of terrorists killed."

Singh, who was wounded during anti-guerrilla operations in Kashmir in the 1990s, said the army would seek feedback from local people and officials in insurgency-hit areas about the behaviour of troops.

Singh was replying to questions about allegations of abuses by troops, including the molestation of a 10-year-old girl and her mother by a major last October in Jammu and

Kashmir, Hindu-majority India's only Muslim-majority state.

On Monday, the army dismissed the major, who was found guilty of sexually assaulting the girl and her mother.

Kashmir is the cause of two of three India-Pakistan wars, and rights groups blame Indian forces and rebels for widespread rights abuses.

The army says violations by troops are isolated incidents and that offenders are punished.

Singh also said he wanted a cur-

rent truce between Indian and Pakistani troops on the Line of Control, a military boundary dividing Kashmir, to be encouraged by both sides.

"Both countries have a lesser number of widows and wounded soldiers because of the ceasefire. Seeing the ceasefire take effect, people are reassured."

The truce came into effect in Nov. 2003 as part of an ongoing India-Pakistan peace process and has mostly held.



Kashmiris queue to cast their votes as Indian soldiers stand guard in a polling station during the second phase of municipal elections in Srinagar Feb. 1. REUTERS

Nepal king sacks government, assumes power

KATHMANDU, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Nepali King Gyanendra sacked the government and assumed power on Tuesday, saying the leadership had failed to hold elections or to restore peace amid an escalating civil war with Maoist rebels.

The king had taken power for the next three years and placed many politicians under house arrest, residents said.

"I have decided to dissolve the government because it has failed to make necessary arrangements to hold elections by April and promote democracy, the sovereignty of the people and life and property," the king said in an address on state radio.

Shortly afterwards, land and mobile telephone lines were apparently shut down in Kathmandu and communications links severely affected between the country and the rest of the world.

This is the fourth time the king has sacked a prime minister in less than three years. Nepal has had no parliament since 2002.

Matthew Kahane, U.N. resident coordinator in Nepal, was reached by telephone from Singapore and said it was the first telephone call he had been able

to receive, from outside or inside the country, since the announcement.

The situation in the capital seemed calm and normal, he said.

"There's a good deal of traffic moving up and down the street," he said, adding that his office was fairly centrally located outside the engineering campus, which sees plenty of protest activity "I don't see any burning cars".

The strategic Himalayan nation sandwiched between India and China is locked in a bitter three-way struggle among the king, the Maoist rebels and political parties who are often bitterly divided themselves.

The king is frequently accused of overstepping his powers, and reappointed Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba only last June, two years after sacking him for the same reasons he cited this time - inability to tackle the long-standing revolt against the monarchy and failure to call an election.

In January, Deuba had promised to go ahead with the election despite the civil war and the refusal of the Maoists to come to peace talks by a Jan. 13 deadline.



Nepal's Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba talks to Reuters in Kathmandu in this Oct. 5, file photo. Nepal's King Gyanendra sacked the government on Feb. 1, announcing the decision in an address broadcast on state radio. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had been reappointed last June, about two years after Gyanendra fired him for failing to tackle a long-standing Maoist revolt against the monarchy. REUTERS



Nepal's King Gyanendra addresses a felicitation function organized in his honor in the western regional city of Pokhara in this March 28, file photo. Gyanendra sacked the government on Feb. 1, announcing the decision in an address broadcast on state radio. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had been reappointed last June, about two years after Gyanendra fired him for failing to tackle a long-standing Maoist revolt against the monarchy. REUTERS

But many members of Deuba's own cabinet were known to be unhappy with the election plan on grounds it was unrealistic in a country where the rebels control much of the countryside.

WEAKENING DEMOCRACY

Giant neighbour India had no immediate reaction. India has been giving military aid to Nepal to fight the rebels but was unlikely to be happy with developments. New Delhi had been trying to convince the king to form a united front with political parties in the battle against the Maoists.

"The Nepal king has snubbed New Delhi," said S.D. Muni, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. "I hope New Delhi does not continue to supply military hardware which only strengthens the monarchy in the name of fighting Maoists."

Kalim Bahadur, a South Asian political analyst, said Gyanendra was "not very enthusiastic about democracy".

"I think the king's move will weaken democracy and weaken the state against the Maoist rebels, and we can only look with great doubt about the

future of Nepali democracy."

The rebels have been fighting since 1996 to replace the monarchy with a communist republic in a revolt that has cost around 11,000 lives.

The king had promised that elections would begin by the start of the Nepali new year in mid-April.

Indian television said he accused political parties of factional fighting. The king, they said, had asked for the support of the media but said he could not guarantee media freedom.

Nepal is one of the world's poorest nations and its only Hindu kingdom. Many people still view the king as a reincarnation of the god Vishnu.

But the monarchy's reputation dived in 2001 when Crown Prince Dipendra killed his father, the popular King Birendra, and several other members of the royal family in a palace massacre. He then turned the gun on himself.

Gyanendra was crowned king after the massacre, but has never been as popular as his brother Birendra.

Tens of thousands of tourists visit Nepal each year, and it has eight of the world's 14 highest mountains, including Mount Everest.

Moi hands over Kenya party to protege Kenyatta

NAIROBI, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Former President Daniel arap Moi stepped down from his last job in Kenyan politics when his opposition party chose his protege Uhuru Kenyatta as its next chairman, according to poll results released on Tuesday.

A conference of delegates held on Monday cast 2,980 votes for Kenyatta, its losing candidate in 2002 presidential elections, and 622 for his only rival Nicholas Biwott, a close Moi aide, according to results broadcast on Kenyan television after voting went on late into the night.

The vote boosts Kenyatta's chances of leading the opposition challenge to President Mwai Kibaki in presidential elections expected in the east African country in 2007.

At 43, Kenyatta says he represents a new generation hungry for change in a country that continues to be mired in economic stagnation, crime and corruption after two years of faltering reforms by Kibaki's coalition government.

"The time has come for this country to welcome a new generation," is a fre-

quent Kenyatta refrain.

Moi, 80, an austere former headmaster rarely seen without his silver-topped ivory stick, had remained chairman of his Kenya African National Union (KANU) party despite stepping down as head of state following the December 2002 elections.

Plucked from the political wilderness in 2001, Kenyatta emerged as Moi's preferred choice of successor despite being a stranger on the national stage. Son of founding president Jomo Kenyatta, Kenyatta sought to exploit a yearning for change among a younger generation in the 2002 polls, but many voters regarded him as a puppet picked by Moi to protect him in retirement.

Moi's departure as head of state represented the end of an era for Kenya under one of the last of an older generation of African "Big Men" style rulers.

The transition was Kenya's first experience of an incumbent president stepping down in favour of a successor. Moi, who took over after the death of Jomo Kenyatta, was bound by the constitution to retire.

Malaysia delays illegal immigrant crackdown

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Malaysia has called a last-minute delay in a planned huge round-up of illegal immigrants, the majority from neighbouring Indonesia just a short boat ride away, officials said on Tuesday.

Mahadi Arshad, director general of Volunteer Corps, or Rela, which is involved in the crackdown, said the deferment was to enable the authorities to identify possible hiding areas.

The decision was made at a meeting on Monday chaired by Home Affairs Minister Azmi Khalid, he said.

"We will not announce the new date. If we do so, the illegal immigrants will go into hiding," Mahadi told Reuters.

The new date for the launch of the crackdown would be determined by the minister, Mahadi said, adding that he was not aware of any extension to the amnesty period.

The Star newspaper on Tuesday quoted a Home Ministry source as saying the three-month amnesty for illegal immigrants that had been due to end at midnight on Monday would now be extended by another week, but gave no reason why.

Home Ministry and Immigration Department officials were not available to comment due to a holiday in the capi-

tal.

The Star quoted Indonesia's ambassador to Malaysia as saying Jakarta had asked for the extension in a letter from Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono due to be delivered to Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Wednesday.

The New Straits Times said the Indonesian president had sent his state secretary, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, to see the Malaysian prime minister.

Officials in Jakarta at immigration and the foreign ministry could not immediately confirm the reports, while Malaysian embassy officials could not be reached.

MANILA TOO

The Philippines has also asked Malaysia to extend the amnesty by a month to allow an estimated 170,000 undocumented Filipinos to return home. Manila plans to send navy vessels to Malaysia's eastern state of Sabah to bring back some of the illegal workers.

"This will entice Filipinos in Malaysia to come home, especially those who have availed of the amnesty but do not have the funds for the trip," newspapers quoted Jose Brillantes, the



Indonesian illegal immigrants queue to get their documents checked by a Malaysian immigration officer on the last day of the amnesty deadline to return to their countries at Port Klang, 70 km (43.5 miles) west of Kuala Lumpur Jan. 31. Malaysia had extended an amnesty for illegal immigrants to leave the country until Jan. 31. REUTERS

foreign undersecretary, as saying.

The government has also reconvened a multi-agency task force to ensure the "orderly repatriation" of the Filipinos, seeking to avoid the chaos of 2002 when thousands of illegal workers returned at the same time after a previous Malaysian amnesty.

The amnesty had already been extended from its original deadline of Dec. 31 because of the Dec. 26 tsunami, which hit Indonesia particularly hard, leaving 230,000 dead or missing in the northern province of Aceh.

On Monday, thousands of people rushed to catch ferries and planes out of Malaysia before the expected crackdown, the biggest in three years.

More than 500,000 immigration officers and volunteers were scheduled to be deployed to hunt illegal immigrants. Those caught can be jailed for up to five years or fined before being deported. Men younger than 50 can be whipped.

Nearly 380,000 illegal immigrants left the country under the amnesty and 400,000 or more remained, immigration officials said.

Malaysia has a persistent shortage of skilled and unskilled workers, drawing in illegal immigrants from poorer countries in the region, especially from Indonesia..

China \$6 bln loan helps Russia nationalise Yugansk

MOSCOW, Feb 1 (Reuters) - China lent Russia \$6 billion to help the Kremlin renationalise the key unit of oil major YUKOS, officials said on Tuesday, underpinning oil-hungry Beijing's efforts to tap into Russia's huge energy business.

Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin told a news conference that Chinese banks made the loan to Russian state bank Vnesheconombank (VEB) to help state oil firm Rosneft finance its purchase of YUKOS's unit Yuganskneftegaz.

"VEB has borrowed \$6 billion from Chinese banks to credit Rosneft," said Kudrin after more than a month of mystery surrounding financial details of the \$9.3-billion deal.

Russia's No.2 oil official, Sergei Oganessian, told a separate news conference Rosneft had obtained a \$6 billion loan from China's state oil firm CNPC guaranteed by future crude oil deliveries.

"The two companies (Rosneft and CNPC) have agreed on the pre-payment

for long-term oil deliveries," said Oganessian, who is a director on Rosneft's board.

"The contract has been signed. There is nothing unusual that the pre-payment is for 5 to 6 years," he said. It was not immediately clear whether Kudrin and Oganessian were talking about the same loan. Rosneft and VEB declined to comment.

Yugansk was put up for auction in December to recoup some of YUKOS's \$27.5 billion back-tax bill.

The sale was the culmination of a Kremlin campaign to destroy the empire of the politically ambitious owner of YUKOS, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and regain control over the strategic oil sector it lost in the chaotic privatisations of the mid-1990s.

Rosneft emerged as the new owner of Yugansk after days of confusion that followed the auction, but it was unclear how the medium-sized and indebted firm financed the transaction.

CNPC and Indian companies have

been rumoured to be seeking a minority stake in Yugansk, but Oganessian and Kudrin did not say whether an equity deal had been discussed.

Merger confusion

Russia's top energy official, Viktor Khristenko, said in December CNPC could acquire up to 20 percent in Yugansk, but at the time Chinese officials denied any deal had been struck.

"Clearly, the Chinese are trying to get some leverage. In the end, property rights are not their principle concern," said Dmitry Lukashov, analyst at Aton brokerage.

"They understand property rights in Russia are not the most important rights and they're more interested in guaranteeing supplies."

Rosneft is due to merge with gas monopoly Gazprom later this year to form a state-controlled energy giant.

But that transaction stalled after YUKOS filed for U.S. bankruptcy protection, exposing Gazprom to potential



A Yukos oil well is seen at sunset near the Russian northern city of Nefteyugansk, Dec. 19, 2004 in this file photo. China lent Russia \$6 billion to help the Kremlin renationalise the key unit of oil major YUKOS, officials said on Tuesday, underpinning oil-hungry Beijing's efforts to tap into Russia's huge energy business. Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin told a news conference that Chinese banks made the loan to Russian state bank Vnesheconombank (VEB) to help state oil firm Rosneft finance its purchase of YUKOS's unit Yuganskneftegaz. REUTERS

Britain probes cause of Hercules crash in Iraq

LONDON, Feb 1 (Reuters) - British investigators were scouring the wreckage of a military plane that crashed north of Baghdad in a possible missile strike thought to have killed 10 people, the UK's worst single-incident death toll in Iraq.

Officials from London were joining military investigators on the ground on Tuesday, seeking to discover what caused the crash on Sunday - Iraq's election day.

"We have people on the ground sifting through the aircraft wreckage looking for clues," said the Royal Air Force's chief of staff Jock Stirrup.

A videotape on Monday purported to show insurgents downing the C-130 Hercules transport plane with a missile.

The video, aired by an Arabic TV channel and issued by the 1920 Revolution Brigades, showed a mid-air explosion then burning debris of what looked like a plane, including an engine, on the ground and filmed at

close range in a large field.

Analysts said the wreckage on the video looked authentic but the first part - shots of a button being pressed, a missile streaking off then an explosion - was less convincing. Leading Arabic broadcaster Al Jazeera said it received the tape from the group, which has claimed responsibility for attacks and kidnappings in the past.

