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Hundreds attend reception

Yemen Times celebrates



Many of the staff members of The Yemen Times, at the newspaper's 14th anniversary celebration. (Yemen Times photo by Abeer M. Al-Shami)

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a gala reception attended by Arab and foreign ambassadors, political party leaders, personalities of distinction and various media, The Yemen Times celebrated its 14th anniversary March 9.

The celebration was held at the Taj Sheba Hotel, whose great hospitality and warmth added a special touch to the whole celebration.

It covered a host of changes, includ-

ing the formal appointment of Mrs. Nadia al-Sakkaf as Editor-in-Chief. She succeeds Walid al-Saqqaf, who will now spend time in the United States to continue postgraduate studies.

Senior journalists and employees received various certificates of recognition for their professional work.

Mrs. al-Sakkaf confirmed that she has a variety of ambitious strategies to upgrade the newspaper and keep abreast of all that is new in the world

of media. She said that the newspaper will have a totally new classification to meet the changing needs of its readers.

The new chief editor also emphasized that The Yemen Times marks its 14-year anniversary after reaching several milestones. It has become a huge establishment for printing, as it issues many other pamphlets and magazines.

Meanwhile, the Regional Association for Marketing and

Development (RAMD) (Yemen & Gulf Group) awarded the EMPA-European Fellowship Certificate to The Yemen Times in recognition of its quality and transparency in dealing with regional and international issues.

The RAMD praised the status of The Yemen Times among the public, and the role it plays in promoting democratic issues and activating civil community organizations to contribute to Yemen's development.

More photos on page 11



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Yemen Times receives European Fellowship Certificate

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

While celebrating its 14th anniversary last week, The Yemen Times received the European Fellowship of the European Marketing and Promotion Association (EMPA).

The certificate was delivered to Yemen Times Editor in Chief Mrs. Nadia al-Sakkaf by Dr. Abdulaziz al-Tarib, president of the EMPA's Arab region.

It was given in appreciation of the continuous contributions the paper gives on national and international levels.

While giving the award, Dr. al-Tarib who is the Head of the Arab Union for Administrative Development, and Head of the Arab Investment and Development Association, commented on the professionalism at The Yemen



Times. "Nothing could be better rewarding than granting The Yemen Times the European Fellowship EMPA," he said.

Deadlock on joint fishing Yemen and Eritrea sign accords

BY MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The first round of the joint Yemeni-Eritrean committee was held in the Eritrean Capital, Asmara on March 8-10.

The two countries signed seven agreements covering mutual cooperations in investment encouragement

and protection, oil gas and minerals, culture, tourism, media, and security.

However, the Yemenis and Eritreans arrived at a deadlock regarding establishment of a joint fishing company. Instead, they agreed to set up a technical committee to study the possibility of establishing the joint company.

Dr. Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, head of the Yemeni delegation, told Saba News Agency upon his arrival in Sana'a, that in the first round several agreements were signed. Meetings in Asmara confirmed the importance of implementing the agreed on terms and preparing practical programs.

He also pointed out the relationship between Yemen's and Eritrea's security. "The security of Yemen and Eritrea is part of the security of the region. All should work for the sake of stabilizing it so that the region's countries get a chance for development through their own capacities."

Prior to his departure from Asmara, Dr. al-Qirbi, along with his Eritrean counterpart Ali Sayid Abdullah, head of the Eritrean side in the committee discussed means of coordination between the ministries of foreign affairs in the two countries, as well as ways to enhance mutual cooperation.



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Family slams US court ruling against Yemeni cleric

SANAA, March 13 (Reuters) - Relatives of a Yemeni Muslim cleric jailed in the United States said on Sunday they hoped an "unjust" court decision convicting him of conspiring to support al Qaeda and Hamas would be overturned on appeal.

Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad, 56, arrested along with an aide in an FBI sting operation in Germany in 2003, was convicted on Thursday in New York of conspiring to provide support for the two Islamic militant groups.

Moayad's wife, Um Ibrahim, told Reuters by telephone that collecting funds for Hamas was a duty to help Palestinians. "He was doing what many Yemenis are doing," she said.

Many Arabs see Hamas as a resistance group fighting Israeli occupation. The jury found Moayad and his 31-year-old aide, Mohammed Mohsen Yahya Zayed, guilty on eight counts including conspiring to provide material support and resources to al Qaeda and Hamas.

Continued on page 2



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Many will be closed Yemen's religious schools investigated

By Mohammed Bin Salam
Yemen Times Staff

Yemen's cabinet is studying a report for Yemen's 4,000 religious schools that are out of the government's official control, belonging to various local and external authorities.

According to the report, most of the schools belong to private authorities, religious personalities, or local political parties. They are supervised by some questionable Yemeni and non-Yemeni charitable societies and they are financed by unknown sources listed as charities.

"The census of religious schools, teachers, students and curricula show the harm that threatens the safety and security of the society in the future throughout the outcome of these schools that teach curricula and books with different resources," said Yahya al-Najjar, Deputy Minister of Endowment and Guidance.

"Those books contain extremist

thoughts and attitudes towards the other cultures, but are approved only by some of the religious sects exploiting the religious education aiming to give a negative picture on our religion and homeland," added Al-Najjar.

He said there are a great number of foreign teachers and students who are working for these schools and some of them are not paid, but they are hosted by a number of charity societies. Some of them belong to Islah party. Tens of these schools rely on the books of Al-Wahabi sect though they are called 'Ahl al-Sunah and Al-Jama'ah'.

Yemen decided in June to close the religious schools unless they are under the frame of the educational system in Yemen.

A committee of the Ministry of Endowment and Justice and the Ministry of Education was formed at that time to evaluate these schools' work and take the census.

YPPS suspends strike, PM answers demands

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

An official at the Yemeni Physicians and Pharmacists Syndicate (YPPS) verified last week that the supreme executive office at the syndicate decided to suspend the massive strike that had been staged by physicians and pharmacists for more than two weeks.

Dr. Abdurrahman al-Udaini, member of the supreme executive office, mentioned to different media means that the strike was not stopped but suspended, pointing out that the decision has been made after the syndicate's meeting with Prime Minister and Minister of Health and Population.

The PM confirmed that his govern-

ment will fulfill the demands of doctors within three months, while the Minister of Health and population vowed to put an end to the arbitrary practices taken against physicians and pharmacists during the strike.

A statement issued by the supreme executive office mentioned that the stand of physicians while staging the strike had a great effect in compelling the government to give them their rights and improve their living standards.

The statement also mentioned the massive strike in hospitals and clinics all over the republic will be resumed unless the government fulfills its promises within the agreed period of time, by July.

Continued from page 1

Family slams US court ruling against Yemeni cleric

Moayad was acquitted on a separate count of actually providing such support to al Qaeda, but was found guilty of providing material support and resources to Hamas, which is regarded by the United States as a terrorist group.

"We thank God that my husband had been cleared of links to al Qaeda. But convicting him of other charges is unjust and inhuman," Moayad's wife said.

Moayad's son, Zakariya, said U.S. authorities had no right to try his father for donating funds to Hamas. "Hamas is licensed and recognised in Yemen and there is no written law that allows the

Americans to try my father," he said.

Both said they hoped the cleric would be cleared in an appeal scheduled to be heard in May.

The ruling was a victory for prosecutors after controversy over a key informant, Mohamed Alanssi, who set himself on fire outside the White House in November in an apparent suicide bid after saying he had been mistreated by the FBI.

Lawyers for the two men had argued they were victims of entrapment in an "unfair and coercive" situation manipulated by the U.S. government after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

IN BRIEF

- On Women's Day March 8, a number of distinctive female personalities who had an integral role in reviving the women's movement and in making women a partner in the development process were awarded in Sana'a.
- Citizens in Taiz are complaining of being blackmailed and having their lands stolen by a gang led by influential people pretending to be municipality authorities.
- Locals in al-Qabbaita, in Lahj Governorate, are complaining of a water shortage leading many people to leave for the cities. Locals are calling on the authorities to take immediate action to solve the crisis.
- Around 30 Yemeni women are calling for the political empowerment of women by boycotting the political parties that oppose the application of the quota system.
- Yemeni journalists have approved a cooperation agreement between their syndicate and the International Union of Journalists with the aim of enhancing its ability to their inter-

- ests.
- Yemeni children will participate by entering 99 paintings in the Tripoli International Painting Contest scheduled for April 20. The paintings express the reality of the Yemeni child and their lives in school and at home.
- A workshop under the title of "Woman and the Society, Move for the sake of development" was concluded in the city of Ibb with the aim of enhancing the role of women in the social development last week.
- Yemen will take part in Iran's Third Conference that aims to enhance dialog, cooperation and confidence among member countries in the Islamic Conference. Yemen is represented by Khalid al-Akwa'a Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The National Museum has recently received two ancient pieces in the shape of two Islamic tombs stones made of a precious stone, weighing 245 kg. The two pieces were returned from Britain.

Teenage kills Russian doctor in Hodeidah

BY YEMEN TIMES

The Court of First Instance in the city of Hodeidah began on March 12 examining the murder of the 37-year-old Russian physician Sankina Elina Nicolavna, who was working in the privately owned al-Hayah Hospital.

The perpetrator confessed committing the crime on March 8 at night. Being a student in Grade 9, 17-year old Omar Ali Omar Faqirah, son of a physician, admitted killing the doctor with a sharp knife.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the under-age criminal visited his victim at Tuesday midnight at her dwelling and she welcomed him since

she knew his family but he stabs her thrice in her left arm and her waist after which she died. Then, the teenage ransacked the flat burglarizing gold ornaments and other belongings.

The Russian doctor, specialist in nose, throat and larynx, whose husband had traveled to Dubai for work, was previously recruited by the Hodeidah al-Salam Private Hospital, whose manager was the boy's father, before moving later to al-Hayah Hospital.

Following the incident, a team from the Russian Embassy went to Hodeidah to transfer the dead body to Sana'a while the Court has adjourned the case until Wednesday March 16.



Omar Ali Omar Faqirah, the accused

Readers' Voice

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

This edition's question:

Do you think establishing a ministry for women would enhance women's status in Yemen?

- Definitely
- To a small extent
- It will have no effect

last edition's question:

Do you think Yemen has to join the Gulf Cooperation Council?

Yes 73%
No 27%

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Health is one issue New refugee law requested

By MOHAMMED BIN SALAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The number of Ethiopian and Somali refugees, as well as with other nationalities, in Yemen has exceeded 400,000 according to non-official sources.

A parliamentary report requested last week a new law to organize the refugees according to the commitments of Yemen under the frame of the Refugees International Agreement, and its protocol that was approved in 1980.

A report presented by the Foreign and Immigrants Affairs Committee on the results of a field visit to Lahj and Aden requested the government to control such refugees, and smugglers who help refugees come to Yemen. It

also asked the government to quickly judge the Ethiopian and Somali refugees' cases.

It asked the government to audit and supervise refugees' conditions, and to take care of the services offered to them by the authorities and the international organizations.

The committee recommended that the government should make the medical checks for all refugees available in Yemen, to confirm their having no dangerous diseases. It recommended the necessity for establishing specialized medical centers in all entrances of refugees.

The report also appealed to the government for rebuilding Kharaz Camp, providing it with electricity and water and opening another refugees camp. It suggested the talks with UNHCR for accepting the number of refugees who have not been registered yet.

Some consider the refugees to be a great economic and social burden on the Yemeni government.

Taiz has student competitions

TAIZ — A number of scientific and cultural competitions organized by the Salah Educational Center, in collaboration with the Education Office in Taiz, began March 8.

The competitions were organized to take place between the public and private schools and it will last two weeks.

These competitions aim to improve and encourage student talent and abilities.

The prizes are presented by the private sector

The competitions were launched in the presence of Ahmed Abdulaziz, Manager of Salah Education Office, and Raja'a Ali, Manager of Al-Khansa'a School, as well as a number of educators, parents and students.

Apology

Yemen Times would like to apologize to IRIN for the unintentional mistake dropping her name as author of the news story "Just where is Yemen going?" published on the second page of YT issue No.822. The author was mistakenly mentioned as By Yemen Times News Services while it should be by IRIN.

Once again our apology to the author and our readers for the mistake, thanks.

Shura still closed though penalty period is over

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Reporters without Borders called on the Yemeni government to lift ban on al-Shura Weekly since penalty period has come to an end. The Prosecution had earlier rejected a plea from the Secretary General of the Yemen Public Forces Union Mohammed al-Rubai who asked for releasing al-Shura as penalty period finished on March 5, 2005 as per the verdict of West Capital Secretariat Court.

Reporters without Borders also urged the government to immediately release Abdul-Karim al-Khaiwani, Editor-in-Chief of al-Shura.


Meanwhile, persons from different

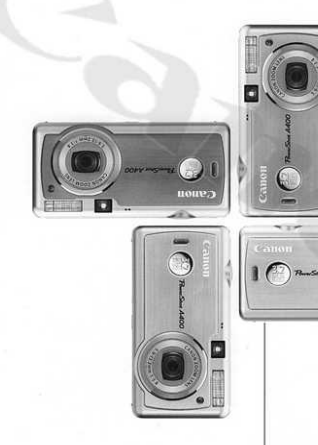
nationalities endorsed a statement supporting al-Khaiwani and Yemeni journalists. They said in the beginning of the statement, addressing the president of the Republic, "We have concluded that Mr. al-Khaiwani is a prisoner of opinion as we reviewed the proceedings of his odd trial.

"We believe the next trial slated for March 22 will not be adjourned as it happened five times in the past the last of which was in the beginning of March when many lawyers and journalists were attacked by the bodyguards of the head of the court."


The lawyers and journalists syndicates condemned the assault.

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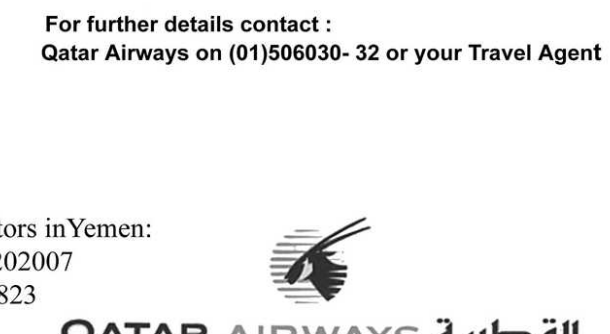




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Girl Guides expressing their thoughts on Women's Day:

"We want equality!"

BY NADIA AL-SAKKAF
YEMEN TIMES EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

During the Women's National Committee's conference, to celebrate last week's International Women's Day, a group of 16 Brownies and Girl Guides from Salah al-Din al-Aiobi and 14th October schools attended the inauguration.

Singing songs to open the conference, they seemed very excited to be part of this celebration. To explore the extent of their awareness regarding all that is happening in this event we had a chat with a few of them

What is today? What is this function all about?

(All together): Women's Day!

So what is Women's Day?

(Buthaina Badr al-Najjar- Salah al-Din School): It's the day in which women demand their rights and to have an equal say in the society to the man and to participate in development.

Very impressive! And do you know who is conducting this celebration today?

(One girl): The president!

(Another girl): No! It can't be the president because he didn't come today!

(The first girl): It's the government!

Who in the government?

(The same girl): The women's...errr

(Another girl): The women's ministry!

(A third girl): No no ..not the women's ministry it's a non governmental association

(A fourth girl): It's a woman called Halima!

None of that it's the Women's National Committee, a governmental organization, and the woman you are referring to is the deputy chair-



Girl guides celebrating their day!

woman of the WNC called Hooria not Halima

So tell me what importance does such event have to you?

(Sahar al-Mahjari- Salah al-Din School): We want to emphasize through this event that women are half of the society and it is she who builds countries and raises men. So she must be appreciated.

How do you feel about today?

(Bahja al-Omais - 14th Oct School): We feel happiness and glory because we know that they care for women and women's issues. And our role is to encourage other girls in participating in such events.

(Another girls from 14th Oct School) And we want to extend our thanks to the people who organized this event and invited us here!

Do you think there is discrimination against women in Yemen?

(Khadija Ahmed - Salah al-Din School): Yes, definitely, they favor boys to girls, they have more rights.

(Yasmen Zakariya- Salah al-Din School): They force us out of school to marry, some of my classmates dropped out of school. Girls should marry only if they are older than 23 years old.

(Sahar al-Mahjari- Salah al-Din School) They even don't take their approval before getting them married off. They deprive her from education.

