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# Journalists reject the bill

Since the declaration of the new press law draft by the Ministry of Information earlier this year and the Yemeni journalists are seeing red. Not only was the draft formed without any consultation with the journalists or representative bodies such as the Syndicate, the draft is a clear violation of freedom of press. The lobbying and campaigning the journalists have been conducting to exercise pressure on the Ministry proved in vain. Two steps left before the journalists' nightmare becomes reality: the approval of the Shoura Council (which is elected by the government) and the ratification of the Parliament. Today the draft is within the Shoura Council's hands and the journalists are losing hope.

By: Amel Al-Ariqi  
& Mohammed Binsallam

SANA'A, Dec. 22 — Yemeni journalists unanimously rejected the press law draft proposed earlier by the Ministry of Information and now presented to the Shoura Council. The journalists in their assembly at the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate (YJS) last Thursday described the bill as "a new infraction to the freedom of speech or freedom of the press".

This rejection was announced after the long discussion of the bill at the YYS as a follow-up to the press law progress. They expressed their resentment to what they considered a gross attempt to impose more restraints on press. They also criticized the bill, which had been drafted by the government without journalists' contribution. They demanded the syndicate to raise a memo to the Consultative Council in which they explained their point of view of the bill.

Hafez Albukari, previous general secretary of YYS, described the bill as a shock since, according to Albukari, it exposed the false claims that the draft law promotes press freedom. "We can not deal with such law and we can not put our comments or remarks on this draft because it contained only expandable expressions and more limits. The only comment we can make is the rejection." He said.

Continued on page 3



Journalists gathering in the Journalist Syndicate.

PHOTO BY FOUAD AL-HARAZI

## Al-Houthi pleads for help as clashes renew

SAADA, Dec. 25 — Armed confrontations between security forces and some members of the "Faithful Youth" group left many people killed and others wounded on both sides, media sources quoted security sources, as well as tribal sources in the northern province of Saada.

The same sources said on Saturday that an armed group of fifty people attacked the Police Station in Al-Ghail District, leaving a number of people dead and several wounded on both sides.

The sources also added that the security authorities distributed at the beginning of the week a general note to all police stations in the province of Saada, asking for information about a person named "Abdullah Al-Nims", who is accused of leading a cell of less than fifty people which resides "Ham" Mountain - a 12 km northeast of Saada.

Military sources told the media last Thursday that Al-Houthi supporters, who have been entrenched since Dec. 18 in Mahdida Mountain (east of Suq Al-Talh) fired rockets, which fell down in different parts of Suq Al-Talh, but no human casualties were reported. One of the rockets fell down in a car showroom, owned by a

Saada local, damaging around fifteen cars.

The same sources clarified that Al-Houthi supporters have attempted to attack a military site that was recently established in Ghamman Mountain, near the Arms Market and Mahdida Mountain, dominated by Al-Houthi followers. None of the rockets reached the military site. It is worth mentioning that military site was established in order to blockade Al-Houthi supporters entrenched in Mahdida Mountain.

Continued on page 3

## While IMF writes off debts Yemen awaits its turn

The result of the Global Campaign Against Poverty (GCAP) has proved the campaign a success as the International Monetary Fund's executive board on Wednesday agreed to write off \$3.3 billion owed to it by 19 of the world's poorest countries. Certain criteria were required to be fulfilled by the poor countries before the IMF cancels the debts. The write off of Mauritania's debt, being the 20th country yet to be forgiven, is withheld until it makes "satisfactory progress in a few policy areas". The situation with Yemen is not any better, in fact according to international economic reports the Yemeni government has a long way to go before its economic reform policies are taken seriously.

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Dec. 24 — "This is an historic moment, which will allow these countries to increase spending in priority

areas to reduce poverty, promote growth," IMF Managing Director Rodrigo Rato said in the IMF press statement confirming the cancellation of debts.

Continued on page 3

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# A glass half full

Yemen has been trying to be integrated in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) since its establishment almost 25 years ago. In spite of the many economic and political challenges the country is facing today, especially with the conclusion of the 26th Gulf Summit in Abu Dhabi it seems Yemen is getting a step closer.

SANA'A, Dec. 23 — "It's a long way but we have crossed the first mile" This was how Dr. Abdu Bakr Al-Qirbi Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs concluded his statement to the Yemen Times with regards to Yemen's joining the GCC. The discussions of the 26th Gulf Summit concluded last week, prove optimistic as stated by Dr. Al-Qirbi. Yemen has presented an economic reform project to the summit with which the Yemeni government hopes to enhance its national economy. Three areas were of specific concern: economic enhancement, establishment of an economic support fund for Yemen and the agreement on compensation in case of establishing free trade areas in the region. Having free trade zones in the area including in Yemen might harm some of the national products that are not able to compete in the regional and international market. This is why the compensation in such event is being considered. A common committee made from representatives of both Yemen and the GCC would supervise the Fund dedicated for Yemen. "The decision to support Yemen is confirmed, now we are preparing for the Gulf development Funds visit to Yemen to discuss the details." Dr. Al-Qirbi told the Yemen Times.

The 26th Gulf Summit (18-20 December 2005) was conducted in Abu Dhabi and headed by the Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan President of the United Arab Emirates. The summit was named the " Fahd Summit" in memory of Late King Fahd of KSA and was attended by King Hamad Bin Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa of Bahrain, King Abdullah Bin



Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs

Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, Sultan Qaboos Bin Saeed of Oman, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar and Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah. The summit, which coincides with the GCC silver jubilee, is widely seen as setting the stage for a new era of co-operation in the history of the six-member organization. The agenda of the summit included the current situation in Iraq and Palestine, GCC relation with Iran, continued Iranian occupation of the UAE isles of Abu Moussa, Greater and Lesser Tunb, progress on war against terror, means of making the GCC and the Middle Eastern region a nuke-free zone in addition to the latest development on the Syrian-Lebanese relations. The summit also discussed issues that include economic integration, common GCC market, which is expected by 2007, monetary union, expected single currency by 2010, water network, GCC railway scheme, single identity, demographic structure and social insurance. Fahd Summit reviewed the extent of implementation of the GCC Supreme Council resolutions on education, military and security co-operation. It also touched on the progress being made on the negotiations between the GCC states and international groups on the establishment of free trade zones. Concerning Yemen, the summit discussed further details of Yemen joining the GCC especially that the 22nd Summit in Muscat had approved Yemen's integration to a number of affiliated bodies which are the Education, Health, Labour and Social Affairs and Sports Offices.

## 7th anti-polio campaign launched

SANA'A, Dec. 25— The 7th anti-polio campaign was launched Sunday all over Yemen. The campaign aims to vaccinate around four million children who are under five years old. Over 40,000 health workers and volunteers are involved in this campaign, supplied with 9,000 vehicles in order to reach remote and mountainous areas. Around 5 million and 1200 thousands vaccination dosages for the campaign have been distributed throughout health utilities.

The Ministry of Public Health and

Population organized the campaign in cooperation with World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. Anti-polio campaigns are run in order to further continue the efforts of curbing the spread of polio in Yemen. This campaign is considered the last one for 2005. During 12- 14 November this year, the Ministry of Public Health and Population organized an earlier campaign against polio. Around four million children under five years of age were vaccinated during that campaign.

## Cotton farmers clamor for compensation

SANA'A, Dec. 25 — Cotton farmers in Hudeidah province appealed to the President last Thursday to instruct concerned governmental bodies to compensate the farmers for what they lost this season. The appeal came after the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Authority for Textile and Weaving backed out from their commitment to grant loans the farmers in support for their cotton plantation expansion.

In their petition, signed by 120 farmers from 25 agricultural societies in Hudeidah, the farmers said they were informed of the president's directions to expand cotton plantation in 2004- 05 seasons. They said they aimed at achieving a high rate of productivity this season but insecticides spread in their farms destroyed the crops. A vast area was destroyed because of these bad insecticides making the 2005 product less than the planned rate by far.

The farmers added that they contacted the Ministry of Agriculture to investigate and hold officials who deliberately ignored the crises. They met with the Minister of Agriculture, who promised to make up for the damages. The Minister proposed ten Yemeni Riyals (amounting

six US cents) per kilo of cotton, but such promises have gone awry.

The farmers have shown concern over the government's disavowal after it had lifted subsidies on fuel products, which led to the exhaustion of their possessions. They have sold their cattle and other possessions because the General Authority for Textile and Weaving did not give them more than one loan. They demanded the provision of irrigation network to save more water for farming and request the government to keep its pledges for raising the cotton prices and deal with their debts. The Hudeidah farmers confirmed that the season of cotton plantation has started with vast areas being cultivated and these areas depend on well water.

Consequent to their deteriorating conditions, many farmers were compelled to abandon their farms. They feared of deliberate ignorance by the concerned authorities, which led to the season's losses. Thousands of families depend mainly on the outcome of this season. The farmers said the government's ignorance would create agricultural disorder, increase desertification and lead to closure of cotton spinning shops.

## When abduction means power

Occasionally we hear of clashes between Yemeni forces and some powerful Yemeni tribes. These tribes resort to violence whenever they find it the possible way to defend their rights or serve their interests. They sometimes resort to kidnapping tourists as means for exercising pressure on the government. Considering the complicated tribal system in Yemen and that most tribes are fully armed, the government generally yields and surrenders to the tribes demands. Encouraging by this, the on going abduction making certain areas in Yemen a "not so friendly" place for tourists.

SANA'A, Dec. 24 — A spokesman of the Ministry of Interior announced Saturday the release of the two Austrian tourists, who were kidnapped last Tuesday in Marib governorate. Saba News agency affirmed that the hostages were released on Tuesday December 20 by three young men from Al Hateek area, which is part of Abida tribe in Marib. The released tourists are the Archaeology Professor Peter Schurs 52, from Vienna, and his friend the Architecture Barbara Meisterhofer 21, from Austria.

The kidnappers told the mediators that 'they resorted to kidnapping because they failed to convince the security authorities to release their relatives and refer them to judiciary. Their

detailed relatives are Mohamed Saeed Hassan Jameel, Abdulazeez Saeed Jardan and Ali Bin Ali Doha.

They added that they have released the kidnapped pair, after they highlighted their detainee's case. They say that they succeeded to convey a message to the political leadership. They think that now the media and human rights organizations know that the arrest of their relatives is a clear ignorance of human rights.

The kidnappers abducted the two tourists from old Marib town north east of Sana'a. They wanted to put pressure on security to release three of their relatives, who were arrested upon their arrival from Syria, a year ago. Security authorities claim the three detainees

have been accused of fighting the US-led coalition in the Iraqi territories. They also accuse them of having connection with one of the organizations facilitating the transportation of Yemeni fighters to Iraq.

However, relatives of the detainees deny these allegations and insist that the three young men went to Syria for medical treatment. They demand that their sons should be referred to judiciary, which security authorities refuse to do.

Security sources confirmed that the tourists were released at 03.00 A.M. Saturday, and they were in good health. They headed to one of Marib hotels, after being handed over by tribal men to the house of the Governor of Marib, Mr. Abdulla Alnassi.

It is worth saying that the Austrian foreign Ministry had made a committee of crisis and emergency to follow up their citizen's case. Consequently the Austrian ambassador in Jordan arrived Sana'a on Friday. Another delegate came from the foreign Ministry in Vienna, in addition to an interior Ministry delegate. They meant to follow the developments in cooperation with the Austrian Consulate in Sana'a.

Kidnapping cases had stopped for sometime but they have now resumed.

## Honey industry gains higher dimensions

SANA'A, Dec. 25 — The production of Yemeni honey is rated at an annual total of 1706 tons as reported by the Ministry of Agriculture in its latest report. Seventeen percent of the quantity produced is exported to neighboring and foreign countries generating an income of \$ 9 million. The same statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture indicated that the number of grown beehives exceeded a million in Yemen. This is considered a significant increase and proves as economic investment potential.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture told the media recently that the Ministry is considering investing in the honey sector, among the five strategic crops to support in the coming development plans.

The Taiz based honeybee development project which was established in 1993 through German funding, is now being considered strategically as potential national economic project. Muqbil

Naser Al-Bahr, General Manager of the project, in a press statement explained that the project, in cooperation with the beekeepers and 'IDAS' had carried out 253, long and short training courses for more than 4037 beekeepers from different parts of the country. Moreover, 4260 field and office visits were made to 3800 beneficiaries in light of this training program and eighty-three field surveys were conducted regarding 539 beekeepers.

More interesting is that the honey sector is encouraged to create its own associations and networks. This would be considered as a significant step in professional this industry and including it in the organized sector of the national economy. The creation of such associations as mentioned by the beekeepers would assist in marketing their products and beekeeping tools. In addition, a database of the beekeeping industry and relevant information will be created during the project implementation.



Honey industry thriving in Yemen.

Photo by Majid Al-Saqqaf

## Yemen heads African Horn Assembly

SANAA, 21 Dec 2005- Leaders of the Sana'a Assembly for Cooperation (SAC) are going to meet on Wednesday in Aden from 28/12/2005 to 29/12/2005. The Assembly will be headed by the president Ali Abdullah Saleh along with a participation the Sudanese president Omer AL-Basher, Ethiopian Prim Minster Meles Zenawi and the Somali president Abdullah

Yousif Ahmed.

Foreign Minister Dr. Abu Bakr al-Qirbi told the mass media that Sana'a Assembly for Cooperation will focus on security cooperation among concerned countries of the African Horn, Southern Red Sea and Aden Gulf. Furthermore; the Sana'a Assembly for Cooperation will discuss a cooperation opportunities with the international

community to combat terrorism and the protection of international nautical in Red Sea and Aden Gulf. The SAC will also discuss issues of security, development, peace, and economic integration regarding exporting sheep and cattle to Yemen and commercial market among Sana'a Gathering Countries.

Al-Qirbi points out that the SAC will call for more efforts to realize peace in

Sudan and Somalia. It is worth mention that Sudan has made a progress in peace talks with the Sudan Liberation Movement in Naivasha, Kenya, and with Darfur. Moreover, the SAC will discuss what Gulf Countries Council can subsidize and restructure security in Somalia an Sudan. During the Assembly there will be invitation for expanding the membership.



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### 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:

Journalists insist on refusing the press law. Do you think that the government will enforce its law?  
Yes  
No  
I don't know

#### Last edition's question:

The state is almost decaying out because of corruption. Do you think that the resolutions of the seventh conference of the ruling party will help fighting corruption?

No 76%  
Yes 15%  
I don't know 9%

**Go to our website at:**  
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The latest kidnapping case was about a month ago in Marib. The kidnapped, a Swiss and his wife were released based to tribal mediation. The kidnapper was also demanding the release of his brother detained in similar circumstances.



# Media trained on election coverage

Media in Yemen mostly follows unprofessional techniques when covering elections. News bulletins are not interesting enough to draw people's attention; the voice of opposition and public opinion is hardly heard in election coverage. For that reason, the BBC World Service Trust is currently working on a long terms program for training journalists from several media institutions to help them improve their professional skills in preparation for the coming Presidential and local elections.

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

SANA'A, Dec. 22 – The BBC Election Reporting Project, in cooperation with Civic Democratic Initiatives Support Foundation, concluded Thursday a two-week training program for journalists and editors. Participants in the training are from Saba news agency, Al-Thawra newspaper, Sana'a Radio Station, and Yemen TV. This training is one of a series of training projects that come underneath the The BBC Election Reporting Project.

Ms. Juliette Harkin, project manager, said the training programs aim to build the skills of journalists, editors, and managers to improve the media's coverage of the coming elections. It also aims to make the election coverage more interesting and attractive for the public. "Progress will be measured through content analysis before, during and after the training," added Ms. Juliette.

The trainees welcomed the new techniques of election coverage, describing

them as a real step towards democracy. They expressed their willingness to apply those techniques in the coming elections. Mr. Bakr Al-Dabiani, a trainee from Sana'a Radio Station, said trainees have learnt much during the training programs and have come to learn about election coverage in an objective, accurate and neutral way.

Mr. Ali Al-Ajri, another trainee, said trainees were given practical exercises on preparing field reports, public opinion reports and personal interviews. Another trainee said previous election coverings were used as propaganda.

