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Terrorists get ... Death penalties

BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Two Yemeni terrorists were sentenced to death in a Sana'a court Saturday.

The Sana'a Counter-Terrorism Appeal court also jailed an additional 13 al-Qaeda militants.

The convicted terrorists were accused of a range of crimes, including bombing the French oil tanker Limburg, plotting to blow up five Western embassies and plotting to assassinate the US ambassador, plus other attacks and terrorist operations in Yemen.

The court, led by Judge Saeed al-Qatta sentenced, Fawaz al-Rabee and convict Hizam Saleh Mujali to death. Al-Rabee had previously been sentenced to 10 years.

They were convicted of killing a soldier Hameed Khasroof, and pledging to kill Americans.

The court raised from 10 to 15 years the jail terms for Omar Saeed Jarallah and Fawzi al-Hababi.

It endorsed the 10 years jail terms for Mohammed Saeed Ali al-Amari, Fawzi Yahia al-Hababi, and Yasser Ali Salem (tried in absentia) as well as Abu Bakr al-Rabee.

The court also endorsed the same verdicts against the rest of the militants; the five militants: Ibraheem Mohammed al-Huwaidi, Aref Saleh Ali Mujali, Mohammed Abdullah al-Dailami, Abdulghani Ali Hussein Kaifan, and Kasem Yahia al-Ramee, who were sentenced to five years in prison.

The two defendants, Khaled Ahmad al-Jalob and Saleem Mohammed Ali al-Dailami, were sentenced to three years in prison for falsifying documents relating to the various attacks.

"God is great, there is no god but God and America is the enemy of God," the men shouted after sentencing.

The relatives of the convicts condemned the verdicts and described them as "groundless."

"This is unjust; the prosecution got a landslide victory, despite the fact that it provided no evidence against them. The court was subject to pressure by the authorities and the US," said the father



Convicts talk while waiting for their verdicts to be passed. (Yemen Times photo by Mohamed al-Qadhi)

of Fawaz Yahia al-Rabee, to Yemen Times.

Hassan, brother of Fawaz, could not express his sadness and anger over the verdict but to weep. Other relatives of the convicts also condemned the verdicts and said they would resort to the Supreme Court which can overturn the rulings.

During the final hearing that was run on Dec. 25, a heated debate went on between the prosecutors and the advocate Abdulaziz Al-Samawi.

"Those suspects are mere scapegoats and are innocent of the charges presented," Al-Samawi said.

He said that his clients are "victims of the US arrogance under the pretext of what is called the war on terrorism."

Fawaz al-Rabee admitted his connection and relationship with al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, but he denied that he killed the soldier Hameed Khasroof, and hence protested the prosecution's demand to have his 10-year imprisonment sentence be intensified to the death penalty.

Al-Rabee and the other three defendants claimed during their appeal that the confessions they made during interrogations were taken by force, and that they were beaten up and tortured.

Ibraheem Huwaidi said that he tried to commit suicide twice due to the psy-

chological pressure and torture he faced at the intelligence prison.

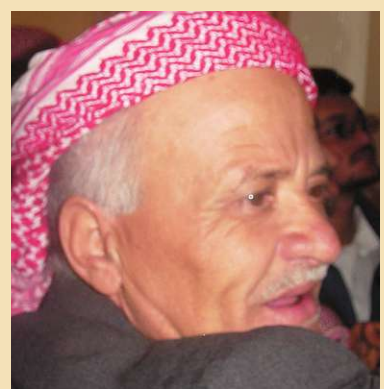
During the earlier appeal hearings, the prosecution presented the evidences that made it appeal the primary court verdict and demand intensification of the jail sentence to the death penalty against some of the suspects.

The prosecutor said that the law does not differentiate between those people who forge official documents to hide from security or for any other reasons. He also said that the suspects claim that their plan to assassinate the former US ambassador Edmund Hull was just a mere talk and does not exempt them from punishment as long as they agreed to carry out a criminal act.

The prosecution also refuted the appeals made by eight of the defendants during the last six hearings and described them as baseless.

"It is not true that they made confessions under force and threat; the complete verdict was not based only on such confessions but on other evidences, testimonies of the witnesses, experts' reports and others," chief prosecutor Saeed al-Akil said.

He demanded the court that verdicts



Father of Fawaz al-Rabee describes verdict as unjust.

YT photo by M.al-Qadhi

against all defendants be intensified, based on the evidences presented earlier as there is no reason to lessen the verdicts.

Some of the defendants expressed strong support al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden during the trial sessions.

Continued on page 3

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Ongoing battle over goods Saudis impose embargo on Yemeni produce

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Saudi border authorities are refusing to allow Yemeni agricultural products to enter the Saudi Kingdom, claiming that the materials are spoiled by diseases and insects.

That follows reports published by the Saudi 'Alwatan' magazine about unsanitary conditions in Yemen.

Meanwhile, Sana'a is forbidding Saudi goods from entering its markets as a reaction to the Saudi decision on refusing the Yemeni agricultural produce.

Sources said at the end of last week that a responsible official of the Yemeni Haradh Customs in the border declared

that they have stopped Saudi goods and products from entering into Yemen as a reaction from the Yemeni authorities.

"This is not the first time for such procedures, as we adopt the policy of similarity in treatment. We had stopped tens of Saudi trucks from entering into Yemen lands until cancellation of the embargo imposed on our products", said the Yemeni boundary Customs responsible official.

A higher level responsible official in the Yemeni Agricultural Ministry, in a press declarations, said: "There is no reason justifying the Saudi step as we continue to solve the problem through the diplomatic channels."

Continued on page 3

PFU appeals for Al-Khaiwani

BY MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Public Forces Union Party renewed its appeal to local and international organizations to help Abdul-Karim Al-Khaiwani, the jailed editor-in-chief of Al-Shura Weekly.

A statement issued by the General Secretariat of the PFU on Feb. 5 urged human rights watches and political forces to work against the

arrests and violations of Yemen's journalists and writers, and pressure the state to respect human dignity.

The PFU emphasized the need for an impartial judiciary and respect for the principles of justice ensured by the Constitution and laws.

The statement called on the judicial authority to quickly look into the appeal which has been delayed for five months.

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USDA supports Makha Port

TAIZ — A joint meeting between Yemeni officials and the US Development Agency team was held Feb. 2 at the headquarters of Taiz Governorate.

The meeting included Judge Ahmad al-Hajiri, Governor of Taiz, Abdulmalik al-Alarashi Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Abdulqader Hatim, Deputy Governor of Taiz for Technical and Environmental Affairs and Eng. Abdullah al-Janadi Director General of Taiz Agriculture Office as well as the US Development

Agency delegation.

Matters related to the development of infrastructure of Mukha Port were discussed in the meeting, which also focused on the possibility of extending aid to education, health and veterinary sectors.

Members at the meeting discussed the possible ways for equipping the medical laboratories, vaccination and establishing a burning pool for ailing cattle.

Activating the role of veterinary quarantine was also discussed in the

meeting because it is believed to make the Mukha Port a regional center for receiving cattle and exporting them at a later time.

At the beginning of the meeting, the US delegation presented the experience of the US Development Agency in extending support for a number of Third World countries.

The delegation was warmly welcomed by Judge al-Hajiri and his companions and the Taiz local council showed readiness to support functions of the agency in different aspects.

Rain agriculture discussed

By TAIZ BUREAU

A consultative meeting was held Feb. 2 at Al-Saeed Cultural Forum, Taiz with the rural chiefs and farmers from Sabir Al-Mawadim district under the auspices of French organization of Iddeales and faculty of Agriculture of Sana'a University.

Under the motto "Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture Capacities," the meeting discussed the importance of hereditary plant origins and locally acquired knowledge of developing sustainable agriculture in rainy areas.

The meeting was financed by the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and French Food Aid, with the participation of 15 farmers from Sabir Al-Mawadim, five agricultural guides, and five Sana'a University researchers.

Speeches were delivered by Dr. Amin al-Hakimi, head of Hereditary Department, Faculty of Agriculture,

coordinator of the event, Frederic Pelat of Iddeales, Ahmed Abdul-Ghani, Secretary General of the district's local council, and Abdul-Qadir Hatim, Deputy Taiz Governor for Technical and Environmental Affairs.

The speakers underscored the significance of rain-dependent agriculture in Yemen and indicated how to boost it, since it is the oldest occupation on which the national economy has been relying.

Speeches reviewed the aims of the discussion, and expected results to farmers, stressing the need for maintaining the traditional ways of agriculture.

On his part, Deputy Governor showed the province leadership's readiness to support, facilitate problems and remove obstacles to the agricultural progress.

Participants received videos on how to make use of different kinds of rain agriculture.

Foundation prepares for book fair

Al-Saeed Foundation for Sciences & Culture is getting ready for up its 3rd International Book Fair, in a l - S a e e d hall for International Exhibitions in Taiz Governorate, during the period from April 27 to May 8.



Faisal Saeed Farae

And in a declaration by the General Manager of al-Saeed Foundation, the General Supervisor of the Fair, Faisal Saeed Farae, said that the exhibition organized by the foundation comes within its general cultural program, and that it is considered as one of the prominent events, highly arranged and fully equipped prior to its inauguration, in an aim for receiving the titles.

The number of the titles has already reached 175,000.

He also indicated that the number of applications from the Arab, foreign and Yemeni publishing centers is increasing due to the big success achieved by the fair in its previous two exhibitions during the Years 2003 and 2004.

From France Yemen to get new boats

By MOHAMMAD BINSALLAM YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen is due to receive eight military boats from France to enhance the effectiveness of the Yemeni coast guards recently established under the US supervision, says a government source.

On its part the USA is due to give in a later time an identical batch of military boats.

Al-Wahdawi weekly quoted the same source (on condition of an anonymity) as saying: "the Yemeni Coast Guard Authority will receive a new batch of European-manufactured military boats (8 French military boats) with a total cost of \$10 million.

This batch is a new addition to seven military boats offered earlier by the US government, which is currently monitoring the Yemeni coastlines to prevent the infiltration of terrorist elements into the country."

The source added: "the new French batch of boats is considered as a qualitative addition to equip the Yemeni coast guard forces. The imported boats are technologically equipped with modern radars and every boat has heliport."

The US Embassy in Sana'a announced earlier that Washington is due to support Yemen with additional military boats in the framework of the security and military cooperation on the fight of terrorism.

The US administration fears that al-Qa'eda elements from Somalia, Afghanistan or Pakistan may infiltrate into Yemeni lands exploiting the length of the Yemeni coastline and the lack of monitoring on the part of Yemeni forces.

It is worth mentioning that US military experts are keeping on their training tasks for a number of coast guard officers in Aden, while many other military officers were sent to receive training in the USA and to know about the mechanisms followed up by the US coast guards.

Yemen and Malaysia agreed last year that the latter holds the task of training the Yemeni coast guard officers at the Malaysian Marine Academic. Currently there is a batch of Yemeni officers receiving training at the academic after a batch of 600 officers graduated last year.

In the fall of 2003, the Yemeni coast guard was established with the US support and supervision.

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:

Are death penalties for two convicted terrorists justified, as opposed to life in prison?

Yes, I support the death penalties.

No, life in prison would have been more appropriate.

last edition's question:

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

- Yes, it will 55%
- No, it will have no effect 25%
- No, it would increase 20%

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US official visits Taiz University

Henry Mandelson, the Regional responsible official of IT in the American Foreign Ministry, visited Taiz University Feb. 1 and met the Chairman of Taiz University, Dr. Muhammad Abdullah al-Soofy, University Vice-Chairman for academic affairs, Dr. Ibrahim al-Selwy, University Vice-Chairman for higher studies, Dr. Ahmed Alwan al-Mudhaji, and a number of other professors.

Cooperation issues between Yemen and the USA were studied, relating to supports that the American government offers Yemen in the information technology line.

A part of this is preparation for establishing an Electronic Corner and central library in Taiz University.

The Chairman of the University, Prof. Muhammad al-Soofy, has expressed his thanks to the visit paid by the American friends and the support they will present.

He also praised the attempts of the university towards modernizing teaching methods and technical equipment.

Discussion of World Bank projects

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A joint meeting between the Taiz Governor, Judge Ahmed al-Hejri, the Director of the World Bank bureau in Yemen, Mustafa Ruwais, was held in Taiz Governorate bureau on Jan. 31.

Governor al-Hejri discussed the current work of the World Bank funded projects in Taiz Governorate and

the municipality development project and Taiz town for protection from the floods. Governor al-Hejri, assured that the projects funded by the World Bank in Taiz Governorate would be well executed.

Arrangements for receiving the President of the World Bank in Taiz, in the middle of February 2005 were also discussed.

British, CARE help out

Dealing with water and conflict

By FAHMIA AL-FOTIH FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

A new water management and conflict resolution project was launched in Yemen, Feb. 2 by the British embassy and CARE International.

The project will last for an 18 months period and will focus on training and capacity-building measures related to water and tribal conflicts in al-Jawf and Amran governorates.

"It is a pilot project which is funded by UK and among the other many projects that run globally attempt to prevent water conflict. One of the main causes of conflict in the north of Yemen is scarce water," said Patrick Tobin, head of the Political and Projects Sections in the British Embassy, Sana'a.

The project, which will include digging of wells, costs 80,000 pounds.

Tobin added, "We recognize that water sources are scarce and it is diminished. It is about managing the resources over there. In some areas water is being wasted and pumped not public served. Some areas they have access to water but they cannot serve it."

The first stage is to have people to do initial studies to the situation and the second phase involves training workshops in attempt to raise awareness among the villagers how to manage water to build water conflict networks.

The third stage is to present the results



From left: Mr. Tobin, Mr. Al-Fahad and Mr. Paddiford launch the project.

of this project and studies.

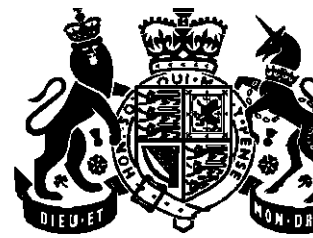
Yemen representative of CARE International in Yemen, Jonathan Paddiford, said CARE's involvement in this type of program is "a little bit new for us, but at the same time we, in CARE, believe very much in community participation and working with communities."

He said CARE also has a history in water, with water projects in Mahweet, Haja and Abyan. Iamran and Al-Jawf. "So it is commonsense to start out project there. We all see that conflict is central in water. This project is to examine

how to manage water conflict together."

The head of the Civic Democratic Initiative Foundation, Abdul Majid Al-Fahad, said, the CDF's role is to organize the training of the project beside the conference that will be done in the end of the project.

"The whole idea is an attempt to decrease conflict related to water. It is to train people how to manage rare resources like water. It seems those areas have limited amount of water. It will be like training them how to redesign their life, and in the same time, the same tool could be applied for other fields."



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:

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- Maintaining accurate financial reports for different types of projects and reporting on monthly basis
- Monitoring and Evaluation of projects
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The year to eradicate poppies

Drugs under attack in Afghanistan

BY PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

After last year's dramatic increase of opium production in Afghanistan, the government has implemented an aggressive strategy to eradicate poppy cultivation.

The government's Central Poppy Eradication Force, which was established last year, is now equipped with 700 officials. And according to Deputy Minister of Interior General Mohammed Daud, the counter-narcotics force will be 2,300 strong by the end of 2005.

When the newly-elected President Hamid Karzai was sworn in last December, he stressed that tackling the drug trade is the country's first priority. Daud recently said that the new government has labeled 2005 as "poppy eradication year."

In the last three months, the new counter-narcotic force has destroyed around 14,800 hectares of poppies.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported last November that 131,000 hectares were used by farmers to grow poppies in 2004, a 64% increase from the year before. Eighty-seven percent of the world's opium, the raw material used to produce heroin, comes from Afghanistan, and the \$2.8 billion annual revenue represents 60% of the country's economy. Poppy seeds are planted in each of the country's 34 provinces.

The government's crackdown on poppy cultivation has already shown some positive results. So far this year, the number of farmers planting poppy seeds has dropped: Government officials forecast that harvesting poppies this year will go down between 30% and 70% in 2005. Officials say that there might be a significant drop in some of the provinces known as producing large quantities of opium, such as Nangarhar in the east and Helmand in the south.

Some are concerned, however, that an aggressive fight against the drug trade could generate repercussions in the future.

"It appears that the government's new strategy to crackdown on poppy cultivation is a good start," an Afghan analyst told Yemen Times. "But unless the farmers receive a lot of assistance to profit from growing other crops, the

drop in poppy cultivation might be short lived."

Last week, 31 non-government organizations operating in Afghanistan, such as CARE, Oxfam and the International Crisis Group, sent a letter to the newly appointed US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warning that a quick solution could bring in more severe poverty and social unrest in the war-ravaged country.

"We accept that there will be some eradication this year, but eradication - if it is the primary mode of combating narcotics here - is going to negatively impact the poorest people in the country and do very little to actually get at the core of the problem," said Paul Barker, CARE's Afghan Country Director, after the letter was sent. "The problem really has not been driven by the poor farmers in the fields. It's been driven more by the processors and merchants who sell it further up the chain."

Barker added that it is critical for the farmers to have an opportunity to find an alternative livelihood.

The US Congress has asked for \$750 million to help support the war on drugs in Afghanistan this year. But some are skeptical: A small amount of the money will be directed towards assisting farmers switching to another crop and targets only a few provinces.