There is oppression against women they make her work at home and sometimes outside, and nobody appreciates her efforts.

What do you hope from the future? When what happens would you say that women have gained their rights in Yemen?

(Nadia al-Hafashi- salah al-Din School):When they have freedom of choice, when they are educated as much as they want.

(Khadija Ahmed): When they can work easily without hesitation.

(A girl from 14th October School): When there is political participation and there is a women in decision making position in every ministry.

Views of some of the participants of the WNC Conference

BY FAHMIA AL-FUTAIH
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

While attending the sessions regarding the WNC's Conference on Women's Day, we interviewed some of the participants

to seek their opinion about what is going on.

Mr. Mohammed AL-Sabri, Researcher, commented generally on the discussions "on this occasions the issues of discussions are not ordered due to priorities that may help to focus on the discussion. The

issues and cases are tackled today, there are more than organizations to work on.

All discuss the same issues and go in the same circle. I think if we continue discussing in this way, the goal will not be to come up with solutions; however, we take these issues only to hold workshops only. The topics of today are not new. Many have already discussed many times. We must be logical and rational. We have to find the solutions for these problems not just talk about them in every workshop and any occasion. For example the reasons of the early marriage is illiteracy. If we concentrate our efforts to have a pressure on the ministry of education to do tangible efforts to eradicate the illiteracy and do its best. Poverty is also a big problem and one of early marriage causes. If we focus on education and poverty seriously and truly, we can cure such problems. Woman political

participation is not a problem. It is a result that a man himself cannot have his political rights. If all the equal opportunities are found, not only the woman can get her rights but also marginal classes as well. So we have a defect in ordering the priorities."

Gamila Ali Rajaa, one of the participants working in the media talked about her impressions on the event by saying: "Dedicating a day for woman to honor and celebrate is important and essential to show her

role and rights. This day it is important to me as it is the day for woman to get her right in having a number of leading posts. It is pretty symbolic day that should be converted in a phenomenon to celebrate of the capable woman. The woman has successfully engaged into various fields such as in education. However, she couldn't conquer the political field and her steps still stumble.

Ms. Dagmar Diebels a Filmmaker from Germany was attending this

event. She expressed her views about this event: "This is the first time to see such a small crowd of woman. I thought I would meet many more women here on this occasion. In Germany there are a lot of women's demonstrations. However, I have met very interesting women who talked about interesting issues. I think it is just the beginning of women's movements in Yemen. I think that the quota system is very important to enable women and help them reach to high positions."

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Rainbow Group visits Presidential advisor

BY DR AYID SHARYAN AND
THE RAINBOW GROUP
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES



Saba University students (Rainbow Group) hold many extracurricular activities: debates, trips, and cultural visits. One of their activities is a visit to Professor Abdullazeez Al Maqaleh, the academic adviser of the President of the Republic. The aim of the visit is to know and interact with the giant national figure (Professor Al-Maqaleh) and listen to him talking about his experience in politics and education. The visit was to the cultural center where Prof Al-Maqaleh spends most of his time. The Rainbow Group requested Prof Al-Maqaleh to talk about himself and his background.

They come to know from Prof Al-Maqaleh many things about the past. Al-Maqaleh is a major modern poet in Yemen. He was born in a small village in Ibb district, Wadi Bana. He is from a simple family and he was the only child of his mother. He started his education at the age of six years. At first he was studying Quran at a small place called Al Kutab (a form of religious schooling). Then he was sent to Sana'a to

study. The educational system (very primitive) then includes very few schools that teach elementary and intermediate stages. The high secondary schooling was not available. An equivalent to that is the Scientific School at Hajja where Prof Al-Maqaleh used to go to finish his education. (It was more than the University now.) Al-Maqaleh's father was taken to prison twice. Once before his birth and the other time is after Al-Maqaleh's birth; so he did not see him until the age of 12. He was proud of his grandmother because she was the one who protected him and encouraged him to read and memorize poetry by giving him rewards. He dreamed to be an author since the age of 9. This is what makes him dissatisfied after finishing Scientific School. He went to Egypt to achieve his dream. Nowadays he is a well-known writer, not only in Yemen or the region but worldwide.

The visit was illuminating to the group. They come to know about Prof Al-Maqaleh and about the cultural center. They were taken in a tour around the center to see the treasures of books that were available in the center.

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Russia is for Syria withdrawal but without threats



Over eleven thousand Lebanese youths rally by forming the Lebanese flag in front of the grave of assassinated former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri in Martyrs Square in Beirut March. 12. REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS, March 12 (Reuters) - Russia advocates a withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, including intelligence units, despite having abstained on a Security Council resolution demanding the pull-out.

But Moscow is reluctant to take punitive action against Syria if it does not pull out quickly, its U.N. ambassador Andrei Denisov told Reuters on Friday.

"I don't know if that makes sense," he said. Terje Roed-Larsen, a special U.N. envoy, will meet Syria's President Bashar al-Assad this weekend and press for a timetable to withdraw all troops from Lebanon.

However, U.N. officials said he could not give Syria an ultimatum or threaten punitive sanctions the Security Council might not approve.

"I'm looking forward for a good dialogue and of course I expect that we will get commitments and timetables for a full implementation of Resolution 1559," Roed-Larsen said in Amman on Friday after talks with Jordanian Foreign Minister Hani Mulki.

That resolution, adopted on Sept. 2, calls for all foreign troops to leave Lebanon and for the disarmament of militia, such as the Hizbollah group, backed by Syria and Iran, which controls the south.

But six out of 15 council members abstained in September, an indication that punitive action in case of non-compliance would be difficult.

The United States is demanding Syria complete its withdrawal before Lebanon holds parliamentary elections in May. Denisov said it was "reasonable" for the troops to withdraw before the May elections.

"But we think there is no need to fix any timetable. It is better to encourage them to act expeditiously.

He said Russia abstained on the resolution in September because "we were not sure that was the most constructive and positive way to solve that problem." But he said Moscow was "committed to the resolution.

"We support withdrawal of Syrian troops and intelligence units are part of the withdrawal," he said.

"We are convinced that it must be done non-stop manner and must finish."

U.N. spokeswoman Marie Okabe said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, had offered Roed-Larsen Moscow's support in a telephone conversation.

Lavrov said in Moscow that a Syrian withdrawal "should be gradual and should not undermine the ethnic or religious situation in the region," according to the Interfax news agency.

"This is especially important in light of the upcoming parliamentary election in Lebanon, which we hope will be held without outside interference," Lavrov was quoted as saying.

Syrian troops have pulled out of northern Lebanon and some left the Beirut area.

Lebanon's defense minister has said the first phase of the withdrawal plan, which calls for a Syrian pullback to the eastern Bekaa Valley, will be completed next week. Syrian forces first entered Lebanon in 1976, early in the civil war.

Their numbers have declined to 14,000 from a peak of 40,000, but they had never before abandoned the north.

eastern province of Bingol was felt in neighbouring Erzurum, Diyarbakir, Mus and Tunceli. In a village in Erzurum 20 houses collapsed.

Bingol governor told NTV news channel one person was slightly injured and treated in hospital.

ANKARA, March 12 (Reuters) - An earthquake in eastern Turkey toppled some 20 houses on Saturday and sent people fleeing in panic but caused no serious injuries, officials said.

The morning quake, measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale, in the

Quake jolts eastern Turkey, no deaths

Iran stands firm in face of united US, EU approach

TEHRAN, March 12 (Reuters) - Iran insisted on Saturday it would never give up its nuclear fuel programme despite new incentives and threats from Washington and the European Union.

"Deadlock in nuclear talks due to European extortion," the hardline Jomhuri-ye Eslami newspaper proclaimed a day after the EU's three biggest powers said they would take Iran to the UN Security Council if it resumed uranium enrichment.

"The problem is that the Europeans should give up their illogical stance," Sirus Naseri, a senior member of Iran's nuclear negotiating team, told state television.

"What we have said is that our fuel production will continue."

Iran has frozen enrichment, a process that can be used to make bomb-grade fuel, while it tries to reach a negotiated settlement about its nuclear programme with the EU big three Britain, Germany and France.

Tehran says its nuclear facilities will only be used to generate electricity and never diverted to

weapons production.

Washington, in a policy shift, gave practical backing to the EU's diplomatic approach on Friday.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Washington would allow Iran to begin talks on joining the World Trade Organisation and would consider letting it buy civilian airline parts if it ceased all activities that could produce fuel for nuclear power plants or atomic weapons.

WTO membership and aircraft spares are two key incentives which the EU hopes will persuade Iran to scrap enrichment for good. The EU was unable to deliver these incentives without U.S. support.

Short of expectations

But Naseri told Reuters on Friday the incentives were "too insignificant to comment about."

On Saturday he told state TV: "What they (the EU) have offered so far is way short of our expectations ... The more guarantees they give us, the more they can expect from us."

Iran says it can offer the world "objective guarantees" that it will

not make atom bombs.

These would include measures such as allowing intrusive U.N. inspections of its nuclear sites.

But Washington and the EU say the only acceptable guarantee is for Iran to scrap its nuclear fuel production plans altogether and rely on the supply of reactor fuel from abroad.

Hassan Rohani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, said a key Iran-EU meeting on the nuclear issue would be held in Paris on March 23. "It will be a very important session and we hope to reach an acceptable conclusion through legal and diplomatic means," Jomhuri-ye Eslami quoted him as saying.

"The continuation of the talks between Iran and Europe will depend on the March 23 meeting," he said.

Iran has warned that it feels progress in the EU talks has been slow and it may pull out and resume enrichment if the EU drags its feet.

But most diplomats and analysts believe the threat of a Security Council referral will be enough to keep Iran at the negotiating table for at least another three months.

Hamas says will run in Palestinian elections

NABLUS, West Bank, March 12 (Reuters) - The militant Islamic group Hamas announced on Saturday it would compete in a Palestinian legislative election scheduled for July, setting the stage for a showdown with the more moderate Fatah movement.

The announcement at a news conference in the West Bank meant that Hamas, a group sworn to Israel's destruction, would field candidates in a legislative election scheduled for July 17 to replace the Palestinian parliament chosen in a 1996 ballot.

"Hamas ... has decided to participate in the upcoming Palestinian legislative elections on the basis of sticking to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and protecting the programme of resistance as a strategic choice until the occupation is swept away," said Mohammed Ghazal, a Hamas leader in the West Bank, reading a statement from the group.

Hamas had previously boycotted Palestinian Authority elections because of its opposition to the 1993 interim Oslo peace accords that mandated the ballots.

But leaders of Hamas have shown interest in having a greater voice in Palestinian government, especially following the group's strong showing in municipal elections earlier this year.

Hamas won 30 percent of all seats

in the local elections in the West Bank and a majority of seats in the Gaza Strip.

Its decision to compete in the election for the Palestinian Legislative Council is seen by Palestinian analysts as a sign that Hamas is ready to join the political mainstream and may

ultimately lead to changes in some of its positions.

Hamas recently agreed to abide by a de facto ceasefire called by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as a first step towards renewing deadlocked peace negotiations with Israel.



Dr. Mohammed Ghazal, a Hamas leader in the West Bank, speaks during a news conference in the West Bank city of Nablus on March. 12. A militant Palestinian group sworn to Israel's destruction announced on Saturday that it would compete in Palestinian parliamentary elections scheduled for July, ending a decade-old boycott. The announcement by the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas set the stage for a showdown with President Mahmoud Abbas's more moderate Fatah faction which has dominated Palestinian politics since the Palestinian Authority was established in 1994. REUTERS

Algerian Islamic rebels kill two policemen :report

ALGIERS, March 12 (Reuters) - Algerian Islamic rebels killed two policemen and wounded two others in the town of Bouira east of the capital Algiers, newspapers said on Saturday.

Militants with automatic weapons attacked a police post in Bouira, 80 kms (50 miles) from Algiers on Thursday, unnamed

sources told newspapers Le Soir d'Algerie and La Tribune.

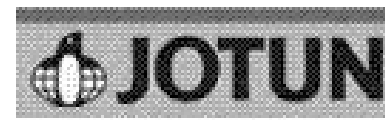
The rebels escaped with police weapons before security forces arrived.

One of the wounded was in serious condition.

The Interior Ministry was not immediately available for comment.

Algerian militants unleashed an Islamic holy war or "jihad" after the powerful army cancelled legislative elections a now-banned headline party was set to win in 1992.

Authorities estimate that 150,000 people have since died in the violence, which has sharply fallen in recent years and brought back foreign investment.



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HK's Tung named top adviser to China's parliament

BEIJING, March 12 (Reuters) - Hong Kong's outgoing chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa, became a senior adviser to China's parliament on Saturday, a face-saving promotion that allows the unpopular leader to make a graceful exit.

Citing poor health Tung, 67, resigned on Thursday after nearly eight years in office marred by huge pro-democracy demonstrations in 2003 and 2004, recessions, and accusations that he was no more than Beijing's puppet.

The 2,300-member Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the legislature's top advisory body, elected Tung a vice-chairman by 2,065 votes to 21 with 20 abstentions.

Two other vice-chairmen were elected, bringing the total to 27 before the CPPCC wrapped up a 10-day annual session.

Tung, Hong Kong's first leader after British colonial rule ended in 1997, flew to Beijing on Friday for the CPPCC's closing session.

He was named one of 80 new members this month.

Many Hong Kong residents believe Chinese leaders fired Tung in violation of Beijing's promise to give the city a high degree of autonomy after the handover.

President Hu Jintao scolded Tung for poor performance last December, an unprecedented public rebuke.

Tung's deputy, Chief Secretary Donald Tsang, is to take over as acting chief executive until a Beijing-anointed electoral college chooses a new leader in six months.

Tsang, whose British knighthood does not endear him to Beijing loyalists in Hong Kong, will have to walk a fine



Hong Kong Chief Secretary Donald Tsang attends the opening ceremony of the new police headquarters in Hong Kong March 12. Tsang is to take over as acting chief executive until a Beijing-anointed electoral college chooses a new leader in six months. Hong Kong's outgoing chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa, is set to be named a senior adviser to China's parliament on Saturday, a face-saving promotion that will allow the unpopular leader to make a graceful exit. REUTERS

line between winning China's trust and coping with public demands at home for political reform.

The city's masters up north have already ruled out change for at least several more years.

It was Tung's failure to curb pro-democracy protests which caused the new Chinese leadership led by Hu to lose faith in him and, critics say, eventually to cast him out.

It was unclear whether Tsang would serve out the rest of Tung's term until mid-2007 or would receive a fresh five-year mandate.

An announcement could come as early as Saturday evening.

Beijing will in effect be putting Tsang on probation if it decides on a two-year

term.

Sources have told Reuters that if Tsang did well, he might get Beijing's backing to run for a full term in 2007.

Otherwise, he would just be a seat-warmer for someone more acceptable.

One of Tsang's rivals for the top job is Financial Secretary Henry Tang.

Both Tsang and Tang were in Tung's cabinet, which sources say Beijing does not want to see changed, for the sake of stability.

If Tsang keeps the recovering economy humming, Beijing believes public calls for more democracy in Hong Kong will eventually die.

Hong Kong's pro-democracy lawmakers anticipate a more subservient administration under Tsang.

India's Congress walks down Gandhian road again

AHMEDABAD, India, March 12 (Reuters) - Hundreds of people joined the leader of India's ruling Congress party, Sonia Gandhi, on Saturday in a re-enactment of a famous march that analysts said was a political gimmick aimed at bolstering her image.

Mahatma Gandhi, India's independence leader, led the "salt march" 75 years ago from Ahmedabad to the coastal Dandi town in western Gujarat in defiance of a colonial law that allowed only the government to make salt, triggering patriotic fervour.

"With this march, we shall spread Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence across the country and inspire the youth to fight against injustice, violence and communalism," Italian-born Sonia Gandhi said on Saturday as she unfurled the national flag with patriotic songs blaring in the background.

Sonia, who is not related to Mahatma Gandhi, briskly walked three km (two miles), as dozens of political leaders followed her amid shouts of "Long Live Sonia Gandhi".

Thousands of people plan to wind their way through the heat and dust of Gujarat over the next 26 days to re-enact the 380-km (240-mile) "salt march" in a bid to bolster the strength of the Congress party, which heads the federal coalition in New Delhi.

Many foreign tourists also joined Saturday's march organised by Mahatma Gandhi's great-grandson, Tushar, who said the walk was aimed at spreading peace in the country.

"We all have to fight against discrimination," said Joshua Troast, a 32-year-old American tourist.

