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## Kuwait Emir Sheikh Jaber passed away

KUWAIT, Jan. 15 – Government of Yemen mourns the death Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who had died at age of 78 on Sunday after a long illness. The republic has announced an official three-day grieving period in expression of Yemen's condolences and sorrow about the loss. His Highness late Sheikh Jaber had ruled Kuwait since December 31, 1977. During his rule the Yemeni-Kuwaiti relations had thrived and witnessed many cooperations and investment programs.

Under the constitution, Crown Prince Sheikh Saad al-Abdulla al-Sabah, 76, will become emir of the OPEC nation. But because illness has incapacitated Saad, political analysts expect Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah to effectively run the country. Sheikh Jaber had been ailing since suffering a brain hemorrhage in 2001. He had surgery on his leg in the United States in May.

"With the utmost of sorrow and sad-

ness, the (royal court) announces to the Kuwaiti people, the Arab and Islamic nations and the peoples of friendly world nations the death of His Highness Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah," said a royal court statement carried by the state news agency KUNA. It said the emir, "passed away at dawn on Sunday". Kuwait said there would be a 40-day official period of mourning and that government offices would be closed for three days from Sunday.

Kuwait, a founder OPEC member, enjoys one of the world's highest standards of living, despite its reliance on oil exports, unpredictable oil income and huge losses from the 1990-1991 Iraq occupation. It hosts up to 30,000 U.S. troops and some 13,000 U.S. citizens live in the country.

Biography of the late Amir of Kuwait, H.H. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah: KUNA

The late Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-

Sabah, who passed away early Sunday morning at the age of 78, was Kuwait's 13th ruler and its third since the 1961 independence.

Born in 1928, His Highness Sheikh Jaber received his preliminary education in the Mubarakia, Ahmadiya, and Sharquiah schools, as well as by private tutors for Arabic and English languages.

His father, the late Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, allowed him to visit many countries, and at the age of 21, Sheikh Jaber became directly involved in politics.

He was appointed Chief Director of Public Security in the Al-Ahmadi area in 1949, when Kuwait moved from a country dependent on diving to an oil-nation. In 1959, the late Sheikh Jaber became Head of the Finance Department, and on January 17, 1962, he became Kuwait's first Minister of Finance and Economy in the first Kuwaiti cabinet to be formed after independence.

Sheikh Jaber was appointed Minister

of Finance and Industry on January 28, 1963.

And on January 3, 1965, Sheikh Jaber became Minister of Finance and Minister of Trade and Industry, and remained in the post until November 27, 1965.

Sheikh Jaber became Prime Minister on November 30, 1965, and an Amiri decree was issued on May 31, 1966 appointing him Crown Prince. The decree was unanimously approved by the country's first National Assembly.

He was appointed Crown Prince and Prime Minister on February 4, 1967, and again in 1971 and 1975.

Sheikh Jaber became ruler of Kuwait on December 31, 1977 upon the demise of Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait's 12th ruler. Thus, Sheikh Jaber became the country's 13th Amir.

The late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah ruled the country since 1977 until his demise this morning.



Late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

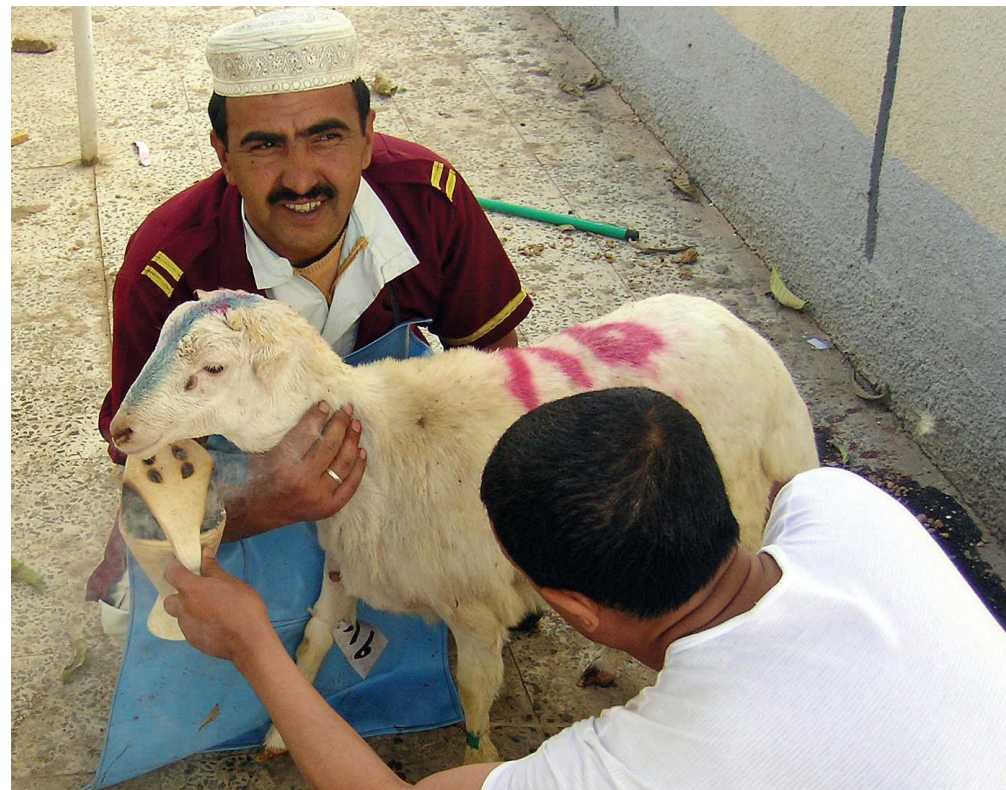
## Eid in Yemen

### Prohibitive prices while people dance to the music of pipe and drum

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

Eid Al-Adha is a religious occasion, which Muslims celebrate around the world in different styles. Muslims welcome Eid Al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) as an important occasion to be exploited for purifying their souls, visiting each other and consolidating solidarity and cooperation. The days of Eid undoubtedly have a distinctive taste to compensate for the suffering of people in the Arab and Muslim countries, where each community have their own style to enjoy the occasion.

People in different areas of Yemen differ in their reception of Eid and their customs and traditions are not identical. Over the last few years, religious occasions in Yemen and the joy associated with them has been influenced by the economic situation, as well as the average per capita income in the country. The average per capita income defines the limitations of enjoyment that the people can reach, and the Yemeni markets in the rural areas or in the cities become crowded with shoppers as the Eid draws nearer. Roadsides and streets appear flooded with commodities and goods needed for the occasion. In these markets, particularly the popular ones, people of low income can not buy any cloths and other Eid-related articles. As a result, people of low income do not care for quality, as most of the markets seem to be flooded with poor-quality commodities and arti-



Cleaning the animal before slaughtering

cles illegally smuggled to the Yemeni markets. Despite the fact citizens know that these commodities are smuggled, they prefer them for their cheap prices.

Abduljabbar, a government employee said that he bought all the Eid clothes from the popular markets and vendors since they are cheaper and new. He confirmed that his salary can only cover the cost of any clothes sold by vendors and that he is sure that these clothes are durable, and they make children happy regardless of their quality. Popular markets and roadsides are not only flooded with clothes, but also with all kinds of sweets, chocolate and child toys, particularly firecrackers which sometimes cause numerous problems and health risks to children. Despite the large quantities of imported sweets in the Yemeni markets, the Yemeni raisin is judged the best kind of sweet to be eaten during the days of Eid, in addition home-made cakes.

#### Skyrocketing prices of cattle

Due to the deterioration of economic situations over the last few years, the majority of Yemeni people, mainly the poorest categories stopped buying sacrifices and eating meat on the occasion of Eid. As the sacrifice (qurban) is a proper Sunna in Islam, the prices of cattle: sheep, goats and cows climb as Al-Adha Eid draws nearer because of the rising demand for them, causing obstacles to people of low income.

The price of sheep ranges from 10 to 30 thousand Yemeni Riyals (from 50-150 US dollars while prices of cows fall between 30 and 100 thousand Yemeni Riyals, equivalent to 200-500 US dol-

lars. Eng. Mohamed Abdu, who works in the implementation of projects run by the Social Fund for Development (SFD) in different parts of Yemen, affirmed that during his travel to different provinces before Eid Al-Adha he noticed that the prices of cattle consumed on this occasions run high, be the cattle sold in rural markets or cities. Most of the people share the purchase of cows and big bulls and then divide the flesh among them, each person according to his finance. He

attributed such prohibitive prices to the rarity of livestock in the country and holding up the sale of cattle until the Eid draws nearer. Coming back to some habits associated with Eid in Yemen, we find that the majority of people in the cities travel to the countryside to spend the Eid vacation with their families. Tawfiq Al-Humaidi, who has business in Sana'a, stated that he has to travel to the countryside to spend the Eid vacation with his family, confirming that the habits of Eid in the countryside are better than those in the city, as the former is far away from the noise of traffic.

