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Al-Houthi besieged near Saudi Arabia border

By MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES

The government troops in the governorate of Sa'ada, 240 km north of Sana'a, are besieging the rebel Zaidi cleric Badreddin al-Houthi. He is thought to be in an area close to the border with Saudi Arabia, an official source said. He said that al-Houthi, 80, along with tens of his supporters and loyalists are in al-Naqa'a area, 30 km from the border. "The government troops are controlling the outlets of the area, getting ready to storm their stronghold," he told Yemen Times.

Other sources said that a military aircraft shelled a house in al-Naqa'a belonging to one of the Sheikhs believed to have given shelter to al-Houthi. Badreddin, who is now considered to be the spiritual leader of the rebels who emerged from his son's extremist Faithful Youth movement, formed in 1997.

They pointed out that government troops are hunting down rebels in Rizamat, Al Shafi'a, and Nushoor areas for the rebel's military Abdullah al-Rizami. Military sources said Wednesday that al-Rizami's uncle and his brother were found wounded in one

of the Rizamat's stormed houses.

Earlier last week, the authorities declared the "sedition" crushed, despite the fact that all the leaders of the uprising were still at large, and that the group was estimated to have 3,000 supporters before the June rebellion.

The government troops are conducting an intensive arrest campaign, against the suspected members of the Faithful Youth movement, a tribal source told Yemen Times. The military troops have finished carding Damaj area to the south of Sa'ada, wherein the al-Houthi supporters are hiding. Around thirty people tried to lead

another rebellion but were repressed. Some rebels were killed during the fight, including Mohammed al-Houthi, son of Badreddin al-Houthi, according to the tribal source. This information was not confirmed by official sources. "Around thirty people were arrested while searching the houses, while 60 others gave in themselves to the authority without any resistance, including the district of Hiadan," the source added. The government forces were able to foil three bombs planted in the market of al-Ana'ad and two more were found near al-Salam hospital, local sources said.

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Yemeni journalists object to law amendment

Journalists protesting against imprisonment of al-Khaiwani, one of many manifestation against maltreatment of journalists. YT Archive

By MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Sana'a, Apr. 16—The Yemen Journalists Syndicate has sent a letter on April 13 to Prime Minister Abdul-Qadir Ba Jammal, asking him not to

put the journalism law on the next Tuesday's Cabinet agenda until journalist community's remarks are taken into account. The law had been prepared by the Information Ministry.

Yemeni Journalists' Chief Mahboub Ali announced last weekend YJS's

rejection of the amendments, made by the Information Ministry to the Journalism and Publications Law, and was submitted to the Cabinet without involving YJS.

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Threats to internationalize Jarallah Omar's case

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

At a meeting on April 9, seven Joint Meeting Party (JMP) representatives, and members of the National Board for

Following-up Jarallah Omar's case threatened to internationalize the inquiry into his assassination if the judiciary fails to investigate the murder properly and disclose the facts to the public. Omar was the Assistant General Secretariat of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) and was shot dead two years ago by an extremist.

The JMP and the National Board, as

well as the legal defense team, Late Jarallah Omar warned of the danger of trying to conceal the truth about the murder of Jarallah Omar, as it would encourage the perpetrators and their supporters to commit more murders.

Continued on page 3

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Syrian prime minister begins talks in Yemen

YEMEN TIMES STAFF
& NEWS SERVICES

Sana'a, April 16- Syrian Prime Minister Mohammed Naji Otari and his Yemeni counterpart Adulqader Bahjammal held a round of talks on Saturday in which they reviewed issues related bilateral cooperation on table of the current session of the Yemeni-Syrian joint committee.

Mr Otari arrived in Sana'a Saturday heading a large team of Syrian businessmen who will take part in the three-day talks.

The first round of Yemeni-Syrian talks areas of marine transport, social

affairs and tourism, development of exports, specifications and standardization, expatriates, technical and agricultural cooperation and various other fields.

The two sides had also discussed regional integration in cultural, banking and scientific areas and agreed on increasing the volume of trade exchange and movement of commodities and products into both countries.

They had also agreed on boosting political solidarity and coordination with regard to the Middle East issue and other issues of common interest.

"The two sides will review all previous economic agreements, numbering

107, to check what has been implemented so far and to lay new bases for boosting cooperation at the economic and cultural levels," a Yemeni government source told United Press International.

He said the two sides would sign new accords at the end of the talks Monday, including a memorandum of understanding for technical, scientific and planning cooperation, as well as cooperation in social affairs, tourism and transportation.

The volume of trade between Yemen and Syria is very small, estimated at \$2 million per year.

Most of the trade revenue goes to Syria.

Yemen demands Israel to commit to peace

Sana'a, Apr.16-"No normalizing with Israel unless and until it adheres to the International legislations first". This was the Yemeni stance in reaction to the allegations of the Israeli foreign minister that some Arab countries including Yemen intend to build diplomatic relations with Israel soon.

According to Saba News Agency: a Yemeni official said last Thursday in a statement, that Yemen has a clear stance towards the issue of normalizing relations with Israel.

It said Yemen had confirmed many times that Israel must commit to the comprehensive solution of the Middle East crisis, and to withdraw from all Arab occupied lands, as well as to acknowledge the right of Palestinians to set up their independent state.

The pro-government daily Thursday, denied comments by Israeli Foreign Minister Sylvan Shalom that 10 Arab countries, including Yemen, intended to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

"Yemen's stance is clear, and we affirm that normalization of ties with Israel should be preceded by Israel's commitment to a comprehensive and just settlement, including withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands, creation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the implementation of all international resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the road map," this statement was quoted from a Foreign Ministry source to the "September 26" government newspaper in its edition on the 14th of April this month.

Readers' Voice

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

This edition's question:

Are the amendments to the press law by the government going to be in favour of press freedom?
- Yes
- Only if the syndicate approves them
- No

last edition's question: Is Yemen a safe country to live in?

Yes	52%
No	32%
I don't know	16%

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

State-opposition dialogue halted

BY MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Joint Meeting Party (a group made up of seven opposition parties) requested late last week at the opening session of dialogue with the Ruling Party (GPC) that the GPC-favored National Council Parties be not involved in the dialogue. Dr. Abdul-Karim al-Eryani, GPC Secretary General, insisted however, that the dialogue should include the 21 parties licensed by the Parties Committee.

In response to the opposition's request to exclude the NCP, a JMP leader reported Dr. al-Eryanias saying, "I am not ready to break up dialogue

whatever that may cost." With the GPC unready to budge, dialogue has been postponed indefinitely.

In a statement to the Yemen Times, one of the JMP leaders said, "dialogue has been postponed after the opposition (JMP) requested that an agenda should be set up for issues to be covered by discussion... so that opposition-ruling party dialogue becomes a success."

The JMP do not want to announce their declining the GPC General Secretariat's invitation lest they be seen as being anti-dialogue, said the JMP leader. "The JMP are convinced that the invitation is unfeasible because experience has shown that the Ruling Party is not serious about dialogue," he

said.

He added, "we requested that the invitation be sent by the GPC leadership to the party secretary generals and not through a Permanent Committee's communication officer (Ali Hamza) because we are neither working for the Ruling Party nor are we its members to be addressed in such a way."

The GPC Permanent Committee's last meeting notice had called on opposition parties to join a dialogue based on national principles, law, and the constitution. That was in the wake of protests against the sales tax sweeping the country in the middle of last month.

The invitation met with opposition's sarcasm, "the aim was to make preparations to put the new price increase on oil derivatives into play and to give the impression that the (opposition) parties approved of the State's orientation," the opposition claimed.

Analysts believe that the technique of dialogue and deliberation promoted by GPC leaders enhances the opposition's air of caution especially as the dialogue invitation goes against the GPC's recent accusations and smear campaigns against some opposition parties conducted by official and Ruling Party's newspapers. They are also carrying out an ongoing policy of

duplicating parties as well as threatening to dismantle existing parties.

Yemeni students in India standing their grounds

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

For more than five decades, Yemeni students have been traveling to India for education, especially in Pune where more than 50% of the Yemeni students study. However, there had been many complaints from the students regarding their scholarship stipends and regulations with the embassy. According to a statement by the Yemeni students union around India exclusive to the Yemen Times, the embassy has treated the students without respect and bypassed their authority as representatives of the students.

Head of Parliaments sub-committee on higher education Dr. Saleh al-Sanabani, who is heading the delegation to inspect into complaints from Yemeni students in Indian universi-

ties held meetings with the staff of the Yemeni consulate in Bombay, over the condition of Yemeni students in India universities last week.

Simultaneously Education Minister Dr. Abdul-Salam al-Jawfi discussed here on Tuesday with the Indian ambassador to Sana'a Al Agapurian Karuppaniyah issues related to the Indian community's students in Yemen.

The issues that Yemeni students complain about are focused mainly on increasing their scholarships to suit with the living expenses, and most importantly releasing the stipends, especially that it has been held at the Yemeni embassy's cultural section for more than 4 months. According to Yemen Times sources the amount reaches 400 thousand US dollars.

War wounded demand their rights

War victims in a sit-in in front of the marginalized people's town.

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Tens of wounded and handicapped due to war have been staging a sit-in for more than two weeks in front of the marginalized people's new housing city in Sa'awan area, Sana'a. They protested because the government has not fulfilled promise to build homes for them.

The protestors called on the government, and the War Wounded and Martyrs' Families Association to make them equal to the marginalized and give them their homes which were promised eight years ago. Protestors claimed that the government and WWMFA have mishandled their rights

and unfulfilled promises.

Being the fuel of wars since the Revolution onwards, this class is living in miserable conditions. The monthly pensions they get hardly meet their need for bread and water. They appealed to the President to look on them with mercy, and at least make them equal to the marginalized.

In the same place where the handicapped and martyrs' children are staging their strike, martyrs' mothers and widows are standing requesting the government to keep its word.

The government had promised to build homes for war martyrs, amputees and disabled especially those of 1994 war, but it has not done anything yet.

Protestors confirmed that they would continue their strike until the government fulfill its promises.

Some 400 thousand soldiers affected by war, are reported living with very low standards.

The government has made provisions to establish associations for them which should take care of their needs.

According to protestors, some of these associations get considerable budgets but they are useless offices with no action in reality.

"They neither look after the needs of these people nor do they let international organizations alleviate some of their suffering through humanitarian aids and constructing homes," they added.

United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has the following vacant posts:

- Snr. Finance/Programme Assistant
- Community Services Assistant

Applications should be addressed to UNHCR Office, not later than Saturday 23/04/2005. For more information, please contact UNHCR Office under the following address:

Algeria St, No. 38 - Building No. 2
Tel.: 469772 - 469773
Fax: 469770
P.O Box: 12093 - Sana'a, RY

Vacancy Announcement

The Social Welfare Fund Support Project financed by the European Commission is anticipating two job openings for its extension period for Yemeni nationals. These concern:

National Expert Training & National Expert Coaching

Requirements for both positions include:

- University degree in a relevant subject;
- Experience in development work in general and human resources development in particular;
- Fluency both spoken and written in Arabic and English;
- Computer literate;
- Available in early June 2005.

The project welcomes applications from both female and male candidates. Applications should be in English and should include an application letter and an updated CV. Applications should be received in the project office on 27 April at 12:00 hours (noon) latest. Applications can be sent by mail, email or be delivered at the project office.

Applications are to be addressed to:

Teamleader SWF Support Project
P.O. Box 4304, Sana'a
Email: SWFEU@y.net.ye

For further information please call the project office
tel: 1.508076 or 1.267978

In Brief

- A Yemeni security delegation is heading for the Thai capital Bangkok on Sunday, to participate in meetings of the 11th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice set to be held on April 18-25.
- Prime Minister Abdul-Qader Bajammal has formed a committee to tackle overhaul performance of government universities, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research said last Thursday.
- Foreign minister Abu-Bakr al-Qerbi headed on Thursday for Nouakchott to participate in the meetings of Yemeni-Mauritanian ministerial joint committee.
- Saudi cable manufacturer Saudi Cable Co (SCC) has won a 28 million Saudi riyals (\$7.5 mln/5.8 mln euro) contract to export electricity cables to Yemen, according to SCC's president Waheeb Linjawi, it was reported on April 10, 2005.
- A World Bank mission arrived in Yemen on Friday 15th to inspect the implementation of agricultural irrigation projects funded by the bank.
- Under a cooperation agreement, Yemen and Egypt was signed last Monday, Yemeni agricultural experts will be trained in Egypt on the use of geographical information system and remote sensing.
- The U.S. Embassy in Yemen has reopened to the public after a two-day closure prompted by a security threat.
- Deputy Premier Ahmed Sofan and Abdul-Kareel al-Eryani, political advisor of the President Ali Abdullah Saleh, will leave for Japan this week to launch Yemenis wing in the Aichi 2005 expo exhibition. The Yemeni wing, to be opened on April 23rd, includes a number of cultural, art and tourist activities.
- Strategic Information Database, According to Al-Khaleej newspaper (April 12, 2005), official statistics show that the volume of Yemen's fish production grew to 259,000 tons, valued YR 44 billion, in 2004, up from 228,000 tons in the previous year, an average increase of 13.8%.
- The information Resource Center concluded April 11th, a two days workshop on 'Proposal Writing & Submission Techniques', the first module within the 'Becoming the Source in Resource' training program that also includes 'Project Management Essentials', 'International Communication Skills', and 'Advanced Internet Research Techniques'. The training was held at the University of Technology.
- Yemen has taken part in the 6th meeting of the Arab Electricity Ministers Council scheduled held in Cairo in April 13-14.
- Finance minister Alawi Saleh al-Salami headed for Abu Dhabi on Monday to participate in the annual meeting of the Arab Financial Institutions Council held in April 13-14.
- Foreign minister Abu-Bakr al-Qerbi, met on Monday with Jordanian ambassador to Yemen Mohammed Tawfeeq al-Khaleedi. The meeting focused on boosting bilateral relations between the two countries and means of enhancing them.
- Minister of Religious Endowments said last Monday that Yemen is seeking to learn from the Indonesian experience in printing the holy Quran.
- The director-general of the OPEC Fund for International Development, Suleiman J. Al-Herbish, has held high-level talks with senior government officials in Yemen. He is leading a fund delegation during a three-day visit last week to Yemen to discuss the institution's cooperation and future partnership with Sanaa.
- Yemeni Children Parliament took up the issue of child trafficking in their Monday session last week, where they called on neighboring countries to stop child trafficking through dealers from Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Tehamah celebrates 30th anniversary with Siemens

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A - The Tehama Company celebrated the 30th anniversary last week of its transaction with the German Siemens Company operating in Yemen. HE the German Ambassador, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health and Population, and a number of Yemeni and German businessmen, attended the event.

On the occasion, Mr. Ameen Dirhem, owner of Tehama Company and authorized dealer of Siemens Company in Yemen said "Tehama was based in Hodeidah and specialized in tractors and spare parts. We started working

with Siemens AG in 1969, immediately after the restoration of political relations on July 14, 1969."

"The Tehama Group started actual

business with Siemens Medical on an agency basis in 1974. Almost all public and private hospitals as well as outpatient clinics are equipped entirely or partly with Siemens medical technology. There are five hospitals with almost all their equipment from Siemens", said Ameen Dirhem. "Almost all Siemens equipment installed in different governorates are still working and in a good condition. We do not just sell and install equipment, but we do the maintenance".

IHRC appalled by latest injustice against Babar Ahmad

BY THE ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The IHRC is disgusted at the decision of the Police Misconduct Tribunal to acquit the only officer charged with using excessive force during the arrest of Babar Ahmad in December 2003. IHRC is most sickened by the Tribunal's statement that the officer in question should be commended for his "great bravery".

IHRC chairman, Massoud Shadjareh, stated:

"As usual, the police closed ranks but to actually commend an officer, who almost beat a defenceless man to death, is a new low, even by their standards."

Even the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which viewed photographic and independent medical

evidence, recommended that the officer be charged for misconduct for brutality. IHRC is not surprised by the Tribunal's decision. Institutional Islamophobia in Britain is at such a high level that Muslims are unable to obtain any justice within the system. In the face of continued harassment and bullying, Muslims are continuously told by the authorities to be patient and to obtain justice via due process. However, this decision shows that all Muslims can expect is a slap in the face, or in Mr Ahmad's case, a kick in the teeth, both physically and metaphorically.

For more information please contact, (+44) 20 8904 4222 or info@ihrc.org. Islamic Human Rights Commission PO Box 598 Wembley HA9 7XH United Kingdom.

Discussion held on Aden's design

ADEN BUREAU

A discussion session organized by Authority of Developing Ports Aden, Hodieda, and Mukhalla was held at the Mercure Hotel in Aden on April 12 to discuss the first steps of designing Aden.

The session was attended by Dr. Yahya Al-Shuaibi, Governor of Aden, and a number of officials from local authorities. The session explained the aims of developing Aden and the final draft of Aden's design for 2025.

The strategy included plans for investment projects which take into account all of Aden's special characteristics, particularly its port and beautiful coastline. The strategy will be sponsored by the Ports Developments Project at the cost of US\$1,100,000 and will be executed by Halker Company for International Consultations.

New law to boost tourism

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A - April 16, The Ministry of Culture and Tourism discussed on Monday the new draft law for organizing tourist activities in Yemen and is planning to forward it the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Nabeel al-Fakeeh, Undersecretary of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, confirmed in a press conference that the new law, due to be forwarded to the Council of Ministers, was drafted after a series of meetings of those concerned with the tourism sector. The meetings included tourist associations, unions, tourist hotels, the Tourism Promotion Board and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Al-Fakeeh asserted that interest in tourism in the past concentrated only on the cultural tourism and that only met

around 10-15 percent of the international demands of tourism. He considered that focusing on the cultural tourism was a shortcoming, pointing out there are various tourist areas that are worth investing in, such as rural and desert areas, islands and protected areas.

He stressed that an agreement was reached sometime earlier with sheikhs in al-Jawf Governorate with respect to holding tourist festivals to develop desert tourism.

An official report revealed progressive development of foreign tourism in Yemen over the past three years and this helped increase tourism-related revenues that make up 32 percent of the national income.

The report emphasized the number of tourists last year reached 273,000, a 41 percent increase rate from 154,000 tourists in 2003, most of whom were

Arab nationals.

The increase of the number of tourists came after the tourism sector experienced deterioration, following the attacks of foreign targets such as the bomb US Cole Destroyer in Aden port in 2000, which claimed lives of 17 sailors.