"It is not a national issue but an issue

that affects human beings. The walk will not find an instant solution but will surely send a message."

But analysts said the grand show in Gujarat, ruled by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, was a political gimmick aimed at restoring Sonia Gandhi's image that has been tarnished by charges of political opportunism after recent state elections.

"It's a trial of strength for the Congress.

The purpose is to revive public opinion," said Gaurang Dalal, a political analyst in Ahmedabad.

"They want to strengthen themselves

at the grassroots level and create awareness in rural areas in Gujarat."

Many followers of Mahatma Gandhi, who was killed by a Hindu in 1948, stayed away from the march.

"The historic Dandi yatra (walk) is being used as a banner by the Congress party to gain momentum in the state," said Chinu Modi, an 85-year-old follower of Gandhi.

India's Congress party, which led the country to freedom in 1947, returned to power last May after eight years in the cold when it edged the Bharatiya Janata Party from power.



A "all-India peace march" demonstration against China in New Delhi. A Tibetan woman sits with a child during a demonstration called "all-India peace march" against China on the occasion of 46th anniversary of National Tibetan Women's Uprising Day in New Delhi, March 12. REUTERS

Manila suspects pesticide poisoning behind deaths

SAN JOSE, Philippines, March 12 (Reuters) - Philippine doctors said on Saturday they suspected pesticide contamination as the possible cause of food poisoning that killed dozens of children in a remote village.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said test results that could show the cause of death of 27 school children on the central Bohol island will be announced on Monday as government toxicologists ran more tests on food, blood and vomit samples.

"Our working diagnosis was organophosphate poisoning," Harold Gallego, the chief doctor in the Mabini town hospital told Reuters.

"Most children brought here responded to atropine phosphate, an antidote for pesticide poisoning."

He said symptoms shown by the children, aged between 6 and 13 years, who fell ill after eating cassava fritters and balls, were consistent with cyanide and pesticide poisoning.

But, those poisoned by cyanide would not react to atropine phosphate, said Gallego. Sodium nitrate and sodium thiosulfate are normally given to victims of cyanide poisoning.

Initial tests made by experts from the Philippine rootcrop agency tend to back the doctors' theory because samples of cassava found at the kitchen where the snack was prepared and cooked showed a lower level of cyanide.

"We concluded that the poison (cyanide) in the cassava is low, and it can



Filipino villagers carry a coffin of a school child who died after eating fried cassava balls in school, during a funeral in San Jose town in Bohol province, central Philippines, March 12. Philippine doctors said on Saturday they suspected pesticide contamination as the possible cause of food poisoning that killed dozens of children in a remote village. REUTERS

The rest will be buried on Sunday. Villagers said would avoid cassava until authorities find the cause of death.

"I won't allow my children to taste any cassava again," said Josefina Mano while giving soup to her two sons in a hospital ward in Mabini town.

"From now on, I will personally prepare their snacks."

Three of Mano's children were hospitalised.

But Mano's neighbour, Esterlita Asan, said her family would still continue to eat cassava, a staple among most poor families on Bohol island.

Indonesia steps up security after U.S. warning

JAKARTA, March 12 (Reuters) - Indonesia stepped up security at a shopping mall in the capital on Saturday after the U.S. embassy warned of a possible bomb threat, a spokesman for the complex said.

The embassy warned of the threat at the World Trade Center Mangga Dua in northern Jakarta between March 11 and 14 in a terse statement posted on its Web site and circulated to Americans in Indonesia on Friday.

It gave no details on the information that led to the statement or who might be behind the threat.

Australia issued a similar warning on Saturday, asking its citizens to avoid areas surrounding the shopping mall.

"We have elevated our security level and alertness.

We also have reinforcement from security personnel," Budi Santosa, general affairs manager at the complex, told Reuters Television.

"We cannot afford to take this lightly," he added.

The complex, which opened last year, is one of some half a dozen shopping malls in the area, one of the busiest for retail and wholesale trading in Jakarta, a sprawling city of some 10 million people.

Another spokesman said 100 policemen had arrived at the mall to reinforce a similar number of internal security personnel.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, has been hit by

several bomb attacks in recent years blamed on Islamic militants linked to al Qaeda.

The deadliest, on nightclubs in the resort island of Bali in 2002, killed 202 people, many of them Australians.

The most recent, last September against the Australian embassy in Jakarta, killed 10.

Jemaah Islamiah, which has been called the Southeast Asian arm of al Qaeda, is blamed for both attacks.



Armed Indonesian policemen guard the World Trade Center Mangga Dua, north of Jakarta, March 12. The U.S. embassy in Jakarta warned on Friday of a "possible bomb threat" at the centre between March 11-14. REUTERS

Former ally accuses Mugabe party of intimidation

TSHOLOTSHO, Zimbabwe, March 12 (Reuters) - A controversial former minister sacked by President Robert Mugabe after opting to stand as an independent in this month's general election has accused the ruling party of using threats to garner votes.

Former information minister Jonathan Moyo has become the most visible symbol of cracks within Mugabe's ZANU-PF - which have taken on ethnic overtones.

Analysts say these cracks leave the party weaker against the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change at the March 31 poll.

Moyo said late on Friday ZANU-PF officials were intimidating people

in his rural constituency of Tsholotsho by suggesting that failing to vote for the party could evoke a reprisal similar to a 1980s government crackdown that rights groups say left 20,000 civilians dead.

That crackdown in the minority Ndebele-speaking Matabeleland region, which includes Tsholotsho, fuelled ethnic tensions with Mugabe's majority Shona group which only ended with a 1987 pact which saw the two regions' political parties merge into ZANU-PF.

"What is of concern is what is being said by some of the campaign groups representing ZANU-PF.

(They) have been threatening the people, that ... if you don't vote for

the party you will not be given drought relief," Moyo told reporters during a campaign tour in drought-prone Tsholotsho, 110 km (70 miles) northeast of Bulawayo.

"(The officials are saying) if you don't vote for the party you may even provoke ... Gukurahundi days," Moyo added in reference to the 1980s crackdown.

ZANU-PF officials were not immediately available for comment.

Moyo, who as information minister spearheaded ZANU-PF's propaganda campaign in a diplomatic war of words with the West, lost favour with Mugabe after convening a secret meeting the party says plotted to push a favoured candidate to the post of

ZANU-PF and government co-vice president.

The post, which eventually went to Joyce Mujuru, is seen as a step to succeeding Mugabe, 81, who is widely expected to retire when his present term ends in 2008.

Resentment lingers in matabeleland

The succession furore saw Moyo lead several other rebels in registering as independents in the March 31 election, leading to their expulsion from ZANU-PF.

Analysts say the fall-out could cost ZANU-PF votes in Matabeleland, where resentment lingers over the crackdown and a perception that the

government has neglected the region.

"Unity is something very good, something that we cherish, but we do not cherish it as just an idea that is there to benefit a few individuals," Moyo said on Friday.

"We cherish if it is an agenda for development, if it means by having unity we will see our roads being repaired, tarred so that our people can move ... and in the case of Tsholotsho that the perennial water problem will be addressed."

The MDC enjoyed a near-clean sweep of Matabeleland both in the last parliamentary election in 2000 and presidential elections in 2002. ZANU-PF won both amid opposition and Western charges of rigging.

Portugal PM plans EU charter vote in December

LISBON, March 12 (Reuters) - New Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates said on Saturday he aimed to hold a referendum on the European Union constitution in December this year.

The government will seek to have the Portuguese constitution amended to allow a vote on the EU charter to be held jointly with municipal elections in December, the Socialist leader said in an address shortly after he was sworn in.

The constitution bars the holding of a referendum between the setting of a date for a municipal election and when the vote is carried out.

The authorities have yet to set a date for the city polls.

The Iberian country usually holds elections on Sundays.

A tight elections schedule and cost concerns demanded that the EU charter vote be held along with the local polls, Socrates said after the swearing-in ceremony at Lisbon's Ajuda Palace.

"No political reason should bar the referendum over the European constitutional treaty being held in conjunction with municipal elections, benefiting from the civic participation and trusting in the political capacity of the Portuguese," he said.

His Socialists won last month's parliamentary elections, ousting a Social Democratic government, and presidential elections are scheduled for 2006.

The previous government had said Portugal would hold a referendum on the constitution agreed by EU leaders last year but did not set a date for the vote.

Spain last month became the first member of the bloc to approve the constitution, designed to make the EU



New Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates (R) is felicitated by outgoing Prime Minister Santana Lopes (L) at the end of the new cabinet swearing ceremony in Lisbon March 12. New Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates said on Saturday he would seek to hold a referendum on the European Union constitution in December 2005. REUTERS

run smoothly after its enlargement to 25 states in May 2004.

Many other member countries also

plan to hold referenda on the EU constitution, with France next in line on May 29.

French still back EU treaty, but 'No' rising: poll

PARIS, March 12 (Reuters) - Opposition in France to the EU constitution is growing but a clear majority of voters say they will approve the treaty in a referendum on May 29, according to an opinion poll released on Saturday.

The BVA survey for the L'Express weekly news magazine said opposition to the treaty had risen to 44 percent from 37 percent since January.

A 'No' vote had most support among public sector workers (57 per-

cent), head of BVA polling Jerome Sainte-Marie said in an accompanying note.

"The more people vote on the merits of the treaty, and that alone, the more people vote 'Yes'.

Conversely, any link with the government's policies benefits the 'No'," Sainte-Marie said.

Most major political parties are campaigning for a 'Yes' vote, something that should restrict further progression of the anti-treaty camp, he

added.

President Jacques Chirac called a referendum on the EU constitution, which aims to simplify decision-making in an expanded European Union, after parliament adopted changes to the national basic law.

But the conservative government's efforts to rally the country behind the EU treaty are being undermined by strikes over labour laws, economic reforms and anger over unemployment of 10 percent, a five-year high.

Russia hopeful of avoiding ban on EU plant imports

MOSCOW, March 12 (Reuters) - Russia is hopeful of signing a deal with the European Union on Tuesday to prevent a blanket ban on plant and vegetable imports from the 25-nation bloc, Russia's chief animal and plant safety control official said on Saturday.

"We expect to sign a memorandum on the introduction of a single certificate on Tuesday," Sergey Dankvert, head of Russia's Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Inspection Service, told Reuters.

Russia wants a common safety certificate for EU plant and vegetables it imports from April 1 to replace the 25 different national versions that are now in use, and is threatening to ban the trade if a deal is not reached before this date.

The EU has no figure for the value of the bloc's plant and vegetable exports to Russia, but observers say it runs into the hundreds of millions of euros.

Moscow has blocked imports of a string of farm products from EU countries, including Germany, Denmark, Estonia and the Netherlands, saying they do not meet sanitary standards.

After several months of negotiations it

lifted a ban on Dutch flowers, cocoa beans, tobacco, tea, soybeans and potato seeds from February 15 and fruit and vegetables from March.

Dankvert is due to meet the EU Food Safety Commissioner Markos Kyprianou in Brussels on Tuesday. EU diplomats said on Friday that Kyprianou will make a fresh offer to Dankvert in a bid to end months of trade tension.

Dankvert said that Moscow had to agree with the EU a transitional period, during which old certificates will be accepted alongside the new ones, though its length is unclear.

"The EU has proposed a transition period of 5 months, which I believe is not realistic," he said, declining to say what period he would accept. "It is a subject for negotiations," Dankvert said.

Last year Russia agreed to a 3-month transition period for adopting single EU safety certificates on meat imports.

Common certificate not to end a grotrade tensions

Dankvert said the adoption of the common certificate will not end all problems linked to safety of agricultural imports

from the European Union.

"European safety standards do not correspond to Russian standards.

And we want them to be closer," he said.

He also said the European Union has to solve problems linked to forgery of certificates.

"Blank certificates are on sale on the territory of the European Union, and not only European certificates, but also those for other countries like Colombia or Ecuador," Dankvert said.

"Although this is a matter for Interpol rather than for us," he added.

Dankvert said he planned to discuss stricter controls on plant exports with his Dutch counterparts on Monday, after Russian officials discovered pests, diseases and violations of safety standards in some flower shipments from the Netherlands after March 15.

Pests have also been found in flowers coming from Belgium, including some of Dutch origin, he said.

"On Monday we will have to decide what to do about Belgium.

We may ban flower imports from Belgium," he said.

VACANCIES ANNOUNCEMENT (INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL)

The Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the costs of Sana'a Basin Water Management Project and it is intended that a portion of the proceeds of the credit will be used to cover the the cost of consultancy services (Individuals). Now the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) invites qualified and experienced international/regional experts to apply for the following posts.

(1) Irrigation System Engineer (30 staff-months in three periods 2005 - 2008)

The ISE shall work under the overall supervision of the PCU and shall Provide direction and guidance to the Project Field Unit teams undertaking:

- (i) Physical system design relating to improvement of delivery (conveyance and distribution) system through upgrades or conversion to, piped system, introduction of various modern on-farm pressurized irrigation technologies, wadi bank protection works for some vulnerable locations, land leveling and introduction of plastic tunnels/covers for demonstration plots;
- (ii) Tendering and contracting of above physical systems construction and installation supervision such that these activities are to proceed in parallel with the Social Mobilization but the construction is carried out not before WUA establishment and signing of implementation agreement;
- (iii) Commissioning and O&M start up.
 - Undertake various implementation studies, including inter alia the following:
 - Undertake a study to review the design criteria and technical specifications of pipes with the purpose of cost savings and potential increasing the number of beneficiaries; and
 - Provide on-the-job training to the counterpart Project Field Unit staff.

Qualifications and Required Experiences

- Degree in Engineering, preferably with Master Degree in Irrigation Systems Engineering
- Knowledge and Experience in management of rural development projects and water resources engineering and irrigation including pipes conveyance and pressurized irrigation systems
- More than ten years experience in Designing and Managing projects and supervising engineering works
- Good knowledge of English, Knowledge of Arabic an advantage
- Basic Computer Skills (MS Word and Excel)

(2) Water Management/O&M Specialist (18 staff-months in three periods 2005 - 2008)

- Assist in developing water resources management and understanding and skills for the Farmers, WUG and WUA training program;
- Guide SMTs in developing procedures for measurements (including metering of water consumption of wells) and evaluation of water savings in fields as a result of project intervention and assessment of mid-the long-term individual financial benefits resulting from water savings and systems modernization, including reduced water system operation costs (from less pumping and less labor-intensive irrigation) and increased crop yields (from more even and effective water applications and control, fertilizer application through irrigation systems, and improved disease control) and long-term community sustainability benefits from reduced water use and non-expansion of irrigation, in the form of groundwater conservation and extended useful aquifer life; and

- Assist in comprehensive capacity development and training program for the WUA and water users covering irrigation management and O&M, specifically in relation to the system types and technologies being provided under the project, and agricultural techniques and practices for improved cropping and production, again specifically related to the physical system interventions;

Qualifications and Required Experiences

- Degree in Engineering, preferably with Master Degree in Irrigation Agronomy
- Knowledge and Experience in management of major rural development projects, piped conveyance and pressurized irrigation systems, ground water recharge and crop water requirements, crop yields etc.
- More than ten years experience in Designing and Managing projects and groundwater recharge studies and O&M of Irrigation Systems
- Good knowledge of English, Knowledge of Arabic an advantage
- Basic Computer Skills (MS Word and Excel)

3- INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING SPECIALIST/EXPERT (International/Regional)

The ITS will help the PCU to oversee the institutional development and capacity building. This will require him/her to work in close collaboration with the relevant existing and projected water management institutions, in particular (i) the National Water Resources Authority (Nwra) and the Nwra Sana'a Branch (Nwra/SB), (ii) the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) and its sub-agencies including the MAI General Directorate for Irrigation (MAI/GDI), and including the MAI Office (MAI/SO) and/or to the Northern Development Authority (NDA or SSHADA), and (iii) the Sana'a basin stakeholder organizations including water user associations (WUAs), water user federations (WUAFs) and the SBC. More specifically, the PCU institutional Training specialist would be responsible for:

- Develop the various comprehensive training programs for each component including: Training in Water Management for Irrigated Agriculture, Water Control and Recharge Systems O&M, Social Mobilization Teams, Basin Water Resources management, Information and Public Awareness Campaign, Training for the PCU and Line Agencies
- General Overview and Direction of all training programs in collaboration with PCU's Sociologist/ Social Development Specialist, and line agency engineers
- In collaboration with all project staff, define the population concerned by the training program
- Design and coordinate the execution of a training needs assessment (this would be conducted as early in the cycle as possible)
- Define the training needs and the scope, and type of training, in collaboration with the project management team
- Define the needed consultancy and education program, write terms of reference and prepare cost estimates and advise on the procurement process
- Design quality control mechanisms, including post training evaluations and follow up reviews
- Design and help implement a training programming and monitoring system
- (At the end of the project) prepare a full report on training

effectiveness and cost effectiveness

Qualifications and Required Experiences

- At least MSc Degree in Administration / Sociology/ Economics/ Business/ Public Information or any related field,
- Ten years experience of designing and conducting training programs, of which five in projects related to natural resource management

Duration: intermittent consultancy assignments totaling nine months during (2005-8) (3/2/1/1/2).