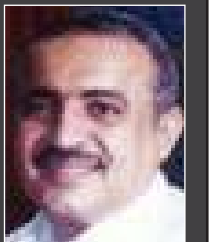
Spending the Eid days in the countryside makes you feel as if you are living in a one family. Some of the joyful habits practiced during Eid in Yemen are the sessions for the Eid days to exchange tales and talks. Large quantities of qat are consumed on this occasion.

The countryside in Yemen has a special taste and style where people gather in certain places to perform popular dances. One of the rural habits associat-

ed with Eid is that people visit their female relatives after performing the Eid Prayer. Men with their children visit their female relatives and shake hands with them and offer them Asb (money given to women by their male relatives). Children also get the same Asb when adults visit them. This habit has been inherited from one generation to another since the ancient times. Among the prominent Eid habits in Yemen is performing the Eid Prayer in public yards and fields, in addition to shooting at specific objects to know who is the best marksman.

### Media mourns death of prominent journalist

ADEN- Jan.15- The media community in Yemen mourned the death of the prominent journalist Essam Sa'eed Salem who died on Friday afternoon from a heart stroke. The deceased was transferred to the hospital immediately after he had the stroke but to no avail.



Late Essam Sa'eed Salem

Late Essam Sa'eed Salem, born on November 12-1950 in Al-Sheikh Ottoman Zone- Aden, completed his high school in the city of Aden and then he had his university study at the Faculty of Archeology- Cairo University. He was one of the founders and active members of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

Essam was one of the great personalities having glorious history in the profession of journalism since 1981 when he joined the 14 October Newspaper and worked as a reporter. He was promoted to the post of the managing editor and later on to the position of deputy publisher and editor-in-chief.

Late Essam Sa'eed Salem was appointed chief editor of 22 May Newspaper during 2000 and 2001, and after establishing the national unity, he founded a caricature magazine named "Sum Bum", which means "Deaf and Dumb". He remained editor-in-chief of this magazine until he died last Friday.

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## Troops give work animals free medical care in Yemen

By Sgt. Brian E. McElaney, USMC

AMRAN, Jan. 13 — More than 780 animals received free medical care recently during a veterinary civil action plan event here.

Local veterinarians teamed up with civil affairs team members from Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa to treat herds in the villages of Bani Mamoon, Thula and Hababa. Animals were given vitamins and anti-parasitic medication and were checked for any other problems.

While the number of animals treated was lower than in past VetCAPs held by the task force, team members said they felt the mission to assist local villagers was a definite success.

"The neat thing about this is that we made a big difference for probably 700-plus families, each with their own work animal," said Army Maj. Jim Riche, veterinarian and civic action team leader, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion. "Each animal was extremely valuable to the owner, so we had a larger effect on the human population owning these animals than we originally expected."

In addition to having the opportunity to assist the Yemeni villagers, team members had the chance to share and learn new techniques with local veterinarians who worked alongside them.

"They were a lot of fun, even if communication was a little difficult at times," said Riche. "There were a lot of tools we use that they weren't familiar with, and techniques they use we've never seen before, so the experience improved the profession on both sides."

This was the second VetCAP con-



ducted in Yemen, and it is part of a larger humanitarian aid effort being conducted by CJTF-HOA at the request of the Yemeni government. Local and national government leaders invite civil affairs teams into various areas to nominate projects that range from medical civil action plans and VetCAPs to school and hospital renovations, said Billy Wilkins, team leader, Civil Affairs Team A 611.

"These are exactly the kinds of projects we're most capable of doing," Wilkins said. "As a civil affairs organization, it's what we're designed to do — to help better our relations with the Yemeni people."

Relationships formed among the owners, the civil affairs teams and local vets are the most important result of the project for the health of the animals involved, said team members. More than that, they said they appreciated the chance to learn about Yemen and to share a little about America at the same time.

"I was honored to be one of the few Western faces they will ever see," said Army Capt. Anthony Evanego, civil affairs officer, Civic Action Team, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion. "It's an honor knowing that their perception of you will be the perception of the entire United States. It's an opportunity not many people ever get."

Relationships formed were also important because the effects of the project will be temporary, said Riche. Medicines given during the event will improve the animals seen for about six months. But without further treatment, parasites and dietary problems will eventually cause health problems to return.

"We boosted their general health, but the project needs to be repeated for a long-term impact on health and the economy," said Riche. "The real importance is more than what we did for any individual animal, ... it's that we helped gain trust and friendship and proved our intent to good for the people of Yemen. We've broken the ice for future projects to go to the region."

"Hopefully, the word will spread about what we did," he continued, "and someone like (the U.S. Agency for International Development) can make it back and continue these kinds of programs."

## World Bank Board endorses funding plan to combat avian flu

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13 — The World Bank's Board of Directors has given its endorsement of a new framework for a global funding program of up to US\$500 million to help countries combat avian flu.

The new funding program is designed to allow countries to access funding on short notice to strengthen their veterinarian and health services to deal with avian flu outbreaks among animals, and minimize the threat posed to people, and prepare for, and respond to, any potential human flu pandemic.

The Kyrgyz Republic is expected to be the first country to obtain financing under the new program. Bank officials have been working on a project for the Kyrgyz Republic worth about US\$5 million.

The Board's endorsement of the new framework comes just prior to the start of an international donors conference in Beijing, co-sponsored by the Government of China, the European Commission and the World Bank.

The conference is aimed at securing grant funds for countries from donors to help them fight avian flu — responding to estimates by the World Bank that at least between US\$1.2 billion and \$1.4 billion is needed globally to help countries combat the deadly virus.

The Head of the Bank's Avian Flu Taskforce, Jim Adams, says the Bank's new funding program will allow poor countries immediate access to funding to carry out national programs to control bird flu.

Adams says it's designed to be a flexible funding mechanism, also allowing donors who pledge money in Beijing to combine their grant funding with Bank-supported operations to reduce the overall cost.

"There are on-going discussions with a number of countries — in Africa, Eastern Europe, and in Asia. Turkey has already approached us and we've done some technical work and those discussions are on-going and we expect further talks in Beijing."

### 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:

Prices of the sacrifice animals soared this year. Do you think that poor citizens will manage to buy their sacrifice animals next year?

Yes  
No  
I don't know

#### Last edition's question:

Do you think that Yemen can persuade all the Somali factions to reach permanent reconciliation?

No 59%  
Yes 30%  
I don't know 11%

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and have your voice heard!

## Eleven Yemeni pilgrims died in hajj stampede

MECCA, Jan. 15 — Ministry of Endowment and Guidance announced that eleven Yemeni pilgrims died and 56 others were injured as they performed the Jamarat ritual (stone-throwing) in Mina last Thursday in this year's hajj session in Saudi Arabia. Minister of Endowment and Guidance, Mr. Hamoud Ubad, said that five of the dead pilgrims were members of the Yemeni official Hajj mission, and the remaining six are residents of Saudi Arabia. Mr. Ubad said to the Saba news net that the dead Yemeni were buried in Mecca on Friday, while most of the injured have got out of hospitals being in good conditions. The dead pilgrims are Saida Abdullah Nahshal, Qaed Ahmed Nahshal, Ali Al-Hadari, Mohammed Jarallah, Abdul-Jalil Al-Hibshi, Hifzallah Ali Ahmed, Ali Mohammed Abdullah, Mohammed Saleh, Fatima Farei' Abdullah, Jawhara Salim Ahmed, and Fatima Farham.

Saudi authorities announced Friday that the death toll of pilgrims who performed the Jamarat ritual in Mina reached 362 this year. A hundred of them are Egyptians, 30 Pakistanis, 26 Indian nationals, 4 Chinese and two from Indonesia. Saudi authorities attributed the incident to the "unruly pilgrims" from outside the officially approved tours. Saudi Health Minister said "unruly pilgrims and a problem of luggage" caused the stampede. On the same front, Saba News Agency stated on Thursday that President Ali Abdullah Saleh made a telephone call on Thursday with Minister of Endowments, guidance and chairman of Yemeni Pilgrimage mission Hamoud Ubad to get assure about Yemeni Pilgrims and their safety after



crush accident of pilgrims in Mecca. Minister of Endowments reassured President Saleh about Yemeni pilgrims, affirming that all Yemeni pilgrims are getting all kinds of care. This is the second incident in which Yemeni pilgrims died this year. On January 5, four Yemenis were killed and three others injured as a hotel collapsed near the holy Kaaba site in Mecca.

## Workshop on fighting piracy

SANA'A, Jan. 15 — The International Marine Organization (IMO) organizes currently a regional workshop in Oman on fighting piracy and armed robbery against ships. Yemen participates in this workshop, which is being held between the 14 and 18 of this month.

In April Last year, the IMO had organized a regional workshop in Sana'a regarding the same issue, in cooperation with the Yemeni General Marines Authority. It resulted important

regional and international decisions.

In a statement to Yemen Times, Mr. Khalid Ibrahim Al-Wazeer, head of the of the Yemeni Marine Authority, said that Yemen had earlier sensed the seriousness of piracy over international trade navigation, as it commands the Bab Al-Mandab strait, through which about 20 thousand ships annually pass. Yemen also occupies a strategic position, which raises its concern over the phenomenon. Al-Wazeer added that the authority is preparing a regional cooper-

ation agreement on fighting piracy and armed ship robbery, in the red sea area. However he assured that all issues are being discussed by the region's countries in Oman's workshop.