Named for an Iraqi uprising against British rule, the group has often released videos of attacks on U.S. tanks, troops and aircraft and claimed to be responsible for the shooting down of two U.S. helicopters in early August 2004.

Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said nine Royal Air Force personnel and one soldier were "missing, believed killed".

Hoon said American and British forces had secured the crash site, and were recovering the bodies and attempting to determine what caused

the giant plane to plunge into the desert.

Among the victims was Australia's first casualty of the Iraq war - a former Australia Air Force member who had joined Britain's Royal Air Force.

"It could very well be hostile action," said parliamentary defence adviser Air Vice Marshal Tony Mason.

The Hercules, widely considered the most secure and reliable "workhorse" plane used by British forces, could have been the target of a heat-seeking ground-to-air missile or a "very, very lucky shot" from small arms fire, he said.

Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Tuesday it was not clear yet what had happened.

"Let me again express my sympathy and condolences to the families of those that have died," he told GMTV.

"We don't yet know the exact cause of the crash. We hope we will be able to give people more details of that in due course."

Wreckage from the plane was strewn over a wide area when it hit the ground 30 km (20 miles) northwest of Baghdad, prompting defence experts to speculate it could have been hit by insurgents, although they questioned parts of the video.

"The rebels have not shot down any big planes before, so it's not as if they'd be recycling old footage of wreckage," Tim Ripley, defence analyst at Britain's Centre of Defence and International Security Studies, told Reuters.

"But the first bit looks of a more propaganda nature."

Earlier a little-known Islamic militant group, whose claims have in the past been discounted, said it had downed the plane.

"The mujahideen fired a guided anti-armour missile at the C-130 Hercules as it was flying at a low altitude," said the statement by Ansar al-Islam Group - Saad bin Abi Waqqas Brigade.

Before Sunday, 29 British troops had been killed in combat in Iraq and 43 more had died in non-combat incidents.



Stephen Conlon, 23, from Doncaster, and a member of Britain's Royal Artillery lowers the Union flag in Az Zubayr, southern Iraq Jan. 31, in memory of the 10 servicemen who it's believed have been killed when a Hercules transport plane crashed on Sunday. The Arabic television channel Al Jazeera on Monday aired a videotape purporting to show insurgents shooting down a British military transport plane that crashed in Iraq. REUTERS

Sicily governor stands trial on Mafia charges

PALERMO, Sicily, Feb 1 (Reuters) - The head of Sicily's regional government and an ally of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi went on trial on Tuesday accused of aiding and abetting the Mafia.

Salvatore Cuffaro and 14 other defendants, including a senior police chief and a leading Sicilian businessman, are accused of feeding the Mafia secret information about anti-mob investigations.

Cuffaro, who is a member of a centrist government coalition party, has denied the accusations and rejected demands from centre-left opposition parties to resign ahead of the hearings. He was not present at the first day of the trial, which could drag on for weeks.

Prosecutors believe a ring of well-placed officials passed details about sensitive investigations to the Mafia in Italy's southern-most region. Businessman Michele Aiello, a leading

figure in Sicily's private healthcare sector, is accused of creating the ring and working for the Mafia's boss of bosses, Bernardo Provenzano, who has been on the run for four decades. Aiello denies the charge.

Police believe Provenzano is still living in Sicily and has managed to escape capture thanks to highly placed moles within the local government and police forces who have tipped him off ahead of security raids.

Vacancy Announcement

For the execution of the project "support to Yemen's Accession to the WTO" funded by the European Commission, GTZ International Services (Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, International Services) will employ a Yemeni Specialist in legal matters and WTO agreements for a duration of up to 45 months.

Qualifications and Profile:

- Degree in law preferably from a university in an English speaking country.
- Ability to formulate legal texts in Arabic.
- Ability to formulate legal texts in English would be a distinct plus and will be a requirement at a later stage.
- Professional background in Yemeni legislation and general knowledge of WTO agreements.
- Arabic native speaker with good command of English.
- Working experience of not less than 3 years since graduation.
- Proven working experience on WTO-related issues would be a distinct plus.

Description of Work:

- Study WTO agreements and identify the requirements that Yemen is expected to abide by.
- Identify issues pertaining to legislative compliance with WTO.
- Compare the requirements under each agreement with the relevant Yemeni laws and identify legislative reform needed.
- Review all amended/new Laws and regulations to make sure that WTO requirements are reflected in these laws.
- Draft/assist in drafting a legislative action plan containing all laws to be amended or newly drafted, showing the stage each law has reached and all stages expected, up to ratification stage.
- Assist on any other legal related matters, including working with other national entities in formulation of legislation related to WTO accession process.

Yemeni Nationals of suitable qualifications are invited to present their application in English, prior to February 13th, 2005 at the following address, or by hand:

Coordination and Communication Office with the World Trade Ministry of Industry and Trade Organisation/Project Management Unit
C/O Dr. Achim Seiler, GTZ
P.O. Box 8278, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Tel: (01) 561 114/118
Mobile: 73777398

Words of Wisdom



One of the main problems in building a modern state in Yemen is that three blocks of our society perceive themselves above accountability. The sooner we see this and address it, the easier it will be to build a meaningful government based on law and order, and modern values.

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

OUR
OPINIONIraq elections
and the future

A sigh of relief was breathed by the Arab populations around the world for the peaceful end to the Iraqi elections without any bloodshed or major attacks against civilian voters. The beginning phase for a transformation period is now ahead.

What the Iraqi people ought to do now is to ensure that the election results would not lead to any dominance of a certain faction on the others. Because otherwise, this could be an invitation for trouble in the country because ruling Iraq based on religious or ethnic lines would again repeat the scenario of oppression this time against the minority.

There is hope that insurgency would slow down and possibly diminish with the wise leadership of the upcoming transitional authority if it implements the right steps and procedures to ensure that the new constitution and method of rule would conform to democratic standards. If this happens, we may as well welcome the Iraqi experience as an Arab country moving towards democracy.

There was a feeling before the elections that they could turn violent and result in severe pain and frustration for many, especially if they did not work out in the right way. However, as the turnout percentages reveal, it apparently was a success. This being said, Arabs are cautiously optimistic that Iraq will now be paving the way to the establishment of an independent democratic Iraqi state with no occupation forces whatsoever.

But when will that happen? The answer is still unknown.

Because the American interest in the country is enormous, it is doubtful that the forces would be leaving any time soon. Iraqi interior Minister Falah al-Naqib gave clever remarks saying that the presence of coalition forces is conditioned on the security of the country. "If there are no security threats, and if there is a strong Iraqi security force, why should we keep coalition forces?" he asked.

Let it be clear that reformists and educated Yemenis as well as Arabs are with elections anywhere on the planet as long as they are done in a proper and independent manner. Therefore, it should be obvious that decently held elections in Iraq will also be supported, and their results should be respected.

Furthermore, it is important to note that elections cannot be perfect in their initial stages. There will always be violations of some sort. It is therefore important to measure the success of the Iraqi elections with the turnout, the level of violence, and with the independently carried out vote counting process.

The elections are a great thing to have, especially as they are done with transparency and honesty. There is a tendency to be optimistic about Iraq with those elections now over, and it is a hope that drives many people to think that it could also be possible to hold free elections anywhere else in the region.

I guess it is a matter of time until it happens, but hopefully without any need for an occupation.

The Editor



Independent Cultural, Economic & Political Weekly
First English Newspaper in Yemen, founded in 1991
by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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

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

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

Branches:
Aden Bureau Chief: Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596;
Fax: +967 (2) 347-056
Email: ytaden@y.net.ye

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



Regional Distributors
KSA: Saudi Distribution Co., Jeddah, Tel: 6530909
Tlx: 605350
P.O. Box: 13195

Qatar (Doha): Dar Al-Sharq Printing, Publishing & Distribution
Tel: 4664265
Fax: 4661865
P.O. Box: 3488

Dubai: Dar Al-Hikma
Tel: 00971 506589158
P.O. Box 2007

Policies:
- All opinion articles that have not been written by Yemen Times staff on the Opinion and Op-Ed pages do not necessarily represent the newspaper's opinion and hence YT could not be held accountable for their consequences.
- Letters to the Editor must include your name and signature, address and telephone number. Letters should not exceed 2,000 characters in length. We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity, style, length and legal contents. Any article or letter submitted cannot be returned to the writer under any circumstances.
- To advertise in the paper, contact the advertising department in any of the offices of the newspaper.

The new
Bush doctrine

By GEORGE SOROS

President George W. Bush's second inaugural address set forth an ambitious vision of the role of the United States in advancing the cause of freedom worldwide, fueling worldwide speculation over the course of American foreign policy during the next four years. The ideas expressed in Bush's speech thus deserve serious consideration.

"It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture," Bush declared, "with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

There is a bow to diplomacy in the assurance that fulfilling this mission "is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend our friends and ourselves by force of arms when necessary." Similarly, Bush recognizes that outsiders cannot force liberty on people. Instead, "Freedom by its nature must be chosen and defended by citizens and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities."

Finally, there is acceptance of diversity, for "when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own. America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom and make their own way."

I agree with this goal, and have devoted the last fifteen years of my life and several billion dollars of my fortune to attaining it. Yet I find myself in sharp disagreement with the Bush administration. It is not only that there is a large gap between official words and deeds; I find that the words sometimes directly contradict the deeds in a kind of Orwellian doublespeak.

When Bush declared war on terror,

he used that war to invade Iraq. When no connection with Al Qaeda could be established and no weapons of mass destruction could be found, he declared that we invaded Iraq to introduce democracy. Now the elections in Iraq are about to be converted into a civil war between a Shi'a-Kurd dominated government and a Sunni insurrection.

In Iraq and beyond, when Bush says that "freedom will prevail," many interpret him to mean that America will prevail. This impugned America's motives and deprived the US of whatever moral authority the country once had to intervene in other countries' domestic affairs. If, for example, America offers support to Iranian students who are genuinely striving for greater freedom, they are now more likely to be endangered by US support, as the regime's hardliners are strengthened.

To explain what is wrong with the new Bush doctrine, I have to invoke the concept of open society. That is the concept that guides me in my efforts to foster freedom around the world. The work has been carried out through foundations operating on the ground and led by citizens who understand the limits of the possible in their countries. Occasionally, when a repressive regime expels our foundation - as happened in Belarus and Uzbekistan - we operate from the outside.

Paradoxically, the most successful open society in the world, the US, does not properly understand the first principles of an open society; indeed, its current leadership actively disavows them. The concept of open society is based on the recognition that nobody possesses the ultimate truth. To claim otherwise leads to repression. In short, we may be wrong.

That is precisely the possibility that Bush refuses to acknowledge, and his denial appeals to a significant segment of the American public. An equally significant segment is appalled. This has left the US not only deeply divided, but

also at loggerheads with much of the rest of the world, which considers our policies high-handed and arbitrary.

President Bush regards his reelection as an endorsement of his policies, and feels reinforced in his distorted view of the world. The "accountability moment" has passed, he claims, and he is ready to confront tyranny throughout the world according to his own lights.

But the critical process that is at the core of an open society - which the US abandoned for eighteen months after September 11, 2001 - cannot be forsaken. That absence of self-criticism is what led America into the Iraq quagmire.

A better understanding of the concept of open society requires that promoting freedom and democracy and promoting American values and interests be distinguished. If it is freedom and democracy that are wanted, they can be fostered only by strengthening international law and international institutions.

Bush is right to assert that repressive regimes can no longer hide behind a cloak of sovereignty: what goes on inside tyrannies and failed states is of vital interest to the rest of the world. But intervention in other states' internal affairs must be legitimate, which requires clearly established rules.

As the dominant power in the world, America has a unique responsibility to provide leadership in international cooperation. America cannot do whatever it wants, as the Iraqi debacle has demonstrated; but, at the same time, nothing much can be achieved in the way of international cooperation without US leadership, or at least active participation. Only by taking these lessons to heart can progress be made towards the lofty goals that Bush announced.

George Soros is President of Soros Fund Management and Chairman of the Open Society Institute.

Letters to the Editor

Jerusalem: a
must for Palestine

I thank Yemen Times writers for making the point that conceding to the Palestinian claim to part of Jerusalem is not tied to a particular Palestinian leader. Jerusalem is as necessary to a Palestinian state as water is to someone thirsty. So why does Israel seldom talk about this eventuality? Could it be because Israel does not really accept a future Palestinian state? Israel in its arrogance does not realize that its national moral underpinning is becoming more and more corrupt. Israel dissimulates and prevaricates and apparently does not understand how urgently it needs to give the Palestinians their state with Jerusalem.

The Zionist imperative to not treat Palestinians as real people but as trespassers has acted as a cancer rotting the Israeli character. Tyranny poisons the tyrant more than the oppressed. Jerusalem will always belong to Judaism, Christianity and Muslims. Jerusalem does not need Israel's permission to also be the capital of a Palestinian state.

I would also like to commend Hassan Al-Haifi for his recent article entitled "Numbers Don't Matter". That was another thought-provoking article!

Congratulations!

I would like to add a few comments, however. Once the Soviet Union fell apart, the United States was left alone in the international jungle without a natural predator. The US was the king of the jungle. As happens, prosperous nations and peoples interpret their wealth as a divine decree of superiority over the rest of mankind. Decisions based on reason or arrogance all were

made with little to no circumspection. After all, the US is king of the jungle. But then some band of no name "misfits" dared to attack the king.

The attack shattered the invincibility of the king. Then the decisions of the US were even more inscrutable and less circumspect. The king flailed in the dark at a faceless and nameless enemy. He got into armed conflict that mixed Zionist support, oil control and British Empire overtones with a poor, third world country. The US made this decision in folly and defends this decision in folly. Being king of the jungle is hard work, especially when he is new at it and makes decisions by being a bully.