4- SOCIOLOGIST/ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST (International/Regional)

The SSDS will work with the national social development/WUA specialist in the PCU and will report to the manager of the PCU. The primary function of the SSDS will be to provide methodological guidance and management support to the national social development/WUA specialist in overseeing the social mobilization function in the project. In particular the SSDS will help the national social development/WUA specialist in the PCU to:

1. In collaboration with the national Sociologist and SMTs, conduct social assessment studies to assess the attitudes of the farmers towards implementation of Demand Management Component and Supply Management Component, and their impact on the traditional water rights to the beneficiaries located downstream of such structures in accordance with Article 27 to 45 of the Water Law and give his recommendation.
2. Conduct social assessment studies to assess the attitudes of the farmers and make recommendation for achieving stakeholders participation of farmers especially in the WUAs for management and conservation of groundwater and to encourage them not to expand the irrigation areas and not to increase cropping intensities in lieu of the subsidies on the modern irrigation systems to be provided to them.
3. Design the overall community participatory approach for the management and conservation of water
4. Review and assess the institutional structure at the community level (Stakeholders, Community relations with other local institutions, Water transfers and markets etc.).
5. Train National Consultant and Counterpart staff assigned to the PCU.
6. Coordinate the various involved implementation partners and processes involved in the social mobilization aspects of the project
7. Oversee and guide the process of identification, interview, selection, recruitment and assembly of the SMTs, and of their subsequent training.
8. Review and refine the methodological approach to social mobilization, test it, and reflect results in a continuous process of improvement of the approach
9. Oversee the process of assessment and selection of participating communities through definition and application of criteria related to socioeconomic characteristics, social and organizational readiness, and willingness of communities and water user organizations to assume both benefits and responsibilities relating to project interventions;
10. Overview the social mobilization, training and extension

support processes, including coordination of inputs by the various partners (SMTs and consultants, and community groups and individuals), review and supervision of the preparation and execution of work plans, and definition of process adjustments from cycle to cycle in response to encountered constraints and difficulties;

11. Oversee in particular the social and organizational development of the WUAs for village wellfields management and dam and recharge systems operations and maintenance, including legal and organizational establishment, setup of financial and administrative procedures, and corresponding management training;
12. Contribute to definition and execution of community social, economic and institutional baseline, monitoring and evaluation exercises, assess from these the level of satisfaction of water users, WUGs and WUAs with project-supported interventions and of the corresponding social benefits, and propose actions to be taken for needed improvements;
13. Mediate in and/or address as needed social difficulties that may arise as a result of project interventions, such as conflicts within and between WUGs and WUAs, between participating and non-participating WUGs and WUAs, between government agencies and local communities, etc.
14. Provide social and organizational development inputs to PCU monitoring, reporting and decision-making related to Components 1 and 2.

Qualifications and Requirements

The Sociologist shall have at least MSc degree in Sociology or economics with specialization in Sociology with extensive experience of not less than 15 years in Socio-economic surveys, social and institutional assessment related to water / agriculture and irrigation projects. The Sociologist shall have experience in poverty assessment of land tenure and land use, water rights, participatory water management, stockholders assessment, formation of Water Users Groups and Associations etc.

Duration: intermittent consultancy assignments totaling nine months during (2005-8) (3/2/1/1/2)

Competencies Required: - incumbents should have:-

- Ability to produce quality outputs in a timely manner
- Ability to work under heavy pressure
- Excellent organizational skills and sound judgment
- Ability to communicate with different levels of targeted populations and Professionals
- Good knowledge of English language and knowledge of Arabic is an advantage.
- Computer Use: Windows, MS Office and related programs

Duty Station: Sana'a Basin area and in-country travel if necessary

Applications accompanied by CVs and supporting documents shall be delivered to the project address as follow (SBWMP- P.O.BOX11014) Rabat Street, Sana'a ROY Tel (00967-1-469159/7/6) Fax (00967-1-469158) E-mail (SBWMP@y.net.ye) Latest Date is (March 26th, 2005)

Words of Wisdom



It is my belief that grassroots level organizations such as unions and syndicates are vital contributors to the system because of their broad-based interaction. They give tangible meaning to popular participation within a democratic context. Therefore, any effort to broaden the participation base of decision-making in this country should, in part, involve the unions and syndicates. This means letting these organizations do their job.

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

OUR
OPINIONConnecting
with ... you

Last Wednesday we celebrated the 14th anniversary of The Yemen Times at the Taj Sheba Hotel. There were 300 or more guests, including fiends, diplomats, representatives of various organizations and associations, clients and staff.



Nadia Al-Saqqaf
Editor-in-Chief

It was an occasion to connect with and relate to some of the supporters of The Times, and to get a feeling about how the newspaper is perceived. It also was a time to learn of ideas and ambitions the supporting community has, and how they might be implemented.

Although it was a busy night, it gave clear indications as to what how we are performing, and what we could to make things better. Especially appreciated was Dr. D. Thakur's words quoted from Joseph Eddison: "If you want never ending success in life, make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise counselor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian angel." By putting these words into reality I hope we can make an ever-lasting success.

The challenge is great. We can do our best, but still not achieve success if we don't get feedback and guidance from our readers. The real need now is to connect.

So, on monthly basis, starting in May, the Yemen Times will be conducting discussion rounds, for one hour or so, on various topics. We will announce the schedule of topics in a later issue.

The invitation is open to all interested people, and results of the discussions will be documented and published in the paper, to form the basis for further issues of comment. It will also be an opportunity to meet and connect with people from various fields.

The Yemen Times will also shortly conduct a survey to explore the interests and inclinations of the readers, as to what should be covered more and what should be presented differently. It will be done online, as well as within the paper. Please contribute to the paper by filling this questionnaire and returning it. We need to hear what you have to say, because simply we are writing for you.

The celebration which we had last week marked a turning point in the history of the Yemen Times. Clearly, we are now at a crossroads.



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

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- Letters to the Editor must include your name and signature, address and telephone number. Letters should not exceed 2,000 characters in length. We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity, style, length and legal contents. Any article or letter submitted cannot be returned to the writer under any circumstances.
- To advertise in the paper, contact the advertising department in any of the offices of the newspaper.

Slow, but steady

The Indian model

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

India has been able for more than half a century to prove itself a singular model among developing countries. It has set up a constitutional system of governance based on secularist and democratic foundations. It has succeeded to move out of a system dominated by one party into a multi-party state. Indian leaders realized early that a sub-continent country with a wide range of diversity cannot remain stable only on democratic principles.

What is distinctive about this country is its lack of a suitable environment that fosters democracy: a developing country with high poverty and illiteracy rates; a billion people speaking hundreds of languages and embracing different religions.

Nevertheless, India enjoys a deeply-rooted democratic system. It has a stable constitutional system which ensures a peaceful transfer of power among political forces; it has impartial independent judiciary despite sporadic pressures by the executive authority; free press thrives over there; elections are regularly conducted; increasing participation by voters from marginalized classes (minorities, outcasts); high political awareness of Indian women as indicated by the women's high participation rate in the parliamentary elections and the increasing number of women candidates winning a reasonable portion of the seats.

This is different from the Arab World in

which political participation is low, especially among women, youth and the educated. Many factors have helped stabilize democracy in India most importantly the leadership's commitment to the democratic model out of a belief that it is the only frame able to bind India.

The federal system also is an appropriate form of government that fits pluralistic communities and boasts participation. This has given birth to a climate suiting the growth of political parties and lobbies which the constitution allows without religious or ethnic constraints. Thus, parties represent the whole political spectrum.

The Indian partisan system is one of the oldest in Asia and it has never been put aside for the sake of development, as it is the case in the Arab countries which claim that economic reforms are prior to the political ones. Indians try to adapt development to democracy. In this regard, Nehru said, "I prefer slow development with democracy to development with dictatorship."

Another phenomenal observation is the recent appointment of a Prime Minister from the Sikh minority (less than 10% of the Indian people). This means that India conforms to political and legal criteria and also takes into account ethnic and religious diversity.

These are some facts from the Indian experience and its genesis. Regardless of criticism against it, India's experience has been able to achieve two major things: introducing stable democratic conventions into the country, thus safeguarding

the Indian society from disintegration, and showing political will to preserve stability and push development forward. Despite wars, conflicts and problems, India proceeded unflinchingly in the way of economic development.

Arabs always blame colonization for having given them a legacy of problems. India however, has perpetuated the advantages of colonization. It has actually made use of them such as the modern administrative system, a working railway network (fourth largest worldwide at the time of independence), and the adoption of the English language as a main subject in curricula.

Moreover, India's concept of independence is comprehensive: it did not limit it to the political aspect. It stretched it to cover economy to avoid needing anyone's help and culture by conserving its national and cultural identity internally and externally.

Finally, we may say that India's model should be a lesson for Arabs. However, it shouldn't be replicated to the letter because a country's democratic evolution is the result of historic, cultural and geographic elements. The essential achievement of the Indian leadership over the previous six decades is perfect success in infusing the belief in democracy into the Indian's mindset and political convictions.

Lessons are galore, but we hardly make use of them, especially as preparations for elections are underway in different places of the Arab World.

An embarrassment to Yemen

Who will fight Qat's terror?

By RAJIL AL NOUR
njb@swissmail.org
For The Yemen Times

The use of Qat continues to be pervasive in Yemen, and I know I'm not the first to say how harmful it is.

It's wasting important resources, one being water - an irreplaceable commodity. Secondly, it steals household resources available for children. A great percentage of money is used daily on Qat. Thirdly, time is wasted during the many hours chewing and discussing dreams that only can be achieved through serious discipline and hard work. Fourthly, "Qat chews", disrupt family life, not only financially and educationally, but also in destroying bonding within families. Who else will teach your children that they are loved and that Allah provides for them? When these valuable concepts are not correctly passed on to children, the next generation is weakened, stagnant, and unfulfilled; this next generation is one of the most precious resources to lose.

The availability of Qat leads to many questions. Who is going to answer? It seems to me that Qat steals life from everyone who uses it, and everyone around them. Even though I have been assured that Qat is not addictive medically, it seems to be medicating a whole population from their problems. Why does it command a better selling price than healthy fruits and vegetables? Will farmers be encouraged to grow crops that bring in less money? Why is Qat allowed by the government in this country? A

democracy based in freedom does not allow anyone to do whatever they want at the cost of someone else. Yet, this government allows the public usage of something that handicaps this country. Does Qat serve a purpose so that people don't do anything with their concerns about reform? Does the usage of Qat enhance this nation or tear it down? Those who might care about this problem are probably too influenced by Qat to do anything about it.

The disruption that Qat causes is seen in every day life here in Yemen. There are many tedious arrangements done to keep this pervasive and sinister evil alive and well. From something as practical as covering the plants with fabric so it isn't sunburned, to traffic jams around a Qat market holding up hundreds of others from passing. Children's feet are burnt and hurt by the ground and pavement, but shoes for those same children may not be bought because buying Qat was considered a more important use of money. The same suqs that were established for the welfare of the people are now mixed with the selling of Qat. It doesn't make sense. It is causing more and more people to have illnesses, lack of nutrition (due to a suppressed appetite), and various mood swings that leave the wife and children out of the father's lives.

Is there no healthy (Ahlybb) shame in this culture? The use of Qat is (Ahlybb) a shame. Yemenis pride themselves on not being like those Westerners who drink that mind-altering alcohol; yet Qat is mind-altering, so it might be compared to drinking alcohol. It shames this nation, and allows people who visit here to

believe that Yemenis are lazy, sluggardly, and strongly obsessed. Even the money spent on special Qat rooms high on the top of our largest buildings makes me wonder what Yemenis revere more, Qat or Allah? Which one gets more time spent on it? This is definitely a curse and a partial explanation for why this country and its people suffer.

Doesn't this curse demand some serious rearrangement of thought and practice? Why has the government not gone on full scale alert against this insidious "terrorist" Qat? Is this practice by so many going to be the downfall of a culture that has so many possibilities to be a leader in the Arab world? It certainly doesn't create any assurances that Yemen is serious about planting its flag in the 21st century; when it is so busy planting more trees of Qat.

Doesn't Yemen want to be recognized as an inviting place to the peoples of the world, a place where tourism is expanding and pulling in revenues? How can anyone hope for this, if for the majority of people three to four hours every day is spent sitting around, dreaming, and discussing the latest misinformation? Qat will never help us to build an aggressive economy.

We need to be a distinctive, moral people; able to know wrong from right. Am I the only one out there seeing these abuses? I can't believe there are not more lifting up a lament unto Allah about the scourge of Qat. I am so bothered, I took the time state my opinion, as others are starting to do.

Who is going to answer these questions? More importantly, who will take responsibility to do something about it?

Letters to the Editor

Some refugees
commit illegalities

I would like to tell you that many Ethiopians and Somali refugees in Yemen, especially those in Sana'a are committing illegalities. For example, the Ethiopian restaurants and beautiful saloons on Zubairi Street opposite to Al-Jumhuri Hospital actually sell alcohol and sometimes cocaine. I have even found out that some practice prostitution even by hiring Yemeni girls. We must not forget that we are Yemenis and Muslims and should not allow this to happen. I believe that the government along with the police and security forces with the help of embassies of Ethiopia and Somalia should crack down on those people and prevent further damage to our community.
Saleh Fozi
fozisalet@maktoob.com

'Time' will not
fool us any more!

The US magazine 'Time' has run some stories on Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, Pakistan's renowned scientist, declaring him as 'The Merchant of Menace'. Through your esteemed newspaper, let me make it clear to the editorial board of the magazine that sorry we cannot be fooled anymore by such kind of distorted and highly exaggerated stories, articles, columns and editorials. But the question is: why the magazine has failed to pose Ariel Sharon as 'The Butcher of Menace' who killed and is still killing brazenly thousands of innocent Palestinians, who have been fighting off against the aggression of Jewish forces and why it failed again to expose the worst inefficiency of CIA over the failure of

not finding any Iraqi WMDs? This is the freedom of press in the West?

We are Muslim and we have a firm faith and belief in Almighty Allah's saying 'Wa toghizzo mann tashaa' wa tozillo mann tashaa' that it's only Allah Almighty Who grants distinction and humiliation to a man. Neither American government nor its Jewish lobby press can ever harm Khan's reputation, no matter what they publish. All I would say is that he was/is and will always be our national hero, no matter, what he did or not.

Barkatullah Marwat
Kuwait
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Will this day ever come?

Looking at the situation in Yemen today, what we are supposed to ask is: Will

the day come when Yemen is ruled freely and democratically and when each and every citizen will be treated with dignity and respect. That is the day when mistreatment and atrocities will end for good.

We are indeed in a very strange time. I could not believe it when I heard that our government had openly given a tender to the company that paid highest in the form of taxes. Can you believe that we have reached such a stage?

Yemen will emerge as a strong nation only when equality and rule of law are enforced and when no extra guards will be assigned to any government official and all will be the same in front of the law.