In a statement to the Yemen Times, Ms. Juliette Harkin, said the The BBC Reporting Project seeks to offer training and professional development opportunities to journalists to improve their skills in the next presidential and local elections. This will be achieved through a series of workshops to be held in Sana'a and Aden with the participation of leading media organizations. She added that BBC Trust



Trainees listening to Ms. Julia Paul, Senior Trainer.

expects to train around 150 media professionals, journalists, as well as to train at least 15 Yemenis in the theory of training so they can continue to be used as a source for training of other journalists in Yemen.

There were around 60 trainees from Saba news agency, Al-Thawra Newspaper, Sana'a Radio Station and Yemen Satellite Television. They were given lectures on the principles of journalism, ethics and safety of journalism, and the role of media in reporting elections. Trainees were divided into three groups and received practical training. The first group was given practical trainings in the Al-Thawra Newspaper. The second group was trained in Saba news agency, where trainees were given lectures on the styles, collecting and editing news items. The third group aimed to train journalists and editors from Sana'a Radio and Television Establishment, and the lectures focused on editing and writ-

ing news to be broadcast on television and radio.

Towards the end of the training, trainees expressed their gratitude for the trainers from the BBC World Service Trust. They wished they would be able to apply what they have learnt in the coming presidential and local elections. Some trainees said it is the age of democracy and all parties should participate in reporting and covering the functions of the coming elections.

The BBC World Service Trust works with people in developing and transitional countries to improve the quality of their lives through the innovative use of the media. Ms. Juliette Harkin stated that the BBC World Service Trust Reporting Project in Yemen is funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This project is supporting journalists in the training professional skills in the Arab World, particularly in Yemen during elections.

Continued from page 1

## Journalists reject the bill

Albukari insisted on the journalists demand to redraft a new bill involving journalists, experts in press and law experts. "We have also to pay attention to the studies, opinions and experiences that offered by international experts in this regard. We held many distinguished workshops in which there were many working papers of specialized and neutral experts in media from USA, but those opinions have not been taken in consideration," he added.

Through the discussion, some journalists offered a proposal, which was approved by the rest of the attended journalists and became a draft that they demanded to be sent to the Consultative Council.

The draft includes what they called "the main required definitions that must be taken in consideration in any bill of press". In the basis of the draft any press code must be in line with the international standards and conventions Yemen has ratified such as the Sana'a convention in 1996. The journalists aim through the draft to remove the limitation of media ownership, giving the right to own media instruments particularly audiovisual means (radio and TV) to individuals and institutions. The draft also mentioned the importance of providing the reports with information, protection. Journalists demanded also the end of practices against media persons such whether detention, closure of newspapers, or any other kind of assault. The draft also referred to the importance of improving the economic state of the journalists.

Hamud Munser, Al-Arabiya correspondent and one of the journalists, who formed the draft, said to Yemen Times

that what they recommend is not an alternative to the bill. They are basic principles that should have been included in the legislations of the press law. "We want to be partners with the government and the civil society organizations in developing a press code which promotes freedom of the press. One which is considered a manifestation of democracy in the country and an important means to expose corruption" he said.

Mahbob Ali, head of the Syndicate, confirmed that the government created the press code draft and sent it to the Shoura Council. The latter in return sent it to the syndicate asking the journalists to comments on the bill. "However, I will still send a memo, on behalf of the Syndicate, to the Shoura council telling them that the journalists refused unanimously the whole bill" he said.

Last Wednesday the Yemeni journalists in a similar congregation came up with six main flaws or demands in current draft proposed by the Ministry:

- The law should observe the international charters, which Yemen has signed in addition to Sana'a declaration.

- The right of individuals to own audio and visual media.

- To cancel all restrictions on media and confine to a journalist code of ethics.

- Judiciary is to be the only reference in publication conflicts, and to cancel journalist's detention, closure of press and the fines on journalists are not to exceed 50% of their salaries

- Sponsorship over media is to be transferred to a high journalism council, under the supervision of the Shoura Council. It should contain all the civil society organizations in order to change

journalism into a national information body, which 51% of it is owned by the government and 49% left for the establishment employees' subscriptions.

- The law should oblige the publishers and owners to furnish a minimum salary of \$150 to their journalists.

Several international experts and organizations had expressed fears over the law, because it contradicts the international standards of rights of expression, imposes many restrictions on he license, registration and publication approval. They described it as obstruction to journalistic activity.

According to Article 19 Organization's comment on the draft, there is no reason why it should contain any restrictions on the press.

A report of two American experts sees that the project 'imposes pre publication restrictions.' In this law 'A journalist is often under focus of skepticism, while the government has a wide choice of different types of punishments.'

The report also recommended the amendment of other laws, which allow journalists' detention, and to cancel all sorts of press sponsorship. It regarded oppression of press freedom as oppression to the liberty of individuals. The report found that the need to discuss a press law is an offensive deed in itself.

According to activists and journalists, the American and Article 19 reports, entirely wiped out the press law. They considered the notices which they put an honor because it is in conformity with human rights, democracy and modern life. The improvement of the law in their view will be a disaster, not to the journalists but to the whole Yemeni community.

## Al-Houthi pleas for help as clashes renew

For his part, Yahya Badriddin Al-Houthi, an MP representing the ruling party who is currently residing in Germany, sent last Friday a letter of relief to UN General Assembly the UN Secretary General, the Islamic Conference Organization, the Arab League, the European Union and all the media and human rights organizations.

In his letter, a copy of which was obtained by the Yemen Times, Yahya Al-Houthi said: "through this letter we convey to you the screams of your brothers in the Yemeni prisons, particularly those detained in Saada prisons. We would like to inform you of the torture, killings, abuses and all kinds of maltreatment the prisoners are subjected to."

He concluded his letter by saying, "We hope to see humanitarian reactions from you and expect you to do what you think is suitable towards such malpractices that contradict all values, traditions and international conventions.

On the 31st of last October, Yahya Al-Houthi urged the concerned international organizations to shoulder the responsibility and investigate all kinds of abuses and torture against Al-Houthi sup-

porters.

In his emailed letter, a copy of which was obtained by the Yemen Times, Al-Houthi mentioned that the political security apparatuses have practiced severe torture against three of the detainees, who since then have become paralyzed. The letter claimed: "the policy of torture against prisoners was practiced deliberately."

He also added: "the political security in the capital recently freed three of our tribesmen who were arrested before 2004 war in Saada. They were released paralyzed because of torture." Yahya Al-Houthi pointed out that the victims had become psychologically ill although they were young and healthy at the time of their arrest. The freed prisoners were named as Abdullatif Ahmad Al-Murtadha, 25 (from Al-Talh District), Lutfallah Dhafer Al-Saifi, 27, and Ali Murghem. Al-Houthi's letter, however, did not indicate the time of their release.

Yahya Al-Houthi has also mentioned in his letter other names of those been tortured. They were Ahmad Hajar (who claimed that he was tortured by the political police until he became paralyzed), Abdulaziz Al-Najdi (who was

partially paralyzed in the Sana'a political security prison) and a child named Ibrahim Al-Sayyani (who became disabled because of his injury during the military operations in Saada).

The Saada first bloody events between the authorities and Al-Houthi followers lasted for 84 days and ended with the killing of Hussein Badriddin Al-Houthi, the founder of the Faithful Youth Organization, on the 10th of September 2004. Those events were followed by confrontations that started on 28th of March 2005 and continued occasionally.

Politicians differed in their explanations of the reasons that led the authorities to uproot the activities of Al-Houthi followers. Some say that the reasons are political; others describe them as ethnic while the third group relates the authorities' attempt to exterminate Al-Houthi as a response to U.S. and Israeli demands. Majority of politicians, however, believe that Saudis, through their strong influence in Yemen, have a hand in plans for eliminating the Shiite movement of Al-Houthi, which according to their belief, limits the expansion of the Wahabi movement in Yemeni territory.

## While IMF writes off debts Yemen awaits its turn

Twenty of the poorest countries in the world Poor countries should receive IMF debt relief by early 2006 according to the IMF memo issued last week. Development activists had feared earlier this month that the IMF would back-out from its commitment and so they staged a rally outside the IMF Washington headquarters last week. Of course they have nothing to worry about now that the decision is confirmed. The final step is to obtain the approval of 43 of the world's most rich countries, so far 37 countries have approved and the remaining six consents are thought to be on their way. This step would trigger the other monetary organisations such as the World Bank and African Development Bank, whose debts were also written off under the G8 deal to follow suit.

On the local level, Yemen is still struggling to get on the good books of the international monetary organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank. With the decline in the latter's aid to Yemen it seems the job is even getting harder. The financial reports of the IMF Executive Directors issued on the 23rd of May this year considered that Yemen is at a crucial crossroads, facing the long-term challenges arising from the expected rapid decline in oil production. While noting the slow pace of reform in recent years, Directors welcomed the authorities' plans to develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at promoting growth and diversifying the productive base. They also welcomed the authorities' renewed efforts to mobilize public support for reforms-including through a public information campaign-and to make the reform package part of the 2005 budget. Directors underscored the importance of strengthening fiscal adjustment and deepening structural reforms to ensure fiscal and external sustainability, with macroeconomic policies guided by long-term considerations, as well as to strengthen the non-oil sector. The rapid decline in oil production poses serious long-term economic challenges for Yemen. The authorities have carried out a public information campaign to highlight the risks of inaction and to facilitate the political and public acceptance of reform measures, some of which are now part of the 2005 budget.

The IMF financial indicators report on 14th March 2005 indicated that economic growth slowed in 2004 due to a sharp contraction in the oil sector. Oil production declined by 5.9 percent, reflecting diminishing recovery from aging large oil fields as well as the absence of significant new discoveries. Given the slowdown in oil production, real GDP growth is estimated to have declined to 2.7 percent in 2004 compared with 3.1 percent in 2003. Non-oil GDP growth is estimated to have reached 4.1 percent in 2004, supported by stronger activity in the construction, transportation, and trade sectors, and fuelled by domestic demand stemming from continued fiscal expansion and higher public sector wages. The end-year core CPI inflation (excluding qat) increased from 12.1 percent in 2003 to 14.5 percent in 2004, owing largely to expansionary fiscal and monetary poli-

cies, as well as higher food prices caused by adverse weather conditions. The nominal exchange rate remained stable vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar in 2004, and the real effective exchange rate appreciated by 3.5 percent over the 11 months ending November 2004.

In its 2004 report on Yemen, the Country Commercial Guide (CCG) presented a comprehensive look at the Republic of Yemen's commercial environment using economic, political, and market analysis. The 2004 report stated that the country still has an inefficient, overstaffed, and often-corrupt bureaucracy that must be streamlined, appropriately compensated and adequately trained. The government needs to take action to

stem a current annual population growth of 3.5% that is consuming scarce renewable water resources at 140-150% of recharge rate. It must create a transparent legal environment that can objectively and independently resolve disputes, and a sound financial market. Finally, the government must also find a way to extend its authority appropriately throughout the entire country. Handling these issues will require a deft political touch. The tolerance level of Yemen's public for further economic hardship brought by reform is wearing thin.

For more information on the Global Campaign Against Poverty and Yemen's involvement refer to Yemen Times article on 30th June 2005.

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# Cocaine and hashish spreading in Yemen

Ten years ago, cocaine, heroine, marijuana, and hashish were not common in Yemen. Now the situation has changed. The use of such drugs is increasingly spreading.

By: Hakim Almasmari  
hakim\_almasmari@hotmail

Drugs such as cocaine, heroine, marijuana, hashish have been increasingly noticed in Yemen during the last five years. For example, in the capital Sana'a it is now being sold in a number of common places such as Bab-al-Yemen and certain hotels on Taiz Street. These areas were drug free just 10 years ago. Parents are increasingly fearing the further spread of such addictions among youth, especially that the Yemeni society is still trying to limit the use of the Qat addiction.

Considering the strategic location of Yemen, drugs are usually shipped from Southeast Asia through the Gulf of Aden and other coasts around the country. From there, it is shipped to numerous gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and other countries in the region. Not surprisingly, many of these illegal drugs are left behind and used in Yemen. New markets for these drugs have been created in places like Aden, Hodieda, and other cities across the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf shores.

The spread of these addictions is more common among the rich class of society rather than the poor. "The only people using these drugs are the children of government officials and rich businessmen", said Mohammed Abdu, a poor Yemeni laborer. "The more money a person possesses, the more negatives they start to do. We will just stick to Qat, it's safer and more convenient", he added.

Hashish, which is also a dangerous drug banned worldwide, is even grown locally in places like Ibb and Taiz, according to the local people. This drug has been seen used in the Republic of Yemen for over a decade, but never has it been as popular among the rich youth as today. This could be attributed to the



Cocaine could be used by sniffing through the nose.

increase of external influence on the Yemeni people.

Last year, I personally came across a number of teenagers in Sana'a who were using Hashish and Cocaine during Qat sessions. Consequently, last month policemen in Hajjah Province seized a car loaded with 68 kg of Hashish while it was on its way to Saudi Arabia. This quantity is the largest of its kind seized by the Yemeni police before being trafficked into neighboring countries. Yet this amount is considered quite small compared to the amount of drugs shipped to other countries from Yemen.

In a different occurrence, a married couple walked into the family section of a famous local restaurant on Hadda Street, shockingly saw a woman sniffing cocaine up her nose quietly. When she realized that she had been noticed, she tried to run and stumbled on the floor and couldn't get back on her feet easily. Customers watched in shock at the unconventional image in front of their eyes. When the couple complained to the owners of the restaurant, their response was that they can't see what all customers are doing, and privacy must be granted to customers, especially in a conservative society like Yemen.

Also, in famous dance clubs near the city of Aden where beer and liquor are

provided, it's common to see the use of illegal drugs by many Yemeni men and women. "I walked in and thought I was in London or New York. How could this happen in Yemen?" said Hameed Saleh, a Yemeni who lives in Britain. "Such people have lost their cultural values, and are too addicted to the drugs to stop its usage" he criticized.

Citizens living in rural areas have also been seen using Hashish carelessly, as they consider it similar to Qat. "It's the same as Qat, so I don't understand why the big fuss!" said one hashish user from a rural area near Ibb. Hashish is grown locally it is available for even the lower class people. Ignorance and illiteracy in rural areas increase the chances of Hashish being used by the rural people. As the comment by the farmer from Ibb indicates, many of the locals in such places do not even understand the significance of getting involved in such practices.

Hashish and cocaine are very addictive, and in many situations could be life threatening if misused. "This will be a phenomenon if authorities don't take such an issue with serious concern", said Talal Ahmad a Yemeni Specialized doctor. "Our health system is already weak, and if this goes on, who knows what catastrophe will hit our health system next", he added.

The price of Hashish is 30 to 50 times more expensive than Qat. It is also more regularly used as it is consumed while smoking cigarettes. Cocaine on the other hand, has fewer users yet, the number is increasing dramatically, especially among the wealthy of the society. "These rich people have so much money they don't know what to do with it. They don't understand that money is a gift bestowed upon them from Allah and will definitely be questioned about", said Ali Saleh, a senior citizen when comparing the past generations to the present. In Yemen where there is hardly any enforcement of law, problems and

tragedies are given importance only after they spread. Future consequences of such trend are drastic. Children will be raised smoking Hashish instead of cigarettes and using cocaine instead of Qat.

According to confidential sources, many women involved in prostitution are frequent users of Hashish and Cocaine, as it is given to them from drug dealers in exchange for sexual intercourse. "If you ask yourself how these girls even get the money to buy such drugs it's very easy to understand. I definitely know that their parents are not giving them money for drugs" said Mujahed al-Munabbih who is from the business circle in Yemen and knows about these issues.

There are over 4000 prostitutes in Yemen as reported by sources from within the sex industry in Yemen. "We destroyed our lives when we took this path, and now our health by using drugs" this source said regretting her fate.



Hashish in one of its many forms.

A crisis like this must be dealt with great concern. The government to combat drugs, in order to decrease its spread, has noticed no real effort. Organizations for fighting drugs do

exist, but expectations for their efforts are low and unaccounted for. If serious effort is not seen in fighting this dilemma, expect corruption in Yemen to rise to unexpected levels in the future.