Chris Molling
cpmolling@yahoo.com

Fingers crossed
for Bush's plans

I thank Hassan Al-Haifi for his excellent description of Bush policy in his recent article entitled "Numbers Don't Matter". Christian Cowboy Bush and his fanatic supporters, according to CNN today, now have plans to invade Iran. Iraq wasn't enough for them. The plan, according to sources of Seymour Hersh, is based on Bush's assessment that the Iranian people are ready to revolt against the present Iranian government and will welcome the invasion and the bombs with flowers, cheers and virgins for the troops. Sound familiar?

Well, who knows what Bush might do? A plan to invade Iran may or may not be followed. But to discredit such a plan simply because it sounds stupid and inhumane would be dangerous. Bush has killed well over 100,000 people in the past two years

and he obviously enjoys it. Invading Iran and setting up torture chambers in Tehran would create the regional bloodbath that Americans voted for.

On another subject, in his inaugural address, Bush states "The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world." What he means is that the best hope for him, his greedy war-machine friends and American imperialism is the further expansion of American military power. Next stop - Iran and another hundred thousand deaths.

And who is going to stop this Christian fanatic? No one, that's who!

Get ready for the bloodbath, Iran.

Robert Lindh
lindh@swnebr.net

Rebuttal to "Somalia
must remain two"

I read a letter titled "Somalia Must remain two," here at the Yemen Times online.

It is very disturbing to see such a baseless and blatant lie published on a prestigious place like the Yemen Times Letters section.

Mr. Jamal Yusuf, a secessionist wrote that the People of Lascanod did not live in that area during the colonial times. Maybe Mr. Yusuf has no knowledge of Somalia's history, if he did he would have know that: The people of Lascanod, Buhodle and Eastern Erigavo or regions know as SSC, they lived that area all their lives, not only did they lived there but they were the fighter know as the Dervish movement and lost thousands and thousands of men, women and children defending Somalia from the brutal Imperial British

colonial. They refused the British to take hold of their country and they wage a war that dragged over two decades, 21 years to be exact. They were the first people in Africa that were ever attacked by plane.

The second argument which says: this area was always part of British Somaliland. The Northern Daroods who live in the regions known as Sool, Sanaag and Ceyn never signed agreement with Britannia to annex Northern Somalia from the rest of Somalia and when they received their independence from the colonial they went back to the way Somalia was. Somalia has always been and will be one.

Somali Unity is non-negotiable. The people of Sool, Sanaag and Ceyn chose to remain with the rest of Somalia, and no one can force them to do otherwise. Everyone knows who started this war; it is started by the secessionist/ Somalilander who wants to force the will of the people of SSC and force the people of SSC to take a name they fought not to be call for over a century ago, Somaliland is a name given by their former enemy Britannia. If the secessionists don't want to be part of Somalia that is their prerogative, the door is open for them.

Let them find a country that recognizes three cities, Hargeysa, Burco and Berbera as a country. But kindly, they should refrain from claiming or clinging to lands that never belong to them.

That is how wars start, when one becomes greedy and decided to take other's Possession.

Yasmin Abdi
yasmin@myway.com

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

King Albert
could teach
Chirac a lesson
on human rights

This observer was flabbergasted at the sight of His Majesty, the King of Belgium demonstrating one of the most moving scenes in respect for human rights and freedom for all the citizens of Belgium. Belgium has often showed the real sense of justice that modern society should be adhering to. A couple of years ago the Belgian judiciary took the precedence of prosecuting Ariel Sharon, the Prime minister of Israel, alias the mastermind of more than one massacre of Palestinians and other Arabs in the long standing feud between the Zionist state and the help-less Palestinians and Arabs that no have to live with the bad neighbor policy of the Likudnik Government of Israel. The United States couldn't run out of steam in applying all the pressure it could on the Belgian Government to withdraw the Summons issued on Ariel Sharon to come face litigation for the crimes he committed in Lebanon long before he became the distinguished Prime Minister in Israel.

Now the Belgian people again display their knack for true modern civilization. The BBC revealed on Monday that a young Muslim Belgian woman was employed by a Belgian factory for confectionaries of some kind. She was adamant in pursuing her Islamic beliefs and continued to cover head with the scarf that has become the traditional veil for Moslem women living in Europe. The factory owner saw no trouble in that and did not make a fuss about it. All of a sudden the owner of the factory was getting phone calls and letters containing threats demanding that he fire the Moslem woman or else face dire consequences. The factory owner persisted in his respect for human rights and insisted on keeping the woman notwithstanding all these anonymous cowardly threats.

The barbarians would not let up and continued to threaten the factory owner by phone mail and other means including an envelope with bullets to scare the factory owner to get the girl to remove the veil or fire her. The case started getting the attention of the public in Belgium and the case became controversial: Should Belgium, a modern state with a strong traditional European history and a minor stint as a big power during the Age of Imperialism allow Islam to infiltrate its modern lifestyle and progressive secular philosophy? For our Moslem lady, the Belgian people were more than understanding and respectful of the rights of one of their citizens and insisted that the factory owner should not succumb to these hooligans of the night who have no qualms about what the likes of Sharon do at night as they quench their thirst for the blood of children while they are in their deep slumber. The support was overwhelmingly in favor of the woman upholding her beliefs.

The story did not end there. In a dramatic show of real civilization and respect for human rights, His Majesty King Albert went through a very touching display of true Royal humility and went on to have all the television cameras of the world follow him as he went to pay his respect to the factory owner and the Belgian Moslem woman and thus show the world that prejudice and long embedded biases are not the making of a modern nation.

Perhaps one would think that this incident should not have attracted attention as it did and certainly that is true, if one does not see the real fine lines that are catapulted into prominence in the wake of the French to succumb to Zionist biases and right wing hate mongrels in France, who are propagating that anything Islamic should always be treated with a taint of hatred and suspicion.

Thus we wonder if the rest of Europe will learn a lesson from his Majesty king Albert, who believes that a Moslem Belgian is just as good as any other Moslem citizen and certainly is endowed with inalienable rights that no one can contest.

Back to the Nitty Gritty

Well, the Elections of Iraq are over and thank God the people of Iraq were ready to display their true desire for democratic rule, notwithstanding the fact that it had to be spoon-fed to them. There is an important lesson in this for most of the other Arab leaders, who fail to see the importance of what transpired in Iraq. Yes, no body wants to be spoon fed democracy with the barrel of an American tank, but democracy is fervently desired by the Arab people everywhere, no matter how it comes. No one is ready to raise that "welcome" banner to any American forces, God forbid, but it should be borne in mind that most of the Arab people are tired of their archaic dictatorship that continue to step on their constituents necks for God knows how long and now insist that their domains are subject to hereditary dictates as well.

It is in the interest of the Arab nation that our leaders start thinking about how to truly make history and that is simply by letting their people become truly free democratic societies. To have it come from our leaders is far more appealing than to have it come via American tanks, but then who knows how God wills his justice for the discontent and downtrodden of the world?

The Ghost of Biafra

By Ike Okonta

When Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo made his surprise announcement on 13 January to begin a nationwide dialogue to discuss constitutional reform, he was bowing to the inevitable. The clamor by disaffected politicians and human rights activists for such a conference had reached a crescendo.

Obasanjo and the ruling Peoples Democratic Party were re-elected in May 2003 in controversial circumstances. Opposition forces, led by Muhammadu Buhari, the candidate of the All Nigeria People's Party, accused Obasanjo of using the police to intimidate voters and falsify the election results.

Initially, it looked like Obasanjo would weather the storm and serve out his last term without making concessions to his opponents. However, in late December 2004, the national election tribunal, sitting in Abuja, the capital, ruled that while the election had been free and fair in most parts of the country, the number of votes was larger than the population in

Ogun, the President's home state. The opposition seized on the ruling and called on Obasanjo to resign.

Simultaneously, the eastern part of the country descended into anarchy. Political thugs linked to the president resorted to strong-arm tactics in an attempt to remove one of the governors, angry that he had not given them lucrative public contracts. Obasanjo refused to call them to order, even after they invaded and razed government offices. In the Niger delta, where oil production and official neglect have devastated the environment and wrecked livelihoods, enraged youths took to the swamps and led an insurgency against Federal troops.

But the most powerful push for the conference came from politicians in the largely Christian south, apprehensive that power would return to the Muslim north in 2007 after Obasanjo, himself a southern Christian, completed his second term. Since political independence in 1960, politics has revolved round Nigeria's major ethnic groups – the Igbo and Yoruba in the south, and the Hausa and Fulani in the north.

Southerners' apprehension is well founded. The north dominated the

armed forces following the Biafra civil war in the late 1960's. As military rule became the norm in Africa in the 1970's, northern army officers imposed an authoritarian and predatory mode of governance on the country, a vicious grip that was loosened only when a resurgent civil society forced them to return to the barracks in 1999. Obasanjo's election marked the return of civilian rule.

The demand for a new constitution emulating Nigeria's First Republic of the early 1960's, when the country was a federation of powerful regions enjoying a large measure of fiscal autonomy, grew over the years as Nigeria's economy plummeted. But Obasanjo is a passionate advocate of unitary government and counts many influential northerners as personal friends. The northern business and political elite see him as a bulwark against their increasingly restive southern rivals who openly threaten a repeat of the Igbo attempt to secede in 1967 that caused the Biafra conflict, taking the rich oil fields of the Niger delta with them.

Obasanjo's latest move, his proposed "National Political Reform Conference" in March, is an attempt to steal the opposition's thunder.



There will be 400 delegates, but the bulk of them nominated by the president and his party, and the government-controlled National Assembly will vet their proposals.

The opposition has responded by calling on Nigerians to boycott the conference, arguing that it lacks legitimacy. The opposition, grouped in the Pro-National Conference Organization (PRONACO), a new umbrella coalition of political parties and human rights groups, has said it would convene an alternative national conference in June.

PRONACO has formidable leaders in Wole Soyinka, the Nobel literature laureate, and Anthony Enahoro, an elderly politician who made his name as a fiery young nationalist in the 1940's. The group's demands include dividing the country into six or eight

new regions along broad ethnic lines with powers to generate and spend revenue.

Opposition leaders also intend to debate such issues as the rights of women and minority groups, and the place of Shari'a, the Islamic legal code, which has replaced civil courts in several northern states. Reformers also have the Obasanjo government's neo-liberal economic policies, which they describe as "punitive and intellectually bankrupt," in their sights.

But it is PRONACO's demand that at least 50% of the oil revenue derived from the Niger delta and other states in the south be retained in the area of production that most threatens the survival of the country's survival as a united entity. The Biafra war was largely an oil war, prosecuted by northern officers and politi-

cians to win back the delta oil fields from the Igbo. It is not likely that northern elites will stand by idly as a fresh attempt is made to take away what they consider a glittering prize.

For now, the north appears divided. But a hardening of the mood there, and a brokered armistice between its disenchanted youth and older but vastly more experienced political war horses, will not only present PRONACO with a formidable opponent, but could throw West Africa into turmoil if matters degenerate into a frontal clash.

Ike Okonta is author of *Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights and Oil* and is a visiting fellow at the Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, January 2005.

Remembering and Forgetting Zhao Ziyang

By Orville Schell

So, at last former Chinese Premier and Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang has died. But the political agenda that he espoused while in office passed away long ago, on May 19, 1989, when he appeared in Tiananmen Square just before dawn to beg tearfully for the forgiveness of protesters. "I am very sorry," he said to startled onlookers. "I have come too late." After that, he existed more as an historical chimera than as a real person.

When his bizarre and unscheduled appearance in the square was broadcast on Central Chinese Television the next morning – during one of the last days of uncensored media coverage – people across China were stunned by this fleeting moment of all-too-human, official anguish.

After all, Party leaders rarely evince their personal feelings in public, much less transgress the Party line as brazenly as Zhao did. Such individualism fit neither Leninist nor traditional Chinese proscriptions for behavior by a high official.

As the crackdown following those heady weeks of free expression and assembly came to its apocalyptic end on the night of June 3-4, Zhao vanished, sucked down the Party's memory hole into which so many other leaders have vanished since China's "socialist liberation." To the discredit of the democratic world, hardly any head of state remonstrated on Zhao's behalf, minimally demanding that some accounting be made for his illegal and immoral incarceration. Instead, Zhao was allowed to remain in suspended animation, under house arrest, conveniently forgotten like some cryogenically frozen celebrity with no hope

of resurrection.

Zhao was not killed, but allowed to live in an old Beijing courtyard house with his family. He was let out from time to time, but under guard like a zoo animal, to go to some spa or to play solitary holes of golf, one of the many manifestations of "bourgeois liberalization" that his reform efforts allowed to leak through China's once hermetic seal.

Chinese have long since used the deaths of defrocked leaders as occasions to let out sentiments that can find no expression through the normal political process. During the winter of 1976, when Premier Zhou Enlai (viewed as a relative liberal in the Maoist hierarchy) died, tens of thousands of people spontaneously flooded Tiananmen Square, giving the Party a tremendous fright.

It was, of course, the death of former Party chief Hu Yaobang, a liberal like Zhao, which set off the

protests in 1989. Whether Zhao's supporters will express themselves in a similar fashion is uncertain. The events of 1989 remain so sensitive, and Tiananmen Square so securely guarded, that it is hard to imagine a protest happening there soon.

At the same time, China seems so drugged on business nowadays that it is hard to imagine many people marching for a cause that would do nothing for their bottom line. It's almost as if the Communist Party had turned Marx on his head, replacing religion with profit as the new "opium of the masses." Few outside of the lumpen classes of unemployed workers and dispossessed peasants seem to have any gusto for political protest.

By contrast, Zhao embodied a chapter in Chinese history when to be a reformer meant to take on not only the economy, but every aspect of life. Before becoming Premier

and Party chief, he experimented with everything from the de-collectivization of agriculture and separation of the Party from business to laws guaranteeing the rights of journalists and greater openness toward the outside world for ordinary people. He was even the first Chinese leader to wear a suit and tie rather than a Mao habit when traveling abroad, as well as the first to hold an open press conference.