Each of Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen are participating in this workshop. Representatives from the IMO, UN, Interpol, Italian and British Admiralty, International Shipment Chamber and the British Maine Cargo are also present in this workshop.

## Al-Firdos Women's Society launches handicraft exhibition in Aden

ADEN, Jan. 15 — Al-Firdos Women's Development Society launched a handicraft exhibition during Eid Al-Adha on the Al-Boriqa coast. The exhibition was organized in cooperation with Aden Refinery Company.

Society head Samira Abdullah said holding the exhibition during Eid aimed to activate tourism and promote the handicrafts of the society's 60 members. She confirmed that a large number visited the exhibition from several governorates while spending Eid on Aden's coasts.

Formed last year, Abdullah said the society seeks to promote the economic, social and developmental spirit among

its members, as well as their cultural skills and talents. It also endeavors to help poor families in cooperation with the Development Fund and other related authorities.

Al-Boriqa MP Abdulkhalil Al-Barakani expressed his gratitude to the society's leadership for organizing the exhibition. He said the exhibition reflects huge achievement by a women's society less than a year old.

He called on the governorate's leadership to fully support the society so it can extend its activities to all parts of Al-Boriqa district, an area attracting visitors from all governorates for Eid vacations.

## Al-Masri is being trialed

LONDON, Jan. 11 — Mustafa Kamel who is also known as Abu Hamza Al-Masri 49, is currently being tried at London's Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey). Abu Hamza faces 15 criminal charges, including encouraging murder at public meetings and using "threatening, abusive or insulting words or behavior" with the intent to stir up racial hatred. The prosecutor David Perry claimed that Al-Masri has a 10-volume "terrorist manual" and the "Encyclopedia of the Afghani Jihad", which contain detailed instructions on how to construct explosives and carry out assassinations. Soliciting murder carries a maximum sentence of life in prison in Britain, while "using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behavior" carries a maximum seven-year term. The cleric denies the charges.

The Egyptian-born cleric, who is a former preacher at the Finsbury Park mosque in the north of London, was

questioned by Scotland Yard, in 1999, detectives on suspicion of terrorism offences in Yemen which accused him of providing support and resources for a terrorist group, called (Abeen- Aden Army) that took 16 tourists hostage in the Yemen, in 1998. He is said to have spoken to the terrorists before and after the incident. Three British tourists and one Australian were killed when they were used as human shields during a shoot-out with Yemen rescuers, it is claimed. Therefore Yemeni authorities had requested his arrest and extradition. However he was held for several days before being released without charge. He has always maintained his innocence.

In 1999, his son Mohammed Mustafa Kamel was sentenced to three years in prison in Yemen for his involvement in a terrorist bombing campaign when aged 17. He returned to Britain in 2002 after completing his sentence.

## Women journalists trained to design their own websites

SANA'A, Jan. 9 — An intensive training course to improve female media employee skills in designing websites concluded two weeks ago. Organized by Yemen Female Media Forum (YFMF) and held at Information & Communication Technologies City, the course trained 22 women journalists affiliated with the capital's different mass media: political, private and public newspapers, as well as television and radio.

YFMF chairwoman Rahma Hujaira said, "Unfortunately, there is no special website directed by Yemeni women to fight negative and out-of-date concepts used to address women's issues. We at YFMF aim to fund media issues, activities and all things related to women's issues." She added that the course will enable trainees to publish their issues via websites and make achievements under patronage of the National Grant for Democracy Enhancement and Information & Communication Technologies City. "What distinguished this course was that the best three websites will be linked and sponsored by YFMF, Al-Sahwa Net Journal and Shora.net," she noted.

Website technical design trainer Abdulghani Al-Yemeni noted the importance of encouraging female media staffers to use the internet to discuss their problems. "Due to the small number of women working in Yemen's media, Information & Communication Technologies City hopes to encourage them and assist them through information technology. Therefore, the internet will be of great advantage to them, given the relationship between journalism and the internet," he said. "We teach them how to design websites on the internet, enabling them to contact other people all over the globe, to solve their problems and deal with large amounts of information," he added.

News Yemen website Editor-in-Chief, Nabil Al-Sofi, participated in the course by lecturing attendees on the means of directing, running and selecting materials and resources for websites.

YFMF deputy chairwoman Dalia Hussain Anam noted the course is part of a program aiming to upgrade female media employee skills in handling women's issues efficiently through modern means. The program has training courses in: modern technology and skills to acquire information via computer; internet and designing websites; press art and editing and design

skills; communication skills and photography. Additionally, there will be two workshops on gender discrimination and moderate Islamic views on women and training in international law and local law (Treaty of Human Rights and international promotion of women's rights and media liberty). Anam said 15 trainers from Yemen and other Arab countries will teach the courses.

Abdul Al-Qudos Al-Mansoor, manager of Information & Communication Technologies City, said the minister of communication was particularly interested in helping women in the media benefit from the information revolution.

He declared the City will organize a free computer illiteracy reduction campaign for the public. "We have prepared 10,000 computers for this purpose. We will be ready to receive 100,000 trainees from all different classes in society; 50,000 of them to be female trainees," he said.

In 2005, YFMF trained 90 women at Information & Communication Technologies City under sponsorship of the minister of communication, prompted by a YFMF study revealing that only 19 women in the media had their own E-mail addresses as of the beginning of 2004.



Members of YFMF and some of the staff of Information and Communication Technology City

# Defiant Iran calls for atomic talks

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran said on Sunday diplomacy was the only way to resolve the impasse over its nuclear programme but that it would not reverse its widely criticized decision to resume atomic research after a break of more than two years.

Iran raised the stakes in the dispute last week by removing U.N. seals to gain access to equipment that purifies uranium, which can be used for power or, if highly enriched, in bombs.

The move prompted the United States and the European Union's three biggest powers — Britain, France, and Germany — to say the time had come to refer Iran's case to the U.N. Security Council, where Tehran could face sanctions.

Iran says it has no intention of building nuclear arms and has a clear right as a signatory of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to develop a full nuclear programme for peaceful purposes.

"Diplomacy is the only clear answer to the current situation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told a weekly news conference.

"There is no legal basis for referring Iran to the Security Council. But if that were to happen Iran is not afraid," he said.

Asefi declined to clarify whether Iran planned to carry out small-scale uranium enrichment — the most sensitive part of the atomic fuel cycle — as part of its research work.

"Iran's decision to resume nuclear research activities is irreversible," he said.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad speaks at a news conference in Tehran January 14, 2006. Iran will not be deflected from its drive to develop nuclear technology if it is referred to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions, Ahmadinejad said on Saturday. REUTERS

## Saddam judge threatens to quit

By: Mariam Karouny

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - The chief judge in the trial of Saddam Hussein has tendered his resignation in protest at political interference, casting fresh doubt on the U.S.-backed Iraqi government's ability to ensure a fair trial.

A source close to Kurdish judge Rizgar Amin told Reuters on Saturday that tribunal officials were trying to talk him out of his decision but he was reluctant to stay on because Shi'ite leaders had criticized him for being "soft" on Saddam in court.

"He tendered his resignation to the court a few days ago but the court rejected it. Now talks are under way to convince him to go back on his decision," the source said. "He's under a lot of pressure; the whole court is under political pressure."

"He had complaints from the government that he was being too soft in dealing with Saddam Hussein and his co-defendants. They (government leaders) want things to go faster."

Technically the departure of the presiding magistrate on the five-judge panel can be overcome by appointing a substitute; but Amin's complaints about government interference may do lasting damage to the credibility of the Iraqi High Tribunal.

The killing of two defense lawyers had already highlighted problems with the process amid a virtual civil war between Saddam's fellow minority Sunni Arabs and the U.S.-sponsored government, run by Shi'ite Muslims

and ethnic Kurds intent on quickly hanging a man they say massacred their peoples.

International human rights lawyers have urged U.S. officials and the new Iraqi government to send Saddam and his aides to an international court abroad while the defense has branded the proceedings "victor's justice" imposed under U.S. occupation.

"The defense team has long warned about the dangers of political pressure that has undermined the court's independence and integrity," Saddam's chief attorney, Khalil Dulaimi, said.

"We expect the political pressures to mount on the court after ... the farce it has turned out to be," he told Reuters.

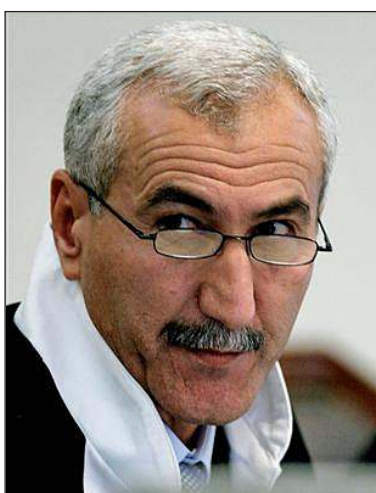
Miranda Sissons, who has observed the trial for the New York-based International Center for Transitional Justice, said that if Amin quit: "Public faith in the tribunal will have disappeared ... It will be a signal to the Iraqi public that political pressure on the tribunal has had an effect."