Will this day ever come?
Salim A Salim
bolayaman@yahoo.co.uk

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

No let up in the ongoing misery:

For the Palestinians,
Sharon is just
being himself

In much of the western press, the situation in the Holy Land is hardly getting any meaningful attention these days, although anyone who thinks it is peaceful and quiet there is overtaxing his/her imagination. Maybe the continuing ugliness of the situation in Iraq and the new directions of the Bush Administration hostility prone compass needle towards Lebanon and Syria have slackened the interests of the western press and even a lot of the Arab media coverage of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Israelis would undoubtedly prefer it to be that way and are not complaining, but for the Palestinians, the temporary calm and "ceasefire" is no more a reality than snow in the Empty Quarter Desert in the month of July. From eyewitness accounts and some coverage by some of the Arab media, as well as from independent western organizations, and even some Israeli sources as well, Israel has not let up on any of its police state tactics in its stewardship of the Palestinian territories nor its aggressively hostile attitude towards the helpless Palestinian population. On the contrary, the Israeli ongoing policy of making life as difficult and miserable for the Palestinians as can be remotely imagined that has been in effect since 1967 is the prevailing dominating characteristic of life in the West Bank and Gaza. Notwithstanding all the efforts of projecting a calm in the territories and the "inclinations" of the Ariel Sharon Government to reach a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians, the facts on the ground tell a continuing tragic tale. The truth of the matter is that almost on a daily and demonstratively systematic manner there are Palestinians dying, injured, detained indefinitely for no substantial reason, not to mention being subjected to harsh conditions or lack of mobility, as curfews are randomly put into effect and road blocks set up, without any hopes of a let up. Even the land there is complaining that the Israeli efforts to proceed with the demographic and geographical disassociation with the Palestinians has actually picked up momentum. Mind you, these are all under official moves fully sanctioned by the Israeli authorities and undoubtedly with the seal of blessings of the now projected peace loving Israeli Prime Minister and his peace-seeking government. There are also the free lance activities of the settlers in the illegal settlements that Israel has set up over the last 35 years, which in some cases are even more distressing for the helpless Palestinians. As the settlers are not subject to any official scrutiny and would often avoid or remove any likelihood of press coverage, they have not hesitated in taking the "law into their hands" and maximize their officially granted permission to bear arms, which are actually supplied by the Israeli government, and unleash their hate filled measures of intimidation and provocation against the Palestinians.

Judging from various Palestinian and other accounts of the situation in the West Bank, Israel is out to make sure that it maximizes its hold on the biggest area of Palestinian land, before any reluctance to even recognize any "land for peace" arrangements. In other words, the only peace that the Israelis are actually seeking is that the Palestinians just sit out their nightmarish ordeal and pray that the Israelis will let them off for another day or so, before their turn comes up to have their children coming from school shot at, at random, by Israeli troops (and settlers), their olive trees uprooted to enlarge the areas or extend the boundaries of Israeli settlements, or have their land officially confiscated to make room for the racist wall the Israelis are still illegally building in Palestinian occupied territories.

In the Holy City of Peace, no effort is being spared to literally strangle the remaining Palestinians that are still in East Jerusalem as large plots of land and a mounting number of dwellings are confiscated, almost on a daily basis, under clearly weak justifications and legal pretexts that were actually devised to facilitate the mounting efforts to turn Jerusalem into a one-religion city.

Yet all this is not stirring the heart of the White House or anyone in the George W. Bush Administration, because for the Palestinians, there is no one there that would not consider it offensive to even mention "Palestine". For the White House, all that matters is that the Palestinians are not doing anything to upset the peace and the serenity of the Israelis, no matter what the latter do, and that the Palestinian Authority is clamping down on any Palestinians, who would dare even think about just protesting the ongoing Israeli aggression. Even Palestinian peaceful protests are treated with the harshness of suicide bombing attacks, with protestors risking indefinite arrest and possible destruction of their homes and seizure of their land.

That is how it looks on the face of it. When viewing the more generic pathetic economic situation of the Palestinians, the story becomes even more tragic. Almost every economic activity that the Palestinians are engaged in is subject to severe obstacles that would almost render those activities as useless, let alone able to sustain their owners or operators. Even if the Palestinians can get over the difficulties of producing their output, they will then face the horrendous obstacles that will make it difficult to get their products to the market. That is for those who can manage to set up or maintain any economic activities, including agriculture. For the vast majority of the Palestinians, who are employees, or skilled, semi-skilled or day laborers, despair would be the least common denominator amongst them. For those who are lucky to get any work, it means having to spend as many hours getting to the work location as having to work and that is for the lucky ones. The passage through the numerous road blocks, security systems and other obstacles is just one manifestation of the ordeals Palestinian workers and employees must go through, if they are lucky not to have to go through areas under curfew or undergoing an Israeli raid. In the latter case, the added plus of getting shot at by random Israeli gunfire is not at all remote.

Any way one looks at it, the lack of seriousness in the quest for peace with the Palestinians by Israel is further evidenced by the obvious contempt shown to any assemblage concerning the Palestinians, or anything to do with them. Israel refused the invitation to attend the recent Palestinian Blair Conference in London even when it was delivered by hand by Prime Minister Tony Blair himself some months ago. That is a wonderful gesture of peaceful coexistence, as only Israel knows how to give.

Wolfensohn stepping down

Democracy in inaction at the World Bank

By JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

James Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, has announced his intention to leave, and the search is on for a new head of the world's most important multilateral organization promoting development. The choice is especially important now, when poverty in the Third World is finally being recognized as our greatest problem and challenge.

The World Bank's designation as a "bank" understates its importance and its multifaceted roles. It does lend money to countries to undertake a variety of projects, and to help them through crises (such as the \$10 billion it provided to Korea in 1997-1998). It has been, and is, playing a vital role in post-conflict reconstruction around the world.

But the Bank also provides grants and low-interest loans to the poorest countries, particularly for education and health, and advises these countries on development strategies. It has often joined with the IMF in strong-arming countries into accepting this "advice": unless they do, they will not only be cut off by the IMF and the World Bank, but also by other donors, and capital markets will be discouraged from providing funds.

Sometimes - its critics will say often - the advice provided by the IMF and World Bank is misguided. This was certainly true in the 1980's and early 1990's, when right-wing ideology dominated, producing a one-size-fits-all prescription entailing privatization, liberalization, and macroeconomic stability (meaning price stability), with little attention to

employment, equity, or the environment.

The term "bank" is a misnomer in a second sense: while the World Bank refers to its members as "shareholders," it is hardly a private bank. On the contrary, the World Bank is a global public institution. But, while the G-7 countries, which dominate voting at the Bank, all declare their commitment to democracy and good governance - and espouse promoting them as one of their central objectives - there is a yawning gap between what they preach and what they practice.

Indeed, the entire process of choosing these international institutions' leaders is a historical anachronism that undermines their effectiveness and makes a mockery of the G-7 countries' commitment to democracy. This process, established at the outset 60 years ago, is framed by an agreement that an American would lead the World Bank and a European would lead the IMF. The American president would choose the Bank's head, and Europe would collectively decide on the IMF leader, with the understanding that the other side would exercise its veto only if a candidate were totally unacceptable.

Within the United States, all major presidential appointments must be ratified by the Senate; even if rejections are rare, the vetting process is important, for the president knows that he can go only so far. But the presidency of the World Bank is a rare presidential plum - an appointment that is not subject even to Congressional hearings.

How can advice on democratic reforms be taken seriously when the

multilateral institutions that offer it do not subscribe to the same standards of openness, transparency, and participation that they advocate? Why should the search for Wolfensohn's successor be limited to an American (and especially an American loyal to a particular political party)? Why is the search process going on behind closed doors? Shouldn't these international public institutions be looking for the best-qualified person, regardless of race, religion, gender, or nationality?

The two names that have been floated so far - presumably leaked as trial balloons - are particularly disturbing. To put it bluntly, given the World Bank's importance, consideration of either putative US candidate, Assistant Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz or former Hewlett-Packard CEO Carleton Fiorina, have been highly controversial around the world. Even if convention allows the American president to appoint the World Bank's head, the organization's success depends on the confidence of others. Neither Wolfowitz nor Fiorina have any training or experience in economic development or financial markets.

Of course, some past appointees turned out to be far better than anticipated; they rose to the occasion, despite qualifications that, in any open and objective selection process, would never even have left them on the short list. They proved that there is always a chance of outperforming. But this does not outweigh the risk of underperforming, which is why the best policy is to look for the best candidate.

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By Samer A.



There are some absolutely first-rate individuals who could step into the job, people who have shown their command of economic development, their intellect and personal integrity, and their political and managerial skills. Such potential candidates include former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo, a Yale Ph.D. who now teaches there and has been strongly supported in an editorial in the *Financial Times*; Arminio Fraga, a Princeton Ph.D. and former head of Brazil's central bank; and Kemal Dervis, a former World Bank vice-president who has taught at Princeton and successfully managed one of Turkey's crises as finance minister. Why should the world settle for anything less than candidates of this caliber?

It is time that the G-7 countries back up their democratic rhetoric with action. Many stood up to the US as it pushed for the war in Iraq. They were right to be skeptical about US claims of an imminent danger from weapons

of mass destruction.

What is at stake here is no less important: the lives and well being of billions in the Third World depend on a global war on poverty. Choosing the right general in that war will not assure victory, but choosing the

wrong one surely enhances the chances of failure.

Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, is Professor of Economics at Columbia University.



By Yahya Al-Olfi
alolfi@hotmail.com

Reflections

Yemen's fixation on the GCC and other irritants

One is bewildered at the continued resolve by the Yemeni Government to join GCC countries. Naturally, joining the GCC is likely to provide some job opportunities. But it is by no means a cure to the ever-growing deterioration of law and order, namely the law and order pertaining to justice and equality which are predominantly negated by judging people by their connections and variable associations regardless of their qualifications or competence.

This is easy to understand when we know that the management of this country is based according to the famous example of putting the carriage in front of the horse, not the other way, as things are supposed to be.

On the other hand, despite the outward appearance of wealth by the scarcely populated, British-made happen Sheikdoms, poverty is still widespread due to the non-existence of social security and modern management mechanisms. In fact, the same illnesses suffered by Yemen are still there, but at a lesser scale due to the available riches and the scarcity of population.

I remember reading an article by an economist in which he described GCC states as people staying in a five star hotel (i.e. they are guests in their own countries and every thing is done for them by imported foreigners). Indeed, nothing is being done to solve such problems, and believe it or not, if oil dries up, such countries shall stop to exist, for they are like castles on sand dunes. Some of the citizens are wealthy, but the majority barely make ends meet, because no system is in the works nor is it in the offing.

Spirits' ruler

The theological rulers of Yemen, who are in reality of Persian descent, had it as their policy to render all Yemenis ignorant. This was in order to digest their old time lie that they are the holy offspring of the Prophet Mohammed, and hence should be our Masters until doomsday.

So, being sure that he has eliminated most Yemenis who were still in their wits. The once upon a time Imam of Yemen, who ruled from 1948 -1962 declared himself as the exclusive paramount chieftain of the genies. And to test this, he ordered the people one day to soil their foreheads with tar so as to avoid the wrath of the genies who managed to escape his iron grip.

Within this context, I laughed vigorously last week when I read in Al-Balagh Newspaper that Luqman, the imprisoned judge, according to equitable witnesses had declared on more than an occasion that the President does not meet their sect's criteria for leadership, except in the masculinity proviso.

I read also in Al-Wasat that the father of the defunct insurgency leader Al-Houthi has again declared that Yemen must and ought to be ruled solely by the mythical alleged offspring of the two.

About the Old City's bridges

The rain waterway road going through the old city boasts nowadays having non-fenced bridges which seriously threaten the lives of pedestrians, namely kids. The mayor should order quick fencing so as to avoid unnecessary sad incidents. Or do we need accidents in order to react!

About Sana'a Radio

To tell you the truth, I rarely listen to

Sana'a Radio or watch the Yemeni TV because I believe that both can have better performance if competition is allowed by privately owned radios and TV stations. This in turn shall encourage investment in local film and series industry, which is at present non-existent due to the usual failed state management.

For example, Arabian Peninsula history is being depicted from an illusory Arab point of view fitting the newly founded entities in films and series predominantly financed by them. On the other hand, some working at Sana'a Radio have complained to me from the administration's haughty conduct which is by no means equal to its predecessors. Furthermore, some poets complain about the premeditated disregard of their intellectual rights and that the radio has become regionally biased in this respect by concentrating on certain individuals from limited regions and ignoring others.

The missing Opposition

All that can be said about the Yemeni Opposition is that it is much ado about nothing. Reading their mouthpieces and seeing their conduct, you shall surely find that they are dismal. Whether this is due to alleged state impact, may be, but it is not by any means a justification for the status quo, e.g. the socialist party by the assassination of its Dynamo Assistant Secretary General became disoriented.

While The Nasserites are overwhelmed by opportunists, despite the reported positive changes of leadership and their representatives in state, institutions are predominantly soiled by corruption and theft of public money.



Vacant Positions Jotun Yemen Paints Co. Ltd.

Jotun Pints is one of the leading Paint manufacturers in the world and is a division of Jotun A/S group of Norway. Jotun Yemen Paints Co. Ltd. Is a Company being setup in association with the HAS group. Jotun has started up paints trading operation with effect from 1/10/2003 as a precursor to the factory scheduled to come up during next few months in Aden. We are looking for dynamic, motivated and independent functioning personnels to fill in the following vacancies based in Aden, Sana'a & Taiz.

Only Yemeni National need to apply

1. Machine Operators (to be stationed in Aden)

Basic requirements:

- Should have at least three to five years of working experience in factory, preferably paint or paint related products.
- Should be living in Aden.
- Can read, write and speak English very well.
- Preferably with basic understanding of computer.

2. Sales Representative (to be stationed in Sana'a)

3. Sales Representative (to be stationed in Taiz)

Basic requirements:

- Should have at least three to five years of working experience in sales preferably paint or paint related products through dealer network.
- Should be living in Sana'a & Taiz city as per the above locations.
- Should be bilingual (English and Arabic).
- Preferably with basic understanding of computer.

Submission of application

Interested candidates meeting the above requirement may please forward the bio-data with contact details giving the details of educational as well the work experience within 10 days to:

Jotun Yemen Paints Co. Ltd.,
P.O. Box No. 70183
Aden - Republic of Yemen
Fax: 02 249362
E-mail: jotunaden@y.net.ye
Attention: Administration Manager

إعلان عن وظائف شاغرة لدى شركة جوتن يمن للدھانات المحدودة

تعتبر دھانات جوتن من المنتجات الرائدة في العالم وهي إحدى فروع مجموعة آي/اس النرويجية. وقد تأسست شركة جوتن يمن للدھانات المحدودة في اليمن بالمساهمة مع مجموعة شركات هائل سعيد انعم وقد بدأت نشاطها المستقل اعتباراً من ١٠/١٠/٢٠٠٣ تمهيداً لإنشاء مصنع للدھانات خلال الأشهر القليلة القادمة، وتبحث عن أشخاص مؤهلين ذات خبرات وكفاءات عالية لتغطية الشواغر التالية في كل من عدن، صنعاء وتعز:

خاص باليمنيين

١) مشغلي الآت ومكائن

- المؤهلات الأساسية المطلوبة:
- أن تكون لديه خبرة عملية أقلها من ٣-٥ سنوات في مجال تشغيل الآلات في المصانع، ويفضل في مجال الدھانات.
 - أن يكون من القاطنين أو الساكنين في محافظة عدن.
 - أن يجيد اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية كتابةً ونطقاً.
 - يفضل من لديه خبرة في مجال استخدام الكمبيوتر.

٢) مندوب مبيعات (مقيم في صنعاء)

٣) مندوب مبيعات (مقيم في تعز)

- المؤهلات الأساسية المطلوبة:
- أن تكون لديه خبرة عملية أقلها من ٣-٥ سنوات في مجال المبيعات عبر العملاء، ويفضل في مجال منتجات الدھانات.
 - أن يكون من القاطنين أو الساكنين في المحافظات أعلاه صنعاء وتعز.
 - أن يجيد اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية كتابةً ونطقاً.
 - يفضل من لديه خبرة في مجال استخدام الكمبيوتر.

تقديم الطلبات:

على الراغبين في شغل الوظائف أعلاه تقديم طلباتهم خلال ١٠ أيام مع سيرتهم الذاتية إلى العنوان التالي:

شركة جوتن يمن للدھانات المحدودة

ص.ب. رقم ٧٠١٨٣

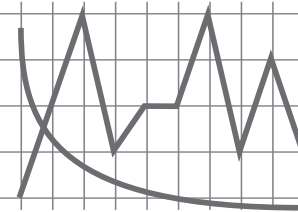
عدن - الجمهورية اليمنية

عناية الأخ / المدير الإداري

فاكس: ٠٢ ٢٤٩٣٦٢

بريد الكتروني: jotunaden@y.net.ye

YT Business



Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	187.5300	187.7700
Sterling Pound	359.5200	359.9800
Euro	247.8500	248.1700
Saudi Rial	50.0000	50.0700
Kuwaiti Dinar	642.0100	642.8300
UAE Dirhem	51.0600	51.1200
Egyptian Pound	32.3100	32.3500
Bahraini Dinar	497.4300	498.0600
Qatari Rial	51.5300	51.6000
Jordanian Dinar	264.6900	265.0200
Omani Rial	487.0800	487.7100
Swiss Franc	160.1300	160.3400
Swedish Crown	27.4200	27.4600
Japanese Yen	1.7859	1.7882

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

Cabinet looks at Central Bank's report

Yemen's bank surpluses grow

By Mahyoub al-Kamali
Yemen Times Staff

The Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) says that Yemen has achieved trade surpluses, giving more confidence in Yemeni economic performance.