Although Zhao was no visionary, no Vaclav Havel or Lech Walesa, and not even anti-communist, his agenda in the mid-1980's embraced the economy, politics, culture, media, and society, and it led to one of the most open and intellectually rich periods of Chinese history.

It was a tragic paradox that the political movement that so peacefully swept China in 1989 ended up arresting the process of broad-based, evolutionary reform to which Zhao

consecrated his life. So chastened by the trauma of June 4 was the Party leadership that, for several years afterwards, it was unclear if any reform would survive. Then, in 1992, Deng Xiaoping set in motion one of the most rapid and total marketizations of a society in history, catalyzing China's spectacular rise as an economic superpower.

Zhao Ziyang's death reminds us not only of how unjustly he was treated, but of how lopsided China's reforms have been. For China's "miracle" to truly become miraculous, Party leaders could do worse than study the record of a man whose legacy they now seem eager to push into oblivion.

Orville Schell, the author of many acclaimed books on China, is a dean at the University of California at Berkeley.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, January 2005.

Can We Insure against Tsunamis?

By Robert J. Shiller

Most of the discussion surrounding how to respond to Asia's tsunami disaster has focused on government relief programs and official schemes to implement early warning systems. Little discussion has focused on the promotion of private risk management institutions, notably insurance.

This is unfortunate. Insurance companies provide professional, finely detailed risk management that respects the complexity of the dangers to be hedged and responds creatively to individual needs. Promoting private insurance may seem an indirect response to the tsunami disaster, but it is a rational – and powerful – response.

Insurance companies have not penetrated many of the regions that suffered the greatest losses. According to a study by the Insurance Information Institute, expenditures on non-life insurance in 2003 amounted to only 0.83% of GDP in Indonesia, 1.19% of GDP in Thailand, and 0.62% of GDP

in India, compared with 5.23% of GDP in the United States.

Foreign aid is no substitute for insurance. Charity inspires, reassuring us of our humanity, but it is often capricious. You wouldn't want to rely on it. Indeed, when deciding how much disaster aid to offer, countries often seem to be influenced mainly by their leaders' concerns about how others will view them. Charity responds to attention-grabbing events, often neglecting less sensational disasters.

Insurance, on the other hand, is a reliable and venerable institution, its modern form dating back to the seventeenth century. But insurance and other risk management institutions have been slow to develop, even in advanced countries. In the US, most people still do not have flood or earthquake insurance. In California, one of the world's most unstable geological regions, only one in six homeowners buys earthquake insurance.

A fundamental problem is that insurance is not a concept that comes naturally to most people. In fact, as psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky have shown, there is a

systematic human tendency to downgrade the perceived probability of low-probability events, so that people go about their lives as if the probability of these events' occurrence is zero. Similarly, humans tend to accept large downside risks in order to avoid small certain losses, such as insurance premiums.

Insurance companies have faced a slow and difficult process in weaning the public from these tendencies. Moreover, designing new risk-management products is not easy. Insurance companies face inherent difficulties in measuring risks, and they must tailor their policies creatively around the human foibles that limit uptake. Insurers must also be attentive to a wide array of possible moral hazards – perverse incentives to risky behavior – and to problems of selection bias in attracting clients.

To deal with disasters more effectively, countries must find the will to create an environment in which a much more developed private insurance industry can flourish. In the US, the National Flood Insurance Program of 1968 made it mandatory for those

financing construction or improvement of structures within Special Flood Hazard Areas to buy flood insurance.

If not made mandatory, insurance must at least be promoted effectively. Otherwise, people will build on flood plains in the belief that their government, or the governments of the world, will feel obligated to bail them out, thereby insuring, in effect, bad risks that should not be taken.

Many of the worst outcomes in Asia occurred in tsunami-prone areas, such as the low-lying coastal areas of Sri Lanka. Private insurance would discourage construction in the most dangerous locations, owing to prohibitively high premiums, while encouraging the adoption of tsunami-resistant building standards in marginal areas.

Fortunately, our international risk-management institutions are steadily improving. Various catastrophe bonds, covering earthquakes and other disasters, and weather derivatives have begun trading on financial markets in recent years. The Kyoto Protocol created a mechanism for trading carbon dioxide emissions, which promises to

manage the risks of an even bigger potential disaster: global warming.

The markets for these products are still small, but they have strong growth potential, and their further development would enhance insurance companies' ability to cover risks of major international disasters.

Consider the absence of an early tsunami warning system in the worst affected countries. It is easy to blame people for lack of foresight, but none of the nine hardest hit countries had developed one. They can't all be bunglers. The problem is not individual error. The failure was caused by the absence of appropriate international institutions that would be alert to the broad spectrum of potential disasters.

Discussion of early warning systems for tsunamis has focused on government programs. But early warning means more than ocean sensors and satellites; it also implies directing construction away from disaster-prone areas and prodding private businesses to develop effective safety and evacuation procedures.

These are normal activities of insurance companies. Indeed, one of the

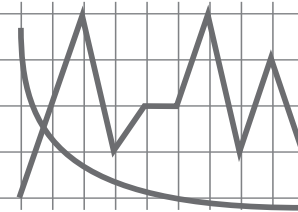
more striking features of the tsunami disaster was that it caught some of the most glamorous vacation resorts completely unprepared. The lesson is clear: even high-class businesses are only as professional as the existing institutional infrastructure permits them to be. The ultimate reason for their lack of preparation is that our insurance industry was not covering their tsunami risks, and hence not offering up-to-date disaster-prevention guidance.

The insurance industry can, and should, respond to the tsunami disaster by accepting the moral imperative to take concerted action to expand risk coverage. To the extent that governments are involved, they can promote better risk management through responsive regulation and even subsidization of experiments with new private insurance products.

Robert J. Shiller is Professor of Economics at Yale University, and author of *Irrational Exuberance* and *The New Financial Order: Risk in the 21st Century*.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, January 2005.

YT Business

Exchange Rate for
the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	186.4600	186.7600
Sterling Pound	351.9500	352.5200
Euro	243.2000	243.5900
Saudi Rial	49.7200	49.8000
Kuwaiti Dinar	638.5600	639.5900
UAE Dirhem	50.7700	50.8500
Egyptian Pound	31.9600	32.0100
Bahraini Dinar	494.5800	495.3800
Qatari Rial	51.2300	51.3100
Jordanian Dinar	262.9900	263.4100
Omani Rial	484.3200	485.1000
Swiss Franc	157.3100	157.5600
Swedish Crown	26.7100	26.7500
Japanese Yen	1.8145	1.8174

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

Oil is main exportWorking on Yemen's
resource sectorBy Mahyoub Al-Kamali
Yemen Times Staff

Yemen is always interested in the oil sector through enhancing its scientific activities which aims to qualify the national cadres and make a competent administration for such an important economic sector.

An official report about the new oil explorations stated that new explorations in a number of oil blocks

including the blocks 43, 9, and 20 will be announced soon.

The report indicated that an agreement was signed between the Yemeni Gas Company and the Korean Co-Gas Company in the respect that Yemen sells 3.3 million tonnes of the natural gas to South Korea. A number of international companies were also nominated to sell 2.5 million tonnes of gas to the US market and it is expected that the best company will be selected before the end of this month.

In the area of minerals, the report pointed out that the first iron

explorations in the country were carried out and with promising provision, in addition to materials related to the industry of cement in the Governorate of Marib. This creates an investment opportunity for businessmen to establish a cement factory in the governorate.

According to the report, the Ministry of Oil is due to inaugurate the Load and Zink Mine in Nuhm in the coming short period. The ministry sponsored during the last few years, in its framework of implementing the State's policy, a series of scientific conferences to bring forth database

for the oil and mineral wealth in the country.

The most important conference was the one associated with the groove sedimentations Red Sea Aden Gulf. It was held in October, 1995, while the first international conference for oil and gas in Yemen was held in June 2002. Both conferences contributed to the promotion of investment opportunities in the oil and gas sectors.

The Ministry of Oil issued in 1998 a scientific book under the title "Uniting the Biological Terms in Yemen".

The first Yemeni oil refinery was established in 1954 in the city of Aden and was designed to produce 80,000 barrel per day. When the British Occupation ended, the refinery was repaired by the Government to retain its usual production.

In the 1980s the State built Marib Oil Refinery with a production capacity of 10,000 barrels a day, and in the first half of the last year, an agreement with respect to building a refinery in the city of Mukalla with the capacity of 25,000 barrels per day in its first phase. Its production capacity is expected to increase to

reach 100,000 barrels per day. The total cost of the refinery is \$200 million with local and Arab investments.

Meanwhile, a preliminary agreement regarding the establishment of Ra'as Eisa Refinery in the city of Hodeida with a production capacity of 30,000 barrels a day was signed between Yemen's Oil Ministry and one of the International companies.

It is worth noting that oil is an important source of revenue to the State's general budget as it exceeds 90% of the total exports.

Central Bank of Yemen:
Inaugurates its training yearBy Fahmia Al-Fotih
Yemen Times Staff

Under the patronage of Mr. Ahmed Abdualrahman al-Samawi, governor of the Central Bank of Yemen, the Arab Company for Investment-Bahrain Kingdom held a workshop to discuss different topics such as money laundering, electronic banking operations and the investment fund industry.

More than two hundred people from the banking sector, financial institutions and exchange and insurance companies participated in the workshop.

In his welcoming speech, al-Samawi pointed out that the Central Bank of Yemen deposit assets increase to 576 riyal billion from only 100 billion riyal in 2003. Loans also have increased in the private sector to 183 riyal million, and bank capital in Yemen has increased from 31 million riyals in 2003 to 37 million riyals at the end of 2004.

Inflation has been reduced to less than 10% in 2004 compared to 13.6% in 2003.

The savings of the Central Bank



A scene of the symposium held at the central Bank of Yemen

of Yemen also has increased with around \$5.7 billion compared to \$5 billion in 2003.

Mr. Faisal Alwan, the manager of the Arab Company for Investment,

revealed that the company has selected Yemen to implement and hold these types of workshops because Yemen now has witnessed increased stability and there is great

improvement in the atmosphere for investment. He further said that Yemen has a nice international reputation that in turn it has gained the confidence of many investors.

Preparations
for Arab
Economic
Council

By Yemen Times Aden Bureau

Aden will host the 75th session of the Arab Economic and Social Council, affiliated with the Arab League, on 16-17 Feb. The Minister of Industry and Commerce, Dr Khaled Rajeh Sheikh, said, "Yemen has finished all the necessary arrangements for this session and it comes within the preparation framework of the economic tasks schedule of the 17th Arab Summit supposed to be conducted in Algeria the forth-coming March."

He says that the work schedule will determine the options for activating a Free Trade Zone, and expanding regional trade. He praised the council for clarifying the idea of a major Arab Free Trade Zone.

Staff Colonel Abdullah Gairan, Aden Security Director, delivered a speech saying, "realizing the importance of this

topic, we have to start this year with a distinctive beginning, with a scientific basis."

The expert for Yemen, John Premkin, said, "the course is considered as a part of the aids and aims at qualifying the individuals and the coast guards to lead the marine boats and use them in ceasing the suspected vessels and conducting the marine inspection generally. The rest of this course is a part of the security assistance program that the USA is rendering. American experts come to Yemen according to the training plan granted by the USA. This course will teach and train the individuals in driving the boats and offloading the boats consignments, using the maps, the weekly and rotational maintenance. Also, there will be new topics in this course for improving the individuals capability in the rotational maintenance line. We wish that this course will be beneficial and interpreting what has been studied on the fact ground", said He too.

The Democratization of Aid

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

The outpouring of aid in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami brought hope to a troubled world. In the face of an immense tragedy, working class families around the world opened their wallets to the disaster's victims. Former US President Bill Clinton called this response a "democratization of development assistance," in which individuals lend their help not only through their governments but also through their own efforts.

But, while more than 200,000 people perished in the tsunami disaster, an equivalent number of children die each month of malaria in Africa, a disaster I call a "silent tsunami." Africa's silent tsunami of malaria, however, is actually largely avoidable and controllable.

Malaria can be prevented to a significant extent, and can be treated

with nearly 100% success, through available low-cost technologies. Yet malaria's African victims, as well as those in other parts of the world, are typically too poor to have access to these life-saving technologies. A global effort, similar to the response to the Asian tsunami, could change this disastrous situation, saving more than one million lives per year.

Herein lies the main message of the new report of the UN Millennium Project, which was delivered in mid-January to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The Project, which I direct on behalf of the Secretary General, represents an effort by more than 250 scientists and development experts to identify practical means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals to cut extreme poverty, disease, and hunger by the year 2015. Our new report, entitled Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (available for download at www.unmillenni-

[project.org](http://www.unmillenni-project.org)), shows that these goals can be achieved.

The key to meeting the Millennium Development Goals in poor countries is an increase in investment in people (health, education, nutrition, and family planning), the environment (water and sanitation, soils, forests, and biodiversity), and infrastructure (roads, power, and ports). Poor countries cannot afford these investments on their own, so rich countries must help.

If more financial aid is combined with good governance in poor countries, then the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved on time. In short, our new Report is a call to action. Rich countries and poor countries need to join forces to cut poverty, disease, and hunger.

The reason that the Millennium Development Goals are feasible is that powerful existing technologies give us the tools to make rapid advances in the quality of life and economic productivity of the world's poor. Illness and deaths

from malaria can be reduced sharply by using insecticide-treated bed nets to stop the mosquitoes that transmit malaria, and by effective medicines when the illness strikes. The total cost of battling malaria in Africa would be around \$2 to \$3 billion per year.