"This new American initiative with alternative livelihood funding is targeted only at a few provinces, whereas poppies are now grown in all 34 provinces in Afghanistan," said Barker. "We prefer to see a nationwide program to provide viable alternatives for all poor farmers in Afghanistan and don't want to provide an incentive for people to grow poppies so that they can then benefit from an alternative livelihoods program."

The UNODC report estimated that 10% of the country's population, or 2.3 million Afghans, are now involved in the drug business.

In a recent interview, Habibullah Qaderi, who was appointed as the Minister of Counter Narcotics in December, said that the government is aware of a possible backlash coming from the eradication process. "To take away the livelihood of farmers could pose security problems at this time. We will be careful with the eradication," said Qaderi. "Certainly we need to give more stress to alternative livelihoods. If



An Afghan farmer looking at his poppy field that has been destroyed. (Yemen Times photo by Peter Willems)

you want to get rid of the poppies, we need assistance from European countries and from America itself."

Some also argue that the Afghan government needs to focus on capturing and prosecuting druglords, destroying labs that convert opium into heroin and cracking down on the supply line that leads to neighboring countries.

The UNODC has warned that organized crime involved in the drug trade has become well established in the last few years. The UN organization says

that Afghanistan, once only a supplier of the raw material, now has enough labs to convert three-quarters of its opium into heroin. With a new mafia established in Afghanistan, some believe that violence will increase as those involved in the drug industry try to maintain instability throughout the country.

Reports indicate that terrorist networks, such as Al-Qaeda, and Afghan warlords that still rule vast areas of the country outside Kabul, the capital, are profiting from opium production. When Karzai formed a new Cabinet late last December, he replaced a number of militia leaders who were appointed as ministers in the interim government as a reward for taking part in toppling the Taliban regime in late 2001.

Former Defense Minister Mohammed Fahim, once a leading commander of the Northern Alliance, was replaced by his deputy Abdur Rahim Wardak, who fought against the Soviets in the eighties. Yunus Qanooni, who stepped down as Minister of Education and was Karzai's top rival in the presidential elections last October, was not given a position in the cabinet.

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Death penalties
During the last hearing the director of the legal department at the US embassy in Sana'a presented a request to the court supporting the lawsuit made against the defendants, and in the name of the Hunt Oil Company whose helicopter was shot by some of the suspects. Defendants previously denied their involvement in these operations. They said the confessions they made were taken by force and that they were subject to beating and torture. They disclosed that they reached an agreement with cleric Hamoud al-Hittar, head of the dialogue committee with extremists, to give up their fanatic views and take the path of tolerance. "Please help us: we do not have any devastating ideas," Ibraheem Huawaidi told the judge while reading his appeal. He refuted all allegations made by the prosecution against him. "I do refute and deny all allegations about my involvement in an armed gang or attacking Western embassies or the US embassy," he said. Kasem al-Raimi requested that the court order the prosecution to bring evidence of its charges against him. The other five defendants refused to comment on the appeal of the prosecution without having advocacy. When the judge offered the defendants to respond to the accusations in writing, they used the platform to openly send a political message saying that the trial was only to please the US. They said that the whole trial is a mere scenario to satisfy the superpower adding that it is a shame to do so in a time "the USA is committing massacres in Iraq and the Muslim world

Saudis impose embargo on Yemeni produce
And as a result, the official responsible expressed his regret towards the aggressive action taken upon the Yemeni sellers. They were allegedly chased in markets and streets of Saudi, and forced to return to the boundary inlets, accompanying their goods. "As claimed by the authorities of the Kingdom, Yemenis irrigate some goods using waste waters. It is really a strange point, as the farms are located in Tehama desert, and there is no waste water institutions. So from where do the farmers bring the sanitary waters?" said one Yemeni official. An official press release said, "There is no any custom fees between Yemen and the Saudi so as to compel the Yemeni farmers to escape. The selling operations run through the agents of the wholesales markets. We confirmed that the Yemeni products are exported to the European markets but no any complaint received regarding disease affecting any product." The Saudi action came up after Yemeni authorities stopped the import of some vehicle engines and oils, since they don't meet the Yemeni standards. Consumers Protection Society said, "There is rampant cheating in the oil substances, some of which lead to breaking down the vehicles engines. This is taking place while 90% of the Gulf oils enter the Yemeni markets." Saudi's "Alwatan" magazine previously mentioned, "That the Saudi Ministry of Agriculture imposed an embargo on a number of Yemeni agricultural products and yields that come into Saudi Arabia, and have confirmed to all the Ministry branches in the southern zones to chase the Yemeni sellers in the markets and on the roads and turn them back to the borders, or confiscate the produce

PFU appeals for Al-Khaiwani
"The PFU asks the Yemeni authorities to respect democracy, liberties and human rights as well as the frequent calls and protests staged locally and internationally against the imprisonment of Al-Khaiwani," read the statement. "It also confirms that the continued detention of Al-Khaiwani, and keeping Al-Shura shut down has substantially damaged Yemen's reputation in the international arena. The freedom of journalism has turned to be mere mirage. When approached, it vanishes." The origin of the case is in the issue of inheritance of governance raised by Al-Shura, following the insurgency of Al-Houthi. Al-Shura was charged of slander of the president of the republic, the national unity, and supreme interests. The editor-in-chief was then tried with haste and the newspaper was closed down, apparently for six months. Some feel that it's all a misuse of law by the authorities to punish any kind of opposition. Al-Shura at that time was classified as a newspaper supporting Al-Houthi's insurgency. Other opposition newspapers also supported the insurgency, except for Islah newspapers which sympathized with the state, and lashed out at Al-Houthi.

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Emirates Airlines - Hertz Yemen Grand Raffle Draw



Sana'a Emirates Airlines and Hertz Rent a Car in Yemen jointly promoted Skywards membership, wherein any Skywards members who rent vehicles from Hertz are entitled for two raffle prizes from Emirates. The Grand Raffle draw was conducted on 02 February 2005 in the Emirates Airline office in Hadda in the presence of Mr. Dadr Abbas, Emirates Area Manager and Mr. Salai Sheikh Saleem, the General Manger of Hertz and executives from both sides.

The first prize of Emirates Round Trip Air-ticket sector between Sana'a and any Emirates Europe destination was won by Mr. Zaid Naji Abdu Naji, and the second prize of Emirates Round trip Air-ticket sector between Sana'a and any Emirates Middle East destination was won by Mr. Kahled Abdul Rahman Al Baidani.

Mr. Badr Abbas said, "The EK Hertz joint promotion in Yemen earned a very good promotional value and was an eye opener to the concept of Skywards membership. The response was moderate and I should be thankful to the Hertz management for their excellent co-operation."

Mr. Saleem Sheikh indicated that "Promotions of such nature are widely done globally in many manners for the mutual benefit of both partners. Yemen being a developing nations, such promotions create product awareness among the public. Hertz Yemen is open for such creative promotions and look forward to retain its corporate image to achieve further standards and customer satisfaction"

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Saudi sees long, bitter fight against terror

RIYADH, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia, battling an al Qaeda campaign, vowed on Saturday to fight terrorism to the end but warned at a world anti-terror forum that the war in the world's biggest oil exporter would be bitter and long.

"I know that terrorism will not go away overnight and our war against terrorism will be long and bitter," de facto ruler Crown Prince Abdullah told security and intelligence officials from more than 50 countries.

"Terrorism increases in ferocity and violence the more the noose tightens round its neck, but I trust the final result will be victory, tolerance, love and peace," Abdullah said.

Most of the hijackers behind the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States were Saudis and the kingdom was widely criticised for dragging its feet in the battle against al Qaeda.

But diplomats said it stepped up its efforts after triple suicide bombings at expatriate residential compounds in

Riyadh killed 35 people, mainly foreigners, in May 2003.

"We are in a war against terrorism and whoever supports it and justifies it," Abdullah said.

He urged countries to set up a global centre to exchange information and to expand the fight.

"It is difficult to win in our war if it does not include the criminal networks of arms and drugs smuggling, and money laundering," Abdullah said.

The conference takes place less than six weeks after an al Qaeda suicide bomber blew up a car outside the Saudi Interior Ministry, the nerve centre of its battle against militants.

Extra security in Riyadh, which has been on high alert for nearly two years, was visible across the Saudi capital on Saturday.

Security forces manned roadblocks and special forces in black balaclavas guarded delegates.

Speaking in a hall dripping with opulence, a U.N. official gave a speech

by Secretary-General Kofi Annan which called on countries to also look at the causes of terrorism.

"People must see that legitimate grievances can be addressed by peaceful means," the envoy said, adding that measures should be "much broader than coercive measures".

"Every time we stand up for human rights and fundamental freedoms we, stand up against terror.

Every time we make the rule of law stronger, we make terrorism weaker," he said.

Gulf countries feel threatened by al Qaeda, which wants to topple their rulers because of close ties with Washington.

The network's Saudi-born leader Osama bin Laden has urged direct strikes against oil facilities in the region.

Kuwaiti security forces are hunting a number of key militant suspects after a surge of al Qaeda-linked violence last month.



Delegates take their seats at the Counter-Terrorism International Conference in Riyadh Feb. 5. Saudi Arabia, battling an al Qaeda campaign, vowed on Saturday to fight terrorism to the end but warned at a world anti-terror forum that the war in the world's biggest oil exporter would be bitter and long. REUTERS

Prisoner-release key to summit success: Palestinians

GAZA, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Palestinian officials said on Saturday it was imperative to resolve a dispute with Israel over the release of Palestinian prisoners to avoid failure at a summit seen as crucial to ending over four years of violence.

Nabil Abu Rdainah, an adviser to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, urged Israel to be flexible on the issue of prisoners slated for release to avoid a crisis at Tuesday's summit at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Israel disappointed the Palestinian leadership by refusing to include those jailed for deadly attacks among the 900 prisoners whom Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and top cabinet ministers agreed on Thursday to release in a goodwill gesture.

"We hope that we can bypass this problem within the coming 48 hours in order to ensure the success of the summit," Abu Rdainah said in Gaza before attending a meeting of an influential decision-making body in Abbas's Fatah faction.

Abbas is under enormous domestic pressure to secure freedom for 8,000 prisoners, among the most emotive issues for ordinary Palestinians, many of whom have relatives in Israeli jails and see their release as a sign of peace and goodwill.

The issue is also key to Abbas's aim of consolidating power, ending bloodshed and reviving the "road map" charting mutual steps to Palestinian state-

hood.

The dispute over prisoners overshadowed fresh optimism in the region that Israel and the Palestinians would declare a formal halt to more than four years of violence at the summit.

Sharon will meet Abbas for the first time since the moderate Palestinian leader was elected on Jan. 9 to replace Yasser Arafat, seen by Israel and the United States as an obstacle to peace.

The talks, to be joined by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Abdullah, would aim to solidify a shaky new de facto ceasefire by setting in motion a peace process based on the U.S.-backed road map.

"The issue of the prisoners is of extreme importance for the Palestinians. It could either lead to a breakthrough or to negative results," said Mohammed Dahlan, another Abbas adviser.

The road map calls on the Palestinian Authority to disarm militants and dismantle "terrorist infrastructure". Abbas has said he wants to co-opt rather than confront the gunmen, hoping to avoid civil strife.

Israel demands Abbas Quash militants

Israel would not carry out any steps in the road map until "the Palestinians stop terror attacks, dismantle the (militant) infrastructures and carry out government reforms", Sharon's office quoted the Israeli prime minister as saying.



Sabreen Boheri cries during the funeral of her brother Mohammed, was shot by Israeli troops east Gaza, Feb. 5. Israeli shot killed Two Palestinian early in Gaza Strip, Palestinian medical workers said. REUTERS

Violence has dropped sharply amid Abbas's efforts to coax militants into a truce they say must be reciprocated by the Israeli army. He has also deployed Palestinian security forces in Gaza to combat militants.

Sharon's view according to aides is that despite such moves, Abbas has still not done enough to stop anti-Israeli attacks.

"Deploying Palestinian troops in Gaza is insufficient. The Palestinian Authority must also stop terrorists by arresting them," an official at Sharon's

office said.

The prisoner issue could loom large in meetings new U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is scheduled to hold with Sharon and Abbas during a visit to the region next week.

Israeli officials said a first batch of 500 prisoners would be freed next week, after the summit, with 400 to follow over a period of three months.

Israel's plan also calls for a troop pullback from five West Bank cities, starting in Jericho next week, after the talks.

At least 4 militants surrender after Kuwait raid

KUWAIT, Feb 5 (Reuters) - At least four militants surrendered to Kuwaiti security forces who had surrounded their hideout in the north of the oil-rich Gulf Arab country on Saturday, state media said.

"Four terrorists holed up in a house in Sulaibiya area have surrendered," state television said in an urgent bulletin, adding that security forces continued to search the area.

State news agency KUNA said five militants had surrendered in the raid, the fifth confrontation this year between police and suspected al Qaeda militants believed to be planning attacks against U.S. troops in Kuwait and state security

forces.

Security sources told Reuters that gunfire had erupted in the area but gave no further details.

Used as the main launch pad for the 2003 war in Iraq, Kuwait hosts up to 30,000 U.S. troops and is the key transit route for forces and civilians into Iraq. Some 12,500 American civilians also live in Kuwait.

Authorities have stepped up security around oil and other vital installations after militants tried to attack the country's largest refinery and a U.S. military camp last month.

Two Sinai bomb suspects killed in gun fight

CAIRO, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Two Egyptian men suspected of involvement in bombing three Red Sea resorts last year were killed on Saturday after five days of gunbattles with police in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, security sources said.

At least 34 people were killed in three bombings on Oct. 7 at Taba and two other resorts on Egypt's Red Sea coast popular with Israelis.

Police have fought since Tuesday with Bedouin, who were believed to be hiding several bomb suspects, in the Ras Sudr area of central Sinai, 150 km (94 miles) east of Cairo.

The sources said two suspects, Mohamed Ahmed Saleh Fulayfel and Hammad Gumaa, were killed after several hours of shooting on Saturday.

Investigators found bullet casings, automatic weapons and hand grenades in the area, they said.

The Interior Ministry had no immediate comment on the report.

Security sources said that four policemen were wounded in clashes on Friday.

They said one died of his wounds overnight.

Two other suspected bombers were killed in the Taba attack when their bomb went off early. Egypt has said they were not part of a wider militant network or linked to al Qaeda.

Police said in October they had arrested five Sinai Bedouin as accomplices in the bombings.

Most of them were from the north coast town of El Arish, near the Israeli border.

IRAQ WRAPUP 2: Eight Iraqi soldiers killed, violence simmers

BAGHDAD, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Insurgent attacks killed eight Iraqi soldiers on Saturday as guerrillas stayed on the offensive after failing to scupper last week's historic election.

Millions of Iraqis braved suicide bombers and mortar attacks to vote in Sunday's ballot. The count so far puts a religious Shi'ite coalition in the lead with two thirds of the poll, based on results from 35 percent of voting centres.

Buoyed by the strong showing, a top Shi'ite official told Reuters on Saturday the Shi'ite alliance would insist on the job of prime minister in the new government.

The post is now held by Iyad Allawi, whose bloc is in second place. But this could change as votes from the Kurdish-dominated north are counted, reducing his chances of keeping his job as a compromise candidate.

"Shi'ites want the prime minister-ship, we are insisting on it and will not

give it up," said Deputy Foreign Minister Hamed al-Bayati, who is a senior official in the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).

SCIRI is a key player in the United Iraqi Alliance, the Shi'ite bloc which has polled 2.2 million of the 3.3 million votes counted so far from 10 of 18 provinces.

Allawi's Iraqi List has about 18 percent, but the Kurds are still awaiting the results in their three northern provinces, where turnout was high and is expected to secure them a powerful voice in the new 275-seat National Assembly.

Violence simmers

Attacks by insurgents against foreign and Iraqi security forces may have slowed slightly since the election but a steady drumbeat of violence has continued.

Police said four Iraqi Army soldiers were killed by a bomb in the southern

city of Basra, which has been relatively peaceful compared with the rest of Iraq.

Four other Iraqi servicemen died in three separate incidents in Samarra in the restive Sunni triangle region north of Baghdad, hospital sources and the Iraqi military said.

More than 20 Iraqi police and soldiers have been killed since the election.

Civilian casualties also continued to climb. Two children playing outside their home were killed when a landmine exploded, and a local government official was assassinated in a drive-by shooting in the Adel area in western Baghdad.

The U.S. army said two U.S. soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb while patrolling in armoured Humvees near Baiji, north of Tikrit, on Friday. Four other soldiers were wounded.

Journalist kidnapped

In the first abduction of a foreigner

since the poll, an Italian reporter was snatched from the street on Friday while she was interviewing people near Baghdad University.

A little-known Iraqi group, the Islamic Jihad Organisation, said in a Web statement that it had taken Sgrena hostage.

It set a 72-hour deadline for Italy to remove its nearly 3,000 troops from Iraq but did not make a specific threat to kill her.

It was not possible to verify the statement.

A group using the same name said in September it had killed two abducted Italian aid workers who were later released by another group.

Sgrena is the eighth Italian to be kidnapped in Iraq and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said Italy was working to secure her release.

More than 120 foreigners have been kidnapped in the country in the last year and about a third of them killed.



An Iraqi soldier surveys a damaged army vehicle following a roadside bomb explosion in the southern city of Basra, Feb. 5. A roadside bomb blast killed four Iraqi soldiers and wounded three in the southern city of Basra on Saturday, Iraqi officers said. British forces sealed off the site after the blast. REUTERS

Troops find Afghan plane crash site, no survivors

KABUL, Jan 5 (Reuters) - A Dutch military helicopter on Saturday found the wreckage of an Afghan passenger plane that went missing two days ago with 104 people on board after turning away from the capital Kabul in a snow storm.

An Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman said there were no survivors.

"There are no survivors from the crash," he said "We will begin to evacuate and retrieve the bodies," he said.

The Boeing 737 aircraft operated by private Afghan airline Kam Air went missing on a flight from the western city of Herat after it turned away from Kabul airport on Thursday in a snow storm. It disappeared off radar screens shortly after.

"Dutch AH-64 Apache helicopters that were searching for the missing Kam Air Boeing 737 have found the wreckage at 1:37 p.m.

The wreckage was spotted in the Shaperi Ghar area approximately 30 km (19 miles) south, southeast of Kabul city," said a statement from NATO peacekeepers in Kabul.

"The tail of the aircraft was spotted with other debris," it said.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force has sent specialist mountain rescue teams to the area.



Several relatives of passengers of an Afghan airplane that went missing stand outside the office of the airlines in Kabul on Saturday, Feb. 5. The Boeing 737 plane belonging to a private airline with 104 people, some 14 foreigners and eight crew disappeared from radar on Thursday as it was trying to land on Kabul airport in snowy weather. REUTERS

An Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman identified the crash site as being near Band-e Ghazi, a village overlooked by the mountain of Shaperi Ghar.

More than 1,000 Afghan soldiers were joined by around 100 NATO ground troops scouring the mountain-

ous, snow-bound area on Saturday while helicopters clattered overhead.

Foreigners on board

There were a number of foreigners among the 96 passengers, including nine Turks, three American aid workers, an Italian naval captain, two other

Italians and an Iranian working for an international non-governmental organisation.

Six of the eight crew were also foreigners, four of them Russian, the Russian Interfax news agency said.

The plane was leased from a company in Kyrgyzstan.

Kam Air opened as Afghanistan's only private airline in November 2003. It flies leased aircraft between Kabul, Dubai and Istanbul and operates several domestic routes.

In September, an Antonov-24 operated by the airline slewed off the runway while landing in Kabul, slightly injuring some of the 27 passengers aboard, apparently after engine trouble.

In early 1998, 51 people died when an Antonov transport plane operated by state-run Ariana Afghan Airlines crashed in mountains near the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta after failing to land in Afghanistan because of bad weather.

In March that year, 45 people were killed when another Ariana plane, a Boeing 727, slammed into a mountain near Kabul.

In the most recent air crash in Afghanistan, three U.S. military personnel and three civilian crew were killed when a U.S. transport aircraft crashed in central mountains in November.

Dozens injured during latest Bangladesh strike

DHAKA, Feb 5 (Reuters) - At least 30 people were injured in clashes between police and opposition activists during a nationwide strike on Saturday, the fifth in about two weeks.

Police beat protesters with batons and fired teargas, while activists threw stones at police and vehicles, witnesses said.

Dozens of people were detained, the witnesses said.

Nearly 11,000 police, paramilitary troops and other security forces were on duty in Dhaka, where the number of buses and taxis operating on Saturday was more than during previous strikes, apparently encouraged by beefed up security.

Police said they doubled the presence of security personnel, included 300 specially trained women police brought into the capital from outlying districts to tame women opposition activists — who often turn violent — during the strike.

Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the main opposition Awami League, said on Friday the strikes were aimed at toppling what he called the failed government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The opposition has been



Bangladesh police surround a group of opposition activists on a street during a strike in Dhaka on Feb. 5. REUTERS

campaigning to oust Khaleda for several years, accusing her government of being corrupt, inefficient and repressive.

It has also accused the government of failing to investigate properly and punish perpetrators responsible for staging a series of bombings at opposition rallies. The government says such accusations are nonsense.

The Awami League called a series

of protest strikes after a grenade attack at a party rally in the country's northeast on Jan. 27. Five people died in that attack.

Another strike is set for Sunday, taking the total to six in two weeks.

The strikes have halted transport and business over a wide area, shut schools and disrupted the country's main port in Chittagong.

Port officials said about 40 ships

were stranded by the strikes while 18,000 containers awaited delivery.

Food markets in Dhaka were short of goods, which pushed up prices of essentials over the past few days, traders said on Saturday.

Business leaders have said each day of a general strike costs the poor country \$60 million in lost production, and appealed to the opposition not to call for frequent stoppages.

The government has vowed to act against protesters.

"Those who try to disrupt normal life and damage property in the name of strikes are enemies of the people and the country.

We will deal with them sternly," a senior police officer said late on Friday.

"We shall overcome all obstacles and continue our protest until the government goes," said senior Awami official Mufazzal Chowdhury Maya, leading a street march in Dhaka on Saturday.

Saturday and Sunday are working days in mainly Muslim Bangladesh, a country of 130 million often plagued by natural disasters and political turmoil.

Nepal king seeks support with anti-graft drive

KATHMANDU, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Nepal's new government, led by King Gyanendra, will focus on fighting corruption and poverty in the Himalayan kingdom, state media said on Saturday, setting a populist direction days after the monarch seized power.

Analysts say Gyanendra is likely to work quickly to win popular support, capitalising on a brief honeymoon period for his move with many Nepalis fed up with the politicians he sacked on Tuesday and placed under arrest.

In its first meeting, Gyanendra's appointed cabinet drafted a strategy focusing on corruption and poverty, state media said, but announced no strategy for peace with Maoists fighting the monarchy in a nine-year revolt that has killed 11,000 people.

The army said on Friday it would step up its offensive against the guerrillas to force them back into peace talks after Gyanendra's sudden move, in which he

also suspended civil rights and isolated the tiny country from the world.

Authorities continue rounding up activists, including sacked prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's chief spokesman, Minendra Rijal, who had been one of the few political leaders left free to speak to reporters.

To stifle dissent and avoid protests, Gyanendra has cut all public phone lines within the Hindu kingdom and with the outside world. The media have also been banned from dissent.

In some newspaper offices, soldiers proof-read stories, at others, soldiers and armoured cars are stationed outside.

The independent human rights commission is investigating reports soldiers fired on students protesting the king's power grab, wounding some, in the western tourist town of Pokhara.

But the commission cannot contact its staff there and considers it too dangerous to send a team from Kathmandu

while phone lines are down and conditions uncertain, commission member Sushil Pyakurel said.

Gyanendra and his ministers said the

new government would fight rampant corruption in the Himalayan nation, one of the world's poorest countries.



Nepalese policemen stand guard at a street in Kathmandu Feb. 5. Nepal's king could begin releasing arrested political leaders soon, local media reported on Saturday, as the new government said it was setting up a panel to fight corruption. . REUTERS

Homecoming delayed for Sudanese refugees in Uganda

KAMPALA, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Shattered infrastructure and the threat of return of thousands of south Sudanese refugees languishing in camps in northern Uganda, the U.N. refugee agency said on Saturday.

A peace deal for Sudan that ended Africa's longest-running civil war last month has given hope to many of the 3 million people thought to have fled the 21-year conflict.

Uganda hosts about 220,000 of them, more than any other country bordering Sudan.

The U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) says moves to transport them home are not expected to start until October.

"We are taking a very cautious, phased approach," Cindy Burns, the agency's representative in Uganda, told Reuters.

"UNHCR has not been operating in southern Sudan for 20 years, so we are starting from scratch to begin receiving these groups.

There is very little infrastructure in place, and of course there is the huge problem of landmines."

She said officials from seven nations hosting Sudanese refugees — Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda — held talks in Khartoum this week to discuss repatriation plans.

Sudan's civil war broadly pitted the Islamist government based in the north against the mainly Christian, pagan south, complicated by issues of oil, ethnicity and ideology.

Analysts say some of those who fled to neighbouring states do not necessarily support southern leader John Garang — who becomes vice president under the peace deal — and are seeking assurances

of their safety before making the journey home.

Uganda's minister of state for disaster preparedness, Christine Amongin Aporu, said it was vital leaders from Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Movement visited the camps in northern Uganda to educate the residents about the accord with Khartoum.

"The major challenge we are facing now is talking to the refugees and giving them the confidence the peace agreement is going to embrace all Sudanese refugees," she told Reuters.

The displaced communities in northern Uganda have also been plagued by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Ugandan rebels operating on both sides of the border who have waged a separate 18-year-old war against the government in Kampala.

More than 10,000 refugees crossed into Uganda last year to escape raids by the group inside southern Sudan, while about 20,000 were uprooted by attacks on their camps in Uganda.

Uganda's government announced a limited ceasefire with the LRA this week, and Aporu said she hoped the push for talks by both sides in Uganda's war would improve security and boost plans to help repatriate the Sudanese refugees.

Meanwhile, she echoed comments by Burns that since Sudan's peace deal was signed in January there have been no large-scale movements of refugees heading home unaided.

"Among the unregistered refugees there may have been some spontaneous criss-crossing of the border," Burns said.

"People are checking out the security situation, and probably checking out what has happened to their properties there, but there has been no movement out of our camps."

Musharraf wants Kashmiris to attend India talks

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf called on Saturday for Kashmiri leaders to be involved in talks with rival India to resolve their main dispute over Kashmir.

Musharraf said the Himalayan region was of "vital national interest" to Pakistan and would never compromise on this point.

"Pakistan will accept only that solution of the Kashmir problem which is according to the wishes and aspirations of Kashmiris," he said in a message to legislators of Pakistan-ruled Kashmir.

Musharraf's message was read out to the legislative assembly because rains had prevented him from flying to the region to attend the annual Kashmir Solidarity Day.

He said Pakistan had told India as well as the international community that the peace process between the nuclear-armed rivals could not move forward without the settlement of the Kashmir dispute and involvement of Kashmiris in the dialogue process.

Musharraf said on state Pakistan Television that his country was ready to give up its decades old position of calling for a U.N.-sponsored plebiscite to resolve the Kashmir dispute if India responded in kind.

"Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir issue remains the same original one," he said.

"The only change is that we are ready to show flexibility if India also shows flexibility in its stance."

Last year, Musharraf suggested

demilitarising the territory while a compromise is sought over its status.

He said this could include joint control, some form of U.N. control, or independence. But India rejects any redrawing of its borders or further division of territory.

Islamists criticise flexibility

Musharraf has come under criticism from the hardline Islamic groups for suggesting the two countries show flexibility.

Speaking to hundreds of supporters in Islamabad, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, head of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal alliance of six Islamic groups, said India must end its "illegal occupation" of Kashmir to resolve the lingering dispute.

"Until this illegal occupation is brought to an end, no amount of confidence building measures can bring peace between Pakistan and India," he said.

Musharraf's remarks came ahead of a visit by India's Foreign Minister Natwar Singh later this month to Pakistan to bolster the fledgling peace process.

The dispute over the Himalayan region lies at the heart of tension between the South Asian rivals, which have fought three wars, two of them over Kashmir, since gaining independence from Britain in 1947.

India accuses Pakistan of arming, abetting and sending militants to join a 15-year-old insurgency in India's portion of Kashmir. Islamabad denies the charge and in turn accuses India of rights abuses.



To strengthen ties, Russia must improve democracy: Rice

WARSAW, Feb 5 (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Saturday Russia needed to reverse what Washington considers its backsliding on democracy if Moscow wants deeper relations with the West.

The former Soviet specialist, on her first trip abroad as the top U.S. diplomat, will meet her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov later on Saturday in Ankara, where she will also press him on Iran's nuclear ambitions.

"Obviously we have concerns ... it is important that Russia make clear to the world that it is intent on strengthening the rule of law, strengthening the role of an independent judiciary, permitting a free and independent press, of course," Rice told a news conference in Warsaw, during a stopover en route to Turkey.

"These are all the basics of democracy."

Last year, the United States began voicing its concern over what it called Russia's "backsliding". Rice said she would continue to express those concerns in hopes of improving ties.

"We really do believe a more democratic foundation in Russia ... will indeed strengthen and underscore and put a real sort of substance into a deepening relationship with the democracies of Europe, and indeed the United States."

Ahead of her eight-nation tour of Europe and the Middle East meant to repair ties with partners like Russia frayed over the U.S.-led war in Iraq, Rice had complained the Kremlin had amassed too much power and noted concerns over the judiciary's impartiality.

In December, the State Duma approved President Vladimir Putin's



foreign minister Adam Rotfeld during a news conference in Warsaw U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (L) shake hands with Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rotfeld (R) during a news conference in Warsaw Feb. 5. During her first trip abroad as the top U.S. Diplomat, Rice stopped in Warsaw on her way to Turkey where she will meet her Russian counterpart. REUTERS

plans to scrap gubernatorial elections and allow the president to nominate governors.

Putin has also allowed an apparently politically motivated case to proceed against oil major YUKOS.

THAW

Russia opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq but has also slowly sought to ease tensions over the war. Moscow cautiously welcomed Sunday's elections in Iraq in comments U.S. officials said was a sign it wanted to focus on the future.

Poland wants closer transatlantic ties and also backed the war in Iraq, where it has one of the largest non-U.S. troop contingents. But while it says they will stay as long as needed it has also set a target of pulling out by the end of the year.

In Warsaw, Rice thanked Poland for its "extraordinary contribution" in

Iraq.

Rice will also pressure Russia to keep on hold a fuel supply deal for an Iranian reactor as it intensifies a campaign to thwart what it says is the Islamic Republic's drive to build a nuclear bomb.

Washington fears any Russian fuel supply to a reactor Iran is building would move Tehran closer to acquiring a bomb under the cover of a civilian programme.

Oil-rich Iran denies it is developing such a weapon and says its nuclear programmes are for peaceful power generation needed to meet the energy demands of its growing population.

Rice, who has sought to allay fears of a possible military strike against Iran, says Russia's decision against delivering the fuel is part of an international diplomatic strategy against Tehran.

Pope not strong enough to deliver Sunday message

VATICAN CITY, Feb 5 (Reuters) - Pope John Paul will make a public appearance to bless the faithful from his hospital suite on Sunday but the Pontiff is not yet strong enough to read his customary noon message.

In what appeared to be an indication that the 84-year-old Pontiff still needed rest following emergency treatment for flu-induced breathing problems, the Vatican said an aide will read the Pope's message and recite the prayer for him.

Then the Pope himself will deliver the blessing, which consists merely of several lines in Latin and making the sign of the cross.

The Pope normally reads a short address, then a prayer known as the "Angelus" before delivering his blessing to the crowds in St Peter's Square.

"The Pope will give the apostolic blessing to the faithful," said chief Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls, adding that Deputy Secretary of State Archbishop Leonardo Sandri would read the message and the prayer.

Although not specified in the statement, the Pope was expected to deliver the blessing from the window or balcony of his 10th-floor hospital suite at Rome's Gemelli hospital.

The Vatican also said the Pope would not preside at an Ash Wednesday service in St Peter's Basilica marking the start of Lent this week. It was believed to be the first time the Pope would miss the start of Lent.

American Cardinal James Stafford would preside at the ceremony on the Pope's behalf.

The official Vatican statement was in contrast to more upbeat words by a bishop who spoke to reporters after visiting the Pope at the Gemelli hospital on Saturday morning.

"Surely, surely, he is getting better," said Bishop Vincenzo Paglia, a

founder of the Sant' Egidio religious group in Rome who visited the Pontiff to bring him a get well message from some 100 bishops of various Christian denominations.

"He was really happy to see that a lot of bishops had gathered to pray for him ... he is eager to get back to work," Paglia said.

The Pope is spending his fourth full day in Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he was rushed after he suffered a respiratory crisis on Tuesday night suffering from a breathing crisis.

He has not been seen in public since he blessed crowds from his window overlooking St Peter's Square last Sunday.

The Pope's latest hospitalisation, coupled with the onslaught of Parkinson's disease and arthritis, has served as another reminder that one

of history's greatest papacies was getting closer to its end.

The Vatican has said the next full medical bulletin would be issued on Monday at 1100 GMT.

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexiy II sent a get-well-soon message to the Pope, putting aside strained ties with the Catholic church.

"Accept our support expressed in brotherly prayer in connection with your illness," said the Patriarch's message, quoted by Itar-Tass news agency.

He also told the Pope to "recover and regain your strength ... in fulfilling the holy service as head of the Roman Catholic church for the good of the flock and for the benefit of the general Christian values of peace and justice".



Bishops from Saint Egidio community arrives at the Gemelli hospital where Pope John Paul II is being treated in Rome, Feb. 5. Some one hundred bishops are gathered at the hospital to celebrate a mass for the Pope. The Vatican said The Pope's health is improving steadily, he hopes to be strong enough to make his weekly address on Sunday and is still in charge of the Roman Catholic Church. REUTERS



VACANCIES

Yemeni Nationals

A/C Technician (Code – 001)

Location: Al-Masila, Hadhramout
Department: Maintenance
Schedule: 28 days on / 28 days off

Job Duties:

- Carries out repairs to stand alone A/C units on variable speed drives (VSD) in the field. Includes inspecting equipment, evaluating nature of problem, obtaining spare parts if necessary, carrying out repairs using basic hand tools and a variety of operational equipment, using oxy-acetylene welding equipment, as applicable, replacing refrigeration and vacuum gauges, purging refrigeration lines with nitrogen, attaching vacuum pump and refilling system with required gas.
- Carries out planned maintenance. Includes visiting unit, replacing or cleaning filters, checking control panel and wiring etc., checking tension and condition of belt, checking fire and manual dampers, checking level of refrigerating coolant if necessary, checking thermostat settings, closing up unit and returning unit to service. Carries out own electrical isolation as necessary.
- Carries out repairs to walk-in freezers and chillers in the camp. Includes assessing nature of the problem, obtaining parts as necessary, carrying out repair using a variety of hand tools and equipment, and handing unit back to user.
- Repairs water coolers, domestic fridge-freezers and ice-making machines following standard repair procedures.
- Carries out other similar or related duties such as assisting automotive shop mechanics in carrying out auto repairs as required, repairing and maintaining extracting fans on kitchen roof, and providing assistance to electrical technicians during peak loads.