Surplus in the balance of trade rose to \$937 million in 2004 compared to \$368 million in 2003.

In a report to the cabinet, the CBY also said that the surplus in total payments is \$532 million, against a surplus of \$336 million in 2003. That has been reflected on total foreign reserves of the CBY.

At the end of 2003, they rose from \$4.7 billion to around \$5.4



Central Bank of Yemen, Sana'a

billion at the end of 2004.

Meanwhile, foreign indebtedness, as a proportion of the gross domestic product, dropped from 48 per cent at the end of 2003 to 42 per cent at the end of 2004. This makes Yemen among the least indebted countries in the region.

The CBY report said that the total budget of the Yemeni banking sector rose from YR 540 billion by the end of 2003 to around YR 660 billion at the end of the year 2004, a growth of 22.4 per cent.

National banks have taken possession of about 67 per cent of the total banking activity and the Arab bank of about 32 per cent.

As for the total amount of deposits assets in the Yemeni

banking sector at the end of December 2004, they amounted to YR 576 billion against YR 476 billion at the end of December 2003, an increase of YR 100 billion.

In addition, the assets of loans and financing offered by commercial banks to various economic sectors rose to YR 184 billion by the end of December 2004 against YR 138 billion by the end of December 2003, an increase of YR 46 billion.

The Yemeni cabinet has highly evaluated the efforts exerted by the CBY, which has helped gain stability in exchange prices, building suitable reserves and founding a healthy banking sector.

The cabinet has also expressed willingness to support the CBY

measures and policies, and affirmed the necessity of proceeding in the program for restructuring the general, mixed and commercial banks by raising their capitals or by merging.

The cabinet stressed the necessity that capital of commercial banks should not be less than YR 6 billion, besides the acceleration in changing the bank of cooperative and agricultural lending into a bank of development.

Gender and employment in Yemen

By ILO, MoSAL, AND THE
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR
WORKING WOMEN- YEMEN

Yemen is the only IDA-eligible country in the Arab region covered by ILO regional office for Arab States. With a GNI per capita of 490\$ in 2002, Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world where 42% of all Yemeni households live below the poverty line and 25% of the labor force is unemployed or underemployed.

The population growth rate in Yemen is 3.5% per year, which is among the highest in the world. With an average total fertility rate of 6.5 children the care burden on Yemeni women limits their mobility and time availability to pursue education or acquire skills that will enable them to earn an income. The labor force participation rate of Yemeni women was 21.8% according to Labor Force Survey, with 62% working in agriculture as unpaid family workers in the rural areas. Paid job opportunities in the non-agricultural sector (13.8% of all employed women) and self-employed (23.9% of all employed women) are limited. Only 1.8% of all employed women are in the public sector.

In addition to the care pressures, there are cultural constraints on women's mobility and restrictions on their work in close proximity to men who are not members of their families. These restrictions result in limiting access and opportunities for appropriate training to employment opportunities.

However, it is important to note that such constraints are not absolute, and they change across time and between different communities and settings. There are, for instances, changing attitudes with respect to girl's education that can help increase their potentials for employment ability. With supportive institutional and policy environment, and appropriate programs in place, these positive trends can be escalated.

Institutional Context:

Women's status in Yemen has improved over the past decade with increased government attention to arrange of issues from legal rights to employment. A number of laws have been amended to reflect more gender equitable provisions. For instance, the labor legislation of Yemen now takes workingwomen into account by recognizing that work is a right of all citizens. Article 5 of the Labor Code emphasizes the principle of equality between women and men with respect to working conditions, rights and duties and labor relations without discrimination. This article also prescribes equality between the sexes in matters of employment, promotion; pat

training, qualifications and social security.

The national women's employment Strategy is a 10 years (2001-2011) initiatives, which was approved by Cabinet Decree No. (49). It builds on demographic and economic indicators related to women's employment and highlights for better utilization, current national legislation and international conventions that the Yemeni governments have signed. The initiative reviews the existing efforts around gender and employment issues in the country, identifying four strategic objectives for activities (employment opportunities, employment ability, terms and conditions of work and perceptions and attitudes around women's work).

The establishment of the Directorate General for Working Women (DGWW) in the Ministry of Labor in 1998 marked an important turning point for gender and employment in Yemen. The Body's mandate is to work towards enhancing gender equality, preventing discrimination in the world of work and improving women's employment ability through appropriate policies, legislations and interventions.

The DGWW remains a part of the present Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MoSAL). ILO regional Office in the Arab States has an ongoing project with DGWW and MoSAL on gen-

der and employment in Yemen.

Strengthening the Women's Machinery for the Advancement of Women's Work Project

The project titled "Strengthening the Women's Machinery for the Advancement of Women's Work in Yemen" was launched in June 2004. The project has four main goals:

- Institutional capacity of DGWW for advancing women's work
- Coordination of the implementation of the National Women's Employment Strategy
- Becoming a clearing house for sharing knowledge and information on working women's issues in Yemen
- Advocacy platform for workers issues in general and women's workers in particular

An additional program supporting the project is a Gender Mainstreaming in Social Dialogue Institutions Program. This program consists of the following main activities:

Currently, there are two ongoing studies, one on women members of Chamber of Commerce and industry and the other on women members of the General Federation of Worker's Trade Unions, which will provide an assessment of the needs of women members of these organizations and provide recommendations for policy and action. The findings from the studies will be used towards designing training and

awareness raising activities.

Technical assistance will be provided towards the development and implementation of strategy and action plans promoting gender equality in workers and employers organizations. Training activities will provide women members of workers' and employers' association with leadership, conflict resolution and negotiation skills towards their increased participation as decision makers. The project will strengthen the capacities and responsibilities of Women's committees among women's organizations, whole it will help employers associations set up gender focal points and women's com-

mittees with in their structures.

Further in the project, the focus will be on strengthening the roles of the social partners in integrating gender issues on selected issues in the social dialogue process. Possible issues of focus include working women's rights, informal emolument and women's entrepreneurs. The ILO's International Training Center in Turin will also be contributing to the capacity building activities of the projects.

A range of strategies is being utilized toward achieving these goals including research, training, advocacy and awareness raising and communication and dissemination.

While ILO executes the project, its secretariat is based in DGWW in MoSAL. It works in close consultation with tri-partite steering Committee and related social partners. This project also liaise and collaborates closely with other ILO projects and donor initiatives in Yemen including the MDG/PRSP framework towards better integration of gender concerns into poverty, employment and overall economic development efforts. The ILO Chief Technical Advisor on gender and employment in Yemen, based in the DGWW offices of MoSAL in Sana'a, provides oversight for both project and the additional program.

Request for proposals

A donor funded project providing technical assistance to improve the quality of basic education programs in Yemen requests proposals from local firms capable of providing Professional Engineering Structural Inspection Services. The YALA - Yemen Basic Education Program is seeking an engineering firm to conduct assessments of the structural integrity of selected school buildings in Mareb, Shabwah, and Amran governorates, prior to subcontracting for their renovation.

Background:

School renovation and rehabilitation is one of the major components of the YALA, which has agreed with the Ministry of Education to renovate a selected number of schools in the governorates of (Mareb, Shabwah and Amran). The first phase of the implementation steps is to make sure that the targeted schools are structurally sound and able to be renovated; and, that there is no risk of structural damage likely to during and/or after renovation.

The schools selected represent a range of different types of structural systems, including:

1. Mud brick load bearing wall + wooden roof with plain concrete sloped layer;
2. Cement blocks load bearing wall + wooden roof with plain concrete sloped layer;
3. Reinforced concrete structure + cement block external and internal walls; and,
4. Some cases of mud covered roof with load bearing wall structure (stone, solid cement blocks, mud bricks).

Work Required:

The Structural Engineering firm to be selected by the YALA team of architects should inspect the selected schools and assess their conditions according to the ACI code and the MOE general specifications.

The Scope of work for the selected structural firm will include:

- Study and inspect the structural reliability of each of the selected schools (approximately 150 to 200 schools over the next two years);
- Issue a signed certificate for each facility that explains the final result of the inspection with full legal responsibility; and,
- Submit a detailed estimate of the costs of renovating each school, including a detailed work plan for performing the assignment, and a work schedule of activities (all requested documents should be written in English and Arabic languages).

The Structural Engineering firm selected to conduct these preliminary assessments, and develop the cost estimates for renovations, will not be eligible to bid on the subsequent contracts to renovate the facilities.

Technical proposals must include the relevant services carried out in the last five years that illustrate qualifications.

Financial proposals must remain valid 45 days after submission date. Information on the outer envelope should include: name of the firm.

Firms are requested to submit a proposal written in English and Arabic languages no later than the 10 in the morning on the 12th of March 2005.

The proposal should be submitted to the following address:

YALA - Basic Education Development Program
Sana'a, YEMEN
Tourist city, Tower 4, Apartment 4
Tel (01-302-736 / 302-758 / 304-100)
Attention to: Eng. Ahmed Al-Tashi

للإستفسار 01- 441000

المعرض التايلندي الأول - عدن
للفترة من ١٥ - ١٧ مارس ٢٠٠٥

المعرض التايلندي الثاني - صنعاء
للفترة من ٢٠ - ٢٢ مارس ٢٠٠٥

برعاية

وزارة الصناعة والتجارة

تنظيم

DEP

المركز التجاري التايلندي (دبي)

البنادق APOLLO

شركة أبولو للمعارض الدولية
Tel: 441000 - Fax: 440000

الإشراف

الإتحاد العام

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لغرفة التجارة الصناعية - امانة العاصمة

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١٧ مارس (تجار + عام)
صنعا: ٢١/٢٠ مارس (للتجار فقط)
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Stories are powerful tools

Children's imaginations need nurturing

BY SALEM AL-MAJIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

aggressiveness and other violent conducts.

Double-edged sword

Imaginary stories are highly appreciated by children. These tales have their own influences on their behavior and day-to-day activities, helping them to enrich their knowledge, perception and mental abilities and implant the desire to be helpful to others.

But not all the imaginary tales and fables presented to children via films and caricatures can help develop their abilities, particularly those leading to violence and hatred among children.

How one protects the child and modifies his behavior after being exposed to such tales and fables and various scenes were printed in his/her mind is important. In the view of some, it becomes impossible to modify the child's behavior after he/she starts to imitate what has been viewed in the screen.

Is it possible for parents to provide their children with some useful tales and fables other than what they watch in the TV? How can we protect our children from deviation and make them capable of proper thoughts?

To discuss events behind the phenomenon, we probed into the views of some educators and psychologists.

Fatihia Lugman commented that imaginary tales contribute much in developing children's creative abilities through their feeling toward responsibility and modifying their behavior by themselves.

Some useful tales include those related to truth and honesty that are viewed in caricatures; they make the child accustomed to think enough before taking decisions in critical times.

"We do forget that the limited imagination often yields positive outcomes and in the contrary, the limitless imagination leads to negative influences on the child's behavior such as roughness and

"As far as I am concerned, imaginary tales are useful for children if they are employed properly, otherwise, the imaginary tales are a double-edged weapon," said Nawar al-Maqtary, a teacher at Jeel al-Ghad School.

"Such tales may help modify the child's behavior to be socially admired. Some other times they make children aggressive and a source of trouble in the society; the useful imaginary tales and fables can be exploited in developing the mental abilities of children and implanting in them curiosity via reading special stories. The frightening tales should be avoided since they have their negative influences on the personality of the child".

She added: "children experience horrifying dreams during their sleep after reading or listening to tales colored with aggression and violence. Childhood-related fables attract the attention of children more than others, particularly those narrated by mothers before their children during days of childhood. Tales related to other children and animals seem to be next in importance to the first kind.

"The more the child's experiences increase in the sense of reading and listening to tales, the more his/her mental domain expands. Tales exposing familiar things help develop the child's horizon of thought; they help take the child from his limited environment to the outer world."

Mohammad Murshid Sultan holds the view that any fiction has its effect on the recipient, specifically if it forms exciting scenes on the mind of the recipient. Fictions to some extent develop the mental ability of children while there are many others that have their negative effects on the behavior of the child.

Mohammad commented that the scientific imagination in fictions contributes effectively to developing the analytical abilities and talents of the child either at



home or at school. This enables him to be more creative in his scientific and practical life.

With respect to the subject Waheeb al-Shaibani, a teacher at Jeel al-Ghad said: "The child as psychologists say is a blank slate and the nature implants in him either love, hatred, curiosity or violence. When adults narrate fictions and fables before children, the mental abilities of the latter will develop leading him or her to the phase of creativity."

Mohammad al-Qubati holds the view that imagination is of two types, either broad imagination or narrow imagination.

We can profit from the second type in developing the mental abilities of children because such a type of imagination fit their mental abilities and help them develop, but the first type usually scatters the mental concentration of the child and draws his attention to things out of place, he said.

A true story

Abdulsalam al-Omaisi said that the stories of children have an integral role in raising awareness among them and implant in them some good qualities like discretion and honesty. However, tales heavenly colored with imagination have their negative influences upon the behavior of the child making him aggressive and accustomed to telling lies. The majority of tales are not more than being a waste of time and have no specific purpose to be reflected in the child's day-to-day life.

On this subject, Dr. Rifgi Eisa, Professor of Psychology at Faculty of Education Taiz University said: "One of the outstanding characteristics of younger children is their enthusiastic desire for imagination and creativity, and this in turn leads to the conflict between reality and imagination. Children mostly desire to be driven by their imagination

while adult people want them to avoid this due to its negative influences. By this we resort to bring a compromise solution to combine between reality and imagination and to make a distinction between them while maintaining the latter (imagination) under our control.

We have to take for granted the tale of "Aglat Al-Usb'u" which tells the younger child that whatever seems difficult and intricate, he/she has to face because when he/she grows up and goes out of his/her home he/she is bound to face risks in the outer world.

Dr. Eisa added: "What I mean is that we have to teach the child how to differentiate between reality and imagination as this helps children overcome difficulties facing them later.

Growing through imagination

Does the child need a particular style of imagination to develop his creative abilities? Dr. Eisa answered that using

the style of imagination and its role in preventing children from perceiving reality.

Most of the advanced experiences are not favored to be offered to children at earlier stages, and imagination is recommended as the favored mean to provide children with experiences that fit their level and age.

With respect to this, Dr. Eisa noted: "Some of the imaginary tales are considered to be an effective means in the social upbringing. The imaginary personalities also have a crucial role in cultivating the child's behavior and they can be visualized in the form of ghosts and Jennies."

On this subject, Mohammad al-Sawi, a teacher of psychology at the Teachers Institute mentioned that it is the psychological features which distinguish the artistic works of children in their earlier stages.

He added: "Younger children show a great desire for the tales that expresses the idea of loss and restoring, and this idea is existent on the psychological analysis. While in cradle, the infant experiences that his/her mother left him/her once and returned, and the mother is the physical and spiritual protection of the child. The child becomes happy when he/she realizes that his/her mother comes back."

How we should write tales Regarding this, al-Sawi emphasized an important point associating with the style the writer has to follow for the sake of conveying his ideas. The tale should deal with a specific idea or a single topic that is related to the day-to-day experiences of the child.

The tales should proceed on one direction without any shifts and the succession of events has to be perceived as it took place in a specific area such as a forest, a school or a castle. The time setting should be as limited as possible and the number of characters is preferred to be small so that they can be distinguished and convincing.

Yemen Times celebrates: photo shoots



International Women's Day

Yemeni women face breadth of issues

BY NADIA AL-SAKKAF
AND FAHMIA AL-FUTAIH
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Last week the Women's National Committee celebrated the International Women's Day by conducting a two-day conference in which many issues relating to women's status in Yemen were discussed.

The strategic and general directions of 2005 plan was assessed and discussed by the WNC through a working paper on this assessment in the education, economy, health, infrastructure, environment, national strategy for women from 2006-2015.

In addition legal amendments, where a proposal for amending 27 laws, were discussed. Working papers on early marriage and women sports were also discussed.

This year, WNC's celebration of Women's International Day paralleled the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women of the UN.

More than 700 attended the March 8 ceremony, and Prime Minister Abdulqadir Bajamal attended part of the two-day conference.

Mrs. Hooria Mashoor deputy chairperson of the WNC, commented on the great disparity in accessing opportunities, services and resources between men and women on the one side and between the rich and the poor on the other.

"In our country, we see this occasion as a valuable opportunity that must be used to review the updates in Yemeni women's progress. Today, this issue has gained many supporters who encourage integrating women into the public sphere in accordance with the era's essence and necessity of change and development.

"This trend comes in line also with the political directions that call on creating political mobilization that would lead the socio-economic process and that would view women as a basic constituent of change.

"This national initiative carries in its fold deep reading and realization of the rapid transformations taken place in the world. This initiative is presented through positive dealing of political authorities with the women's movement project in implementing the Quota System adopted by the Women's National Committee.

"This quota system is seen as a breakthrough for women in order to overcome cultural and social barriers and to ensure adequate and fair representation of Yemeni women in all authority and decision making position in both elected and non-elected bodies."

Themes at the conference, included:

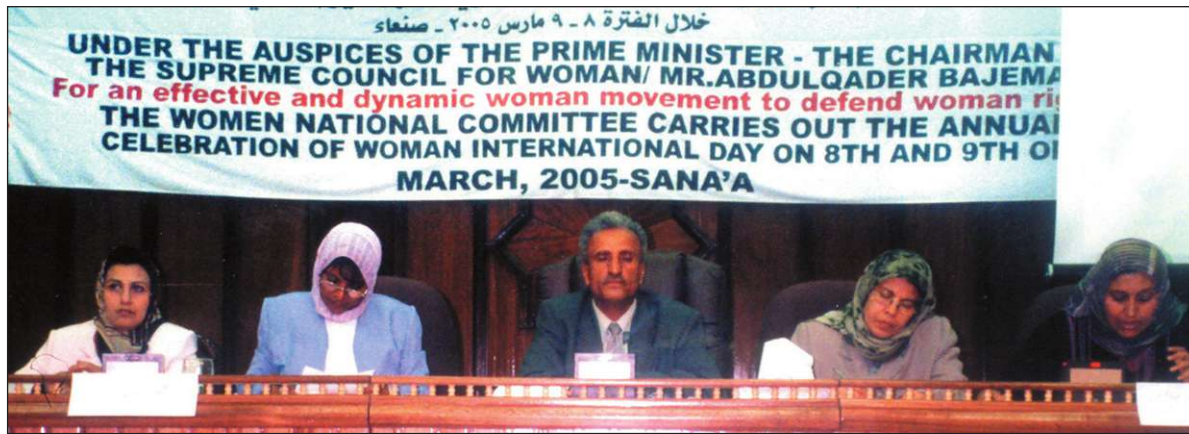
Linking gender equality to the Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs commits member countries to promote gender equality and women's empowerment as a necessary condition to combat poverty. Persistent gender inequalities is seen as being one of the underlying causes of poverty both from the point of view of limiting women's capacities to contribute fully to growth as well as benefit from development.

Women's exclusion and persistent marginalisation from the social, economic and political spheres of the economy results in both their inability to participate fully in development but also limits the extent to which a country can emerge from the poverty trap. While all the eight MDGs endorse this view and recognize the fact that gender equality and women's empowerment is central to eradicate poverty. Goal 3 specifically focuses on achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Development planning

Yemen was one of eight pilot countries selected by the UN Millennium Project to ensure achievement of MDGs by 2015. Pursuant to this the Ministry of Planning and International Co-operation (MoPIC) took a lead in carrying out the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing. The outcomes of the needs assessment and costing will form the basis for development of the forthcoming Third Five Years Plan for Development and Poverty Reduction (2006-2010). The MoPIC set up five Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) on Macro-Economic Growth & Employment, Health, Education, Infrastructure and Environment along with three groups on Gender, Decentralization and Civil Society to address cross-cutting issues.



The economic environment for gender equality

Economic and social development programmes aimed at improving living condition of the population have been in existence in Yemen since the 1970s. These programmes were successful to a limited extent through development of basic infrastructure, expansion of social services and support to agriculture and industry.

The subsequent economic downturn beginning in the 1980s and the shock to the economy in the early 1990s resulted in decline in Gross National Product (GNP) per capita from US \$701 to US \$318 during the period 1990-1995 (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper PRSP, pg. 1). The Unification of Yemen in 1990 was a step forward in providing political stability despite the challenges met in the form of failed attempts at secession.

The legislative environment for gender equality

The government of Yemen in the past decade, especially post-Beijing has attempted to create a policy environment to enhance women's participation in different spheres of the economy. Some of the key government policies and strategies aimed at addressing women's specific condition and enhancing her participation are mentioned here.

The national gender strategy

This strategy endorsed in May 2003, provides a policy framework to promote gender equality and women's rights. It provides the strategic directions for the WNC to improve women's status in Yemen.

The strategy focuses on: (1) Promoting and endorsing the basic principles of CEDAW and BPPA, with a particular emphasis on reviewing and amending gender discriminatory laws; (2) Gender mainstreaming in all sectors of the PRSP; (3) Increasing women's representation and political participation; and (4) Institutional capacity building for the WNC's staff, focal persons and Head Officers at governorate levels in order to plan, implement and monitor activities in line with the strategy. The strategy also emphasizes building partnerships with CSOs and donors to promote the strategy's direction and realization.

Health sector reform

This was launched in 1998 by the Ministry of Health. The HSR provides the framework for primary health care with emphasis on equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility. Reorganization of the health system through greater decentralization of management and service delivery from central to district forms the core agenda.

National strategy for HIV/AIDS

Endorsed by the Cabinet in 2002, this recognizes equality in allocation of resources between education and health services for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Emphasis is on awareness raising on the issue especially amongst the youth. Mention is made specifically to women's particular needs and their rights to be taken into account fully in drawing up appropriate responses.

Basic education strategy

Until 1998 the Yemen government had a specific Girls Education Strategy, which was then included in the National Strategy for Development of Basic Education 2003-2015. The girl's education is an important component and looks at changing attitudes towards girls education through curriculum development, recruitment of female teachers and campaigns to promote girl children's educational opportunities.

Illiteracy and adult education.

This programme (1998-2020) specifically

aimed at overcoming illiteracy among rural women comprising 74% of total illiteracy. A department was created affiliated to the Ministry of Education and until recently was headed by a woman. It targets women in the age group of 10-45 years and girls who drop out of school. Specific focus is on reducing increasing illiteracy in future generations through special programmes for adult education. However, absence of budget allocation and low payment of teachers are major constraint in the effective implementation of this policy.

Central Statistical Organization

It started focusing on gender disaggregated statistical data in 1997 and produced its first report in 1999. This report was translated in English and workshops were organized to disseminate information on education, health, laws, employment, women political participation and violence against women. The updated report of 2001 included two other issues

productive actors in the development process through integrating gender concern in planning and implementation of programs and projects related to agrarian policies.

Population Policy (2001-2025)

It has three comprehensive strategies none of which make any explicit mention of gender inequalities. In terms of principles and objectives the policy focuses on the International Conference on Population and Development and the BPPA. Discussions are on the basis of equity, equality and women's empowerment. It points to the lacunae in community involvement and civil society organization in protecting entitlements of marginalized groups particularly women.

It recognizes discrimination within household and family resulting in subordinate position of women. Acknowledges resistance from some political and religious groups on women's political participation as well as legislative challenges in ensuring the same. The final document of the Population Council talks about bridging the gender gap in education, labor and access to social services

While the world is celebrating and marking 8 March as International Woman's Day, most Yemeni women are deprived of their basic rights.

women and poverty and women and environment.

Justice sector reform project

This is ongoing and looks at women's access to justices and legal redress. It seeks to examine gender sensitivity in terms of women's ability to use the court systems, access to law, information, legal assistance, support; facilitate attitudinal change in legal officers including judges, lawyers, clerks and other functionaries towards women petitioners.

Women labor strategy

It was formulated for the period between 2001-2011. The main objective of this strategy was to enhance women's participation in the labor market given prevailing economic changes. Emphasis was on increasing women's skill to compete effectively in the labor market through capacity building and training programs. Focus was also on improving the conditions of work through institutional changes, as well as economic and social protection for women.

National strategy for agriculture advancement and development

This was formulated in 1999. The main purpose was mobilization of human resources and employment in the rural areas, and included both men and women. In terms of gender perspective it intended to bridge the gender gap in employment through affirmative action for women. It also aimed at building rural women's capacities as socio-economic

also signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention which is no small achievement.

Gender equality

Gender inequality is a way of life in the context of Yemen with variations depending on the diverse religious, cultural, social and political tradition that influence it. Under the circumstances a one size fits all approach would be erroneous. Extent of mobility, segregation and educational opportunities are dependent on a number of factors including social and economic.

Gender inequalities in access and control over resources persist in all aspects of women's life influencing economic opportunities, access to basic services and decision-making.

Women and the economy

Although right to work is recognized as a basic entitlement of all citizens immaterial of gender, in reality gender disparities in employment prevail. Article 5 of the Labor Code prescribes equality between the sexes in matters of employment, promotion, pay, training, qualifications and social security.

Yemen is also signatory to key international conventions on women's rights such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Declaration for Human Rights, the International Convention for Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the ILO Convention on Equal Remuneration.

Women and health

In the last decade, Yemen has achieved progress in improving health with significant improvement in health indicators especially that of infant and under 5 mortality rates. Programs such as dehydration and diarrhea eradication programs, regular vaccination against deadly diseases campaigns (chicken pox, Diftiria, TB, Children Paralysis) contributed to this success. Despite these gains the overall health status of women and children in Yemen leaves much to be desired.

Women and education

The Yemen government has made a considerable effort to enhance primary education in the past decade. Both national and donor funds have been invested towards improving access and quality of education through various interventions. In the period between 2000-2005, gender equity in education was actively pursued through the Second Five years plan 2000-2005, the National Strategy for Improving primary education (part of the Education for All initiative) and through the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction.

The National Strategy of Girls Education, 1998 focuses on increasing primary education opportunities for girls and aimed to increase the rate of enrolment upto 80% in 2025. Despite these initiatives education of girl children in Yemen lags far behind that of boys both in primary as well as secondary education. In the following section we focus on the specific challenges in achieving gender parity in education as per the MDG commitments.

Women and political participation

Despite considerable progress in the democratic system since Yemen's Unification in 1990, women's political participation continues to remain low. Of the total 7251 representatives in the Parliament and local councils only 38 are women. Women's representation overall comprises only 0.5% in the elected institutions. Gender disparities in women's representation also persist in the govern-

ment with only 16,200 women and legal institutions with female judges numbering 32.

Political participation is fundamental to the process of change and transformation. However, both political parties and civil society organizations instrumental in enhancing women's participation in public spaces and decision-making are governed by traditional political structures and attitudes towards women's participation in political process. We look at some of the issues related to women's participation and underlying causes leading to poor performance in the following section.

Women and law

The Constitution of the Republic of Yemen promulgated in 1994 recognizes equality between men and women before the law and is enshrined in Article 40 which states 'All citizens are equal in general rights and obligations' before the law. In addition to the equality provision Yemen is also a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) and signed the Optional Protocol last year. Despite these commitments women in Yemen still experience inequalities both in terms of access to law as well as inconsistencies in the interpretation of the equality principle.

Conference recommendations

The participants came up with a number of recommendations that all aim at activating the woman role in the political and developmental participation in the society.

All the recommendation stressed on the necessity of cooperation between the official institutions and civic societies to implement the strategy of developing the woman status and set a mechanism to monitor and follow up the levels of implementation of the strategy.

The recommendations also pointed out to the importance of having a woman cadre in drawing, starting out and implementing the policies, programs and the different developmental projects to ensure the woman needs especially what concerns the rural woman. All the recommendations focus on the improving the infrastructure services to serve the issues and needs of the woman development programs in a short and a long term.

The participants called for increasing the participation of woman in structures of the high authorities decision-making and apply the equality standard between men and women in posting the leading positions.

The recommendations also stressed on the importance of media role in raising woman issues and needs and paying attention in raise awareness among the women in rural and remote areas in all educational and healthy issues as well as paying attention to carry out studies and surveys to genuinely know the problems and reasons that lead to increase diseases infection among women including breast cancer and the fatal diseases like AIDS and the ways of its transmission.

The recommendations demanded for hastily implement the articles and local laws that parallel with level of labor laws in Arab and foreign countries and other laws that Yemen has ratified. Moreover, they called for healing all the shapes of discrimination in all labor sectors and guarantee the legal protection for woman workers and support their issues.

The recommendations called all the committees that support woman in the government, parties, and civic society organizations to stand together in attempt to apply quota system for women to pave the way for woman to the decision-making positions through which she can monitor the women situations and improve their roles in all life aspects.



أنت الرابع في عيد سبأفون الرابع



أجهزة منزلية



رحلات سياحية



سيارتان هيونداي



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Liana Sedan

A letter to the teachers of English: 78 Language teacher education and training (2)



DR. M.N.K. BOSE
(BOSE@y.net.ye)
Associate Professor of English,
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Dear Fellow teachers,
I hope my argument against training teachers of English and for educating them makes sense to you; you can question me any time you feel misled or carried away.
I strongly feel that today's classrooms are much more different from those in the past, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Our students are genetically gifted with more intelligence than us; we should honour this innate 'superiority' of our students. This inborn intelligence is either bettered or worsened in the situation each one lives; that is why we suggest an affable home climate and a congenial school climate. Unfortunately, most of our students have a conducive home climate and left at our mercy at the schools and colleges. It is sad that most of the time they fail to get such a climate in schools as well, especially in English classrooms, mainly because we belittle their capabilities and treat them at a much lower level, psychologically and sociologically. What I mean is that we hardly take them into confidence when we plan our lessons or teach the lesson in the classes; the examples we give them sometimes are of the lower mental abilities, the exercises we set for them are less challenging and the tests we give them are not at all demanding. Most of our clever students who get at this 'secret' of our professional activities through their keen, constant observation, beat us out of our exams memorizing and reproducing the answers to get higher scores. I have heard many students who are not good at the art of mugging the answers up growl at the exam results

when they see the 'muggers' get ranks and not the real intelligent ones. When it comes to using the language skills in the interviews for jobs or any such events, the rank holders betray their incompetence, because the ranks were the prize for their mugging up and not for their intelligence.
My contention, therefore, is that training does enable the teachers to provide a healthy climate in the classrooms to our students; only education helps. Educating the teachers results in giving them abilities to tackle any eventualities in the classrooms, academic or otherwise; developing in the teachers competence to evaluate the teaching materials and adapt them, if necessary, to tackle the classroom crises, if any and turn them to the advantage of the students, to design suitable testing tools for their classes. Teacher education prepares teachers to meet the challenges of today's classrooms, academic, sociological and psychological. In addition, it inculcates in the teachers a positive attitude to research and enables them to find answers to most of their classroom problems.
Some of the readers might wonder if the teachers of English 'educated' in the Faculties of Education do have these abilities. I have come across many teachers with these abilities and their classes are success stories and models to follow. I am not unaware of those who find it difficult to manage their classes and get frustrated when they face problems in the classrooms. I will not put the blame wholly on these teachers, because the curriculum of the Faculties of Education is partly responsible for their poor performance, as they were not prepared well to meet the classroom challenges. We will discuss what should be done to improve the situation later.

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

Jane Austen's Crypto-feminism



DR. MURARI PRASAD
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
SADA'AH

There was a long tradition of passive revolution in support of women's mobility and uplift before the term feminism gained currency around 1890 and, eventually, flowered into a widespread vibrant movement in the 1970s. In this unorganized empowering project of the Western provenance literature, particularly fiction, has played an important part. In this brief essay I would wish to look at Jane Austen's engagement with the issue of women's position in the early 19th century English society.

Every year March 8 marks the International Women's Day. Though a little belated, we are not far behind in taking note of the assorted varieties in the ideological battles—robust or passive—that lent strength and vigour to the feminist movement

Jane Austen was born in 1775, five years after Wordsworth, four years after Walter Scott, and three years after Coleridge. She was twenty-two years of age when Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, died. Despite Wollstonecraft's unorthodox views on women's role in society and her plea for female

What was Jane Austen's position on the iniquitous social conventions? Of course, she does not unleash oppositional rhetoric. Nor does she state any ideological position or express her outrage against exclusion and oppression of women. Her ideological reticence as well as the placid texture of her novels has been taken as her conformity to the order and stability of society. On both sides of the Atlantic she was for long considered a conservative and uncritically orthodox writer. As the head of the Great Tradition in the English novel in F.R. Leavis' estimation she does not come out in full-dress evaluation. It was only in the 1980s that her novels were viewed through the lens of feminism. What does a feminist perspective on her fiction yield?

The restrictive social practices of her time prevented her from articulating her assumptions and attitudes. She even suppressed her name in the title-page of her novels—they merely said that they were 'By a Lady'. Probably the only novel in which the traditional gender pattern is overtly resented is *Persuasion*. Chafing under limitations imposed by patriarchal society, Anne Elliot expresses her views on women's fate in a conversation with Captain Harville: "We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us. You are forced on exertion. You have always a profession, pursuits, and business of some sort or other to take you back into the world immediately." However, her views on female autonomy and her questioning of traditional sex roles are voiced in the witty sallies and emotional independence of her heroines. To configure her ideological alignment we need to look at her feisty and forth-

Improve Your English



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I. What to Say Situations and expressions (76): Job advertisement (IV)

The language of advertisement is chiefly characterized by persuasion. It is essentially persuasive discourse which, like any other form of discourse is an interactive public or mass mode of communication with a rich 'persuasive intent.' It is based on a resource-given-receiver-received framework. The ultimate objective of advertising is 'promoting' and 'selling' goods and services in the most appealing 'persuasive manner.'

- An opportunity waiting just for you.
- Unleash your talent, realize your dreams.
- Looking for a life-time opportunity. Life can be as big as you dream it to be.
- 6 months of your time can lead to a global career.
- Join — and connect to the future (a customer knowledge company)
- We'll make you your own boss.
- Looking for a few influencing minds.
- Discover yourself at —.

II. How to say it correctly Correct errors, if any, in the following sentences

1. Scarcely had we gone out than it began to rain heavily.
2. we reached at Taiz at 8 p.m.
3. Telephone was discovered by Graham Bell, an American scientist.
4. The gentry of the city was present at the meeting.
5. I have collected all the informations about this case.

- Suggested answers to the previous week's questions**
1. Unless you speak the truth, you will be dismissed.
 2. One ought to perform one's duty to the best of one's ability.
 3. You must work hard if you want to achieve success.
 4. The police was successful in capturing the culprit.
 5. The political leaders should refrain from telling lies in their speeches.

III. Increase your word power

- (A) How to express it in one word
1. Person, animal, or plant much below the usual size.
 2. To become gradually fewer or smaller.
 3. The science that deals with matter in movement.
 4. Machine for changing steam-power, water-power etc. into electrical energy.
 5. Succession of rulers belonging to one family.

- Suggested answers to the previous week's questions**
1. Make another sound track for a cinema film in a different language: **dub** (vt)
 2. To lower one's head or body so as to avoid being hit: **duck** (vt&i)
 3. A person or behavior that is easily influenced or controlled: **ductile** (adj).
 4. Goods on which customs duties must be paid: **dutiable** (adj).
 5. Goods that are allowed to come into the country without tax: **duty-free** (adj).

- (B) Synonyms and Antonyms
i) Synonyms
Given below are some words followed by four answers. Mark the answer, which is nearest to the meaning of the given word.

1. **aura**
a) frame b) crown
c) subtle emanation d) enthusiastically.
2. **solicit**
a) to command b) to worry
c) to sympathize with d) to ask for
3. **envisage**
a) to face b) to seek
c) to foresee in imagination
d) to understand

- Suggested answers to the previous week's questions**
- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Word | synonym |
| 1. entail | to impose or result in |

2. thwart to block
3. assiduously persistently

II. Antonyms Given below are some words followed by four answers. Tick the answer, which gives the opposite meaning of the given word.

1. **Ignominious**
a) selfish b) villain c) honorable d) victorious
2. **Magnanimous**
a) dishonest b) covetous c) gracious d) faithful
3. **Penitence**
a) penniless b) cowardice c) naughty d) remorseless

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Word | Antonym |
| a. laud | to censure |
| b. reverence | disdain |
| c. sycophant | slanderer |

(C) Words Commonly Confused Bring out differences in meaning of the following pairs of words.

1. madding, maddening
2. gage, gauge, gaze, gauze.
3. exhausting, exhaustive.
4. dependant, dependent
5. epidemic, endemic.

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

1. **partiality** (n) (favoritism; inclination of the mind towards something) A teacher should not show partiality to any particular student.
- bias** (n) (undue mental inclination towards or away from something) He is biased against Americans.
- prejudice** (n) (opinion, like or dislike formed before one has adequate knowledge or experience) The Britishers in India were guilty of racial prejudice.
2. **locate** (vt) (look for and find something; discover or show the position of) Can you locate Yemen on the map? The mechanic could not locate the source of the strange noise in the engine.
- find** (vt) (to come upon something not as a result of deliberate search) I found a purse on the road.
3. **jealous** (adj) (feeling unhappy because of the better fortune of others) He is jealous of his neighbour's prosperity.
- zealous** (adj) (full of enthusiasm) He is a zealous worker.
4. **hoard** (vt&i) (save and store) She likes to hoard gold.
- horde** (vt) (crowds of people) Hordes of people gathered outside.
5. **excursion** (n) (short journey by a group for pleasure) We organized an excursion to the mountains.
- incursion** (n) (sudden attack or invasion) There have been many an incursion into our territory by foreign invaders.

(D) Phrases and Idioms Use the following idioms in sentences

- 1) the more the merrier.
- 2) dead to the world
- 3) turn upside down
- 4) cross swords with
- 5) laugh one's head off

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions.

- 1) **be tied up** (to be busy, to be occupied with): I am tied up with several things this week.
- 2) **burn the midnight oil** (to study or work until very late at night): Students burn the midnight oil nearer the dates of exam.
- 3) **hit the nail on the head** (to be absolutely accurate or exact): The advocate hit the nail on the head when he produced the inviolable evidence against the accused.
- 4) **twist someone's arm** (to try to persuade someone to do something against his/her will) He was unwilling to fight the election, but the party workers twisted his arm and made him agree to contest.
- 5) **have a stab at (something)** (to try to do something): He had no previous experience of paratrooping; but he decided to have a stab at the sport.

IV. Grammar and Composition

A) Grammar Use who, which or whose to complete the following sentences.

1. Marsupials are animals young are carried in a pouch.
2. There are a number of mammals live in the sea.
3. An ornithologist is a person studies birds.
4. Amphibians, are cold, blooded animals, can live on land or in the water.
5. David Attenborough is a naturalist films have been seen all over the world.
6. Spiders feed on smaller creatures they catch in their webs.
7. There are some scientists.... spend their entire lives studying one kind of animal.
8. There are a number of birds.... are not capable of flying.
9. Mammals are animals ...babies are born fully formed rather than as eggs.
10. Crocodiles and lizards are related to the dinosaurs...lived millions of years ago.

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

1. Dr. Adel's upstairs are getting changed, but he will come down in a moment.
2. When they heard the sound of the helicopter, they looked up and waved.
3. The enquiry team are looking into exactly why the accident happened.
4. I can't remember her number- could you look it up in the phone book for me?
5. At the end of the concert, the audience went on clapping until the singer came back and did an encore.
6. When they looked into the nest, they saw three baby birds.
7. When I last visited the Eiffel Tower, the lift wasn't working, so I came down the stairs.
8. Although unemployment is high, the government says it will come down soon.
9. When he went to the fair, Ali wanted to go up the big wheel.
10. He was pleased to hear that the value of his house had gone up since he had bought it.

Composition Expand the idea contained in the maxim 92. MIGHT IS RIGHT

The previous week's topic 91. PROSPERITY GAINS FRIENDS. BUT ADVERSITY TRIES THEM

When a person enjoys power, position or wealth, he is surrounded by many admirers who like to curry favor with him. These are but fair-weather friends whose ostensible objective is to buttress their selfish designs. But if that person, who was once Dame Fortune's favored child, falls in bad days and loses his glamour, the admirers don't hesitate to desert him unscrupulously, except a very few who are steadfast in their loyalty to this person even though he is haunted by the slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune. This proves that adversity or blind misfortune is a kind of acid test for friendship. It discriminates between the true and faithless friends and separates them like grain from chaff. It exposes the masks of the time servers whose only motive was fulfillment of their narrow, petty, selfish interests. So, unless a man faces adversities, he may not know the true worth of friends.

III. Pearls from the Holy Quran.

"Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger. And beware (of evil): If ye do turn back, know ye that it is Our Messenger's duty to proclaim (the Message) in the clearest manner."
S.5 A.92

IV. Food for thought "With love one learns the best manners."

—Mir

right heroines, such as Catherine Morland, Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse.

Unlike their fragile fictional stereotypes, these robust women make no bones about their fondness for outdoor life and open air. Catherine Moreland in *Northanger Abbey* is lively and boisterous, "noisy and wild", and detests confinement. Far from being a husband-hunter, or seeking after crutches for social standing, she eats to her fill and falls asleep for nine solid hours after her suitor fails to show up at a ball. As a conventional role model, she could be seen mooning over her true love. Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* is a sensible, sharp and self-possessed girl. Unlike Miss Bingley, she does not angle for Darcy's attention or approval while proclaiming her identity. She is incapable of fainting like Richardson's Pamela or Goldsmith's Olivia.

The traits of these heroines represent Austen's views on women's selfhood and space in family and society. Elizabeth Bennet does not hesitate to

violate the code of female propriety when she decides to walk through the muddy countryside to see her sick sister. Jane Austen's subtle authorial observation is conflated with Elizabeth's curt reply to Mr. Collins, "Do not consider me now as an elegant female, intending to plague you, but as a rational creature." She makes measured and mature response when Lady Catherine asks her whether she and her sisters have acquired the conventional feminine accomplishments like playing and singing. Lady Catherine can hardly hide her obvious discomfiture:

"Upon my word," said her Ladyship, "you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person.—Pray, what is your age?"
"With three younger sisters grown up," replied Elizabeth smiling, "your ladyship can hardly expect me to own it."

Lady Catherine seemed quite astonished at not receiving a direct answer; and Elizabeth suspected herself to be the first creature who had ever dared to trifle

with so much dignified appearance!

Jane Austen undercuts the conventions in the market economy of marriage through strategic interventions in the form of her heroines' witty rejoinders. For instance, Elizabeth's reaction to Mrs Gardiner, who had cautioned her against marrying Wickam, on the double standard of morality in matrimonial transactions:

Pray, my dear aunt, hat is the difference in matrimonial affairs between the mercenary and the prudent motive? Where does discretion end and avarice begin? Last Christmas you were afraid of his marrying me, because it should be imprudent, and now because he is trying to get a girl with one thousand pounds. You want to find out that he is mercenary.

In the same vein, Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* protests, "Let him [Henry Crawford] have all the perfections of the world... a man [need not] be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like". Emma Woodhouse in *Emma* is equally self-assertive, "A

woman is not to marry a man merely because she is asked or because he is attached to her". These heroines do declare their personal and private choices, without capitulating to the pressures of the patriarchal community. They are arguably too tenacious to be tenuous moulds of the given feminine ideal. Jane Austen exposes the burden of female passivity and mocks the dominant paradigm of gender.

She could not afford to be an aggressive debunker of the prevailing ideology. Nevertheless, as a crypto-feminist, she subverts the values imposed by the custodians of orthodoxy and undermines the iniquitous gender construction by manipulating plot dynamics, by interweaving ironical jabs in conversations and asides, and these narrative devices go against the conservative grain of the novel. The tensions surrounding the emancipation of women and their role in society are built into the plot and it is not difficult to see her implicit endorsement of the passion and desire of her unaffected and intelligent heroines.

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MiG tipping, not tension, at US base near Iran

Iran and the United States may be in the midst of a war of words over Tehran's nuclear plans, but there is little evidence of the tension at a former Soviet base in Afghanistan, now home to U.S. troops.

The sprawling air base lies close to the border with Iran and life there is so slow that U.S. troops at times resort to "MiG tipping" — a game that involves standing on the tail of one of the many wrecked Soviet-era planes and tipping its nose up.

"It's a pretty pointless and silly thing to do," said one serviceman. "But there really isn't that much to do around here."

American troops established themselves at the windswept base last August after fighting there between rival Afghan factions.

The United States now has a total of a few hundred troops at or near three former Soviet bases in west Afghanistan — each just 100 km (60 miles) from the Iranian border.

U.S. President George W. Bush has called Iran a part of an "axis of evil" and accuses it of seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Analysts say the troops could prove useful to Washington should the tension with Tehran's boil over.

Influential U.S. Senator John McCain fuelled speculation about American plans last month when he said Washington needed permanent bases in Afghanistan to ensure regional security.

But the Pentagon dismissed such thinking as premature. The U.S. military says it is in western Afghanistan to maintain security and assist in post-war reconstruction.

Lieutenant-Colonel Phil Bookert, the U.S. commander for western Afghanistan, scoffed at a January New Yorker magazine article that said the



A U.S. soldier stands on a wrecked Soviet-made aircraft at the Shindand air base west of Afghanistan, close to the border with Iran, in this photo taken on February 28, 2005. Iran and the United States may be in the midst of a war of words over Tehran's nuclear plans, but there is little evidence of the tension at a former Soviet base in Afghanistan, now home to U.S. troops. Picture taken Feb. 28. REUTERS

United States was running secret spy missions into Iran from Afghanistan to help identify nuclear, chemical and missile targets.

"The U.S. presence in western Afghanistan is for reconstruction and economic development," he said.

"We have done no operations along the Iranian border and I have no knowledge of operations along the Iranian border. That is not why we are here... We do reconstruction activities between here and Iran, but we certainly don't cross the border."

Few facilities

Shindand is currently home mainly to U.S. military police, as well as a few army Blackhawk helicopters largely used recently for ferrying supplies and mail and supporting relief operations in snowbound Afghan provinces.

The base has few facilities beyond a recreation tent for troops to watch television and check emails, a tiny shop, a dining area and a gym.

The recreation tent is stacked with cheap thrillers, crossword books, jigsaw puzzles, a table-tennis table with bats but no ball, and the expectation among soldiers seems to be of many more slow days, rather than drama, ahead.

The troops seem far more interested in Soviet past of the base and the U.S. Cold War victory than any future that might involve Iran.

But analysts say the dozens of

wrecked Soviet aircraft testify to the strategic value of the giant base built in the 1980s by Moscow, which not only gave it a platform to attack Afghan rebels but extended its air capabilities into the Gulf.

According to U.S.-based think tank Global Security, Shindand is the largest airbase in Afghanistan, bigger even than the main U.S. base at Bagram to the north of Kabul.

It has nothing like the same facilities as Bagram, but U.S. troops have repaired damaged runways and gradually patched up huts and cleared ground for more accommodation on a base NATO troops are expected to take over next year.

Bookert, the only U.S. National Guardsman with a brigade command overseas, played down the work, saying the long-term future of Shindand would be as a base for the Afghan military.

"In typical U.S. army fashion, we always say that whenever we are sent anywhere we improve our foxhole. And that is just normal improvement that the U.S. army does where ever we go."

NO BUILD UP

Bookert said he did not know how long U.S. forces would remain at Shindand but he understood those in the west would be sent east to help fight insurgents once NATO troops arrived.

London-based defence analyst Paul Beaver said he saw no current sign of any move by Washington to build up forces against Iran, but the Afghan bases did provide useful flexibility.

"The Americans are good at options

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and like to have them," he said. "And Afghanistan is their easiest option in the east."

Beaver said the U.S. base at K-2 in neighbouring Uzbekistan — also Soviet built — was not ideal given its distance from the sea and potential Uzbek concerns about its use against another country, which is likely to be less of an issue with the U.S.-backed government in Kabul.

At the same time, Beaver saw McCain's call for permanent U.S. bases in Afghanistan as politically, rather policy driven.

"There is no indication this is policy yet and it does sound like McCain is just setting out his stall for the next Republican presidential nomination," he said.

"I don't see any physical manifestation on the ground of the Americans trying to pressure Iran. I think for the moment this issue of permanent Afghan bases is just something still being talked about in the rarefied atmosphere of Washington," he said.

Reuters

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