With around one billion people living in high-income countries, it would thus cost just \$2 to \$3 per person per year in the developed world to fund an effort that could save more than one million children annually. When child mortality is reduced, poor families choose to have fewer children, because they are more confident that their children will survive to adulthood. Thus, paradoxically, saving children's lives is part of the solution to rapid population growth in poor countries.

Malaria is an important example where specific investments can solve the problems of disease, hunger, and extreme poverty. Our report makes dozens of such practical recommendations.

Investments in soil nutrients and water harvesting could help African farmers double or triple their food yields. Anti-retroviral medicines can help save millions from death due to AIDS. Rural roads, truck transport, and electricity could bring new economic opportunities to remote villages in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. School meal programs using locally produced food could boost attendance by poor children, especially girls, and improve their ability to learn, while also providing an expanded market for local farmers.

These investments are an incredible bargain. Rich countries have long promised to increase their aid levels to 0.7% of national income (from around only 0.25% today). The promise of 0.7% means that the rich world would give developing countries a mere 70 cents out of each \$100 of national income.

In recent weeks, many European countries have pledged to honor the 0.7% commitment, and five European countries (Denmark,

Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden) already do so. It's up to the US and Japan to follow through on their promises as well. Moreover, with the "democratization" of aid now underway, we can look forward to increased private efforts alongside official development assistance.

Of course, not all developing countries are sufficiently well governed to use an increase in aid in an honest, effective way. The world should therefore start this bold effort by focusing on the poor countries that are relatively well governed and that are prepared to carry out needed investments in an efficient and fair manner. Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia are on that list. It is urgent that we get started in these and similarly well governed poor countries this year.

Jeffrey D. Sachs is Professor of Economics and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2005. www.project-syndicate.org

Need to take action now

Zabid symposium just a start



BY ISMAIL AL-GHABERY
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The holding of the national symposiums for the safeguarding of the historic town of Zabid mid December at Hodeidah University made clear that Yemen's urban cultural heritage is in danger.

The fact that the symposium focused on Zabid was because the town is enlisted in the world heritage list of UNESCO as one of three Yemeni cities which have made it to the list, Sana'a, Shibam and Zabid.

The symposium, however, was held to signal the danger that the town of Zabid, in particular, could be withdrawn from such list if no action to conserve it is taken by all the stakeholders in the town.

Many people in Yemen are not aware of this fact and the convening of this symposium was intended to announce that out loud, so that people specially the residents of the town of Zabid should know that the recognition of the historical aspect of their town is about to be withdrawn if they don't do something to protect it.

Both the government and the World Heritage Center (WHC) are of the view that the residents have a major art to play to safeguard their own town. WHC, in particular points out that the reason why the town stands to be withdrawn from the world heritage list because its historical landmarks and urban fabric are disappearing due to destruction of landmark buildings,

illegal occupation of open spaces and illegal construction on such spaces as well as inaction by both the central and local governments and the residents.

The governments actions to safeguard the town seems to be little to late and the real basis for the conservation effort, the Conservation Plan, has yet to materialize compounding the atmosphere of uncertainty which has had a severe impact on the towns economy.

However, the residents, who were represented by the local NGO which is working to protect the historical part, also made clear their grievances and voiced the problems rather eloquently to all those present. They made it clear that the residents of the town can't be expected to restore their own homes or buildings because of their economic condition, let a lone making any type of contribution to the conservation of the whole town.

This is not all; they also made it clear that traditional building materials which are essential to restore the town to its original state no longer exist or are prohibitively expensive. But the most striking comment which I heard during the symposium was that the government was the biggest violator in the town.

They pointed out that new government buildings in the town were built using concrete structures and stones used a style of architecture which, although is a traditional Yemeni style, but looks so foreign in this town which has its own character and architectural style so different from that found in the highlands.

During our visit to the town of Zabid, this argument was strikingly



clear. Nevertheless, this constitutes a major learning for conservationists and planners who are well aware of this problem and have come up with proposals to remedy it. (see recommendations of the symposium).

The government was not the only violator with a number of buildings which looked strikingly foreign but also the residents who have adopted concrete structures and cement blocks to make additions to or to fence their home. They argue that cement blocks are far more cheaper and therefore, more affordable.

The problem

For many years, Yemenis took their urban cultural heritage for granted. They neither recognized the historical value of such heritage and didn't see that it can become a major economic asset which can play a major role through economic revitalization and renewal and integration into the overall urban fabric of a city or town.

The Symposium on Zabid not only recognized this fact, but showed that that concerned government bodies are

now aware of the need to conserve the Historic cities and towns of Yemen not only to preserve one of the elements of the Yemeni identity but also as an economic asset. It was clear that the planners were aware of the special consideration for planning of historic parts of a city or town and that it required sensitivity to these concepts.

Although up till now not even a single conservation plan has been made for any town or city in Yemen which incorporates these concept, the planned Conservation Plan for Zabid which is under preparation seems to recognize the need for economic growth and integration of the historic part to the urban fabric of Zabid. During the proceedings of the Symposium, the planners announced that they have completed the first step of the plan.

The land use plan which forms the basis for the conservation plan and said that it is ready for approval by the planning committee at the Ministry of Public Works and Roads (MPWR) GOPHCY is working closely with the

MPWR to develop the conservation plan which takes into consideration, the integration of the historic town, revitalization criteria, conservation of historic monuments and landmarks and an infrastructure that is sensitive to the traditional aspects of the historical part, seem to complain about the lack of sufficiently trained staff who can later on supervise and quantify the implementation process.

The plan which seems to be long due needs to materialize as soon as possible in order to bring back confidence so that the residents would be allowed to interact freely to bring about an economic revival of the town of Zabid. As for other cities and towns, plans such as this should be produced quickly to prevent any further destruction of historic parts of the cities which seem to be the victims of an attitude that prefers the new over the old and equates the historic parts of cities to the detested past blamed for all, the backwardness that people have been suffering from.

The experience in the old city of Sana'a has proven this attitude wrong and showed that not only we, Yemenis, can be proud of or built heritage, but it could serve us well and help bring economic prosperity.

National and international concern

The fact that director of the World Heritage Center, Mr. Francisco Bandrin paid attended the symposium was a clear signal that the center is serious about the state of affairs in Zabid.

WHC wants to see real action on the ground by all stakeholders. The government, the Local Council and the residents of the town; and by the fact

that its director attended the symposium, it also made a committeemen to help in any future plans to safeguard the city.

The symbolic handshake between the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Khaled Al-Roweishan and Mr. Bandrin in Zabid signaled a new era of cooperation and a real commitment to work together to conserve Yemen's cultural heritage.

The symposium was therefore, very successful in that it brought together all the stakeholders and all concerned officials at the central and local level and allow them to hold a discourse on what has to be done while defining the roles and functions of all parties concerned.

The visit to Zabid by all those who attended the symposium gave them a close encounter with magnificent landmarks and a unique architectural heritage and immersed them into the many intricacies involved in the conservation process for Zabid and other historical towns and cities of Yemen.

The meeting echoed both the national and international concern of the need to put a lot of emphasis on the conservation of the town of Zabid and other urban heritage centers of Yemen and to go about it in a systemic and scientific way which incorporates all the economic, environmental as well as cultural aspects.

Concerns now seems to be on how to start on good footing in Zabid which requires immediate attention before it becomes too late to do anything. The recommendations of the symposiums see to present a sound beginning and if adopted, we stand to see real action in the ground very soon.

Artist Fadhl Al-Waheedi to YT:

Art makes life complete



BY MOHAMMED
NO'MAN AL-HAKIMI
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

From Hais that is dipped in pain and privation, the artist Fadhl Ali Al-Waheedi emerged with his wonderful creativity that is inspired by the nature of the desert and its people. The Yemen Times met with him to discuss his work.

Q. What would you be if you were not an artist?

A. For me, art is a part of me as a natural flair as it is in everyone. A deficient person is one who has no creative art in his life. Thus, he is deficient in the formation of his brain cells.

Q. Deficient? How can our life be complete with art?

A. In my paintings, for instance, I talked about the Tihamis' motive for life and the traditions practiced there. For example, the painting I drew of a bride meeting her husband. Many Arabs and Europeans appreciated this portrait and it was published in local and foreign newspapers.

Q. How are Arab setbacks and calamities reflected in your paintings?

A. My portraits talk about Arab conditions... I expressed my feelings about Sabra and Shatila massacre on a portrait. There is a painting that got the first prize in Yemen. This portrait was among my paintings with which I participated in Moscow. So many intellectuals and writers talked about it. I had many press interviews in Moscow in the exhibition held in 1985. I

held in the Arab Cultural Capital for 2004, Sana'a, was the evidence. That exhibition attracted Arabs as well the whole world.

Q. What is the direction of your paintings?

A. My painting is "realism" that the public can understand and probe.

As for the classical school, it was reflected in some expressing portraits about some Arab cases, where we find the Palestinian case on the top being followed by those of Iraq, natural disasters...etc. In those portraits, I put some colors that depict the dead.

Q. Do you find yourself in what you produce?

A. I live my artistic experience with a brush that paints the feelings and emotions around it.

Q. How do you imagine the future of the Yemeni 'brush'?

A. Colors personify all that the society seeks and they express the society itself. Therefore, without any doubt, the future is that of the brush and the painting.

Q. Where do you classify our country among Arab countries in this field?

A. Since the stone ages, Yemeni people created paintings to express themselves, with inscriptions and decorations on walls, rocks and stones. The Yemeni art of painting and geometry is quite unique.

Q. What is the nature of this uniqueness with which you compete internationally?

A. Today it is the most important art of the world as the exhibition

Q. What assures that?

A. The president's care of art is the strongest evidence that art has its own importance that makes it distinguished and prominent from other creative works. This is because the president is aware of the importance of art universally as it depicts history.

Q. Great! How was their interaction with such a profuse creativity?

A. My works are uncountable, but they are imprisoned at home as well as at Hais Tadhamon Club. This is because of lack of care taken of them by the Ministry of Culture. So, my works were sentenced to imprisonment. After my participation with my portraits in Sana'a, I had to sell my wife's gold as well as my motorbike so as to get my paintings back home. Therefore, I packed them on a car used for carrying fish and got them back to 'prison'.

Q. What are your most important exhibitions?

A. My first participations were in the First Youth Camp in 1979. Then, I participated in Amateurs' Club in 1985 where I got the first rank. I stood first in Yemen in the art of painting in the Amateurs' Club. After that, I was nominated to participate in the Universal show in Moscow.

I participated in different Yemeni exhibitions, agricultural and artistic, and gained different token prizes. In addition, while I was studying in Egypt, I participated with some portraits in the exhibition held at Al-

Ahli Club on 23 July as well as in Ahmed Urabie's Exhibition. But the most important participation, for me, was that in the exhibition held in Zabid on historical cities as my participation attracted most of the people in Zabid.

Q. Is it possible to have an artistic creativity without being erudite?

A. I do believe in intellectuality to a great extent. Unless the artist has a great scope of intellectuality in all the aspects of life, then, they will not be able to create for the artist has to be an intellectual and erudite, especially, in psychology. Otherwise, their paintings are not appropriate to the place and time.

Q. What does 'art' mean in people's daily lives?

A. The art of paint has a vast role to play in cultivating and developing talents, especially culturally.

Q. Does the saying "hunger breeds creativity" apply to you?

A. We, in remote areas like Tihama, are not taken care of, because attention is drawn to only a few assigned people in the capital and other main cities. A creative person here has to fight with his limited finances. Here, we find talents are too often consigned to the dustbin. As a result, nobody but those with money can afford to be creative.

Q. Do you have any final comments?

A. I invite H. E. Minister of Culture to visit Tihama to get an idea of the nature and talents of people there. I invite him to have a look at them because he might offer a hand of help. He will definitely find many attractive and surprising things.

Children's perception of democracy must be developed

BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Children's Parliament in Yemen is a unique experience that was initiated to give children the opportunity to learn about democratic concepts.

The Yemen Times forwarded the following questions to Jamal Abdullah Al-Shami, Principal of the Democratic School in Sana'a, to shed the light on the activities of his school and the Children's Parliament.

Q. When was the first Children's Parliament in Yemen founded?

A. It was founded in 2000.

Q. The Children's Parliament in Yemen is a pioneering and unique experience in the Arab region as it attempts to teach democratic concepts to children, do you agree?

A. The Children's Parliament in Yemen is a good initiative that attempts to develop the child's perception of democracy. It gives children the opportunity to practice democracy and to form their parliament according to the electoral law. Children are elected to represent others not on the base of their education or creativity but according to fair polls.

Q. What is the primary goal of this parliament?

A. The parliament aims to raise awareness among children about the democratic transition. It intends to train children and make them aware of their rights.

Q. What are the activities of the Democratic School and does it receive any support from any other organizations?

A. The activities we exercise include all the children from around the

Republic of Yemen. We intend to teach people to enjoy their rights and expression freedoms. The election process was a wonderful achievement, and a number of international and local organizations acknowledged its success.

The Democratic School is a non-governmental organization interested in the rights of children and the practice of democracy. The school never received any direct support from other organizations, and if there is any support, it is reflected in monitoring the election process, the functions of the parliament and the Children's Local Council.

UNICEF, the Canadian Development Program, the American Embassy, and the National Institute for Democracy are some of the organizations that offer such support.

Q. Are there any other activities practiced by the School?

A. The Democratic School has many other activities related to women's rights and it has special projects to be implemented in 2005 such as the Arab Childhood Conference and spreading awareness about women's rights among youths.

We have a partnership with the government in implementing some of the activities and the government often gives us financial support which facilitates the tasks of the school.

Q. What are the most important recommendations of the last childhood conference?

A. The important recommendations of the conference included:

- Forming a committee for human rights and activating the laws that prohibit child labor in the chemical factories and other jobs that put children at risk.

- Forming an education committee that is responsible for making education compulsory as well as free.