### Reluctant

The source close to Amin said: "There's too much pressure ... it is a question of integrity ... I am not sure if he will go back on his decision. I don't think it's possible."

Amin, 48, told Reuters in November his family was worried about him and he had taken on two bodyguards after pressure from friends. But he stressed: "A judge should never be afraid."

Spokesmen for the High Tribunal were not available for comment on a



The chief judge in the trial of Saddam Hussein plans to step down and will announce details of his intentions after presiding over the next court session on Jan. 24, a source close to the judge told Reuters on January 13. REUTERS

weekend following the Eid al-Adha holiday.

In the first trial, which has sat for seven days since October 19 and is due to resume on January 24, Saddam and seven others are charged with crimes against humanity in the deaths of over 140 Shi'ite men after an assassination attempt on Saddam in 1982.

After hearings last month, some observers criticized Amin for allowing Saddam to speak at length, making allegations, including of maltreatment at

American hands.

The judge, whose dry wit and courteous manner have been features of the proceedings so far, rejected the criticism and insisted the defense should have a fair hearing.

### Election

Al Qaeda claimed Friday's shooting down of a U.S. helicopter that killed the two crew. U.S. commanders have warned of an increase in violence when election results come out next week.

International experts investigating Sunni complaints of fraud in the December 15 vote will deliver preliminary findings on Sunday or Monday, the head of the team said. An election official said he hoped for final election results within a week.

An almost final tally of parliamentary seats, obtained by Reuters, confirmed Sunni parties would have about a fifth of the seats, while the dominant Shi'ite Islamist Alliance would fall only a few seats short of retaining its slim absolute majority.

A British journalist recounted a brush with Iraq's feared kidnap gangs, writing in several newspapers how U.S. troops stumbled across him five days after he was seized in Baghdad on December 26 and forced to make a video calling on the British government to pull its troops out of Iraq.

While Phil Sands, 28, was counting his blessings, another freelance journalist, American Jill Carroll, was still missing a week after she was snatched by gunmen in the Iraqi capital.

## SANAA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



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## Kuwait oil policy unchanged by emir's death

DUBAI (Reuters) - OPEC producer Kuwait will adhere to its oil policy aimed at keeping global markets well supplied following the death of the Gulf Arab state's Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Kuwaiti oil officials said on Sunday.

"Kuwait's (oil) policy will not change. It will continue to cooperate with OPEC in the interest of both producers and consumers," an official, who declined to be named, told Reuters by telephone. "The oil sector is running as normal, both production and exports."

Kuwait, the fourth-biggest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, is pumping at around 2.68 million barrels per day (bpd). It controls about 10 percent of global oil reserves.

"This (oil) is a general government policy. There will be no change," said

another Kuwaiti oil official.

Under the constitution, Crown Prince Sheikh Saad al-Abdulla al-Sabah will become emir. But analysts say they expect Saad to be a figurehead, while Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah will continue to effectively run the U.S.-allied country — a role he has played over the past four years.

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah said at last month's OPEC meeting that Kuwait, which has a formal OPEC quota of 2.247 million bpd, would continue to meet the needs of global oil markets.

Kuwait's government is trying to push through parliament an \$8.5 billion project, Project Kuwait, involving multinationals to upgrade four major northern oilfields to help boost its production capacity, which totals 2.7 million bpd now.



Makkieya Abdulla and her mother Ragaya Gallaf mourns the death of Kuwait's emir Sheikh Jaber al-ahmad al-Sabah. REUTERS

## Olmert to remain Israeli PM until March ballot

By: Dan Williams

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Ehud Olmert will remain Israel's interim prime minister until a March 28 general election, barring a change in the condition of the comatose Ariel Sharon, political sources said on Sunday.

They said Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz planned to declare later in the day that Sharon, who suffered a massive stroke on January 4, was in a state of "protracted temporary incapacity", effectively extending Olmert's tenure as his replacement.

In further consolidation of his potential power, Olmert this week was expected to be named chairman of the centrist Kadima Party, which Sharon formed after quitting the rightist Likud last year to push for peace with the Palestinians.

In new violence in the occupied West Bank, Israeli troops killed a Palestinian woman and her 20-year-old son in a clash near the city of Nablus, witnesses and medics said. The army said soldiers fired back after being attacked by Palestinian gunmen.



Acting Israeli Prime Minister and Finance Minister Ehud Olmert addresses the media during a news conference in Jerusalem January 8, 2006. Olmert will remain Israel's interim prime minister until a March 28 general election, barring a change in the condition of the comatose Ariel Sharon, political sources said on Sunday. REUTERS

Opinion polls predict an easy win in the election for Kadima under Olmert, 60, who served as deputy prime minister under Sharon and is also finance minister.

Israeli political sources said Mazuz was forced to define Sharon's incapacity temporary for lack of information from doctors who have been trying to rouse him out of a coma induced with sedatives to prevent his brain from swelling after surgery.

Though medical tests over the weekend showed activity in both sides of Sharon's brain, doctors reported no signs he was coming around. Sharon responded to pain stimuli on both sides of his body last week, but has not made notable progress since.

### Olmert's status could change

Were Sharon to die or be declared permanently incapacitated, the Israeli cabinet would convene to choose an acting premier from among Olmert and other designated Kadima deputy prime ministers.

The resignations of three cabinet members from the Likud who quit last

week under orders from party leader Benjamin Netanyahu come into effect on Sunday. Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom of the Likud leaves the cabinet on Monday.

The resignations will have no direct impact on the viability of the caretaker government since Olmert can appoint new ministers to serve until the March 28 ballot.

Palestinians are gearing up for their own parliamentary elections on January 25, but have warned Israel against measures that would disrupt the vote.

Olmert has agreed to allow Palestinians in East Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East

War, to cast ballots in the city at five polling stations to be set up in post offices, a source in the prime minister's office said.

Israel's cabinet is due to approve the recommendation on Sunday, but will not allow the Hamas militant group on ballots.

Sworn to the Jewish state's destruction, Hamas has carried out dozens of suicide bombings in Israel and gained a strong political footing among Palestinians with an anti-corruption platform.

Palestinians hope to name East Jerusalem the capital of a future state. Israel views the entire city as its capital.

# Zawahri missed dinner that prompted US strike

By: Zeeshan Haider

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) - A dinner invitation to al Qaeda's second-in-command triggered a U.S. airstrike in Pakistan's tribal region but Ayman al-Zawahri failed to show up, Pakistani intelligence officials said on Sunday.

Pakistan condemned Friday's strike, which killed at least 18 people, including women and children, and summoned U.S. ambassador Ryan Crocker to protest. Thousands of local tribesmen also rallied near the scene, chanting anti-American slogans.

The Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that foreigners had been near the village of Damadola in the Bajaur region bordering Afghanistan and were the probable target.

Pakistani intelligence officials said they were checking reports up to seven foreign militants had been killed and their bodies removed by local supporters. But they said there were no indications Osama bin Laden's deputy, Zawahri, was there.

"He was invited for the dinner, but we have no evidence he was present," a senior intelligence official told Reuters.

Al Arabiya television quoted a source it said had contact with al Qaeda saying Zawahri was alive.

The U.S. government has not commented, but U.S. sources familiar with the operation said it was too early to determine his fate and the remains of the dead would have to be examined to determine whether Zawahri was among them.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitive nature, said the airstrike was carried out on the basis of "very good" intelligence indicating Zawahri was at the targeted location.

Another Pakistani intelligence official said two local Islamist clerics, known for harbouring al Qaeda militants, had attended the dinner but left hours before the airstrike at 3.00 a.m. (2200 GMT).

### Anti-American anger

The U.S. sources said CIA-operated unmanned drones were believed to have been used in the attack. A Pakistani intelligence official said four missiles had been fired.

Washington has offered \$25 million each for Zawahri and bin Laden, who have been on the run since U.S.-led forces toppled Afghanistan's Taliban rulers in 2001 after the September 11 attacks.

The two have long been thought to be hiding along the Afghan-Pakistan border under the protection of Pashtun tribes.

The angry reaction to the strike comes just days after Pakistan, an important ally in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, lodged a strong protest with U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, saying cross-border firing in a nearby tribal area last weekend had killed eight people.



A U.S. airstrike in Pakistan targeted al Qaeda's No. 2 al-Zawahiri but it was unclear if he had been killed, CNN quoted U.S. sources as saying on January 13. REUTERS

Zawahri is seen as the brains behind al Qaeda and has been its public face, denouncing the United States in repeated video messages, the most recent of which was broadcast this month.

Killing him would be a major victory for Washington in its battle against al Qaeda, which has lost much of its capability to launch attacks globally after a string of high profile arrests in Pakistan and elsewhere, analysts say.

Zawahri, a doctor involved in Egypt's radical Muslim Brotherhood in the 1960s, teamed up with bin Laden in Pakistan in the 1980s when both were involved in a jihad, backed by the United States, to end the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

# Rebel raids will not deter polls in Nepal

By: Gopal Sharma

KATHMANDU (Reuters) - Nepal will go ahead with next month's municipal polls despite Maoist attacks around the capital in which 12 policemen were killed, a minister said on Sunday.