Minimum Requirements:

- Successful Completion of Technical Diploma in Electrical and Air Conditioning Trade, with 4 years of Air Conditioning Maintenance Experience.
- Commenced hands on training for work order and permit procedures.
- Very Good English skills.
- Valid Yemeni driving license.

If you have the above requirements, please send your CV to the following address.
NOT later than February 20th, 2005

Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen
Human Resources
Sana'a Republic of Yemen
Attention: Human Resources, Recruitment Section
E-mail: recruiting_sanaa@nexeninc.com

SCADA Technician (Code – 001)

Location: Al-Masila, Hadhramout
Department: Maintenance
Schedule: 28 days on / 28 days off

Job Duties:

- Installs, repairs, calibrates, trouble shoots configures and maintains all Regulatory Control Systems within the plant facility. Performs Preventative and Corrective maintenance on Process Control equipment, PLC and Data Acquisition Systems in accordance with manufacturers and Maintenance department accepted industrial standards. Updates documentation related to Process Control Systems to ensure current data accuracy. Analyzes Process Control Systems and where applicable recommends and or implements improvements. Includes use of hand-tools and test equipment such as data monitors, transmission testers, voltmeter, ohmmeter etc.
- Provides on-the-job training to SCADA/Instrument technicians in any of the areas covered above.
- As required, trouble shoots and repairs other equipment including but not limited to field instrumentation, office equipment, fire/gas detection systems etc. within the scope of technician's skill and training.
- Carries out similar or related duties and preventive maintenance work as deemed necessary to support the plant's activities, monitors and ensures EH&S policies and procedures are followed.

Minimum Requirements:

- Successful completion of a Technical Diploma in SCADA/Instrument Trade, with 6 years of related experience. Certified Technologist standard (CET) personnel are preferred.
- Excellent knowledge of English (written and oral) and the ability to produce technical reports.
- Valid Yemeni driving license.

Application Criteria:

- ∞ Please make sure that your CV contains all the needed personal, contact and qualification information, **no need** to attach any certificates unless we request them.
- ∞ Please **don't** call us, we will call you if you are selected for test and interview, **which will be based on the most qualified applicants.**
- ∞ Please **mention** in your application the **job** you are applying for and the **code number.**
- ∞ Preferable to send CVs via the **E-mail** address. Faxed CVs **will not** be considered
- ∞ Unclear and untyped CVs **will not** be considered, use normal font and **do not** decorate the CV.

Words of Wisdom



The real meaning and purpose of the democratic transformation and the economic reform is to remove traditional master-client relations in Yemen's power structure, as well as market distortions in economy. Thus, the success of the nation's evolution will be measured exactly in those terms. Unfortunately, our political leadership does not understand the meaning of intended change.

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

OUR
OPINIONInvitations are
not enough

The other day, I was talking with a friend at the foreign Ministry. We were discussing the issue of economic development. In the meeting, that took place in a reception at one of the embassies of a European country, he argued foreign investors don't know about the great potential the country has to offer. "Foreign investors should come and invest in Yemen. We need to invite them over because there is great potential," he said.

I responded by saying that it is important for us to provide the right environment first. I tried to tell him that wishful thinking has nothing to do with what we are facing on the ground.

"Look at the hundreds of investment cases pending in courts. Look at the complaints, at the bureaucracy, the corruption, the weak infrastructure, the taxes and customs, and the obstacles that they are facing," I said with some frustration.

It is pathetic to see how most officials call to investors within and outside of the country, only to have those investors face a miserable reality on the ground. What is even more pitiful is that most officials don't realize the degree of competition in the region and continue to fool themselves that Yemen's potentials are real, and the others are mere decorations.

When I described the successful experience of Dubai, some of our officials picture it as a hollow economy that will blow up one day. On the other hand they think businesses that will succeed are in Yemen only. This thinking is common place in closed governmental circles and is dragging the country's ambitions and hopes down.

"What is it that the others have that we don't?" asks my official friend who wants to say that Yemen has much greater attractions. But, in my opinion, the fact that places like Dubai have started from scratch, with the exception of its oil revenues, is its source of pride. Meanwhile, a country like Yemen, with all its natural resources, beautiful terrains, excellent climate, and diverse and intelligent working force is falling behind in all aspects.

In the meeting, I tried to explain that the ball is mainly in our court. We need to establish a proper environment where the government should think of the importance of making investors successful and satisfied. We need to ensure the success of investors and businessmen in Yemen, and not only give licenses or invitations.

Furthermore, we need to develop an infrastructure that is capable of coping with the requirements of today. We have to invest heavily on the basis to build up at a later stage.

It currently is the responsibility of our decision-makers to ensure that investors are given the opportunity to work in a clean, transparent, effective, and friendly environment. Only when investors are encouraged by action - not mere talk - will we see a growing number of businessmen who would like to call this country their home.

Instead of thinking of direct profit from taxes and fees from investors, our government must concentrate on the long-term results of the success of investors in Yemen. Once those investors feel happy and satisfied and make good profit, they would automatically market Yemen on their own.

Will our authorities realize this for the sake of the country's economic future? Let's hope so.

The Editor

YEMEN
TIMES

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by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Sagqaf

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Must come from within

Change, reform
and development

By Prof. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Tarb
For the Yemen Times

No one in the Arab world denies that reform, by all means and from the political social and economic points of view, is a pressing need and persistent necessity to save what remains and reorder the Arab home.

It is vital to take the reform-oriented approach so that we can survive and withstand recent challenges of the era in the big village called the "world" with its capacious corners. Whoever blatantly rejects this necessity is either ignorant or a pretender. As an analogy, he would be someone who wants to hide sunlight with his feeble fingers, or put his head in the sand like an ostrich.

Yes, reform is necessary and needs to be adopted today in Sana'a, Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Kuwait and other Arab capitals. We should take all that seriously, but what kind of reform and through which means can it be realized? And what are the impediments and probable obstacles and how to overcome them without damaging the principles of the nation including traditions and customs, and with the incorporation of others' experiences and lessons making use of their mistakes.

All this is nice and obvious, but it is notable that despite the agreement of the majority of the "enlightened" Arabs with callers of reform in the region, the major point of difference revolves around the aims and means to reach reform.

However, some calls contain sinister elements, inviting for good with evil intents.

Reform needed by the Arab World has priorities, consecutive grades and we should be patient for it to be ripe. The application of such a reform requires awareness, enlightenment and gradual "medication" with neither haste nor slowness.

What makes us cautious and become suspicious of intentions and aims is the current sudden passion that has taken hold of the US administration and other

international sides. They are, ironically, very concerned about the interests of Arabs and their hearts are full of love that they want to hurl reform onto them.

What further instigates doubt is that reform calls are coeval with western pressure on the Arab states with no exception. We have already seen Iraq's experience and what has happened in it, ranging from violations, to chaos, to disintegration, to feuds, etc.

We have also Israel which unashamedly claims it is the first democracy in the Middle East while we view daily its brutish treatment of Palestinians and transgression on their rights, as well as the killing of children and the innocent and uprooting long settled residents.

How could we be fearless about our present and our children's future while we live in such conditions and read each day more pages of black books?

These facts oblige us to intensify calling for reform but from the inside and not as imposed from outside. It should be in line with our priorities and our Arabic and Islamic specialties and not according to the western dictations. We should take into account the objective prerequisites for the success of the reform plan in the region which are as follows:

* reaching a final, comprehensive and fair settlement to the Middle East's Cause, and granting the Palestinian people their lawful rights with Israel's pulling out from Arab occupied lands. The peace of the international legitimacy should prevail in order to eliminate the reasons that threaten the peace of the region and the world.

* finding out a solution to Iraq's problems by means of the results of the elections and replacing the occupying US forces with Arab and Islamic ones.

* combating terrorism and treating its reasons and motives. All people should be involved in the process of uprooting this phenomenon which has substantially harmed and threatened Arab countries.

Arab leaders should amend laws that hamper wider participation in elections such as that a candidate should have the

recommendation of a certain number of Parliament members. The president and vice president should be elected from a number of candidates. Opposition should cooperate in this attempt. Also laws should make a maximum of two times for someone to be a presidential candidate. Arabs need to respect the free will and confess the untruth in results of "99.9%"

These are the scientific principles for a start of the reform process in the region and to ensure its success. We have to define the relation between technology, economic advancement and democracy as well as corruption problems, the absence of law, brain drain, lack of balanced development, and human rights violations.

We should not focus on subsidiary issues and neglect the main ones which I have pointed out.

Is it possible to amend Arab states' constitutions and outlaw cross out provisions that confine liberty to elect leaderships. Election are to be conducted in Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen, why shouldn't we form committees to supervise such events in harness with Arab and international organizations (Arab League and UN).

All these concepts, if taken into consideration, will contribute to the sought-after reform. This was expressed by the Arab Strategic Forum, held in Dubai recently. The form sent a clear message to Arab decision-makers to hasten the reform program lest they face indomitable change winds that will be difficult to know its size and direction, as stated by sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai crown prince at the opening speech.

Yes, reform is necessary and inevitable so that we don't cry over lost chances later, but it should be a reform originated from within the Arab World and based on Arab convictions believing in change for the better. We, in Yemen, under the reign of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, witness a campaign against corruption, adopting reform and establishing the state of law and discipline. The talk will be continued.

Letters to the Editor

Hoping Aden prosperity

I read the very encouraging news about the Port of Aden in your newspaper. One hopes that all bids are scrutinized on merit, and not, as it is well known about Yemen, on the basis of which bidder pays more to the officials.

Many a good project was lost due to the greed and corruption of officials, while the region is in dire need of investors.

Let's hope and pray that this project sees light.

Meanwhile, I must also say that to start with and to ensure that the intended work of the COCC will be fruitful, all officials at the helm of said organisation must have a clean bill of health. Do they?

As the saying goes in Arabic: 'faqid al-shay la yo'te'h' (whoever doesn't have something, cannot give it!)

Salah Hamood
anaghulban@aol.com

Al-Haifi's 'Zionist' hallucinations continue...

Haifi, you once again manage to invent Zionist conspiracy theory to explain what is obvious. Beyond the ridiculous notion that the US wants to make Iraq a buffer state to protect Israel (Israel doesn't need a buffer zone), the notion that the US will attack Iran because of a Zionist concern is laughable.

It must be a Zionist conspiracy in your opinion... However, maybe, just maybe, there is another reason. Maybe the Iranians attempt to acquire nuclear weapons (I don't blame the Iranians I would do the same). Maybe it is because of

continued Iranian interference in Iraq and Afghanistan. Maybe it could be the fact that Iran wants Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Iranian parliament regularly chants "Death to America".

Maybe it is because Iran supports terrorist organizations. It could even be because the neo-conservatives (who come from a neo-liberal political philosophy) believe that the US should export democracy, with force if need be, to areas of the world where it may be well received.

But no, these explanations can't be right! It must be some dark Zionist plot. That way you can continue to focus on Israel and continue to blame them for the woes of the Middle East.

It was the Nazi's propaganda efforts that first realized that if you repeat a lie often enough people start to believe it as the truth. So I guess it isn't important that there is no all-controlling Zionist plot, if you just keep blaming everything on them it will be believed.

Richard Rubright
richard.rubright@verizon.net

Seeking my father

I hope that you could allow my letter to be published in your newspaper for a human cause. My father Dr. Anis Yousef Ali is a professor in Faculty of Engineering, Aden University. I didn't meet him for seven years already. I'd like to contact him but can't find a way to do so. Below I'll list my contacts. Please if there is a possibility that any of your readers knows about

him and could get him to call or contact me, I would be extremely grateful. I can be reached on my ICQ 266706838, mobile +7 903 717 84 65, or email below.

Leila Anis Yousef
leila22ru22@mail.ru

We can develop
in our own way

I must say that I fully agree with you in your editorials and articles in that you're trying to improve our country. Maybe we could now be known now for our effort of becoming a educated country. I just hope we can do it really soon so that our children of the future will have the same education as us in the United States. This way we won't have to bring our kids all the way here to be educated and make something of themselves; and at the same time they'll know Yemen and act like they're Yemeni and be educated they won't have to take on the traditions of Americans but Yemenis. This way we got the best of both worlds in one.

Yasimeen Khatari
yemenitebabe@aol.com

Uncle Sam's
direction is now Iran

Uncle Sam has reported to have given a final touch to its strategy as to how to strike Iran. On the contrary, Iranian defence minister came out with a warning that his country will use that weapon which has been kept secret so far. Is it a fact or myth that Iran, being our Muslim brother, does have such a weapon which could frighten Uncle Sam to pause or stop materialising his long-awaited plan?

Let's not forget the ground realities that it was the regime of Taliban that warned US to meet the deadliest consequences if attacked Afghanistan, but as you saw that nothing happened and finally US entered the mountainous area successfully. Then it was the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussain, who also used the same coin but in vain. In the given situations, it is now Iran which is also following in the footsteps of Taliban and Saddam Hussain in terms of issuing warning to Uncle Sam but will it bear any fruit if God forbid the latter go to strike Iran? I don't know whether the Iranian threat is also very similar to what the previous two regimes had rendered or full of what the minister has dropped a hint.

On the other hand, US President, George W. Bush, while being sworn in for the second term, made it very clear that his pledge of making the entire world free will be followed up properly. It means still lots of countries are under the rulers who are not liked by him or maybe not dancing to the tune of music at the White House.

Last but not least, the honourable president is requested to first purge his own society from the alarming ratio of crimes, decoities, thefts, killings, abductions, rapes, gang-rapes etc which have become a matter of the day, then he had better to come out to talk of freedom of the entire world. Excuse me...charity begins at home.

Barkatullah Marwat
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COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Moslems should
first tolerate
each other

When the eternal message of Islam was delivered to the ignorant Bedouins of Arabia, more than 14 centuries ago, it introduced several new social and cultural concepts, which were then completely unheard of. Not only did these new concepts set forth new guidelines for Moslems on how to interact with each other, but also introduced new frameworks for relations between Moslems and non-Moslems, who happened to be under the jurisdiction of a Moslem state. Thus, we saw how Islamic armies overran large territories, that were as familiar about Islam as they were about the shape of the Earth. Yet, when the people of these newly "opened" territories (Moslems called conquered territories "open territories" and described Islamic conquests as "openings", meaning they opened up these territories to the just rule of Islam), saw the tolerance preached and practiced by the successive Moslem caliphates that prevailed, most of the people of these "opened" territories saw in Islam their path to freedom and self esteem and social cohesion. They willingly adopted Islam and before long Islam prevailed as the dominant religion in these newly acquired territories that have become part and parcel of the Nation of Islam. Some of the newly acquired territories went even further and became the bearers of the Islamic message and established their own empires, while insisting that they are still the continuation of the Islamic Ummah or Nation which they took over from the previous regime that has weakened by age or corruption or chronic disputes over who should wield power in the Islamic nation. A prime example is the Ottoman Empire, which never considered itself as the "Turkish Empire" but the Ottoman Caliphate (and the Ottomans had taken over the Seljuk regime, also a Turkish people) regarded themselves as the continuation of the Islamic State or Ummah and the universalism of Islam was assured up to the early years of the 20th Century. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire had perished out and became almost confined to the present borders of modern Turkey. Thanks to Western prodding, Mustafa Ataturk abolished the Caliphate and it was thought that Islam was finished as an institutionalized political order.

In other areas that were not "opened" by military force, Moslem traders paved the way for the entry of Islam to large tracts of territory in Africa and Asia. Because of the observance of these traders of their religious creed and their display of sound human behavior and tolerance of others, again Islam spread rapidly in these territories were these merchants settled down and made new homes for themselves at the insistence of the local populations.

Throughout all this history, mostly because of the political disputes that arose between various leading elements of the Quriesh Tribe (the Prophet Mohammed's tribe, PAUH), in the few decades after the Prophet's death, political sympathies became religious sects over the centuries. Even the originators of these sects had no inclination of forming any organized sects or religious orders, but were merely expressing their views on certain primary or secondary issues of Islamic theology. Moreover, the overriding motivation of most of these Moslem scholars, who were well known in their time for their piety and wisdom in Islamic Law (Shari'ah), were actually more concerned about the unacceptable deviations of the regimes that prevailed in their times or the corruption that officials of the Moslem State have come to implant as the rule rather than the exception. It was only after the passing of these "founders" of Islamic sects that those who sympathized with their conceptual interpretation sought to create institutional frameworks or "sects". In principle, however Islam is really one religion and most of the sectoral differences within most Islamic states are for the most part concerned with secondary issues that have left major Islamic beliefs on the whole fairly uniform.

For this reason, notwithstanding the large followings that this sect or that sect were able to gather over the centuries, most Moslems looked to their sectoral differences as never worth feuding over, and literally accepted the existence of these sects, without prejudice to the overriding concepts of brotherhood and equal rights that all Moslems are entitled to. Thus states in which Sunnis prevailed left the Shiite communities in their realm carry on without trying to forcibly let the Sunni sect prevail, and the same is true where Shiites may have been allowed to establish Shiite regimes (as in present day Iran, where there is a sizable Sunni constituency).