Bordering Saudi Arabia

Sadah's rich history, current challenges

BY IRENA KNEHTL
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The Yemeni geographer AlHamdani writes about the Yemeni region of Sadah as having among the best wadis, horses, fruits, grapes and animals in the region. It's also known to have some of the most fertile lands in Yemen.

History

The Yemeni geographer Hassan AlHamdani (ca 900 AD) writes much about the city of Sadah and its surrounding. From him, we now that Sadah used to be known as Yemeni region well before Islam.

He writes further that Sadah lies in the middle of Qaraz region. Qaraz is an Accacia tree from which juice and the gum "Arabicum" used to be extracted.

And finally it is being said that in the surrounding of Sadah are some of the best wadis with horses, fruits, grapes, and much animals. AlHamdani's writing are the earliest recordings about Sadah region.

The city itself was built on a spot of a pre-Islamic Yemeni kingdom. Sadah used to be of strategic and political importance to the Yemeni pre-Islamic Kingdom of Main, a role the Governorate of Sadah continues to play for modern Republic of Yemen.

Next to the city of Sadah begins the opening of Wadi Najran, which runs from west to east and flows into Empty Quarter. The region is a natural road leading to the north.

Lying as it does on a plateau at some 2000 m high, Sadah used to be in the past an ideal meeting point for caravans which arrived from ancient Marib and Main and then proceeded to the north. Since ancient times gold and iron mines were reported to be found in the region. The region of Sadah has been continually inhabited over two thousand years.

The Islamic history of Sadah starts in 897, when Imam Yahya Ibn Hussein AlHadri made Sadah his capital. At the rise of Islam, the Yemeni province Sadah was a flourishing trade center.

The region is also known for its castles, palaces, ancient watch towers along the "pilgrimage route". The best known ancient route passing through the region of Sadah used to be the frankincense trail, and in Islam the Yemeni pilgrimage or Haj route.

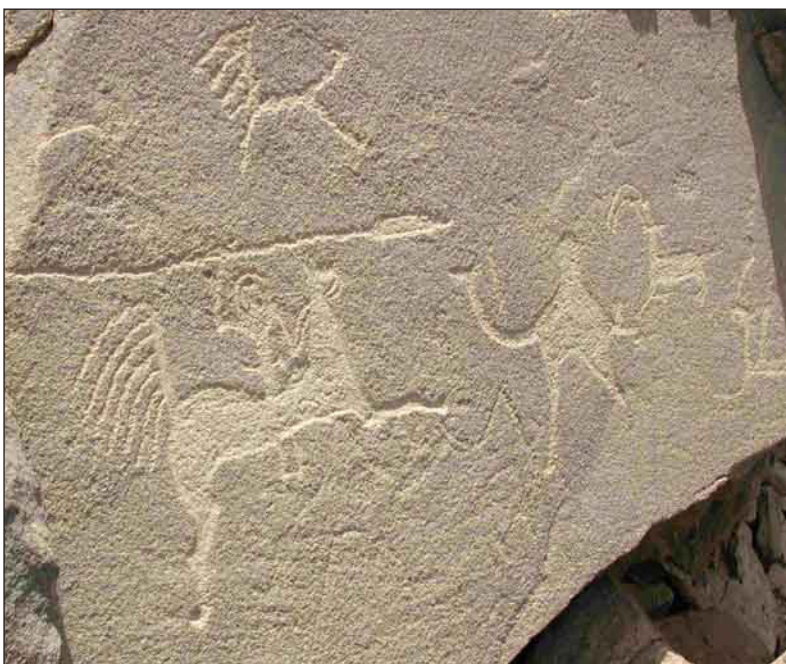
Several pre-Islamic and early Islamic documented sites consist of stone structures, cairn, tumuli, camping stations, praying places, mosques, water reservoir, and wells, some of these are still in use.

Also rock paintings and graffiti showing human and animal figures. They suggest that the route was probably established during First Millennium B.C. and continued to be used, both for trade and pilgrimage from pre-Islamic period well into the late Islamic period.

Sadah today

The main road between Sanaa to Sadah passes through a stony desert-like region scattered with green, irrigated fields, and with watch-towers and grain stores dotting the landscape.

Past Khamir and Huth, the road turning west leads towards the broad Wadi Lissan. North of Huth, the main road toward the city of Sadah continues through Al-Harf crossing a desolate - but beautiful - landscape of lime stone pavements pierced by volcanic stones. In the mud walled villages on both sides of the road many of the houses are painted with ochre stripes.



Settlements in this area would be constructed where seasonal rains or ground water can sustain cultivation and are traditionally build of zabur, layers of coarse clay mud, and libn, sun dried bricks, both derived from alluvial soil.

The color of the houses thus harmonizes with the countryside around. The clean white and dozens of vivid colors that make the regions home so distinctive, have long been prepared by women.

In the traditional house, women are responsible for plastering and painting of walls, corridors, and ceiling after men finish building them. An uniquely expressive interiors, and elaborate geometric patterns, and color combinations.

Traditional architecture of Sadah region is characterized by the four to six storied houses, palaces and castles build with mud. The thick walls are built with mud, while the narrow doors and high window were made for the purpose of security and defense, and to keep the temperature moderate throughout the year.

The historic city

The administrative center of this Yemeni governorate is a historic city, 243 km north of Sana'a, situated on a green and fertile plain, an important tourist site. It lies 2261 m high above sea level.

Named AlJuma in the past, the historic city of Sadah, is located at the foot of Thalmas mountain, on which is an unconquered castle. The historic city of Sadah is surrounded by a fortified wall.

Built in 16th century, it has 52 towers and four gates, Najran, Swedan, Mansourah and Hamdan. The wall is 3.326 m long and 8 m high, inside the wall are 16 staircases. The Al-Hadi mosque built in 9th century is considered among the oldest and most beautiful historic mosques in Yemen. It includes tombs, valuable manuscripts and books.

Interesting to see is also the near by Islamic cemetery, many graves have Quranic and poetical verses.

The city today seems as freshly scented like a light mountain breeze carrying the scent of perfumes. As in the past the Sadah market used to be the place where members of different tribes and caravans met not only for trade, but also to discuss crops, business prospects, politics and marriage.

Even today it retains these social and economic functions, though adopted to modern economy. A bustle of cars, pick up trucks, and people, all of which had been converging since the end of dawn prayers. In the market of Sadah, the most eye-catching are the people from north of Sadah, where man often wear bunches or garlands of sweet - smelling flowers about their heads.

Their bright, multicolored sarongs like futta is a colorful contrast. Silver jewelry, rings, amber necklaces, heavy bracelets, enormous anklets, herbal medicine, the markets are organized by trades and loosely arranged in section, as it has been since time immemorial.

Merchants of vegetables, fruits, livestock, clothes, shoes, toys, candy and a variety of local tailored coats of goat and lambs wool. Merchants sitting cross - legged next to each other, daggers, silver jewelry, straw baskets woven from palm fronds, decorated with geometric design with natural dyes of red, turquoise, and burgundy.

Welcome Cardemon! Without weight, Without Measurement! This is how guests are greeted in this Yemeni region. Scattered around Sadah but united by common architectural style of the region, surrounded by gardens of grapes, pomegranates, fruits are some beautiful villages, in particular, Al-Talh, AlAbdainn

and Rabban.

Villages dotted with brightly white painted mud-brick sky scraper houses are an attractive architectural feature of this Yemeni region. It is mentioned in writings that besides an important trading center, the Sadah region is an important agricultural area, as evident from the dams, and a wells and a well developed irrigation systems.

The Sadah plateau is among the most fertile in Yemen with farmers growing black grapes, pomegranates, peaches, apricots, figs and others fruits. With an altitude of 1800 m above the sea level, it is one of the highest Yemeni flatlands where fruit is grown. Eastern Sadah, in particular, has high mountains and inner deserts with a number of fertile wadis flowing to Empty quarter desert.

The Sadah region has long been known manufacturing center for good quality iron works, in particular agricultural tools, ploughs, leather tanning tools. But also utensils from stone, palm leaves, and minting of coins.

Tribes

Upper Yemen is dominated by a series of major tribes. With the exception of Khawlan b. Amir, five tribes around Sadah, most of these belong to one or other of two famous Yemeni tribal confederations Hashid or Bakil. The tribes were an important source of armed strength throughout the Islamic period and they remain so today.

The tribesmen are mainly villagers, who grow sorghum, barley and wheat by "dry" (rain - fed) cultivation. On the other hand there are a few areas of cash-crop cultivation on the plateau, notably, the grape plots of the Sadah region.

Most tribesmen, though are, grain farmers, who produce largely for their own use. However, to assess the productive potential of the land is not easy. Plainly, however, we are not, and never were, dealing with the kind of surplus production to be found in Lower Yemen and the West.

Land, however, has gone out production.

The region of Sadah has some of the most fertile land in Yemen. It used to have sufficient water supply from its relatively rainy season and large under ground reservoir. The people of Sadah have lived off their farm and animals, and have enjoyed semi-independent lives and a very loose social and political structure for centuries.

Modern challenges

The challenges at hand are how to play a role and contribute to local, national and in turn regional economy and how to make a difference. Along with the opportunities generated by modernization and globalization some challenges that must be faced, the loss of traditional markets, increased competitions from imported goods, changing attitudes towards traditional life styles and modes of productions along with rapidly evolving cultural expectations have lead to a decline in traditional crafts and often social status.

The challenge here is working hand in hand to take advantage of emerging commercial opportunities, in particular, for traditional crafts, representing this regions identity and originality, that of an Arab Islamic identity, and pass such skills to future generations with pride.

The challenge here is to make modern times an instrument of opportunity and inclusion, and not fear and insecurity. Rural areas such as Sadah need first to think about quality and quantity of food supply, road for commerce, improved method for irrigation.

Further building of essential infrastructure, provision of services, such as electricity, health and education in order to make life more comfortable. They need capital for packaging plants for their fruits and dates and other productive capacities.

To explore and tape domestic and regional markets for their fruits and vegetables.

To endure harsh times - or even benefit from them - it is essential to tape that deepest stratum of personal identity, that which is deeper even than fate, and which is incorruptible even by harshest realities.

It is essential in order words, to tape the well spring of human endurance: hope. And to keep in mind that failure - the final taboo in modern society - is but one part of the inevitable cycle of life for those who dare to live full and completely. Somewhere beneath the distress and loss, is a reserve of strength that has been building for this kind of opportunity enabling to focus on positive.

Local government

In this respect the local government experiment in this Yemeni region should be viewed as important success. It aims to further improve governance and it is working towards possibilities of opportunities and further provision of basic services.

The governorate of Sadah has been increasingly covered by a network of modern roads, out of which the most important will be the completion of Razih ring road.

It will enable further opening of economic opportunities for the Sadah governorate.

The programs include a food security program, a small scale project program, a micro irrigation scheme program, and the important water supply project for the city of Sadah.

A program for further provision of electricity, communication, health and educational facilities for the governorate as a whole.

Particular stress and importance is given to technical training programs, and educational and training program for women.

Exploratory works are being carried out at Huraigah zone, in the northern part of the governorate for gold, nickel, copper and cobalt ores. It will be further important to explore economic feasibility for possible mining and investment.

The region has excellent tourism potential, in particular for cultural tourism.

Investment opportunities for innovative local and foreign investors thus lie in the fields of communication, transport and telecommunication, tourism and tourism services, mineral exploration. In upgrading of husbandry, packaging plants for fruits and dates, and other productive capacities.

Sadah governorate at a glance

- The Yemeni Governorate Sadah lies in the north of Republic of Yemen. It is bordering on Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The administrative center of the governorate is the historic city of Sadah, 243 km north from Sanaa.

- The relief of the Sadah governorate is varied, as is its population. Mountains, towns, villages, plains, glass lands at the eastern part of the governorate. High mountains to the north and west, such as Khawlan, Baqim, and Razih mountain (2.800) that are linked to the Jumah mountain chain, the Hamdan mountain range.

- Several wadis intersect the mountains, of which the most important are wadi Saqain, wadi Nushour, wadi Badr, wadi Dhamad and Alaf and wadi Abdayn. There are remains of Himyrite dam which was in use up to 9th century AD. The western chain of mountains from the south starts with mountains of Khawlan Bim Amir (2800m), AlKarb, AlMuftah, Marran, AlJomah, Haydan, Wair, AlManar and Haysh mountain.

What to see

- The historic walled city of Sadah, one of the most beautiful historic cities of Yemen

- A number of interesting forts, such as AlSinara, Sama fort, Tulmus fort and AlAba fort, Razih fortress and Humrun to the north west.

- Um Lailah mountain, some 20 km off Sadah, which probably used to be an off splinter of the caravan road Aden-Sanaa-Sadah-Mecca-Gaza is the most important of the forts and castles. This significant archeological site contains stone paved roads, reservoir, grain stores, and defense construction such as towers and fortified walls. There is only one road leading to the fortified city, and a breath taking scenery awaits the visitor.

- A trip to Razih mountain is rewarding for its breath taking scenery.

- Sadah is also an area, which boasts a large collection of ancient rock paintings and signs dating back to hunters gatherers society. In the mountains area caves and rocks, full of inscriptions and paintings of goats, hounds, cows, snakes, plant and geometrical shapes. The two areas that are rich in painting and rocks are Al-Khaza, some 15th km to the north - west of Sadah, Om Lailah and Musalhaqat, 20 km to the north west of Sadah.