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*No excuses accepted***Traffic police want their qat money**

By: Hakim Alasmari  
Hakim\_Alasmari@hotmail.com

In countries around the world, security forces tend to play a large role in maintaining the country's stability. Here in Yemen, unfortunately, it's the opposite. In one way or another, traffic police are causing chaos through their unjust tactics. Traffic police only get paid the equivalent of \$5 for a day's work, which is the reason for this widespread problem. Due to such poor government pay, traffic police take their financial problems into their own hands, taking money from poor innocent citizens driving taxis or buses, trying to provide for the urgent needs of their own families.

Hundreds of transportation drivers complain daily of unjust treatment by traffic police. Blackmailing has become common whenever a simple violation occurs. Nagheeb Abdullah, a poor citizen living off the little he gets from driving his taxi, said, "They are God's worst creation! They'll find the simplest mistake just to blackmail you and openly ask for 'qat money.'" They don't understand it's not our fault they have financial problems - it's the government's. They should go after it, not poor citizens like me."

"Qat money" has become a usual demand in negotiations between drivers and traffic police. Citizens complain of the way officers demand the money, making them feel desperate to give it and openly demanding a certain

amount. "Qat money! What do we look like, farms? We can't even buy our children decent school clothes for god's sake," one taxi driver nervously said while giving a customer a ride home. "These people are not from respectable families. If they were, they would not take such corrupt and unjust actions against people," he added.

From the driver's viewpoint, you cannot excuse them from blame. They have damaged transportation vehicles: cracked windshields, broken rear lights and many other unpleasant scenes. But how can someone earning a little over 1,000YR per day repair car parts costing more than his income also deal with the many corrupt traffic police who demand illegal money from them? Government irresponsibil-

ity in dealing with this issue is the root of this crisis. "All the government cares about is how to erase society's middle class. With procedures like this, the middle class will disappear and the lower class will virtually double," Abdullah said, previously a middle class citizen now in the lower class.

According to taxi and bus drivers, traffic police take an estimated 5,000YR monthly through ridiculous claims. Ironically, drivers give what they are asked, fearing greater loss and more problems if they go to the police station. Situations like this are one of the many corruption cases the government must combat. Last week, President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced that corruption must be

fought from within the government, as well as in political parties and organizations. No actions are visibly taking place. Yemenis feel that words are as far as we'll get in fighting corruption from its different angles. Poor citizens will have to suffer the outcomes of this until authorities end such a terrible issue.

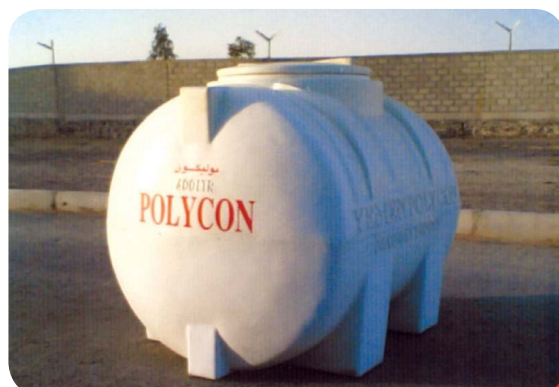
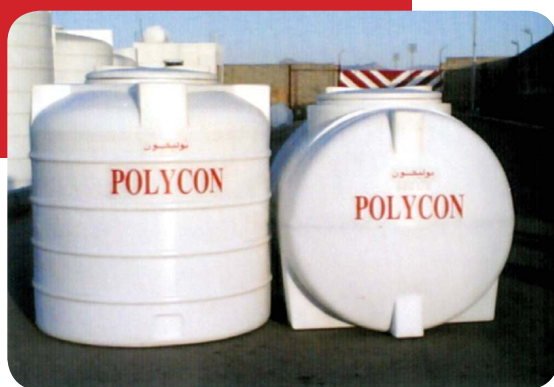
A traffic police officer who preferred to remain anonymous said, "People don't understand that we are living through this dark age as well. With salaries like the equivalent of \$150 monthly, we can't even guarantee ourselves a future." It is hard to imagine who is right when you hear the story from both sides. Citizens complain of traffic police oppression, while traffic police complain of gov-

ernment oppression.

The government must be held accountable for such issues, as they result in tragic outcomes for this country. Citizens begin to see one another as prey to achieve a certain goal, therefore causing chaos. Authorities must fight corruption at its root, keeping in mind that violation fines must be reasonable enough for people to pay. Otherwise, these actions will continue for as long as we can imagine. Such an issue would not be as serious if responsibility was put in the right hands. We hope the president really meant what he said in Aden in mid-December about fighting corruption and putting an end to it from its root of existence. If not, then where can we expect change in this country?

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## Words of Wisdom



Gentlemen, Yemen does not need more money! It needs a system. Yemen needs accountable officials, and it needs people with some decency in the way they work. If the IMP, World Bank and other organizations pump loans into Yemen, where will it go? More importantly, how will it be paid?

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

OUR  
OPINIONConnecting  
with the people

Six days ago, the Indian President Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam made a powerful presentation on "connectivity" in all its dimensions. The speech was delivered during a one-day event hosted by *The Indian Express*. This event as part of the India Empowered initiative titled "India Empowered: Roadmap for Tomorrow". It was not the first time the Indian president connects with his people. In more than one occasion he would reach out and disseminate hope and courage providing his people with wings to fly and achieve their dreams. "Problems should not become your captain, you must become the captain of your problem and succeed" He said on the event last week. Being a writer and a man of science Dr. Abdul Kalam wastes no opportunity to encourage the Indian people to progress. Of his famous quotes:

*"Thinking should become your capital asset, no matter whatever ups and downs you come across in your life. Thinking is progress. Non-thinking is stagnation of the individual, organization and the country. Thinking leads to action. Knowledge without action is useless and irrelevant. Knowledge with action, converts adversity into prosperity."*

Anyone can reach him, you can send a letter to him through his website, as I have, and know that your letter will be answered. He is an inspiration to his people and acknowledges their intellect and rights. Today, in spite of all its challenges, poverty, population growth...etc, India has become one of the most powerful countries in the world and is growing stronger. The only reason why India is progressing this fast is because its leaders have a vision. They have a dream for their country and want the welfare of the Indian people.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf  
Editor-in-Chief



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## Opinion

Characteristics of the  
successful executive manager

The Arab region is in a position where there should be co-existence with and acceptance of variables, as well as effecting modernization in its management aspects. The successful manager, whether president of a company or leader of a political party or organization, is capable of shouldering the responsibility of specifications and criteria he believes could meet his ambitions and orientations for serving the society, the party or the organization of which he is a part.

Owing to that, he must acquire and possess high proficiency and ability empowering him to deal with all types of incidents and make proper and timely decisions. This should be far-removed from self-interest, nepotism and bias toward any group or party. By this, he will prove the extent of his sincerity and the sincerity of others.

The executive manager is well aware of all matters and issues needing discussion, is not self-opinionated and should not utter coarse words or severe looks. He should entertain self-respect to be respected by all. He is a well-studied decision maker. Moreover, he is to be more patient toward employees responsible to him, giving them more than one chance to reconsider mistakes made



By: Prof.  
Abdulaziz al-Tarb

before taking any action against them. An executive manager possesses a modern director's personality whose positive words endeavor to overcome and solve difficulties facing employees by increasing meetings with them. The successful manager also will not allow his temper to affect his management policy and therefore, does not make decisions out of anger over certain actions. He also should have an ever-alert conscience to grant rights to those who deserve them. We hail such a successful and understanding executive manager, from whom no one gets angry, except he who does not like justice.

In this respect, let us question why a successful manager sometimes changes into a dominating, obstinate and temperamental one hating discussion and teamwork and refusing to accept others' opinions.

I think the success of a director in managing subordinates depends on the subordinate's response, for example, the one who dilly-dallies in his performance and does not adapt to changes and incidents in daily work. The successful manager is not willing to waste time—believing that time is money—listening to subordinates' excuses. Such a manager can be found in many public and private

institutions.

In my opinion, we can prepare managers, whatever their qualifications, through workshops, training courses and symposiums, provided their promotions and annual allowances depend on attending such courses and performance results. Even political parties can prepare their cadres in such workshops. Many countries and political parties have special institutes for this purpose but regretfully, they are not operative.

Is it possible to begin 2006 preparing to hold such courses and symposiums, especially since many cadres and officials here and elsewhere are about to be pensioned, so that we will bring trained persons at the expense of these positions and jobs? High-ranking state and party leadership, general managers and ministers who cannot prepare a second generation of employees should be held accountable. It goes without saying that authority can be authorized, but responsibility cannot. We must authorize authorities to create the second leadership generation and be far from centralization, which does not serve the ambitions of development and democracy.

*Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Tarb is an economist and a professor in Political Science and an expert in administrative development. He is head of a number of professional associations, such as the Arab Group for Investment and Development.*

## Yemen's marshall plan

By: Raidan Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf  
alsaqqaf@gmail.com

Perhaps the last few years were the most peaceful in Yemen's modern history, except for the Bush-Saleh rampage on 'terror' and the Saada episode. This notion indicates that peace is an abnormality in Yemen which can't be easily sustained, as our masculine culture is one which endorses violence and war and considers them to be merits of manhood and power; this is evident in our language dialect, dress code, love for weapons, and loyalty for the tribe, faction, political party on the expense of the loyalty to the country.

In fact, Yemen is full of peace-challenged people who are willing to fight and commit massacres in order to sustain their views and interests, from your average minibus driver to the cop who shot him to the superior officer who denies the cop his monthly stipend. And now as economic, political and social pressures are escalating, the likelihood of armed conflict and a potential civil war is escalating, with military spending and the government-sponsored arm race, there-

fore any dispute will be 'crushed' instantly and painfully, and it will target specific locations of the country where the rising will be sparked from, evident from the discriminatory behavior of armed forces reaction after the last price hike, where some localities and cities experienced a harsher response from security forces compared to others.

Similarly, armed tribal forces have succeeded in changing government policy and got exclusive fuel subsidies and also forced the government to drop the petrol fuel price to the mass from 65 YR per liter to 60, while other civil forces and unarmed demonstrations were met with government tanks and excessive use of government forces, and Loyalist to Yemen [not party or tribal loyalist] were threatened, jailed, and made to suffer.

Yemenis are worried, neighbor countries are worried, even Somali refugees are worried: they have experienced the same scenario previously, and thus they desire to be relocated out of the country because they know and they feel that Yemen is doomed to become the new Somalia; unpublished press reports which include interviews with Somali refugees indicate that they are being

underestimated and have systematically managed to undertake organized crime and burglary in order to survive, but mind you, if Yemen isn't able to sustain its own citizens through widespread corruption and crime, what about Somali refugees?

The Marshall plan of 1947 where the US helped war-torn Europe to recover had two objectives, the first was long-term humanitarian relief, and the second was to stop the communism spread. Similarly, our rich neighbors in the gulf region would eventually undertake such a plan, however, their second objective should be in making sure that there is a massive cultural change in the country which includes criminalizing war and changing the mindset of school-age pupils and most importantly making sure that peace-challenged people do not reach points of authority [again] and prosecute them as terrorists. Only a culture of peace is the remedy for Yemen, and only is it possible through a serious change of culture and social reform, doing this along will derive security, economic development, political stability and cultural prosperity, and will truly make Yemen a good global citizen.

## Letters to the Editor

## UNHCR clarify its stance

UNHCR is deeply saddened by the tragic death of a man with unknown identity and injuries sustained by five Somali demonstrators and four Yemeni policemen outside UNHCR's office in Sana'a on Saturday 17 December, when Yemen's anti riot forces had to intervene to disperse an increasingly aggressive and violent crowd. The crowd-varying from 50-300 people had been demonstrating at times violently- since 13 November, despite ongoing efforts to reach a peaceful solution.

UNHCR however wants to take issue with your article of Dec 18 in which UNHCR Yemen is blamed for the death of "a Somali refugee" ("UNHCR-Yemen blamed for death of Somali refugee").

Since the start of the protest on November 13, UNHCR - assisted by the Government of Yemen- has sought to reach a peaceful solution through continuous dialogue. UNHCR staff met several times with the demonstrators to discuss their demands. We agreed to meet several of them, including more assistance for vulnerable refugees; more Somali-speaking

UNHCR staff; additional health care; registration and provision of ID cards (to take place between 24 dec-15 Jan, 2006); and transfer to the camp for those Somalis wishing more assistance.

We explained to the demonstrators, that one of their main demands, resettlement to third countries, is only an option for a few vulnerable cases and at the discretion of the resettlement countries themselves - not UNHCR. We also explained that UNHCR is not and cannot be responsible for the payment of salaries or rents.

We also made clear that all Somalis entering Yemen are automatically granted refugee status by the government. At the end of October, some 79,000 refugees had been registered with UNHCR in Yemen, more than 68,000 of whom were from Somalia. Somalis in Yemen are able to work and to stay in the country indefinitely. Most Somalis live in urban areas, with roughly 7,500 staying at the Kharaz refugee camp in the Lahj governorate in the country's south.

However, despite all UNHCR's attempts and advocating for a peaceful solution, by last weekend the crowd had become

increasingly aggressive and were blocking the entrance to our office and was in a very violent manner preventing staff from leaving. Yemeni anti riot forces decided to intervene to protect UNHCR staff and restore public order. The intervention was done in a professional manner, but turned violent when the demonstrators started attacking the police with heavy stones.

UNHCR is ensuring that the injured receive medical care and is assisting the family of the deceased, whose identity and cause of death until today remain unknown. We also remain in contact with the demonstrators to ensure our previous agreements are met.

UNHCR Sana'a , Yemen

## South Yemen?

No body was happy like my people in The Grate South Yemen in 22nd, May 1990 the day that the two part of Yemen became One and after just 4 year the honest, peaceful and educated people of South Yemen discovered that this unity is just nothing but some of unanswerable buccaneer start filibuster the people of South Yemen and start war in the name of unity. No dear s this is not

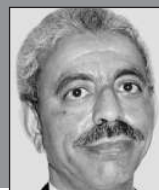
unity and from this honest people I start my words to the world that the occupation, invasion and possessing of the people and the wealth of south Yemen must end now and the freedom of south Yemen will come very soon.

South Yemeni  
southyemeni@hotmail.com

## Discussing sexual freedom

I read with great disdain that three journalists in your country have been accused of a terrible crime... discussing homosexuality. Shame on you Yemen. You can have whatever laws you see fit in order to have complete mind control over your people, but the rest of us out here in the world are watching. And yes, even judging you. Yemen will remain a backwater of culture and justice as long as the people allow their government to impose its own set of moral standards. Nowhere in the Koran does it say to punish people for speaking their mind. Nor do I remember it calling for mere mortals to punish gay men and women. Only God can judge those who are different than the norm, not man and certainly not the government of Yemen.

Clint Carruth  
clintatl@gmail.com

COMMON  
SENSE

By: Hassan Al-Haifi

In Yemen, others are  
also beginning to tell  
a different story

What is apparently obvious from all that is currently written about Yemen, both in the local independent and opposition newspaper is that, and what can be found on the worldwide web, as much as the official media would try to paint otherwise, the situation in the country is not at all that pleasant. Whether, this comes from returning Yemeni émigrés, some of whom may have never set foot in the country at all, or from those who are supposedly here to try to bring into the country some expertise on the formation and activities of civil society, there is a dismal picture that arises about the conditions of the country that does not bring pride to anyone. We have often tried to reflect a moderate course in the portrayal of the situation at home, lest we be accused of aiding and abetting "traitorous" or foreign elements, but it is really hard to maintain such a stature, when one is bombarded by a volley of both written and spoken testimony that the country leaves a lot to be desired. The first reaction by the Government should be really to look objectively at all criticism and not to simply reject it and handle with the least amount of care. One should not surmise that all criticism comes out of a hatred or misunderstanding of the facts. These are genuine human beings, many of whom have really no political or economic ambitions by their discourses on the situation of the country. Much of what is also written and said comes from heartfelt affection for Yemen and the Yemeni people and a lot comes out of sympathy for our poor lot.