However, some of the latest fundamentalists (such as those of Taliban) have come to create an unheard of schism within the Moslem world, by insisting that their interpretations of Islam are the only acceptable forms of Islam. These poorly informed deviates of Islam have even gone as far as sanctioning the blood and property of their fellow Moslems, of other sectoral persuasions. This is a serious problem that the Moslem world needs to deal with, if Islam is to maintain its forward looking image as a progressive and civilized religion that is unequalled historically and unmatched by any other civilization or empire, in terms of the tolerance that it practiced among its own constituencies and in allowing non-Moslem communities to remain within their midst. Not only were these communities allowed to remain free to practice their faiths as they saw fit, but Moslem governments were obligated to protect them from any harm from Moslems or non-Moslems alike. So, where do these deviates of Islam come up with their notions of declaring themselves the sole definers of Islamic beliefs and rejection of their own kind, which is as anathema to Islam as their ugly renditions of Jihad and their thirst for human blood? The discussion continues.

East and West



BY JAMIL ABDUL KARIM

Going through life blind

I'm not sure how it happened, but sometime while growing up I discovered reading. And recently, while finishing a particularly enjoyable book, a tattered paperback I bought at some used book store in the west, I've been reminded again that a book is never just a book.

Left alone, any book, sitting there, minding its own business, asks very little of anyone. But open it, and it lives. It breathes ideas. Like currency passed around, they're ideas that are not really owned by any one person. They're travelers, like on a train, where the scenery is as meaningful as the destination. Unselfishly give yourself to the written word, and learn that others, with thoughts of their own, are alongside.

A type of prison

How tragic then, to be unable to read even a single sound. If not a prison sentence, it must feel like going through life like a blind man.

I wonder if that's how 70 million Arabs feel. Yemen Times readers know the recently reported news that, according to a recent report by the Arab League Education, Science and Culture Organization (which represents the league's 21 countries) that's how many Arabs over the age of 15 now can't read or write. That's 35 per cent of the Arab world's adults. To give perspective, about one per cent of North American adults are illiterate, according to UN definitions.

The percentage of illiterate Arabs has actually fallen in recent decades. But surging population means number-wise there are 20 million more

than in 1970. The societal impact, especially since about half of all Arab women are illiterate, is predictable. For example, studies show a clear link between reading and birthrate.

In Yemen, with families averaging seven kids, they can't build schools fast enough. In fact, with Yemen's population projected to explode from 21 million to 50 million by 2050, one expert calls it "the Middle East bomb nobody wants to talk about." It will affect virtually every other development barometer. Forty-five per cent of Yemenis already live on under \$2 a day, and two-thirds of rural residents have no clean water.

Birth control

Few officials, even here, would argue against educating women about birth control as the key to improve it all. But only 60 per cent of Yemeni children — boys and girls — are now enrolled in school. Also, there are powerful religious and cultural values telling families to have more kids. So while it's fine to preach to the converted, it seems to me that the bigger need is to work on the men: the fathers and husbands and brothers who set the family tone.

Sometimes necessity breeds ignorance. If children are one's only social safety net, let's have lots. And if there's nobody else to feed the goats and plow, why choose Fatima over Ahmed to go to school? They're tough arguments. Especially when decisions are pawned off on God.

More often than not, however, the real issue is fear. As has been pointed out by some Yemen Times letter-to-the-editor writers, teaching a woman

to read will empower her at the expense of men. She might determine if, and when, and how large (or small) her family will be, even if she's happy with just one girl.

Many men in Yemen, and elsewhere in the developing world, just can't accept this. In fact, as someone who has spent time in the west, I find it troubling how many young men here are quite open about not wanting to marry a woman who's been to university. After all, if these uppity girls aren't perceived as being lippy and argumentative, they at least want a career of their own. How threatening.

Cultural change

Slow as it is, cultural change is always possible. Some richer Arab oil states have made literacy strides for both genders. And certainly outside help is always needed. But as crucial as foreign aid is, I'm afraid developing countries like Yemen can go with its hand out to west, though global visions like the Millennium Goals, until the Third World cows come home.

The deeper need is basic heart change. Men over here simply need to appreciate that both genders are equally and inherently valuable. And donor groups that want to help bring lasting improvements need to understand these cultural and human issues, and then face them head on.

Otherwise it's just like the blind leading the blind. And those jail doors won't budge.

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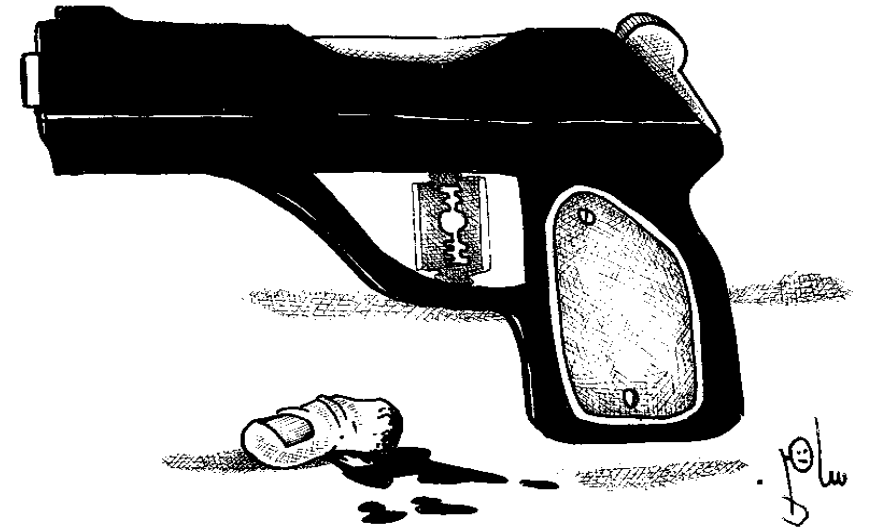


A Yemeni boy and girl enjoy a book with an expatriate. Yemen's future depends on both boys and girls knowing how to read. (Yemen Times photo by Jamil Abdul Karim.)

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Insurgent groups in Iraq



By Samer A.



By Yahya Al-Olfi
alolfi@hotmail.com

Reflections

Racism at weddings, and poor airline service

In some articles in the past I did touch upon some traditions which have become obsolete and used to be practiced in some areas of Yemen.

Today I would like to speak about one of the traditions, which is still being practiced until this very moment in a district named "Qabaita" in Taiz Province at the southwestern corner of today's Yemen.

One of my close friends wanted to spend this Eid in a different interesting place and as he has not visited Qabaita district he immediately accepted an invitation extended to him by one of his Qabaita friends.

This individual is an original Sana'a dweller, so he naturally enjoyed the clean fresh air and the calm nights of the countryside as opposed to the rancid air and pollution of the capital city, but felt rather sad when he saw some people there showing off their riches in front of the mostly farmer community members by exhibiting their latest cars models, killing unnecessary number of oxen and sheep etc.

He saw the people there visit the rich living afar and avoiding the poor residing near. But what indeed attracted his whole attention and made him all the while confused was a strange custom being practiced until this very day in this district, specifically during marriage ceremonies.

People here refer to a marriage ceremony as being either hot or cold based on the number and beauty of the hired girls band, in addition to the large piles of Catha Edulis.

The relatives of the bridegroom in order to receive more guests and show off a hotter marriage ceremony hire a band of adolescent Yemeni African girls, numbering 6 to 12 girls, whom

the elderly, fathers, sons and brothers race to dance and hug with.

The community here considers this normal because the girls are not of their community but from a lower cast (It is considered dishonorable to do that with a normal community member and un-Islamic).

Of course such a band of girls receives, in addition to the agreed amount, banknotes from ecstatic guests. Community women here do not feel jealous because they do not consider the girls of an equal status and naively think that their men won't dare transgress the dancing limits. You would hear them naively saying how dare these dance with such dirty insignificant lot!

In fact the people here call these people "Khadims" and bring up their children to disdain such people. He heard them also repeating a community proverb which goes: "Whoever befriends a Khadim shall for sure live in continued regret" (in Arabic: Mansahabalkhadim Asbahnadim).

Another rite is shooting in the air with machinegun fire which is costly and dangerous at the same time. A stranger rite shows how lucky bridegrooms here are! They pass the whole night beside their brides surrounded by the beautiful higher cast village girls who dance until dawn light, another friend joked and called it sexy Islam.

During the past week or so, Dr. Khalid Saeed Abdulrahman, Dr. Rafeek Mojahid Ali, who have recently obtained their Ph.Ds from Byelorussia in addition to another Yemeni patient who underwent an eye surgery in Moscow, decided and thought it was wise to fly on Qatar Airways thinking that it shall for sure offer them a distinguished scrumptious

service.

They were told back in Moscow that they would have to remain in Transit in Qatar for Sixteen Hours until the next day, that everything is pre-arranged and each and every passenger is bound to be offered a room and breakfast until departure time.

As soon as the plane arrived in Qatar all passengers of different nationalities were transferred to the hotel, while the three Yemenis were set aside and their passports and tickets expropriated and were told to remain in the airport lounge until departure time.

Trying in vain to convince in broken English the predominantly Indian exclusively English Speaking airport staff that they should be treated at least like the other passengers, albeit Yemenis are supposed to be closer than others for millions of reasons. The Indian airport employees and the airport Qatari security men told them that it was impossible, for instructions ordained that Yemenis should be treated as such.

The poor three passengers remained in the airport and slept on the concrete floor until departure time and whoever was not already ill became ill, and he who was ill became worse.

From now on if you're a Yemeni please think twice before flying Qatar Airways, because it is safer for you not to and should from now on avoid falling into the trap of the false cordial relations voiced by both countries' regimes.

In a nutshell, generally all Gulf casual states should and must be honest with our leaders and Sheiks as they are honest and straight forward with normal Yemeni citizens and call a spade a spade.

Lessons from the Tsunami

By JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

There are many lessons that emerge from the tsunami that brought such devastation and loss of life to Asia. It demonstrated the power of globalization, as television brought vivid pictures of the destruction to homes around the world. Indeed, it is at times like this that the world truly does seem like a global village.

Of course, it seemed to take somewhat longer for news of the extent of the disaster to reach the Crawford, Texas, ranch of President Bush. But, in the end, he decided to interrupt his vacation and offer amounts of aid that were successively revised upwards, in a global competition which promised to benefit those who were desperate for help.

America's aid still appeared niggardly when compared with the amounts offered by countries with a

fraction of America's economic wealth. Lightly populated Australia offered more than twice America's assistance, Japan promised almost 50% more, and Europe pledged more than five times as much. This led many observers to reflect on the fact that the world's richest country was in general the most miserly in foreign assistance — all the more so in comparison to the amount it spends on war and defense.

The disaster was international, so it was appropriate that the United Nations take the lead in coordinating the relief effort. Unfortunately, in an effort that was widely seen as another attempt to undermine multilateralism, the US tried to lead a "core group" driving the assistance program, ignoring ongoing efforts within the region and at the UN. Whatever America's motive, it later wisely decided to join the UN effort. The Bush administration's face-saving rhetoric that it had rushed to push together the core group in the

absence of other efforts was quietly let to pass.

The response of some countries within the region was truly impressive, showing how far they had come in establishing efficient and effective governments. Myriad details were addressed: Thailand flew ambassadors to the affected part of the country to help attend to the needs of their citizens; helped those who lost their money and passports return home, provided health care for the injured, set up systems to identify bodies, and dealt with the difficulties posed by shortages of body bags and the lack of cold storage facilities.

Countries, like Thailand, that felt that they could handle the finances on their own asked that assistance be directed to others. They did ask one thing: a reduction of tariff barriers and greater access to markets abroad. They didn't want a handout, only a chance to earn income. The response, at least at the time of this

column's writing, has mostly been deafening silence.

On the other hand, the G-7 made a truly important contribution in offering debt relief. This is especially important for Indonesia, which must service a debt of \$132 billion (of which \$70 billion is owed to public creditors or guaranteed by government agencies). Even without the tsunami, this debt burden would have been an enormous hindrance to the country's development as it finally recovers from the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis.

Indeed, there is a compelling case to be made for Indonesian debt relief in any case, given that much of the debt was incurred in loans to the corrupt Suharto government. Lenders knew, or should have known, that not all of the money was going to help Indonesian development. Moreover, some of the debt was incurred as part of the 1997-1998 crisis, which was aggravated and deepened by IMF-imposed poli-

cies.

No one pretends that we can prevent or alter the forces of nature. Rather, we have to learn to cope with them. There are now calls for improved tsunami early warning systems. But in one area, global warming, we have already received an early warning. Most countries have recognized this, coming together in Rio and Kyoto to do something about it—not enough, but the Kyoto protocol was intended only as a start. Sadly, global warming will likely destroy some of the same countries ravaged by the tsunami. Low lying islands like the Maldives will become submerged.

We are, however, still not a global village. After first disputing that there was scientific evidence of the problem, the largest polluter in the world, the US, is now simply refusing to do anything about it (other than preaching voluntary restraint—of which there is little evidence, at least in America). The international

community has yet to figure out what to do with an aberrant member who fails to live up to its responsibilities as a global citizen.

Optimists say that technology will solve the problem. Realists observe that in the long race between the environment and technology, it appears that technology has so far been losing. Nature, as we have learned from the tsunami, has its own timetable. Unless we learn how to respect it, we will all miss the boat.

Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, is Professor of Economics at Columbia University and was Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to President Clinton and Chief Economist and Senior Vice President at the World Bank. His most recent book is *The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World's Most Prosperous Decade*.

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YT Business

Yemen's economic program

Many factors involved in economic health

BY DR. ALI ABDURRAHMAN AL-BAHRE
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

As defined by the International Monetary Fund, the economic reform program includes a number of economic criteria and values, the most important of which are:

- 1) The general budget of the state in terms of revenues, expenses, deficit and the budget surplus.
- 2) The payment balance, particularly the current balance in the payment balance and this is reflected in what is being produced by the country including commodities and services as well as what is imported and the surplus revenues of the capital and workforce.
- 3) The monetary policy, the price of exchange, stability of prices and interests, stability of currency power and the freedom of exchange prices.
- 4) Economic and entrepreneurial policies prepared for international and local investments
- 5) The annual economic growth rate scored by the country
- 6) The policy if subsidy offered by the government for commodities, services and the government-owned institutions.

Looking at the above list of criteria, we can assess the financial and economic reform implemented by the government.

Regarding the general budget, we find that the public expenses of the

budget are estimated at YR70 billion per year. The total amount of public revenues, on the other hand, is estimated at YR 650 billion per year, resulting in a deficit worth of YR 50 billion a year.

According to the international criteria, the deficit of general budget could come at 3% to 5% of the total gross domestic product per year. If we considered that the gross domestic product in Yemen comes at YR 1.7-1.8 trillion, the warranted budget deficit should be YR 60-100 billion in the year.

Bajammal's cabinet could make the deficit stable in the acceptable prospective compared to that pursued in the European Union as it permits its member countries a 3% deficit out of the gross domestic production.

Part of such success can be attributed to international conditions resulting in the price increase of oil in the International Markets, which climbed up to \$45-50 per barrel.

In our view, oil prices in the coming year will behave according to the following factors:

- The continuously raising demand for oil in the US Market, because of the US economic recovery as it reached, in the last fourth of 2004, 4% annual average. The US economic recovery is estimated to retain its power during 2005 and this helps raise the price of oil.
- The continuity of economic growth in China, which reaches an 8% annual average. China became the second importer of oil following the USA and it surpassed Japan in the rank of oil importers. Besides, the European and Chinese economies,

experiencing miserable conditions, lead to an increase in the demand of oil.

- Security factors in the Middle East
- The halt of production at the Giant Russian Oil Company due to tax-related procedures as the company suffers a \$3-billion debt to the Russian Government. Due to this, the International Market loses 700 thousand barrels of oil every day.
- The stability of political and workforce situations in Venezuela as well as the political situations in Nigeria and the syndicating and workforce situations in Yemen.

Mentioned earlier is the international aspect with respect to oil-related issues and there is a local aspect not less important than the international one which is the continuity of explorations of oil and gas wealth in the Yemeni lands to reinforce spares of this energy and its resources.

The domestic consumption of oil should be restricted because this aspect is one of the means that help enhance the effectiveness of oil wealth and develop the economy of the country.

Additionally, there are three other sectors not less important than oil and gas which are fisheries wealth, environment and water and their maintenance and sustainability, tourism, and workforce and its training.

There are several long-run factors to be prepared for from now so as to maintain the economic balance in the future, including the stability of the State's general budget.

Payments balance: we have so far discussed the current balance in the payment balance that consists of exported commodities and services plus the net revenues of capital and workforce. This balance consists of commodities imported by Yemen such as wheat cars, communication media and other commodities, subtracting from them oil fish and other commodities Yemen export to other countries.

The revenues of capital and foreign works in Yemen should be compared with what is attained by the Yemeni capital invested abroad, specifically, the credits of the Central Bank of Yemen and the other Yemeni commercial banks plus the revenues of the Yemeni workforce abroad. The resulting difference is due to give the net revenues of the capital and work either positively or negatively.

As remarked in the payments balance, more attention needs to be drawn towards oil exports as well as revenues of international and local capitals, and all of these are variables to be specified by the State's administration. But commodities and services are in the hands of the consumer and the commercial sector as well. There is a remarkable tendency toward the increase of imports but the declination of the average per capita income due to the population boom put real and practical restrictions that are difficult to overcome.