Five blasts rocked areas around Kathmandu on Saturday. The deadliest attack occurred in Thankot, 10 km (6 miles) from the capital, where heavily armed rebels tossed a bomb at a police post and sprayed bullets from automatic rifles, killing 11 policemen.

In another attack, near the temple town of Bhaktapur, one policeman was killed and eight people, including seven policemen, were wounded, state television said.

Two policemen were also missing after the attack, officials said.

Other blasts around the city caused no injuries.

"These incidents will not deter the elections," junior information minister Shris Shumsher Rana told Reuters in the first official comments after the attacks.

"Since the Kathmandu targets have high propaganda value the utility of such incidents becomes evident for those who would want to impede elections," Rana said.

"We are prepared for any eventuality," he added.

The attacks were the first near the high-security capital, home to 1.5 million people, since Maoist rebels ended their four-month truce on January 2 after the government refused to match it.

The upsurge in violence follows a period of relative calm and comes as King Gyanendra, who dismissed the government and took power last year, prepares to hold civic polls next month which have been opposed by the Maoists and political parties.



Nepali people walk around a bombed municipality office at Chhyasal at Patan in capital Kathmandu January 15. REUTERS

Rana said the Maoists had joined political parties in a pact to scuttle the elections which King Gyanendra says could lead to a parliamentary vote next year.

The rebels and mainstream parties recently forged a loose deal to restore democracy after the king seized power in February last year, sacked the government, arrested political leaders and suspended some civil liberties.

### High alert, residents scared

Nepali troops went on high alert after the latest attacks.

At Thankot, witnesses said dozens of rebels in plain clothes arrived in a bus followed by armed guerrillas in another bus. They carried out the raid then fled into nearby forests.

Unexploded bombs and bullets left after the raid littered the police post on a highway linking the hill-ringed capital with the southern plains.

Life in the capital was normal despite the attacks but residents were dazed.

"We could not sleep the whole night because anything could have happened to us as well," school teacher Madhukar Khadga, 50, said as he stood outside the raided post near Bhaktapur.

Khadga was among a group of people gathered at the post, its walls scarred by bullets.

"Fear kept us awake," said Khadga, who had helped evacuate some of the eight injured to hospital.

The rebels have been fighting to overthrow the Hindu monarchy and set up a communist state in the Himalayan nation wedged between Asian giants China and India.

At least 12,500 people have died in the nearly decade-old conflict that has also devastated the desperately poor economy sustained by international aid and tourism.

Mainly active in the countryside so far, the rebels have said they will expand their revolt to Kathmandu and other cities.

# Bush calls for prompt US Senate vote on Alito

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President George W. Bush on Saturday called for a prompt Senate vote on Supreme Court nominee Samuel Alito, playing down Democratic concerns that he could tilt the high court too far to the right.

Bush, in his weekly radio address, emphasized Alito's judicial experience, saying the judge approached the law in a "thoughtful, fair, and open-

minded way" and would not impose his personal views.

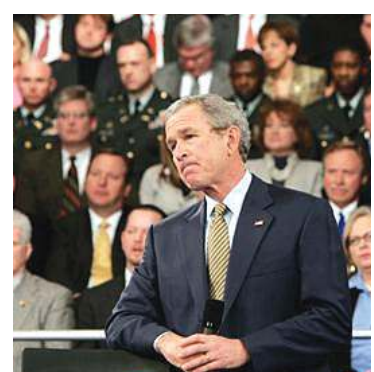
"His record shows that he strictly and fairly interprets the Constitution and laws, and does not try to legislate from the bench or impose his personal preference on the people," Bush said.

"Now the Senate has a duty to give Judge Alito a prompt up-or-down vote," Bush said.

The Senate Judiciary Committee

chairman, Pennsylvania Republican Sen. Arlen Specter, announced his support for Alito on Friday after five days of hearings, but predicted Democrats on the panel would vote against him.

Democrats are worried about Alito's impact on the court because he would replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who was a swing vote on controversial issues such as abortion.



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# Sana'a Zoo: Animals on the hill

Birds of prey, predators, domestic birds, etc. await the visitor of Sana'a Zoo. Located in the southeastern zone of the capital city, the zoo, the first of the kind in Sana'a, drew in huge crowds of people during the Eid time who wanted to enjoy their holiday.

Cages were scattered on the hilly area exhibiting a variety of different types of animals. Children and adults alike gathered to acquaint themselves with the exotic appearance of creatures they might have viewed their pictures or just heard about them. Amusement was discernable in their faces.

You may smile or even laugh when you see the playful baboons swinging or making funny gestures in the spacious roofless cage. You can contemplate the beauty, magnificence and majesty of the peacocks swaggering on green meadow. You can hear the menacing roar of lions incumbent among barren crags.

You can view the vulture, rock hyrax, and spiny tailed lizard, not to mention the python, sea tortoise, crocodile, hyena, and many others.



A general view of the zoo

## Less room to roam

Eng. Adel al-Mujahid who particularly appreciated the inclusion of the Nile crocodile and the Australian ostrich to the group of animals was happy to see the improvements made to the zoo which makes it "visitor-catching." He complained, however, that it is "small-sized with no optimal use of its area," accompanying his family, he couldn't find a suitable place to sit. "More services should be provided and more bare areas should be grassed," he added.

Abdu Abu al-Ghaith, who came with his 9-member family, showed his surprise at the huge number of visitors. "When we visited it the other day, we could see only a few people." At the reptiles section, one

infant stage. Now it is organized with lots of animals like tigers. Now I am pleased with its shape and it is worth visiting."

Concerning overcrowdedness, Al-Bayadhi admitted that he couldn't comfortably see all the animals, attributing the inconvenience to "randomness." He, however, imparted his wish for establishing a larger zoo for the residents of the capital city.

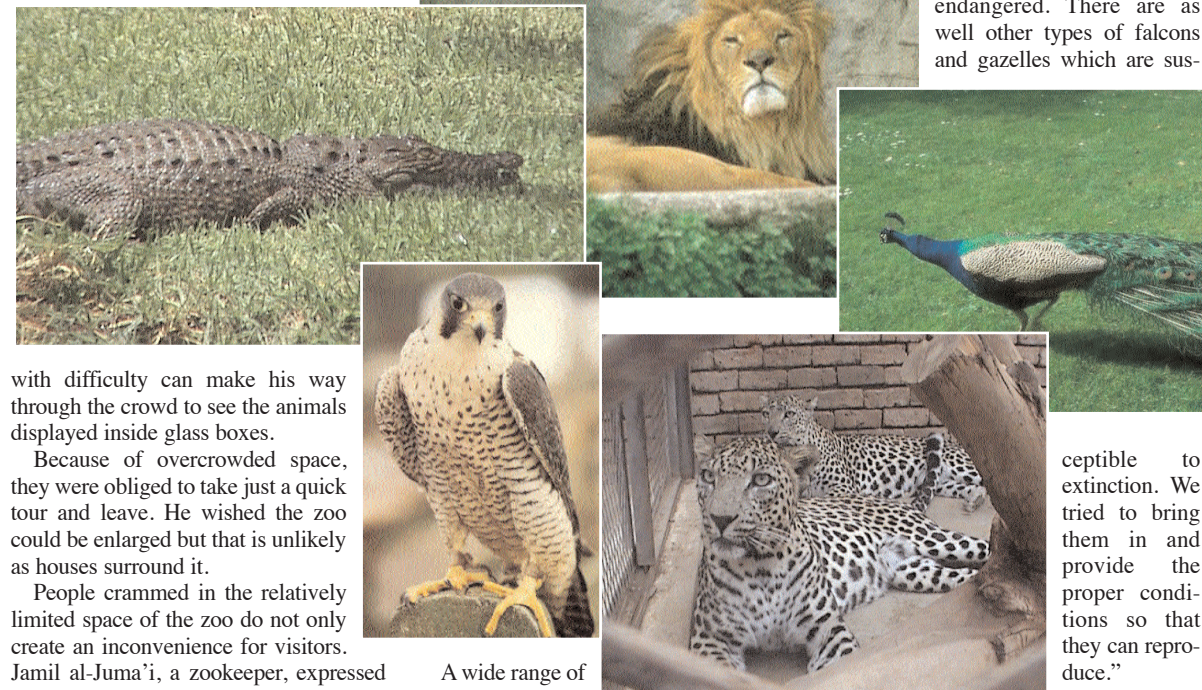
## Zoo's sections

The zoo is divided into a number of sections such as those for predators, reptiles, birds of prey, and domestic birds in addition to a section for monkeys.

responded that the zoo is considering the procurement of elephants from Africa as they did the pythons. However, he pointed out the difficulty in the case of the giraffe. "The giraffe cannot live in Sana'a because the local climate doesn't fit it."

This zoo was established on May 30, 1999, on a 57816-square-meter area. Inspired by an older zoo in the city of Taiz, 260 kms south of Sana'a, the zoo was meant partly to provide a place for Sana'a residents where they can spend recreational times, partly to contribute to the efforts aimed at rescuing indigenous species.

"Some of the Yemeni animals are rare and threatened with extinction," said Humaid. "The Yemeni ibex and tiger exist only in Yemen and they are endangered. There are as well other types of falcons and gazelles which are sus-



ceptible to extinction. We tried to bring them in and provide the proper conditions so that they can reproduce."

with difficulty can make his way through the crowd to see the animals displayed inside glass boxes.

Because of overcrowded space, they were obliged to take just a quick tour and leave. He wished the zoo could be enlarged but that is unlikely as houses surround it. People crammed in the relatively limited space of the zoo do not only create an inconvenience for visitors. Jamil al-Juma'i, a zookeeper, expressed his dissatisfaction at the fact that, due to the high intake of visitors, trees, iron barriers, and other stuff get damaged. "People don't find suitable places in the zoo to spend a few minutes before they exit. They may sit wherever they can manage and to this results in damage to our stuff," he said.

Mohammed al-Bayadhi, 22, expressed his happiness at the current status of the zoo in terms of contents, cultivation and organization. "Because it lies in the vicinity of our house," he said, "I have visited it tens of times. There was negligence in the past perhaps because it was in its

A wide range of herbivorous, carnivorous and omnivorous animals can be seen including wolves, foxes, ostriches, squirrels, honey badger, mongooses, larks, cobras, etc.

The predators are fed the flesh of donkeys, cows and goats. By procreating enough rabbits, mice, and chicks for nourishing flesh-eaters, the zoo will be covering quarter of the feeding cost. The rest of the animals are given vegetables, fruits and grains as well as honey.

Concerning the absence of some animals such as the elephant, and giraffe, Eng. Ali Humaid, director of the zoo,

whether the zoo includes all indigenous animals, he replied that all of them are almost available except for the lesser Indian civet found on the island of Socotra. "We brought it many times but it died. The next time we bring it, we hope it will not die because we will provide the necessary conditions that suits it," he asserted.

The zoo succeeded in increasing the number of lions, tigers and ibexes. Lions, for example, reproduced until they exceeded the desired target in number and they may be sent to other zoos in the

future. Eng. Humaid, who was appointed director of the zoo in 2005, commented on the obvious signs of improvement. "The process was gradual. Everything starts small and then gets bigger." The bettering was matched by a parallel increase in the number of visitors. One year ago, the number of visitors over the Eid holiday was estimated at 20,000 persons while, this year, some 60,000 persons visited the zoo over four days of the Eid holiday.

The zoo's administration has its plans for the future: installing more cages for animals, grassing bare areas, digging a pool for swans, expanding the dimensions of bird cages, procuring non-Arabian leopards, and opening an aquarium featuring marine organisms.

The zoo is often visited by students from schools, institutes and colleges to get a first hand impression of the animals they read about in books. "Such visits are vital for the effective learning. The theoretical knowledge should be enhanced and consolidated by authentic experiences," said Abdullah al-Zikri, an assistant vet at the zoo.

According to the director, Arab and foreign visitors showed their admiration of the zoo for its hilly topography. "Despite the limited resources, we try to enable people to see what they want to," said Humaid.

The zoo has a slaughterhouse and a veterinary clinic. The latter supervises the hygiene, health and reproduction of animals. Ali al-Najjar and Abdullah al-Zikri, assistant vets, said that the Arabian leopard, which is a very rare animal, could be reproduced in the zoo. They also succeeded in making the Russian lioness reproduce and in saving its cubs which it kills sometimes. They isolated offspring from mother. They had a problem finding a suitable food for reptiles but they thought of increasing the number of chicks.

There are also mummified animals: lions, tigers, ibexes etc. "Those which die, we preserve their corpses by means of special chemicals," said al-Zikri.

Despite its shortcomings, the zoo has proved itself to be a spot that much attracts Sana'a residents' attention. It is a destination sought by many people as it features distinctive stuff that ensures interesting pastime. Establishing a typical zoo seems to be a must.

## The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 10

*Translated by Edward FitzGerald*

**With me along some strip of herbage strown  
That just divides the desert from the sown,  
where name of slave and sultan scarce is known,  
And pity Sultan Mahmud on his throne.**

## Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalmah Al-Tayyibah

### The Full Poetic Collection (4/4)

Subject Book: The Full Poetic Collection  
Author: Ali Abdul-Rahman Jahhaf  
Language: Arabic  
Publisher: Ministry of Culture and Tourism  
Year Published: 2004

I have decided to add another article to the original four articles on this very important literary work, because of the significance of the writer's contributions to Yemeni literature.

In this week's article we again see the philosophical, conceptual and even political development of the author as he continues to speak his mind on a number of issues that confront Yemen, the Arab World and the Islamic World. By this it is hoped that foreign readers of the YT can have an inside look at the minds of Yemenis. It is really amazing to see the literary metamorphosis of this genius of Yemeni literature. Thanks to God that he was not hesitant in recording his perceptions of things soon after he saw any new event, region or phenomenon that ignited his intellect and produced some very interesting insights.

In 1998, Ali Jahhaf was impressed with the revival of the Zeidi teachings in the Grande Mosque in Sana'a'

*For the sake of learning, you should persist  
And retreat not from the gardens of theology  
My sons, the students of learning, I am here  
Driven by a heart drawn to you by my heart.  
In the theology of Zeid, you will be elevated,  
And find a retreat from all that is disturbing.  
A more generous good sect you will find not,  
Coming from a good man, who never had shortcomings.  
Tell those who claim the sect falls short:  
You will not get away with trying to belittle the sect;  
The shortcoming is in your mind, my friend;  
And that which is deficient can never add to anything anyway.  
Zeid is the Father of the Free, a man of conscience'  
The worshipper, the visionary and the faithful.*

Of course the Middle East problem occupies the minds of all Arabs and Moslems alike and their sympathy to the plight of their Palestinian brothers is unequivocal. So it is with our poet Jahhaf as uses modern Arabic prose to show his support for the Palestinian Intifidha: He writes in the narrative here, because like most Arabs, they view themselves as stakeholders in the Palestine issue, both religiously and nationally, notwithstanding the orientations of the Arab Governments, in general:

A stone! A stone!  
And another I throw from under the belt

When hunger has tormented me.  
Oh, Lord weapons I have not,  
Except what may little grasp (of the hand) can hold,  
Of these stones, which I turn stronger than all the power of my enemy, and all that one sees of his pieces,  
Of destructive weapons  
It is You, alone that is capable  
To bring the fear to my enemy  
And to grant me courage.  
In 1993, Jahhaf went to Amman for medical treatment. He was amazed by the city's splendor, amidst a region torn by turmoil and retarded development and pain and sorrow:  
Oh, Amman, Oh ye that are the sun as it rises, in the eyes of every innocent girl.  
After a dialogue with the "city" on what he has brought with him to Amman, in which he replies that he has brought all that Yemen can be remembered for past and present, to Amman that steadfast city amidst all the anguish, continuing later,  
Oh Amman!...Oh song at the mouth of the olive tree  
Oh ye smile that embraces the children in the streets of tribulations,  
In "Jerusalem", Nablus, Mt. Carmel and Galilee,  
In every area<sup>3</sup> and mountain.  
...  
Oh (city of) momentum, that still gives live its original scent,  
And gives the slaughtered Arab pride its original foundation,  
Its strength, so as to move forward,  
To resist the ordeals;  
And so as to prevent weakness from flowing in its veins  
So that it can resist all the disturbances...so as not to be afflicted with impotence.  
Oh Amman, Oh how wonderfully real you are, created by a vision  
...  
The home of true men!  
You are the reflection of "Hussein" and "Hassan"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Zeidi Sect is one of the two major Islamic sects predominate in Yemen. It is a moderate form of Shiism, that stresses political freedom and has contempt for any form of oppression. It also admonishes extremism and allows the learned a considerable degree of freedom to deduce rational reasoning in deciding on many matters facing the learned scholar - i.e., deductive reasoning..

<sup>2</sup>The founder of the Zeidi Sect and a great grandson of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH), who gave his life in martyrdom for rebelling against the oppression of the Umayyad Caliphs of his time.

<sup>3</sup>Literally "open space".

<sup>4</sup>In allusion to King Hussein and Prince Hassan (his brother, who was then Crown Prince and in allusion to the ancestors of the Hashemite clan, the brothers, Hussein and Hassan, the sons of the beloved daughter of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH) and Ali, the brave cousin of the Prophet.

# The National Library in Aden

Established on October 14, 1980, the National Library in Aden was a gift from Kuwait.

Upon opening, it consisted of the following sections: General (for borrowing), Reference, Foreign reference, Information and microfilm, Personnel administration

Today the library has 12 sections. In 1983, the Yemeni and legal depositing sections opened. Supported by the General Authority for Books, poet Lutfi Aman Hall opened in 2003, containing a number of modern and reference books. A legal hall was approved in 2004, fully supported by the Social Development Fund, and will open formally in March.

The library system provides internal and external borrowing and it is open mornings and evenings throughout the week. Daily visitors total 2,500.

The library contains a total of 38,688 titles and 65,387 copies. There are 13,668 copies of 9,590 titles in the general

section and 1,219 copies of 4,593 titles in the children's section. The supply and classification administration section contains 12,596 copies of 4,866 titles and microfilm administration section there are 397 copies of 107 titles.

Additionally, the Yemeni section has 5,889 copies of 2,029 titles. In the Arabic reference section, 6,648 copies of 2,756 titles; whereas the foreign reference section contains 15,410 copies of 12,944 titles. The legal deposit section contains a copy of each of its 177 titles. In Lutfi Aman Hall, there are 6,000 copies of 5,000 titles. Also, there are 1,031,225 copies of periodicals.

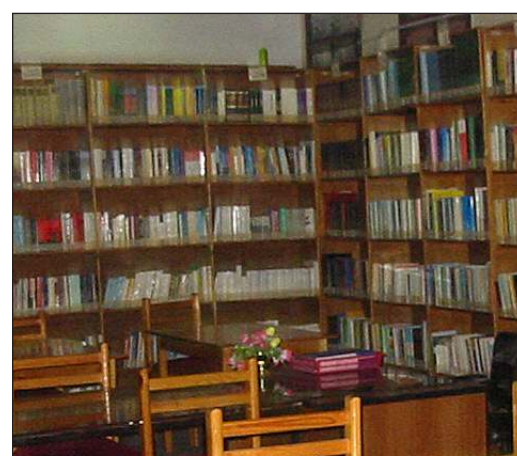
Aims of the National LibraryThe National Library is a cultural science institution entrusted to create a wide cultural and national uprising as well as keep historical and official documents.

Its purpose is to obtain all that concerns community's cultural and historical developments, such as books, publications, periodicals, scripts, written and photographed rare films, and keep them for research. It seeks to increase its reserves in a way that achieves its goals,

according to library systems. In this regard, the library seeks to build relations with corresponding bookshops in the international and Arab worlds to exchange publications in a way serving both the spread of national culture and enabling Yemenis to benefit from humanitarian heritage. The library also aims to protect the rights of writings, printings and publications, according to deposit law.

Dr. Yahia Al-Shoibi's contribution launched the first effort to rehabilitate the National Library. He offered the library nine air conditioners and seven computers with accessories. He also introduced urgent requirements and furnished specialized books.

Prominent personality Sheikh Mohamed Abdu Saeed Hail Ana'am also made outstanding contributions to the library. He gave 450,000 Riyals, 150,000 Riyals of which was for developing and qualifying the children's library. An



internal information network will be financed with 300,000 Riyals, to facilitate readers' quick access to information.

The legal section's information network recently was established and connected with the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs information center.

Among library functions was organizing the first National Book Fair. Fifteen publication houses participated in the fair, which was the first step in paving the way to promote future book exhibitions. The fair also aimed to promote the widespread use of books.



# Sharon's triumph

By: Barry Rubin

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disabling stroke has thrown Israeli politics into turmoil yet again. Or so it seems. Sharon was considered a certain victor in the planned March elections, for which he had organized his own Kadima (Forward) party, attracting leading figures from the Labor party on the left and the Likud party on the right. But will his departure from public life really be as destabilizing as many observers suggest?

To be sure, it was Sharon's personal appeal that made Kadima so popular. His conservative and nationalist credentials sustained his popularity on the right, while his new security strategy – including full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip – attracted supporters from the left. In short, Sharon was the ideal center candidate: a leader who reconciled a dovish approach with a hawkish outlook.

Yet Sharon's untimely departure has by no means reversed the fundamental political and strategic shifts that he initiated. In the short term, while Kadima will get fewer votes without Sharon at the helm, some voters will be swayed by sympathy for the stricken leader. Indeed, polls show that the party could

still finish first.

Moreover, Kadima still has an impressive triumvirate at the top of its list. Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, a veteran political maverick and former mayor of Jerusalem, inspired several of Sharon's initiatives. Shimon Peres, a former prime minister and Labor party leader, appeals to many voters from the left. Former chief of staff and defense minister Shaul Mufaz provides the security expertise. Their differences will be harder to patch up without Sharon, but they have closed ranks and could well lead Kadima to victory.

At the same time, the main alternative candidates on the left and right have positioned themselves too far toward the extremes to recapture the center easily. On the left is Amir Peretz of the Labor party, a populist and trade-union federation leader with little national leadership experience and even less familiarity with security matters. Many Israelis distrust his ability to lead the country.

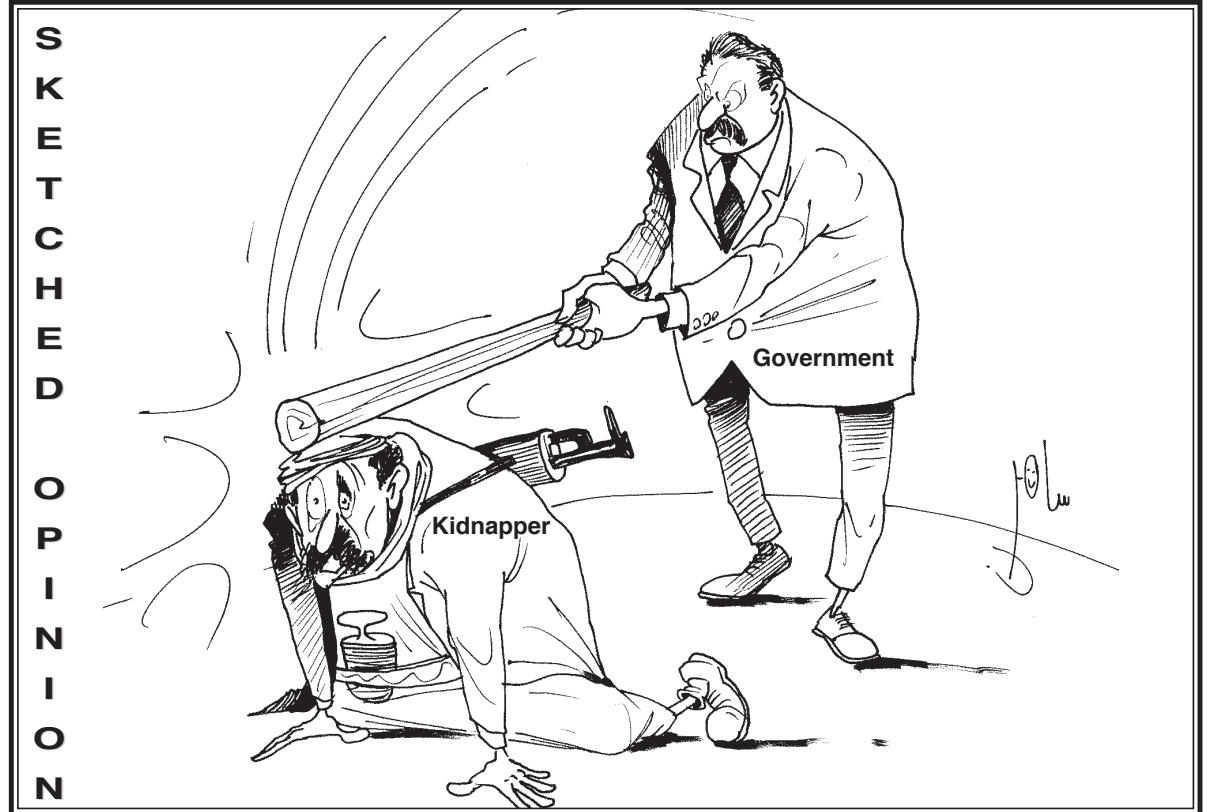
It had generally been expected that Labor would come in second in the election and form a coalition government with Kadima. Without Sharon, Peretz might have more leverage in the partnership, particularly since Olmert has been more willing than Sharon to

embrace policy changes perceived as dovish. A Kadima-Labor coalition would have its problems, but it would still form the basis of a solid government.

On the right is Bibi Netanyahu, a former prime minister and leader of Sharon's old Likud party. A year ago, Netanyahu seemed certain to succeed Sharon. But his opposition to the Gaza Strip withdrawal, coupled with his strong criticism of Sharon, cost him his position as heir apparent.

To gain control of the rump Likud, Netanyahu had to move sharply to the right. In the longer term, Netanyahu may again rise to the top in a post-Sharon era, if he is able to regain the center. But in the upcoming elections, he is likely to be left out in the cold.

More importantly, continuity on the political front is likely to extend to strategy and policy. Sharon embodied a new national consensus, accepted by at least two-thirds of the population, that reflects deep-seated changes in the country and its situation. From the left comes the idea that, in return for full peace, Israel is ready to withdraw from most of the territory captured in 1967 and accept a Palestinian state. From the right, the consensus acknowledges that currently there is no Palestinian partner for real peace.



The left's advocacy of territorial withdrawal gained currency as a result of a general recognition that holding onto land, especially Palestinian-populated areas, is not in the national interest. Israel does not intend to claim this land in the future, never derived any economic benefit from it, and now regards staying there as a security problem rather than an asset. With the Cold War over, the USSR gone, and the Arab world weakened, a conventional war with the armies of Arab states is no longer likely, rendering obsolete the strategic considerations underlying Israel's occupation of this territory.