Indonesian ambassador discusses commercial relations

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Taiz, April 12 - Mr. Kemas Fachrudin, Indonesian Ambassador to Yemen, discussed with Mr. Mufeed Abdu Saif, Chief of Commerce and Trade Chamber in Taiz, the commercial relations between Yemen and

Indonesia.

During his visit to Taiz, Mr. Fachrudin discussed establishing joint commercial ventures, emphasizing the Yemeni and Indonesian Businessmen Forum and the possibility of Yemen benefiting from Indonesian experiences in the field of industry.

Continued from page 1

Al-Houthi besieged near Saudi Arabia border

According to eyewitnesses, Sa'ada is a little bit calm now, expect in some areas. However, the humanitarian situation has been described as miserable, because tens of houses have been completely damaged and tens of families are therefore displaced.

Interior and Education ministers paid a visit to Sa'ada last Thursday. They had meetings with tribal Sheikhs and social dignitaries to persuade al-Houthi's supporters to come back to their villages, and settle down in condition of not getting involved in any armed action against the authorities.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh recently branded Zaidi rebels as "subversive, reactionary and backward." The slain rebel, who was a former member of par-

liament in 1993 representing al-Haq Islamic party, was accused of fomenting sectarian strife in the country throughout his militant organization, campaigning around the country as well as instigating the dogmatic and sectarian turbulence, in a society where in both the Shiites and a majority of Sunni sects lived in harmony for hundred of years, while receiving foreign support to reach this goal. But, he then denied such allegations and said that the conflict with the authority was a result of his anti-US stand. During the main weekly prayers each Friday, Houthi followers used to chant slogans against Israel and the United States, and called for a boycott of American goods. But the authorities which even accused some foreign par-

ties of supporting al-Houthi, arrested hundreds of his followers and said that it was difficult to convince them about their fanatic views.

The minister of interior Rashad al-Alimi told the parliament last July that the "activities of al-Houthi started in 1997 through setting up some unlicensed religious centers in Sa'ada, which then spread in other governorates." It was added that he also established an armed secret organization which split from al-Haq party, and gave it the name of "al-Shabab al-Mum'en". He said that some militants of the organization receive monthly salaries ranging from \$50 to \$200. This shows that there are some foreign forces behind it which the minister did not define.

Yemeni journalists object to law amendment

"We reject any amendments to the law which YJS has not contributed to," said the Chief Journalist, confirming that he was not privy to these amendments which were made by a secret committee.

"I challenge anyone who says that I attended or participated in such a preparation," he added.

Mahboub explained that the committee, set up by the government on President's directives to amend Journalism and Publications Law, did not meet even for one time.

Political sources were surprised at the government's move while the echoes of Sa'ada events are still sounding. They deemed it would provoke the journalists who were not party to the amendments, although they mainly concern them.

The YJS's Council had formed a committee to gauge journalistic community's

response to the proposed amendments. The committee is chaired by the Chief and has Former Chief Abdul-Bari Tahir as one of its members.

Yet the committee itself has not agreed on a specific alternative journalism draft to replace the one proposed by the Ministry of Information.

Simultaneously, a Ministry source told Saba News Agency that the Ministry of information has finalized drafting amendments to the Law of Press and Publications to help bolster the freedom of speech in the country, last Thursday. And that the new press code would also deal with electronic media.

"The new law confirms importance of press freedom in order to serve interests of society and to offering good environment for media to practice their work well," said the official, according to the

news agency.

The debate around this code is closely observed by the international community in Yemen, and freedom of press supporters around the world. Yemen's press code was established in 1995 and is considered one of the advanced laws in the region. The amendments demands were related to imprisonment of journalists and human rights of media people, so as to allow real freedom of press. In May 2004, the president has publicly announced his intention to create an environment that encourages freedom of press and that the new law does not include imprisonment or detention of the journalists. The fear among media people in Yemen is that penalties would be in financial terms that are so that it cannot be afforded by the journalists, and would land them up in jail anyway.

Threats to internationalize Jarallah Omar's case

A statement released by political parties and activists said that the court should have ordered not only the execution of the murderer, but also a thorough and complete investigation of the case. They agreed to communicate with the authorities but will resort to other mechanisms for human rights protection if authorities do not respond, or if the national Judiciary

fails to carry out their constitutional responsibilities.

Legalist analysts mentioned that the jury that was initially examining Jarallah Omar's case at the Sana'a Court of Appeal, has been dispersed after the recent judicial reshuffle.

"The Minister of Justice should have reassembled the jury to issue the judg-

ment. This has not been done despite the fact that we are more than three months past the first-instance court's judgment date," they said.

The statement argues that nullifying the case would not only deprive people of the right to justice and fairness but that it would also be a deliberate attempt to disregard the victim's right to life.

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Officer: Is it possible to throw you from the plane?**Al-Awbali victim of wrongful arrest**

By Hassan al-Zaidi
Yemen Times Staff

When the security authorities tend to be the main reason behind the misery of the citizens by destroying their livelihoods and ambitions, people do not have confidence in the security authorities to protect them.

Mohammad al-Awbali is one of the several people who have endured wrongful and arbitrary security procedures. He was held in prison and deprived of pursuing his job by the security apparatuses without any justification. He is one of several who were imprisoned without any proof, and not compensated after his release. He is one of a series of victims whose rights are not ensured by the law and the constitution.

To discuss the facts behind such illegal practices by the authorities upon innocent people, we forwarded the

Mohammad al-Awbali

following questions to Mohammad al-Awbali who was caught at his work in the UAE to be deported to Yemen without any justification.

Q. Can you explain how you were

captured by the police in the UAE?

A. First of all, my name is Mohammad Ahmad Mubarak al-Awbali from Sewah District, Marib. I traveled to the UAE in search of work to sustain my family. I have been there for three years and worked for a modest company as a driver assistant with an attractive salary. On Dec. 29 2004, the Abu Dhabi Police came to my workplace, asked me to submit my passport and ID and said that I am wanted by the Yemeni authorities, so they threw me in prison.

Q. How long were you detained?

A. I remained in prison for two days until two officers from the Yemeni Interpol came and took me along with my documents to the airport where there was a special plane waiting for me without anybody on board except me, another person and the crew.

Q. Have you ever learned why you were detained and with what you were charged?

A. I did not know anything until the UAE's airport officers said that I was wanted by the Yemeni authorities. When I was handed over to the Sana'a Interpol, officials there stamped my passport red and prevented me from entering the UAE again.

When on board the plane, I asked one of the officers "what is the matter?" and he answered "you are Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad who is wanted by Yemen". Then I told him "I am a laborer and not a sheikh, have a look at my passport in your hands". When the officer looked at the passport, he said: "we have been mistaken, you are not the wanted person, but what can I do for you now! Is it possible to throw you from the plane".

Q. What happened to you when you arrived in Yemen?

A. After I arrived in Yemen, I was immediately transferred to the investigation department where I remained for three days without being

interrogated. Afterwards a police officer came, saying "sorry we have committed a mistake, the wanted person is Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Ali and not you, we did not get the name correct." Then I was released.

Q. Do you know with what the wanted person was charged?

A. According to them, the man is wanted by the authorities to come to Sana'a in order to convince his followers to surrender themselves to the authorities for killing a sheikh in Sana'a. I do not know any further details about the allegation.

Q. What happened to you then?

A. I was taken to the Interpol where officials there sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to talk with the UAE Embassy in Sana'a concerning my case. But I have been waiting for almost four months without any solution and officials at the Sana'a Interpol said that I am prevented from meeting with the Minister of the

Interior. In addition, the Ministry of Expatriates sent a letter to the Ministry of Interior on my behalf but there is still no response.

Q. What did the Interpol do for you?

A. They wrote me a letter of apology for their mistake. They sent a letter to the Council of Arab Interior Ministers in Abu Dhabi saying that there was a mistake concerning my handover to the Yemeni authorities and I am not the wanted man.

Q. Any final words?

Via your newspaper, I appeal to HE Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed, President of United Arab Emirates to intervene in my issue. Because of wrong security procedures, I lost my job, which is the only source of income to sustain my family. Have the security authorities become the cause of misery and strife of citizens instead of protecting them? I hope this question reaches President Saleh and Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed.

“All the Yemeni Jewish families need support because they are very poor.”

By MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Many people speak out calling for human rights, equality, justice, against religious, racism and color discrimination, adopt a lot of captivating mottos but they do not, though slightly, tackle the state of misery the Yemeni Jews live in.

By chance, for a short time I meet with one of the Jewish figures, Moshe Harir, who sacrificed his time and money for this class whose fate is to be attached to more than 2500 years despite of misery and deprivation.

Q: Can you give us a brief account about yourself and the nature of your visit to Yemen?

A: My name is Moshe Harir. I was born in Yemen in 1948 in Sana'a city, namely in Qa'a al-Yahood (Jews Quarter). My family and I left Yemen in 1949. Since that time we have been unable to keep in touch with our families and friends who stayed in Yemen. At the beginning it was almost impossible to keep in touch with them. But for the past 15 years, the door has been opened so we are able to come here, to see and help our needy brothers. The reason I come to Yemen is to help assist fellow Jews with what they need, and to help them if they want to leave Yemen for any reason. I help the families who want to give their children a decent education to move to the United States or England. I help the families who choose to leave Yemen to get new passports and visas. I also help Yemeni Jews by buying religious books or any thing related to religion from abroad for them.

Moshe Harir

can, and support them in whatever they need. Most of the Jews living in Yemen do not have decent jobs because they lack the proper education. That is why it is almost impossible for them to find a respectable job. They, therefore, live in very poor conditions.

Q: Are you allowed to support Jews in Yemen? Is there another organization that you are working through?

A: No, I work by myself. There are other organizations that help the Jews. These organizations are mainly based in the United States, because they have a higher ability to help.

Q: Could you further explain services you offer to the Jewish community in Yemen?

A: I am always trying to help all the Jewish families in Yemen as much as I

and write.

In the United States they learn general studies like mathematics, basics of literacy, and religious studies.

Q: How about Jewish females?

A: In Yemen, women do not get much of an opportunity to learn in schools, whereas in the United States the women attend school, learn how to read and write, and have access to quality education.

Q: Why doesn't America help build schools and hospitals for Jews here in

Yemen?

A: I do not think the United States can, or would like to get involved in building schools or hospitals for the Jews.

Q: How many Jews are left behind in Yemen?

A: There are not many Jews left.

Q: Can we say that some 1,000 remain?

A: May be a bit more. But they are not so many that we should build schools and hospitals for them.

Q: Why don't you request or demand to get some other support?

A: We do get some other support, but unfortunately it does not suffice.

Q: Why don't you call upon Jews to stay in Yemen?

A: In Yemen, people are very poor, and do not have decent education due to the lack of Jewish teachers. Unfortunately this is contributing to the loss of our Jewish tradition. But whoever wishes to stay, they are more than welcome.

The Embassy of The United States of America announces for an immediate job openings within its organization.**“Commercial Assistant”**

The position is located in the American Embassy, Sana'a under the supervision of the Economic and Commercial Officer (ECO). The incumbent will conduct economic and commercial research, make and maintain business and government contacts, analyze and report on commercial developments affecting U.S. trade and commercial objectives in Yemen, and provide guidance to U.S. businesses about investing in Yemen.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Bachelor's degree or equivalent in economic, business, accounting, marketing, or related field is desirable; otherwise, employee should have some college and an appropriate amount of progressively responsible job-related experience.

Prior Work Experience: Two to four years of progressively responsible experience in sales, marketing, banking, economic research or other closely-related field. When job-related experience is substitute for educational requirements, an additional amount of total work experience is required.

Language Proficiency: Level IV (Fluent) English is required.

Knowledge: Incumbent must have a good working knowledge of Yemen's industrial and business sectors, economy, and business and trade practices, restrictions, organizations, laws and customs; of FCS internal reporting requirements and operating procedures; and USG trade objectives in Yemen.

Abilities: Incumbent must be able to develop and maintain effective contacts in the government and private sector, and must be able to obtain and evaluate data and prepare accurate and precise reports. Incumbent must have good computer skills to draft correspondences both in English and Arabic, send and receive emails, and develop reports and basic statistical tables.

Grade/Salary: *EFM/MOH/Non Ordinarily Resident: FP-05 (to be confirmed by Washington)
*Ordinarily Resident: FSN-09

“Driver”

The position is located in the Motorpool, of the General Services Office, American Embassy, under the immediate supervision of the Motorpool Supervisor and the general supervision of the GSO. Employee will be responsible for routine driving work for GSO.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Completion of elementary school is required.

Prior Work Experience: Must have good driving experience in and outside of Sanaa.

Language Proficiency: Level II English ability (limited) and fluent Arabic is required.

Knowledge: Must be familiar with local traffic laws and areas traffic patterns.

Abilities: Must have a valid Yemeni private license.

Grade/Salary: *EFM/MOH/Non Ordinarily Resident: FP-BB (to be confirmed by Washington)
*Ordinarily Resident: FSN- 03

How to apply: All Interested nationals should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualifications and requirements of the position, as listed above, and send it to the Human Resources Office, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, P.O. Box 22347, Sanaa. Yemen, Tel: 7552000, Fax: 303-182 no later than April 30, 2005.

NOTE: ALL ORDINARILY RESIDENT APPLICANTS MUST BE RESIDING IN COUNTRY AND HAVE THE REQUIRED WORK AND RESIDENCY PERMITS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION.

Q: How many Yemeni Jews are there in the United States? It was once mentioned that there are about 8,000, is this number accurate?

A: There are about 10,000 Yemeni Jews in the United States today, living all around America.

Q: Who are the people more entitled to support?

A: All the Yemeni Jewish families need support because they are very poor. They do not have an education and therefore they do not work, and do not earn enough income. So it is very hard for them to live. There are many elderly people who need much assistance, and there are men and women who are interested in getting married. So we try to help them from time to time. We also help release people who occasionally get arrested and jailed for different reasons. Therefore there is much to do, and they use up all the help and support that we are able to give.

Q: How much support do you allocate for them yearly?

A: It is hard to specify as it varies from year to year.

Q: Do you support the Jews from your own money, or do you get some help from others?

A: I collect support from my friends in the United States.

Q: What kind of education do the Yemeni Jews have in Yemen, and how is it different from the education they get in the United States?

A: In Yemen, Jews have religious education, and they learn how to read

U.S., Iraqi forces tackle hostage stand: off

BAGHDAD, April 16 (Reuters) - U.S. and Iraqi forces are trying to secure the release of a group of up to 60 Shi'ite Muslims being held hostage in a town south of Baghdad, where rising sectarian tensions threaten to provoke armed conflict.

Shi'ite officials in Baghdad said they believed as many as 60 hostages were being held in Madaen, a town 40 km (25 miles) southeast of the capital, after being seized by Sunni gunmen late on Friday.

The gunmen have threatened to kill the hostages unless Shi'ites leave the town, the Shi'ite officials said.

But a senior police source in Baghdad said the number of hostages may be far fewer and said the abductions were the latest in a series of tit-for-tat kidnappings caused by growing antagonism between Sunnis and Shi'ites in the town.

"For weeks there have been kidnappings by one group and then the other. Last night some gunmen took some

Shi'ites hostage and they are still being held," the police official said, adding that efforts were under way to try to secure their release.

He said gunmen had also visited the homes of several Shi'ite families in Madaen during the night and told them to leave town.

Residents in Madaen told a Reuters cameraman some people had left, driving south towards the city of Kut.

The hostage stand-off comes amid a resurgence of violence following what appeared to be a lull after January elections.

U.S. forces said they saw a 20 percent decline in attacks in the weeks after the Jan. 30 poll, but in the past week there has been a string of deadly car bombings and shootings.

A bomb at a restaurant in Baquba, a town northeast of the capital, killed up to seven people on Saturday, including two police, witnesses said.

The restaurant, popular with policemen, was packed with diners when the

bomb went off.

And a suicide car bomb exploded next to a U.S. military convoy on the road to Baghdad airport, killing a civilian bystander and wounding two others, Iraqi police said.

There was no immediate word from U.S. forces on any casualties.

Earlier this week, a pair of suicide car bombings in a busy Baghdad street killed 15 people, while a series of attacks the same day and the day before killed more than 20 countrywide.

Hostage tit-for-tit

The resurgence of violence has raised concerns that militants are regrouping after a period of relative quiet.

Some Iraqi officials say the inability of the country's newly elected leaders to form a government more than 11 weeks after the election may be encouraging the two-year insurgency by creating the impression of weakness and indecision.

The longer it takes to form a government the longer decisions on how to

tackle the insurgency, fight organised crime and revive the shattered economy will have to be put off.

When it comes to battling insurgents, Iraqi authorities can still call on the 160,000 U.S. and foreign troops for support.

But organised crime, particularly kidnap gangs, threaten to present much greater long-term problems for security forces if they are not tackled.

Iraqi officials say as many as 5,000 Iraqis have been kidnapped over the past year for ransom.

Police sources in Baghdad said the hostage situation in Madaen may in fact be linked to rival kidnapping gangs, with competing tribes trying to break into one another's territory.

The main road running near Madaen is notorious for hostage-taking — it is part of an area that has been dubbed the "triangle of death" for the frequency of rebel attacks.

In recent weeks, U.S. and Iraqi forces have been caught in several ambushes

A U.S. Army M1 Abrams tank blocks the road during a military operation in Baghdad April 16, 2005.

in Salman Pak, adjacent to Madaen.

Militants have built up a presence in the area, the site of weapons factories during Saddam Hussein's rule.

Salman Pak, Madaen and other towns to their west have mixed Sunni and

Shi'ite populations.

Tensions have been high between the two communities, but have grown since the election, when Shi'ites came to power, ending decades of minority Sunni rule.

REUTERS

New Saudi law to jail, lash cellphone porn users

RIYADH, April 16 (Reuters) - Anyone using camera phones to distribute pornography may face up to 1,000 lashes, a 12-year jail term and a 100,000 riyal (\$26,670) fine under a proposed Saudi law, newspapers reported on Saturday.

The proposed law comes after a Saudi court in January sentenced three men to jail and up to 1,200 lashes each for orchestrating and filming the rape of a teenage girl using telephones equipped with cameras and distributing the footage via the telephones.

The conservative Muslim kingdom's consultative 150-member Shura council was expected to endorse the new law soon, local newspapers said.

The state telecommunications regulator earlier this year warned against using third generation (3G) mobile phones for "immoral" purposes. 3G mobile

phones can access the Internet, which is strictly controlled in Saudi Arabia, and receive high-quality video clips from adult sites.

A ban was recently overturned on the import and sale of mobile camera phones.

Religious leaders said they are used to invade privacy, particularly of women.