The deficit of payment balance compared to the international criteria, maximally 5% of the overall gross domestic production should be taken for granted in the implementation of effective economic strategy. If the

deficit exceeded the just-mentioned rate, the warn is due to be followed by danger.

Looking at the world today, we find that the US economy tops the list of countries that suffer from permanent deficit in the commercial account of payment balance.

The 2004 deficit reaching \$700 billion became a catastrophe for the industrial countries and developing countries as well. This deficit makes up 7% of the US gross domestic product, which amounted up to \$20 trillion per year (30% of the world production). This deficit is the main reason behind the deterioration of the price of dollar that declined to 40% against other international powerful currencies such as Euro and Pound.

If we applied the criterion of deficit or surplus in the payment balance in the Yemeni economy, we find that the warranted deficit must be in the range of YR100-200 billion per year. The national economy can manipulate such deficit without harming the price of the YR.

Having a quick glance at the deficit of Yemen's payment balance, we find that the deficit over the last few years was in the warranted range.

The high prices of oil have the primary role in achieving stability in the current balance and prevent deficit from getting doubled to go beyond control. Nevertheless, we can say that the economic reform program is able to control the situations of payments balance.

If the deficits of the State's general budget and the payment balance were controlled, the price of YR for the dollar would be retained.

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	186.5100	186.7800
Sterling Pound	350.6800	351.1800
Euro	243.1900	243.5400
Saudi Rial	49.7300	49.8100
Kuwaiti Dinar	638.7300	639.6600
UAE Dirhem	50.7900	50.8600
Egyptian Pound	31.9900	32.0400
Bahraini Dinar	494.7100	495.4300
Qatari Rial	51.2500	51.3200
Jordanian Dinar	263.0600	263.4400
Omani Rial	484.4500	485.1500
Swiss Franc	156.6700	156.8900
Swedish Crown	26.7500	26.7900
Japanese Yen	1.7950	1.7976

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

Private sector to boost 2005 jobs

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Participants in the workshop on private sector development and job opportunities that was held from Jan. 15-17 evaluated what was achieved during 2004 in the Taiz and Aden provinces and reviewed the program 2005 work plan.

Mohammed Abdulaziz, a government representative, said that the government intends to ensure employment opportunities through the program, and wants the active participation of others.

The program has been coordinated between the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training and is expected to expand into other provinces. A committee has been set up jointly by the two ministries to draft strategies for the next period, in early 2007.

Yusuf Toma, manager of the program, said "the program hopefully will cover other provinces ... [and] is primarily concerned with creating job opportunities for young people and reducing the unemployment rate, one of the most difficult problems facing the country."

Electrical energy

Siemens, Bin Laden win Mareb project

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The German Company Siemens, in association with the Binco Company of Saudi Bin Laden Group, has won a tender for the implementation of Mareb project for electric power generation by using natural gas.

Yemeni council of ministers has endorsed the tender for the building of \$159 million worth power station with a capacity of 341 megawatts. The station is part of an integrated 700-megawatt power station.

The Yemeni government is also planning the implementation of several electric power projects, among them five stations working by natural gas in some governorates at a capacity reaching about 3,000 megawatts.

Second phase

It is designed that the energy of Mareb power station productive capacity to reach in the second

phase at 700 Megawatt, to be negotiated for with the German company of Siemens.

The accomplishment of the project is connected to the level and speed of building energy lines for transferring power from Mareb to Sana'a and a relay station. Mareb power generating project includes importation and operation of three generating turbine gas units, with various electric transformers.

Integrated systems

The project will also include the building of integrated systems for electricity, control, fuel, water, ventilation, conditioning, combating fire, high-tension keys and electric poles and building of residential units.

People are waiting for the completion of this project on its fixed time. It has been planned that the project would be finished in two years and a half.

The project is to be funded by the government, the Arab Fund for Development and the Saudi Fund.

Small and medium-sized factories

Success for industries takes planning

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Planning for the industrialization of the product in Yemen by the government, represented by the ministry of social affairs and labour, still will not guarantee the provision of enough amount of money for administration and investment of small enterprises, especially for industry.

Small and medium industrial projects in Yemen are not being accomplished in accordance with field studies that would help in the following:

- Drawing up a study on economic feasibility for industrial projects;
- Administration of the project according to rules of modern administration. Good administration leads to the success of the industrial project;
- Gaining an income compatible with invested capital,
- Meeting the needs and requirements of modern human life, such as food, clothing, lodging and means of transport,
- Encouraging improvement of living conditions and culture, the prosperity of the public and their needs at working sites and in their



A Yemeni woman works in a factory.

various professions. The building of small and medium projects begins with choosing the project and ends with arrival of the product to the consumer.

There is a need for planning for the product and its industrialization and regarding the costs of direct labour, planning for the detailed dates of the industrialization process and following up the materials necessary

for the factory.

One reason for failure of many establishments is because of the lack of a study on economic feasibility for them.

The study should also include the discussion of the state of the market in the coming period of time, and predictions of the volume of the working capital, new equipment and products and programs of advertising,

the effort of selling and researches of marketing and qualification and training of producers.

Out of this, experts believe in increasing small and medium factories and deepening the relationship between all sizes of industrial establishments, especially those practicing modern service activities related to production, marketing and those of after sale.

Ancient traditions

Solomon and Sheba

(TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY DAVID BEN-ABRAHAM)

When King Solomon had invited the neighbouring kings bordering upon his country to come up unto him, in order to show them his glory, and especially, to show them his ability to converse with the birds and animals and creeping things, compelling them to do whatsoever he should command, simply by speaking with them, he obtained his desire and had the kings of the east and west, north and south, gathered together in his banqueting hall, where they all sat down together to observe this great spectacle. King Solomon then called in the animals, birds and creeping things, one by one, to parade before the king and his onlookers, without any man leading them, and without any of them being bound by fetters or restraints.

While this was taking place, King Solomon noticed that the hoopoe bird was absent among the birds, and commanded his servants to bring unto him the bird, even if it meant chaining him. When he was eventually brought before the king, the king enquired where he had been. The hoopoe replied that the king should not be wroth, for he had gone for days without food and drink, flying in the heavens, hoping withal to find a land or kingdom where Solomon's fame had not yet reached, and then to return unto the king, and duly report his findings to the king. After these entreaties, the bird proceeded to report on a kingdom which he had discovered afar off, governed by a queen, the queen of Sheba, from the castle Qitor. Their country, he said, was a good land, with trees and gardens watered by the rivers issuing forth from the Garden of Eden, and where there was gold and silver aplenty, and where the citizens of that country made no warlike gestures, and wore crowns upon their heads. At hearing this, King Solomon took up the hoopoe in his hands, and commanded his scribes to write an epistle unto the queen of Sheba, which epistle should then be bound to the wing of the bird, and the bird sent back on his journey into the land of Sheba. The content of that epistle was this:

"From me, King Solomon. Greetings unto thee, and greetings to thy servants. In order that you might know that G-d hath made me king over the wild beasts and fowl of the air, and that all the kings of the east and of the west, of the south and of the north, do come and salute me, so too, if it shall now please you, come thou unto me and pay homage unto me. I shall do unto thee great honour, more so than what I do to the other kings who sit before me. But if you do not wish to do so, neither wilt thou come and salute me, then know of a certainty that I will send against thee kings, and legions, and horsemen to wage a war against you. And if you shall ask within yourself who are these kings and legions and horsemen whom King Solomon hath to send, be apprised that the wild creatures they are the kings and legions and horsemen. And if you shall ask, moreover, which of the creatures are the horsemen in this army, be apprised that the fowl of the air they are the horsemen. They are my troop, the legions who will strangle you upon your beds in the midst of your houses. And the wild beasts shall kill you in the fields, while the birds of the air shall devour your flesh from your bodies!"

Now since the hoopoe bird was greatly desirous of being sent back to the land of Sheba with a message from the king, he was forthwith released with this message to bring to the queen of Sheba. Whereupon, he spread his wings aloft, chirped as he flew away, and was quickly joined by a large flock of birds incapable of being numbered. These all lighted upon the castle Qitor, in the land of Sheba, at the time when the queen of Sheba was going out in the morning to make her obeisance to the sun, which was on the rise. But for the multitude of birds, the sun would have put forth its rays. Yet, now, the sky was darkened by the multitude of fluttering creatures.

The queen, being astounded by such a sight, immediately rent her garment. At this token, the hoopoe bird suddenly descended in plain view of the queen, and she took notice that there was an epistle bound to one of its wings. She took up the bird and untied the letter, reading what was written therein. Again, she could not withhold her shock and surprise, and so she raised her hand a second time, and rent her garment. She then sent and called for the elders and great men of her kingdom, saying unto them, "Have ye not heard

what King Solomon has sent unto me?"

They answered her, "We do not know such a one as King Solomon, neither will we acknowledge his kingdom." Yet, the queen was not satisfied with their counsel and advice, and so quickly called and sent for all of her ships at sea, and commanded her sailors to load them with timbers of box-wood, and jewels and precious stones, and that all vessels should be fitted out to the deck's brim with such things as they might stand in need of for a long and protracted voyage at sea. Camels were also to be carried along, so as to permit hauling the burthens once they had landed

by Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, to Jerusalem, and when the king was told that the queen of Sheba had just arrived in the city, he stood up from his place and went to sit in his glass house. The queen was brought before him, and when she saw the king sitting in his glass house, she thought within herself that the king sat upon water, and so proceeded to draw up the hem of her dress so that she could pass over without getting wet. The king then saw her legs that they were full of hair, and when the queen had sat down beside him, he said unto her, "Thy beauty is the beauty befitting women, but thy hairs are

king and queen, while Benaiah passed the same onto a servant who stood nearby. When this procession came to an end, each child returned to his place within sight of the king, and the king answered:

"'Tis but a trial of character, it is. For the mannerisms of a lad are not as those of a maid. Call hither my servants, and let them fill the floor of the room with walnuts. Let each child take up into the borders of his skirt his fill, or as many as he can thereby hold, and I shall forthwith tell thee who is male, and who is female."

No sooner had the word been spoken than the floor of the room was filled with

quality of linen produced, whilst the poor cannot afford to buy it, and settle for a poorer quality, which causes them great discomfort when first worn by them, until the fabric of the linen cloth is broken in by long wear. Moreover, when men die, only the rich can afford to buy coloured linen shrouds to bury their dead, whilst the poor cannot afford it.⁹ A dead man who is wrapped in a burial shroud finds praise from men, but woe unto the living man who wears a burial shroud! Birds eat the flax seeds and make their nests from its fibres, and they are made happy thereby. But fish are caught in nets made of linen

a great mystery, normally hidden from men. For when he brings forth his seed in the heat of desire, he must do so with the intent of catching those snakes."¹¹

When the queen had heard these matters, she was satisfied with what she had heard, and made note of the things. Now when King Solomon had entertained her a great while, and had given her gifts to take back into her own country, and had shown her his house, and the great feats of engineering used by him in constructing the house of the forest of Lebanon, as well the splendour of his table and the orderly manner of his attendants and their fine apparel, as also the ascent he would make use of when going up unto the Temple of G-D, with its impregnable walls, she resolved to ask him one last question, saying:

"My lord and Sovereign, at thy behest I have come unto thee, traversing both land and sea, and taking the entire Government along with me, to hear this thy wisdom. And, indeed, it was but a small report that I heard in mine own land concerning thee, until I came here to see and hear it for myself. Thy wisdom far exceedeth that which was told to me by my servants. And even then, I could not believe it until I had seen it! Happy are the men who serve thee, and blest is the G-d who delightest in thee to make thee a king of his people! Art thou then the Messiah who is wont to come into the world?"

Answered the king: "Let not thy countenance be distraught, O fair queen, that G-d hath chosen to impart wisdom unto his subjects. For he is the G-d who made heaven and earth, and we are his people. Is it not then commensurable with his excellence to make me a king of his people? Yet, even so, I am not he whom thou seekest."

So, she went away into her own land, leaving behind her a great reputation for one who sought after virtue.

Sources

1 Kings 10: 1-ff; RABASH; Yilquth Shimoni on Chronicles, section 1085; Zohar, section Balak, items 183-184 in new editions, or 194 in old editions; Talmud, Baba-Bathra 15b; Midrash on Proverbs known as Shoher Tov; Alpha-Beta of Ben-Sira (in manuscript form); Midrash Hagadol on the Book of Genesis, 25:6; Targum Sheni of Megillath Esther; Antiquities of Josephus; and Midrash Hahefetz, in the section known as Haftarah.

1 However incredible this might sound, we are admonished to remain faithful to the traditions as they have been reported, without changing or altering what has come down to us.

2 Meaning, the continent of Africa, since the Suez Canal was not yet built.

3 Heb. afarsemom, also falsemon. Believed to be Balsamodendron opobalsamum, but classified by some botanists as Commiphora opobalsamum (which has yet still the other taxonomic name of Commiphora gileadensis), a tree still found in the Dhofar district of Yemen. A similar tree is Commiphora meccanensis.

4 Meaning, if you wish to know the greatness of a king, observe the calibre of men who serve him.

5 Id est, the stibium clings to the spittle on the iron pin.

6 Distilled from petroleum, and used in burning lamps since ancient times.

7 To-day, these plants are more commonly called Cattails.

8 Linum usitatissimum

9 For which reason, Rabban Gamaliel the elder later changed the practice, and made it compulsory that all men, whether poor or rich, buy and make use of only non-coloured burial shrouds to bury their dead, so as not to shame those who were poor.

10 The story of Lot's daughters is related in Genesis 19: 30-ff.

11 These snakes were believed to have come into existence by the wicked practice of any sorcerer who used at least three different types of sorcery. A person who stood in need of their bones was required to take three bones from three snakes in order for them to have any effect or counter-remedy against any or several of the three types of sorcery.

David Ben-Abraham has been fascinated over the subject of the Queen of Sheba, ever since his tour of Yemen in 1979. In this short-story, many of the scenes described are found in, both, ancient Arabic and Aramaic sources.

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The Temple of the Sun in Mareb, believed to be the location where the Queen of Sheba ruled.

and gone ashore. She also commanded that six-thousand youth, some boys and some girls, should accompany her on this journey, children who were to make up the main core of her delegation, besides a great entourage of sailors and servants and attendants, and only those children who were born all in the same year, and in the same month, and on the selfsame day, and in the same hour, and all of them must needs have the exact same height or stature, and all of them must have the same hair trimmings, and all must be clothed in purple tunics, so as to make it hard, at first sight, to distinguish between them, that is, the boys from the girls.¹

Meanwhile, the queen of Sheba sent back a message to King Solomon, requesting leave of the king to come unto him in seven years' time, considering the long voyage that had to be taken at sea. For such would be the time needed to fit out an expedition, and to set sail when the winds were favourable, and then to circumnavigate the entire continent,² docking at the various ports while en route, in order to rest and to replenish their supplies, and again, to avoid traveling the Great Sea (i.e., the Mediterranean) in the midst of winter for fear of being shipwrecked. Yet, she added, if the king should pray to his G-d, perhaps she could come unto him in only three years' time. Now the men and sailors of Sheba, though skillful at sea, knew not that had they embarked on their journey by foot, traversing the great and barren wastelands, they would have reached their destination in far less time.

At the end of three years, the queen of Sheba came with her entourage, a great train of servants and attendants, bearing in their camels' baggage precious stones, and gold and silver, and much spices, as well the Balsam of Mecca.³ The king, having intelligence that they had arrived off shore, sent along Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, to greet them and to escort them along their way to Jerusalem. Now this man was of extraordinary beauty and grace, like a flower when it blossoms in the morning, and like the planet Venus which shines out brightly among the stars, and like a rose standing by the rivulets of water.

So when the queen of Sheba saw him, she mistook him for being King Solomon, and so alighted from off her camel. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, enquired why she had gotten herself down from her camel. She answered, "Art thou not King Solomon?" He returned an answer, saying that he was not the king, but rather one of his attendants who stood before him. At hearing this answer, she immediately turned away her face, and made this proverb to her great men who came along with her in this journey: "If you have not seen for yourselves the lion, then at least observe his resting place. If you have not yet seen King Solomon, then at least observe the good man who standeth before him!"⁴

She and her great train were conducted

the hairs befitting men. Hair on a man's body is comely, but uncomely on a woman's."

Now the king greatly desired her beauty, but was taken aback by the hair upon her legs, and so it was that he devised a method by which unwanted hairs may be removed, that is, by taking an admixture of lime and water and orpiment (arsenic trisulfide), which the king himself discovered and made known its usage abroad, calling it neskasir. When the queen had bathed herself that night in its solution, the hair upon her legs fell off, and she found favour in the eyes of the king, who then brought her into his bedchamber. Now while she yet sat in his glass house, the king asked her, "What portends to thy coming, my fair queen? Hath the tokens of the hoopoe bird summoned thee unto me, which he didst carry in his wings aloft?"

She answered, "Nay, my lord the king. 'T was not merely tidings from thee which didst trouble me, for I fain not look with contempt upon thy calling. But rather, we have heard it stated by our ancestors of old, even by Abraham who was married to Keturah, who bare him six sons, from whom came Sheba our ancestor, that Abraham's descendants through Isaac would bring forth a deliverer into the world, even the Messiah. For this is what was meant by the words, 'For unto the sons of the concubines belonging to Abraham, Abraham did give unto them gifts, and sent them away, etc.' (Gen.25:6); Those gifts meaning none other than the mystery of the earth's redemption, delivered unto us by our ancestor Abraham. I have come here out of due respect to his great name, to wit, G-d's name, to know whether or not thou art this Messiah."