Let us face it, a lot has happened in Yemen over the last thirty years, much of which was good, but we even failed to take advantage of that good and only a few were able to harness much of whatever good transpired to the point that many have wished that this good would have been better if saved for a later time (such as oil). But within this volatile period of Yemeni history a lot of bad has accumulated to form an unhealthy picture for the country in the development indices of the international donor community, led by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, etc. In addition, the image of the country has become difficult to defend in the light of mounting criticism by international organizations that are active in the promotion of human rights and civil liberties throughout the world (Amnesty International, the National Democratic Institute and the International Committee of the Red Crescent and Red Cross, just to name a few). Surely, all these people cannot come together and decide to aim their analytical guns at Yemen just for the hell of it. There are indeed serious problems that the country is facing and no amount of image polishing or blasting at criticism can ever cover up the fact that indeed we are mismanaging the affairs of the country, politically, economically and socially. Culturally, we are hardly making any strides, notwithstanding the very good efforts of the Minister of Culture to bring some life back to our culture, with understandable difficulties before him.

It is really time for the Government to start becoming proactive to criticism, not just coming from outside, but even from within the chambers of our struggling Parliament. The latter has apparently been trying to make some sound criticism become effective in steering the Government towards the right path, but even that criticism is now subject to muffling by the TV censors as they air some of the sessions of the Parliament. That in itself is really disrespectful and a total disregard for the rights of the members of Parliament to make their views heard and the rights of the people to hear what their representatives are saying. This is also contempt for the balance of powers and separation of authority that the Constitution decrees.

As for the press, we are seeing more and more efforts to shut out all criticism coming out of the free and independent media, as well as the exemplary foreign media like the Al-Jazeera channel, which stands as a beacon of Arab free opinion sharing.

These activities are not at all characteristic of a nation that thrives on claiming to be a bastion of democracy and free political thought. It goes without saying that the reason people ask for freedom of speech and free expression of opinion is to help the authorities in determining their stand within the public that is both the beneficiary and the victim of government actions. One is inclined to believe that perhaps the authorities are oblivious to such mounting criticism, because the American White House is also dealing with criticism in a "similar manner". We should not however forget that America can change overnight and mounting criticism is never dealt with the force of tanks and other military hardware, or thugs that come in the wee hours of the night to harass journalists in their home. That would lead to national upheaval in the US and neither the Bush White House or the Neo-con establishment would ever welcome that. Let us not forget that it was popular protest and astute muckraking journalism that brought the Nixon White House down. So, for the government to place its stakes on the longevity of the current American scene is a misleading and perhaps dangerous gamble that if the "Americans can do it so can we". One would really hope that the President and the Government would also take heed of what many of the still living Revolutionary heroes and patriots are also saying as they give sound advice to them all on what needs to be done to get the country out of its ever deepening abyss.

The Yemen Times is trying very hard to uphold the image of the Yemen as best as possible, but we are also under pressure to convey to the world that the realities of the situation on the ground leave a lot to be desired. We are also of the opinion that it is better to react to criticism that comes from inside before others have a chance to perhaps convey a far more unfavorable picture of the situation at hand. This is the view that we believe the authorities should give serious consideration to, rather than to direct the pens of hired writers to lash it at any criticism, simply because they are color blind or their views are out of bounds to what the overall public and international view is.

Happy Holidays and many happy returns to all religious persuasions on this momentous occasions when many of the holidays of many religions converge in the same time frame.



# Yemen Press Review

Review by: Mohammed Khidhr



Al-Wasat weekly,  
21 Dec.2005.

## Main headlines

- Because of disputes over tasks of the GPC general secretariat, The president asks Bajammal to distribute them, keeping out founders
- Bait Al-Hurryah "House of Freedom" lauds improvement in situation of freedoms in the Arab countries
- The GCC summit ignores request of Yemen to join
- Official media ignores demands of he JMP, the GPC assails it
- UNICEF calls for removing discrimination against the Akhdam

Editor in chief of the newspaper wrote saying the final communiqué of the General People's Congress conference appeared to be ridiculing people while maintaining the government in lying and exaggeration in achievement of imaginary accomplishments and great victories in various economic, political and social areas. Similar to it is the report of gains that came full of figures without scrutiny or evaluation, contradicting all international reports that mention the contrary of what had come in the government reports and afterwards reports of the GPC.

Those achievements, which the government deafens our ears with, have become similar to test of the Imam of his citizens to know the extent of their ignorance and obedience to him. It was hoped that convening the GPC conference to represent an opportunity for its members to express issues of the people and to leave them a chance to evaluate the government performance, given that the government represents them. Because they represent two million and a half GPC members and supporters, they suffer and are well aware of practically badness of the situations and deterioration of conditions. There should not have been such an amount of savagery and inconsiderateness of their feelings.



As-Sahwa weekly,  
22 Dec. 2005.

## Main headlines

- International categorization places Yemen among 20 countries prone to collapse
- Al-Mouayad back to his prison in Colorado
- Head of legal sector at the elections commission: The Higher Commission incapable, laws affected with paralysis

- National Bank crisis threatens the ministry of Endowments and pilgrimage agencies
- Iraqi elections: Doctored preliminary results faced by rejection and demand for re-election

Columnist Jamal Ana'am says in his article that corruption in our country is a strategy derives the stay of its legitimacy from disorder of the shape of the regime and ambiguity of the relationship between the governance and the state. The question reached an extent of demanding the separation between corruption and the homeland. Corruption in our country was almost to become the only dominating institution. He who follows up addresses of the ruling party with regard to calls of political reform realizes the amount of collapse the situation has reached. Political parties of the JMP have proved, in their recently published reformist document that they are still present in the heart of actual challenges and have been strong enough to resist all policies of exclusion.



Annas weekly,  
19Dec.2005.

## Main headlines

- JMP to distribute five million copies of its initiative for the national reform in the streets
- Did the GPC miss its opportunity to declare reforms?
- GPC concludes its conference, young members in the General Committee
- While the president defends his party, Kuwait's representative warns the GPCs of corruption
- Amnesty International intends to sue the Yemeni government
- Killing mistakes in the JMP initiative

Columnist Dr Hosni Al-Jawshaie writes in his article to say the ruling parties in the Arab countries always chant the slogan of the peaceful transfer of power. This is rather stipulate in constitutions of some Arab regimes. However, the experiment and reality have in most of the Arab countries proved that this is just for local and international consumption and merely void words. This slogan is just meant to give opposition parties hope that they could attain power but on the ground, the slogan is inapplicable. Throughout half a century up until now, the Arab citizen has not seen any ruling party lost elections in the Arab countries. The Arab ruling parties practice all kinds of temptation, intimidation, and even killing to keep their easy or even sweeping majority heedless of constitutions, laws and democratic rules. These parties do not accept even criticism of their rude

way for keeping power.

The wave democracy began to sweep some Arab countries after the American pressures since the reign of President Bill Clinton and those pressures greatly increased in the time of the rightist extremist president George Bush. Thus, those despotic rulers rode the wave and converted their regimes from the military dictatorships to the partisan dictatorship. In other words, the dictator ruler would not be the individual but the party. The façade democratic while the essence is the same one individual who runs the party and through the party manages the state. This type of rulers remained hiding behind the party and false democracy to rule for tens of years raising the slogan of the peaceful transfer of power via polling boxes. Such a slogan protects those rulers at the international level and before international committees that watch parliamentary or presidential elections. The reality is totally the opposite and that is what we have recently seen in elections of the largest Arab country. The ruling party there continued ruling for more than thirty years, marginalizing all the national forces that entertain the real majority and refusing the mere emergence of an opponent opinion. When an alternative force appeared to be capable of shouldering responsibility of governance and began gaining votes the ruling party then began to unmask its real dictatorial face in its worst image. Thus, succeeded practices of rigging and arrests among ranks of the opposition force and voters were prevented to reach polling stations. The party dictatorship has even killed many of the opposition competing force.



Al-Mithaq weekly,  
organ of the  
General People's  
Congress, 19 Dec.  
2005.

## Main headlines

- The president congratulates members on success of the GPC conference, General Committee elects a woman assistant secretary general for the first time
- 7th conference: Expansion in press freedoms and principle of full transparency
- Banks Committee: Private Banks in Yemen work actively and with good reputation
- Conversion to parliamentary bi-cameral, legislative authorities for the Shoura
- Election of governors, larger authorities for local councils
- Official source: Somali sit-in protesters initiated attack of security men
- Al-Attiah: Leaders of the GCC confirm enhancement of cooperation



- with Yemen
- The new draft of Press law in a seminar

Columnist Dr Abdilaziz Al-Maqaleh says in his article what is happening in Lebanon now of successive crimes and what surrounds Syria of challenges and accusations are flagrant attempts to draw attentions away from what is happening in Iraq and Palestine. The reason is that Syria and Lebanon are the last remaining issue after the occupation of Iraq that was sincerely resisting what happens in Palestine and sympathizing with the resistance that is fighting for salvation from the Zionist occupation. Neutralization of Lebanon and Syria from playing their role first and destabilization of the material and psychological stability of these two countries is a step to make the rest of the Arab countries to be preoccupied with what is happening for them. This is the aim behind the all the assassinations beginning from Al-Hariri to the prominent journalist Jubran Tweiny. The American administration and the Zionist entity are the real beneficiaries of what is taking place in Lebanon and they exploit that to the utmost to distract the attention from what is happening in Iraq and Palestine and focus attention of the Arab nation and the world on crimes in Beirut t forget about all the daily massacres in Iraq and Palestine.



An Nidaa weekly  
21 Dec.2005.

## Main headlines

- Opposition leaderships: Political reform the gate to comprehensive reform
  - Al-Wafi, head of Islah party economic office: According to international criteria 90% of the Yemenis poor
  - GCC bored of Yemen's insistence on joining it
- Columnist Sami Ghalib says in an article the draft law of press submitted to the Shoura Council discloses in the first

place the government playing light with its commitments to the inside and the outside. Secondly, it ushers its failure in adaptation with requirements of domestic changes and lacking of realization of changes regionally and internationally. It finally confirms its inability to shoulder its national responsibility mainly opening outlets for democratic reform beginning with liberation of media from its police grip as an introduction to expand the margin of freedom of press, though it is a relative characteristic of Yemen in its regional surrounding.

The government had promised to present a draft law taking into consideration the international criteria but it seemed as if disdaining those criteria as it is restraining principles of the press freedom. Ten years of the Yemeni government's commitment to expand the scope of press freedom and less than a year since its pledges to the international community to improve situations of press and enhance its gains, it pushes a police draft based on fear from the free word.



Al-Wahdawi  
weekly, organ of  
the Nasserite  
Unionist  
Organization, 20  
Dec. 2005.

## Main headlines

- Yemeni intellectuals ask President

Ali Abdullah Saleh to stick to his decision of not running presidential elections

- The JMP initiative a necessity for coming out of the crisis the country experiences
- Security retains the NUO secretary general at entrance of Aden, refuses to deal with his parliamentary identification card
- Prosecution interrogates officials from the Watani bank

Columnist Mahmoud Sharafuddin has written an article saying the closing statement of the GCC summit concluded last Monday in Abu Dhabi has been void of any mention or indication to renewal of Yemen's request to join the GCC; it has sufficed in including the statement a recommendation to the GCC Supreme council on supporting developmental projects in Yemen. Observers have considered that as a form of indirect rejection of the request whereas the Yemeni foreign minister deemed it as a step toward more cooperation.

Yemeni politicians have viewed the Gulf stand as a blow embarrassing for the Yemeni government death-defying request for joining the GCC. The GCC has not mentioned certain conditions wanted from Yemen to meet before accepting the request, as the European deal with the American request for joining the European Union.



**SILVER LINING**

By: Mohammed Hatem al-Qadhi  
mhalqadhi@hotmail.com

## Challenging Draft Press Law

The battle for free press is again back to the frontline. The journalists were right when they declared last Thursday the rejection of the draft press and publication law being debated by the Shoura Council. This is because they cannot accept to debate a draft law that already criminalizes them. The draft law in its current form is a real demonstration of the antagonism of the people in charge towards media. The government now shrugs its shoulders in pride of abolishing the jail sentence of journalists. But, this is not the whole question. The other provisions provide the authorities with the opportunities to restrict and even throttle the freedom of journalists. It is not enough to tell the world that you are removing the jail sentence. In fact, the journalists and the world community hailed this decision by President Saleh and were expecting further steps to promote freedom of media including the liberalization of broadcast media. Unfortunately, the outcome was this draft law journalists now call "catastrophic".

After 15 years of the multi-party system, Yemen is expected to take some steps ahead to improve this infant experience of democracy and freedom of press. However, what is happening is the opposite. By presenting such a draft law, the government is demonstrating lack of respect to its commitments to the international community and treaties. The international community praised Yemen's democracy because of the scope of freedom that the press enjoyed for sometime.

For almost more than one year, the debate of the draft law has been going on. The draft law of the Information Ministry was dropped out as journalists rejected it. Then, the Justice Ministry took the responsibility to review the cur-

rent law of 1990 and conduct some amendments to it along with a committee working under the table.

Experts from Article 19 in London and the US visited Yemen and came up with very important remarks on the two drafts and recommendations meant to improve the situation and provide some support to the journalistic community. One of the main points raised by the Article 19 expert has been: "Regrettably, however, the majority of the provisions of both drafts are plainly intended to regulate, or to control, the press. International law stipulates that freedom of expression should be the rule, and limitations the exception; the two drafts reverse this logic and mandate government interference in virtually every aspect of the print media sector's operation. Many of these provisions are simply unnecessary and present the authorities with opportunities to stifle critical and independent voices."

We have expected the government makes use of such recommendations presented by well-known international experts and incorporate them into the new draft to show it is serious when it alleges it fully supports freedom of media. Unfortunately, nothing has taken pace and the result is this draft the Shoura Council has started debating. In fact, the government intends to have a toothless press that is not able to hold officials accountable.

I think the most important thing that journalists have to do in this critical moment to stand united and work, away from their political affiliations, to challenge this draft law. Hey guys, beware that such hostile attitudes towards the media will not help you or the country at large. The more you respect your commitments and obligations to democracy and press freedom, the more the world community will stand by Yemen and support it and vice versa.

## “Monkey See, Monkey Do” - Not An Islamic Ideal (1/2)

By: Abdurrahman Squires\*

The other day, a friend mentioned that a fellow Muslim had declared that we should be careful about condemning the recent massacre of innocent schoolchildren in Russia by so-called "Islamic militants" because "some scholars" have issued "fatwas" (non-binding legal opinions) that such operations are sometimes acceptable under Islamic Law. They then referenced part of a Qur'anic verse which basically means, "... then whoever transgresses the prohibition against you, you transgress likewise against him." (Qur'an 2:194). Essentially, this is the age old "an eye for an eye" legal maxim that dates back to not just the Old Testament, but to the Code of Hammurabi as well. While this maxim might be rightfully employed in individual cases of justice, using it to justify mass murder and collective punishment is quite a stretch. Being informed that a Muslim in my community adhered to such shoddy logic rather shocked and disgusted me even though I'm well aware of the half-baked and ethically shallow justifications of suicide bombing espoused by some Muslims. In spite of that, being ambivalent about the massacre of innocent schoolchildren seemed to expose a moral depravity that's sunk to all new levels. It's not that this simple-minded and morally confused Muslim was a rabid militant;

far from it. What scared me was the fact that they would so quickly and uncritically surrender their morality—indeed their basic human dignity—simply because of the existence of a "fatwa" by some unnamed "scholar".

I'd like to take this opportunity to announce to the ladies and gentlemen of the Muslim Ummah, just in case they haven't heard: We've got a moral and spiritual crisis on our hands. No, it's not a conspiracy theory, a Zionist-Crusader plot or atrocities being carried out by Mossad agents dressed up like Muslims. There's no real need for elaborate conspiracies, since if they want to bomb us, murder us and rape us, the past few decades have shown that they can do this with near impunity in full view of the entire world community. In spite of some grave historical injustices, Muslims must take most, if not all, of the blame for the current crisis and only Muslims can provide a long-term and viable solution to this problem within our house. The time for finger pointing is over. Like it or not, we have militant extremists within our midst who are out there committing the most horrendous acts of barbarity in the name of Islam — and we have far too many Muslims living right under our noses who aren't even sure if such acts are wrong. Indeed, some of them have been bamboozled into thinking such criminal acts are Islamically sanctioned. It's high time that we, as an Ummah, snap out of this Freudian

denial stage and start dealing with this problem ourselves. If we don't, somebody is going to do it for us — and it ain't gonna be pretty. Actually, it's gotten ugly already — and a quick look at the headlines being generated by the so-called "War on Terror" should be enough to confirm this.