The use of camera phones has triggered scuffles at weddings and girls schools after handsets were used to film and distribute pictures of unveiled women, newspapers have reported. Under Saudi Arabia's strict Islamic rules, women must cover their heads in public.

Saudi Arabia's rapidly growing telecoms sector is gradually being opened up to competition, ending the monopoly of state-owned Saudi Telecommunications Co..

At least one killed in protest in Iran oil heartland

TEHRAN, April 16 (Reuters) - At least one person died when protesters from Iran's Arab minority fought security forces in the oil-rich southwest, officials said on Saturday, accusing the instigators of stirring ethnic tensions.

Arabs rampaged through the streets of the city of Ahvaz in the province of Khuzestan, smashing up police cars, banks and government offices, the official IRNA news agency reported.

"I know definitely that one person died," said Interior Ministry Spokesman Jahanbakhsh Khanjani.

However, Rasul Mousavi, a former parliamentarian for Ahvaz told Reuters that two or three people had been killed.

A spokesman for an Arab-Iranian group campaigning for Khuzestan's independence said three demonstrators had been shot dead by Iranian forces.

"Iranian security forces were using live ammunition as well as tear gas against Ahvazi Arabs, who were fighting with stones," said Mansour Abu Shaker al-Ahvazi, spokesman for the Ahwazian Revolution Information Centre in London.

He added that hundreds of people had been arrested but Khanjani could not immediately confirm how many had been detained.

Iranian officials were quick to play down any suggestion the fighting could have been part of an

independence struggle in Khuzestan, which is home to the biggest oil fields of OPEC's second-biggest producer.

"Khuzestan has always been part of Iran.

Now that elections are close some people are trying to stir ethnic tensions," Khanjani said.

Iran is very sensitive about any suggestion of ethnic unrest, particularly among Arabs and Kurds.

About three percent of Iran's 67 million people are Arabs.

State Governor Fathollah Moin told state television: "This is a trick by the enemies of the nation to damage Iran's national security."

The Khuzestan governor's office was not immediately able to comment

on the fighting.

Guerrillas demanding independence for Khuzestan seized the Iranian embassy in London in 1980, sparking a siege broken by Britain's elite Special Air Service.

Officials said ethnic tensions had been whipped up by the distribution of a fake letter, supposedly from President Mohammad Khatami's adviser Mohammad Ali Abtahi, calling on Arabs to be relocated to north Iran.

On his Web site, Abtahi denied writing the letter and said he would never have had the authority to make such an order.

Khuzestan officials said the area was now calm.

Lebanon's new PM starts talks on forming cabinet

BEIRUT, April 16 (Reuters) - Lebanon's new prime minister began talks on Saturday to form a cabinet to lead the country to elections after winning the support of the anti-Syrian opposition, reviving hopes the poll may be held on time in May.

Najib Mikati, a wealthy businessman with close ties to Damascus, met with veteran politicians and was set to consult lawmakers on Monday to form a cabinet palatable to both allies and opponents of Lebanon's long-time political master, Syria.

Mikati won the nomination of the

128-member parliament late on Friday, drawing vital opposition votes.

He immediately outlined his priorities; holding the polls, cooperating fully with an international inquiry into the Feb. 14 killing of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and returning confidence to an economy shaken by his death.

Mikati faces a daunting task.

He must form a cabinet, win a confidence vote in parliament, draft an election law and get it passed in the assembly — all in under two

weeks to have any chance of holding the polls by the end of May deadline.

President Emile Lahoud told European ambassadors on Saturday that the elections would allow the Lebanese to express their will in an "atmosphere of freedom, integrity and democracy."

Opposition MPs promised Mikati their support to help ensure that the polls they predict will win them a majority in a house dominated by Syria's allies take place on time.

Some opposition figures even said they may be willing to join Mikati's cabinet, after refusing to participate in a lineup under his predecessor, Omar Karami, a staunch ally of Syria.

"We agreed on the principle; since the opposition appointed Mr Mikati, it is natural to join the next stage," exiled General Michel Aoun said a day after meeting Druze opposition leader Walid Jumblatt in Paris.

"Details can be raised with the prime minister-designate if there are any conditions or demands...but in principle we should join," the Christian opposition figure told local television.

U.S welcome

Lebanon has been without a government since Feb. 28, when Karami quit in the face of massive street protests against his government and its Syrian backers after Hariri's killing, which many Lebanese blamed on Syria.

Karami was later reappointed but failed to persuade both the opposition and his own pro-Syrian allies to join a cabinet.

Parliament's four-year term ends on May 31. The constitution requires polls be called at least a month before the vote.

The United States has led

international calls for the polls to be held on time.

"We welcome the naming of a prime minister.

We expect to see both an expeditious formation of a Lebanese cabinet as well as parliamentary elections being held by the end of May without delays," said State Department spokesman Tom Casey.

"Lebanon must be allowed to determine its own future free of intimidation and all foreign interference."

Syria, whose forces entered Lebanon in 1976, has dominated its smaller neighbour since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war.

Those forces are now leaving Lebanon in line with a vow to end the Syrian presence by April 30, after international pressure and Lebanese protest.

Syrian intelligence forces left a position in the eastern Bekaa Valley on Saturday.

Turkish truck driver killed in Iraq: TV

ANKARA, April 16 (Reuters) - A Turkish truck driver has been killed in northern Iraq, news channel NTV reported on Saturday.

NTV quoted Iraqi police sources as saying that the unidentified Turkish truck driver was killed when a roadside mine exploded near Baiji, 200 km (125 miles) north of Baghdad.

Iraqi insurgents frequently attack trucks transporting fuel products between Turkey and the Iraqi oil centres of Baiji and Kirkuk, or goods such as bottled water to U.S. troops based in northern Iraq.

Friends of AlJazeera Press Release : Tayseer Allouni Exclusive

Submitted by foj on Tue, 2005 Friends Of Aljazeera Obtains Exclusive Interview With Aljazeera Journalist, Tayseer Allouni After His Transfer Into House Arrest When we called Tayseer Allouni at 9:53 a.m., he told us he would be happy to do an interview with Friends of AlJazeera (www.friendsofaljazeera.org)but he couldn't do it right away.

The reason? He had to go "check-in" at the local police station as a condition of his house arrest.

After spending 119 days in prison, Allouni was transferred into house arrest on 18 March 2005.

In an interview with Friends of AlJazeera, Allouni sounded relieved to be with his family but was clearly distressed at the ramifications of his arrest.

Stating that his second arrest was a violation of Spanish law, he went on to say that he was ill-treated while in

detention and was required to prove his innocence instead of the prosecution having to prove his guilt.

When asked if his arrest was meant to intimidate AlJazeera, Allouni responded that: "...Regardless of how I feel and what I think of the significance of my arrest, and the objective of my arrest, it did affect AlJazeera and it was an intimidation of AlJazeera.

It wasn't just meant to intimidate AlJazeera, it was a means of terrorising and harassing all free journalists and our work..." During the interview Allouni also voiced his disappointment at his colleagues in the West, but noted that he was: "...fully and unconditionally supported by my colleagues and the administration at AlJazeera.

I can say the same for the Arab media but not for the Western media.

I did not receive adequate support as a colleague in the same profession from the Western media."

Cardinals vote in Latin, schmooze in Italian

VATICAN CITY, April 16 (Reuters) - When Roman Catholic cardinals vote in the Vatican for a new pope next week, they will swear an oath before God in Latin and then cast ballots written in the Church's official language.

Any canvassing for votes or comparing of notes between ballots, though, will almost certainly be done in Italian. Most "princes of the Church" would be lost if a cardinal sidled up to them and began sounding them out in whispered Latin.

The classical language served the Church for centuries as the link among the top Catholic clergy. The 115 cardinals who will elect the next pope come from all corners of the globe and have several dozen mother tongues among them.

But the demise of Latin within the Church, which stopped using it for Mass in 1965 and dropped it at its Rome-based universities for priests soon afterwards, has meant the Vatican's everyday language, Italian, has become the norm.

"We manage to communicate with each other. Most of the cardinals speak Italian," explained London's Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who learned the language fluently as student in Rome in the 1950s. "It would be rare to find one who doesn't."

Many other cardinals picked it up the same way after being sent to Rome for the pontifical university degree or Vatican job that signals a man on his way up the Church career ladder.

Speaking Italian has even become an unwritten requirement for the papacy. Polish-born Pope John Paul won over surprised Roman crowds at St. Peter's

daily Mass before the Second Vatican Council decided in 1965 to switch to local languages.

But reciting texts is easy, conversing off the cuff is hard.

"I joke with cardinals in Latin ... and most don't laugh," Father Reginald Foster, a Latin teacher at the Pontifical Gregorian University here, remarked with clear disapproval. "Some say they have no idea what I'm saying."

Among the few who can is Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who is tipped as a frontrunner in the race for the papacy. Some East Europeans have also kept up the tradition, Foster said.

Others try but their Latin "is on the spaghetti side", said Foster, meaning it sounded more Italian, which like French and Spanish developed over the centuries out of Latin. Many Italian and Latin words are so close they are easy to guess.

According to Italian media, most cardinals speaking to the pre-conclave sessions known as the "congregatio generalis" (general congregation) addressed their colleagues in Italian.

They said about one in eight speeches was held in the outside world's international language, English.

While most politicians instinctively reach for the headphones at international meetings, the men who have made it to cardinal rank in the Church are usually linguists who have spent at least several years studying in a foreign country.

Pope John Paul used to speak Polish with his personal secretary, German with main doctrinal specialist, Italian with many cardinals and English, French and

Thousands hold anti-Japan protests in eastern China

SHANGHAI/BEIJING, April 16 (Reuters) - With some shouting "Japanese invaders must die", thousands protested against Japan's wartime past in eastern China on Saturday, hurling projectiles at Tokyo's consulate and burning Japanese flags in Shanghai.

But with thousands of paramilitary police on the streets of Beijing and students warned against protesting, authorities appeared to have headed off repeat protests in the capital, which will host Japan's foreign minister on Sunday.

In the third weekend of violent protest against Japan across China, thousands marched in Shanghai from the central People's Park to the consulate, pelting it with paint bombs and throwing rocks and bottles at Japanese restaurants along the way.

Some posters carried messages such as "Face Up to History", while another warned: "The anti-Japan war is not over yet".

The crowd went on to burn Japan's red and white flag.

Hundreds of paramilitary police in full riot gear stood at the ready as police used loud hailers to appeal for calm.

In the scenic eastern city of Hangzhou, about 10,000 people, mainly university students, chanted anti-Japanese slogans, held up banners and handed out fliers calling for a boycott of Japanese goods, witnesses said. Reporters were told not to report on it and warned they'd be sacked if they took part.

Billboards featuring Japanese electronics goods were covered up in Hangzhou as were restaurant signs in Beijing.

Beijing secure

In the capital, hundreds of police wearing helmets and carrying shields secured the ambassador's home in the northeast diplomatic district and the embassy in the southeast. Both were pelted with rocks and bottles by thousands of protesters last weekend.



Chinese protesters display their national flag and anti-Japanese banners during a demonstration in Shanghai April 16. REUTERS

But Beijing remained calm on Saturday, the eve of Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura's visit.

He is due to meet his counterpart Li Zhaoxing on Sunday, and aims to ensure disputes on everything from gas exploration in disputed waters to Japan's history do hurt \$178 billion in annual trade between the economic powers.

Chinese have been protesting against what many see as Tokyo's failure to own up to atrocities by its military during World War Two, new textbooks seen as whitewashing that wartime past, and Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Japan has pledged not to let the series of disputes hinder their broader relationship.

There were also unconfirmed calls to protest in Tianjin near the capital, Shenyang in the northeast, Guangzhou and Dongguan in the south and Chengdu in the southwest, according to a U.S.

embassy email warning its citizens to remain on guard.

It was unclear whether those had occurred. Japan's Kyodo news agency on Saturday said protests were under way in Nanjing, near Shanghai.

The situation worsened on Wednesday after Japan announced it had started procedures to allocate rights for test-drilling in a disputed area of the East China Sea.

China has come under fire for tacitly encouraging the unrest, which started in Guangdong and Sichuan provinces early this month and has spread north to Beijing and, now, east to Shanghai and Hangzhou.

Beijing denies it deliberately allowed things to spiral and pledged to protect Japanese businesses and nationals in China.

"I have to point out here that such allegations are totally groundless and a serious distortion of truth," State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan, a former

foreign minister, said.

Tang blamed the tensions on repeated visits by Japanese leaders, including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, to the Yasukuni shrine — where convicted war criminals are honoured along with Japan's war dead.

Authorities appeared to be clamping down harder in Beijing to keep the capital peaceful during Machimura's visit. University students were warned by email to avoid "excess" in the face of calls to protest, and that they would be held accountable.

The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong quoted unidentified sources as saying top anti-Japanese activists in Beijing were rounded up to prevent protests. One activist, Hu Jian, was put under house arrest on Friday, it said.

Beijing police on Friday warned against "unapproved or harmful" actions and there was a stepped up security presence in the country's political heart, Tiananmen Square.

Aceh peace talks to end early, real progress made

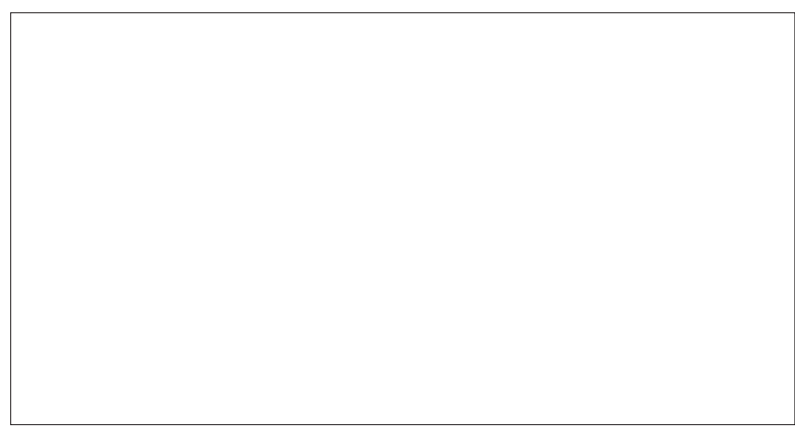
HELSINKI, April 16 (Reuters) - Indonesia and Aceh rebel peace talks will end on Saturday with the two sides expected to say real progress has been made in settling economic and political sticking points, the rebels said.

The Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) group, which is mediating in the talks, said these would end a day ahead of schedule and there would be a news conference at 1200 GMT.

"The talks have ended early, but there is no drama to it. The Indonesian delegation have to go back early to Jakarta for another official engagement," said CMI spokeswoman Maria-Elena Cowell.

Jakarta is organising a summit of Asian and African leaders next week to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, and some 60 heads of state from these two continents are due to attend.

A joint communique from Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) is possible, the rebels said, detailing



An Acehese worker rebuilds the Baiturrahim mosque in the village of Uleelheu in tsunami-hit Banda Aceh April 16. REUTERS

the common ground agreed during the past four days of talks, which seek to end three decades of conflict.

The tone of the negotiations was described by both sides as positive and constructive, with a smiling Indonesian Information Minister Sofyan Djalil giving the thumbs up to reporters on Friday and saying "We are

going to solve this problem."

The groups struck on Wednesday a broad agreement on future economic ties, covering topics like taxation, excise duties, and the distribution of wealth and oil revenue from the resource-rich province.

On Thursday, GAM presented its plan for self-government in a formal

document that the Indonesians will take back to Jakarta.

The political framework includes contentious issues such as the status of Acehese citizens and political parties, rules governing provincial and local elections and changing the name of Aceh itself.

GAM has been fighting a simmering rebellion, with at least 12,000 estimated to have died, many of them civilians. Both sides accuse the other of human rights abuses.

The two sides were brought together by the Dec. 26 Indian Ocean tsunami, which devastated Aceh and left nearly 130,000 Indonesians dead and more than 500,000 homeless.

Despite skirmishes continuing in Aceh, both groups have been upbeat on the latest round of peace talks, saying a peace deal is possible this year.

The two sides have said the remaining big roadblock to a settlement was security issues and how to enforce a future peace deal.

Combination photo shows nine of the cardinals considered possible candidates to succeed Pope John Paul II as the head of the world's more than one billion Roman Catholics. The election will be held at a conclave opening on Monday. Reuters

Square on the night of his election in 1978 by addressing them right away in fluent Italian.

"I do not know if I can express myself well in your ... our Italian language. If I make a mistake, correct me," he said.

No jokes, please

Given their ages, all but the youngest cardinals would have said Latin prayers at

Spanish with visitors.

"In Rome, you usually start in Italian," Washington Cardinal Theodore McCarrick said when asked how he communicated with other cardinals. "But many of them speak English."

"I can speak Italian, French, Spanish and German, so I can usually get by," he said. "I really wish I knew Arabic. That would really be great."

Pakistan police detain Zardari, say not arrested

LAHORE, Pakistan, April 16 (Reuters) - Pakistani police boarded an airliner that brought home the husband of opposition-leader-in-exile Benazir Bhutto on Saturday, detaining him and several aides to prevent them holding a rally.

The detention of Asif Ali Zardari after his plane landed in the eastern city of Lahore from Dubai appeared to again dim hopes for political reconciliation in Pakistan, but police said he had not been arrested and he would be freed.

"He has not been arrested. We have just shifted him to his house," Superintendent of Police Mohammad Usman said. "He will be free there."

However, police had erected barricades around Zardari's house in a posh neighbourhood of Lahore and Zardari himself told Reuters he was not allowed to leave the house.

"They told me that they are taking me

into protective custody," he told Reuters by telephone. "But since then they have not told me anything. I can't go out."

Zardari vowed to lodge a court petition against the government of Punjab province and complained that about 70,000 supporters of his wife's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had been detained to prevent them rallying to welcome him.

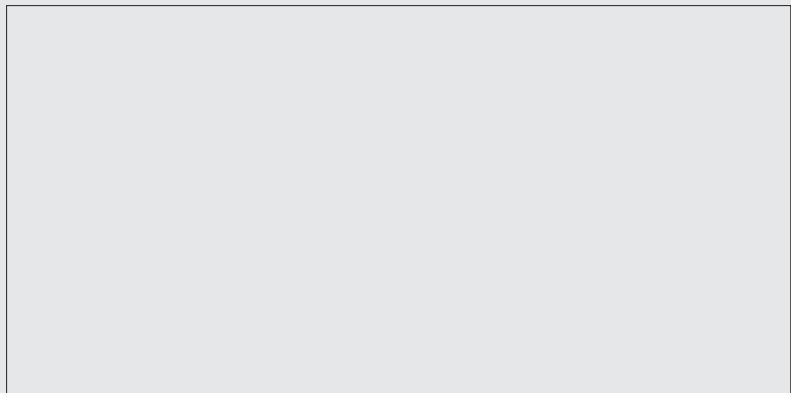
"I will take out a rally whenever I get the opportunity," he said. "If I can't do it today, I will do tomorrow."

Zardari, who was released on bail from eight years' jail late last year, was returning to Pakistan for the first time since travelling to visit his wife in Dubai in December.

Hundreds of police blocked roads to the airport to prevent Bhutto supporters gathering there and used batons to disperse about 50, including women, who managed to evade the cordon.

The Geo TV channel, which had a correspondent travelling on the DC-9 airliner belonging to private Pakistani airline Aero Asia said police boarded it after it landed.

It said among those detained were Makhdoom Amin Fahim, leader of the PPP's parliamentary wing, and its former Foreign Minister Sardar Asseff Ahmed Ali.



A Pakistani policeman (R) arrests the lawmakers of Pakistan's opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) at Allama Iqbal International airport in Lahore April 16. REUTERS

Rally Ban

The government of military ruler President Pervez Musharraf refused permission for PPP supporters to rally in Lahore and extended a temporary ban on gatherings of more than three people.

Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed told Reuters Zardari's movements would not be restricted. "He is free and independent and can go anywhere in the country. All those detained will be freed soon," he told Reuters.

On Friday, Zardari vowed "street agitation" if the government tried to block a rally by supporters to welcome him home.

"We don't want confrontation with the government," he told reporters. "But they have created a situation under which we have no other option."

"We will launch a movement to fill

jails," he added.

The crackdown has again dimmed hopes of reconciliation between Musharraf, who seized power in a coup in 1999, and Bhutto, prime minister for two terms in the 1980s and 1990s.

Bhutto has lived in self-imposed exile for fear of arrest on corruption charges since 1999 and Musharraf has in the past said she would not be allowed to return to politics.

Apparently seeking to bolster his power base and respond to Western critics pushing him to lift curbs on democracy, Musharraf had appeared to soften his position towards her in recent months.

However, while Zardari's release in November despite still-pending charges ranging from corruption to murder raised speculation Musharraf was trying to improve relations, authorities then blocked his attempts to rally supporters.

Words of Wisdom

Many countries hold elections. Even when these are not rigged, they tend to cement the old patron-clientele relations in a new grab. The reason is that the people in power use their connections (and state funds, media, bureaucracy, etc.) to achieve the election results they want. The result is that they create docile parliaments. Elections thus end up enabling those in power to hold on to it.

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

OUR
OPINIONThe youth
is our hope

Yemen is one of the most ancient countries in the world with a history so long you could see the wrinkles on the face of the old buildings around the country. As old as the mountains, as deep as the sea, you read through history about the times of Yemen and how the kind hearted people waved their way through the centuries.

Reading through Yemen's history, I can't define a time when this country had peace, actual peace. There have been struggles one way or another and people were continuously sacrificing for the sake of a principle, an interest, a bad decision or even a mistake. No wonder most Yemeni men are armed, perhaps this stems from insecurity and the need to defend. Yet, despite this, there have been stories of success that spark a ray of light. And I know that no matter how sad and ugly times are that there is still hope.

I know there is hope when I look into the innocent faces of the children and in the glowing eyes of the inspired youth. When you are young there is nothing you can't do. Sadly, sometimes depression finds its way into the young hearts of our children and you hear them talking about how dark they see the future of Yemen. But the truth is that this future is only a reflection of the spirit of the young generation of today. The people who cause the misery of a nation will not live forever, and other people with flaming spirits will come.

It is not true that there is no future of this country, because as long as there are newborns, there is hope. There is a hero inside each and every one of our youth, we only have to look closer and dig deeper. They are the ones who can build the future. They are makers of life, Sunna'e al Hayah!

Editor



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

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One single
alternative to reform

By Prof. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Tarb

After Egyptian President's decree to amend constitution so that it caters for appointing the president through secret and general election instead of a referendum on one single person, we don't know definitely the results of that initiative in the Egyptian life. Analyzed, ultimately they wouldn't be isolated from the discourse of change, development and reform overwhelming the area for two years, or the series of far-reaching developments after the September 11 events and then the war on Iraq in 2003. Some would reject such a conjecture.

The initiative came weeks after the Palestinian, Iraqi and Saudi elections and two days before the public upheaval that overthrew the Karami government in Lebanon and compelled Syrian President Bashar a-Asad to announce his readiness to pull out from Lebanon. Prior to all that, it came after the reform steps taken by some Gulf States, internal and external maneuvers by the Libyan Leader, and the signing of the peace pact between the Sudanese government and the Public Army for Sudan Liberation.

There are many questions now that revolve around whether our area, whose authoritarian leaders spent many decades resisting the winds of democracy and reform, has become lenient and given itself up to its fate or is it still invincible to change and reform, and that this swaying movement is just to absorb the winds' force?

To attempt a definite answer to these questions is risky. It is too early to announce the defeat of such totalitarian, authoritarian, and tyrannical regimes, groups and ideologies which are still controlling the Arab life and refuse to lower their flag before the democratic surge creeping up the streets of Arab cities.

In Iraq, regardless of the election results, enemies of democracy do not accept these results. In Palestine, the greatest challenge before the sun of freedom is the establishment of the Palestinian statehood which would give a meaningful and respectable life to Palestinians. In Lebanon, there is much for the public revolt before it turns into a real power of the people aside from foreign and political interference, influences and interests of war lords and militias who try to throw Lebanon back into the era of dominance and warring. In other Arab capitals, each step of doing reform is threatened with many steps of undoing reform, if for a while the impetus for

reform abates.

It is important to understand and describe the current reform process for many reasons: a) to avoid being entrapped by the schemes of the regimes that propagate its minor steps as a democratic achievement they patronizingly bestow on their peoples as though they are not long delayed rights.

b) To stop indulging in rosy dreaming that an era of freedom and democracy has come in after a long period of subjugation.

What is happening in the Arab World is actually the prelude to a fascinating scene in which we see people long for, and seek liberation along with governments and regimes confessing their helplessness to ignore or suppress these claims. They are trying to contain them dexterously cunningly. This means that this road is rugged and requires something more than hopes, goodwill, and even importunate claims set forth by the public in the Arab community. It is important to find out the obstacles to the Arab World's democratic transformation, and treat them seriously and plausibly without prolongation, excuses, or uncertainty. The failure of postponement of achieving such transformation will automatically relapse the Arab world to the hands of the lurking forces of darkness.

The first of these problems is the relation between the outside and inside in terms of democracy. Regimes exploit it for purposes of incitement, blackmailing and terrorization. They have succeeded in spreading the illusion that democratizing and reforming the area is an external (particularly American) wish which serves foreign sides. Democracy with its symbols, values and institutions is a purely national need which was expressed by Arabs who participated in the liberation wars against colonization and by Arabs who are resisting dominance. It is necessary to expose the attempts at shaking and accusing reform calls on the ground that they are serving foreign targets and interests. Actual events indisputably indicate that most of these regimes could not have possibly remain in power throughout these years without foreign support as they were flouting all laws, constitutions, criteria of good governance, and human rights conventions. Therefore, those who had taken help from outsiders against their people have no right to claim that "reform melody is externally tuned" for the simple reason that the US realized that to immunize its national security against terrorism it should enhance and spread democracy in the area.

We should admit that the public in the

Arab region are suffering from pathological apathy, distrust, and confusion, the results of consecutive disappointments at regimes' inaction and ill-intention regarding reform, the totalitarian impulses and monopoly. I myself have seen in Arab elections people who did not go to poll stations, though they were in the vicinity of their homes. They justified their lack of confidence in the impartiality of conducting the elections, and their results. They said they were pre-planned by the regime.

To restore people's confidence in the feasibility of reform is essential but, this can't be done by regimes that don't like reform. Then, it is necessary to create and develop a public democratic culture to support and facilitate establishing, fostering, and reinforcing democracy. Indeed, people sometimes erupt in volcano-like motion at certain historical moments but democracy needs more than wrath. It requires democratic culture, conduct, and values which NGOs can instill in ambitious souls. The Arab community is inordinately in need to get out of the state of frustration and despair and be incorporated into the current process.

There is the issue of the absence of the people who can spearhead the reform and modernization claims which are the prerequisites of the success of this process. Such calls have to be broadly public-based outside the official circles and governmental authorities that do its best to mischievously evade them or make them devoid. The policy of totalitarianism, exclusion and monopoly practiced by the (sole party) regimes and their security apparatuses have weakened other parties and groups so much that they appear sometimes shaken, marginalized and infiltrated. This makes them unable to win the people's confidence that they can encounter the regime and lead the reform movement.

The sensitive and critical turn which the Arab area is taking, jeopardizes nations and countries as regimes have failed to meet decent life needs of their people, entering into a state of collapse and helplessness in front of local and foreign challenges.

It is evident that there is an alternative to reform that is, getting out of the vicious circle of totalitarianism, monopoly and custodianship as well as for the regimes to stop playing tricks and providing half solutions. It is the option of obeying the resolution of the Arabs and meeting their expectations to live like other people of the world, in freedom, dignity, welfare and peace. Can our leaders do that?

Is Yemen committed
to media freedom?

MOHAMMED HATEM
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Last week, the Ministry of Information shocked us as media professionals by presenting a draft law for press and publication, claiming that it would ensure more freedom for journalists as well as more room to operate freely.

This is fine, but shouldn't the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) have been a part of the team conducting the amendments on the law? The YJS represents the journalists and therefore should be a main partner in this process.

I remember when the Danish took the initiative last year to develop a comprehensive media program, and all hell broke loose. The government was not happy about the possibility of a professional media that did not fall in line with its interests. The government tried to hamper this effort by creating a problem for the Danish delegation in Taiz, which was harassed by the Political Security Office. The government believed that the Danish were coming to establish a union for private publishers, providing them with a printing press. This was in fact completely false.

The YJS was completely ignored when it came to a very critical issue like the draft law. We blame the YJS for not taking the initiative put last year by some journalists that it should present a draft law that voices the concerns of

journalists and meets their ambition of having a more liberal law. However, this does not justify the behavior of the Information Ministry, which has worked in secret on the law for journalists who were kept in the dark.

I do not really have any explanation for such silly behavior by the government at a time where calls for reform are gathering throughout the Arab world. Instead of showing more commitments to the world that it respects human rights and the freedom of the media, our government has shown more hostility towards the media by hassling journalists in various ways. Our government has forgotten that several international declarations have been issued from Sana'a, indicating Yemen's commitments to freedom of media, human rights and other democratic values. The case of the imprisonment of our colleague Abdulkareem al-Khaiwani is a concrete example of tendencies to harass the media. Journalists were very happy when President Ali Abdullah Saleh specifically demanded in June 2004 the removal of the clause allowing the imprisonment of journalists.

However, contrary to the hopes of the media community, the situation has deteriorated, as allegations and prosecutions of publishers, editors and journalists increased in the second half of last year, making it the worst year for press freedom in Yemen since the unification in 1990.

Now, the Ministry of Information announces that the law will open the scope for further freedom for media professionals. I do not believe that it will as government officials always make

empty promises. By law, the publication of "false information that threatens public order or the public interest" or "false stories intended to damage Arab and friendly countries or their relations with Yemen" is punishable by fines and sentences of up to five years in jail. Journalists are even persecuted not in accordance with the Law No. 25 of 1990 for Press and Publication, but according to the Penal Code, deeming them criminals. The current law is full of other shortcomings that constitute a major hindrance for the press to operate freely. However, the government wants more and more restrictions in the amended law.

Journalists should not keep quite and wait for the government to make a new law. They should make a lot of fuss about the government's intentions to hinder media freedom. They should be satisfied with any amendments to the law, including freedom of electronic media. The state monopoly over radio and television should come to an end because media ownership in a real democratic society should be open to everybody.

Yemen committed itself to the Sana'a Declaration of 1995, concerning the freedom of electronic media. The government used to take the law as an excuse for not allowing private radio and television stations to operate, claiming there is no way to regulate such matters. But, as long as the law will be amended, new articles about free electronic media should be added. Free media is one of the indispensable elements of a democracy. A society can never be democratic without a functioning, free media.

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Respecting the
views of others

One of the fundamental principles that a democracy rests on is that, all the members of the society respect (although not necessarily agree) with how other people perceive similar matters. If Yemen is to be truly regarded as proceeding forward on the path to democracy and modern nationhood, all Yemenis, whether in Government or in the widely dispersed communities they live in, who may not be in Government, but nevertheless do have the right to have their views become known and given their due weight. The people in Government do not have a monopoly on sound perception of the situation in the country and may in fact, try to project a situation that is not akin to that which is seen and felt on the ground. That is normal and expected as people in Government will never tell you they are wrong.

Thus if the Constitution says all citizens have a right to express their views (even if they are not compatible with the Government's perception of things), then those views have the right at least to as much respect as the Government expects people to have for its perceptions of things. Otherwise, there is no credibility to Yemen's claim for embarking on the path to democratic rule.

However, it is not encouraging to read how some official or semi-official media channels (especially printed form) has lashed out with unusually harsh opinions of those who may have different views on many of the events occurring in the land, as well as the economic and social retractions that are beginning to plague our development process. If there are grounds for finding such views unrealistic, it is the right of Government to come forward and explain the facts that would make any opposing views untrue or baseless. But to resort to name calling and labeling of such opposing viewpoints as tantamount to treason or selfishness is an evasion of the issue and an attempt to put down fellow citizens, who certainly have as much love and fealty to the land and people of Yemen as any conscientious government official (and there are many of those around, who have the admiration and respect of the public as well).

It is no secret that Yemen is beset by many problems lately and many of these problems might have come to easier and sometimes more peaceful solutions if reason and common sense would have prevailed and if Government recognized that it does not have a monopoly on what people should think or how they perceive things. Much is made of the need for dialogue between people of different perceptions, but it is not enough to call for dialogue when the opinions of others on the matters to be discussed are attacked or stigmatized for no real substantive reason, other than being a deserved practice of a civil and human right guaranteed by all the legislations that have supposedly legitimized our democratic process.

The President has often stated that there is no backtracking from the democratic course the political leadership has embarked on and we wholeheartedly thank him for his reassurances. But apparently those organs and political opportunists that thrive on insinuations and rejection of opposing opinion do not have an inkling of what it means to embark on a course of democratization and what the President is really implying by his reassurances to the citizens of this country.

What do we want from the
president of the republic?

By RASHIDA AL-QAILI

The answer to this question, no doubt differs as the citizens of this country vary. Every one has their own demands and wishes. Since Mr. President is the authority supreme figure of this country and bears the responsibility, he needs to throw the question and not shy away from the answers as they pour on.

So what do we really want from the president? What is our inclusive national demand in which our desires and wishes are embraced?

We don't want him to be burdened with the worries of our breakfast, lunch and dinner, our drinks, clothing and sleep like the poor Chinese president (like the amazing Samir Jubran exclaimed)...

What we want is only:

To abolish the wall separating him and us for we are not Yajooj and Majooj and he is not Zul Qarnain. We want him to create a fixed referential base on which we all abide to without leaving space to moods, power relations, links and ties... There is no base after God's holy book and prophet's teaching, which are included in the oath of all the leaders and decision makers, the constitution and law that in essence should be embraced by the jurisprudence.

Therefore if the relation between the governor and the governed was bound and controlled by a standard reference, people will realise the value of their lives, the value of order and the value of the nation. Yet if such referential base is missing then the result would only be chaos and rule of force. Survival of the strongest and corruption would then dominate. The system in the society would vanish filling the prisons with bulks of citizens and the progress journey of the nation would stray to the dark tunnels and mazes of personal and family interest. As well as the tribal and political parties affiliations and desires, selfishly destroying the values of land and man, nation and state, present and future, history and geography and perhaps national education as well.

To summarize

We don't want the president to put us in jail whenever he decides so, then take us out when he feels comfortable doing so.

We don't want him to put us in jail without sin and we don't want him to take us out of it without virtue. All this does not adhere to any man-made legislation on earth, let away that of the heavens.

Cutting a long story short, what is happening is the law of the jungle, upon which, no life would be secured, no system would be maintained and no democracy would ever be founded.

The rise and fall of meritocracy

By Ralf Dahrendorf

Meritocracy: the word sounds nothing but virtue. It means rule by those who have merit. Such merit is usually understood to be academic achievement and combination of talent and training. This is measured by academic degrees, which in turn are graded on merit: A, B, C, D, or First, Upper Second, Lower Second, Third.

Who would not wish to live in a meritocracy? It is certainly preferable to a plutocracy, in which wealth determines status, or a gerontocracy, in which age leads one to the top, or even an aristocracy, in which what counts are inherited titles and properties.

So meritocracy seems preferable, at least at first sight. But, on closer inspection, things are not so simple.

For many, France has long been the epitome of meritocracy. Most of those in the top reaches of not only the civil service and the judiciary, but also politics, business, and academia used to be graduates of the famous *grandes écoles*. Many then went through the rigorous training to become *inspecteurs de finance*, senior state officials.

Yet the French elites today are increasingly held in suspicion, and even reviled, by part of the population. Certainly, French leaders are not immune to corruption. The uneasy relationship of money and politics has given rise to several high-profile scandals in recent years. It is no longer clear that France's highly educated

leaders are better able to run the country's affairs more efficiently and more honestly than others.

Japan's meritocratically selected bureaucracy, too, faces much the same public opprobrium. Indeed, the bureaucracy itself is often blamed for the country's rigidity and ongoing stagnation.

In Britain, a government heading for its third term in office has said more than once that it wants the country to be "meritocratic." Chancellor Gordon Brown, Tony Blair's heir apparent, is particularly eager to go down that road. Yet it was a British social scientist (and Labour Party politician), Michael Young, who forty years ago wrote a much debated book entitled *The Rise of the Meritocracy*. His was not a description of the road to the promised land, but a dystopian vision of almost Orwellian dimensions. Meritocracy was Young's "1984."

Two central questions raised by Young remain topical today. First, if academic achievement is the entry ticket to power and status, what about the rest? What about those who do not make it to university? How do the other 50% fare in a meritocratic world?

They are, Young argued, confined, even condemned to lower-level jobs, with no chance to rise to eminence, or even to a comfortable position of responsibility. According to Young, those who have at least some talent will form a "pioneer corps" of plumbers and builders and other skilled workers. Those who do not even make that grade will remain in a "home help corps" of

unskilled laborers.

Young's bleak picture bears an eerie resemblance to today's world. The new underclass is the other side of the meritocratic elite. Immigrants, in particular, do not enjoy the equality of opportunity that the word "merit" suggests.

Indeed, nowadays meritocracy seems to be simply another version of the inequality that characterises all societies. It may in fact be a particularly cruel form of inequality, as those who do not succeed cannot argue that they were unlucky or kept down by those in power. Instead, they must conclude that they personally failed, and that no amount of effort can save them.

To this must be added another feature that Young described: meritocracy means only that another ruling group closes the gates behind it once it has achieved its status. Those who made it on "merit" now want to have everything else as well – not just power and money, but also the opportunity to determine who gets in and who stays out.

Sooner or later, Young argued, meritocratic elites cease to be open; they see to it that their children have a better chance than the offspring of the "pioneer corps" or "home help corps." Like all elites before them, they become firmly established – and use all available means to keep it that way.

There is no need to follow Young's argument all the way to the eventual revolution. There is a need, however, for a healthy skepticism towards the claims of a meritocracy based on

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By Samer A.

academic achievement alone. Such a society is not the answer to all our prayers for decency and fairness, or even for sensible and good decisions.

It is far better to remember that when it comes to leadership, many qualities other than a first-class degree come into play. As far as institutions are concerned, we should not allow any one criterion to determine who gets to the top and who does not. Diversity is a better guarantee of openness than even merit, and openness is the real hallmark of a liberal order.

Ralf Dahrendorf, author of numerous acclaimed books and a former European Commissioner from Germany, is a member of the British House of Lords, a former Rector of the London School of Economics, and a former Warden of St. Antony's College, Oxford.

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Open fire
Where ever hits,
it will be useful

Reflections

By Yahya Al-Ofri
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The horrendous Baladiya & other ambiguous crimes

Articles have been written about Baladiya/Municipality crimes but change and clarification to the people is never forthcoming from our interior ministry. Recently a man named "Al-Samhi" was killed at the hands of the Baladiya or Municipality men. Baladiya illegal prisons are still there e.g.

At Kentucky crossroads in a lane to the right you can easily find Baladiya offices and down at the basement you can have a look at one of such prisons where citizens are held illegally for idiotic reasons such as shops or stores license renewal, in conditions unbefitting to cattle moreover for humans!

Again, I am calling on our responsible men to close such prisons and stop the aggression of Baladiya, which is supposed to be a servant of society not an abominable aggressor. The solution is at hand except if this government represented in the mayorality seeks through Baladiya to randomly bully and intimidate the citizens and at times kill them cold-bloodedly. Why can't license fees be paid at banks with the annual taxation and thus avoid the ongoing extortion at Baladiya Offices. Baladiya takes law into its hands, while it should be exclusively restricted to issuing notices and refer defaulters to the court and the "Summary Matters Court" issues the orders to police stations.

What is this!?
I was bewildered last week by two different stories one published by Al-Ussu Newspaper and the other is an unclear denial by Althawra Official Daily. Whom should we believe? What we read and hear or a small denial on an official gazette, let us see and judge:

"Yemen, a conservative religious society based on Islam and traditional customs has through the years become a sad version of "Silence of the Lambs" in its ignorance over crimes of rape and sexual abuse against women and children which to the outrage of the community has risen due to the lack of investigation in such cases causing more crimes. What drove me to write about this sensitive issue was a report by Wayil Abdul Hag Khadsh in a Yemeni Independent-political newspaper named "The weekly". "Al-Ussu" on Thursday 31/3/2005 edition, issue no. 304 where it is told that a 20 year old Sana'a university girl named "Salwa" was kidnapped on her way home from university. She was followed, threatened by sulfuric acid and forced into a car to be taken to a house where she was gang raped by four men. Later, when she had the chance to escape she was chased to the street by one of them who without warning spilt acid onto her face as she stood waiting for a Taxi, causing her to scream in pain and faint to the floor only to find herself in hospital, suffering from burns to her face, eye, and part of her chest. Her father by her bedside in a state of trauma after his daughter's horrific ordeal and her

mother was hospitalized in a life and death situation suffering from a nervous breakdown and trauma after knowing of her daughter's ordeal.

The victim who knew nothing about the rapists' identity described the car as a Mercedes and the house as luxurious. The place, only realizing after escaping to the street, was said to be somewhere near Taiz street.

When it came to the role of the police, it was a shock to find that they did not handle the matter quite seriously but stated that it was none of their business! When asked who was responsible for the law and security the answer was "Go to the Ministry of Interior!"

All this leads us to more than one question and to many suspicions.

Many cases of kidnappings and rape have run through the years without any investigations let alone the capture of culprits mentioned, only rape, rape, rape. What raises the suspicions of the population are the victims who are mostly schoolgirls ranging from as young as 9 years old, some kidnapped on their way home from school. Recently a few weeks ago came a report of a failed kidnapping attempt of a young girl who was on the verge to be forced into a car but the girl's struggles and screams brought passersby in "Shumaila Zone" to the rescue forcing the kidnappers to flee the scene (Vide last month's issues of Al-Balagh).

The Ministry of Interior's silence in this matter leaves many of us to wonder whether they are involved in any way, covering up crimes lead by some prominent figures or else why don't they investigate and why haven't we heard of any capture of such criminals?

It is time they wake up and do their job effectively to secure the people of such crimes and to prove to us that they are not involved; we need to hear them speaking lively on TV and radio.

People also must insist on the opening of such issues to prevent them from happening further and to insist on investigations and to open the eyes of our government's securities to crimes such as rape which go unheard of. These girls and women are the sisters and daughters of our country and whom if we care about their future, must protect.

It is time we break the silence, speak, and act. It is either now or never. Before, speaking about this subject I waited for an official account and was perplexed to read a simple naive denial at the last page of Althawra daily edition "14759" issued on April 9, 05 saying that the whole thing was a fabrication and is an April lie, for which the "Al-Ussu" newspaper has begged pardon. Therefore, I waited to read something in Al-Ussu's imminent issue and to my horror merely read a fetid article in praise of "Police".

Both, the interior ministry and the newspaper should treat us as sane human beings by telling us the truth, for we have had enough of continued cover-up and the inaction of our quasi-nonexistent police.

The Iraqi public speaks

By Mansoor Moaddel

Most of what we think about Iraq is shaped by the daily violence that plagues the country. Intelligence and military analysts debate how much of the violence is due to the presence of foreigners, though it is widely conceded that most of the attacks can be attributed to what American officials call "former regime elements," with the Iraqi Sunni community the main pillar of the resistance.

Having dominated Iraq under Saddam Hussein, and despite numbering less than a quarter of the overall population, Sunnis, it is said, are fighting to prevent their communal interests from being overwhelmed by the majority Shi'ites and the Kurds, a distinct ethnic group concentrated in the north.

Late last year, I was an organizer of a major national survey of Iraqi public opinion that demonstrated the complexity of the country's communal relations. To be sure, Iraqis of different ethnic or religious backgrounds are divided over many issues, but they also embrace a common national identity, as well as a desire for democracy.

To begin, we asked Iraqis to reflect on the fall of Saddam: Was Iraq better off without him? Among Sunnis, only

23% thought so. Among Shi'ites, however, 87% saw a better Iraq without Saddam. Kurds exceeded this number, with 95% claiming an improvement.

At the same time, overwhelming majorities of Kurds, Sunnis, and Shi'ites – more than eight out of ten – preferred to be seen as Iraqis first, believing that "Iraq will be a better society if people treat one another as Iraqis." Strong majorities also endorsed the idea of a democratic system for Iraq.

While these findings demonstrate the shadings of opinion across Iraq's dominant communities, they do not explain attitudes that may be behind the continuing violence that disfigures Iraqi life. The most radical differences in opinion can be found in communal perceptions of control of the future – the possibility of building a better life in post-Saddam Iraq – and security.

We asked respondents to indicate how much control they had over their lives and how optimistic they were about the future, using a scale on which ten indicated a highly optimistic sense of control and one a deep level of powerlessness and pessimism.

Kurds had the highest perception of control and optimism, with 19% indicating the highest level of control over their lives and 17% the greatest degree of hope in the future. The comparable figures for Shi'ites were

10 and 14%, respectively, but were just 4% and 5%, respectively, for Sunnis. The results for extreme pessimism were skewed in the opposite direction: 14% of Sunnis thought things were as bad as could be, while only 2% of Kurds and 3% of Shi'ites shared this opinion.

The effects of localized violence were also made clear in the survey: 17% of Kurds, 41% of Shi'ites, and 77% of Sunnis felt that life in Iraq is unpredictable and dangerous, a clear demonstration of the effects of the ongoing resistance that is centered in the Sunni Triangle.

This disparity in attitudes toward the future could determine what eventually happens in Iraq. Widespread political violence in both Iran and Latin America in the 1960's and 1970's demonstrated a connection between popular feelings of powerlessness and the growth of urban guerrilla movements. Leaders of these groups often defended terrorism by insisting that violence was the only means of bringing hope to demoralized people. This argument, long discredited, resonates in the actions of the Iraqi insurgents and their fanatical allies.

This is not to say that an insecure and demoralized community supports violence. By its immobilization, however, such a community may simply be too passive to oppose the violent men acting in its name. If Iraqi

Shi'ite leader Muqtada al-Sadr and his followers chose to stop their own violence, it was not simply because of the superior firepower of the coalition forces. It was because Shi'ite religious leadership felt empowered, optimistic, and secure enough to press the Sadrist to end their revolt.

If the Sunni leadership were to feel that it has a stake in the outcome of political events now unfolding, it would also be able to stop the insurgency. That's why the political talks – open and clandestine – now reported to be underway are vital. They offer the possibility for the Sunni community to participate in the new system.

The American-led coalition can help by taking more steps that would reinforce a message of hope and optimism for the exhausted and demoralized Sunnis of Iraq. Military action by itself may simply make matters worse.

Mansoor Moaddel, a principal investigator for a national survey of Iraqi public opinion, funded by the United States National Science Foundation, is Professor of Sociology at Eastern Michigan University and the author of Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse.

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Letters to the Editor

US out of Yemen

We now see that the U.S. Embassy in Yemen has closed its doors to the public.

This is a good sign but it should be followed by the Embassy staff, the CIA and the U.S. military leaving Yemen. Until they do, the civil war problems in Yemen will only increase. The U.S. and the British are behind the current problems in Yemen and can only make matters worse.

Until the U.S. and Britain can be rid of the Bush and Blair warmongers, Yemen will

remain as a military and CIA stronghold in the Middle East. Bush bribed his way into Yemen with hard currency; it's time he and his band of criminals leave.

Robert Lindh
lindh@swnebr.net

Our bleak future

When I sit down to think about our future in Yemen, I see nothing! It's nothing in comparison to the other Arab countries. I would not be exaggerating if I say that we are a backward country, espe-

cially when compared to other countries such as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I often wonder about something and get confused when thinking about our graduates, and those with high qualifications. Have they failed us? Are they responsible for the failure in reforming this country? Or is it because of the corruption and those cold people who steal public wealth and depriving the very needy, even the sick from their basic needs.

I call on everyone who has conscience, integrity or sincer-

ity to do the best on reforming and finding solutions to this thorny problem. This is our home and it means everything to us.

My hope is that somebody reads this note and tells me where and how to find hope. Is there anyone who will write back to me?

Tariq al-Naggar

The best newspaper "Yemen Times"

I am a student at the University of Hadramout, English Department. I follow

up events through your newspaper. I am one of the lovers of the Yemen Times. This esteemed newspaper enables us to know more vocabulary and information.

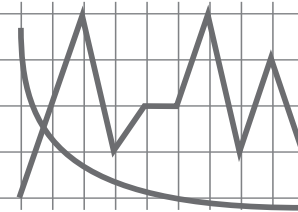
In my opinion, the Yemen Times is the best English Newspaper in Yemen.

I would like to thank the Yemen Times staff for the hard work they are demonstrating.

Go ahead and God bless you!

Abdulaleem Ahmed Alkhalagi
Abdulaleem_alkhalagi@yahoo.com

YT Business



Information symposium recommends, Establishment of Arab network for scientific & technical information

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

At the conclusion of the meetings held on Wednesday on the Information Symposium and its role in upgrading efficiency, the participants had recommended the establishment of an Arab network for scientific and technical information as

well as specialized national information centers as part of integrated national systems for information.

The participants also stressed the necessity of expanding Arab coordination in this area and the work on linking national information, scientific and technical networks to an Arab information network.

Participants in the symposium organized by the ministry of higher

education and scientific research, represented by the Sana'a University, and in cooperation with the Arab Union of Scientific Research Councils, recommended there should be an adoption of a national strategy for information.

That strategy must respond to requirements of comprehensive development and keep pace with contemporary developments of information technologies and

communication.

It also has to support activities of scientific information researches and to invest them in advancement of the level of performance efficiency of the society's technical and service sectors. In addition to that is the necessity of completing Arab and national information and communication sector's infrastructures and benefiting from modern information systems.

The symposium also called upon

scientific sides to include those recommendations in geographical curricula to be taught as part of Arab universities curricula.

The participants stressed the necessity of developing and qualifying human families in areas of information technology. As well as the establishment of scientific cities for information technology to be a medium between scientific research and modern technology and to benefit

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	190.6000	191.2600
Sterling Pound	359.7900	361.0300
Euro	245.4300	246.2800
Saudi Rial	50.8200	51.0000
Kuwaiti Dinar	652.7200	654.9800
UAE Dirhem	51.8900	52.0700
Egyptian Pound	32.8400	32.9600
Bahraini Dinar	505.5600	507.3100
Qatari Rial	52.3800	52.5600
Jordanian Dinar	269.0200	269.9500
Omani Rial	495.0800	496.7900
Swiss Franc	158.1400	158.6900
Swedish Crown	26.7900	26.8800
Japanese Yen	1.7690	1.7751

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

from them in sectors of labour and production.

They asked also for formation of a national working team in every Arab country to study the recommendations and facilitate the process of implementation. Government and private establishments concerned with following up information, communication and production should take part.

Specialized consultant help sought for,

Yemeni Gas Project feasibility study

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a recent meeting held by the supreme council for Oil Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal, it has approved the seeking of help of a foreign consultant to complete aspects of financial and economic analysis, the volume of financial and monetary influx over years of the project implementation and the confirmed and probable benefits to be gained from the vital economic and investment project.

The council has also studied the legal status of the company and its economic performance in order to restructure its in compatibility with the new functions of the company and the developments the oil sector has witnessed.

The Council has also discussed a

report offered by the ministry of oil dealing with the status of Iyad sector No.4 at Bilhaf area, the governorate of Shabwa. It has instructed the min-

istry to publish an official announcement inviting an investor to establish a common company for investment in production and development of

the oil field of that sector, provided that there must be a help sought from a consultant to help analyze bids that would be submitted to this purpose.

In Brief

- A number of Yemeni businessmen took part in the Investment Forum last Wednesday in Mensik Bila, Russia. The forum discussed the prospects of joint economic partnerships and exchanging experts. Businessmen and economists from 22 countries participated.

- The Ministry of Culture and Tourism released a report stating that foreign tourism has increased over the last three years. The number of foreign tourists reached 273,000 in 2004, a 41 percent increase from 2003. The report indicated that Yemen's revenue from this sector was US\$214 million in 2004, up from US\$139 million in 2003.

- The Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology will open 188 stations and enhance 21 existing stations on the 15th anniversary of unification, with the capacity of 268,622 telephone lines at the cost of YR 12,46,162,648. The foundation stones of 34 new stations will be laid with a capacity of 46,398 lines at the cost of YR 580,410,000. A report issued by the ministry mentioned that 500,000-

line projects will include 41,953 new lines at the cost of YR 5,829,213,000 and the foundation stones of 3072 lines worth of YR 340,992,000.

- The roundtable conference on growth and social work in Yemen organized by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation recommended adopting a practical policy for overcoming investment obstacles in Yemen. It focused on the phases of partnership between the government and the private sector, development of banking and the reinforcement of its role in credit cards, including the establishment of credit cards attracting and organizing savings. The recommendations called for classification of public occupations, improving efficiency and increasing the salaries of workers in order to fight corruption. Concerning gender, the recommendations approved a quota in plans, programs, budgets, and investment encouragement to enhance woman's employment. They also recommended improving women's place in the agricultural sector and meeting their educational, technical and health needs.

Experts urge fighting sea piracy

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Experts from eleven countries, including Yemen, called on the region's countries for complete cooperation among themselves in order to enhance security and stability in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. This is to include repelling of acts of sea piracy and armed robbery of ships.

They have confirmed that the Yemen republic feels a historical

responsibility towards security in the Red and Arabian Seas and the Gulf of Aden for its direct effect on interests of the region's and the world's interests.

The experts also recommended, at a regional workshop organized by the international marine organisation in cooperation with the State Authority for Marine Affairs, that the necessity of protecting navigation security in this region means otherwise impingement on entire world interests, not only causing damage to national

economies of the region's countries.

The experts pointed out the close relationship between activities of piracy gangs committing robbery and smuggling of humans and weapons and drugs and the phenomenon of terror. In addition to Yemen, the countries of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Oman, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea were taking part in the workshop.

The workshop has clarified the high cost the countries are sustaining as a result of facing those two phenomena

with their human, social, security and economic dimensions.

Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal had addressed the workshop and pointed to the security of the Red Sea and what that required of continuous integration and cooperation among various countries, stressing the need for adoption of an integrated strategy by those countries to enhance security and stability in the Red Sea and its protection against illegitimate greed that were beginning to be seen in the horizon.

On his part Mr. Omar Muhsin al-Amoudi, the minister of transport had indicated that the big participation to discuss ways of preventing and fighting piracy and robbery would contribute to a great extent to curb the phenomenon.

He emphasized the necessity of offering support to Somalia for the establishment of security in it because that greatly contributes to curbing the phenomenon that has affected the movement of maritime and movement of international trade in general.

On the other hand, the minister of interior Dr Rashad al-Alimi has made it clear that sea piracy is directly connected to operations of smuggling prohibited things, weapons and humans, pointing to the security apparatuses sending of number of those cases to justice where many of those elements are now standing trial.

The stressed the necessity of the existence of regional and international cooperation and coordination among states to encounter the phenomenon of piracy.

How economic superpowers rise

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Two-day roundtable conference on social growth and development organized last week by the ministry of planning and international cooperation and the World Bank, recommended the necessity of adopting a practical policy removing hindrances of investment in Yemen and drawing up a collection of measures in all fields.

All that in addition to the importance of activating partnership between the government and the private sector, development of the banking sector and enhancement of its role in financial mediation as well as the establishment of a stock exchange market as a mechanism for attracting savings.

Recommendations called for the

building a thorough economic policy based on diversification of the base of economic resources and resources of national income through the exploitation of promising sectors such as fish, tourism and agriculture.

At the time the prime minister has, at the conclusion of the conference, stressed the importance of exploiting Yemen's strategic situation as a free area for attracting foreign investments directly, the increasing of trade activity, exportation and encouragement of women in the private sector through facilitating and simplifying the procedures of registering economic projects established by women, acquires great importance.

The recommendations also called for defining the public officialdom, adoption of the criterion of efficiency, raising the level of the public sector

employee to curb corruption. Regarding the gender, the recommendations called for dependent systems of quota and the approach of gender in plans, programs and budgets, in addition to encouragement of investments in areas employing the woman labour, the development of women in agriculture and encountering their educational, health and technical needs.

Those recommendations demanded improvement and development of education programs to be in line with needs of labour market and requirements of the private sector. They called for paying attention to industries that attract labour particularly those which help create job opportunities, enhancing the role of the sector of small enterprises. They also called for building governmental institutional frame meant for encouraging small labour sectors,

concentration on all rural development and encouragement of agricultural, fish and tourism sectors.

There should be an effort for caring for the change from traditional economic activities to modern ones which have added value. There must be an enhancement of women participation in drawing up general policies and translation of the strategy of the working women into programs and projects. As well as taking care of government employment offices and opening more of them especially in the facilitation of abroad labour transfer.

Dr Mutahar Abdulaziz al-Abassi, undersecretary of the ministry of planning and international cooperation had confirmed that the government would give articles of the recommendations great importance and attention, pointing out that holding that roundtable

came as part of the third developmental plan 2006-2010, a matter which would render their articles enter in that plan and there would be executive procedures.

There would be a technical team that would undertake the follow-up results and the assistant World Bank team so that that program would have certain goals, time, policies and measures that must be taken as well as defining roles of relevant sides.

On his part, the World Bank senior economists at the sector of economic and social sector in the Middle East and North Africa reviewed the WB plan on how to revive the deteriorated growth in Yemen, stressing that there was hope in improvement in performance of the Yemeni economy through activation of promising sectors and not to depend on oil as a major resource.

He clarified that the cost of local investment in Yemen is still little and that helps engagement of the private sector in greater manner in the economic construction. He mentioned that Yemen was among the few countries that had great profits from trade and investment and there must be an activation of this characteristic in addition to activation of the role of judiciary and registration of land ownership as well as the spread of security stability.

The participants in the establishment of a ministry for woman development, to make her participant in the plans of economic development and mechanism of fighting corruption spread in some government institutions, as well as th formation of a committee to follow up implementation of the recommendations with the relevant sides.

The Queen Of Sheba (1/5)

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY
DAVID BEN-ABRAHAM
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When King Solomon had invited the neighboring kings bordering upon his country to come up unto him, in order to show them his glory, and especially, to show them his ability to converse with the birds and animals and creeping things, compelling them to do whatsoever he should command, simply by speaking with them, he obtained his desire and had the kings of the east and west, north and south, gathered together in his banqueting hall, where they all sat down together to observe this great spectacle.

King Solomon then called in the animals, birds and creeping things, one by one, to parade before the king and his onlookers, without any man leading them, and without any of them being bound by fetters or restraints.

While this was taking place, King Solomon noticed that the hoopoe bird was absent among the birds, and commanded his servants to bring unto him the bird, even if it meant chaining him. When he was eventually brought before the king, the king enquired where he had been. The hoopoe replied that the king should not be wroth, for he had gone for days without food and drink, flying in the heavens, hoping withal to find a land or kingdom where Solomon's fame had not yet reached, and then to return unto the king, and



Queen of Sheba side view

duly report his findings to the king. After these entreaties, the bird proceeded to report on a kingdom, which he had discovered afar off, governed by a queen, the queen of Sheba, from the castle Qitor. Their country, he said, was a good land, with trees and gardens

watered by the rivers issuing forth from the Garden of Eden, and where there was gold and silver aplenty, and where the citizens of that country made no warlike gestures, and wore crowns upon their heads. At hearing this, King Solomon took up the hoopoe in his

hands, and commanded his scribes to write an epistle unto the queen of Sheba, which epistle should then be bound to the wing of the bird, and the bird sent back on his journey into the land of Sheba. The content of that epistle was this:

"From me, King Solomon. Greetings unto thee, and greetings to thy servants. In order that you might know that God hath made me king over the wild beasts and fowl of the air, and that all the kings of the east and of the west, of the south and of the north, do come and salute me, so too, if it shall now please you, come thou unto me and pay homage unto me.

I shall do unto thee great honour, more so than what I do to the other kings who sit before me. But if you do not wish to do so, neither wilt thou come and salute me, then know of a certainty that I will send against thee kings, and legions, and horsemen to wage a war against you.

And if you shall ask within yourself who are these kings and legions and horsemen whom King Solomon hath to send, be apprised that the wild creatures they are the kings and legions and horsemen. And if you shall ask, moreover, which of the creatures are the horsemen in this army, be apprised that the fowl of the air they are the horsemen.

My troops are the spirits, whilst the demons and little she-devils are the legions who will strangle you upon your beds in the midst of your houses. And the wild beasts shall kill you in the fields, as shall the birds of the air devour your flesh from your bodies!"

By: Abu Alkalmah Al-Tayyibah

Abdurrahman Al-Shirqawi: projecting Islam as an important liberator of mankind

Most Arab readers know Abdurrahman Al-Shirqawi (Egyptian) for his plays, novels and work on poetry. But Al-Shirqawi was also strongly interested in religion and often produced praiseworthy efforts in trying to convey the Islamic religion in its basic fundamental tenets without getting bogged down in any obsession with religious sect or trivial discourses on worship rites.

Moreover, Shirqawi tried to project Islam as an important liberator of mankind: Mohammed sought to instill in the true believers the love for freedom from oppression, upholding of personal and human rights and more important safeguarding of dignity.

The book under discussion is an important book in that one has a brief biographical narrative on the lives of perhaps the most influential experts on Islamic jurisprudence from the First Century of Islamic history to the 6th Century AH (Islamic Calendar) (12th Century AD).

This was the period indeed when the Moslem Empire was at its zenith and splendor, stretching from Spain to China, while Europe has yet to fully come out of the slumber of the Dark Ages.

The Imam, is a title that may have political significance (as the Leader), but even with its political connotations, it is only meted out to those with proven credentials of scholastic attainment. The first known bearer of the title of Imam was the Fourth Orthodox Caliph after the passing away of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

His three predecessors, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, Omer Bin Al-Khattab and Uthman Ibn Affan (May God bless their souls) were bestowed the title of "Caliph" or "Commander of the Faithful".

However even the last adjective became more of a nickname for Ali, then just an adjective of political leadership. Ali was perhaps the father of "fiqh", or Islamic jurisprudence. Of all the followers and disciples of the Prophet Mohammed (PAUB), no one can match Ali in terms of learning and comprehension of Islamic dogma.

Most printings of the Holy Quran all trace the origins of the text to that recollected by Ali, as the leading source. Even his political predecessors acknowledge that Ali was their savior when confronted with the most difficult of Islamic theology or jurisprudence. Omer used to say: "If it wasn't for Ali, Omer would be finished", i.e., in front of God for not ruling properly on an issue.

With the establishment of the Islamic State, learning became an essential element of the development of society and most of the leading

mosques in the Islamic cities had what they called "halaqah" or "Circles" of students that studied the major fields of the day under leading scholars of the time.

Out of these halaqahs, there were many a great scholar, who reached a high level of learning, especially in the area of "fiqh", were even the political leadership of the day would find it a challenge to not execute the rulings of these great experts on Islamic jurisprudence.

The nine experts of jurisprudence discussed in Shirqawi's book are:

- Imam Zeid Bin Ali Zein Al-Abedien (from whom the Zeidi sect got its name)
- Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq (from whom the Ja'afari Shi'a sect got its name)
- Imam Abu Haneefah Al-Nu'uman (from whom the Hanafi sect got its name)
- Imam Malik Ibn Anas (from whom the Maliki sect got its name)
- Imam Allaith Ibn Sa'ad
- Imam Mohammed Idriss Al-Shafe'i (from whom the Shafe'i Sunni sect got its name).
- Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal (from whom the Hanbali Sunni sect got its name)
- Imam Ibn Hazm
- Imam Al-'Izz 'Izz-Aldin Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abd Al-Salam

Although many of these great men eventually had sects named after them, it should be borne in mind that they never thought of themselves as seeking to have their own rendition of Islam, nor expected their name to be tied to any faction. To them Islam was Islam and that is it. To them, their interpretation of Islamic Law and Theology were attempts to correct misconceptions on the original message of Islam.

Almost all of them viewed most of the deviations they sought to correct as the evil doings of those "scholars", who were used by, or sold themselves to autocratic rulers, to justify the oppression of their constituents. In almost all cases, these Imams stood steadfast in defense of civil liberties and the rights of the faithful. Many paid a dear price for their positions of advocacy on behalf of the downtrodden or the exploited.

In the following 2 Literary Corners, we will look at each of these men briefly and highlight the hallmark of their contributions to Islamic jurisprudence, as eloquently described by Shirqawi.

In this way our readers can surmise that there is a great treasure of legal and social heritage, on which much of the liberties and rights one hears as being of "western" origin, actually emanated from the tireless work and struggle of these men.

12 Shirqawi deals with him in a separate book called the "Imam of the Pious"

Continued from back page

An exhibition of artistic talents

There were also some comments about the display, as Muna Hamid a government employee talked about her impressions by saying:

"I was mostly triggered by curiosity and the reputation of the photos, when I came here I thought I would find supernatural and rare photos but they were good and not supernatural. I would like to comment on the display of the photos, they should have been arranged according to classification but I found some of them were mixed up. I liked especially the natural scenes" Muna brought along with her a relative, a little girl Hanan Khalid who studies at Asma School in the fourth grade.

When asked about her impressions she hid behind Muna and with a smiling face said that she especially liked the camels and that next time we should have her photo in the exhibition!

Previously Dr. Ahmed Azzan had won a million Riyals through one of Yemen Times competition and he has faith that this time he would win again. Dr. Azzan is an assistant professor at the linguistic college of Sana'a University and has participated with many photos.

"I was interested in seeing the exhibition, mainly because I like arts and photography and also because many of my photos were among the 200 nominated for voting. I think it is a good idea and I hope that there are more of these events.

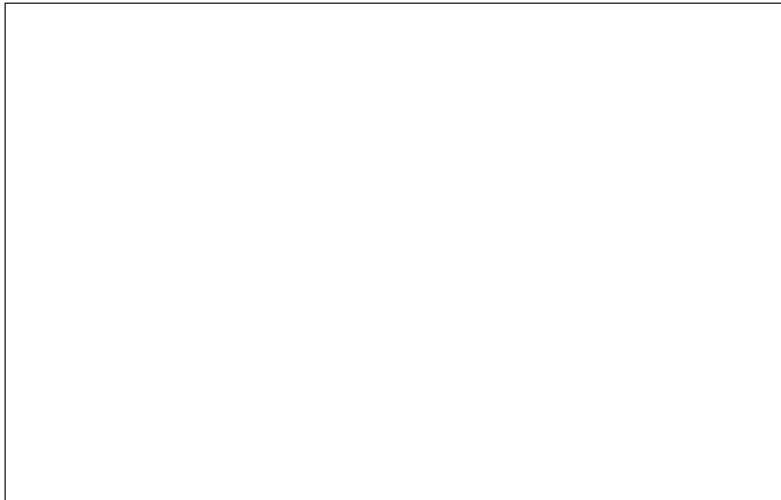
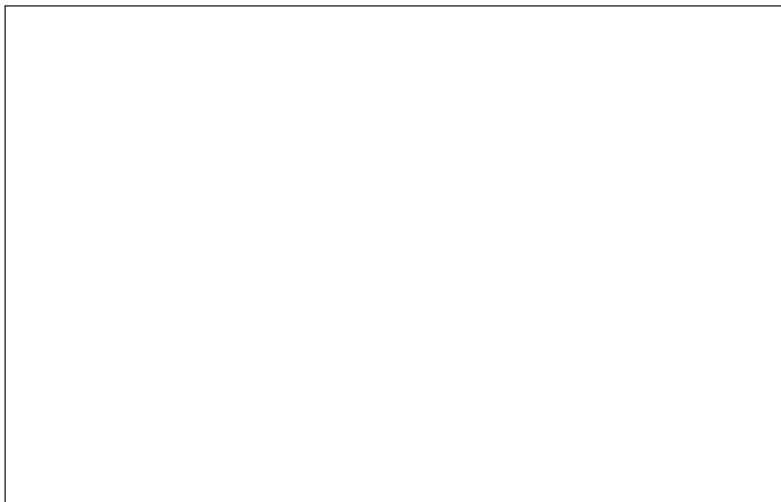
It's well organized; the people in charge wore badges and helped us through the voting process, and were quite polite. It shows the good culture of the Yemen Times.

Yemenis are not used to such events and although they might have found it un common to conduct a photography exhibition many participated and many came to see. I have seen many talents among the photos and I believe that this has revived the artistic sense in many people and in my especially."

The little kids present among visitors seemed delighted with the occasion, it was an opportunity for them to get out and enjoy the photos with their parents, a little girl from the crowd seemed especially delighted watching the photos of the babies.

Mr. Khair aldin alNsour deputy director of the Yemen Times and general manager of the Yemen Times press was present in the opening of the open days, he commented on the event by saying: "Frankly speaking it went well, in fact better than we expected and the number of visitors was encouraging.

I must take this opportunity to thank our sponsors al-Harithi Trad company, Yemen for Trade and Construction Company Ltd, CCC, Yemania Airlines, Artex Trade Company, Canon, MAM International, and Hertz. I am looking forward to the celebration of winners next month."



VACANCIES

CARE International Yemen is looking for;

- 2 Civil engineers (Sana'a and El-Mahweet projects). The projects are funded by ECHO. The duration of projects is 1 year. The successful candidates must satisfy the following criteria
 - Experienced LNGO's project activities of Basic Service Provision in related field at least 2 years.
 - ECHO or other large donor experience.
 - Experience of site management.
 - Excellent spoken and written English and spoken Arabic.

For a detailed job description, please e-mail carechosanaa@y.net.ye OR Fax 01 504021. Applications (CV and a covering letter) must be received by April 25th 2005. Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Female circumcision wrecking lives

By Roonak Faraj and Talar Nadir in Sulaimaniyah (ICR No. 120, 13-Apr-05)

© Institute for War & Peace Reporting

Much criticised by human rights groups, the practice is said to leave girls vulnerable to infection, haemorrhaging and long-term health and sexual problems.

Forty years have passed since Sairan Muhammed was circumcised, but she still remembers the event vividly.

"I was seven-years-old. My mother took my hand and I didn't know where she was taking me," she said. "We went to a house with a wooden roof. I could hear the shouting and crying even before we got there. I ran away, but my mother chased after me and caught me. In the house, there were six other girls who were being

circumcised."

For Sairan, 47, a resident of Sulaimaniyah, the psychological scars left by circumcision refuse to heal. "Even now, I can't get the screams, the struggles and the fear of that day out of my mind," she said.

Circumcision, also called female genital mutilation, is a well-known practice in Somalia, Sudan and Egypt, but is not generally considered to be common in this part of the world. However, according to a 2004 survey of women from the Kurdish-controlled Iraqi areas of Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaimaniyah, a staggering 75 per cent of 40,480 respondents were found to be circumcised.

Twelve-year-old Ameenah Muhammed, from the town of Kalar, remembers the agony of the procedure. "I was 5-years-old, I was grabbed by two people, and they circumcised me. I didn't go outside for two days, and it hurt when I peed," she said.

The Kurdish method of

circumcision involves the removal of a girl's external genital organs. The procedure is usually carried out by women who are not trained in surgery. There is no anesthetic and little attention to hygiene. As a result, there is a high risk of infection and hemorrhaging. Women with disfigured genitals commonly have problems with urination, intercourse and childbirth.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, uncircumcised women are often looked down upon. Shamsa Ali, 50, from the Sarshaqam neighborhood of Sulaimaniyah, describes how a deep sense of shame led her and her two sisters to circumcise themselves. "We were in our early teens, and we felt ashamed because we hadn't been circumcised. Our friends told us that if a girl isn't circumcised, the water from her hand is unclean and not fit for drinking and that God is angry with her. So we decided that the three of us should go to Hamdia, a friend of ours, and circumcise one another."

Muslim clerics in northern Sulaimaniyah declared a fatwa on the practice in 2000. Muhammed-Amin Abdul-Hakeem Chamchamali, the head of the Kurdistan Religious Scholars Union, said the "common belief that uncircumcised women are dirty or unsuitable for marriage is unfounded" and they "are not guilty of anything in the religious sense".

Dr Rezan Ismael, a gynaecologist in the Rania township, an area where many girls are circumcised, believes that female genital mutilation damages women's sexual organs so profoundly that it can lead to sexual dysfunction and marital problems. "The damage done by female circumcision is most apparent after marriage. I think that 70 to 80 per cent of marital problems are sex-related."

The damage is compounded because the women conducting the circumcisions are often illiterate and unskilled.

One practitioner from the town of Basma, who preferred not to be

named, circumcises girls aged between two and five, performing the operation with a blade and placing the child in a washtub to staunch the bleeding, then applying a mixture of salt and oil to the wound.

Fatim Ibrahim says she performs circumcisions because she sees it as a moral duty. "I learned the profession from a woman in our village," she said. "I do it because it is virtuous, and that God will be satisfied with me. So far, I have circumcised over one thousand girls."

The damaging practice has been condemned by many international human rights groups. In a report about women in Iraq published in February this year, Amnesty International concluded, "Some aspects of [female circumcision] are analogous to torture some of what is intentional, calculated, and causes severe pain and suffering."

Roonak Agha of the Kurdistan Women's Union has launched a campaign to educate mothers against

circumcising their daughters, which she says has begun to lower the incidence in some areas. "We held symposiums and seminars, and have made a concerted effort to stop circumcision. We have held talks with religious scholars here so that we can persuade mothers to put an end to this phenomenon."

Thanks to projects like these, circumcision is on the wane in the larger cities of Kurdistan. But in smaller towns and villages, the practice is more difficult to eradicate.

While some progress is being made in tackling female genital mutilation, many victims of the practice continue to suffer the consequences. Sairan Muhammed said her husband took a second wife because of her sexual frigidity. One consolation for her, she said, is that her four daughters will not have to experience what she went through.

Roonak Faraj is the editor-in-chief of Rewan newspaper. Talar Nadir is an IWPR trainee in Sulaimaniyah.

Geology of the Yemeni island of Socotra

DR. ENG. MOHAMMED DARSI
ABDULRAHMAN NEDHAM
FOR YEMEN TIMES

Many articles were written about Socotra describing its beauty and charm, nevertheless this is not enough. This island is a national treasure not only because of its importance as a tourist attraction, but also because of its geological significance.

The Republic of Yemen is located on the southwest corners of the Arabian Peninsula, while the islands of Soqatra, Abd al Kuri, Darsa, Perim, and Kamaran in the Arabian Sea and southern Red Sea are also part of the Republic of Yemen.

Socotra is the largest and most easterly of a group of islands, which includes Abd al Kuri, Samha, and Darsa. The surface area of the islands is about 3,650 square kilometers; a broad continental shelf area, particularly well developed on

the south side, surrounds the island chain, with an area of approximately 32,000 square kilometers.

For the most part, the island of Socotra is covered by a veneer of Cretaceous and Tertiary limestones, up to 700 meters in thickness, which forms an undulating, irregular, and in part block-faulted upland plateau ranging from 300 to 900 meters in elevation, overlying an older igneous and metamorphic basement.

There are three main structural uplift areas from the central backbone of Socotra, culminating in the spectacular Haggier Range with peaks rising to 1,500 meters. In other areas, where part of the limestone cover has been removed, recent deposits largely obscure the earlier rocks, particularly along the northern and southern coastal plains and in some of the inland depressions.

OIL AND GAS PREDICTION

Patchy minor oil fields were encountered in the lower Cretaceous section between 1,880 and 2,275 meters. Dolomitic beds within the Permian granite wash section had poor to fair porosity and displayed moderate dry gas fields. These fields increased within the basement, and were interpreted as fracture production. Log analysis indicates that the Permian section is gas

Garden of Socotra - piece from Heaven

saturated. Sedimentological and geochemical analysis of samples and cores from the Samah well indicate that good reservoir beds are present in the Permo-Triassic continental sandstones, in carbonate reef flank and shoal deposits, in secondary

dolomites, and in sandstone interbeds, particularly in the lower Cretaceous section.

The well contained no thick, continuous sequence of potential source beds, although thin shales between 2,240 and 2,290 meters were

determined to be a fairly good source of rocks for oil. It is entirely possible that adequate oil sources can be expected to exist in Cretaceous and possibly Jurassic beds in deeper parts of the basin where their maturity can also be anticipated.

Magical beach, nature untouched

Medicinal & Environmental uses of Bukhur

By: Qazi Shaikh Abbas Borhany
Religious Scholar & Attorney At Law
qazishkborhany@yahoo.com

Bukhoor is the smoke of fragrance created by the burning chips of Agarwood or pieces of mix fragrant ingredients bind by sugar-syrup. When burnt slowly it produces a more concentrated smell. These chips are burnt in Bukhur burners to perfume the surrounding and clothing specifically on occasions of all seasons.

Not only Prophets of Bani Israel, but Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.), and his companions used Bukhur regularly and more specifically, on the day of Jumma.

Through the powerful Prophethood institution this Sunnat was largely promoted firstly in Arabia and afterward in the vast territory of the Muslim world. It is a tradition in the Arabian Peninsula to pass Bukhoor around to guests.

Bukhur preparation originated exclusively from the beautiful region of Yemen. It comes from the highest peak of Yemen, Shibaam, where the famous shrine of the celebrated Sirat-biographer and historian, Syedna Idris Imaduddin is located. According to the valuable source of "Qaratees

al Yamaniyah", during the period of Suleyhi Power, first from Sanaa and later Zeejiblah, a large quantity of costly Bukhur along with other fragrances were regularly presented to the Al Haramyn al Sharefyin, Kabah and Rauzat al Nabawi.

It was the illustrious Queen of Yemen, Arwa Suleyhi, who sent large wooden boxes of Bukhur to Najaf, Karbala and Misar in Ramazan, Muharram and Milaad occasions. When it was burnt the atmosphere of the sacred cities became very pleasant and people knew that the Gift of Yemen reached its destination.

Similarly, while educated Suleyhi Queen Arwa conducted a series of lectures on the Sciences of Islam, behind the curtain, among the erudite scholars of Arabia as well as Indian Subcontinent, the Agarwood burner spread the fragrance, which created a pious atmosphere. Learned students achieved both the benefits simultaneously and spiritual knowledge with precious fragrances.

Recently scholars of the West reported that Bukhur provided the right mood for a person, enabling them to concentrate for long periods at a time. Regular Bukhur users burn it in the morning to set the mood and freshen the atmosphere. It also relaxes and allows people to loosen-up & lighten-up after a meal.

Some 225 years ago, distinguished Intellectual of Yemen, Syedi Abdulqadir bin Qazi Habibullah revealed in his book several benefits of Bukhur:

- Bukhur alters moods to bring peaceful, tranquil, refreshing, uplifting & inspiring feelings
- Bukhur opens the mind to spirituality & diverts from worldly impurities
- Bukhur keeps the mind alert & encourages it in solitude
- Bukhur gives the mind leisure when it is busy
- Age does not affect the efficacy of Bukhur & its habitual use causes no harm
- Burning Bukhur is a soothing & uplifting activity.
- It is a good haemostatic, antiseptic and a good healing agent
- Applied on wounds internally subsides the inflammation of UTI & respiratory tract infections
- It dispels malicious & distressing psychic forces
- Improves memory ("Al Risalatil Nadirah Fil Attur al Fakhirah", Syedi Abdulqadir bin Qazi Habibullah, manuscript, Hiraaz, Yemen).

Romans and Greeks used it in religious rituals. Once transported over a thousand of miles up to the

Mediterranean, before it could be traded on to Europe. Bukhur was also used in vast quantities by the ancient Egyptians. History is rich with accounts of the uses of Bukhur in Biblical literature. It was one of the fragrances presented to the infant Nabi Essa and is always used during religious ceremonies; amongst the People of the Books. After the fall of the Roman Empire the newly established Christian Church adopted several ceremonies -including the ritual burning of Bukhur. It is well recorded that it was the practice of all kings of England once a year to offer Bukhur and Myrrh on the Feast of Epiphany (Jan. 6th). In addition, Bukhur was widely used for important ceremonies, such as the consecration of churches and bishops. The Crusades brought a wide range of Arab and Barber traditions adopted as beneficial. Then of course Spain was ruled for centuries under Muslims, again giving a most magnificent opportunity to spread the Muslim customs. Later on the Ottomans promoted the cultural heritage of Islam in the west through their military expeditions, which signs are still visible today. Each Bukhur formula has a different cleansing, healing or purifying effect. Using Bukhur is a powerful science or art of cultivating positive states of mind. Bukhur is not just a way of

masking unpleasant smells, but a way to refresh your heart and mind. Scent has a deep subconscious impact, bringing back positive memories, or cultivating good thoughts and feelings. The Bukhur recipes are hundreds and even centuries old created from natural plant ingredients. Agarwood is prized as one of the finest aromatic woods burned for Bukhur purposes. There is nothing like Agarwood chips. It grows and is harvested in the wild in Southeast Asia. It is also known as Oud, Eaglewood, Jinko, or Kyara. One ounce of wood chips, chunks or larger pieces lasts a long time.

Loban is a resin from a tree, Styrax benzoin and is an excellent repellent of insects and mosquitoes. Rasulullah(S.A.W.A.) advised fumigation of houses with Loban. Abdullah bin Jafar narrates that Rasulullah (S.A.W.A.) said: "fumigate your houses with Loban." (Baihaqui). It is extracted by making an incision on the stem of the tree; the secreting liquid is collected, dried and sold for usage. Though the trees of Loban are found in India, maximum Loban is imported from Thailand, Malaysia and the Islands of the East Indies. According to the Hadith scholars it has several medicinal benefits. Eminent scholar Dr. M.

Laiq Ali Khan discussed the benefits of the uses of Loban in his research. Some are as follow:

- It relieves constipation, stomach pains & tones up the stomach
- It is useful in diarrhea & is a good digestive
- It heals the wounds & ulcers of the eyes
- It is a good expectorant & decreases the production of phlegm
- It enhances the memory if taken internally
- It heals long standing, bad & putrefied wounds speedily
- The fumigation of Loban is a good insect repellent & can be used as an insecticide
- It tones up the heart, stomach & increases libido
- It is a good appetizer & is carminative
- It relieves colds, cough, antiseptic & fights epidemics
- Its local application relieves the toothache
- Relieves the inflammations of urinary tract & is useful in pulmonary tuberculosis

("Loban, incense, multiple benefits as a medicine", by: Dr. M. Laiq Ali Khan, Director: Shah Faisal Institute of Hadith & Medical Science, Kasganj-U.P.207123).

Nets maintain momentum with win Over Raptors

TORONTO (Reuters) - Vince Carter was loudly booed in his first game back in Toronto and made no new friends scoring 39 points as the New Jersey Nets kept their playoff hopes alive with a 101-90 win over the Raptors on Friday.

Once the city's favorite sports celebrity, Carter became public enemy number one among Toronto sports fans after he demanded a trade earlier in the season and then admitted he never gave 100 percent while playing in the NBA's northern outpost.

Carter was booed during team introductions by a capacity crowd at the Air Canada Center and jeered every time he touched the ball.

If the unwanted attention bothered Carter, it did not show in his performance as he also had nine rebounds and four assists to help keep the Nets in the chase for an Eastern Conference playoff berth with three games to play.

"It was fun to come back and play here," said Carter, who spent six seasons in a Raptors uniform.

"I'm fine, we won."

As usual, the Nets got plenty of production out of their other all-star Jason Kidd, who chipped in with 15 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 22 points as the Nuggets rolled for an 111-102 win over the Memphis Grizzlies, who once again failed to secure a playoff spot.

While the Nuggets head toward the postseason riding a 10-game winning streak, the Grizzlies lost for the third straight time, unable to get the win they need to lock up a postseason berth.

The Grizzlies still need only one win from their three remaining games or a loss by the Minnesota Timberwolves to

reach the postseason.

In Salt Lake City, NBA MVP Kevin Garnett had 22 points as the Timberwolves kept their slim playoff

any chance of reaching the postseason.

In Boston, Paul Pierce hit an 20-foot jump shot with nine seconds to play then made a clutch free throw as the Celtics edged the fading Miami Heat 101-99, to win for the fifth time in six games and inch closer to their first Atlantic Division title in 13 years.

Pierce finished the night with 22 points while Al Jefferson contributed 19 points, including 13 in the fourth quarter.

Shaquille O'Neal, working his way back into shape after missing three games with a stomach virus, had a game-high 34 points and Dwyane Wade added 17.

However, the Eastern Conference champions continue to stumble toward the playoffs, having now lost four straight.

In Phoenix, Amare Stoudemire poured in 24 points and added 17 rebounds in leading the Suns to a 98-91 decision over the Los Angeles Clippers, improving their NBA-best record to 60-19.

Shawn Marion and Joe Johnson each had 20 for the Suns while Steve Nash added 14 points and 11 assists.

In Indianapolis, Allen Iverson continued to lead the Philadelphia's drive toward a playoff spot scoring 43 points, including 16 in the final quarter, as the 76ers held on to beat the Indiana Pacers 90-86.

Iverson, who played 53 minutes a day earlier against Miami, appears determined to get the 76ers into the postseason dishing out seven assists and four rebounds in another tireless effort.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas nailed 33 points and Larry Hughes 31 as the Wizards dumped Cleveland 119-111, damaging the slumping Cavaliers

playoff hopes.

LeBron James continued to do all he could to push the Cavaliers into the postseason, playing all 48 minutes for the third time in five games, scoring a game-high 38 points while snaring six rebounds and dishing out six assists.

But it was not enough as Cleveland lost for the fifth time in seven games, leaving them one game in front of the surging Nets for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

In Auburn Hills, reserve Ronald Dupree had career-high 20 points and Tayshaun Prince added 17 points as the

NBA champion Detroit Pistons continued to build momentum toward the playoffs, crushing the Milwaukee Bucks 99-73 for their ninth straight win.

In Chicago, the Bulls had seven players in double figures, led by 17 point efforts from rookies Ben Gordon and Andres Nocioni, on their way to a 117-77 demolition of the Orlando Magic.

The big win comes a day after learning leading scorer Eddy Curry would be lost for the rest of the season with an irregular heartbeat, sending a message that the Bulls still plan to be

force in the playoffs.

In Oakland, Mike Dunleavy scored 20 points and Baron Davis added 19 as the Golden State Warriors defeated the Portland Trail Blazers 108-88 to snap a three-game losing skid.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 32 points as the Seattle SuperSonics snapped a six-game losing run with a 97-72 win over the New Orleans Hornets to clinch the Northwest Division title.

In Los Angeles, Mike Bibby had 26 points leading the Sacramento Kings to a 115-106 win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

New Jersey Nets guard Vince Carter (R) passes off while being guarded by Toronto Raptors forward Jalen Rose during the first half of the NBA game in Toronto, April 15. Reuters

hopes alive with a 100-84 win over the Jazz.

Wally Szczerbiak had 17 points and eight rebounds and Sam Cassell added 14 for the Grizzlies, who must win all three of their remaining games to have

Ortiz grand slam powers red sox

TORONTO (Reuters) - David Ortiz had a grand slam home run and David Wells pitched seven strong innings in his first Fenway Park start as the Boston Red Sox crushed the Tampa Bay Devil Rays 10-0 in American League action on Friday.

Ortiz's third career grand slam keyed a seven run second inning as the Red Sox seized early control and Wells (1-2) did the rest, holding the Devil Rays to six hits while striking out three for his first home success.

Hideo Nomo (1-1), who had a no-hitter in his first start as a Red Sox player in 2001, took the loss as Boston hitters roughed up their former team mate.

Earlier in the day, Major League Baseball said it would investigate a potentially explosive incident in Thursday's game between the Red Sox and Yankees when New York outfielder Gary Sheffield and Boston fans exchanged words and shoves.

In Baltimore, Bruce Chen pitched a complete game four-hitter and Sammy Sosa and Miguel Tejada had back-to-back homers to key a seven-run sixth inning to spark the Orioles to an 8-1 triumph over the New York Yankees.

In a masterful performance, Chen (1-1) held the Yankees to just four hits and one run while striking out three to record his second career complete game.

Sosa and Tejada combined to bring across five runs in a decisive sixth inning that saw the Orioles send 12 batters to the plate.

In Cleveland, Johan Santana pitched six strong innings to guide the Minnesota Twins to a 3-2 win over the Indians, extending his club record winning streak to 16 games.

Santana (3-0), who has not lost since July 11 last season, gave up two runs on six hits, striking out 10 and walking one.

The Twins had just three hits but made them all count, Terry Tiffiee smacking a two-run single in the second and Matthew LeCroy scoring the go-ahead run with single in the third.

In Arlington, Michael Young and Mark Teixeira both homered and Ryan Drese tossed eight solid innings to lead the Texas Rangers to a 4-2 win over the Toronto Blue Jays.

Drese gave up two runs on six hits, struck out one and did not allow a walk.

Baltimore Orioles starting pitcher Bruce Chen delivers a pitch against the New York Yankees at Camden Yards in Baltimore, Maryland April 15. Reuters

Francisco Cordero pitched the ninth to pickup his fourth save of the young season.

Frank Catalanotto had a home run for the Blue Jays, who lost for the first time in six games.

In Chicago, Jon Garland flirted with a no-hitter through six innings then held on to earn the win as the White Sox downed the Seattle Mariners 6-4.

Dominant going into the seventh inning after retiring his first 19 batters, Garland (2-0) saw his perfect game disappear when he walked Jeremy Reed and then lost his no-hitter when the next batter, Adrian Beltre, singled.

Garland would work his way out of the seventh before turning the game over to Luis Vizcaino, who combined with three other relievers to nail down the win.

In Kansas City, Angel Berroa had an eighth inning two-run homer as the Royals rallied to beat the Detroit Tigers 6-5.

Trailing 5-0 after the first inning the Royals chipped away at the Tigers lead, scoring two runs in the third, one in the fourth and sixth inning to set the stage for Berroa's game-winner off righthander Ugueth Urbina.

After giving up five runs in the first, Kansas starter Jose Lima settled down to pitch six shutout innings but reliever Jaime Cerda (1-1) took credit for the win after pitching the eighth.

In Oakland, Bartolo Colon allowed just two hits in seven innings of work, out-duelling Oakland ace Barry Zito as the Los Angeles Angels dumped the Athletics 6-1.

What is the best syllabus?

Dr. Abdulhameed Shuja'a
Department of English
Faculty of Languages
Sana'a University

"The syllabus is not suitable for my students"; "it is a difficult syllabus to cope with"; "this is a very bad syllabus", such statements are often given by practicing teachers. Obviously, these teachers are unsatisfied with the syllabuses they use. Their reluctant use of the syllabus may make the learning/teaching process end in failure, because the "syllabus" is considered the nucleus, as it were, of the teaching/learning process.

In a broad sense, the term "syllabus" also encompasses "the teaching materials", "the textbook", or "the course-book" that the teacher makes use of to teach the target language in the classroom.

In order to deal with any syllabus, it is important that we understand its theoretical underpinnings and the circumstances in which the syllabus was first developed. This kind of understanding certainly helps us to use the syllabus at hand in a more conscious, informed and efficient way.

Let us, then, go quickly through the kinds of syllabuses that are available in literature. Broadly speaking, syllabuses are divided into two main types: Product-oriented and process-oriented syllabuses.

1. Product-oriented syllabuses

As the name suggests, a product-oriented syllabus is concerned with the ends and objectives, which the learner

has to achieve by the end of the language program. In other words, it is objective or ends-oriented. There are two kinds of syllabuses which are product-oriented: grammatical/structural syllabus and functional/notional syllabus.

Grammatical/structural syllabus

This syllabus teaches the target language in terms of grammatical forms and structures that are believed to enable the learner to use the language in communicative situations outside the classroom. The following are examples of this kind of syllabus:

This is a book / penciletc.
That is a bag / penetc.
These are books / pencilsetc.
Those are bags / pensetc.
Is this? Yes, it is.
Is that? No, it isn't.

The criteria of selecting the items of a grammatical/structural syllabus are frequency of the items, their simplicity, learnability and teachability.

Functional/notional syllabus

The basic units of this type of syllabus are language functions and notions. Whereas 'functions' refer to the purpose of using language, 'notions' refer to conceptual meanings. Both functions and notions are used to present the target language to the learner. Therefore, functional/notional syllabuses are based on what people want to do through language. Examples of 'functions and notions' are given below:

Functions	Notions
introducing	duration
greeting	frequency
agreeing	time

2. Process-oriented syllabuses

Unlike product-oriented syllabuses, process-oriented syllabuses are not governed by the goals or ends of instruction. Rather, they focus on the process of instruction itself, i.e., on the learning experiences that the learner goes through. Process-oriented syllabuses shifted the concern of teaching from 'content' into 'process' of learning and 'procedures' of teaching. They appeared in order to overcome the limitations reported about product-oriented syllabuses. These kinds of syllabuses are further subdivided into procedural syllabuses (task-based) and process syllabuses (negotiated).

Procedural syllabuses

The focus of procedural syllabuses is 'task'. That is, language is taught through tasks, which cover 'form' and 'meaning'. The content of a procedural syllabus is a variety of tasks that the learner can do using the target language. Examples of such tasks are:

- Giving directions (using a tourist guide)
- Asking people for information
- Drawing pictures based on oral instructions

Negotiated syllabus

A negotiated syllabus, on the other hand, is developed and created through negotiations between the teacher and the learner during the course of study. Consequently, such kind of a syllabus may end up being any type of the above-mentioned syllabuses, depending on the learner's goals and objectives.

The rationale behind this type of syllabus is influenced by four important strands:

1. Humanistic methodologies for ESL

environment in North America.

2. Needs analysis as the basis for a notional or communicative syllabus.

3. Research in the individualization and autonomy of the learner.

4. Investigations into the nature of learner strategies in the language learning process.

However, to implement a negotiated syllabus is not an easy job. It is a task, which is beset with difficulties due to the following factors:

- a. Cultural differences among the learners.
- b. Diversity of learning strategies.
- c. Shortage or lack of competent teachers.
- d. A considerable amount of time is needed.
- e. Every group of learners would require a new material.
- f. A training program is needed to carry out the negotiation process.

Conclusion

Any syllabus, when it first appears, is a response to a particular need in a particular place, at a particular point of time. It is so, because the common objective of all types of syllabuses is to provide the learner with language input that would equip him/her with necessary skills to use the target language outside the classroom.

Therefore, a syllabus which fully meets the learner's needs, wants, desires, aspirations and expectations is most welcome, no matter what label it carries or the approach of language or theory of learning it is based on. If the syllabus concerned satisfies the learner and makes him/her use the target language effectively and communicatively, then we can confidently state that it is the best for the learner.

The Pioneers: a welcome outlet of creative upsurge

The English department, Faculty of Education, Sana'a University deserve warm adulations on their brilliant efforts to bring out **The Pioneers**, crystallization of their collective creative endeavor. Their credo is succinctly captured in their dictum: "Success pioneers our way, we pioneer future". In the fitness of things their battle cry "Be active, productive, smart... Be succinctly a pioneer" is not only aphoristic, it aptly reflects the essence of their vision which promises to herald a new revolution, justifying them as distinctive harbingers of a tradition of excellence.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the glittering galaxy of the

Editorial Staff: Emad Al-Qadasi, Abdullah Shawqi, Osama Ahmed Sultan, Jamal Al-Najjar, Abdulrab As-Samawi, Ashwaq Al-Mesbahi, Elaf Al-Bahloli, Haihat Saeed, Bushra Al-Homaidi, Ameera Al-Qasooos on successfully accomplishing a great job.

"The pioneers" may be a small step for them, but it has the potential of being the glorious symbol of a new generation, a giant leap into future which belongs to the vibrant and dynamic youth. The colorful bouquet of illuminating articles are an unmistakable emblem of the promising future that lies ahead of them.

We wish the pioneers behind **The Pioneers** all success and a great future.

—Dr. Ramakanta Sahu

"Man" in Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"

By Dr. Bashar GHAZI ASKAR
Basharaskar90@hotmail.com

Man sometimes feels senseless, absurd, and purposeless. This feeling of anguish is due to the psychological, social, cultural and economic situations that man finds himself in. According to Beckett, man is defeated, his hopes and promises are shattered due to an inevitable devaluation of ideas, and loss of purity of purposes.

According to Beckett's philosophy embedded in the Theatre of the Absurd, man feels strange and lacks hope for the future. Life presents a formidable challenge to all his dreams and hopes. So he feels a sense of utter isolation and alienation. There is no sense or taste in life. It seems that all men are doomed to die in sheer desperation as the social and personal values are continually degraded, leaving man in a state of misery, perplexity and loss of identity.

One naturally feels miserable in this world of agony, pains, suffering and destruction. Is man stripped off of all his morals and traditions? Is he stripped off his social position? All these are questions that arise now and then in our minds suggesting to us that we are living in a dreadful world, a world of no norms

or principles. Beckett in this context remarks: "Man is alone thrown into a meaningless world; a closed world; he is chained to the process of waiting. He is tied to the hope of delivery by something outside the self, tied to the hope of arrival of Godot, who will apparently change his being."

The tramps on the unknown road waiting under a bare tree in Beckett's play represent hopelessness of their own waiting for the unknown hope or the unknown miracle. In the waiting there is a dramatic tension and a suspense of those tramps just passing time and talking senselessly. In reality man is in the process of waiting and hoping for something new to enter to his life. Man is surrounded with areas of impenetrable darkness. Man lives this spiritual bankruptcy which represents the lack of any sustainable meaning of life.

The two tramps are unknown, they come from nowhere and have nowhere to go. The only thing that keeps them in touch is that they receive messages through a little boy.

The boy promises that Godot, hope, future or tomorrow may come to help and support. Estragon and Vladimir are merely alive, but no longer living in a world. To them the world is empty. They do nothing. They wish to go on living but their lives have become pointless. Estragon and Vladimir remark: "Therefore we must be waiting for something."

A letter to the teachers of English: 82

Curriculum revision: some lessons to learn (1)

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

Dear Fellow teachers,

This and a few letters following this are addressed to my colleagues teaching in the Universities, as they focus on some issues related to the teaching of English in the universities. This doesn't mean that my teacher friends in schools will not find them useful. The teaching of English in the universities and the teaching of English in schools should complement each other and the biggest problem in the education system of this country is the lack of coordination between the two levels of teaching. This is what I have highlighted in my last few letters on Language Teacher Education and Training.

There have been frequent noises against the present English curriculums used in the Faculties of Arts and the Faculties of Education in this country; many students feel the inadequacy of these curriculums. I have made suggestions to the Faculty of Education curriculum in my earlier letters and I hope they reach the right people and right actions are taken to modify the curriculum.

Recently, I heard about the revision made to the Faculty of Arts curriculum in one of the Yemeni universities. These revisions have been made, I understand, by a committee of experts some of whom from abroad. The revised curriculum, however, does not fulfill the needs of the learners, I am afraid. This is what I gathered from the teachers teaching the curriculum and the students 'suffering' the curriculum. Sometimes what we do with goodwill misfires because we do not take into consideration all the factors involved in teaching English in an institution; this revision seems to me an example of this. I feel that teachers involved in the teaching of English in the universities have

some lessons to learn from this revision.

A curriculum should necessarily reflect the needs of the learners. The needs of Yemeni learners of English are very simple and pragmatic; majority of them (more than 90% of the learners) need English to find lucrative jobs and those who go for higher studies or go abroad to work or get into diplomatic services constitute only a minority (10% of the population). Any curriculum revision, to be useful, should be able to achieve a balance that will help the majority without frustrating the minority; unfortunately, the revision I am talking about has erred on this count, I'm afraid. I am in no way belittling the expertise of the people involved in the revision; I am only worried that the revised curriculum is going to be a bigger burden to the students than the old one, pushing them from the frying pan to the fire, as the proverb says.

Though I haven't read the entire curriculum fully, the initial reactions from the teachers and the students make me feel that it is a 'bewildering' curriculum. The earlier curriculum was considered to be overloaded with linguistics and literature courses, which are not very useful to the learners to make them employable; some of us suggested that there could be more skill courses such as reading, writing, study skills and job-oriented courses such as English for tourism industry, hotel industry, office management etc, so that the graduates pass out with skills and language that make them employable. The revised one, I hear, has courses that are far-removed from the needs of the learners. I wonder how the courses such as Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Ideational politics of Literature, Advanced Literary Criticism (some of the courses in the revised curriculum) are going to be useful to the majority of the students.

I will continue this discussion in the next letter.

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

Sports events at the Faculty of Education, Mahweet

Annual Inter-class games events were held under the auspices of the English department for the session 2004-2005

Volleyball

Champions (Level 4)

1. Bassim Mohammed Al-Saqir (Captain)
2. Radhi Yahya Al-Radhi
3. Abubakr Al-Salamy
4. Adel Ali Saleh Dejrjan
5. Mohammed Hassan Hamza
6. Nasser Al-Samla
7. Moffaq Al-Nossaif

3. Jalal Ahmed Abdullah
4. Mohammed Yahya Al-Yafeem
5. Hassan Al-faqeeh
6. Mohammed Ali Abdulraheem
7. Fuad Mohammed
8. Anwar Khalid
9. Saddam Hussain Al-Ali
10. Abdulmalik Shawqi
11. Omar Ali Rajeh
12. Wasem Al-Thifani

Chess Champions (Boys)

1. Khalid Hassan Al-Hamaty - Level 3

Champions (Girls)

Bushra Al-Ali - Level 1

Dr. Ramakanta Sahu, Coordinator

Poetry Corner

Butterfly dreams

I dreamt a dream of butterflies
That flittered and fluttered
And filled the blue skies
I tell you, my friend,
It was a sight for sore eyes!

I knew it was special,
Right from the start!
I knew that it cared,
I knew it had a heart!!

Just then I noticed
One stood out from the rest;
This one little butterfly
Had me completely impressed!

Tears of joy I began to cry,
For I knew something else
'Bout this sweet butterfly...

It did flips and tricks,
And what seemed to be
A little butterfly show-
Just especially for me!

For what it showed me
Was a love stong and true...
What it showed me, my dear,
Was my friendship with YOU!

By Nabeel Salah
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Ebhar Foundation, Sanaa

O My home

In this empty space
My heart is hardly
breathing...
Love and warmth
Days full of joy and
happiness
Have run away from me,
Homelessness is killing me
O my departing love,
O my home!
Close not the door of the
horizon

Let a ray of light,
A ray of hope cover all these
dark paths
You have walked out leaving
me desperate,
A body without a soul.
You see, the sea you have
navigated through,
It is me,
It's my tears...
You see, the wind you wish it
to blow,
It is me,

It is my sights...
You see, these two stars
gaze at you from heaven,
It is me...
It is the pair of my sleepless
eyes...
O my departing love,
O my home!
When is the retreat?
Loneliness is a heavy weight!
Longer I can't wait!

Ghada Al-Haraze
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An exhibition of artistic talents

By NADIA AL-SAKKAF REPORTS:

“I never knew this country had so much talent in photography!” Mr. Qaid Radfan, general manager of the Yemen Times exclaimed with delight about the Yemen Times best photo contest. Indeed thousands of photos streamed from around the republic during the last few months participating in the photo contest, all in heart praying that they would be the one landing up with the number 1 prize of a brand new car.

Nasri al-Sakkaf is the in-charge of the contest, receiving the photos during the last few months, arranging them according to classifications and giving each a unique number. About the mechanism of selecting the winners he says:

ners he says:

“It's simple, you can say it is from the public, for the public and by the public. We announced the categories of the photos to be one of six; natural scene, funny, children, rare, general and others. A person can have only one picture per category and the coupons are available in the Yemen Times and could be photocopied. The photographs have to be original and the Yemen Times maintains the right to use the photos any time preserving the copyrights of the photo taker among other conditions and requirements. Eventually we narrowed the choice of more than 4000 photos to only two hundred of which only two hundred and thirty four were nominated to win the 25 in-kind prizes including electric goods, home equipments...etc and of course the first

Photo from the contest

prize. There were other photos that were good and were displayed but unfortunately we could not display all the 4000 photos because of space problems, so we chose the best. The less professional ones were not displayed. The choice of the winning photos will be completely left to the public during two open days for the voting. These votes cater to 60% of the evaluation and then we have a professional committee who provide the recommendations between these votes which is counted as the 40% of the value of the votes. Adding the two percentages we find our winners. This way if a person has lobbied to get many people to vote for his photo there is still space for professional evaluation. For example if a photo got the number one votes, it's value is sixty percent, and if there is a photo that came fourth in voting it's percentage for example is only 40%, if in case the photo that received the first place in voting was not that much appreciated by the professional committee then it gets of the 40% only 5% or so, and if the one in the fourth position was really good by professional standards 40% or less and so this one wins. This way we cater for those who are from the governorates for example or those who did not get many supporters in the lobbying process.”

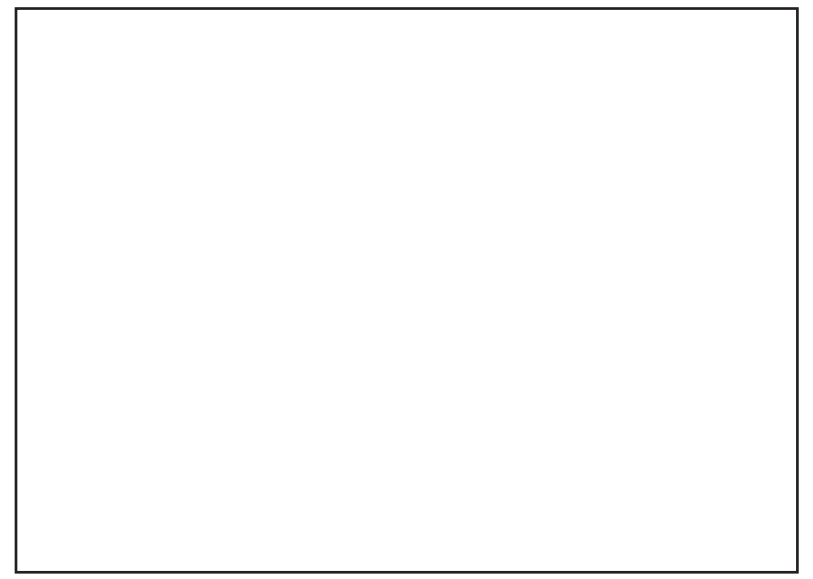
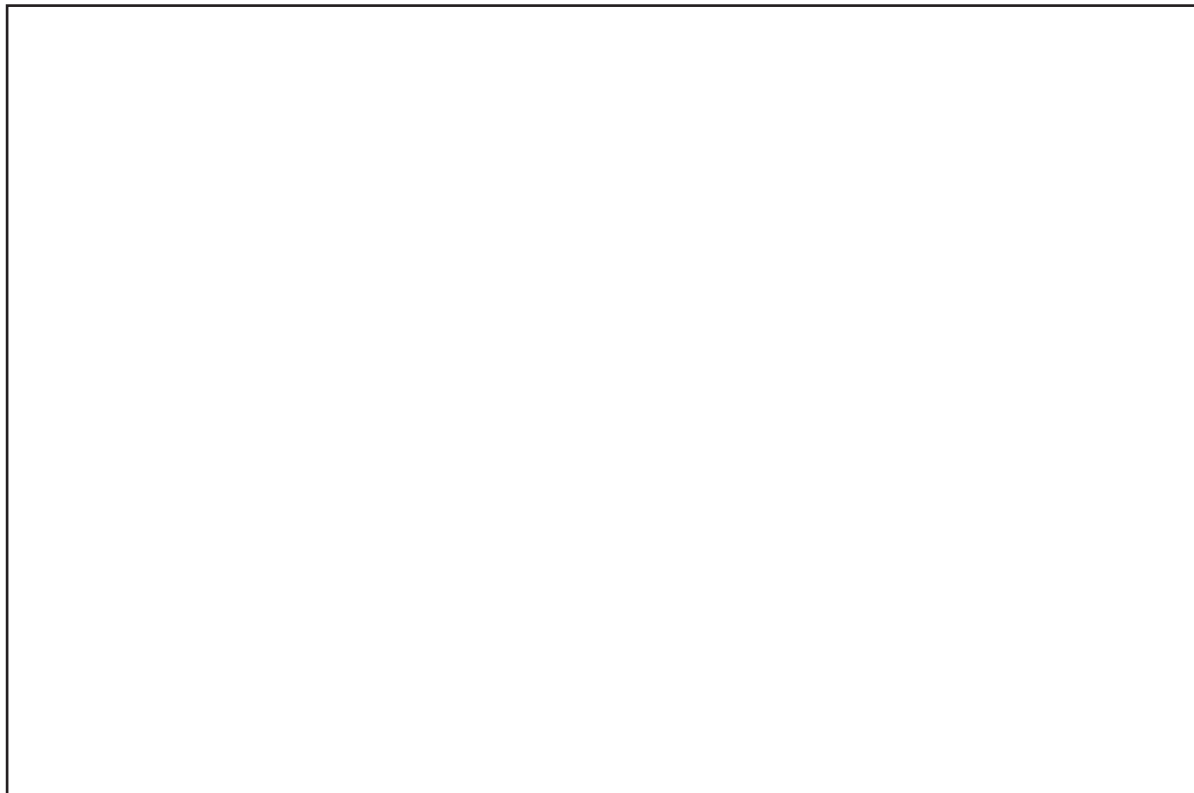
More than 1200 visitors came the first day on Thursday the 14th, and more than 2000 on Friday the 15th April. It seems that there is a crowd for photography in this city. We asked some of the visitors about their impressions and what they aspired from the exhibition.

Mr. Mohammed al Nourah a pilot said that he liked the exhibition and was most impressed with the natural photography in Yemen, while Main Mohammed al Qazali who is an accountant praised the organisation and good order in which the exhibition was conducted and was happy with the variety of photos to enjoy. Abdul Nasir a-Junaid an employee at al-

Huda Supermarket has commented by saying: “I participated with more than 3 photos and I came to see if any of mine were selected. Fortunately one was selected and I hope people vote for it. It's a beautiful exhibition and I am very excited about the number of extraordinary photos. I am beginning to think that there is so much to see in Yemen and that there is so much talent. Thanks to Yemen Times for this event and I wish the newspaper all the success.” A modern arts designer Ms. Lamia Abdullah al-Kibsi was there among the visitors and thought the photos to be expressive. “I found out that there are so many beautiful photos and I enjoyed looking around.” She said.

Continued on page 11.

Photo from the contest



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