Now Solomon knew not what to answer the woman at her words, being astonished at her great measure of faith. And so, not willing to disappoint the queen who had endangered herself to come unto him, he wisely evaded her question, and asked, "Who are these youths, my fair queen, who have come along with thee?" "My lord," she said, "if thou art so wise that even the wild beasts of the field and the birds of the air do heed thy call, then I shall yet make trial of this thy wisdom. For I would prove thy wisdom by words and by riddles, and by way of puzzling problems which I shall pose unto thee. Canst thou then distinguish between manchild and womankind, though they might appear to thee to be alike?"

At these words, she nodded, and the children whom she had brought along with her came forward in single file, passing before the king. Each child carried within his bosom a vessel laden with either gold or silver, and the best of the spices and incense that grew in their land. When each child reached the place where the king sat, he or she bowed down before the king, presenting his vessel to Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, who stood before the

walnuts. At the given signal, the children began to fill up their garments, racing to outdo the other. The boys filled their garments by lifting up their skirts, exposing their legs without the slightest embarrassment or shame. The girls, however, bent over awry, and out of modesty would not expose their legs.

"Here, then, my queen, are thy menservants and here are thy maidservants!" quoth Solomon, who rising up from his chair did intimate with his hand to separate the boys from the girls, putting the one on his right side, and the other on his left side.

The queen, not yet convinced of the king's wisdom, answered: "My lord the king, this may have been but a simple trial of character for thee, yet perchance other questions and hard riddles will prove thy wisdom most consummately. Allow me, therefore, to ask thee three questions, which if thou shalt answer correctly, disclosing the secret meanings of my words, I shall know indeed that thou art a wise man of uncommon wisdom. Yet, if thou shalt fail, you shall be esteemed as all other men of regal order. Tell me, if you can, since we have heard that thou art wise also in the natural sciences, what is like unto a wooden well, the contents of which are drawn up, as it were, by a bucket of iron; that thing taken up no more than stones, which forthwith are irrigated by water?"

Answered the king: "The reed container, or vial, which carrieth the black antimony known as stibium, which stone when crushed is used by women in painting their eyelids, and by men as a remedy in eye ailments, and which they apply to themselves by wetting the iron pin with their spittle."⁵

"Correct!" said the queen, and then proceeded to ask the king another question, saying: "What is like dust, in that it cometh forth from the earth? Yet, when it comes forth, its food becomes the earth upon which we stand. It is split as water, and causes the house to be seen?"

Answered the king: "Kerosene!"⁶

"Correct!" said the queen, and then pronounced an even harder riddle to ask the king, saying: "Whenever there is a strong gale, this thing is always at the forefront. It makes a great and bitter shout, and bows down its head as a bulrush.⁷ It is a thing lauded by the rich and wealthy, yet deplored by the poor; a thing of praise to the dead, yet strongly detested by the living. It is the happiness of birds, yet the grief of all fishes. What is it?"

Answered the king: "Flax linen!"⁸ For a strong gale can only mean that it is used in making sails for ships, which same sails are driven by strong winds. Now these linen stalks, after soaking, are first pounded and beaten in order to expose the good fibres, hence the great and bitter shout it makes. (Like bulrushes, the head of its stalks are split open, appearing to bow down.) The rich laud it, because they are able to afford the softest and most fine

cords, and are grieved thereby."

The queen of Sheba, not being able to conceal her amazement at the ease with which the king answered her questions, propensed to ask him yet other questions, saying: "Seven are departing. Nine are entering in. Two are giving drink, but only one is drinking. What are they?"

Now the king thought within his heart, no man will speak upon a matter except that which is closest to him in his heart. So, too, this woman will ask none other than that which is in her heart, and a woman's heart is mostly on child bearing and children, jewellery, perfumes and cosmetics and clothing. So the king answered her:

"The seven whom you have spoken of as departing are the seven days of a woman's separation from her husband when she is unclean by reason of her natural purgation. Yet, while she enters her nine months of pregnancy, the seven days of uncleanness are not to be found with her, since she remains clean for that entire duration of time. Thus, the seven being departed, the nine come in. Whilst the two whom you have said are giving drink, these are the two breasts giving milk to the newborn infant. However, the only one actually drinking from those breasts is the babe himself!"

Again, she asked the king: "This thing, at first, goes upon four. Then it goes upon two. At last, it goes upon three. What is it?"

The king replied: "When a child is born, he first crawls upon four. When he learns to walk, he walks upon twain. When the child becomes old, and is waxen in years, he is helped by the cane - hence, he goes upon three."

She asked furthermore: "A woman once said to her son, 'Thy father is my father. Thy grandfather is my husband. Thou art my son, and I am thy sister.' Who can this be?"

The king, reflecting, said: "This can be none other than one of the two daughters of Lot.¹⁰ They alone could have said this."

The queen, realizing the wisdom with which King Solomon had been endowed by his G-d, left off asking him riddles, and so sought answers to those long-standing questions which she had long ago asked herself in her own land, but could find no answers. She enquired of King Solomon concerning the snake bones used by men against three types of sorceries, and how the snakes were caught, since she stood in need of those snakes. Now Asmodeus, prince of the demons, taught Solomon the art of craft and sorcery. He said to her privily:

"No man can overcome these snakes, except by doing one thing, namely: If he takes up within a piece of cloth his hot, copulative seed and throws it down before the snakes, or before their hole, they will immediately submit themselves to men, and bend their heads so that they can be taken up like a domestic hen. This thing is

High fat, sodium intake are risk factors for stroke

NEW ORLEANS (Reuters Health) - The results of a large urban multiethnic study show that high fat and high sodium diets are both risk factors for stroke, investigators with the Northern Manhattan Study (NOMAS) reported here Thursday.

NOMAS is an ongoing epidemiological study being conducted at Columbia University Medical School in New York. Investigators administered dietary questionnaires to 3,183 area residents. The average age of the subjects was 70 years; 21 percent were white, 24 percent black and 52 percent Hispanic. During 5.5 years of follow-up, 142 strokes have occurred.

The participants were divided into four subgroups according to the level of fat in their diet. These amounts were compared dietary fat levels recommended by the American Heart Association, which are 65 grams of fat per day — based on a 2,000 calorie diet with 30 percent of calories derived from fat.

The subjects who ate the most fat each day had a 64 percent greater chance of having a stroke compared with those who ate the lowest levels, postgraduate research fellow Halina White reported at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2005.

This figure was obtained after other factors that affect stroke risk were considered including age, gender, education level, race, ethnicity, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, moderate alcohol consumption, smoking, body mass index and physical activity. She said subjects in the lowest dietary fat

group consumed about 24 grams per day, while those in the highest group consumed more than 115 grams per day.

"Fat, particularly saturated fat...has an almost hormonal effect on the blood, causing the release of cholesterol, among other effects," White told Reuters Health. "Polyunsaturated fats have the opposite effect."

Neurology resident Armistead D. Williams, III, also presented data from NOMAS showing that a high sodium intake increases stroke risk. The same group of subjects was divided into four subgroups according to daily sodium consumption — more than 4 grams, 3 to 4 grams, 2.4 to 3 grams, and less than 2.4 grams.

About one fifth of the study group consumed more than 4 grams of sodium a day, Williams noted.

The investigators used 2.4 grams as a reference level because an intake of 2.4 grams sodium daily or less meets the American Heart Association recommendation.

Consumption of more than 4 grams sodium a day increased stroke risk by 90 percent compared with the reference group, Williams reported. This was consistent regardless of whether or not the subject had high blood pressure, he added.

NOMAS lead investigator Dr. Ralph L. Sacco noted that "we can't exclude the blood pressure effect, but it is small."

Williams told Reuters Health that it is possible that the sodium is increasing the rigidity of the artery walls. "That's one of the things we're going to look at when we get back to New York."

Peru's rare 'Mermaid' baby to have risky surgery

LIMA, Peru (Reuters) - A Peruvian baby dubbed the "Little Mermaid" because she was born with a rare condition in which her legs are fused, will have surgery this month to try to separate them, doctors said.

Nine-month-old Milagros Cerron -- her name means miracles in Spanish -- is one of only a handful of the estimated 1-in-60,000 to 100,000 people born with sirenomelia, or mermaid syndrome, to have lived more than a few hours, experts say.

For Luis Rubio, the doctor leading the Peruvian team that will cut her legs apart in Lima on Feb. 24, the past year has been a crash course in tackling a condition he had read about in textbooks but never expected to have to treat.

Doctors believe there may only be one other surviving "mermaid" -- 16-year-old American Tiffany Yorks, whose legs were separated when she was a few months old.

Experts say sirenomelia is about as rare as conjoined twins but is nearly always fatal because most sufferers lack kidneys or have other complications.

"It is very, very rare," said Prof. Pierpaolo Mastroiacovo, director of the Rome-based International Center of Birth Defects. "The presence of renal agenesis (absence or imperfect development) makes survival very rare and improbable."

From the waist up, Milagros smiles and babbles like any healthy infant. Below the waist, her stomach merges seamlessly into her legs, which are joined all the way to her heels.

With her tiny feet splayed in a 'V', the impression of a mermaid's forked tail is complete.

The bones of both legs are visible and move separately, "as if she wanted to get free of this sack," Rubio said.

He took on Milagros' case when she



Nine-month-old Milagros Cerron is carried by a doctor at the hospital in Lima, on Feb. 1. The Peruvian baby dubbed the 'Little Mermaid' because she was born with a rare condition in which her legs are fused, will have surgery this month to try to separate them, doctors said. Her name means miracles in Spanish, is one of only a handful of the estimated 1-in-60,000 to 100,000 people born with sirenomelia, or mermaid syndrome, to have lived more than a few hours, experts say. REUTERS

was two days old and is treating her in a City Hall-funded mobile "solidarity hospital" run out of old buses in a poor northern district of Lima.

Milagros' father, Ricardo Cerron, 24, appealed for aid when she was born on April 27, 2004, in the Andean town of Huancayo, around 200 miles east of Lima.

"I thought it was something horrifying" he said, recalling his reaction on seeing his daughter. "I was in total despair."

Her legs have separate cartilage, bones and blood supplies, and she has one good kidney. Her heart and lungs are fine.

Milagros, who weighs 17 lbs (7.5 kg) and is 24 inches (60 cm) long, has a rudimentary anus, urethra and genitalia all located together.

Doctors will insert three silicone bags filled with saline solution between her legs on Feb. 9 and gradually add liquid to stretch the skin to cover exposed wounds once they are cut apart, centimeter by centimeter.

"I have faith it will all go well," said Milagros' mother, Sara Arauco, 19.

But Mutaz Habal, the doctor who began treating Tiffany Yorks when she was one hour old and helped pioneer the separation technique, said it was hugely risky.

"My only desire is to have another survivor," he told Reuters. He said he did not know of any besides Tiffany.

Tiffany, who lives in New Port Richey, Florida, walked for six years after her separation surgery but is currently wheelchair-bound after an accident. "I have the highest hopes that (Milagros) is going to go on for a long time," she said.

"We want to dream that she could one day run or ride a bike," Rubio said. "But if we could just give her the ability to be independent, that's enough."

Under HM King Abdullah, Jordan Continues to Move Forward

Since His Majesty King Abdullah ascended to the throne as the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, he has worked diligently to focus on different aspects of life in Jordan. HM directed his a significant share of his attention towards the economy. He placed the topics of achieving sustainable development, economic growth and social welfare at the top of his priorities, while ascertaining the requirement that the improvement in economic performance of Jordan should be reflected in the welfare of all the people in all the provinces or governorates of Jordan. To achieve this, King Abdullah has launched several initiatives for the improvement of the social and economic situation in the Kingdom, while insisting that decision making by the Government on the economy should follow a participatory approach. He also insisted that the private sector should be encouraged and motivated to play its role in responding to the political and economic reforms and to participate in their formulation. At the same time, HM called for the need to continue improving the performance of the public sector, so as to ensure that Government decisions do provide encouragement for the implementation of the national projects, programs and initiatives. Among the royal initiatives is the establishment of the Al-Aqaba Private Investment Zone, which has contributed to the enhancement of the participation of the private sector in a liberalized modern business environment and also the development of the Information Technology sector in the Kingdom. Here, His Majesty ordered that all schools should be supplied with modern computers. In addition, there is the royal initiative for undertaking development in the provinces that aims to achieve regional development and the enhancement of social welfare in all the regions of the Kingdom.

During his reign also, Jordan joined the World Trade Organization in 2000. It also signed several agreements for regional and international integration, such as the Free Trade Agreement with the United States. Jordan hosted the meetings of the World Economic Forum in 2003 and 2004, which was the first time that the meetings were held outside its traditional home in Switzerland.

Politically, licenses were issued to several political parties, with the number of parties permitted reaching over 24 political parties throughout the nation. These parties now enjoy an effective presence in the political theater and in discussion of the political issues and topics and in correcting any mistakes that may have arisen. They are also assisting decision makers in making the appropriate decisions, in the defense of the nation, and in upholding the rights of Jordanian citizens. This would not have materialized had not HM confirmed that the way must be paved for the citizens to express their views through the political parties or appropriate institutions. Also, for the first time, a Ministry for Political Development was created, and also for the first time seats were assigned for women in the Jordanian Parliament, which is a clear indication of the attention given by HM to women and gender issues. Recently, HM launched an initiative, in which he called for the division of Jordan into regional sections and for the establishment of local councils. This step would undoubtedly contribute to building a democratic, political, economic and administrative system that is unique for the Middle East, in addition to the fact that it will allow for the broadest representation of the people and will incite all the citizens to participate in decision making on matters that will directly touch on their lives. This initiative will also primarily touch on the issues for National Dialogue on the Best Methods for the Development of a Political System and setting the climate for the broadest participation in government, beginning at the grass roots level up to the highest positions in the executive and legislative authorities.

Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Public Health and Population
health Reform Support Project (HRSP) Credit 3625
Credit Administration Unit (CAU)

Announcing Vacancy for the post of Senior Level Secretary of the Credit Administration Unit

The World Bank financed Health Reform Support Project Credit 3625 seeks applicants for the position of **Senior Level Secretary** of the Health Reform Support Project. The **Senior Level Secretary** will work closely with other staff of the CAU, relevant departments of the Ministry of Health and Population, and all other relevant/ related parties or organisations as necessary.

The senior level secretary will be responsible for the following:

- 1- Follow up on administrative activities of the project with the relevant directorates/ departments responsible for implementation of the activities of subcomponents of the project.
- 2- Provide administrative and secretarial support to the project steering committee including verbal and written communication, documentation and archiving, related to all project activities.
- 3- Act as a focal point at the office of the head of the project steering committee for all dialogue on matters related to the project with all parties.
- 4- Track progress of the activities of subcomponents of the project and provide periodic reports to the steering committee, and CAU on the progress of the subcomponents of the project.
- 5- Provide support to the implementation of the project by organizing meetings, facilitating procedures and paperwork.
- 6- Schedule appointments and meetings of the project steering committee and project coordination committee and handle the logistics of conferences and workshops.
- 7- Write minutes of meetings relevant to all project activities and as required.
- 8- Follow-up on all pending administrative matters related to the project with the relevant bodies or parties.
- 9- Provide support to visiting specialist and IDA missions.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of bachelor's degree in management, business administration, secretariat, or a related field of study.
- A minimum of five years experience working as a personal implementation assistant or secretary.
- A minimum of five years experience in office management.
- Good interpersonal and communication skills.
- Proficiency with all office software.
- Proficiency in speaking and writing in Arabic and English.
- Familiarity with the government and World Bank management procedures and guidelines.
- The ability to supervise staff performance and productivity and motivate others to achieve results.
- Good entrepreneurial skills.

Applications with CV's, with Expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by 26th February 2005. Interested consultants may obtain further information at the address below during office hours form 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.

Credit Administration Unit
Health Reform Support Project
4th Floor- Ministry of Public Health and Population
P.O. Box. 1330 - Al-Hasabah - Sana'a - Republic of Yemen
Tel: +967 (1) 252 224, Fax: +967(1) 251 622, Email: hrsp@y.net.ye

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شوقي الحميدي - عبد الحكيم القدسي
 - عبد الله الحميدي - رمزي العبسي

We present our highest compliments and sincere felicitations to
Mr. Lutfi Al-Mashriqi
 on the occasion of his engagement.
 We wish him the best of success in his marital life.

Felicitators:
 Adel Al-Khawliani, Ramzi Al-Abasi, Essam Al-Du'as
 your brothers Lutf, Essam and Assem and all your close friends.

أفراح آل درهم

من ربى الأعبوس تغرد الطيور طربا وتشدو مدينة الحديدية
 طربا فرحا مباركة بزفاف الشاب الخلاق

رامي عبد الماجد درهم

أكاليل الورد وأعطر الأمنيات وأجمل التهاني
 والتبريكات تزفها للعريس رامي ولوالده العزيز

عبد الماجد درهم
 المهنتون:

فاروق محمد عبد الجبار راشد، عبد الناصر علي سلام،
 عماد السقاف، عبد الحكيم محمد عبد الجبار راشد، جمال عبد الناصر علي سلام،
 فهمي محمد سيف، هاني مقبل سيف، عارف أحمد الزريقي

The Board of Directors of the National Bank of Yemen approves the Bank's Audited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2004

Mr. Abdul Rahman Al Kuhali
 Chairman and General Manager

The Board of Directors of the National Bank of Yemen, held its Annual meeting on Tuesday, 1 February 2005 to approve the Financial Statements of the Bank for the year ending 31 December 2004 and to hear the Report of the Bank's external Auditors Dahman, (RSM).