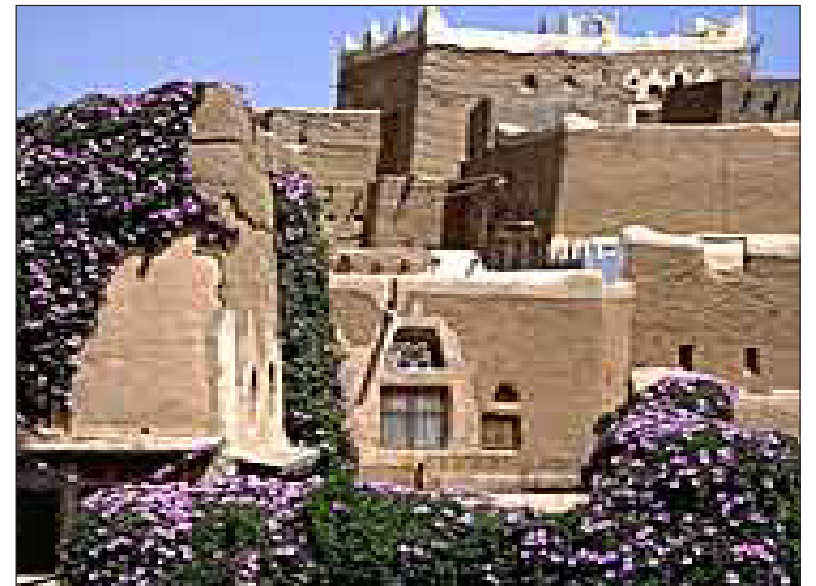
- The large number of discovered inscriptions suggest that the region was an important station for trade of caravans. A number of rock art painting date from 7000 B.C. to the early Islamic period. As result of investigation we now have important information of the life style of the people of that period, such as dog was domesti-

cated at that time. While camels, cows, goats and ostriches were hunted by long lances and with bow and arrow.

- Al-Kazain rock graveyard, some 15 km north west of Sadah carved in the mountain. It has a square door leading to rooms, which are about 20 square meters each. The rooms are similar to those at Shibam Kawbakan. And a 8 m deep and 4 m wide reservoir.

- Other places worth visiting in the Sadah governorate are Haidan Baqim, Wadi Nashurm, Razeh mountain,

Waela Sehra, Ghuraz and AlBuqa
- A number of markets are held at different parts of the Sadah governorate on different days. The largest at AlTal, a 10 km ride to the north of Sadah held normally every Saturday.
- The Sadah governorate is also famed for art, music, folklore, oral poetry, silver jewelry and handicrafts
- In year 2000 the Northern border agreement with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was signed. Al-Buqa is the border crossing with Saudi Arabia, located north east of Sadah.



Hingis beaten in three sets on Comeback

PATTAYA (Reuters) - Former world number one Martina Hingis slumped to a 1-6, 6-2, 6-2 defeat by Germany's Marlene Weingartner on her comeback on Tuesday from two years out with an ankle injury.

The 24-year-old Swiss was seeking a low-key event in which to test her ability to return to the WTA Tour and was on top for the first set against a player ranked 73 in the world.

However, Hingis's service began to deteriorate in the second set and her opponent took advantage of a series of lightweight returns.

In the third set, an increasingly listless Hingis fell behind 1-0 with a netted double-handed backhand and a blistering backhand winner down the line gave Weingartner a further break for 4-1. A netted Hingis forehand ended her hopes of victory.

At 16, Hingis was on top of the world, the youngest winner of a grand slam last century, the youngest world number one and the holder of the Australian, Wimbledon and U.S. Open titles.

She compensated for her lack of height with superb court craft, great timing and an indomitable will.

The advent of the powerful Williams sisters punctured Hingis's dominance and her decline began. She won the last of her five grand slam singles titles at the 1999 Australian Open.

In 2001 she sued Italian sportswear



Former world number one Martina Hingis of Switzerland serves to Germany's Marlene Weingartner during their first round match at the Volvo Women's Open in Pattaya, Thailand Feb. 1. Hingis was playing in her first WTA Tour event in more than two years, after being sidelined by severe ankle injuries. Weingartner defeated Hingis 1-6, 6-2, 6-2. Reuters

company Sergio Tacchini, saying their shoes had damaged her feet.

Operations on her ankles in October 2001 and May 2002 led her to withdraw from the sport. Before the Pattaya tournament her last match had been in Filderstadt, Germany, in late 2002.

TOTAL CONTROL
On Tuesday, Weingartner failed to hold serve in the opening set and lost it on her third double-fault. Hingis showed a few strokes of genuine class and appeared in total control.

However, the weak link of Hingis's game was her serve and it became an increasing liability as the match progressed.

A second serve return gave Weingartner a break for 1-0 in the second set and although Hingis immediately leveled with a cross-court backhand winner, the match began to turn.

Leading 2-1, Hingis went up 40-0 on Weingartner's serve by hitting a smash so hard that it removed several letters of her opponent's name on the scoreboard.

Hingis then lost nine of the next 10 points to go behind 3-2 and she never recovered.

Looking slow against an opponent growing in confidence and aggression, Hingis barely competed for the remainder of the match. Her serve offered no threat at all, and many of the rallies ended in listless errors.

"Without referring to an epidemic situation, this proves that THG was not a one-off. This new substance has been discovered so quickly after THG, it's because we learned some lessons from the THG story," he said.

LONDON (Reuters) - Scientists have discovered a second steroid especially designed to evade drug testers, anti-doping officials said on Tuesday.

"Following the THG story, this is the second designer steroid we have found," World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) scientific director Olivier Rabin said in a teleconference from Montreal.

"We believe this was created purely for doping in sport."

Several leading track athletes, including double world sprint champion Kelli White and Britain's European 100 meters champion Dwain Chambers, have been banned after THG (tetrahydrogestrinone) was discovered in 2003.

Rabin said a desoxy-methyl-testosterone (DMT) had been discovered after an anonymous tipoff and a test had been developed.

Scientists discover another designer steroid

Owens practices for first time since surgery

RALEIGH, North Carolina (Reuters) - Philadelphia Eagles receiver Terrell Owens practiced with his team for the first time since undergoing ankle surgery last month, in a Super Bowl workout at Jacksonville, Florida, Monday.

"We limited what he did, but he did it well," Eagles coach Andy Reid said at a news conference.

"He moved around pretty good. We'll see how he continues here, how he feels tomorrow morning and how he continues throughout the week."

Overall, Owens participated in less than a third of Monday's practice, Reid added.

The All-Pro receiver has vowed to play in Sunday's Super Bowl XXXIX against the defending champion New England Patriots although his surgeon has refused to clear him.

Owens had surgery on a severely sprained right ankle on December 22 and missed the National Football Conference divisional playoff win over the Minnesota Vikings and championship game victory over the Atlanta Falcons.

Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb said Owens "did a good job" Monday.

"He looks good," McNabb told the team's Web Site.

"You have to work him in slowly but he did an excellent job."



Philadelphia Eagles injured wide receiver Terrell Owens trains during the team's Super Bowl practice in Jacksonville, Florida, Jan. 31. Owens practiced with his team for the first time since undergoing ankle surgery last month. The Eagles will play the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XXXIX on Feb. 6. Reuters

Former French international striker Dugarry retires

PARIS, Feb 1 (Reuters) - Former French international striker Christophe Dugarry has retired.

Dugarry, who helped France win the World Cup seven years ago as well as the 2000 European title, is the eighth member from the 1998 generation to retire.

Last month, midfielder Emmanuel Petit, who had been without a club since the start of the season, also quit.

"I made up my mind about four or five days ago," Dugarry, 32, was quoted as saying by sports daily L'Equipe.

"Benfica offered to sign me but I didn't feel like going there to start all over again even if it was interesting from a financial point of view."

Despite 55 caps for France over a 15-year career, Dugarry was never considered an automatic choice and was often booed by the fans.

He said: "I've spent eight years playing for France and it has

always been tough. I never felt comfortable there."

Dugarry made his international debut in a 1-0 victory over Australia 1994 and headed home his country's opening goal in the 3-0 win over South Africa at the World Cup finals in 1998.

He picked a thigh injury and returned only in time for the final against Brazil in Paris.

Dugarry said: "I think I have been really lucky during my career. I have played alongside the best player in the world. I'm just like those who partnered Maradona. I played with (Zinedine) Zidane. That was my good fortune."

In a rollercoaster career, Dugarry who started at Girondins Bordeaux in 1988, played for AC Milan, Barcelona, Olympique Marseille, Birmingham City and Qatar Sports Club.

He last played for his country in the 2002 World Cup finals when France failed to go through the first round.

Want Best Enjoyment Of Food In Town?
Then Go To Beijing Cuisine!!

WELCOME

Outside Catering, Take Away, Dining-In Services Available

Tel: 01-440302, 77448825 Fax: 01-440303
http://www.pinyad.com Email: pinyad@163.com

INTERNATIONAL BANK OF YEMEN بنك اليمن الدولي

PERSONAL LOAN SCHEME

NEED A CASH ADVANCE ?

Easy application and the cash will be in your account within 6 hours !

Buy the things you have always dreamt of !

To enable you acquire the things you need, the International Bank of Yemen provides you with the Personal Loan Scheme which allows employees of companies, with prior arrangement with the Bank, to get Loan.

On Eligibility:

- The loan is disbursed to you within 6 hours after your completing the documents.
- Option to apply for another loan after repaying 50% of your loan.
- Receive IBY debit card at no cost to use our ATM or the Point of Sale at any time.
- Receive different kind of credit cards such as Visa, Master, Diners Club and American Express after meeting the conditions.

Fore more information call (01- 407030) we will be glad to serve you.

Arsenal look to end Man Utd hoodoo

LONDON (Reuters) - Champions Arsenal will look for revenge against Manchester United this week when the clubs renew one of the bitterest rivalries in the game.

Two nights of Premier League action begin on Tuesday with Arsenal hoping to end a run of painful defeats by Alex Ferguson's side in a showcase meeting at Highbury.

It will also be a chance to set aside some of the ill-feelings stirred up by past meetings, most recently in the so-called Battle of the Buffet at Old Trafford in October.

As if extra spice was needed, the game would also give the winners a valuable edge in the race to finish second behind runaway title favourites Chelsea and claim the other automatic place in next season's Champions League.

With second-placed Arsenal just a point ahead of United, a win for Arsene Wenger's side would give them a useful cushion, while defeat would deal a punishing body blow to team morale.

Arsenal will certainly want to avenge their disappointments over the past two seasons at the hands of the FA Cup holders.

United's 2-0 victory in October ended Arsenal's record 49-match unbeaten

league run and triggered a mini-crisis in which Wenger's men won only three of their next 10 games.

Off the pitch at Old Trafford, Ferguson was reportedly pelted with pizza in the players' tunnel, sparking a furore that was re-ignited recently by the United manager.

Equally painful was Arsenal's FA Cup semi-final defeat last season by United at Villa Park, dashing the north Londoners' hopes of lifting the trophy in three consecutive seasons.

United level

That tie came only a week after United had denied Arsenal a morale-boosting victory in the league at Highbury with Louis Saha's late equaliser in a 1-1 draw.

Six months earlier, the two sides were at loggerheads in a bad-tempered 0-0 draw at Old Trafford, which led to an ugly fracas and the subsequent banning of four Arsenal players and a 175,000 pounds fine for their club.

Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira was sent off, while a missed late penalty by United's Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy kept Arsenal's then fledgling unbeaten run intact.

Given the recent history between the sides, which also includes a few notable

spats between their respective managers, it will not be a game for the faint-hearted.

However, the likes of Arsenal striker Thierry Henry and United forward Wayne Rooney, who scored two stunning goals in Saturday's 3-0 FA Cup win over Middlesbrough, should also mean there will be no shortage of skill either.

The game will be of passing interest to Chelsea, whose 10-point lead at the top would rise to 12 if there was a deadlock at Highbury on Tuesday followed by a win for Jose Mourinho's men at Blackburn Rovers the next day.

Certainly, everything has been falling into place for Chelsea this season.

Along with their commanding lead at the top, Chelsea are through to the FA Cup fifth round, the knockout stages of the Champions League and the League Cup final, where they are strongly favoured to beat Liverpool on February 27.

Fourth-placed Everton are at home to relegation battlers Norwich City on Wednesday and should keep Merseyside rivals Liverpool at a safe seven-point distance in the race for the final slot in next season's Champions League qualifiers.

Liverpool are away to Charlton Athletic on Tuesday.

NBA Wrap: Spurs Silence SuperSonics



Oston Celtics Raef LaFrenz (top) and Houston Rockets Ryan Bowan go to the floor after a loose ball in fourth quarter NBA action in Boston, Jan. 31. The Rockets won 97-94. Reuters

TORONTO (Reuters) - Manu Ginobili poured in 23 points and Tim Duncan contributed 21 points and 10 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs eased to a 103-84 win over the Seattle SuperSonics on Monday, reclaiming the league's best record.

With the Phoenix Suns idle, the Spurs seized their chance to go top of the overall standings by posting their seventh win in eight games to improve their record to 37-10.

Seattle played without leading scorer Ray Allen, who was sidelined with the flu and the SuperSonics struggled offensively. Antonio Daniels, Vladimir Radmanovic and Ronald Murray each scoring 13 points.

The SuperSonics were also missing coach Nate McMillan, who returned home to Raleigh, North Carolina following his mother's death.

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson returned from a shoulder injury to score 27 points and Kyle Korver hit a jump shot with six seconds to play, lifting the 76ers to 89-88 win over the slumping Indiana Pacers.

Korver finished with 17 points but his last two were the most important, taking a feed from Iverson then nailing his shot to condemn the Pacers to a season-high fifth straight loss.

After missing three games with a strained rotator cuff, Iverson, the NBA's leading scorer, was quickly back in charge adding nine rebounds and eight assists to his night's work.

Stephen Jackson, back in form after serving a 30-game suspension for brawling with Detroit Pistons fans, had a season-high 24 points for the Pacers while Jermaine O'Neal added 21 and 10

rebounds. In Atlanta, Antoine Walker nailed a fade away jumper with two seconds remaining to give the Hawks a shock 80-79 victory over the Orlando Magic.