Let's all take a moment to recognize that being patient with ignorance, humble in the face of stupidity and tolerant of legitimate scholarly differences of opinion are one thing, but endorsing complete moral depravity is quite another. Yes, believe it or not, the mass murder of innocent schoolchildren is completely unlawful in Islam; nothing justifies it. The fact that this even needs to be explained to members of our Ummah speaks volumes about the state we're in. This shouldn't be taken to mean that I'm unaware of the genocide that Russia has been carrying out in Chechnya. Indeed, they've killed far more innocent women and children than Islamic militants ever have. However, the Russians are not our teachers and it's not their example that Muslims are supposed to follow. Our methodology is not "monkey see, monkey do", but rather the unassailable moral high ground of our noble Prophet — may God bless him and grant him peace.

On that note, a discussion of the classical understanding of Qur'an 2:194 is in order, since this is one of the verses that the extremists use to justify their murder and mayhem. No doubt,

the first thing we should do when we come across someone using a Qur'anic verse as a blunt instrument is turn to the classical exegesis of the verse and see how qualified Islamic scholars have understood it in the past. It should come as no surprise that neither al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, nor al-Qurtubi, who are three of the greatest scholars of our rich hermeneutical tradition, mention anything in these verses that could be used to justify the acts that were recently committed in Russia. Even a cursory look at Qur'an 2:194 reveals that it essentially provided a dispensation for fighting in the sacred months, months in which fighting was normally forbidden. This verse in no way opens up the door for going to extremes — which is also strongly condemned in Islamic Law — and ignoring God's limits.

*\* Abdurrahman Squires is an American Muslim, originally from San Diego, California, who embraced Islam back in 1992. A former officer in the U.S. Marine Corps and life long student of history and religion, he has traveled extensively throughout the world. His travels included a four-year stay in Kuwait, where he became active in writing about topics related to Islam and comparative religion. He currently lives with his wife and five children just outside Orlando, Florida, where he works as a networking and telecommunications engineer.*



# CBY decision offhanded: Chambers of Commerce

By: Mahyoub Al-Kamali

States of panic had dominated the banking market of Yemen following the Watani Bank bankruptcy declaration on 6 December 2005. This took place after economic experts had called on the Central Bank of Yemen (CBY) to work for rehabilitation of the Watani Bank. They predicted that bankruptcy of the bank is probable and would shake investors' and depositors trust and negatively affect activities of the banks in the country.

The Yemeni General Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (YGFCCI) had on its part criticized the CBY move of taking control of the Watani Bank and deemed it as a "reckless, offhanded and lacking professionalism" measure. The YGFCCI mentioned that this step was taken without considering its impact on both domestic and international level and that it would have negative results on other banks. "There would be no confidence in the Yemeni banking system domestically and internationally for many years to come." The YGFCCI spokes person said in the context of the impact of this action on the Yemeni economy and attraction of investments.

Economic experts ascribed the cause for the collapse of the National Bank to failure in application of international criteria related to banks' systems and lack of monitoring by the CBY. In addition to the lack of a sense of responsibility to protect rights and funds of depositors, a mater which increased among them a state of apprehension on fate of their money. Dr Taha Al-Fassil, professor of economics at the University of Sana'a said: "What has happened to the Watani Bank shakes confidence of depositors in the banking apparatus in general and urges some of them to withdraw their money for fear from the future even though the volume of the banking activity of the National Bank was limited."

In its letter addressed to the president of the republic, the YGFCCI has demanded that the government should

take national responsible, decisive and quick steps, defining its stand on whether the private sector banks deserve continue operation alongside government banks. Following a recently held meeting of the Yemeni Banks Committee, the YGFCCI said, "In economics, it is known worldwide that banks represent a mechanism of economic activity movement, that is why the states are keen on treating banks' problems with utter caution and responsibility. And ensure that wrong dealings would not threaten the economy as a whole and create incurable problems."

The central Bank of Yemen had on Thursday 8 December 2005 issued an announcement declaring its taking control of the Watani Bank for Trade and Investment without clarification of the reasons that forced it to take that decision. According to article 42 of the law concerning banks, the Central Bank is authorized to take control of a bank if it was in straitened circumstances or was facing a crisis in its money liquidity. In such a case the Central Bank's control of the bank in question would be for the protection of depositors' rights. As a reaction to the Central Bank's measure some banking sources complained of the difficulty of understanding what happened to the Watani Bank and at the same time fears of small banks increased about falling into the abyss of bankruptcy.

On the other hand, the head of the political office of the Yemen congregation for Reform Party (Islah) Mohammed Qahtan had wondered whether the law obliged the CBY to practice permanent and direct monitoring over all banks to prevent their sudden collapse, adding that would in turn affect the national economy and shake the trust of the citizen in his monetary. Mr Qatan considered corruption has reached to the institutions of law and those sponsoring or controlling the movement of money in the country. That is in an indication to the CBY and the destiny of the National Bank as one among the biggest national banks, describing that as a dangerous indicator for the future of Yemen.



Central Bank of Yemen

The YGFCCI letter has also affirmed that Yemen is not the only country to face a problem with one of its banks. There are countries that face more dangerous problems such as what had happened to a number of Japanese banks and the Asian Tigers countries (Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand) and Egypt. Some banks were unable to provide necessary liquidity for their clients but those countries considered the problem as a national issue rather than a banking problem and tackled the subject with objectivity and studied responsibility in order not to take a step that they could not contain. Those countries had taken a number of measures ensuring the non-creation of con-

fusion and mistrust in banks and supplied those banks with funds meeting their needs and at the same time took measures to rectify the situations and restore conditions to their former normal position. Those countries' measures had reduced impact of the problems and continued in enhancing trust in the banks so that the problem would not aggravate an create panic among depositors to withdraw their deposits in a manner leading to that the biggest banks would be unable to regain the deposits at one time. "Because the deposited funds are usually connected to investments and loans not able to be restored at a short time and connected to financing projects of infrastructure

and other types of developmental activities." The message further mentioned that the CBY could immediately play its role as other countries central banks usually do in such cases, demanding the central bank breaks its silence by issuing a statement assuring depositors, banks and economy market instead of leaving the matter for speculations and rumors that are issued by irresponsible parties that do not feel their impact. The YGFCCI also affirmed that the condition of private banks does not call for worrying and they are working with activity and good reputation and depositors' money is preserved and invested. The YGFCCI has also demanded the government to issue an official statement assuring those dealing with and depositors to continue their dealing with those banks.

This criticism comes as a consequence of the fuss created by bankruptcy of the Watani Bank, preventing its board of directors from travel and sending them to public property prosecution in preparation for standing trial. Nevertheless, experts of banking market considered measures of the Yemeni Central Bank of temporary closure as a clever move to absorb the situation considering that some other banks have close financial relationships with the Watani Bank.

While holding administration of the Watani Bank responsible for what happened to the bank, the professor of economic at the University of Sana'a Dr Hassan Thabit ruled out the clients' responsibility of that bankruptcy saying, "it is an escape from shouldering the responsibility given that the work was in the hands of the bank and its administration should have assessed capability of the client." As for chairman of the board of directors of the Watani Bank Dr Ahmed Al-Hamdani, and according to media sources, has allocated around YR one million for journalists who would stand by him against dealing with the attack on him, saying it was targeted against him from among the other banks operating in the country.

In response to that other banking sources said there were clear-cut docu-

ments affirming the existence of financial violations that led to manipulating in the bank's revenues and that pushed the Central Bank to announce protection of is members' shares estimated at YR47 million. The sources ascribed the reasons of protection to government intentions to carry out serious financial reforms to stop the economic deterioration the country is experiencing and the inability in implementation of the policy of financial and administrative reform. The same sources have expected that other banks, to which terms and criteria of establishment, would encounter similar measures by the Central Bank because of instability of the banking climate despite the efforts exerted by government banks. Banking legislations for establishment of any bank stipulate raising guarantees of establishment with the central bank to YR50 million.

This banking crisis has urged the CBY to pump foreign currencies into the local market in two rounds within days. The value of the second batch was \$50 million in the mid of this month. The aim was to keep stability of banking situations and exchange price of the national currency. On his part, Mr. Ahmed Al-Khawi, chairman of the Yemeni Banks Society gave assurances to customers of commercial and Islamic banks about growth of their activities and increase in volume of their deposits. Mr. Al-Khawi has said in a statement to Al-Thawra newspaper that the banking sector in Yemen has witnessed noticeable development from January to October 2005. This development is represented by the increase of deposits in the unfired budget of the commercial and Islamic banks estimated at YR 613389.7 million despite of the not active economic circumstances. He has affirmed that the increase in the growth of banking deposits is considered as new and reflects trust of customers dealing with the banking sector, pointing out that the volume of loans and funding offered by commercial and Islamic banks to various economic sectors during the same period amounted to around YR235.7 million.

## The Promise of Central Asia

By: Kalman Mizsei and Johannes F. Linn

Central Asia is frequently in the news these days – and most of the news seems to be bad. The casual reader, viewer, and listener has become acquainted with a region of landlocked and poor countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – that share a legacy of isolation, squandered natural resources, environmental degradation, and Soviet-era political systems.

And yet, it is also a region with a distant history of great economic and cultural achievement in the Silk Road era, and that recently has emerged as a focus of renewed global competition reminiscent of the Cold War. Can Central Asia regain a key role at the center of the huge Eurasian landmass, surrounded by some of the world's most dynamic economies – China, Russia, and India?

While there is a laudable international effort to help Africa grow out of heavy donor dependency in the next decade, the equally momentous economic-development and human-security challenges facing Central Asia is generally not fully understood. History and geography – measured by distance from the closest seaports – have isolated these countries physically, economically, and socially, and have exacerbated the difficulties of their transitions to market economies. The result is that development and governance

indicators in Central Asia are on par with those in many sub-Saharan African countries.

The *Central Asian Human Development Report*, recently launched by the United Nations Development Program, argues that the countries of Central Asia have a great opportunity to capitalize on their location at the center of a dynamic continent, their abundant natural resources, and their still-strong potential to forge a prosperous, stable, and cohesive region. This will require them to open up to the rest of the world, cooperate with each other and their neighbors, and radically reform their antiquated political systems.

Regional cooperation should include areas ranging from trade, transport, and transit, to water and energy, as well as efforts to control of drug trafficking. The Report estimates that by doing so, and by improving their investment climates and governance, Central Asian countries can double their incomes over ten years, modernize their economies, connect with the rest of the world, and improve the lives of their citizens dramatically.

Currently, the region suffers from tremendous transport and transit constraints. Trade times and costs are unnaturally high due to unintegrated and lengthy border procedures, high tariff rates, corruption, and underinvestment in transport infrastructure. These costs could be halved by better customs, border and transit management, improved transport corridors and more competitive transport services.

By joining the World Trade Organization, improving their investment climates, and stopping interference with shuttle traders – mostly poor women trying to make a living – governments would give the region's businesses and farmers access to markets and attract much-needed new investment.

Central Asia is blessed with an abundance of energy and water resources, even though much is wasted by inefficient use and poor maintenance of infrastructure. An estimated \$1.7 billion of agricultural production is lost annually due to poor water management. The region is poised to become one of the main suppliers of oil and gas for world energy markets, and its big rivers, if properly managed, have the capacity to provide enough water both for irrigation and for electricity exports to China, India, and Russia. But cooperation is needed both within the region and with key neighbors in order to realize effective regional water and energy management.

The region is also at risk from the effects of drug trafficking. While illicit drugs are moved through all Central Asian countries, Tajikistan bears the brunt of the scourge due to its location at the northern border of Afghanistan. Up to 100 tons of heroin are estimated to pass through Tajikistan each year, which is equivalent to the estimated annual North American and West European demand. Unless Central Asian countries and their neighbors cooperate in controlling drug production, use, and trafficking, this source of

major health risks, corruption, and crime will not be eradicated.

The good news today is that most of the Central Asian countries, their neighbors and the international community have recognized the importance of cooperation, openness, and integration. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are actively opening up and working together on many fronts. Unfortunately, not all are equally interested in open borders and close cooperation: Turkmenistan stands aside and Uzbekistan's borders remain substantially closed.

Cooperation clearly is not only for the region's governments; businesses, traders, and civil society must be involved as well. Yet it will be up to the leadership in the region to overcome obstacles to openness and co-operation. Market-oriented reforms and good governance are preconditions for effective cross-border ties. The international community, which has a shared interest in a prosperous, stable, and cohesive Central Asia, can and should play a supporting role in these efforts.

*Kalman Mizsei is the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States at the United Nations Development Programme. Johannes F. Linn is Executive Director of The Wolfensohn Initiative at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC.*  
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## Yemen among least convenient Arab countries for living

Investment in human resources in Yemen is still one of the challenges that confront the country. This came in a report issued by the Arab Establishment for Investment Guarantee, issued recently. Yemen is among seven countries characterized by weak economic freedom and according to the international calendar among the countries of low transparency. It is also listed as a dangerous country for investment among of the Arab countries studied in the report.

The report was written based on and quoting from accredited international sources. It stated that Yemen is categorized along with two other Arab countries Mauritania, and Djibouti as least convenient countries for living. Another report by the same establishment classified the three countries as among those of weak human development.

The report pointed out that Yemen had captured the highest figure in the cost of building a legal entity for businesses. While in Kuwait it is

24% of the average income of the individual, it reaches at 269.2% of the average of income of the individual in Yemen. The report maintained that Yemen scored zero figures among six Arab countries with regard to the ease of business creation and employment or discharge of workers and scored longest among the Arab countries in time taken for deciding and settling disputes of businesses.

The report has made it clear that Kuwait, Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have got a prevalent calendar of a high investment degree, very low degree of risk and high ability of repayment. While Bahrain, Tunisia and Sultanate of Oman have according to the report scored good investment degrees, low risk and reasonable capability of repayment. Egypt, Morocco and Jordan have gained evaluation of speculation, medium risk along with existence of aspects of risk in payment. While Yemen and Lebanon gained high degree of speculation, high degree of risk and exposure to dangers of repayment.



*Prof. Yosuf Abdullah to Yemen Times*

# Government failed to protect national antiquities

**P**rof. Yosuf Mohammed Abdullah, who is a renowned Yemeni archeologists. He described himself as "a professor at Sana'a University teaching archeology, South Arabian epigraphy." He is also a Semitist in addition to his office duty as an Advisor to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. He is a foremost authority in terms of Yemeni archeology, studies and old languages. The Yemen Times met him on the occasion of his being honored by Al-Afif Cultural Foundation (ACF) and explored a number of issues pertaining to his field of expertise.

Prof. Yosuf Abdullah expressed his happiness on the honorary day and said it is a nice occasion. "It is a good hint on the part of Al-Afif Foundation which I claim to be one of its founders," he added. "It is a great pleasure to accept this recognition and to think of it highly. I feel honored on this day. This is because I contributed a lot to this Foundation and I am a part of it." He has contributed substantially to the Yemeni Encyclopedia and has been always in close contact with Al-Afif Foundation.

The ACF has a tradition that the members of its board of trustees should be honored separately in sequence of their age. The founders were five and Prof. Yosuf is the fourth. The fifth honored member will be professor Hussein Al-Amri. All of them are in their sixtieth year. The board includes also Ahmed Qayid Barakat, who was a minister many times, and Mohammed Al-Ra'di as well as others.

There will be another honorary day next week at the University of Sana'a where Prof. Yosuf will have another day of honor along with two European scholars. They are famous French scholar Christian Robin, and Italian renown scholar Alexandero De Migrat. "We are all friends and peers," Prof. Yosuf went on. "We grew together and worked together. We have also the same age and we worked all on Yemen for thirty years."

**Give  
archeology to  
archeologists  
and not to  
administrators**

The University of Sana'a will try to publish a book written by fellow scholars of 750 pages in English and Arabic printed in Italy in contribution to celebrate the 60th birthday of the three scholars who worked on South Arabian inscriptions and South Arabian studies. Prof. Yosuf thinks that the ACF will continue both its cultural and scientific work. "We plan to have the third edition of the Encyclopedia of Yemen which is the core work of the Foundation," he explained. "The cultural activities of the ACF are extra but the main task for which it was established was to promote scientific activities and research in Yemen. Examination of the first and second editions of the Encyclopedia would reveal the great effort put into it."

#### Blemishes in Encyclopedia:

However, he has his reservations regarding the second edition. "Many people wrote in the second edition but with less scientific responsibility. They copied from books and they just filled the blanks. It is not enough. I believe that, in the third edition, we should try to revise the material because a number of articles that were provided by people claimed to be scholars, did not live up to the standards of the encyclopedia. It is not simply about copying materials or filling the blanks. It is about establishing scientific tradition in a professional manner as well as scientific and academic responsibility."

He is optimistic that the mistakes will be righted in the future.

#### Private sector and public commitment:

To improve the status of antiquities in Yemen, Prof. Yosuf suggests a shift



**Prof. Yosuf Mohammed Abdullah**

of reliance from the government onto the private sector, and local population.

"We shouldn't depend only on the government," he said. "We have to connect the awareness of antiquities and the world of archeology to the people with the help of the private sector. It is high time to move from the government to the private sector."

"The government did little. The ministries of culture had done little for archeology. Others should be involved: the people and the private sector. They can do a lot."

He stresses the concept of "public commitment" which should be a characteristic of each citizen and a force that can make up for the failure of the government in this respect.

"Antiquities are not the ownership of the government. They are national properties. I think the governmental sector failed in protecting antiquities. It is very difficult to convince the authorities with the importance of antiquities and to make them realize what antiquities are. Each minister comes and he has to spend a lot of time to know what is what and then he starts late before he is leaving office. So, we have to rely mainly on the people and the private sector. The private sector can start supporting archeological research and data as well as the publication of materials and supporting the dissemination of knowledge to show what is important. We have to put the people in the thing. Actually, the President is highly keen and interested in antiquities but we don't find the same interest in the governmental level. Then what we should do now, as we have a green light from above, is to resort to the people and the private sector that can do a lot. They can establish societies for the protection of cultural antiquities and heritage."

#### Protection of archeological sites needs awareness:

Confronted with a question about the security of archeological sites many of which are believed to have been left to looters and robbers, Prof. Yosuf replied that this is the duty of the locals themselves and the local government. "People must be aware of the significance of antiquities and archeological sites because it is our history and a national cultural property. Protection and preservation of antiquities and cultural heritage is a common national responsibility. It shouldn't be entrusted solely to the government or the ministry. It is a concerted work among locals, private sector and government with, of course, the help of the international community because our heritage is part of the World's heritage."

#### Potion for archeological ailments:

The field of archeology in Yemen is plagued with certain shortcomings. The potion is easily prescribed by Prof. Yosuf. "Let archeology to the archeologists and not to administrators. We have enough qualified archeologists in Yemen. Give them the job and don't give it to the governmental administrators."

#### Foreign expeditions meet a need:

Recently, we have heard about archeological discoveries done by the French, German, Italian missions in Yemen. Asked why don't Yemeni archeologists do the job themselves, he responded by saying: "They are not financially supported. You cannot dig a place without money. It costs a lot. Archeological work is a delicate

**There was  
only one  
kingdom in  
Yemen, that is,  
the Kingdom  
of Sheba**

scientific work. It needs patience and meticulousness. It needs time and you have to care for the stereography and the pieces. "When looters steal antiquities from sites, they dig, take them out and run away in five minutes. But an archeologist would take five months to dig a small place. He has to be careful with the pieces, register the stereography and know exactly the relationship of each piece with the other in order to rebuild the history and fill the gaps. How can you write the history without knowing the relationship between all pieces? There are Yemeni archeologists who can do that and I myself have hundreds of students who studied archeology with me and I am sure they can do it but put them in their jobs and provide them with the means. Archeology is a scientific task to be carried out by specialists and only specialists."

"When European missions come here, they come from reputable universities and we work along with them. I take care also to rectify certain misconceptions. Several books were written about the history of Yemen and I was involved in the writing of these books. I wrote also some of their introductions. This is why they are ok. I managed to correct certain wrong notions. For example, they used to write that in Yemen there were many kingdoms, many histories and many governments. I managed to convince, with the passage of time, the European archeologists that in the ancient history of Yemen, there was only one kingdom, i.e., the Kingdom of Sheba. The ancient history of Yemen is the history of Sheba. The rest of so-called kingdoms came and went but the title of the main king of Yemen was the King of Sheba, or the King of Sheba and Thi Raydan, or the King of Sheba and Hadhramout etc. So when we discussed with them and tried hard with them at conferences, they were convinced. Thus, there was only one history of Yemen as there was only one history of Egypt and one history of Mesopotamia. But we ourselves ignorantly insist that we had many

kingdoms. Of course, they existed but were satellite kingdoms, something we can call them sheikhdoms. They worked with Sheba and where under Sheba.

#### Yemen's written history

Prof. Yosuf doesn't think that the history of Yemen has been written completely. Although a great deal has been done, to him, there is still a long way to go.

"There is much to do before getting the full picture. The discoveries are made now everyday and Yemen now is at the zenith of discoveries. Yemen now is everywhere. I was at a conference in Saudi Arabia on ancient caravan cities in Arabia two weeks ago and Yemen was on the top. And I was at the American University of Beirut last week at another conference, which was on society and economy in Ancient Arabia and Yemen was also on the top."

"Currently, tens of Arab and European scholars are writing about Yemen. Yemen is no longer out of focus. It is now the focus of history."

#### Distorters of ancient Yemeni history:

He advises against listening to amateurs and non-archeologists or those who want to make money out of archeology and artifacts. He recommends listening to specialists.

"Only listen to archeologists and Yemen has many." He warns against the people opposing the Yemeni history; people who "don't believe in the ancient history of Yemen. There are people who write books on Yemen's history, which are nothing but 'bullshit.'"

He continued, "I assure you that there are many books on the market, which are about Hymiar and Sheba all of which are nonsense. There are people who don't believe in the ancient history of Yemen and believe in their own history."

He states that the term of antiquities/archeology is hackneyed and profaned. It is mentioned by many people and newspapers that talk about it but don't know it exactly.

"They don't go to the field and deal with the artifacts. Non-archeologists have no knowledge and they claim that they know a lot. For them antiquities are a treasure; antiquities are so and so. Antiquities and archeology should not be tampered with and should be left to archeologists and not to amateurs or any Jack or Tom."

#### Sued for doing well:

Recently, a Yemeni exhibition of artifacts that went around the world has come back after a seven-year journey. The exhibition, entitled "In the Land of the Queen of Sheba," included many pieces that were displayed in many European capitals. Prof. Yosuf told us that the exhibition was his intuitive, which caused him a trouble.

**I was brought  
to court  
because of  
alleged selling  
of artifacts**

"The exhibition is mine. I was the one who directed and planned it and sent it for seven years. I was brought to court because of it. The alleged charge against me was that I sold all those pieces. Now you read in the newspapers that they have come back and they are all there and are ok."

Concerning the fruits of this exhibition, he said: "Yemen is now known. Yemen is no longer on the margin but in the focus. The Queen of Sheba was not in Ethiopia or Israel as some people falsely claim but she was in Yemen."

According to Prof. Yosuf, seven books have been published in Arabic, English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish, all of which testified to one fact: The Queen of Sheba was Yemeni and now everybody knows that the Queen of Sheba was in Yemen. Before, it was a matter of debate.

## The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

4

*Translated by Edward FitzGerald*

**Now the New year reviving  
old desires,**

**The thoughtful soul to  
solitude retires,**

**Where the white hand of  
Moses on the bough**

**Puts out, and Jesus from the  
ground suspires**

## Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalmah Al-Tayyibah

## The Full Poetic Collection (2/4)

**Author:** Ali Abdul-Rahman Jahhaf

**Language:** Arabic

**Publisher:** Ministry of Culture and Tourism

**Year Published:** 2004

Last week the importance of Humainy poetry was discussed with respect to literature in Yemen and it is widely circulated and enjoyed by both the educated and the normal farming and working people of Yemen. It has been able to establish a well refined structure and it has its controls as well, so that only gifted people can truly produce fine prose in local Yemeni dialect. Perhaps nowhere in Yemen has Humainy or local prose reached a high level of refinement than in Sana'a, with its distinct dialect and refined cultural flair (with the other cities in the center-north taking up somewhat from where Sana'a left off; i.e. Dhamar, Ibb, Sa'ada, Hajjah). Tehama has its own linguistic character as well, where the rich Arabic of the classical and Bedouin genre blend in somewhat causally with some of the inherited attributes of the ancient Himyarite language.

The author admits to the writer of the preface of the first group of poems that he hardly keeps organized copies of his poems and that the only major source one can rely on his brother Khalid Abdul-Rahman Jahhaf, or else those who have memorized his poems or keep copies of them as they are printed. He says most of the time he juts them down on any piece of paper that he can find, including cigarette packaging, bills, etc. that are near him as the idea of a poem comes to his mind.

The first group of poems is called "The Screw pine Flower of February", collection of this group mainly deal with rural farming life, especially in the Tehama area around Hajjah. They form a beautiful anthology of the early poetry of the writer and was in fact the author's first collection of poetry. The poems mainly range around a young or adolescent farmer shepherding sheep or other livestock and enjoying the beauty of the rural mountain air and the Tehama beautiful young ladies shepherding with them or just harvesting the millet or whatever cereals they are harvesting on their own land or in the lands of others.

One such poem starts (On the Mountains of Bliss)

In the mountains of bliss,  
In earth's paradise did we dwell.  
The Path of Light is our path,  
Its location is from our places  
We have in each village,  
A rock on we which we have inscribed,  
The borders of love are our,  
And its home is our park

Later on in the poem, the author brings back to the memories of his beloved:

If you have forgotten, do remember,  
The day I sang to you.  
And the river applauded and laughed,  
And turned to kiss you.  
Again he says later on:  
Then, I was only ignorant grazing our

cows,  
Your flock with our flock,  
Grazing on the graze land of our country.

If you say sunset has approached,  
I parked our camel ahead of you.  
The camel was our transport  
And the dog, the guard of our sheep.  
Such is the simplicity of Jahhaf's poem showing a very pleasant affair between two innocent youths, fiddling around with the game of love, without going beyond the limits of shame and indecency that would characterize present day poems of an urban flair.

In a poem about the approach of the beginning of the agricultural season, the author reminds his colleague and friend Hassan Abdul-Malik about the beginning of the appearance of Aquarius, the beginning of the agricultural season:

Yes, indeed, by the Prophet, the great Aquarius is approaching.

You reminded me of the farming chant, the long tunes and the harvest songs,

The Sharaf Land, in its hills, brings out the songs,

I wish we were in it,  
I wish it was with us.

.....  
The farmers awake early, before they say it is too late.

With the smile in their faces like the light of the sunset.

In a message to his friend, Sheikh Muhsin Al-Dhul'i, who was the Administrator of Kushar area, which included some advice to be conveyed to his son, the author states:

Sheikh Muhsin, your words are right on target,

May evil evade you, oh Administrator of Kushar,

I testify that you are on the straight path,

On what you said about that news.

I knew not no one like Al-Dhul'i so prudent-

Full gentleman-experienced in the ways of men.

.....

Beware (oh son) lest you think you live forever

Death, Zeid, there is no escape from.  
Go with people, with a proper character,

Whether you live in Syria or in Qatar.

My son, people like those who are steadfastly righteous

And keep their amity for the chivalrous and the noble.

Ramzy: Use the same picture of the cover of the book in last week's LC.

Here country really means the region or area where they lived.

A way of swearing.  
The start of the farming season.

The home area of the author's friend in the Hajjah area.



# Plastic everywhere

By: Amel Mohammed Al-Ariqi

A report of Environment Protection Authority EPA revealed that the domestic waste in 2000 is estimated at 1,266,084 tons in main cities like Sana'a, Taiz, and Aden due to increasing population concentration, while the number was at 970,461 tons in 2000. According to the report, the domestic waste includes food remains, glass, metal objects, electric wires, and hazardous waste such as expired medicines, bactericide or insecticides.

Therefore, communities started complaining of waste in their neighbors, with special focus on plastic bags and materials which are not dis-banded naturally and need specific waste containers for discard or recy-



Plastic bags are thrown in the streets waiting for the cleaners

cling purposes. Municipalities have arranged for daily door-to-door collection of garbage, however, residents find it inconvenient that their daily

garbage has to wait throughout the day and night until the next morning to be collected, as household consumption takes place throughout the day therefore garbage bags are filled and put outside door steps to be collected the next morning. However, stray cats and dogs, as well as weather conditions do allow plastic garbage bags to remain intact resulting in dirt and garbage spreading in the streets and neighborhoods during the rest of the day and night.

Moreover, not all neighborhoods are lucky enough to get daily garbage collection; several neighborhoods get this service only once every two days or twice a week, despite the Republic decree number 20 in 1999 for the establishment of funds for cleaning and beautifying the Yemeni cities.

Additionally, research indicated several cases where various disposed

liquids may become poisons that cause skin burns and toxic odors. Similarly, glass, metal and other sharp objects may tear plastic bags and in turn expose cleaning workers and children to cuts and infections. Mohammed, 19, indicated that throughout his work as a cleaner and garbage collector for two years he was hurt by sharp tools or glass that were put in the low quality plastic bags.

With this regard, the government issued two ministerial decrees to identify the acceptable standards for plastic production stipulating that imported and locally produced plastic bags whose density is less than 60 microns (currently they are 20 microns) should be banned. This standard resulted in the protests of plastic factories directors who have no social responsibility and refused to sacrifice a share of their profits to this end through claiming that such demand will need more raw material and in turn raise the cost of production. Thus, the two decrees were no longer enforced.

On a related issue, animals in the countryside occasionally suffer poisoning as a result of munching over plastic bags, consequently affecting those who consume meats of such animals.

The plastic pollution is also threatening marine life. According to Dr. Akram Al-Kershi of the Department of Environmental & Earth Sciences, the ingestion of plastic bags "may cause a problem for rare species such as the leatherback turtle, which normally eats jellyfish. Plastic litter may also deform the beauty and value of coastal areas, in turn posing a threat to tourism."

Discarded plastics do not easily break down into simpler components; they are mixed with soil, preventing rainwater from seeping into earth to feed the underground reservoirs,



Discarded Plastic affects plants which do not get enough water as a result

affecting plants which do not get enough water for their growth. Burning plastic is also inefficient, because burnt plastic becomes a solid substance while emitting a suffocating smoke which is hazardous to health.

Researches on the subject have attempted many times to facilitate

alternative methods for waste management, including reducing consumption of plastics, using biodegradable plastics, and recycling plastic waste, or chemical recycling which refers to a process that uses heat and chemicals to break plastic molecules down into more basic components, which can then be reused.

Plastic are moldable, synthetic (chemically-fabricated) materials derived mostly from fossil fuels, such as oil, coal, or natural gas. The word plastic is derived from the words plasticus (Latin for "capable of molding") and plastikos (Greek "to mold," or "fit for molding"). Plastics can be made hard as stone, strong as steel, transparent as glass, light as wood, and elastic as rubber. Plastics are also lightweight, waterproof, chemical resistant, and produced in almost any color. More than 50 families of plastics have been produced, and new types are currently under development. As plastics have become more versatile, use of plastics has grown as well. In 2005, annual global demand for plastics is projected to exceed 200 million metric tons (441 billion lb).

However, none of these alternative methods are being implemented on a large scale.

The Ministry of water and Environment has finally started the endeavor towards waste management; In 22nd of June 2005, the ministry signed an agreement with Zinat Corporation on a project for waste recycling, through providing containers of different colors to collect paper, cartons, and plastic waste. The garbage picked up weekly is recycled into items of daily use (such as plastic sewage pipes, and cardboard boxes for eggs), the ministry is supposed to receive a regular record of disposal quantities, and if successful, the project will be replicated in other related government agencies.

# The folklore of buried memories

By Richard J. McNally

How victims remember trauma is the most controversial issue facing psychology and psychiatry today. Many clinical trauma theorists believe that combat, rape, and other terrifying experiences are seemingly engraved on the mind, never to be forgotten.

Others disagree, arguing that the mind can protect itself by banishing memories of trauma from awareness, making it difficult for victims to remember their most horrific experiences until it is safe to do so many years later. While acknowledging that trauma is often all too memorable, these certain clinical trauma theorists assert that a condition known as "traumatic dissociative amnesia" leaves a large minority of victims unable to recall their trauma, precisely because it was so overwhelmingly terrifying.

However, these clinical trauma theorists do not argue that "repressed" or "dissociated" memories of horrific events are either inert or benign. On the contrary, these buried memories silently poison the lives of victims, giving rise to seemingly inexplicable psychiatric symptoms, and therefore must be exhumed for healing to occur.

This is no ordinary academic debate. The controversy has spilled out of the psychology laboratories and psychiatric clinics, capturing headlines, motivating legislative changes, and affecting outcomes in civil lawsuits and criminal trials.

Whether individuals can repress

and recover memories of traumatic sexual abuse has been especially contentious. During the 1990's, many adult psychotherapy patients began to recall having been sexually abused during childhood. Some took legal action against the alleged perpetrators, often their elderly parents. While complaints against parents, based on allegedly repressed and recovered memories of abuse, have declined, those against large institutions, such as the Catholic Church, have increased.

Strikingly, both advocates and skeptics of the concept of traumatic dissociative amnesia adduce the same studies when defending their diametrically opposed views. But it is the advocates who misinterpret the data when attempting to show that victims are often unable to recall their traumatic experiences.

Consider the following. After exposure to extreme stress, some victims report difficulties remembering things in everyday life. Advocates of traumatic amnesia misconstrue these reports as showing that victims are unable to remember the horrific event itself. In reality, this memory problem concerns ordinary absentmindedness that emerges in the wake of trauma; it does not refer to an inability to remember the trauma itself. Ordinary forgetfulness that emerges after a trauma must not be confused with amnesia for the trauma.

Consider, too, that one symptom of posttraumatic stress disorder is an "inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma." This symptom, however, does not mean that victims are unaware of having been traumatized.

Indeed, the mind does not operate like a video recorder, and thus not every aspect of a traumatic experience gets encoded into memory in the first place. High levels of emotional arousal often result in the victim's attention being drawn to the central features of the event at the expense of other features. Incomplete encoding of a trauma must not be confused with amnesia – an inability to recall something did get into memory.

Moreover, a rare syndrome called "psychogenic amnesia" is sometimes confused with traumatic amnesia. Victims of psychogenic amnesia suddenly lose all memory of their previous lives, including their sense of personal identity. Occasionally, this sudden, complete memory loss occurs after severe stress, but not invariably. After a few days or weeks, memory abruptly returns. In contrast, the phenomenon of dissociative amnesia supposedly entails victims' inability to remember their traumatic experiences, not an inability to remember their entire lives or who they are.

Several surveys show that adults reporting childhood sexual abuse often say that there was a period of time when they "could not remember" their abuse. Claims of prior inability to remember imply that they had attempted unsuccessfully to recall their abuse, only to remember it much later. Yet if these individuals were unable to remember their abuse, on what basis would they attempt to recall it in the first place?

Most likely, they meant that there was a period of time when they did not think about their abuse. But not thinking about something is not the same thing as being unable to remember it. It is inability to remember that constitutes amnesia.

Research conducted in my laboratory on adults reporting histories of childhood sexual abuse provides a solution to this bitter controversy. Some of our participants reported having forgotten episodes of nonviolent sexual abuse perpetrated by a trusted adult. They described it as having been upsetting, confusing, and disturbing, but not traumatic in the sense of being overwhelmingly terrifying. Failing to understand what had happened to them, they simply did not think about it for many years.

When reminders prompted recollection many years later, they experienced intense distress, finally understanding their abuse from the perspective of an adult. These cases count as recovered memories of sexual abuse, but not as instances of traumatic dissociative amnesia. That is, the events were not experienced as traumatic when they occurred, and there is no evidence that they were inaccessible during the years when they never came to mind.

Sexual abuse is not invariably traumatic in the sense of being overwhelmingly terrifying. Of course, it is always morally reprehensible, even when it fails to produce lasting psychiatric symptoms.

**Richard J. McNally, Ph.D. is Professor of Psychology and Director of Clinical Training in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. He is the author of Remembering Trauma.**

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## People of Yemen continue the fight against polio

By: Andrew Robinson

On December 25, 26 and 27, people all over Yemen will once again open their doors to polio immunisation teams. Through their participation in the campaign, parents will continue efforts to protect their children from polio and eradicate the deadly disease from the nation.

During the 3 consecutive days of the immunisation campaign, many thousands of vaccination teams will move door-to-door, visiting every household in order to deliver the oral polio vaccine to all of Yemen's 4 million children aged under five years.

Yemen's unprecedented immunisation efforts follow an outbreak of polio earlier this year in which a total of 476 cases of polio were reported. Only one other country (Nigeria) recorded more cases of polio this year. Yemen's outbreak began in February and reached its peak in May. Previously, Yemen had been polio-free since 2000.

This year's intense polio immunisation efforts have been a direct response to the polio outbreak. During these campaigns parents and health workers have worked together to ensure that every child under 5 years receives the polio vaccine and is protected from the polio outbreak in Yemen.

The immunisation campaigns in Yemen have already brought the national outbreak under control. No new cases of polio have occurred since October. However, the intense, door-to-door immunisation efforts will continue to occur until it is certain that polio has been totally eliminated from Yemen.

The virus that causes polio is highly infectious and spreads in areas where sanitation is poor or children are not immunised. The virus grows in the human intestine and is passed from person to person via human faeces. If human waste contaminates a water supply, or even the hands of young children, the virus can spread and cause disease.

Polio can cause permanent paralysis or even death. The disease cannot be

cured, but it can be prevented by multiple doses of the oral polio vaccine. Unlike other immunisations, polio vaccine has to be given by mouth. This makes the vaccine easier to give to children. However, the effect of the vaccine is less reliable, since the child may not swallow all the drops, or the vaccine may not be absorbed properly from the gut – especially if the child has diarrhoea. For these reasons, multiple doses of the vaccine should be given in order to ensure adequate protection. Children can receive multiple doses of oral polio vaccine without any detrimental effect upon their health.

In 1988, the Polio Eradication Initiative was launched to eliminate the paralysing disease from the world. The end of 2005 had become defined as a deadline for this achievement. However, eradication efforts suffered a setback in August 2003 when children in several Northern Nigerian states were prevented from receiving the oral polio vaccine. Governors of these states banned immunisation activities; claiming that the vaccines might contain sterilising agents. Following the end of immunisation activities, the number of polio cases rose sharply in the region. Subsequently, during 2004 and 2005, the poliovirus spread from Nigeria to other African countries and eventually across the Red Sea to Yemen. The Northern Nigerian states eventually resumed polio immunisations after scientific experiments conducted in Pakistan proved the vaccine did not contain sterilising agents.

Eradication efforts reduced the global incidence of polio from 350,000 cases in 1988 to an all time low of less than 700 cases in 2003. However, following Nigeria's outbreak and subsequent spread of the disease, the number of global cases rose to 1255 in 2004 and to 1567 so far in 2005.

The deadline for worldwide eradication of polio has now been pushed back from the end of 2005 to 2008.

[The Polio Eradication Initiative is a coalition spearheaded by the World Health Organisation, Rotary International, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UNICEF.



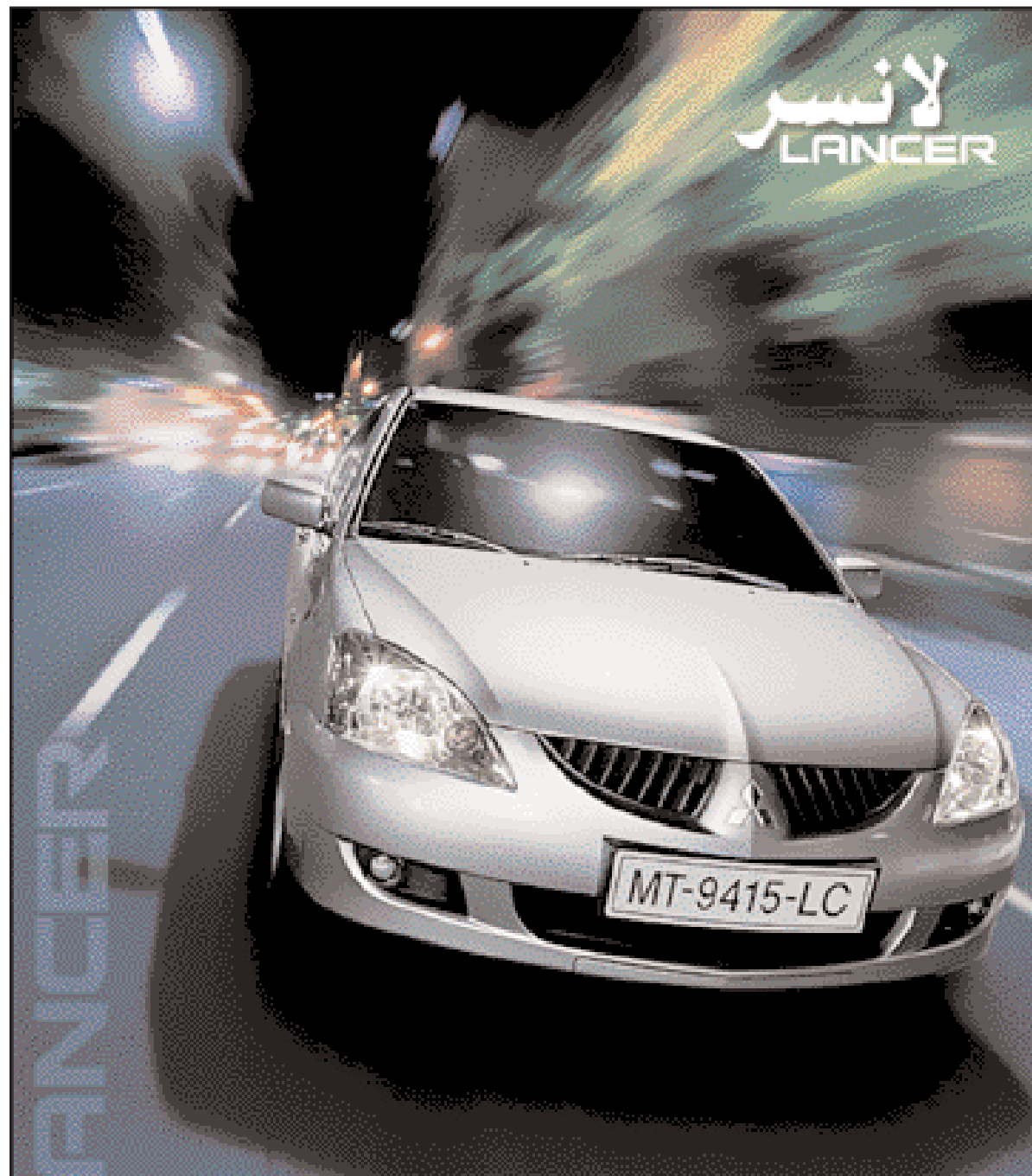
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ELT  
P a n o r a m aThe art of reviewing a book:  
Some useful tips (PART 3)

In the last two parts we have seen some of the basic principles a reviewer should bear in mind, and what tasks should a learner perform in the class. A small suggestion has also been offered to encourage the students to write reviews. In this section we shall look at the teacher's job. Let us be very brief, for teaching like life has variety and each one of us may do our jobs differently. There is no single method proven to be universally good or bad. Hence what is said here needs to be taken more as a suggestion rather than a recommendation.

A learner while reviewing a book is expected to produce the review in six steps. These steps have been enumerated in some detail in the previous write up. As teachers, it is our duty to facilitate the learners to complete each of these six tasks as successfully as possible.

1. The first step in writing a review relates to stating the title. Here we need to make it clear that the title as given in a review differs from the bibliographic entry. It may be useful to introduce to our learners style manuals. Copies of MLA Style Sheet (Modern Language Association) could be made available or books with bibliographic entries could be provided to students. Students could make a comparative study of the two types of entries and make a list of similarities and differences. You could use this e.g. to begin with:

Bibliographic entry: Lewis, M (2002) **The Lexical Approach - The State of ELT and a Way Forward**, London, Thomson Heinle.

Review entry: **The Lexical Approach - The State of ELT and a Way Forward**, Michael Lewis, London, Thomson Heinle: 2002 (pp viii + 196) ISBN 090671799 x [price not stated]

To help your learners, you could ask them to look at the order of entries, punctuation marks used, details of information etc. Practice can be provided using books they are familiar with, perhaps the books that are prescribed to them. It would be more helpful, if this exercise is carried out in pairs and groups for discussion makes learning better.

2. The second point talks about the relevance of the book under review. This would perhaps be difficult for the learners to arrive at. Help the learners read reviews of books published in journals



Dr S Mohanraj  
Faculty of Education  
Taiz University, Taiz

and magazines, and identify parts which relate to the relevance. In the previous section (part II) of this write-up some reasons which could prompt a person to write a review are suggested. The list is not exhaustive. By undertaking the type of exercise mentioned, learners can come out with an inventory of reasons and the list can be formidable.

3. The third section which should give information about the author is optional. However, in the class, to make the task useful, it would be appropriate to choose authors who are well known and about who we could give some information to the learners. A better task could be ask the learners to look up encyclopedias or surf the net to glean information about some authors. Let them get some information about Keats and Shelley, or Shaw and Galsworthy, Milton and Marlowe. The list of authors we can provide them can come from different fields as well. Some famous names are provided here to help you start the work: Milton, F; Myrdal Gunnar; Kant Emmanuel; Sartre J P; Kafka F; Proust M; Cohelo P; Calvino, I; Ray Bradbury; Jung C; Widdowson H G; Hoyle, F; Bellow, S; Mandela, N; Patai, R; and El Shamy Hasan M. These are names chosen from different fields of work like economics, psychology, science, sociology, criticism, creative writing, ELT and other fields. Once again pair work may be more profitable than students working alone on a task like this. Perhaps this task could even be administered as part of a project work on which the learners can work at home.

4. The fourth section of the review deals with providing a summary. This is in fact an exercise in comprehension. But let us attempt at eliciting learner understanding without our intervention. Let us help our learners with some small stories, essays, and reports (not over two pages) and ask them to read independently and summarize for the whole class. A pool of materials (stories, essays and reports) can be gathered with student cooperation. We could ask each student

to bring a story or two (or a piece of some published writing) and this could be pooled and distributed randomly to the students for summarizing. Certain guidelines can be offered to develop summaries (this need not be elaborated here) and later discussed in the class with peer correction.

5. This section deals with offering opinions and comments. In fact, this would be the spill over of the task offered in the previous section (4). When students share their summaries in the class, and their write up is open for discussion, comments would flow in, in abundance. We could monitor this discussion by helping the learners to sift the chaff from the grain. You could sensitize them to identify the relevant points and discard the not very relevant points. Further, a lot of training can be provided in observing the etiquette of group discussion, and using a language that does not hurt others while offering criticism. It is time our learners become familiar with the nuances of the language, for they are at a stage when they need to say good bye to their student lives and enter real life.

6. The last section relates to the writing of the conclusion and offering suggestions on the relevance and usefulness of the book. This is an open exercise, and much depends on the type of book chosen. Perhaps this is best left to the learners to learn on their own.

After reading this, you may have a relevant question to ask. The tasks suggested here take a long time to work through. Do we have the luxury of eternity to teach in our class? And at that one topic on a course? Indeed, the question is relevant, and the following suggestion may help you to some extent.

When we read literature available on the Teaching Writing (called Process Writing), most of the scholars express an opinion that the classroom time should not be utilized for the actual writing. Classroom should provide the inputs, and the actual writing task should happen outside the class either as assignment or a home task. If this is accepted in principle, and the classroom time is used for discussions and sharing views, the tasks suggested here would not occupy more than two weeks of teaching time. Let us hope to build a new tomorrow.

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Teaching English pronunciation:  
past and present (PART 2)

With the developments in cognitive psychology, which tried to unravel the mental processes in language learning, language was viewed as a rule-governed creative activity rather than a mechanical habit formation. The cognitive approach which then substantially influenced language teaching drew from theory development in the transformational generative grammar proposed mainly by Chomsky (1959, 1965). The development in the cognitivist school stemmed the structuralist tide which was very much in favor of pronunciation teaching. The cognitive school proposed that learning native-like pronunciation was unrealistic, and could not be achieved. The tide turned to emphasize the teaching of grammar and vocabulary which proved to be more attainable objectives for non-native learners.

The *Silent Way*, as discussed in Gattegno (1972, 1976), is the next prominent landmark in pronunciation teaching with focus on accuracy. Individual sounds, assimilation processes when sounds combine, stress and intonation are all emphasized in the teaching methodology so that the learner can sharpen her internal mechanism for accurate pronunciation.

In this method, sound-color charts, Fidel charts, word charts and color rods are used by the teachers in place of the phonetic alphabet and explicit linguistic information. The teacher's talk in teaching is kept to the minimum, and the input is given mainly through elaborate gestures in how to use the various tools in approximating an accurate pronunciation. Once the input has been given, the teacher recedes to the background allowing learners to practice pronunciation in stages using the charts and rods. Many language educators (Stevik: 1980, and Blair: 1991) appreciate the discovery procedure of the *Silent Way* which allows learner's internal resources to come into play in getting a feel for the actual stress, intonation and rhythmical patterns of the target language.

Like the *Silent Way* another learner-centered approach to teaching pronunciation is *Community Language Learning* (Rogers: 1951, Curran: 1976). The role of the teacher in this approach is that of a 'counselor'. A tape recorder is the essential tool around which learners sit in a circle. The 'counselor' produces an utterance for a learner in slow motion and in chunks. The learner repeats the chunks and then the whole utterance till she gets the appropriate pronunciation. The pronunciation is then recorded. Every learner gets the chance for pronunciation practice and recording of their pronunciation.

The recorded utterances are played back with a word-for-word translation provided by the counselor. The input by the counselor can be switched on or off at will by any learner. The focus of the learners remain on how the utterances were made and not on what was said. Here, the learners have the option to choose the language chunks they would like to practice without any intervention from the teacher's side. The level of attainment is also controlled by the learners' independent choice. Though the methodology is similar to the *Direct Method*, i.e., intuitive and imitative, the content and extent of practice is learner centered.

The *Communicative Approach* in language teaching came into practice in the



Dr. Kalyani Samantray  
Reader in Phonetics  
English Language  
Teaching Institute  
Bhubaneswar  
Orissa, India

early 1980s, and is still prevalent in most ESL classrooms. Its basic principle is grounded on the primary purpose for which language is used, i.e., communication. As the main bearing of this approach is to teach language to learners to carry on communication effectively, there has been a renewed urgency in teaching pronunciation to achieve that objective.

Research in the level of pronunciation (Hinoftis & Baily: 1980) shows that nonnative speakers of English should be able to achieve a 'threshold level' pronunciation. They can communicate and produce the desired effect through speaking if their pronunciation is at the 'threshold level'. If their accomplishment falls below this level, there arises problems in oral communication no matter how refined and broad their grasp is over English grammar and vocabulary.

Morely (1987) suggests that four types of English language speakers are now there for whom oral communication needs to be at a high level of intelligibility, and who therefore require appropriate acquisition of English pronunciation. These four types are the following:

1. nonnative faculty members and teaching assistants in academic institutions in English speaking countries
2. nonnative technical personnel, business people and professionals in their work situations in English speaking countries
3. nonnative diplomats who need to use English as their working lingua franca
4. nonnative refugees wishing to emigrate to English speaking countries.

Apart from the list above, there is a spurt in English speaking activities globally. People who are obliged to use English efficiently in other situations than the ones already mentioned are the following:

1. nonnative teachers of English in their own countries who are expected to be role models for their learners
2. nonnative technical personnel, people in business, and professionals who deal either with native English speakers and/or nonnative English speaking people from various countries in relation to their work or profession.

All the above categories require appropriate and adequate training in oral communication skills.

The classroom objectives in ESL currently is not to aspire for a native-like competence in oral communication, which has already been proved to be unachievable with a majority of learners. Such a goal is unrealistic except for a few highly motivated and adroit learners. A more realistic goal is to assist learners to move beyond the 'threshold level'. If they remain below the 'threshold level', they would not only have to consciously labor with the various aspects of pronunciation but would also have to cope with other immediate communication requirements. Teaching of pronunciation should now focus upon the process of internalizing the required patterns in English utterance stress and intonation. When the internalization is accomplished, conscious plodding to achieve an acceptable and intelligible pronunciation will cease, and the mental faculties will allow learners to concentrate their attention on expression of meaning through English. In other words, their attention will no longer be unduly sensitive to 'not' producing clumsy pronunciation, but will remain free to negotiate the meaning-building maneuver in oral communication.

## Pedagogical issues

Accepting that discernible pronunciation is the primary requirement for nonnative speakers of English, the next issue to deal with is pedagogical. Teachers of nonnative learners require pragmatic teaching mechanisms and tools to develop oral competency in their learners. In *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT), no accepted common methodology has yet been projected for the teaching community, though quite some practical suggestions for teaching English pronunciation communicatively appear in Celce-Murcia (1983), Celce-Murcia et al (1996), and Pica (1984) among a few others.

Being holistic in approach, CLT has allowed its practitioners in teaching pronunciation a wide range and variety of choices in methodology drawing from the more traditional 'listen and imitate', 'phonetic training', 'conceptualized minimal pairs', 'approximation drills', 'vowel shift

and stress shift practice' and 'reading aloud', to a more modern practice in 'utterance stress', 'intonation in context', 'voice quality management', 'role play', 'discussions in groups', 'presentation techniques' and so on.

Inherent to the traditional approaches to teaching is the emphasis on practicing sounds in isolation and sounds in words at the initial stage of learning English pronunciation. The words are then placed in unnatural sentences manipulated to focus learner attention on the sound/s under study. Though a discourse based approach is used in reading aloud the sentences under discussion, attention continues to be on sound production. The materials used for pronunciation practice under any of the traditional approaches tend to be teacher driven and prepared by teachers.

With theory development in CLT (Brumfit & Johnson: 1979; Widdowson: 1978), the pronunciation teaching pedagogy underwent a sea change. Techniques and materials used to teach pronunciation at the segmental level were discarded in toto in favor of discourse based approaches. The practical considerations for communication oriented pronunciation teaching drove methodologists and teachers in search of more effective tools in terms of suitable materials and teaching pedagogy.

McNery and Mendelsohn (1992), and Gilbert (1993) share the opinion through their research that pronunciation courses which focus on teaching suprasegmentals at the discourse level lead learners quickly to a higher level of comprehensibility. Such courses prove less frustrating for learners than courses emphasizing learning sounds, as the latter is less achievable. In learning the suprasegmentals, greater change can be attained in pronunciation in a short duration of instruction and practice.

Current research thus deals with the acquisition of the discourse features in pronunciation: English stress and unstress and the resulting rhythm, intonation patterns with variable pitch contours, voice quality settings along with phonemic contrasts and assimilation. There is no longer a tussle between a 'top-down' and a 'bottom-up' approach. The move is towards a combinatory approach using those features which occur in contexts carrying a heavy functional load. Those features could be phonemic and/or suprasegmental but those must be the ones which have a bearing on the communicational needs of the learners. Thus the attention is now on teaching the functional aspects of pronunciation used to carry on effective communication. If the functional impact is under-valued, learners can encounter two problems: first, in listening to understand natural English, and next, in their own oral communication.

At present, any syllabus prepared to teach pronunciation needs to have a holistic approach which would integrate the choice of teaching-learning principles with learner requirements, and would use materials and methodology to suit learners' linguistic ability, and their short and long term requirements in verbal communication.

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## Poetry Corner

## The Paradoxes of war

Those who make war fight not  
Those who fight like not.  
The makers shed tears false for the sufferers  
The sufferers have no powers to stop wars.  
The war mongers preach peace  
The peace preachers monger war  
Everyone knows war is bad  
But all militate over trifles.

Every single penny each country  
Needs for construction, reconstruction.  
Pervasive is the desire for nation-building  
Elusive are measures for confidence-building.  
Permissive hence is a budget for arsenal building.  
Discursive so are the rulers that one longs for  
Daemon Mailer to snatch war

despatches  
Serve failure notices or the Postmaster  
to report the mail as undeliverable.

Why not give a thought to  
The other half weltering in hunger,  
Withering in ill-health, wallowing  
In poverty, illiteracy ...?

No nation has money  
For construction  
But plenty for destruction!



Dr. Aruna Chalam  
Angappan  
HOD of English  
Faculty OF Education  
Hadhramout University,  
Selyun  
dr-arunachalam2004@yahoo.co.in

## WONDERWORD®

by DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** First read the list of words, then look at the puzzle. The words are in all directions — vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backward. Circle each letter of a word found and strike it off the list. The letters are often used more than once, so do not cross them out. It is best to find the big words first. When you find all the words listed in the clues, you'll have a number of letters left over that spell the Wonderword.

## CLUES

Ability  
Angora  
Arts  
Awards  
Belt  
Blouse  
Boots  
Boutique  
Cape  
Celebrity  
Chic  
Classic  
Collar  
Copy  
Corduroy  
Cost  
Cotton  
Crepe

Cuff  
Cuts  
Cutting  
Dark  
Dress  
Europe  
Fancy  
Form  
Fringe  
Furs  
Glossy  
Gloves  
Gown  
Handbag  
Handmade  
Hats  
House  
Ideas

Jeans  
Jersey  
Khaki  
Knit  
Label  
Lace  
Latex  
Left  
Model  
Mohair  
Moire  
Names  
Need  
Nylon  
Originality  
Paris  
Pins  
Pique

Polyester  
Presentation  
Price  
Print  
Publicity  
Pull  
Quality  
Sandals  
Sashes  
Satin  
Scarf  
Seam  
Sell  
Shirt  
Shoes  
Short  
Show  
Silhouette

Silk  
Size  
Snap  
Sporty  
Star  
Stores  
Style  
Suede  
Suit  
Trendy  
Turtleneck  
Tweed  
Variation  
Vest  
Vogue  
Waist  
World  
Yarn

## HAUTE COUTURE

## Solution: 9 letters

P	O	L	Y	E	S	T	E	R	E	Y	E	S	R	E	J	F	M	S	A
T	R	O	H	S	U	C	O	T	T	O	N	Y	L	E	F	T	G	T	R
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# Traveling to Japan? Book a room at Ryokan

By: Irena Knehtl  
Email: iren\_knehtl@yahoo.com

A ryokan is a traditional Japanese-style inn, which has been a central part of Japanese culture for centuries. The earliest ryokans were built along the Tokai Highway for travelers journeying between the capital city of Tokyo and the Imperial Palace in Kyoto. The simplest ryokans were actually homes offering extra rooms for travelers. Others, more elaborate, were offering little luxuries to exquisite elaborate cuisine.

Today, there are around 63,000 ryokans in Japan, of which 1,800 are high quality establishments belonging to the Japan Tourism Association. Many are located close to hot springs. Besides offering relaxation and calming views of the gardens, the blue sky or the stars above during the evening, the onsen (Hot springs) are places to meet friends, swap gossip and jokes, and practice

Japanese. Rooms usually contain reading material in English explaining the inn's history and ryokan customs.

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## Yemen and Japan

Japan is the second largest economy in the world. Yemen remains an important market for Japanese goods and Japan one of the main single donors to Yemen. The Japanese assistance has been instrumental to Yemen, and begun to include municipality projects. It

continued to cover technical expertise, infrastructure projects and projects in the field of education, health, training, culture and environment. The focus now is on projects related to poverty reduction strategy, millennium development goals, human security, such as de-mining and assistance to the most needy. In the future also partnerships in the field of construction, Japanese direct investment, as well as assistance to Yemen's economic, administrative and financial reform will be high on the agenda.

Yemen participated this year in Expo Aichi 2005 in Nagoya under the motto "The Wisdom of Nature". Some 120 countries participated. The Expo was attended by some 15 Million visitors. It offered an excellent opportunity to introduce and promote Yemen to the Japanese public and internationally.

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## Manual Carpets Industry: Painting portraits of Antiquarian Monument

By: Adel Al-Haddad

Industry of manual carpets in Yemen has been witnessing a huge development during last years. The Center of Manual Carpets, which was established in 1999, is considered to be the first workshop for industry of manual carpets in Yemen. The center aims at qualifying orphan boys and girls under the sponsorship of Orphan Organization for Development and Charitable Islah Society. The Center trains orphan students and qualifies them to be professional handicrafts, contributing to and productivity of the society. There are many of orphan boys and girls who studied in the Center and became well qualified in manual carpet industry. More than 24 separate training courses for orphan boys and girls have been taken place in the past. The Center helps many poor and limited-income families to improve their living by getting new job opportunities.

The Center is unique in its kind; it produces unique carpets that portrait many antiquarian monuments that attract tourists. "We would like to show our history through weaving on the carpets." Abdulmalek Al-Wahibi, director of the Center said. The most interesting products of the center are sewing historical sights on the carpets, such as,



Students weaving carpets

the old city of Sana'a with its southern gate, "Bab Al-Yemen."

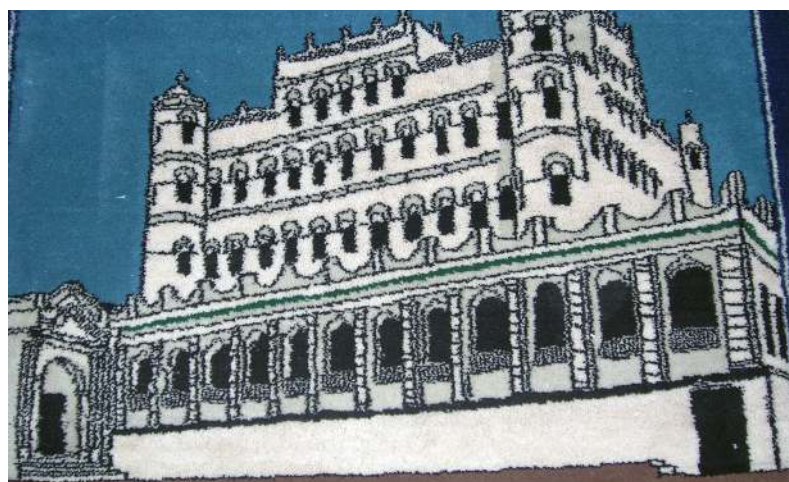
Other examples include Dar Al-Hajer (The Palace of the rock), Al-Mehdar mosque, the thrown of the Queen of Sheba and the Seiyoun Palace.

The huge heritage and very beautiful landmarks of Yemen have inspired

many artists to draw great tablets. This is well reflected in the Center's students who try to weave charming scenes, which are portraying some attractive landmarks and historical buildings on the carpets. In this regards, Abdulmalek said: "Most of our products focus on Yemen history and its most significant monuments." He pointed out that their purpose of establishing the center consists of many goals. "The first goal is to train and qualify orphan students in order to be handicrafts men and woman and responsible for themselves in future." he said. Furthermore, the carpets that are made in the center are of high standards and the materials used are imported from abroad. "The materials that are used are from wool, silk and cotton which are all imported from Egypt." Abdulmalek stated. The center then exports the carpets to many countries, especially to the Gulf Countries.

Working on manual carpets takes a lot of time of training and needs crafty hands that are skilled and professional. "The students start to learn on waving carpets using local cotton until they become professional", Abdulmalek said. The industry process starts firstly by preparing a good pattern of design. Then the students weave the stitches according to the design. Each stitch consists of a separate, small piece of silk or cotton threads, wrapped around extended structural silk threads that sprint the length of the carpet. Once a row of stitches is in place, they must be filled down to give the carpet the tense, to have high quality. "As is known, the silk is the most expensive fiber used in manual carpets" he pointed out.

It is worth mention that the Center helps many orphans and their family to cope with life challenges. The number of graduates is more than 144 girls and 144 boys. The best students become good teachers and trainers, in addition to being skillful makers of carpets. Moreover, they get 45 percent of the price of the carpets they make. "Of course, our project's income is used for qualifying more students." Abdulmalek said.



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