The meeting, which was held at the Bank's Head Office in Aden, commenced with the speech of Mr. Abdul Rahman Mohamed Al Kohali, Chairman of the Board and General Manager.

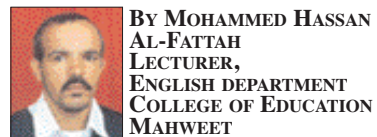
In his speech Mr. Al-Kohali announced that, despite the tendency of reducing short term interest rates by financial authorities in most of the industrial countries, the severe competition between local banks and the increase in liquidity within the banking sector in Yemen, the audited financial statements of the Bank for the year ending 31/12/2004 show continuous improvements, high growth in profits, an increase in the owner's equity, an improvement in the capital adequacy of the Bank and considerable rates of growth in most of the Bank's financial indicators.

Mr. Al-Kohali added, that from the prospective of studying the future outlook of the development of the banking industry in Yemen, the national and international arena, and in order to increase the Bank's business volume, support the continuous growth in its financial results, expand the Bank's products and services according to the needs and satisfaction of its clients and to modernize the Bank's information technology to become abreast with modern technology in banking, the management, have drawn a vision for the future of the Bank to establish a strong presence in the market and to become one of the leading banks in Yemen through the implementation of the Bank's development and modernization project which is expected to commence during the second quarter of 2005.

The Auditor's report which was read by Mr. Dahman Awadh Dahman of Dahman (RSM), stated that the financial statement, in their opinion, present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Bank as at 31 December 2004, and the results of its operations, its cash flows and changes in owner's equity for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

The Board of Directors conveyed their profound gratitude and reverence to His Excellency, The President Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen, for his prudent leadership and foresight, and his sound guidance for setting up a suitable climate for the comprehensive economic development that our country is witnessing. We also extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister the Minister of Finance-under whose supervision the Bank operates- and to the Governor of the Central Bank of Yemen, for their continued support to place the Bank in high standing and for their continued assistance for the banking sector in Yemen, which contribute in large for the growth of the Yemeni economy.

Some general linguistic concepts



BY MOHAMMED HASSAN AL-FATTAH LECTURER, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION MAHWEET

Language and its use has been basic to all human societies, at all times. Linguistics is regarded to be a rich field of knowledge because it explains the matters relating to language. It involves a scientific study and a systematic description of language. Using linguistics as a tool, we can describe even different languages and attempt a comparative or contrastive analysis of language. Recent researches in the area of linguistics have proved that all human languages have certain common characteristics. It is nearly agreed, for example, that all languages have grammatical categories like nouns, personal pronouns, verbs, adjectives and negative expressions. In spite of that, every language has its own rules and its own peculiarities. In English, for example, there are only two numbers: singular and plural. But in

Arabic, there are three: singular, dual and plural. In an English clause, the subject generally comes first then the verb and the object. In a Hindi transitive clause, the object occurs before the verb. In an Arabic sentence, the subject comes sometimes before the verb and sometimes after the verb because there are two categories of sentences in classical Arabic, English verbs and adjectives don't distinguish between the masculine and feminine. But Arabic verbs and adjectives do. In Latin prepositions are not used at the end of a sentence. Such examples can be multiplied. As far as the classification of languages into morphological types are concerned, it is William Ven Humbolt a German linguist of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, who for the first time suggested the classification of languages into the following three types. The first type, known as agglutinating languages are the ones in which sentences composed of shorter elements are formed by sticking these elements. Examples of this type are Turkish and Finnish. The second type is inflecting languages, in which most words are variable words such as the words sing, sang, sung,

sings, singing. The word order is not very important from the point of view of the syntactic relationship between the words in a sentence as found in the Ancient Greek and the classical Arabic. As Dr. Thakur mentions in his book Morphology (1998:85), the third type is isolating languages. Chinese is an example of this type where nearly all the words are monomorphemic and all the morphemes are free morphemes. In this connection, English can be described as a fairly mixed type of languages. English belongs to the Indo European family of language and is classified along with old language like Ancient Greek and Latin. English words carry the characteristics of inflecting and agglutinating patterns. It has also the features of the isolating languages because a large number of words in English are monomorphemic and monosyllabic. To establish the similarities and differences between languages, there is an emerging new branch of linguistics called contrastive linguistics. This area of linguistics helps us to make a systematic study of the linguistic system of various languages. Contrastive linguistics help the experts and researchers to understand and solve

the problems in the field of education especially foreign language learning. Contrastive linguistic analysis is very important in the field of teaching and learning languages because fairly systematic attempts have been made to show the relevance of linguistics finding a solution to language teaching problems. So it is useful for the teacher to get a good amount of knowledge in linguistics because this will enable him to understand, analyze and interpret the structure of the language he/she is teaching. The teacher's knowledge of linguistics helps him to solve the problems he faces while teaching a foreign language. Contrastive analysis can also help the syllabus makers in making syllabuses, designing courses and organizing curriculums in comparison with other curriculums. For example, comparing and contrasting the educational systems or the system of teaching foreign languages in different countries will be useful in the process of designing the curriculum for the teaching of foreign languages. Contrastive linguistics gives useful information about languages and their syntactic systems and this helps the teachers to have some useful insight into the ways in which languages operate.

A letter to the teachers of English: 74 Teaching a poem in the Secondary class (4)



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

Dear Fellow teachers,

You must have got an idea of teaching the poem 'Leisure' by now. Please remember what I am saying in my letters is my idea of teaching the poem, one of the successful ways of teaching it; you can follow it or you can think of a better way of doing it. The following are the suggested steps involved in the teaching of the poem:

- A fairly simple, interesting and relevant introduction to the poem
- Glossing of a few difficult words and expressions in the poem
- Reading the poem aloud by the teacher once or twice or three times
- Teasing out the idea of the poem through a dialogue with the students
- Reading the poem aloud by the students individually or in groups
- Testing the understanding of the poem through simple oral questions
- Pointing out the poetic features in the poem

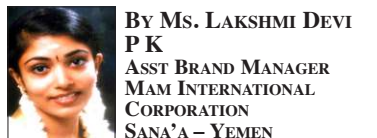
The order of the steps is not rigid and you can alter it according to your need and the level of your students. Some teachers may begin with step three above, if they think it fit; some of them can begin with step six too. It all depends on the language level of the learners and the teacher's interest in the poem. Unless you are interested in the poem, it is difficult for you to create an interest in your learners.

Step four needs a bit of explanation, I think. Teasing out the main idea of the poem can be attempted in several ways. For example, you can read the poem stanza by stanza and while reading, ask questions such as the following:

Why is life full of worry? When are we worried in our life?
 What is the poet's advice to stop worrying?
 Where can you see sheep and cows? Do we see only squirrels in the forest? What else?
 Where do we see the stars?
 How can we see stars in broad daylight? What does the poet mean?
 The reading of the poem can be peppered with such questions and with the answers from the students, the clever ones at least, the entire poem can be explained. The success of the teaching depends on how much answering is done by the students and this in turn depends on how cleverly and simply the teacher asks the questions. The classroom teaching is a drama, in which the teacher acts as if he doesn't know the answers, though he knows them, and elicits them from the students; the success or the failure depends on how well the teacher acts out his or her role.
 A few words about the poetic features in this poem. Apart from the rhyme we talked about, you can point out the deviations in the word order; for example, 'when woods we pass' instead of 'when we pass woods' or incomplete expressions such as 'a poor life this is, full of care...'. You can point out the use of a simile in the fourth stanza - stars on the stream are like the stars in the skies; personification in the next stanza - Beauty is personified as a woman in the expression 'Beauty's glance', 'her feet', 'her mouth' etc.
 How do we test this poem or any poem? A few simple questions to test the learner's understanding of the main idea will be enough. This can be also done by giving a few lines from the poem and asking them question(s) on them. Avoid asking about the poet. Question to test their appreciation can also be useful. Good luck.

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

Tips for friendly telephone services



BY MS. LAKSHMI DEVI P.K ASST BRAND MANAGER MAM INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION SANA'A - YEMEN roja.lakshmi@ny.com

Telephone services, otherwise known as "voice mail", are usually hard to use and frustrating. There are certain guidelines that make such systems more user-friendly, though. Most people in the modern world have encountered an automatic telephone service, or "voice mail". Usually, these are very complicated systems that have a terrible interface. Why? Users can't understand the whole thing; they have no way of knowing where they want to navigate to in the service. In saying that, users are told the "options" that are available to them, but they can't get any kind of snapshot men-

tal model that will help them find what they're looking for. If anything is worded strangely, or if whatever they're looking for is somewhat ambiguous and could be found in any number of "menus", they'll probably never find it, and they'll probably end up doing one of the following things:
 • quitting (giving up on the service)
 • abandoning (giving up on the company or product altogether)
 • wasting time (either trying to do something another way by themselves, or by using a more traditional and reliable method of communication with the business or service)
 • complaining (telling the fallback human operators or customer service representatives how bad the telephone service is)
 Let me make one thing clear: in all circumstances, I recommend a human instead of any kind of automatic telephone system because humans are better

at explaining things and solving problems than are recordings. But, there are some cases in which an automatic telephone service of some kind is necessary or preferred by businesses, especially for cost reasons. So, how do you do it right?
Some practical hints
 There are lots of ways to improve telephone services for users. Some of these are quite obvious, but I'll reiterate them for the benefit of common people everywhere:
 • Always wear a smile on your face while handling calls
 • use short words, and plain language
 • let users talk to a human being if they become frustrated
 • use two levels of hierarchy or less (so that users won't get lost)
 • do research to determine user goals, and design a streamlined service that helps users reach those goals (don't bog users down with options they will likely

never choose)
 • use functional and descriptive welcome messages that don't contain slogans
 • always offer hold music and let users choose a style of music they prefer, instead of letting the call turn into "dead air" (no feedback from the phone indicates to users that something is wrong or that the call has been dropped)
They're here to stay, so they'd better be useful
 Telephone services are not going away, but they could start getting better any time now. If companies want to streamline customer support or messaging services, and save money, they have to make sure that their telephone services are effective. If not, they'll have a lot of unhappy customers (or employees) on their hands. Significant services require a lot of research and meticulously refined interaction.

Some tricky problems in learning English

BY ABDULLAH ALI NASHWAN, AND AHMED MOHAMMED NASHWAN

We all have problems with the correct sequencing of 'i' and 'e' when they occur adjacently in words such as "Neighbor". These are homonyms - words which are pronounced the same way, but spelled differently such as site-sight, there-their, two-too-to, etc. Voicing difficulties are very common among ESL students which pose a considerable difficulty. Such as the voicing contrasts between /b/ and /p/, /v/ and /f/ etc. We know that there are over 250 articulatory sounds. However, the

learners are usually taught the use of 42 'pure' sounds in English and 71 'common phonograms, such as er, ir, ur, dar, sh, ee, ay/al, ow/ou, ao/au, oy/io, eigh/igh... etc. We have to find out answer to these problems, and we need to know various reasons which lead us to misspell and what kinds of words are misspelled frequently. We must also find out the strategies which can make students good spellers in English. They should be proficient in reference skills such as :
 - checking a dictionary for the correct pronunciation, checking for the meaning and history of a word, learning basic spelling rules, practicing spelling the word to themselves as they close the dictionary.

Poetry Corner

Remembrance



BY MUA'AD ALI DABWAN muad55@yahoo.com

Remember you always, at present and in moments rolled by,
 Remember you, dear, while awake or asleep
 Remember you all over the day
 And to you I write and, of course, I try,
 And find a hundred ways to call you to mind!

Remember you when first I shakily spoke to you,
 And you like an angel, smiled gently
 I forgot what to say and what to seek!
 Instead of saying "Hi" I said "Goodbye"
 And fled like an escaped slave,
 Yet found myself still before you!

Remember you when again we met,
 With somber speeches I was prepared,

Yet said nonsense, you laughed and laughed,
 I wish I hadn't spoken, and you hadn't heard,
 And I went on pouring my heart,
 Yet no word rang your heart's bell!

Remember you when I went home,
 And wrote ten poems and by hearted them,
 To recite before you
 Yet all was useless, as the foam to the beach,
 My tongue froze, and with shame cheeks burnt,
 Making me forget,
 What I had written, and what not!

Remember you when I trickily made
 A request for your books
 At school, or at home, I searched without rest
 If you wrote aught even "fool",
 Then I was sad,
 For you wrote naught, not even "bad"!

Remember you when you gently touched,
 My hands, when giving your books back,

And your time goes, mine not,
 For time stood still for me,
 Then you took your hand slowly away,
 I stood still holding my breath.

Remember you when you first wrote,
 To profess sweet love in a small letter,
 I rushed home, to check your note,
 And with every written word I felt sweeter,
 And I read, and read, and read,
 But never to quench love's need!

Remember you when your parents for you did send,
 And you I knew were late,
 At home you said you were with a friend,
 Was the first time for you to lie,
 Your parents believed, yet you cried!

Remember you when we dismissed all friends,
 To ensure we were alone.
 Time swiftly flew, our talk never ended,
 And super courage our hearts had shown,
 And we talked, and talked sweet nothings,
 Till comes the headmaster's, heart rending curse!

Remember you when I deceptively fainted,
 And you planted your curing touch,
 Then I woke, what's this?
 My cheeks grew red, and red, and red,
 As if them your red lips had keenly fed!

Remember you when we met at night,
 You my moon were, shining amid the
 encircling gloom,
 If you were late; I was sans light,
 Then the whole world stopped to work,
 And I stayed awake through the whole night
 Night slipped, still in the same way!

Remember, for me you fought
 To remember things, and things to dwell,
 My being, my inward eye you caught,
 Thus, I remember you every moment that passes,
 and in every place as well,
 All the year from November to November!

Remember you and this pen for you sings,
 Though you're away,
 Remember you down the memory lane,
 Yet have just one thing to say:
 That I weep, and weep, and weep,

WONDERWORD by DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: Put each of the best words from the list in the grid. The words will be discovered by crossing horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and backwords. The grid has 10 rows and 10 columns. The words will be found in the grid.

Apple	Chicken	Lips	Foot	Back
Antenna	Duck	Late	Project	Technology
Agency	Dust	Letter	Phonetic	Trace
Memory	Dave	Launch	Movie	Ball
Bank	Dave	Manager	Next	Time
Bequest	Early	Marketing	Piece	Book
Brook	Eye	Mare	Place	Transfer
Bunch	Face	Movie	Place	Res
Bunch	Face	Mother	Salary	Type
Case	Employment	Mother	Search	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry
Case	Language	Mustard	Get	Worry

LIFE IN THE OFFICE

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YOUTH FORUM

The value of time

How often do you spend your time for nothing? How many hours do you waste in front of TV and Internet? Or how did you benefit from reading a whole book for a long time? These kinds of questions you have to ask yourself, from time to time, to know how best you utilize your time.

Time is like money; both of them have their value in their proper utilization. If you spend your money in unnecessary things, it will exactly be unprofitably spent like time. For instance, one of the greatest men said: "If time could be sold, I would buy it." Then he was asked: "From whom will you buy it?" He answered: "From those who are wasting their time and doing nothing beneficial." Another scholar, when he was dying, remembered an important information and told his stu-

dent to write it down quickly. But his student requested him to relax, but the dying man refused. That is because he appreciated the value of time till his last breath.

When you realize that time is limited, you will exploit every moment in doing something useful. Also, you will have a superior aim and you will work hard towards achieving it. But, of course, that does not mean you need to work all the time, you have to take a rest so that you can continue your work actively and efficiently.

If each person treasures time, he will do better and achieve greater success in the short run and the long run on the highway of life.

By Somaih Al-Beshari
Faculty of Education
Sana'a University

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نكهة الإحالة والمعاصرة

MAREB KING SIZE

Once protected locals from invaders Giant rock threatens lives

By YEMEN TIMES
TAIZ BUREAU

Locals in Asan and Jarb Al-Ma'a, of the Mughrib Ans tribe are being threatened by the so called death rock that once guarded a fortress and

protected them from invaders. The rock looks set to slide from its current position, demolishing the houses and people below it unless Civil Defense takes action quickly.

Last September, locals heard explosion-like sounds coming from underneath the rock. Other rocks fell



Houses at the foot of the footress, in harm's way.



A spectacular view of the fortress.

down from around the area. Locals now believe that the recent movement is the result of the strong earthquake in Dhamar in 1982, and the smaller quake that followed in December 2004. Houses below the rock are being evacuated.

Locals say the fortress was built one hundred years ago and consists of 360 rooms. It has a fascinating

architectural style and was built on the surface of the rock. A mosque and underground stores were built very close to the fortress.

The fortress helped protect the civilians against Turkish invaders, who found that the staircase leading to the fortress was separated, making it impossible for them to reach their target. The Turkish forces put the fortress under siege for one week in an attempt to force those inside to surrender. When the invaders learnt that the people inside the fortress had enough food and water for several months, they withdrew from the

targeted place.

The local council has formed a committee to investigate the dangers now posed by the rock. The Governor of Dhamar, Abdulwahab Al-Durrah ordered the Earthquake Surveillance Center on Dec. 12 2004 to look for possible solutions.

The report included a list of recommendations to avoid disaster, such as chemical destruction of the rock, the construction of alternative paths for the falling rock to follow, and constant observation. Locals complain that no response from the Ministry of Oil and Minerals has been seen since

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