Walker, who sank just three of his first 12 shots, finished with 12 points while Tony Delk contributed 17 and Al Harrington 16 to the Hawks' cause, giving the Eastern Conference cellar dwellers (9-34) a rare win.

In Boston, Yao Ming scored 23 points and Jon Barry added 17, including 15 in the fourth quarter, powering the Houston Rockets past the Celtics 97-94.

Trailing by 16 points, the Celtics rallied to pull within a point but could not complete the comeback, dropping out of first place in the weak Atlantic Division.

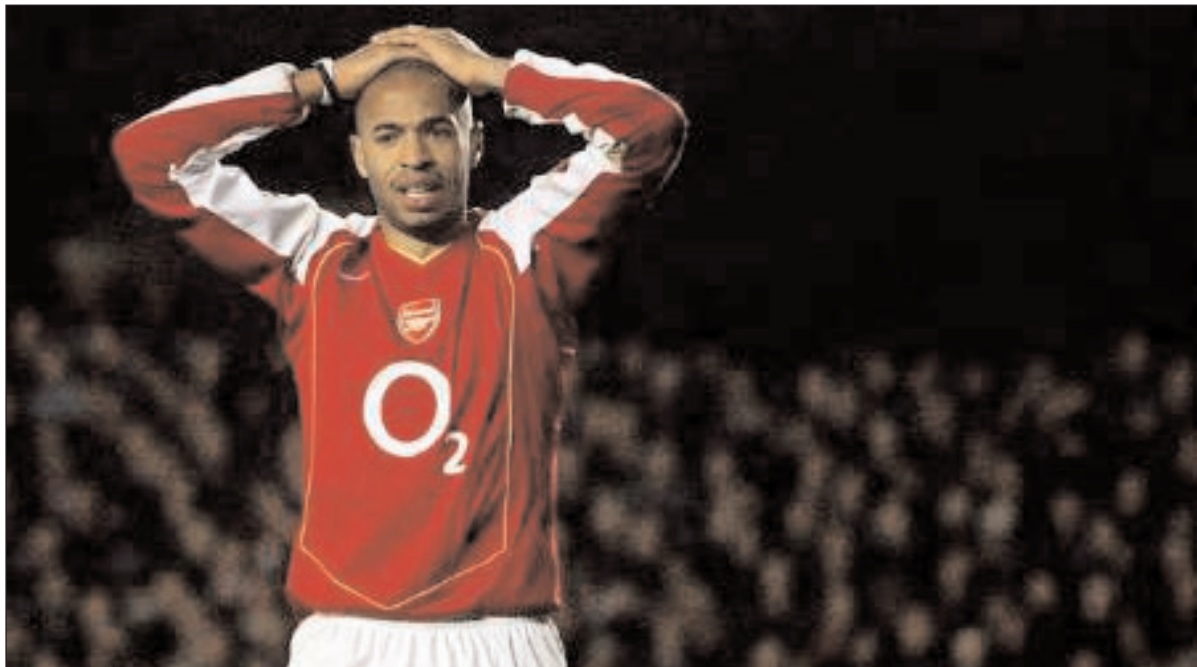
Ricky Davis paced the Celtics with a game-high 24 points and Paul Pierce added 22 in a losing effort.

In New Orleans, Lorenzo Wright and Stormile Swift each potted 19 points the Memphis Grizzlies eased past the last place Hornets 98-91

With all-star forward and leading scorer Pau Gasol and James Posey on the injury list, the Grizzlies produced a balance team effort getting double figure performances from six players to post their eighth win in 10 games.

In Los Angeles, Elton Brand scored 24 points and Bobby Simmons and Chris Kaman each had a double-double as the Clippers sailed past the struggling New York Knicks 96-89.

Kaman had 18 points and 10 rebounds while Simmons hit for 15 points and added another 10 rebounds.



Champions Arsenal will look for revenge against Manchester United this week when the clubs renew one of the bitterest rivalries in the game. Arsenal's Thierry Henry reacts after missing a shot at goal against Manchester City during their Premier League soccer match at Highbury, January 4. The match was drawn 1-1. REUTERS

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY BY Eugenia

<p>Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19) You'll have plenty of chances to show your worth today. The coast is clear, and if you are confident, you will get your point across and grab the attention of someone interesting.</p>	<p>Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22) You will have plenty of chances to let someone you care about know exactly how you feel, so don't chicken out. It's time to lay your cards on the table so that you can move forward.</p>	<p>Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22) You will get the recognition you've been waiting for if you present your ideas. Both business and personal partners will be accommodating and helpful. Focus on your goals.</p>	<p>Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19) You should be putting everything you've got into work and getting ahead. Someone in your personal life may try to hold you back. You have to act on your own instincts and knowledge.</p>
<p>Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20) You may want to watch what you say today. You are likely to start a small feud unintentionally. Work by yourself and you will get far more accomplished. Someone will oppose your ideas.</p>	<p>Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22) You've been too much on the go and have too much at stake. Take a second look before you make a mistake that you can't reverse. Time is on your side so don't rush. Secrets may be revealed.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21) What you see and what you get will be two different things. Don't be fooled by someone who is making extravagant promises. Hard work is what will pay off in the end.</p>	<p>Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18) You may be emotionally drained because someone has been playing games with you. Don't let your heart rule your head, or you will end up making the same mistake over again.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20) You have the drive and the ability to be sensational in all that you do. Love and advancement are evident. A unique proposal will be presented that you won't want to miss.</p>	<p>Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22) There won't be too much that you can do about the changes going on around you, but you can hold tight and not instigate any additional moves. Someone engaging will enter your world.</p>	<p>Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21) Nothing will slow you down or hold you back today. New relationships will develop, and old ones will play an important role in the people you meet. Fit as much in as possible.</p>	<p>Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20) There is so much going on in secret that it is hard for you to know where you stand. Ask direct questions and don't give up until you are satisfied with what you hear. You can get ahead.</p>

Derivation
الإشتقاق
ألعاب وتطبيقات لغوية للعلماء والباحثين

Noun	الاسم	Adjective	الصفة
خشب	wood	خشب	wood
ضباب	fog	ضبابي	foggy
علو	height	علو	height
طول	length	طول	length
قوة	strength	قوة	strength
شمس	sun	شمسي	sunny
مطر	rain	مطر	rain

بيانات المتماثل
الاسم:
الجنس:
العدد:
المدينة:

Ans & Winner contest : 35
1. Astronaut / 2. Classroom
3. Presses / 4. Strength
Omar AbdulSalam

Contest No. (36) مسابقة رقم
إعداد معهد الفاروق للغات والكمبيوتر
Prepared by Al-Farouk Institute of Languages & Computer
الممثل الوحيد لكليات سانت جيلز ومركز كسفورد في كل من بريطانيا وأمريكا
The Sole Representative of Oxford L.C & ST.Giles Colleges UK&USA
إختبر في معهد الفاروق واحصل على شهادته من بريطانيا معتمدة دولياً
Take your exam at Al-Farouk & obtain your certificate from Britain (Sana'a Hael St. Tel: 213711)

1. Get ride of Winner will get a present
2. Working by itself
3. Watch closely
4. Gets better
الفائز بالرعة سيحصل على جائزة

اقطع كويون المسابقة وارسله عبر الفاكس مع الإجابة . (معهد الفاروق صنعاً - تلفون 213711 فاكس 213562 شارع مانل المدخل الفرعي مقابل مجمعات الجابري) * آخر موعد لاستلام الإجابات موبوم الثلاثاء من كل أسبوع
Website: WWW.alfaroukinst.netfirms.com Email: alfarouk26@hotmail.com

**CLASSIFIED
ADVERTISEMENTS
PAGE**

من خدماتنا:
One of our Services:

Stallion Security & Safety Services Ltd.

ستاليون لخدمات الأمن والسلامة المحدودة

Fire Alarm System
نظومة إنذار وحريق

Tel: 967 1 440418/196 Fax: 440 415
Showroom Tel: 217580 Fax: 217 579
P.O. Box: 18916 Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Email: stallion@y.net.ye
www.stallionsecurity.com

Sofia makes difference in orphans' lives

By SHAKER AL-MOLSI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a world full of hardship, it is great to find people so concerned with other people, caring for them and identifying with them. It is heartening to hear then that a five-year old child, Sofia, has initiated a campaign to help orphans.

"She kept complaining about the misery of orphans," her father said. Being his only child, Mr. Claroni Mauro, an Italian who came to Yemen last month along with his friend Bernesi Luca, followed his daughter's demands.

"I started a campaign of fund-raising, I set up what I called the Sofia Project, rallying as many of my colleagues as I could. We went across local districts in Italy collecting donations in cash and in kind. We gathered all articles

including pens, books, drawings, etc." His visit to Yemen last January was part of his trip, which included also Mali, and Ethiopia.

"The Sofia Program focuses on poor countries and those suffering from civil wars. I know there are many other needy areas in the world, but there are limitations."

Both visitors went to the Sana'a Orphanage House and another in Mukalla. "I wanted to see wide smiles on orphans' faces. This pleased me and I knew it would please my daughter seeing photos back at home. We distributed pens, books, and foodstuff. Mukalla Orphanage got \$1200 and Somali refugee orphans got \$1500."

Asked why he did simply channel his efforts through existing orphan-sponsoring establishments, such as the



Sofia, initiator of the project

Sana'a International Rahma Organization, Mr. Mauro answered that he did not have information about them. "Before we came here,

we had tried to contact the Yemeni consulate in Italy. We got no response. People in Mali were very organized. They had sent me all information needed before I arrived. I knew while I was in Italy the locations of orphanages and their needs. I was amazed at the neatness of the rooms and the environment in there. The conditions resembled those in Europe and I am particularly satisfied with what I saw in Mukalla."

The pair traveled across many Yemeni districts reaching as far northward as Sa'ada, where they saw children shouting for pens and books. They came back through Al-Mahweet, Wadi Thula, Amran, Marib, Tarim, Seyon, and Mukalla.

As a tourist, Mr. Mauro commented that Yemen has historic attractions but the highways are riddled with checkpoints. "There are 12 checkpoints between Sana'a and Marib."

The future plans of Sofia Project intend to cover other countries such as Vietnam, and New Guinea. It has already donated 1500 euros for tsunami-hit countries through the UNICEF.

Though the gesture of Sofia Project is symbolic in nature because of its modest capacities, it is significant. It reminds people of their responsibility to reduce the suffering of the enormous number of orphans who live in inhumane conditions.



Orphans holding presents as they pose for a picture with Mr. Claroni Mauro (L) & Mr. Bernesi Luca

Yemeni costumes: diversity and originality

By YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni society is famous for the diversity of its heritage, especially the traditional clothes with distinctive colors and designs. They are a manifestation of the society's culture, ideology and identity.

Costumes' designs, embroidery and drawings play a significant role in articulating the community's tastes, customs and traditions.

The diversity of traditional clothes and costumes in Yemen has been attributed to the diversity of the country's geographical regions, plants, animals and raw materials.

The clothing of the mountain regions are known for the good quality of the wools, cottons, and silks used. In these areas, color is used widely, sometimes with the addition of some coins or other pieces of metal or gemstones. The embroidery also appears only on the front side and the end of sleeves. It is the opposite of what is done in the middle heights areas, where the embroidery extends to involve the majority of the dress.

The costumes of Tihama and coastal plains are distinguished



Yemeni girls in colorful traditional dresses

with their soft and delicate cottons. In these areas, costumes do not cover the entire body, the neck opening is wide, and is either rectangular or square in shape. There is usually another dress that is worn on top of this one when going out of the house - a shirt of cotton designed as a square piece of cloth to be hung over the body with very wide sleeves.

Women's costumes in these areas contain embroidery is of

straight lines and different geometrical shapes, with the front side before the knee shorter than the back part. Women in some plain areas wear various silky scarves on which embroidery is used with glittering lines.

Gemstones often complete the costumes' beauty, showcasing the magic of the handcraft and beauty of the embroidery with stones such as agate, ruby, pearls, amber, coral, and emerald.

OGEC

ORIENTAL GEOLOGICAL ENGINEERING COMPANY

- ★ Water well drilling & testing
- ★ Water supply system design & construction
- ★ Groundwater investigation
- ★ Geological exploration
- ★ Fuel & water storage tanks
- ★ Water treatment, reservoirs & distribution system
- ★ Geotechnical investigation
- ★ Soil and rock tests
- ★ Soil improvement & pile foundation
- ★ Groundwater dewatering
- ★ Applied surveying & mapping
- ★ Sewage treatment plants & collection networks
- ★ Geophysical surveying & well logging

Aden Fax: 02-232313 Sana'a Fax: 01-263603
E-mail: zwx001@sohu.com

دار الإدارة للتدريب
CMT House Consultancy, Management and Training

AMA Certificates

Finance And Accounting Human Resource Manufacturing Management Sales & Marketing Customer Satisfaction General Management

Business English Courses

Elementary Pre-Intermediate, Part A & B Intermediate, Part A & B Upper-Intermediate, Part A & B

CMT House Certificates (Arabic)

ICDL Courses Secretary IT Marketing IT Accounting IT (Book Keeping)

Learn from the experts

P.O.Box: 19268, Sana'a, Republic Of Yemen.
Khartoom (Mujahed) Street, next to Al-Basha Supermarket.
Tel: 967-(0)1-513648 Fax: 967-(0)1-513649
E-Mail: Info@cmthouse.com Web Site: www.cmthouse.com

NOKIA 6630

الفهد

سرعة الجيل الثالث مع Series 60
WCDMA+EDGE
محملة كاميرا 1.3 Megapixel
محملة كاميرا 1.23 Megapixel
تقريباً 1200
تقريباً 1200
تقريباً 1200
تقريباً 1200

73 11 33 55
اتصل على هذا الرقم
للمزيد من تفاصيل نوكيا

NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE