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Inside: Ali said: "I don't want to work on the streets like my brother" **P5** Getting serious on Arab Unity **P8** Horizons for development of fish investments **P10** Acupressure **P12**

Following assaults on journalists

Amnesty International calls for journalist's protection

By YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a recent communiqué, last Friday, Amnesty International expressed concern over the continued harassments of journalists in Yemen, especially those who criticize government policy. The communiqué added that they are still subjected to offenses including arrest, beating and the confiscation of private property including documents and computers.

The communiqué came in the context of a number of threats free speech in the media such as the recent detention of journalist Jamal Amir, chief editor of Alwasat news paper on the 23rd of August. Amir was abducted, taken to an unknown place, beaten and threatened with death. The incident came after his newspaper published articles criticizing government officials and accusing them of corruption.

Amnesty was also concerned by the harassment of journalist Ahmed Alhaj of the associated press, whose office was ransacked by security forces. They took away a number of files, a computer and arrested the office guard who is a Somali national. It is presumed that he is still in



Sami Ghalib Jamal Amer

detention in Sana'a.

The communiqué also mentioned the case of journalist Sami Ghalib, Chief editor of Alnida newspaper whose files and computers of the newspaper were also confiscated by security forces who entered his offices.

The communiqué criticized the cancellation of the license of women Journalists without borders, following their establishment of reports on the July 20 demonstrations in which a number of people died.

In its communiqué, the International human rights organization called on the

Yemeni Government to put an end to the harassments and violations of person and property. They demanded the observation of journalists rights according to article 19 of the International Charter for political and civil rights, which Yemen is party to.

Amnesty asked the Yemeni government to start an immediate independent investigation.

All this is occurring in an apparent wave of media repression. A number of armed people abducted journalist Jamal Amir last Tuesday and took him to an unknown destination. He was beaten and threatened with death if he published any criticism or corruption accusations of government officials. The Ministry of Interior pledged to find offenders and bring them to justice.

In a connected incident, the belongings of the Associated Press office, Alnida independent newspaper offices and the offices of A.P.T.N. Television were entered and violated.

In a special release to Yemen Times Ahmed Alhaj, Correspondent and manager of P.A.P.T.N TV, said that he it was not surprised that his office was disturbed and stolen, following the series offences and threats they received last month. He said that 2 mackintosh computers costing \$3500 were stolen, in addition to video cameras, a recorder and a fax machine. All the documents in the office were badly disturbed.

Alnida newspaper, which is published in the Associate Press building, lost its layout and design computer which was stolen, together with the whole newspaper's archive.

Women Journalists without border also condemned creating another parallel organization to their own organization. Journalist Twakl Karman assured that their organization was a legal one, because it was declared through media in March 2005 and the Ministry of Social affairs welcomed it. Observers think that the real reason for the sufferings of the organization is its criticism to government policies.

Due to all these developments the Journalists Syndicate members staged a sitting in the Syndicate's building last

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Thursday. A council for consolidation with the journalists was formed for coordination with the Governmental and non governmental organizations to follow up freedom cases and the harassments against them.

Reliable sources in the Ministry of Interior said that their ministry is looking for the offenders to bring them to account.

The Arab Journalists Union and the Freedom Committee condemned on Thursday August 25 the kidnaping of the Yemeni Journalist Jamal Amer who chairs the Yemeni paper of al-Wasat by

an armed group.

The union called in a statement upon Yemeni authorities to arrest the gang that kidnapped the journalist and to divulge the circumstances surrounding the incident. Secretary General of the Union Salahuddin Hafez voiced solidarity with the Yemeni journalist and the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate to defend journalism freedom and guarantee journalists' safety.

The text of the statement of the Amnesty International Committee in page 3

Due to absence of justice, economic deterioration and corruption

Crime rate runs high in Yemen

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A- Criminology is a field of study which attempts to understand the social causes of crime, the types of crimes committed, their incidence and distribution. Crime varies according to context and circumstance, but are often related to socio-economic potential, unemployment and identity. In the last half decade the crime rate in Yemen has risen significantly.

Reports recently released by the Ministry of Interior revealed that 22,575 crimes were committed in 2004, with an increase of 3895 crimes compared to 2003. Big crimes including willful killing



Gun merchandise is a boom in Yemen despite the government efforts to downsize the illegal business. Yemen Times photo by Salah Abdullah

constitute 70% of the total amount of crimes, according to the report.

Scores confirm that crime rate differ from one governorate to another, and the capital city of Sana'a tops the list of Yemeni governorates with 37% of the overall crime rate, followed by Aden with 8%. The Governorate of Ibb stood third in the list with 7%, Taiz fourth with 5% and Hajjah fifth with 4%. Raima, the

newly announced governorate in the country came last in the list with a 1% crime rate.

The reports showed that the ten governorates: Ibb, Taiz, Dhamar, the Capital Secretariat, Amran, Sana'a, al-Beidha, Hajjah, Sa'ada and Hodeida witnessed the most flagrant crimes such as willful killing, car robbery and house burglary.

Continued on page 3

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Marginalized people request President to supervise compensations

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A- Yemenis of African origin living in shelters and affected by torrents in 45meter Street appealed to President Saleh last week to supervise compensation approved by governmental committees to be granted to them in return for using the place as a watercourse for disposing rainwater.

Eng. Al-Sabri, a government employee responsible for supervising work at the area said in a statement to the Yemen Times that all the marginalized inhabitants were compensated in response to directives of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who ordered that people would be compensated with 50 thousand rials while shelter owners should be given houses in Sa'awan.

"We have become homeless after the Municipality tractors demolished our simple shelters," Mohammad's 20-member family who live under a tree without any piece of furniture shouted. "There is no objectivity and we have

no connections in the government and so what influence can we hope for when the government writes reports on compensations."

In Yemen it is a norm to find marginalized people of an African origin living randomly in places, which are not convenient for housing. They live in thatch-made huts that can not resist torrential rains and storms.

By the advent of 2005, a shelter for the marginalized people in Esser Zone was set ablaze compelling hundreds of families to evacuate the place. Realizing the situation, the authorities started to construct houses for this category in Sa'awan to northeast of the capital in return for leaving the place to be used as a street.

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To boost utilizing renewable energy sources GAEP holds workshop on weather changes

BY NAZH ABDULLAH
ADEN BUREAU

ADEN- The General Authority for Environmental Protection (GAEP), Aden Branch staged last Tuesday a workshop on weather changes and strategies for dealing with inevitable changes.

The workshop was attended by Ahmad al-Dhla'e, Assistant Deputy Governor of Aden, Dr. Jamal al-Lawzi, Director General of the GAEP and a number of officials at the governorate and the Environment Protection Council.

Ahmad al-Dhla'e delivered a speech at the event in which he urged participants to apply what they learned to real situations.

For his part, Anwar Abdulaziz, General Manager of the Weather

Changes Adaptation Program presented a paper in which he reviewed the general goals of the program and the weather survey results and their effects on the environment.

The paper presented by Abdulaziz affirms what many have believed for years, that the industrial use of fossil fuels which release carbon dioxide and methane, contribute to changes in weather and mean temperature by contributing to the greenhouse effect.

Other papers were presented on sustainable use of water and agriculture and protecting the coastal areas from weather changes. After multi-topic discussions, participants stressed on utilizing the solar energy available in Yemen, particularly in the local areas that lacks electricity and the wind energy that can be utilized in the coastal areas, islands, elevations and mountains.

A question of unfair treatment

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen Times has received a message addressed to the people, government, diplomatic missions, human right organizations and United Nation agencies in the Republic of Yemen.

Signed by Ethiopian Civilian refugees, the letter is a description of the difficult circum-

stances of their settlement in Yemen. In their account, both civilian and navy refugees escaped in a boat from the present regime to Yemen in May 1991. Their situation has been deteriorating due to economic hardship and associated problems, and they have repeatedly applied to UNCHR and other embassies for resettlement to another country.

In 2004, the government of the United States heard the Ethiopian application for asylum and a process to resettle those people in the US began..



Their letter contained this revelation, and they were interviewed by United State delegation on July 10. They underwent medical tests waiting for the final departure from Yemen. However, only the civilian refugees have been denied resettlement while the entire navy and other civilians who came later were accepted. UNCHR gave no reason to them. Therefore, they wrote this message wondering about the unfair treatment, requesting the immediate action by all concerned bodies to find a solution for the civilian refugees who have been suffering for 14 years.

In the new government job ladder YR 20 thousand approved as lowest salary

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A- The Yemeni Government put an end on Saturday August 27 to the sharp controversy between public sector employees and the public by issuing its ultimate decision to raise to YR20 thousand the lowest potential salary for a civil servant.

The increase in salaries will be counted from the beginning of July and will be delivered to employees at the end of September with a retroactive effect. By this the government

approved the table of wages and salaries in the first phase of implementing the wages, salaries and jobs strategy.

The government's hesitation between raising the lowest salary at the job ladder to 20 thousand rials and then reducing it to 15,500 rials after cutting fuel subsidies aroused public uproar.

Hamoud al-Sofi Minister of Civil Service and Insurances denied that the government was in confusion and the strategy's being ambiguous is not unusual, adding that regulations and procedures associating with job hierar-

chy are being implemented at different government institutions.

According to the strategy, 7200 rials is the annual allowance of the President, 6400 rials is the Vice President's and 5600 rials is the annual allowance assigned for the Prime Minister.

Pleasant tasks and duties should be carried out before applying the strategy such as dismissal of falsely employed people, fraudulent jobs and reforming disorders at the Ministry of Civil Service, al-Sofi said in a press conference on the wages, salaries and jobs strategy.

National Coalition sheds light on women politicians

SANA'A- The National Voluntary Coalition was held last Wednesday at the Culture House with the aim of increasing the participation of women in general elections. The event was staged as part of the States' Costumes and National Identity Components Exhibition.

At the meeting, Dr. Rawfah Hassan talked about contribution of Yemeni women politicians to the nations history, pointing out that awareness of this

fact was rare.

Dr. Afaf al-Haimi delivered a lecture on the status of Yemeni women politicians confirming that Yemen is home to culture of extravagant consumption, particularly among high-class women. In addition there is the astonishing emergence of new products in several markets including make-ups and perfumes.

She remarked on the regional dress of the various Yemeni territories and

how Sana'ani dress is perceived to play an important role in the northern parts of the country.

Women having political positions and prestigious status usually wear a distinctive type of dress including a jacket, fota and headscarf.

Participants in the coalition reviewed the mechanism of coordination and efforts stepped up for organizing dialogue and interactions between women organizations. They also

Starting in September on Radio Aden Learn German From the Radio

Starting from September, Radio Aden will offer a program of daily German language courses. The courses, entitled "German- why not?" are broadcast in cooperation with Deutsche Welle Radio and German Embassy in Sana'a.

The language of teaching is Arabic. The courses start from scratch and gradually work-up to a comprehensive

knowledge of spoken German.

"With over 100 million native speakers, German is the most widely spoken language in Europe", says Hendrik Selle, Cultural Attaché at the German Embassy. "This is why some knowledge of German is an asset for the career of any young Yemeni, especially considering Germany's role as the world's top exporting nation and as one

of Yemen's most important development partners."

This program is also designed to target the 3,000 strong group of Yemenis who studied or received training in Germany and who often lack opportunities to practice their German. Lessons will be broadcast on Radio Aden and the Satellite Channel daily except Fridays from 8:45 to 9 p.m.

reviewed the latest developments in Yemeni life with respect to promoting the status of Yemeni women.

The participants expressed solidarity with Women Journalists Without Borders Organization and agreed to hold an expanded meeting on women organizations at the National Women Committee. The main objective of the meeting is to boost women's participation in general elections.

Political security prisoners attempt to break doors

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

SANA'A- Al-Nida Weekly mentioned last Wednesday that quarrels and conflicts took place inside the political security detention centre when prisoners attempted to break doors and windows of the building. According to the newspaper, four guards were injured in the inci-

dent.

Sources stated that it is mere folly for prisoners to escape from the prison which is constructed according to modern standards and consists of underground cells surrounded by rigid iron doors.

The newspaper did not give a mention of the penal procedures taken against

prisoners, however, other reliable sources said prisoners were not allowed to meet visitors last Wednesday and Thursday.

Hundreds of people are detained at the political security organization, 800 of whom over Sa'ad events and tens are jailed for their alleged links to al-Qaida Network.

A delegation of NSIFT visited Yemen

AMEL AL-ARIQI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A delegation of the National Social Investment Fund of Tajikistan NSIFT visited Yemen between 18 August-24 August 2005 with the aim of discussing future initiatives and knowledge sharing.

Mr. Zardov Sh., executive director of NSIFT said that the Yemeni fund was chosen because of its reputation and credentials with donor nations and NGO's. "There are a lot of common issues between our fund and the SFD. The problems that you face in your country regarding water services, education and health issues are similar to those we face in our country" Mr. Zardov Sh dilated. "I believe that exchange visits and experiences is very



important to find out new methods and strategies to implement development projects that improve peoples lives" he added.

Worth mentioning, the members of

the delegation visited some projects which are supported by the SFD in Haja, Amran, and the municipality. The members of the delegation praised the projects water and education sectors.

AP and Nida Weekly offices robbed

SANA'A- Director of the Associated Press office in Sana'a Ahmad al-Haj said he was shocked on Thursday morning when unknown individuals raided his office and stole documents, computers and other equipment. Al-Haj, who is also

the correspondent of the A.P.T.N, told al-Sahwa.net on Friday that police are investigating the incident. On the other hand, editor of al-Nida weekly Sami Ghalib said in a statement to al-Sahwa.net that the paper, located on the

same building, was attacked and their equipment and archived documents were robbed. Ghalib said he would raise a complaint to the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate to stand by him and prosecute the perpetrators.

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:

International Human Rights organizations criticized the government for the oppressions that the journalists faced in the few past weeks. Do you expect that there would be unbiased investigation on this matter?

Last edition's question:

A number of Journalists and newspapers are now standing trial and suffering offenses. Do you think that this is a setback to democracy in Yemen?

Yes	92%
I don't know	5%
No	3%

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



Job Vacancies

The Embassy of the United States of America announces for immediate job openings within its organization.

"Fraud Analyst"

The position is located in the Consular Section, American Embassy, under the direct supervision of the American Fraud Prevention Unit supervisor and overall supervision of the Consular Officer Chief/Anti-fraud Officer. The incumbent will identify fraud, migration patterns and potential threats to U.S. border security posed by consular fraud/misfeasance; perform comprehensive assessment/investigation of fraud cases in all consular services and provide consular officers with recommendations in adjudicative matters and highly sensitive cases; independently perform field investigations and health facility inspections; devise and evaluate effective investigative procedures; establish/maintain high-level host-government contacts; perform investigations for DHS and for other law enforcement agencies; develop fraud profiles and compile evidence for use in U.S. court cases; assist the FPU Supervisor in administering the DNA testing program; independently respond to telephonic/electronic inquiries; research, draft and disseminate memoranda and other information pertaining to U.S./Yemeni law and fraud in Yemeni cases; perform other investigative/administrative tasks and provide assistance in sensitive ACS cases as instructed by the Consul/FPM/FPU Supervisor.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Bachelor's degree in any of a number of fields of study, such as teaching, law, science, information technology, communications, public relations, management, etc., that require extensive analysis, research, writing, prioritization, problem-solving and creative thinking. Four years of consular experience can replace the job requirements.

Prior Work Experience: 3-5 years of progressively responsible experience in security/investigative work or in consular work.

Language Proficiency: Level IV English and Arabic.

Knowledge: Familiarity with US and host-government immigration, citizenship and civil status laws, procedures and documents, DNA parentage testing standards, US health regulations, Islamic law, local traditions, customs and tribal code and Yemeni migration history.

Skills & Abilities: Familiarity with all of Microsoft operating systems and use of the Internet. Investigative techniques are required.

Grade/Salary: * EFM/MOH/Non Ordinarily Resident: FP-06 (to be confirmed by Washington)

* Ordinarily Resident: FSN-08

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The position is located in the Facility and Maintenance Section, American Embassy, under the immediate supervision of the maintenance foreman and the general supervision of the Facility and Maintenance Manager. This position reports directly to the maintenance foreman and is responsible for the general cleaning and maintenance of Embassy complex's building, interiors and exterior. This position calls for dusting, sweeping, removal of trash, vacuuming, mopping of floors, washing of window interiors and exteriors, cleaning of bathrooms and water closets, and polishing of furniture and floors. May also be used to assist in residential cleaning. Working on a prescribed schedule also included is shampooing of carpets and furniture, other duties as assigned by the Supervisor.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Completion of elementary school.

Prior Work Experience: One year prior janitorial experience is required.

Language Proficiency: Level I English ability (rudimentary) is all that is required.

Knowledge: Working alone or as member of a janitor crew, must be able to perform a particular cleaning assignment or a range of janitorial duties.

Skills & Abilities: Ability to properly use cleaning supplies and equipment.

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

*Ordinarily Resident: FSN-1

How to apply: Interested applicants should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualification requirements of the position as listed above and contact the Embassy Human Resources, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, Sanaa. Tel: 755-2050 & Fax No. 303-182, no later than September 11, 2005.

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

Winds of change and NGOs

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The winds of change blowing across the region nowadays require that we establish new systems that respect human rights and democracy and adopt policies that result in social justice. This is more needed now than ever as the issue of democratic and political reform in the area has drawn a considerable attention from the world in the form of some initiatives such as Group Eight's in 2004.

Notwithstanding much reservation about the hidden reasons behind the international initiatives proposed for the Arab World, it is notable that they comprise a number of the most important reformative demands set forth by the programs of reformists, political movements and civil-rights organizations in the Arab World. They have made the proverbially indifferent Arab governments to think of the public opinion and of the necessity to make reforms in their respective countries.

Reform scenarios:

In spite of the international initiatives, the peoples in the Arab World are in a dilemma. As they question the motives and seriousness of international reform propositions, they also realize that their governments are not in favor of reform because that would endanger the absolute power they enjoy and by virtue of which they dispose things as they like. Even the supervisory authorities have not enough

authorization to embark on the process of real reformation.

Being among the first countries in the area to embrace the notion of reform, Yemen may consider the things it has achieved and plans to achieve in this realm. Muhyi al-Din al-Dhabi, Senior Deputy of Foreign Affairs Ministry, said that the current democratic successes has deserved respect and recognition from the international community. In the "Civil Community's Role in Current Democratic Transformations" symposium, al-Dhabi said that part of the recognition is manifested in allowing Yemen besides Turkey and Italy to sponsor the "Democracy Assistance Dialogue" (DAD) Program. In the trilateral dialogue, Yemen suggested inviting NGOs to improve our joint initiative and promote democracy in the countries of the region. Yemen has selected the Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC) as a civil community organization to implement the mutual outlook.

The question that poses itself is whether the HRITC will ever be able to create a mechanism for government-NGOs dialogue in Yemen and theorize for other regional countries.

Izzadin Ali Sa'eed, HRITC Director, told us that the project which the HRITC is assigned to implement focuses on encouraging the participation of the NGOs and will develop a future vision regarding political and economic reform in the region.

According to him, the HRITC, along with other NGOs, will act on different levels:

- Promoting dialogue among civil community members in every Arab country concerned. The recent symposium was part of this effort.

- Promoting dialogue among civil community members, official institutions, and parliamentary and consultative council representatives in each Arab country concerned.
- Adoption of a harmonized and organized communication strategy on the regional level.

Statistics show that the number of NGOs in Yemen until June, 2005, came to 4830 including 98 working in the human rights sector. The number of woman organizations reaches 325. However, politically oriented organizations do not play the role they are supposed to play. They do not, for example, provide visions and thoughts to enrich the process of reform. Such organizations in Yemen have the custom of "courting the authority." They sometimes adopt suggestions just to make certain profits or get some gains from the authority.

Having heard about the international financing for reform efforts, it is expected that such NGOs will rush to organize symposiums and workshops without performing anything in reality or creating a forceful public opinion to pressure the powers that be to make real and lasting change.

Environment Mission spots areas suffering from water shortage

TAIZ, An Environment Ministry Mission last week toured the governorates of Taiz, Ibb and Aden in an attempt to assess moontastic access to drinking water and the presence of sanitary water resources.

The mission assessed efforts paid by the local governments in promoting water supply in those areas.

According to Nouri Jamal, Manager of the Follow-up Unit at the Ministry of Water and Environment, the mission will write down detailed reports on water shortage in an attempt to limit the great folly inherent in such problems.

Continued from page 1

Crime rate runs high in Yemen

The security reports state that crime rates vary from one governorate to another due to differences associated with daily life situations and population; rapid population growth leads to raising crime rates. Probably urbanization and slow economic growth create an environment of high contrasts in material wealth, high population density and widespread discontent. Population is classed among the international measures for assessing crime rate in any society.

According to the reports, crimes are usually committed in certain months and seasons, and the factor of time is relevant to raising and reducing the crime rate. The factor of time is meant for a particular period of time of the year (month/s, season/s or occasion/s). Crimes are found to be connected with occasions such as Eid which sees an increase in house robbery in main cities as numerous citizens leave their houses and travel to rural areas to spend the Eid vacation.

Many thieves center in car stations during Eids and seize the opportunity where passengers often carry luggage and large sums of money for Eid expenses.

The Ministry of Interior has never shown concern over these reports and confirmed the phenomenon is not difficult to control and overcome, adding that its current indicators have not exceeded the limit of the average crime rate in any society. It attributes the sharp rise in crime rate over the last few years to an increase in awareness of crime by the police.

Social studies researchers link the increase in crime rate over the last years to the economic deterioration and the absence of a fair and efficient judiciary to accelerate course proceedings. Prolonging case-related procedures is responsible for the increase in revenge incidents. In addition, widespread bribery and corruption in the government and judicial institutions compound the problem as not only is corruption illegal, but it impairs the ability of the state to deal with other crime.

Another factor specific to Yemen is the massive incidence of handguns, rifles and machine guns. These are traded freely, without license of restriction beyond market costs and their universal distribution must contribute to violent crime. Of course the presence of guns does not necessitate crime, but along with tribal culture, urban sprawl, unemployment, disaffection, retarded economic growth and widespread frustration they certainly have an impact

Girls World Communication Center

Another summer camp wrapped up

Thursday 25 August - The Girls World Communication Center (GWCC) concluded its summer camp.

Students from different levels performed songs and plays in English to great applause.

There was an exhibition that displayed the student-made activities that centered on how to improve the English language, protect the environment and water, concern about traditions as well as youth participation in different social activities in preparation to be the leaders of the future.

Speeches delivered by teachers and students expressed happiness about enjoying their time in the GWCC and the success of the summer camp.

Ms. Al-Mutwakel also made a promise that there would a separate place for young boys next summer through which

they would get the same and equal opportunities that girls have in GWCC and would enjoy with the same activities and programs.

The Girls World Communication Center (GWCC) was established in 1998 as a non-profit organization as the first language center in Yemen caring exclusively for girls. Since 2005 the center has expands its activities to include male young and be part of the Youth Leadership Development Foundation (YLDF) and one of the founders of Yemeni Youth Network.

The center allows women and girls of Sana'a, Yemen the opportunity to develop themselves through English and computer courses, work experience opportunities, an internet club, use of the library and various creative and exercise courses the GWCC offers. All the courses at the GWCC combine traditional for-

eign language learning methods with topical issues relating to the community and culture. Courses are based on issues such as; the environment, health and hygiene and human rights concerns.

The GWCC has succeeded to established itself within the community as a respected and established learning center. The GWCC is sustainable on its own merits, and through center own funds, plus donations from local and international patrons it provides scholarships to underprivileged girls.

The main aim of the GWCC is to assist and encourage young women and girls to pursue their aspirations and dreams. The GWCC aims to provide those girls with the necessary tools to pursue an education, a career with the local workplace or as mothers of the next generation and to be able to communicate globally.

AI: Harassment of Yemeni journalists must stop

Amnesty International
Public Statement
26 August 2005

Amnesty International is concerned at the continuing harassment of journalists by Yemeni security forces. Journalists critical of the government are being increasingly targeted and face abuses, including arbitrary arrest, beatings or confiscation of documents and computers. Such targeting by the security forces ostensibly aim to silence journalists and prevent them from reporting.

On 23 August, Jamal Amer, chief editor of al-Wassat newspaper, was arrested by security forces from outside his home in Sana'a and taken to an unknown destination where he was

beaten and threatened with death. The attack on Jamal Amer followed articles published by al-Wassat newspaper criticizing government officials and accusing them of corruption.

One day later, the office of Ahmed al-Hajj, an Associated Press journalist, was reportedly raided by six members of the security forces, who confiscated his files and two computers. The office's security guard, Mohammed Abdel Badir, a Somali national, was reportedly arrested and is believed to be detained at the Political Security prison in Sana'a.

On 25 August, security forces also reportedly raided the offices of journalist Sami Ghalib, a journalist at al-Nidaa newspaper, and seized files and computers.

Women Reporters without Borders reportedly had its licence revoked after it published reports regarding demonstrations on 20 July, in which dozens of people were killed.

AI calls on the government of Yemen to put an end to harassment, intimidation and other abuses against journalists, and to ensure respect of the right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Yemen is a state party.

Amnesty International also urges the Yemeni authorities to promptly carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the abuses against these and possibly other individuals and bring to justice anyone found responsible for any such violations.

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Ali said: "I don't want to work on the streets like my brother"

By CORINNE LEVEY
corinnelevey@hotmail.com
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

In 2003 a project was established in Sana'a on behalf of the British NGO, 'YERO' (Yemeni Education and Relief Organization). The aim of the project is to identify children who are working or begging on the streets of Sana'a, and to sponsor those children to go to school.

The law in Yemen that children must go to school is not enforced. Many of the children from impoverished families, who work or beg, day and night on the streets of Sana'a, end up imprisoned in The Beggars Centre or the Juvenile Centre; and so continues the cycle of poverty.

Problems in villages drive families to the city in search of work and a better quality of life. In the city, they find that their economic situation worsens, as they cannot afford the rent, they have to pay for water, their electricity bills are high; and they don't have any training to get a job. With an average of seven children in the families, their only option is to work or beg on the street. If the parents are ill or unable to work, then they must send their children out to beg or work at the expense of the children's education.

Ali is nine years old. He has been sponsored by the project for 2 years; and he is now moving into the third grade. His father is mentally disabled and so he cannot work. Sayidda, Ali's mother, works long, hard days as a cleaner; but this is still not enough to support her seven children, so her sons must go out to work - cleaning cars at the traffic lights on the streets.

Sayidda cares greatly about her children's future. She never went to school; but she wants her children to be educated and go to university, so that they can look forward to a better future. As long as YERO continues to support this family, it is very possible that their dreams will come true - all of Sayidda's children are very intelligent and doing well at school. Even Tagheer, who is only six years old and will be starting school this September, can read her sisters' Arabic books beautifully.

When I ask Ali whether he likes going to school, he grins and tells me; "yes, because I like my teacher". Sayidda

explains that Ali doesn't work on the streets like his older brother, as he is too young - she smiles and tells me; "Ali will never have to work on the streets, because now he is going to school". Ali tells me that he would not be happy if he did not go to school, he shakes his head firmly and says; "I don't want to work on the streets like my brother". When he grows up, Ali wants to be a pilot, so that he can fly all over the world. This is a far cry from the dreams he would have if he were not supported to go to school.

Ali's older sister, Hanan, is twelve years old. She flicks through her colouring books to show me the drawings she has done. Hanan loves reading and writing and she is doing very well at school. When she grows up, she wants to be a doctor. Sayidda explains: "Before she started going to school, Hanan would cry when she saw the other children on their way to school, because she wanted to go too." But now there are no tears in Hanan's eyes, she smiles as she shows me her school work and her mother smiles and laughs as she talks about her children; because even though Sayidda has had a hard day at work, all of her children are going to school now and she knows that they have a bright future to look forward to.

Children are identified to be included in this education programme through referral from The Beggars Centre in Sana'a and from the Al-Sada society, which works with the communities in YERO's target areas: Al Saffia and Bab-Al-Yemen. However, many children identify themselves for the project, coming forward to the project's founder, Ms Noria Nagi, whom they know as "Umi Noria"; and expressing their desire to stop working or begging on the streets and instead, to go to school.

Ms Nagi moved from Yemen to Britain with her family, when she was just 16. After living in London for most of her life, she decided that she wanted to return to Yemen and devote the rest of her life to helping Yemeni people who are less fortunate than herself. She said; "I came to Yemen to help these people, especially the children, because they are the future."

The YERO project began with a pilot project, involving just one family of four children. Two years ago, none of the children in this family could read, write, or even hold a pen. Now they are all study-

ing at a government school, and attending summer school. The oldest child, Faten, is moving into the 3rd grade this year; and her younger brothers and sister are moving into the 2nd and 1st grades. YERO has provided medical treatment and support for their mother; and their father is now working for a local taxi firm in Sana'a. The organization has grown since its establishment two years ago; and now there are thirty children, from seven families, enrolled on the programme.

The sponsors of the children pay \$200 per year for their child, which covers the cost of their school uniform, all necessary writing and reading materials, regular medical examinations of the child, obtaining of a birth certificate; and also school registration fees. YERO also compensates for the family's immediate loss of income by supplying them with temporary food rations, until a better solution is found. The work of YERO does not stop there, YERO account themselves to be responsible for the child's social and medical welfare also. The YERO project ensures that the children are taught how to be respectable members of society, both in their appearance and their actions.

The work of YERO is about to take a massive leap, as they look forward to opening the first YERO centre for education and development in September this year. Up until now, YERO has had no central work place for the parents and children supported by the project. The centre will provide a stimulating, caring environment for the children and their families. It will be staffed by Yemeni and international volunteers and will be situated in Hadda, close to a bus stop frequented by buses from the project's target areas, Bab-al-Yemen and Al Saffia.

At the centre, the children will be given classes in health and hygiene. Medical volunteers ensure good health of the children; and they will be taught how to care for themselves and how to wash and dress properly. This is very important for their integration into the government schools. The children will be guided in their behaviour, to ensure that they understand what will be expected of them when they attend school. Their time at the centre will also introduce them to an educational environment.

The centre will also be used for a 'homework club' where the children can get help with aspects of their schoolwork

that they are struggling with; and for this purpose, YERO will employ a teacher to work in the centre.

During school holidays, the centre will be used as a summer school for the children. There will also be opportunities for the children to receive practical training, with lessons in sewing and cooking.

One of the main purposes of the centre is to provide literacy classes for older children or family members, who feel that they are too old to attend government schools. The centre is hoping to get guidance and resources from the Ministry of Education for the purpose of teaching older pupils basic literacy skills.

It is very important to YERO that they have good relations with the parents of the children that they sponsor. The centre will provide an excellent way for the parents to become actively involved in their child's education. There will be opportunities for the mothers or older girls in the families to receive training in sewing and capacity building, to empower them to be independent, then YERO may employ the women to make the children's school uniforms. There will be other employment opportunities in the centre for the parents of the children, such as cooking and cleaning.

YERO is hoping to receive support from The Red Crescent, to provide the children with first aid lessons and guidance on the action they should take in the event of an emergency.

Many of these children do not eat nutritional food at home, and as a result, they suffer from health and development problems throughout their childhoods and into their adult lives. YERO is hoping that local food companies will be keen to support their project, so that they will be able to provide the children with nutritional food.

A social worker will volunteer at the centre to provide professional guidance for children who are having difficulties at home or socially. They will also work with the families of the children and provide support for the parents. Since the majority of the parents have never been to school, the centre will provide the oppor-



Hanan, Ali and Tagheer read their schoolbooks with Umi Noria.

tunity for YERO to help them to understand the importance of their children's education.

At the centre there will be supplies of clothes, shoes, toiletries and learning materials, so that any of the children who are in need, may have access to essential items. Of YERO's work, Ms Nagi says; "We will do anything we can to help these children to help themselves." She won't turn anyone away who comes to her for help. If she is unable to help them directly, she will refer them to somewhere they can get help. This is YERO's philosophy.

The sensitive social situations of the children that this project works with, mean they require more attention than can be given to them at the crowded government schools. This is why the new centre will be so vital to the work that the project does. It will provide a community and support network in which the children can learn and develop their skills in a caring atmosphere. Their time in the centre will teach them how to behave in the school environment; and their attendance at a government school will work towards fully integrating them into society.

When I asked Ms Nagi about her aims for the YERO project over the next few years, she was hesitant to respond. She hopes that in three years time they will have 300 children enrolled on the project; but she knows that for this progress to be made, she will need more support from individuals and from organizations, both locally and internationally.

YERO is a non-profit organization; the transparency of YERO's accounts means that any of its supporters or sponsors can see exactly where their money is being spent. As a foreign NGO, YERO gets no support from the Yemeni government. The project relies on the thirty private sponsors, who donate \$200 per year to cover the costs of one child to go to school and be cared for by the project. The IWA supports the project with donations of food, clothes and educational resources and have sponsored fifteen children for this coming year.

YERO is very grateful to The Dutch Embassy in Yemen, which is showing great support for the project by supplying funding to refurbish the new centre. Ms Nagi is keen to compliment all of YERO's supporters and shows them continuous gratitude. Hasnah Kamin, the wife of the Malaysian Ambassador for Yemen, has personally shown great support for YERO; and Ms Nagi compliments her efforts and those of many other contributors in Yemen. She insists that it is due to the support given to her by the Dutch Embassy, that YERO is able to open the new centre in September.

There is a waiting list of 250 children who have come forward to YERO and asked to be enrolled onto the project. Until the project has enough funding to sponsor and support them, they will continue to work and beg on the streets of Sana'a, just waiting to be given the opportunity to have an education.



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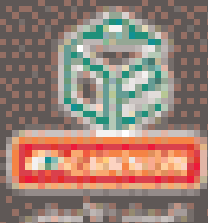
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Words of Wisdom



Parents and family elders are not providing good role models, either. Many adults spend their time chewing fat and watching satellite TV programs that represent the lowest common denominator, the children's recreational needs are mostly neglected, leaving them to wander off into the streets and mix with bad company.

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

OUR OPINION

Policy of aggression, and this time it's Iran

When El Baradei, the chief of the UN's watchdog agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency; the most respected nuclear investigative agency in the world today told the Bush administration years ago that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq he was ignored. Or rather it seemed so because the American went ahead with their plans to attack Iraq regardless of the results of the nuclear investigations.

One would think that the American administration has learnt from its mistake and would pull off a better plan in tackling unwanted regimes. However it takes someone else to remind USA of yet another law of nature as the Russian Foreign Ministry told the Bush administration "We consider that it would be counter-productive and dangerous to use force, the serious consequences of which would be barely predictable" regarding prospective plans to attack Iran.

Even though the Bush administration admits that no information was held from El Baradei team the perception was already fixed from the beginning. And now that Iran is coming forward with a new proposition regarding the Iranian nuclear program, the US intelligence is awaiting any excuse to rearrange their case and launch what could be the World War Three.

The Bush Administration has never backed away from its original goal of "regime change" in Iran. And the most likely method to doing so would evidently be through force, which the US doesn't mind using in the so-called civilized world of today. It is in fact quite ironic when reviewing the Iranian history and realizing that it is one of the very few countries in the middle east with a relatively large democratic margin. The latest elections according to national and international observers could be seen as a mile stone in the Iranian politics, a fact that could not be denied by the Bush administration to the extent that had them digging in the history of the man elected after not being able to comment on the election process itself.

Then again, the matter of nuclear weapons in Israel could not be ignored when talking about security in the Middle East. Why is it so right for this country to enjoy advanced nuclear technology and not Iran, or Iraq before that. In fact, while Israel throughout its life as a country did not respect any of the international laws or conventions while Iran has violated none of its agreements under the current NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation treaty) so, there is no reason for the IAEA to refer the case to the UN Security Council and not that of the Israeli nation?

The Editorial Board



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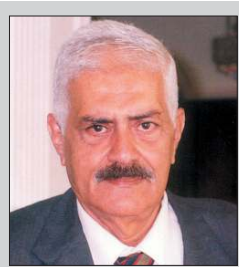
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Hope or bedlam? Getting serious on Arab Unity

The Arab world arguably faces more challenges today than ever before in its modern history. These range from general development issues as diverse as sanitation to good government, education, healthcare and human rights to the Palestinian question and the nascent trauma of the new Iraq. The question remains, can the upcoming Arab summit, adjourned out of respect for the death of HM King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, overcome both history and expectations to get serious about regional goals?



By Prof. Dr. Abdulaziz al-Tarb

In the event that this summit will be a success, solidarity and cooperation are needed both on a large scale and with good will. Previous Arab conferences and summits have issued decrees, statements and agreements that were broken by signatories before the ink was dry. The current state of Arab unity is more a mythologized ideal than a political reality, but it will take more than poetic sentiment to repair 50 years of bedlam and self-interest in the face of so many challenges. Many hold that the occupation of 'Arab land' and the century long history of European interference were a consequence of the weakness Arab factionalism, isolation and posturing caused.

Disunity has also helped accelerate Sharon's construction of the apartheid wall and expand the settlements in al-

Quds and the West Bank. He is now more encouraged to decoy the Palestinian Authority into negotiations under the cover of the Road Map and persuade it into yielding to Israel's pressures to strike at the resistance's infrastructure and exterminate Intifada. Sharon has succeeded in putting a color of honesty on what he called his one-sided plan - two withdrawals from Gaza - as the word withdrawal is associated with the desire to avoid wars and their causes and a concession of Gaza Strip settlements. To this deception do contribute the scene of Israeli opposition and Sharon's claim that his "project" would cost him his own and his aides' lives.

On the other hand, the terrorist attacks in Sharm al-Sheikh came when Condoleezza Rice announced that an international conference would be held but not to achieve peace in the area, taking into consideration the bleeding wounds of Palestine and Iraq. However, this conference is planned according to the American vision, "The Great Middle East", to serve the US and Israeli interests. Meanwhile, pressure continues to be exercised on the Syrian and Iranian regimes and more interference in Lebanese affairs occurs.

With the Sharm al-Sheikh terrorist attack, we are invited to consider that

"terrorism" may be orchestrated by those who want to "mix cards and trouble water." This necessitates a comprehensive Arab strategy to be set up as terrorism did not any Arab state. Consequently, terrorism needs to be clearly defined, both legally and politically. We should also think of the causes of terrorism so that our counter-terrorism measures become effective. No doubt, the US policies in the area, namely the occupation of Iraq and the unconditional support for Israel's projects, aggressive and expansive plans, are the fundamental reason behind the growth of terrorism as a phenomenon and the proliferation of bombings both here and there.

The prospective Arab summit's main task should be to discuss the conditions in Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon and the pressure exercised against Syria to ultimately draw an integrated Arab strategy based on unity of stand and goals.

We live in the era of giant conglomerations, an era where small countries hold little political influence when they stand unilaterally. With our civilization, cultural resources and geography, we can, by means of economic and political unity, build up an Arab union with international respect and authority. To play ball on the same court as the US, EU, China, India and even ASEAN, the Arab world needs to let unity and coordination supercede fractured self-interest. E pluribus unum or impotent obscurity, the Arab summit must ask some hard questions.

Who can protect the law?

Given the continual violations of tens of laws and regulations since the eruption of the Yemeni revolution until the present day, one would justifiably cry, "Who can protect the law?" in another country, such a question would be dismissed as "nonsense" because it is



By Ismail al-Ghabri

law that protects the peoples, including officials and officers, from the tyranny of the strong people in power whether civilian or military, whether gangsters or gangmembers. Such evil groups use various "weapons" such as money, drugs, gifts, etc. to defeat those with lax moral fabric. With others keeping silent, the evil doeser think mistakenly that they have terrorized and subjugated all. Such gangs usually are fought by governments willingly or coaxed to do so by the taxpayers who do not find in the Public Treasury only the tax imposed on their incomes which hardly meet the needs of their families.

The markets in the country are another story. Commodities from a variety of sources come into them. The state has

little to do with them in terms of specifications, quality, standards, customs, taxes, etc. The state admits to its helplessness. Any label can be accepted as there are no regulations. No law or resolution has impacted the course of destructive activities which have thoroughly paralyzed the commercial and political process and affected industry despite all efforts to the contrary. The national industry is the property of all people and, thriving, it reflects the success of other policies like defense, agriculture, education, etc. if every official keeps his commitment and pledge of integrity, honesty and loyalty, industry will expand, creating thousands of jobs and stabilizing the unemployment index at a level that can be handled over the few coming years through well-studied developmental schemes.

Violators should be punished the first time they are proved to have misbehaved. They should be subjected to interrogation and dismissal for, in Yemen, one should not expect an official or officer involved in whatever way in corruption to resign. No official has

ever protested against mismanagement, or, feeling his incapability to function and undertake responsibilities to the satisfaction of his conscience, resigned to show that he is not pleased with a degraded situation, which can be reformed if there is good will and virtual authorizations.

The citizens put their confidence anew in the person of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. I hope that he has heard the grumbling whispers of the Yemeni street. All people have trusted him because he has got enough experience and long record of achievements. The citizens believe he is noble and capable and have no reason to think otherwise. We hope he would respond by acts to the pessimists and prove that the present as well as the future belong to the nation, that is, by placing the right person in the position he fits and enforcing the reward-punishment principle. The citizens will rejoice and be convinced when they see the thrones of the corrupt persons collapse under the just force of law and regulations. So far, some citizens express their apprehension and say they have seen nothing that makes them believe talk. It should always be remembered that if the state loses the confidence of the citizen, nobody would ever believe it!

Letters to the Editor

It's getting too ferocious

I am a regular reader of "Yemen Times" especially "Common Sense," which I see as one of the most responsible and issues that matter to us Yemenis, Arabs and Muslims. Lately, I have noticed many feedbacks to the "Common Sense" in the "Letters to the Editor" all seem to be organized to discourage and silence the few outcries that are still resonating now and then in protest of the increasingly harsh injustices done against us.

It is now common to read or hear the trumpets of our oppressors say to us: "You are very much occupied with conspiracy theories, or "You are brainwashed with theories

against the Zionists and the US, or "Mind your own business and address your local issues" and such non-

sense arguments trying to convince us of their care and concern for our interests and ending up with names such as Ahmed, Nada, Nadwa,...etc. to suggest the origin of that care or concern.

Yes, we are hungry; and yes, we are underdeveloped; and we are the cause for most of our problems. But we are also being invaded, occupied, killed, and our holiest shrines desecrated by the Zionists with the support of the US. Then they can't come and tell us: "Enough, don't talk of the Zionist," "Tackle your hunger," "The Americans are invading you because they love you"...etc.

No, all these problems have to be addressed. Iraq matters to us, and Palestine and Al- Aqsa matter to us our need and hunger do mat-

ter to us.

To Mr. Hassan Al- Haify I say: Go ahead and never mind all the discouraging noise. They are plenty, they are getting ferocious and they will never stop.

Jamal Abu Ramiz Sana'a

Loving ones country

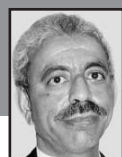
Personally, I don't believe it is practical to love your country, especially when that love is inspired by Hollywood blockbusters. Your country is simply where you have been born. It is however, absolutely right to have a proper knowledge and appreciation of the good points of your country, just as it is proper to have an appreciation of the bad points.

It is good that people love the traditions, culture etc other country.

But it should only stem from true understanding. The history of Europe is littered with the tragic results of ignorant nationalism (most recently Serbia in the 1990s). Revolt for suppressed countries is another matter. Then your love for your country is an expression of disaffection for corruption, brutality and the like.

People understandably revolt with love for their country in their heart. But those sentiments are no basis for day-to-day life. I don't know every day life is like in Yemen. But the struggle to improve life should be based on struggling to apply ideas that are universally good to your particular country.

S.Bailey sbailey@worldgroup.co.uk



COMMON SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

When press freedom becomes a farce

While the world is ostensibly heading for greater freedom, especially those of expression and speech, Yemen is heading backwards into the age of Orwellian double speech, double think and double dealing. The latest series of attacks against journalists in Yemen by elements of the multifaceted security apparatus of the state, do not lend credence to the claim that Yemen is embarking on an "irreversible course" towards democracy and human rights, as President Ali Abdullah Saleh continuously states. The problem it seems is that somebody is trying to fool someone, but who is doing the fooling? The Government? All along we have told the Government, if you want us to have democracy, you better be prepared for the worse. Democracy means that the Government and all its officials must be prepared to: 1) leave office whenever the people get tired of not just having them in office for so long, but also seeing their faces; 2) get hit with all the criticism that is necessary to keep them in check from abusing their power and getting away with murder, obstruction of justice and abusing their power to drain the government treasury from its scanty resources; 3) be prepared to face the public in hearings that will assess their performance and credibility and hopefully face parliament with ready answers for their misconduct in office. There is more to democracy than appeasing the World Bank, George W. Bush and others, who have unfortunately failed (willingly or unwillingly) to see what is really going on in Yemen, and continue to give the regime in Yemen all the praise and compliments it is not worthy of either on "the War on Terror" or on the democratic course that Yemen has embarked on. The truth of the matter is that the regime has lied to the Yemeni people by telling them that Yemen is now on an irreversible course to democracy. That democracy is, in fact, nowhere to be seen or heard except in the speeches of the President and the boring lengthy articles of the hired pens that never seem to get tired of filling the government papers with garbage that hardly anyone reads.

It is amazing that the regime will resort to beating up of some poor newspaper editors or journalists, who are making a point here and there that there is something wrong out there in Government land: there is corruption on a scale unprecedented in Yemen's history; there is wanton abuse of power that has made the common citizen without recourse to uphold their rights and seek justice from oppressive social and political dignitaries who take any peace of real estate by the square kilometers, whether it belongs to private citizens or the Government itself; there are double standards by which the Government is dealing with its citizens, and laws and regulations are only applicable against the weak and actually meant to make the lives of honest decent citizens as miserable as it can be; and that the Yemeni Government is not revealing how the billions of Yemeni Riyals in oil revenues (the original and the surplus) are being used and what is the Government doing to make sure that these funds are not being wasted before the limited oil resources we have are depleted. The Government must think these are valid points to make or otherwise it will not send its tireless thugs to beat up helpless journalists or to ransack their homes or offices. What kind of democracy is this? If it really saw to these points as valid points, then the Government has two choices: declare that we do not have democracy and that freedom of the press is over and done with and all the talk of a democratic future for Yemen is hogwash. The other choice is, rather than send a few illiterate hooligans to beat up dignified citizens, who see the public interest being devoured by criminal elements in the Government without regard to the rights of all the citizens and the possibility that they can be held accountable for their wanton rape of the resources of the people of Yemen, above the ground, below the ground and even in the air we breathe, the Government could straighten itself out and start cleaning itself of all the mediocre and selfish officials, who have shown themselves to be void of any sense of responsibility or patriotic conscientiousness.

If government officials have opted to take up careers of public service, they must be ready, willing and able to take all the criticism that will make sure that they do their job properly and not to think that the bully machine they have at their disposal will silence all free thinking Yemenis, who demand no more than for their leaders to act responsibly and honestly with themselves, God and their countrymen. It is a fair deal and most modern governments operate on that understanding.

This observer would like to echo the feelings of my fellow journalist in Yemen in the concern they have for the way the Government is interpreting the concepts of freedom and human rights: you have freedom to issue newspapers, but do not write about us or criticize us, for we are immune to criticism no matter what laws we break or what public assets we gobble up. This is absurd and no sane mind can go on watching all this pilferage of public resources and the degeneration of the most reasonable levels of accountability be treated with disdain. Yes, you will be criticized and yes you will be asked simple questions like where is all this splendor and wealth you are living in coming from? To be honest with the Government, we are not seeing any sweat coming out of Government officials who have amassed large fortunes, while the overwhelming majority of the population are being told just, watch, listen and die starving.

The beating up of Jamal Amir is another step that only makes Yemeni journalists more determined to work towards instilling press freedom in Yemen. On the contrary, this only adds to our determination to chase after corruption, government incompetence and abuse of power until Yemen is relieved of all those, who have sucked the blood out of the life of the overwhelming majority of its people. Enough is enough is all that we are saying and we are now going to say it louder than ever before. Thank you Jamal Amir, Ahmed Al-Haj and Mohammed Saleh Al-Dhahiry. We are right with you!

Yemen Press Review

Review By Mohammed Khidhr



Annas weekly, 22 August, 2005.

Main headlines

- Questions on Al-Eryani about them, Differences inside ranks of the ruling General People's Congress topple al-Soufi and Al-A'nsi
- In carrying out the unjust ruling, Sheikh al-Mouayad transferred from Brooklyn to Colorado, appeal after next February
- Soldiers from Aden air force fire on assistant deputy of communications ministry
- Victims of "tourist" marriage on the increase under government silence
- Official confession on Yemen's failure in implementing poverty alleviation strategy

Dr Hosni al-Jawshaie writes discusses in his column this week the change in the American address with regard to Iraq. He says a year ago the American stance regarding Iraq was completely different that what it is nowadays. A year ago we used to hear that the American forces were staying in Iraq for a period no less than ten years until they finish their task there. In addition, there were also some pressures on third world countries to dispatch troops to Iraq in a move to mitigate pressure on the coalition forces in Iraq. Those forces were at their wits' end after refusal of those countries to take part in that unjustifiable war, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan had described it in many of his television interviews. The war has become as a

trap for these forces too difficult to disentangle themselves from.

It has become as if someone has fallen into a field of quick sands the more he wants to get out, the deeper he sinks in them.

Observers see the change in the American stance in this regard as a result of the successive and increasing losses they sustain in Iraq. American forces in Iraq are losing at least 15 soldiers every day and double that figures of wounded. As for the undeclared number it is threefold or fourfold.

Those losses have become a heavy burden on the American administration in addition to pressures from the world and American public opinion calling for withdrawing American forces from Iraq.



As-Sahwa weekly, 25 August 2005.

Main headlines

- Officials and official reports admit, the government sells oil for lower price, unknown destination of billions of its proceeds
- Government confusion concerning minimum extent of wages
- JMP condemns attack of journalist A'mer, demands the government to make attackers stand trial
- "Al-Thawri" weekly, organ of the Yemen Socialist Party suspends publication
- Yemen captures three-fourths of world cases of polio

Politicians to As-Sahwa: Waving with the use of force, complication of demonstrations law, hindered opposition from organization of protests to the "dose"

Columnist Zaid Al-Shami has given his column "When the government violates the law" mentioning that disobedience of laws and non-commitment to them is when there is no trust in being implemented by the authority.

The parliament has lately approved the law of salaries and wages and the president of the republic endorsed it. Large-scale discussion and deliberations have been conducted inside the parliament until the minimum and maximum extents of wages and salaries were reached. Since the date of its issuance up till now the government is still hesitant in putting it into force. Sometimes it announces it has lowered the minimum and the maximum levels of wages and salaries and in other times it declares it would abide by the law. This is evidence that the government does not have a clear vision and sound and studied strategy towards issues concerning issues of the homeland and the citizen.



Al-Wahdawi weekly, organ of the Nasserite Unionist Organization, 23 August 2005.

Main headlines

- Government tenders proposal for additional appropriation of YR 400 billion to this year's budget.
- Sources to "Al-Wahdawi": Differences between the president



By Samer A.

and prime minister, power conflicts among ministers

- Millions of riyals worth violations at Hudeidah customs
 - Writer al-Hadhiri in danger
- The political editor of the newspaper writes saying as long as there is no economic and population strategy in our country where economic and population growths are tenacious by each other. And on this ground the long-run goals are determined and which the system of budgets and strategies of services, infrastructures and development is built.

How can we draw up a strategy for wages giving us real transparency of the level of wages for a position for 50 years from now as a strategic work? What the government has called as a strategic work for its defining of wages is void of any strategic work and only represents an attempt to reform wages at a certain stage, if such reform would see the light.

What we can see now before our eyes is merely a kind of tampering with the people and responsibilities. Probabilities indicate there would be no implementation of what the government has called as wages strategy that would also not be enforced. The question is would the parliament respect its decisions by obliging the government on carrying out the strategy of wages according to the law it had passed?

Al-Wasat weekly, 24 August 2005.

Main headlines

- Kidnapping the editor in chief, beating him, the journalists request the president to intervene
- Government backs down, wages minimum extent YR20000
- Politicians and jurists condemn kidnapping Al-Wasat newspaper's editor in chief
- Supreme Court approves exceptional verdicts against Cole defendants
- Confrontations in Jawf return

The political editor of the newspaper writes an article titled "The government rivals opposition in criticizing corruption", saying it maybe for the first time in the history of the country when the authority and opposition are unanimous on the growing corruption inside the state's institutions and inability of means to combat it.

The writer maintains that since the formation of Bajammal's first government following the elections of 2001, the government pledged to uproot corruption and destroy its structure. Nevertheless, after two years of the vote of confidence after the parliamentary elections of 2003, the government retreated from its earlier pledge and began to talk about encircling corruption and to limit it. But now it finds itself encircled with criticism because of its inability to confront this phenomenon.

During the periods in which governments succeeded to power in Yemen, authorities were adopting a stand defending its officials against opposition criticism and its talking about dissemination of corruption in its various forms.

Nonetheless, it is nowadays the stance has changed there have emerged certain parties tougher in criticizing the corruption of officials, though the government has the power to dismiss or try those corrupts if it is sincere in what it claims.



SILVER LINING

By Mohammed Hatem al-Qadhi mhalqadhi@hotmail.com

Journalists under attack

The recent kidnapping and attack of Jamal Amer, editor of al-Wassat reaffirms the intolerance of the present regime to the media and their efforts to gag dissent. Our colleague was treated with violence and brutality by men in a military vehicle wearing plain-clothes.

This political regime is obsessed with the idea that all criticism of the government or its proceedings indicates collusion with foreign powers. If the US supports the rights people and wants to tackle corruption, introduce reforms and development in Yemen, then working as an agent of the Americans would benefit Yemen at large and be justified.

Further, the US doesn't need agents any more as recruiting agents is old fashioned and illogical because the US now has space technology that can even film the sands in the desert of Yemen.

The assault of Amer and the recent repression of the media are an indication that the current regime is losing its nerve and behaving hysterically. They can do nothing but harass outspoken individuals and steal computers from newspapers like al-Nida and the Associated Press.

In despair, one of my friends said "This is crazy and is intolerable any more. We have to close down newspapers and open coffee shops. Democracy is becoming a big lie."

Of course kidnapping, assaulting and threatening journalists is not a new business for the security men. It occurred before with other journalists and writers like Abdulaziz al-Saqqaf and Abu Bakr al-Saqqaf.

What is funny is that the Ministry of Interior said the attackers of Amer will be hunted down and that several people use military license plate-numbers illegally. This is nonsense and a stupid excuse which shows that even the military is corrupt.

Suppose that we believe the Ministry of the Interior claims, then why did these thieves question Amer about his writings and his relationship with embassies? Logically, thieves have nothing to do with the alleged relationship between Amer and the embassies. Who are these thieves that are annoyed by the writings of al-Wassat against corruption and who asked him to stop writing against his "masters". They must be no ordinary thieves.

I challenge the ministry of interior to announce the names of the

attackers whose car plate number was jotted down by a friend of Amer. Can they establish that they have no connection with the terrorization of a journalist and the violation of free speech and personal security for all members of the press? They conduct dialogue with terrorists, and yet prohibit free dialogue from the press.

Al-Shoura, a publication which has been very active in reporting corruption, was closed down. Al-Thawri was silenced by the socialist party itself after pressure was applied from the presidential office and the editor was threatened with violence. Now, it is the turn of al-Wasat and al-Nida. These newspapers have crossed the line and for the first time have threatened corrupt individuals who are threatened by transparency.

The socialist party made a grave mistake when it ordered the suspension of al-Thawri under the pretext of reconsidering the way the paper has been reporting. I do not think that the paper has gone astray and has not been on the right track or following the tendency of the socialist party that identifies with the oppressed masses whose rights are abused by nepotism and corruption.

On the contrary, this is the line the socialist should be heading to promote honest, critical journalism that is able to disclose officials' corruption and hold them accountable.

Such a decision by the socialist truly demonstrates that politics is a dirty game and that journalists should never count on politicians. Politicians have their own interests to take into account but journalists have nothing but reporting the truth. Therefore, I believe it is important that journalists should come together and establish their own media institutions.

These would be independent, dispassionate and politically neutral. International human rights and press freedom organizations should also break loose as human rights abuse is no longer an internal business that has to do with countries as individuals but is a global issue that matters to everybody.

International donor such as aid organizations, NGO's and international monetary institutions must make sure that their money is not used by regimes in the violation of human rights and attacks on journalists and reformists.

Otherwise, journalists will always be persecuted by both regimes and parties and their impact will be mercenary and not impartial.

JOB VACANCY

منتدى الشقائق العربي لحقوق الإنسان



SAF Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights

Job Description

Technical Support Assistant for CICC Middle East & North Africa Region

Post Title: Technical Support Assistant for CICC MENA Region

Place: Sana'a, Office of Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights

Starting: August 2005 one year contract (Renewable with 3 month-initial contract)

Tasks to be performed

The Technical Support Assistant (TSA) shall perform the following responsibilities and tasks with close supervision of the MENA Coordinator:

Technical Responsibilities:

1. Setting up and updating, in coordination with Outreach Liaison and NY-based Communications team, the Arabic-language CICC website.
2. Assisting MENA Coordinator and SAF staff in organizing activities in the MENA region related to ICC including preparation for workshops, conferences and missions undertaken by the MENA Coordinator.
3. Assisting Outreach Liaison and NY-based Communications team with setting up and maintaining Arabic-language ICC Mid-east info listserv.
4. Maintain records of events, activities and human and material resources related to CICC.

Administrative Responsibilities:

1. Assisting MENA Coordinator in administrative and financial matters in terms of budgetary and financial reporting for CICC related activities and missions.
2. Serving as the main support person in Yemen for the Regional Coordinator and handling all requests for information in English from international NGOs and the CICC Secretariat when the Coordinator is on mission.
3. Assisting the Outreach Liaison with production and distribution of the Arabic newsletter (ICC Update in Arabic).
4. Maintaining records on CICC MENA National Coalitions and NGOs members.
5. Maintaining and developing an ICC Section within the SAF Library to make ICC-related documents and reference materials in Arabic and English available for researchers and groups/individuals from the region seeking information on the ICC.
6. Collaborating with the Middle East Outreach Liaison and the Regional Coordinator in responding to NGOs, governments, and others in the Middle East seeking ICC information.

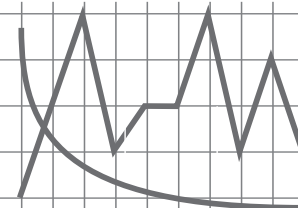
Translation Responsibilities (primarily English-Arabic):

1. Providing translations of resource materials from English to Arabic and vis-a-versa for outreach purposes, in coordination with the Middle East Outreach Liaison and the Middle East Regional Coordinator. This would include translating into Arabic outreach letters drafted in English to be sent to government officials, parliaments, NGOs and media in the region.
2. Ensuring translation of articles for quarterly newsletter *ICC Update in Arabic*.
3. Assisting Outreach Liaison with translations (into Arabic) summarizing English news articles (and occasionally helping with translations of news articles from Arabic into English) to be sent out over Mid-East info listserv (in Arabic and English).

Qualifications

- Availability full time, with at least a 1-2 year commitment desirable.
- At least 1 year experience in working on human rights related issues in Yemen. Background in campaigning, media outreach, event coordination, etc., for national or international events would be helpful. Experience dealing with government officials, international organizations, foreign embassies, etc. would be helpful.
- Minimum of bachelor's degree in law, political science, international affairs or another field in social science or humanities, or other relevant background.
- Excellent writing and communication ability in Arabic and good conversational, reading, and writing skills in English.
- Excellent English-Arabic translation ability and good Arabic-English translation ability. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks and work effectively with limited resources and attention to detail.
- Excellent technical/computer skills - ability to use word processing programs in Arabic and English, experience with html, website design, and basic desktop publishing preferred.
- Excellent intra-personal communication skills and ability to work under pressure.
- Previous ICC related work experience is not necessary, but would be helpful.
- Good working knowledge of political and legal issues in the Middle East.
- Interested persons should submit their CVs within a week as of today to Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights Office address: Flat 2, Dar Al-Ansar (Known as Al-Hashidi Building). The 2nd Floor at the Right Wing, Cairo Street, Sana'a. Telephone: 01 231 686 fax: 01 561 767.

YT Business



Horizons for development of fish investments

By RADHWAN AL-SAQQAF
YEMEN TIMES STAFF
ADEN BUREAU

Fish industry sector receives great attention from the Yemeni government, especially towards fish production activities of traditional fishermen. That attention is done through developmental economic plans, and drawing up their executive timed programs aimed at developing fishery in coastal regions. The aim also focuses on increasing the number of such fishermen, improvement of their catch quality and increasing local fish marketing channels to include all regions of Yemen. The plans also include development of fish abroad exportation.

Despite of the governments efforts exerted for the development of fish sector that is a very important economic factor, traditional fishermen groupings spread in the coastal area of Yemen are still in need of more investment proportionate to their productivity needs, especially for basis structure, and means of fishing as well as provision of social services, such as electricity, water, health and education.

Yemen has been following a programmed policy for the development of rural areas and improvement of living conditions there. Under directives by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, efforts are being exerted for taking care of coastal areas for raising the fishermen's standard of living. Thus the Ministry of Fish Wealth have directed it efforts for building projects of to develop the fish industry. It has finished the fourth fish wealth development project. The project aims at raising the living standard of fishermen and increase production. The ministry has also set up a full strategy for the fish sector containing priorities and major trends for future fish industry projects. The strategy includes three premises:

- 1- Rendering support for fish studies and researches for preserving the fish wealth, modernizing fish stocks and defining allowable ceilings for catching fish and marine life during their seasons. In addition, the studies aim at providing laboratory means and equipment for the implementation of fish studies, leading to develop the fish wealth and protection of its environment.
- 2- Ideal exploitation of the fish wealth and providing necessary factors for activating the role of sea watching



and inspection. In addition, it aims at fighting illegal fishing in regional waters and enhancement of efforts for meeting needs of Yemeni local market and encouragement of fishermen on exporting fish outside the country.

3- Continuation in building new fish installations and facilities, considering them as most important strategic pillars for raising production efficiency of the fish wealth and providing other social services. These are among important auxiliaries for realization of fishermen stability and consequently are able to practice their work easier.

For the achievement of those main goals with regard to future fish projects, the ministry of fish wealth began its communications with financing parties in order to develop those goals through conducting discussion with the ministry's officials and then preparation of a document assessing the fish sector and pinpointing difficulties that it has been facing, such as public services as electricity, water, roads, health services, education and funding. This premise also focuses on giving particular attention to encouragement of investment in waters of Jazeera archipelago that is rich with fish and other marine life. It is still a virgin area for investment in the field of fishery and especially in the area of service centers and societies for fish production. Those centers and societies could provide catch of fishermen who work in waters of the Jazeera, and manufacture it for local markets and exportation.

Another aim of the third premise is the establishment of stock companies for fish investments in coastal areas.

In order to increase production and

encourage investment in fish wealth it is necessary to:

- encourage small investors for establishment of stock companies in various fields of fish sector, especially in production and productive services, marketing and manufacturing fishing tools and canning industry.
- due to importance of and special characteristic of the process of utilizing fish wealth, the process of production, preparation and difference manufacturing processes, these processes are in fact complementary. This characteristic helps and encourage the investor to use his investments in an intensive manner.
- operate inoperative public sector fish establishments and factories, such as fishery ports in Aden, Mukalla and Nashtoun, by establishing national companies by the state or the private sector or participation through opening the door for Yemeni citizens to buy shares. Priority should first be given to employees at those establishments and then to those working in fish sector as well as investors from inhabitants of the areas where such companies are intended to be established.

Under present conditions of state fish installations existing in areas of fishing ports and in case the state is incapable of rectifying conditions of those installations, there are many opportunities for mixed companies for integrated investment. In this regard, there are opportunities for investment in the existing fish complexes. These are, a- fishing port complex in Aden, b- fishing port complex in Mukalla,

Hadramout, c- fishing port complex in Nashtoun, Mahara, d- fishing port complex in Hudeidah, and e- the state establishment for services, Aden. There is encouraging opportunity for investment in those installations especially for the establishment of multi-purpose companies for fish industry.

Privatization of fish installations in coastal areas

As part of the program of reforms and assessment of fish sector performance taken by the ministry of fish wealth, it (the ministry) has to conduct a thorough revision and prepare studies on economic feasibility for a number of fish establishments that it has been proved that there is no economic feasibility of operating them by the state establishment of fish services and marketing. The fish wealth ministry had proposed at a Yemeni cabinet meeting on 25 March 1998 a number of solutions for those installations. It suggest-

ed the lease or selling of a number of ice producing installations because they proved having no economic benefit of operating the ever they were built. The ministry also proposed the lease or selling of a number of refrigerators for preserving fish in certain areas for the same reason concerning ice factories. It proposed the creation of joint venture with the private sector or leasing or selling some installations in Hudeidah, claiming they had not been operated since their construction in 1984.

Investment in marine life fisheries

Reports by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) indicate that rate of production of fish in natural fisheries at sea, rivers and lakes is gradually decreasing. The reason is the overexploitation of those fishing areas and some simple fluctuations that negatively affected fish reservoir. To tackle this problem and solved it, breeding fisheries have been established, particularly for breeding types of fish possessing economic value.

Artificial fisheries in the world have seen important development with regard of escalation in productivity of fishery marines.

Marine life fisheries experiment in Yemen

Under support from the Japanese government, marine life fishery was built in the city of Lesser Aden in 1988. It was supplied with equipment and means of transport and provided with Japanese expertise. The fishery, since its inauguration, had conducted many experiments on marine life that are of economic significance. The experiments had achieved somewhat good results in the fishery of shrimp. In

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	192.4600	192.7700
Sterling Pound	347.3700	347.9300
Euro	236.5800	236.9600
Saudi Rial	51.3200	51.4000
Kuwaiti Dinar	659.1100	660.1700
UAE Dirhem	52.4000	52.4900
Egyptian Pound	33.3100	33.3700
Bahraini Dinar	510.5100	511.3300
Qatari Rial	52.8700	52.9500
Jordanian Dinar	271.6600	272.1000
Omani Rial	499.9100	500.7100
Swiss Franc	152.7500	153.0000
Swedish Crown	25.3700	25.4100
Japanese Yen	1.7501	1.7529

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

1990, the experiment was repeated but because of some subjective and objective factors, the fishery center could not continue in the process of fishery and did not realise the targeted plans. Moreover, because of the Gulf war, the Japanese support stopped. In addition, the fish wealth ministry did not render much care for the fishery situation, did not provide for its requirements and negligence towards its employees and supervisors. Added to above reasons, natural and artificial breeding areas were not established to receive the fishery centre's production of marine larva, and that made employees throw them away to the sea.

Apart from the experiments made at the fishery center, al-Murjan Company was established. It is a private sector company established in an area to the east of the town of Shahr, Hadramout governorate. It undertakes carrying out experiments on breeding shrimp and seaweeds used in medicine formulas. As a beginning of its production, it has exported to Saudi Arabia half a million of shrimp larva after their growth and size were suitable for exportation.

The ministry of fish wealth is working for using its centers for breeding marine life to conduct experiments and researches for producing shrimp larva in commercial quantities, especially those having economic significance. It is also working for carrying out experiments for the production of various species fish larva and an attempt for breeding them for marketing purposes.

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Gulf Tourists

“Are they people of lust and corruption?”

HAKIM ALMASMARI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF
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Recently, Yemen has seen a dramatic rise in the number of visitors flocking to spend their summer vacation in this culturally rich country. Visitors from many countries arrived; including those from Asia, Europe and not to forget our friendly Gulf State neighbors. Numerous tourism sites and scenes are available to give our visitors a welcoming and memorable visit. Many Gulf citizens take numerous visits to Yemen under different reasons and slogans. But for some gulf visitor's, tourism has only one meaning "following the shadows of Yemeni girls and women". Its coming out into the open and people are really amazed.

The controversy has grown so vast and is spreading like a dangerous virus. The government has only recently acknowledged the scale of the problem. Hundreds if not thousands of Gulf tourists, come to Yemen for the purpose of finding local prostitutes. Little effort is noticed in stopping such a horrifying issue confronting our conservative society. The recent developments have made Yemen a new Arab hub for prostitution. In some situations, it's hard to differentiate between the sex industry in Yemen and the one in India.

While the young and old generations of Gulf tourists have different techniques to attract a desired prey, their goal is one, "get a hold on Yemeni women". The younger generation usually goes and crowd up famous local streets trying to find the right choice to feast on. The older generation busy themselves using the temporary marriage as an easy way to achieve their desire and sexual passion.

"It's not possible for older men in their 40's to chase young women in streets, so they do their job under the table by destroying innocent lives of young Yemeni women with the so called tourism marriage" said a local activist.

The average age for victimized young women haunted by the tourism marriage crisis is between 14-24 years. Many of

these innocent girls were snatched away from their school seats and forced to drop out of school to marry these careless people. Life span for such marriages is extremely astonishing. In most situations, they vary from as little as 10 days to as high as a month. The span almost never reaches one year.

Seventy five percent of those who fall in the tourism marriage trap lose confidence and faith in them selves in the long run. They feel that their future is virtually destroyed due to the divorce they receive after only a couple weeks of marriage.

A more nerve wrecking side of the story is that many Gulf tourists have previously traveled to many Asian countries for the same reason under the slogan of "tourism", then come to Yemen spreading the diseases they received abroad. For this, many new diseases erupt and come into existence in our country. One of the fastest spreading diseases in connection with this issue is AIDS. This is only one of the reasons for its shocking dramatic spread. Recent stats show that almost 14,000 people in Yemen carry the HIV virus. AIDS cases have more than tripled over the past four years. Eventually, it slowly spreads to locals who are weak hearted and go after prostitutes to achieve a certain pleasure.

A need of urgency to stop this horror tragedy is a must. The government has recently realized the greatness of this issue and is taking careful procedures to uproot such actions before it reaches a turning point. This will involve massive challenges.

Going back to the issue of the older generation of Gulf tourist, without any sense of shame, they knock door to door until their mission is accomplished. One victim's parent said " they come to our houses in a very peaceful manner and with their mouths busy uttering god's remembrance". "They could fool anyone eventually, with their soft and pre-organized approach."

"I really don't understand the difference between this and adultery," the father added. "Such people have no morality what so ever. If they had such a quality, they would retreat from such terrifying actions. Marriage is supposed to be peace,

love, and comfort not to fulfill your sexual desire only".

In Islam, to have such marriages organized for a set time period, is unlawful and therefore forbidden.

This is the fate of many poor and beautiful Yemeni girls who marry rich Arab tourists then eventually find themselves abandoned. The problem gets worse if Gulf tourists decide to take their temporary wives back with them. Some of those cruel and corrupted so-called husbands, forced their innocent young wives to indulge in pornography and prostitution. Death threats are a possibility if they do not do as asked.

A feeling of disgust erupts when even thinking of such an issue. How can a person have such vicious feelings and go so far in doing inhuman acts.

Ibb seems to be the most wounded governorate in this ongoing drama. Until recently 93 girls from Ibb governorate have been victims to such horrifying issues. This ongoing crisis has also spread to other governorates mainly Sana'a, Hajjah, Taiz, and Aden.

While such marriages are only occurring for the first time in Yemen, many countries went threw the same tragedy including in the past including Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Pakistan.

Many Yemeni activists are working on introducing a new law to govern marriages of Yemenis to foreigners. We call on all human rights organizations and NGO's who care for children and women issues to lend a helping hand.

But we mainly call on all Yemeni citizens to open their hearts to the truth, and stop selling their daughters while to treat them like the precious jewels, which they are.

The consequences on the Yemeni society, when a girl is abandoned and not given the right attention, is the great spread of adultery, not to mention the spread of HIV.

The Yemeni government must be committed to use all the mechanisms available to uproot such criminal proceedings. Let's hope that solutions come timely enough to save the future of not women, but innocent young girls whose only fault is coming from a poor family.

Literary Corner

By: Abu Alkalmah Al-Tayyibah

The history of Yemen (2/3)

Mr. Al-Wasi'y suggests that Yemen's ancient kingdoms maybe divided into four states: Al-Mu'ayyana (Maenians?) and their capital at Karfa, the Sabaeans and their capital is Marikeb (probably Mareb), Catabaeans and their capital is at Tahna and the Hadhramis and their capital is at Sabatan. He suggests that the first Kingdom reached their zenith around 700 BC, but notes that there is an overlap here, as the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon at 972 BC. He said the Sabaeans kings were around 15 in number. Saba's realm extended up to Northern Ethiopia (Eritria and Tagray) and a considerable part of the Arabian Peninsula. The Himyarites overlapped with the Sabaeans in 115 BC. Their kings were called Mukarrib.

He suggests that the Himyarites were aided by the Romans, whose Emperor Augustus sent a force to take over Arabia around 24 BC. The Himyarite kings used to proclaim themselves as sons of gods such as the Kings of Awsan and the Ethiopian King Izna.

Al-Wasi'y, then states however that Yemen's independence was ended in 525 AD with the Ethiopian Army occupation sent by King Kalib Al-Asbaha. Yemen was ruled after that by Viceroy's of the Ethiopian king, the first one being an Arab Christian, Simafi'a 'Ashou'a. Yemen also had a bishop, assigned by the Byzantines Emperor Anastabu, where a church was erected and still stands in Dhofar according to the author.

The African Horn was also an area of contention between the Persians and the Byzantines (Arab Historians usually call the Byzantines "Romans") under Justinian, who sought the Arabs as allies against the Persians who had considerable influence in the Tigris Euphrates Valley.

This led to an Ethiopian attempt to take the City of Mecca (a story related in the Qur'anic Chapter of the Elephant), which failed, but by around 575 AD the Ethiopian influence was replaced with

Yemen being a vassal state of the Sassanid Persian Emperors, who hit the Christians hard under the local leadership of Seif Ibn Dhi Yazin.

However, the Persian rule was very loose and the country went into a state of chaos and anarchy with five Persian governors according to the author.

On another note, with the deterioration of the Mareb Dam, the decline of the fertile area under cultivation, life in Yemen deteriorated somewhat because of the "neglect" of the Persian governors, where the assigned administrators seemed to operate freely without much oversight from the home base.

Thus Yemen fell easily to Islamic conversion at the time of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH) on Year 8 AH or 629 and 630 AD. The last Persian Governor was named Badahan. Al-Wasi'y notes that a nude statue of a Himyarite King, was found in Ghaiman about 12 km southeast of Sana'a.

He also notes that the ancient money of the Kingdom of Saba around the Third Century BC was a copy influenced by Greek coin mintage, with the first coins that appeared showing the head of the goddess Athena and the flip side having an owl and an olive and a half moon.

It wasn't "domesticated" until the first half of the First Century AD, when the head of Athena was replaced with a man's head, who was adorned in the Yemeni style. In view of the amount of gold available then, there were a lot of gold works that were "noteworthy".

He then gives a correlation between the Arabic classical script and that of the Himyarite script which is called the "source reference" for reading ancient South Arabian script.

That is as far as the history of Yemen is given any coverage in the book. On the Third Chapter, the author goes into the tribal composition of Yemen and on Chapter Four, the author goes into the Imams of Yemen and the Yemeni people.

Relating from a book called the "Morning of Night Blindness", he says the Imams of Yemen were humble and

rarely aloof from the people mixing with the strong and the weak without any showing any favoritism.

"The Imam is as any of his constituency" in his food and apparel and the people have a high reverence for him, appealing for rain in his name. "Ibn Fadhl Allah" states, says the author, "because of their high moral character and humility, and his high noble origin" their Imam's prayers are answered and the Muezzin calls "Hail to the Best of Deeds", as the people of Egypt in the Fatimid Era used to do.

In his description of the Yemeni people, Al-Wasi'y says they are "a people of intelligence, acumen, hospitality, charm and sagacity. They are consistent and honest. On the latter, Al-Wasi'y adds this footnote: "I don't say they don't lie, but for the most part honesty prevails among them. Lying is a plight that is generic among all mankind".

They are a people of strength and perseverance; they are industrious and hard working and when given the chance can be productive in agriculture, industry and commerce.

On the people of Yemen, Al-Wasi'y gives us some interesting statistics and a breakdown of the population size by region and tribe. Among the Yemeni tribes Al-Wasi'y states that there is a tribe in 'Asir (now a part of Saudi Arabia), called Thaqib, who "spoke the Arabic tongue instinctively and by all members including women and children".

This was revealed to him he said when he heard their children at age five or six state that he had "two gems" (a pair of glasses) in his eyes in proper Arabic speech and grammar, which he found to be remarkable for children of ages five and six.

On another note, his servant once asked a woman to give him some cloverleaf for the horse and when he said, "Hey woman, "Give us some shrubs for the horse". She replied, "Look you, I am not a woman, I am still an celibate virgin!"

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Acupressure

DR/ BADR AHMED AL-HADHRANI

Acupressure is a science that deals with the human body and the flow of energy within the body. It is a science, and the technique is not magical or supernatural. Pressure points on the body stimulate corresponding glands and cure sickness by unblocking junctions. Some people describe these areas as epicenters of stress where energy is blocked.

The aim of the therapy of acupressure:

Like many other medical therapy's, acupressure aims to help you to maintain good health. It is a remarkably accessible form of medicine, which may be used to cure common ailments and save expenses on doctors and pharmaceuticals.

History of the Acupressure:

As early as 3000 B.C the moontastic Chinese scientist (Huang De) was applying acupuncture (the therapy which consists in inserting very fine needles at carefully defined places in the body tissues) to diagnose and cure many illnesses.

Acupressure doesn't regard the human body as composed of an emotional and physical realm, but treats the body as one integrated whole.

This principle is fundamental to the philosophy and science of acupressure.

Whether the disorder in the body has been caused by an emotional disturbance or a physical ailment it is treated in the same way.

Another important principle relates to neurological inter-connectivity. The nerve endings of all blood vessels and neural pathways terminate in the hands and feet. It is therefore believed that these act as focal points where the neural system may be accessed. Naturally this necessitates an understanding of the relationship between hand and foot pressure points and the body and also how to manipulate this knowledge to



DR/ Badr Ahmed Al-Hadhrani

influence the health of a patient.

In the order to identify these points scientifically the entire human body was divided vertically and

would know which part of the body corresponds to which point of the foot.

The body was also divided into three parts horizontally.

How Acupressure Works: The science of acupressure is based theories and understanding which often contradicts aleopathy (ie. western medicine).

The theory states that the human body has fourteen imaginary meridians "that carry energy throughout the body.

These meridians start at the fingertips, connect to the brain and then to the organ associated with specific meridian. The names of these meridians specify the organ associated with them.

For example, the lung meridian is connected to the lungs via the nervous system. Theoretically a lung problem arises if there is an

that it is not necessary for the organ that relates to the system to be the cause of the problem." It is the root cause " that is the main cause of the disease/malfunction and it is the root problem which must be cured.

Conclusion:

By addressing the internal flow of energy the symptom may be addressed.

This can be explained in an easier way by using an example. Suppose someone is suffering from asthma. An allopathic doctor would prescribe a medicine or steroid that would give rest to the lungs and relieve the symptoms. This is because in Western medicine, if the problem is identified in the lungs it is logical to infer that the problem originates there and must be treated there as well. Acupressure on the other hand, will try to find the root cause:

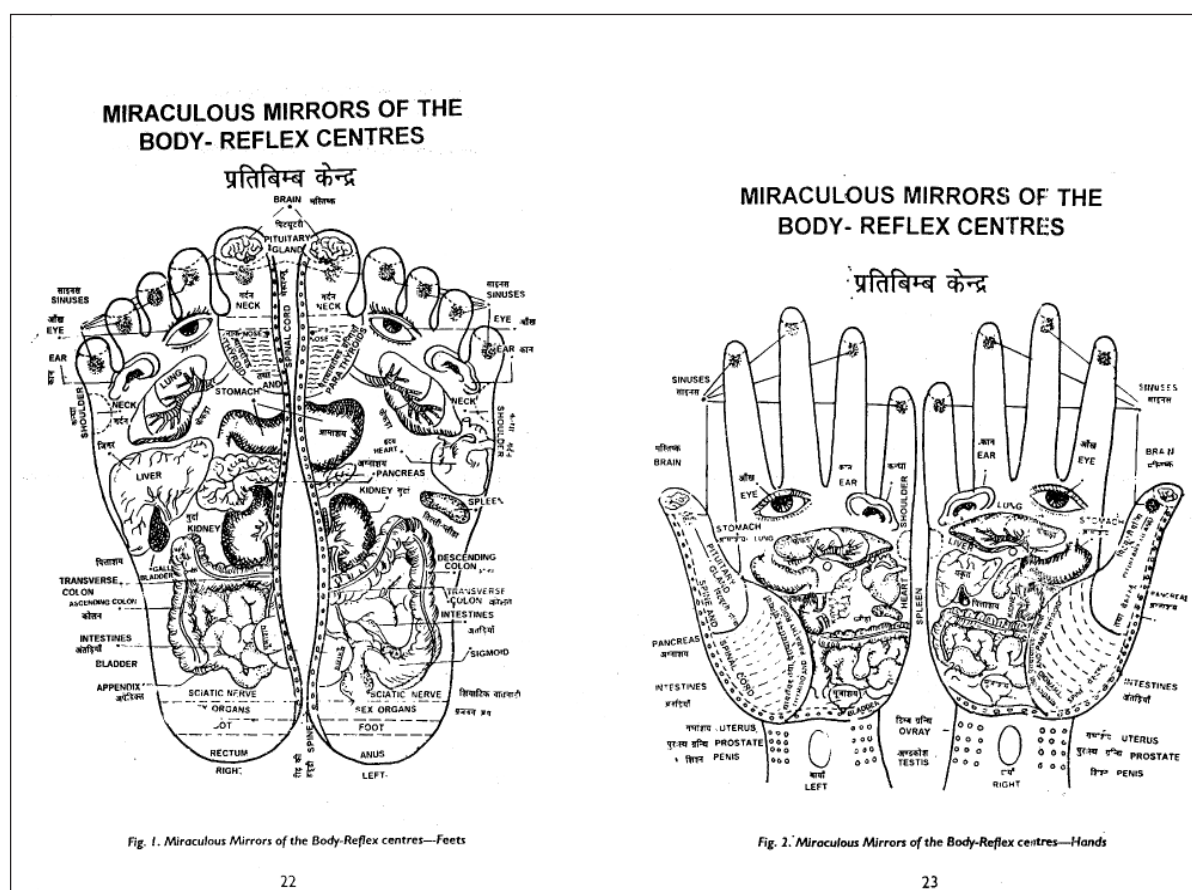


Fig. 1. Miraculous Mirrors of the Body-Reflex centres—Feet

Fig. 2. Miraculous Mirrors of the Body-Reflex centres—Hands

horizontally. (1)

If the whole body right from head to foot is divided into 10 parts we

obstruction in the lung meridian that slow down the flow of energy.

If somehow the obstruction is removed or dissolved, the energy flow becomes regular and the lungs start functioning well. How is the obstruction removed? The answer reveals a great deal about the medical practice. If a stone is in a pipe through which water is flowing, water will build up and the potential energy of the water that is stopped from flowing rises.

When the water that has high potential energy is freed by releasing the dam, the water flows fast along the pipe, dislodging and removing the obstruction. This is exactly the way acupressure works. The theory states that obstruction occurs in meridians. Because the energy can flow with regularity and the organ can be made to resume its normal function acupressure theory states

i.e. the reason why the lungs are unhealthy. An acupressurist would read the whole body by reading energy pulses located on the arms to diagnose the root cause and once the root cause is diagnosed, the doctor would give points to cure that specific problem, not just asthma, a root cause can be anything from poor digestion, excessive heat, bad circulation, depression, or bad hormones, a root cause could even be just the organ that creating a problem.

So as someone with asthma could have weak lungs, those are the root cause of the problem. There have been cases where people with totally healthy lungs suffer from asthma because of other problems like bad stomach, weak circulation or even bad hormones and allopathic doctors give them steroids like cortisone to "cure the weak lung".

Means of transport cause, 60% of pollutants disseminated in the atmosphere

According to a scientific study conducted by Dr. Farid Sha'aban, Professor at the Faculty of Engineering, the American University in Beirut, 60% of air pollution in the capital city of Sana'a is attributed to transportation means. Pollutants are carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and hydro carbonic gases caused by car fuels and the lead substance contained in petrol.

The study clarified that the substance of lead added to fuel affects the neurological system and impairs the mental ability and intelligence in the part of children.

The study indicates that Yemen's

capital suffers from sharp pollution, particularly as it witnessed heavy traffic movement over the last two decades. Currently, the sector of transportation covers around 350 thousand cars of different kinds, the majority of which are 15 years old, and all run on different kinds of fuel, according to statistics released by the Capital's Traffic Department in 2004.

In this respect, sources at the General Traffic Department say the duty of traffic police is to detect whether drivers have the entire document required for car possessions without any attention to fuel that leaves more pollution such as that caused by diesel fuel.



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By Dr. Saleh Al-Habshi
Msc. in Public Health

Public Health Affairs

The Way Towards Safe Motherhood

While the world's population will reach 10 billion by 2020, there are 120 million married women worldwide having unmet needs. Whereas health, social, and economic status of women still needs much attention, particularly in developing countries.

Every minute of every day, somewhere in the world, a woman dies as a result of complications arising during pregnancy and childbirth. That number was calculated to be approximately 600000 deaths annually, the vast majority of which in developing world. The tragedy is that these women die not from disease but during the normal, life-enhancing process of procreation. The death of a woman during pregnancy or childbirth is not only a health issue but also a matter of social injustice. The majority of those deaths could be prevented if the adequate health care was provided in place and time and by a trained staff.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined Maternal Mortality (MM) as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, regardless of the site or duration of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management.

MM is an indicator of disparity and inequity between men and woman and its extent a sign of woman's place in the society and their access to social, health, and nutrition services and to economic opportunities.

In developed countries Maternal Mortality ratio (MMR) averages 27 maternal deaths per 100000 live births, while in developing countries the ratio is nearly 20 times higher, at 480 per 100000, and may be as high as 1000 per 100000 in some regions (1999).

Yemen is one of the countries, which early adopted policies addressing population growth. The average marriage age of females is 22.3 years, with least marriage age 15 years. The Yemeni community suffered a lot due to increased MM. In 1997 MMR was 1400 per 100000 live births. Total fertility rate (TFR) reached 8 at that time. The efforts done by the MoPH and International Organizations led to an apparent decrease of TFR towards the current figure 6.5 and MMR to 1000 per 100000 live births (2003). Coverage with nursing and midwifery personnel should be increased specially in rural areas to exceed the current figure 4.5 per 10000 population. More attention must be given to MM by promoting reproductive health services and raising the awareness of the community.

Safe motherhood is a human right:

Of the human rights currently acknowledged in national constitutions and in regional and international human rights treaties, many can be applied to safe motherhood.

The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the Safe Motherhood Technical Consultation (Colombo, 1997) have helped to focus the attention of the international community on the need for accelerated action to achieve the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990) goal of reducing MM by half. The Safe Motherhood Consultation placed MM in the context of human rights, urging governments to use their political, legal, and health systems to fulfill the obligations imposed by their endorsement of various international human rights instruments. Experts from WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank, the Population Council, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and other national and international agencies concerned with safe motherhood reviewed progress over the past 10 years and concluded that it is possible to reduce MM significantly with limited investment and effective programme and policy interventions.

Community participation is crucial. National, regional, and district safe motherhood committees should be set up as appropriate and where they will be most effective. Raising awareness of the need for women to reach emergency care without delay if complications arise during delivery is particularly critical. Because many women deliver alone or with a relative, community members must be trained to recognize danger signs and develop plans for emergencies, including transport to hospitals or health centres, and local insurance funds to help cover the costs of care.

Enabling women and families to choose when, where, and how often to have children is central to safe motherhood. The availability of family planning information and services to women, including adolescents, helps to limit pregnancies in which complications may occur. The role of the health sector in reducing maternal mortality is to ensure the availability of good-quality essential services to all women during pregnancy and childbirth. With a minimum of good care most women will complete their pregnancies safely.

Impact of Unsafe Motherhood:

High levels of MM are not only a "woman's problem". Poor maternal health and its inevitable corollary - poor infant and child health - affect everyone. Women are the mainstays of families, the key educators of children, healthcare providers, carers of young and old alike, farmers, traders, and often the main, if not the sole, breadwinners. A society deprived of the contribution made by women is one that will see its social and economic life decline, its culture impoverished, and its potential for development severely limited.

Maternal death has implications for the whole family, community, and an impact that rebounds across generations. The complications that cause the deaths and disabilities of mothers also damage the infants they are carrying. Of nearly 8 million infant deaths each year, around two-thirds occur during the neonatal period, before the age of 1 month; 3.4 million of these neonatal deaths occur within the first week of life and are largely a consequence of inadequate or inappropriate care during pregnancy, delivery, or the first critical hours after birth. Moreover, for every neonate who dies at least one other infant is stillborn.

Action for safe motherhood:

Countries vary enormously in terms of the situations and challenges they face and their capacity to address these. However, experience from around the world over the past decade has demonstrated that a number of features are common to successful efforts to address MM. Reducing MM requires coordinated, long-term efforts. Actions are needed within families and communities, in society as a whole, in health systems, and at the level of national legislation and policy. Further, interactions among the interventions in these areas are critical to reducing MM and to building and supporting momentum for change.

Long-term political commitment is an essential prerequisite. When decision-makers at the highest levels are resolved to address MM, the resources needed will be mobilized and the essential policy decisions regarding reproductive health and gender will be taken. Without this level of commitment over the long term, projects cannot become programmes and activities cannot be sustained. A supportive social, economic, and legislative environment allows women to overcome the various obstacles that limit their access to health care.

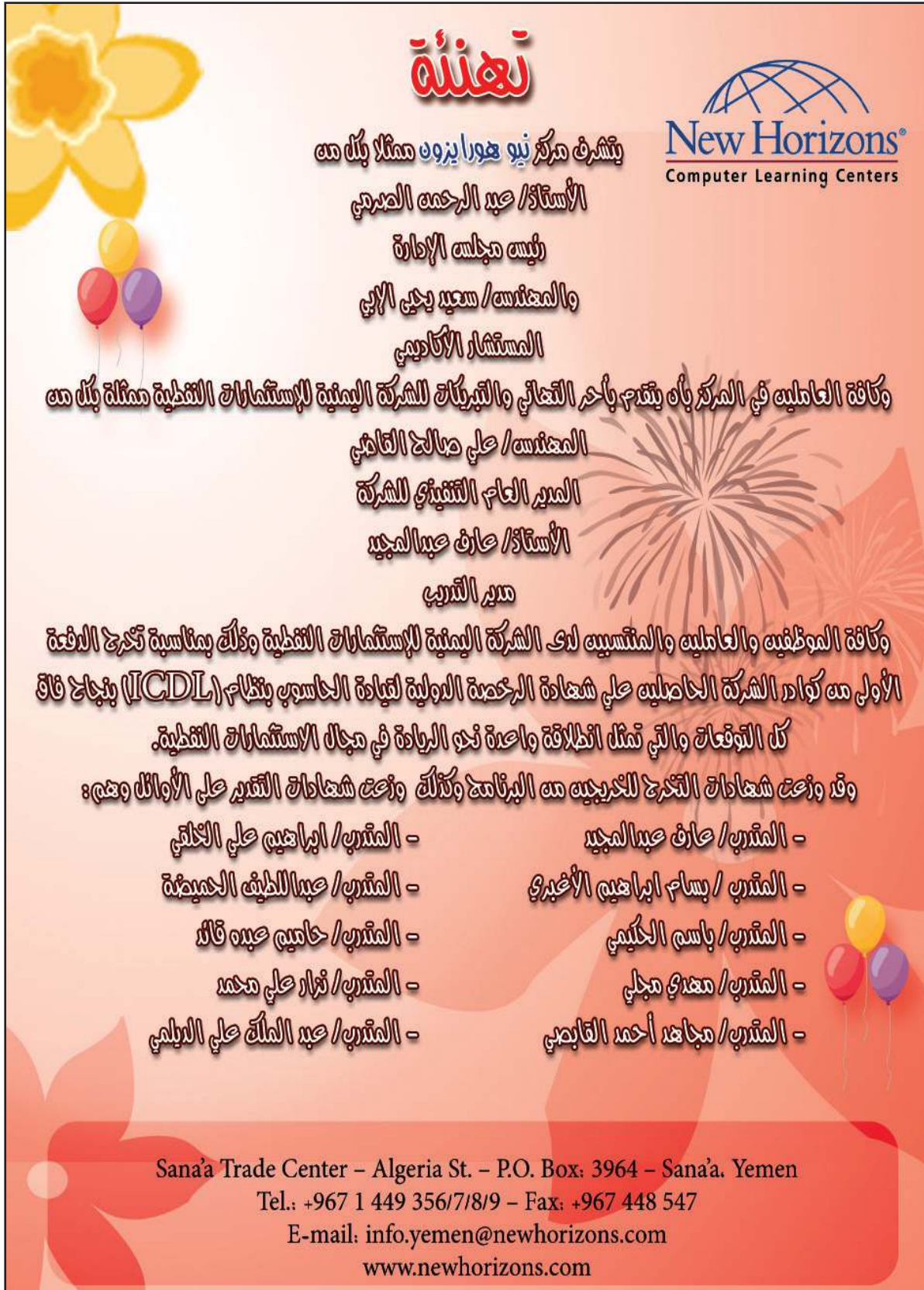
Services should be decentralized so that facilities are available as close to people's homes as possible. Adequate supplies and equipment and trained staff should be available in all health facilities, particularly in rural and remote areas, together with written policies and protocols to guide service provision and to allow certain functions to be delegated to personnel at lower levels.

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تعلمة

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I. What to Say Situations and expressions (80): Social Service ads

Peter Trudgill, an eminent socio-linguist has said, "Advertising not only influences any human society in which it is spread, but also reflects certain aspects of that society's values and the society's structure."

- Social ads
- Bombay is a love story for me. (Tourism)
- One today is worth two tomorrows.
- Only a busy person can enjoy leisure.

II. Correct errors, if any, in the following sentences

- 1. Even though I was sick, but I went to work.
2. Gold silver and copper. They are metals.
3. I'd like a cup of coffee, and so does my friend.

Suggested answer to the previous week's questions

- 1. I thanked him for driving me to the airport.
2. Is it difficult to learn a second language?
3. It is important to get education.

III. Increase your word power

- A) How to express it in one word:
1. Diseases found regularly in a particular place.
2. The natural qualities that a person is gifted with.

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- 1. To go beyond what is right, usual, or natural: encroach (vi)
2. A book dealing with every branch of knowledge: encyclopedia (n)

B) Words commonly confused

- Bring out the difference in meaning of the following pairs of words:
1. interesting, interested.
2. emulsion, immersion.

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- 1. non-human (adj.) (not human): You can't induce human feelings in nonhuman objects.
inhuman (adj.) (too cruel; lacking in feelings to be worthy of human behavior) : The under-trial prisoner was subjected to inhuman treatment.

- tribal conflict.
3. compete (v) (take part in a race, contest, examination, etc.): The two friends keenly competed with each other for the top position in the class.
contest (vt) (argue; debate; dispute) : I contest your argument.

C. Synonyms and Antonyms

- 1. Synonyms
Choose the word that is closet in meaning to the one given at the top
1. connive
a. instigate b. disregard
c. shield d. threaten

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- Word
beneficiary one who receives benefits
freak monstrosity
mammoth huge
frantic hurried
aviary large cage for birds.

2. Antonyms

- Choose the word that is most opposite in meaning to the one given at the top
1. erratic
a. free b. punctual
c. right d. regular

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- Word
pretentious humble
considerate inadequate
inquisitive uninterested
gratify frustrate
fabulous common place

D) Spelling

- Choose the correctly spelt word:
1. a. resonens b. resonance
c. resonance. d. rasonance

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions (correct spelling)

- 1. inflammatory 2. communiqué
3. homogeneous 4. pernicious
5. marriageable

E) Phrases and idioms

- Use the following phrases in sentences:
1. broad in the beam
2. make it one's business (to do something)
3. to do things by halves

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- 1. do a u turn (to change completely a decision): The management unexpectedly did a u turn and reversed their earlier decision about the worker's demands.
2. at a pinch (in an emergency): At a pinch he was forced to sell his car.

V) Grammar and composition

Use one of the following words in its correct form to complete the sentences given below:

- gossip shout whisper scream sing speak say tell
1. I wish you wouldn'tI'm not deaf !
2. When I was a teenager I used toin the school choir.

Suggested answers to the previous week's questions

- 1. The latest negotiations came to a sudden close with the threat of renewed agitation.
2. No sooner is he in Bombay than he calls his uncle.
3. Though she was most eager to reveal the secret, she exercised some restraint.

B) Composition

98. STRIKE THE IRON WHEN IT IS RED HOT

One should grab the opportunity as and when it presents itself. Opportunity once missed may not come again. Just as the blacksmith waits for the most opportune moment, that is when the iron is red hot before he can strike it to the desired shape and size, similarly a man of insight and vision springs to action at the right moment.

VI. Pearls from the Holy Quran

"When those come to thee who believe in our signs, say: "Peace be on you: your Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) mercy: verily...." If any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. 5.6A, 54

VII. Food for thought

"Grief can take care of itself, but to get the full value of joy you must have somebody to divide it with." -Mark Twain

A letter to the teachers of English: 95 Prewriting, writing and Rewriting (1)

Dear Fellow teachers,

Sometime ago, I wrote a series of letters on how to teach writing to our students in schools and colleges. I discussed, if you remember, the importance of writing and the different steps involved in the teaching of writing.



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

It is incredibly true that most of the western universities have separate departments and syllabuses for teaching writing; so much importance is given to the development of writing.

In our universities, on the other hand, writing is a part of a course called, Reading and Composition and receives scanty attention, and the result is that our students' writing (not to speak of the teachers') is awfully intolerable. Our preferences are, unfortunately, wrong: if you ask any student about his priorities in the learning of skills in English, he or she will say 'spoken English', and this is the top in the list of priorities of the teachers too.

ing and speaking.

In our situations where English is taught as a foreign language, the priorities should be reading, writing, listening and speaking; I have been saying this consistently but most of my colleagues in the Faculties of Education do not realize the necessity of this prioritizing and overplay spoken English and expend their valuable energy in teaching it at the expense of other useful skills, namely reading and writing.

The unfortunate result is the underdevelopment of these skills in our students throughout their educational period. It should be stated here that most of our students are weak in writing in Arabic, according to my Yemeni colleagues in the English Department.

How to develop writing in our students? Writing is said to be the seed of understanding, as we bring our knowledge into life while we write. Writing reinforces grammar, vocabulary and rhetoric that our students have been learning in their classes. Writing is a wholesome activity in that it involves thinking, expressing, risk taking, satisfying the readers; in a way, it is discovering and rediscovering what we want to say. It is no doubt a complex process and presents a challenge to the students but it has to be mastered as well as possible to make us 'perfect men and women'. It involves several sub skills such as developing the size and shape of the letters, punctuation, word selection and collocation etc; in addition, it involves a lot of thinking. That is why, writing is said to involve both mind and body of the writer.

More in the next letter.

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

Violence against women

Acts of violence against women often take the form of sexual abuse and harassment, domestic violence against wives and daughters, female genital mutilation and the so-called "honor killings".



Murtada Al-Rifayee Bachelor in English murt3s@yahoo.com

One major problem with regard to violence perpetrated against the Arab women is that victims of brutality rarely speak-up about their problems. This failure to protest their situations may be because they are threatened to be punished or killed if they make such issues public. The women themselves often feel intimidated to take any legal action to stop the offenders and their violence. The only outcome of this situation is that the victim and her family are stigmatized, with light or no punishment meted to the offenders. Incidents of domestic violence and sexual abuse occurring in the home are rarely reported due to the general perception by society in general, and the authorities in particular that this is an internal problem to be solved within the confines of the family, thus any legal interference is unjustified.

also the general absence of any laws and regulations targeting the elimination of violence against females.

Unfortunately, many incidents of killing innocent women have occurred because of inappropriate sexual behaviors in our society. The practice of this custom today is caused by a supportive culture and lenient laws which make it easier for some families to murder their daughters without adequate investigation into these suspicious circumstances. One honor crime was committed against a shepherd guild of 15 years when her brother received an anonymous letter accusing his sister of being involved in a relationship without investigating source of the letter. As is turned out, the anonymous letter was written by school girl's friend who was jealous of the victim's high scores in the school. However, if the situation is reversed, and a girl or a woman avenges her modesty against her husband or brother, she will never receive any form of reduced sentence.

As Muslims, all of us should support women to raise their bold voice against crimes without any fear or shame, and help them to achieve their rights of living that our God, Allah, has prescribed for us.

WONDERWORD by DAVID QUELLET

WONDERWORD: This word is made of 10 letters and is the only one of its kind. The word is a combination of the words 'wonder' and 'word'. It is a noun and means a word that is very interesting or surprising. It is often used to describe a word that is new or unusual.

Table with 3 columns: Clues, Word, and Solution. Clues include 'A word that is very interesting or surprising', 'A word that is new or unusual', etc. Solutions include 'Wonderword', 'Word', etc.

FLANDRE WITH FLAIR Solutions: B letters

Word search grid with letters and words hidden. Includes a list of words to find: BIRD, GAWD, AWAY, EDU, INDO, BER, NIS, SELL, LEAL, M, ILLI, PA, I, E, G, I, A, M, S, I, E, G, M, E, I, F, I, N, I, H, A, S, E, I, T, A, M, S, E, I, M, O, Y, U, O, U, C, O, M, E, N, T, A, N, D, B, O, I, R, U, M, O, C, R, M, Y, T, A, E, M, O, T, G, O, L, I, N, B, U, L, F, O, I, C, Y, V, I, L, I, O, T, I, M, A, R, W, A, R, I, D, I, N, S, E, P, H, I, A, N, Y, O, U, S, H, Y, I, E, A, K, E, N, T, U, L, T, V, R, A, T, I, O, N, S, N, T, I, M, I, M, P, A, C, O, M, P, I, N, G, I, N, S, A, M, M, O, Y, A, E, I, T, K, I, N, G, I, N, G, R, E, M, P, C, A, M, E, O, I, S, V, I, C, I, O, U, S, O, R, E, P, R, O, T, A, I, E, T, A, C, A, R, D, S, I, T, I, C, O, N, D, E, R, A, T, I, O, N, W, A, R, I, B, A, R, I, N, S, L, I, P, K, I, N, I, E, A, G, I, C, U, L, I, N, G, H, O, Y, S, I, S, L, E, P, Y, M, I, S, H, I, K, A, I, L, I, O, M, O, C, I, E, D, I, O, A, S, N, A, R, E, L, I, C, H, O, M, I, T, I, O, S, I, L, A, Y, O, U, R, A, A, G, R, E, S, I, O, N, I, N, T, E, L, I, G, A, L, Y, I, A, A, M, P, O, T, I, S, T, I, O, N, Y, E, P, E, R, I, F, F, A, D, H, O, M, I, S, W, A, C, K, I, N, G, I, S, I, S, I, A, S, S, O, N, D, I, M, E, N, T, I, N, A, S, A, E, L, P, A, D, O, R,

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My views on Yemen



BY PETER PAUL MUSCAT
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES
peterpaul@maktoob.com

I am not a seasoned traveller and I had never been to an Arab country before my visit to Yemen. Moreover most articles, reports and news about Yemen mentioned the poverty, kidnappings, tribal warfare and strict Islamic traditions. Anything about Yemen on the media more often than not had an attached warning.

Notwithstanding all these hurdles this unique country fascinated me. I decided to dig deeper and meet real people rather than bland data and facts which people tend to glance at for one moment only to dismiss them in the next. I started asking people I knew about Yemen. Some encouraged me; others shared information and knowledge; others recited the it's-a-dangerous-country chant; most knew next to nothing about it.

Then I scoured the internet, newspapers and magazines and read reports from people who had actually been to Yemen or lived there. I also contacted



some of them and we duly became good friends. We discussed problems I might encounter in Yemen, what to look for, what to avoid, what I'd need and what I wouldn't need - in short I listened to lots of travellers' tales. I also contacted an Arabic language institute in Sana'a and applied for a month's tuition there. The institute took care of the visa application and related paperwork. Meanwhile I set yementimes.com as my homepage so I could keep myself up to date. I also visited the nearest immunisation clinic to check about the any vaccines or medicines I'd need for Yemen. That reduced my apprehension somewhat.

Finally I arrived in Yemen and I immediately realised that all my previous preparation had not been in vain. Where others were shocked I was merely surprised; when others felt bewildered I felt intrigued.

Yemen is different from Europe. Its (equally old) culture evolved in a different manner, in another geographical location and has been through its particular historical events. Viewing the Yemeni culture from a European perspective would be unfair and unwise. After all I have dived

into the deep end of Arabia so I reckoned I'd better go with the flow. I am a guest here so I must accept where I am. Doing otherwise would be, I think, sheer disrespect.

The first thing I noticed here were the people. Being a native speaker of Maltese (a Semitic language) and having an elementary knowledge of Arabic were assets and helped me accept the Yemenis and feel accepted by them. People go out of their way to assist me. Total strangers greet each other in the streets or on public transport. That is something which is now very rare in big European cities.

The first few days in Sana'a were a big rush of emotion. Coupled with the high altitude, they left me quite breathless. Gradually I settled down and began to observe and take it all in. The architecture in Yemen, and particularly in Sana'a, seems surreal. One can only find something like it in fairy tale illustrations. Evidently the Yemenis are inclined to beauty and decoration. This attitude is reflected in the intricacies of the stained glass windows and the delicate patterns of the local handcrafted items.

The natural environment is still present

in Yemen to a great extent. Even city dwellers feel an affinity with it: the mountains, valleys, flora and fauna. The cooler weather in the mountainous regions also makes trekking and country walks very pleasant activities.

So why all those warnings about Yemen? All I can say is that so far I have enjoyed my time in Yemen. On the other hand I have seen many children and old people begging in the streets and have had people next to me armed with knives and guns. But poverty and squalor are also present in many parts of Europe. So are hand weapons, to a greater or lesser extent. Why should I view these aspects of life in Yemen any different from those in other countries?

The way of life in Yemen is not what I am used to but that doesn't mean one system is better or worse than the other. I expected and accepted this variety of living and shall return home, in sha'Allah, with yet another traveller's tale to tell.

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