At the same time, though, there is no hesitation about waging a tough defensive war against Palestinian terrorism. Israel will complete its defensive secu-

rity fence and strike back against terrorists and those who fire missiles at Israeli civilian targets. No one believes that Palestinian leader Abu Mazin can or will do anything to stop such attacks. Indeed, it is understood on both the left and the right that he and his colleagues will not live up to any commitment they make. The Palestinian movement is falling apart, the radicals are gaining control, and nobody is going to make peace.

The bad news, then, is that the conflict will go on for decades, owing to intransigence and growing chaos on the Palestinian side. The good news is that Israel can defend itself with relatively low casualties, its economy is improving, and tourism is recovering. As Palestinian extremism and anarchy become clearer, Israel's stance may

gain greater international sympathy, strengthening prospects for better relations with the Arab world and the West.

It was Sharon who sensed a sea change in Israeli sentiment and acted upon it. But Sharon was the messenger, not the message. The era of Israeli pragmatism that he opened will not end with his departure.

Barry Rubin is Director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of MERIA Journal. His latest book is The Long War for Freedom: The Arab Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East.

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## Ukraine comes in from the cold

By: Yuliya Tymoshenko

Europe's sigh of relief at the supposed end of the dispute between Russia and Ukraine over gas pricing was audible here in Kyiv. But the settlement raises more questions than it answers. By placing Ukraine's energy needs in the hands of a shadowy company linked to international criminals, the agreement has planted the seeds of new and perhaps more dangerous crises.

As a result, I am challenging this deal in court. Let a public hearing before a judge reveal exactly who will benefit from this deal.

The settlement between Ukraine and Russia's state-owned gas monopoly, Gazprom, is intolerable because Ukraine's energy future has been placed in the hands of RosUkrEnergo, a criminal canker on the body of our state gas corporation. RosUkrEnergo was established in the last months of the regime of our former ruler, Leonid

Kuchma. Yet it miraculously gained control of all of Ukraine's gas imports from Central Asia. Under the deal agreed this week, it retains that control.

As one who worked in the gas industry before entering politics, I know that the gas trade in the countries of the former Soviet Union is riddled with corruption. During my premiership, my government sought to investigate RosUkrEnergo – to discover who precisely its owners are, how it gained a virtual monopoly on the import of Central Asian gas, and where its profits go. Now that I am not in government, that investigation has been shelved. Ukraine's energy needs, and thus the certainty of energy supplies across Europe, will never be secure as long as gas transit is in the hands of secretive companies with unknown owners.

But the issues raised by the gas dispute between Ukraine and Russia go beyond energy security, reviving questions about Ukraine's place in Europe

and the world. As this struggle shows, Ukraine has been obliged to assume a higher-profile role in European affairs. It must consider where and in what sort of Europe it fits, what balance it should strike between Russia and the European Union, and how it should find the self-assurance needed to play its full part in world affairs.

It would be sheer folly to suggest that Ukrainians start with a blank slate. Centuries of being part of the Russian and Soviet empires have, in different ways, shaped how Ukrainians view their country and its interests. One consequence of this is that Ukrainians are often shy about asserting Ukraine's independent interests plainly – exemplified by Ukraine's acceptance of a deal that leaves its energy future so insecure.

Like any country, Ukraine's relations with the world are determined by four interlocking factors: history, patriotism, national interests, and geography. Each factor has special resonance here. True, Ukrainians rightly feel like

citizens of a normal, independent country, and want to be treated that way. But this does not mean we want to bury history and our historic ties. We are a normal country with an abnormal history.

Indeed, Ukraine's interests form a comfortably familiar triangle of economic, political, and strategic priorities: free trade and open markets across the globe; prosperous and democratic neighbors; and not being on the front-line of a conflict, still less a potential battleground, between Russia and the West. Our goal is thus a democratic Ukraine located between prosperous like-minded neighbors to east and west.

Of course, the risk of tyranny, turmoil, and war within the so-called "post-Soviet space" is large, leaving Ukraine keen to limit its vulnerability. Ukrainian enthusiasm about the EU is based on the idea that European security is indivisible.

We recognize, of course, that few of even the most fervent supporters of

European integration want to help Ukraine quickly become a member. But the risk to EU gas supplies shows that our fates are linked. Europe must play its part as Ukraine redefines its historic ties to Russia, and its actions must do nothing to undermine Ukraine's national independence – or, indeed, that of any of the countries that emerged from the Soviet Union's breakup.

The proposed Baltic Sea pipeline, which would bring gas to Germany directly from Russia, bypassing Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states, and the rest of Central Europe, is dangerous in this regard, because it may allow Gazprom the freedom to cut gas supplies to customers without endangering supplies to its favored western markets. That is a recipe for renewed threats, not only to Ukraine, but to EU members like Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the three Baltic states.

In broad terms, Ukraine seeks security and stability, and it should be

remembered that our record here is strong. Our decision more than a decade ago to surrender Ukraine's status as a nuclear nation is the clearest sign of our good neighborly intentions and political maturity.

Today's crisis over gas supplies must not be overblown. Objectively speaking, Ukraine today is more secure as a nation than at any time in its history. But Ukrainians do not feel as secure as they should.

The way to deal with uncertainty and complex situations is to think clearly and act decisively, not cut deals that place Ukraine's future in the hands of shadowy businesses. Only by clearly articulating and defending Ukraine's national interests can today's dispute over gas supplies establish our role in a transformed Europe.

Yuliya Tymoshenko is a former Prime Minister of Ukraine.

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## Russia's "oil-for-knowledge" scheme

By: Alexander Etkind

Whenever you fill up your European compact car's gas tank, or that of your American SUV, you pay as much as a Russian schoolteacher earns in a month. And every time you pay, you subsidize a regime that relies on energy, not information, as its main product. You finance the pre-modern and the inefficient, and perhaps worse: every time you pay, you may be collaborating with political evil.

Russia began 2006, the year of its chairmanship of the G-8, by launching a gas war with Ukraine. Having a virtual monopoly on supply, Russia decided that it could dictate prices. But Ukraine has a virtual monopoly on delivery, so Russia blinked in this standoff as soon as gas supplies to Western Europe dropped.

Modern economies rely not on monopolies, but on competition. Contemporary Russians consume com-

petitive products: Nestle cereals, Mercedes cars, Hollywood movies. The problem is that they do not make them.

Russians pay for this consumption from the profits of gas and oil. State-owned and private multinational companies drill fuel in Russia and sell it to Europe and North America. The government partially redistributes profits by collecting taxes and paying salaries. Gas prices are growing, and so are Russian salaries. This causes inflation, because, other than fuel, Russians do not produce much else. To avoid inflation, the government deposits a large part of its profits into a Stabilization Fund.

But, because the Kremlin does not trust its own stocks and bonds, the Stabilization Fund invests in Western securities. Thus, the government loses its chance to modernize Russian cities, roads, hospitals, and universities. But inflation still grows, as do real estate prices. Mortgages are available at outrageously high interest rates. No civil servant, military officer, or professor is

able to buy even a modest apartment, unless they have an additional – often illegal – source of income. Most don't.

Russia exposes an ugly truth of our era: illiberal societies can grow just as fast – even faster – than open ones. Oil-rich states need global networks to sell their oil, to export their capital, and to import technologies and technologists. Among current United Nations members, countries with large natural resource endowments are also more likely to have a non-democratic regime.

In the 1980's, Mikhail Gorbachev warned that Soviet oil resources were exhausted. Of course, due to the Western engineering and management that became available after Gorbachev launched his *perestroika* reforms, the country was soon producing more oil than ever – indeed, more than was ever believed possible – and oil men like Mikhail Khodorkovsky arose out of the blue.

But, while machines work everywhere, managers must abide by local traditions and belong to indigenous

social networks. If the cultural component is important, why share the profits with Western-minded people like Khodorkovsky? So no surprise that other managers, with better relations with those in power, now run Khodorkovsky's Yukos Oil, as well as another major firm, Sibneft.

Foreign managers don't seem to mind. On the contrary, some of these managers, such as former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who now chairs a Gazprom subsidiary building a pipeline under the Baltic sea, are helping to expand Russia's oil-based imperial designs over Europe.

In the strange new world of today, the modern and the pre-modern depend on each other. Thus, Russians trade oil for the products of knowledge. Imported technologies are cheap if you convert their prices into barrels of oil, so the country produces a shortage of its own geologists and chemists, not to mention economists and lawyers. It needs only one gang of politicians.

In fact, for such a country, local

experts are not just redundant, but dangerous. In their moments of sincerity, Russian policymakers admit that Russia is, from their point of view, overeducated. They recently discovered what their Arab colleagues have known for a long time: that for an oil-rich regime, it is cheaper and safer to buy knowledge than to produce it.

So hidebound conservatives run Russian universities. Scientists go on trial for technical espionage, while ex-KGB spies sign multi-billion dollar contracts. Non-governmental organizations are met with suspicion and harassment, with new legislation seemingly designed to vanquish them. Political parties are created or banned by anonymous Kremlin clerks. Elections are either canceled or faked. Oil-poor neighbors like Ukraine are blackmailed.

An illiberal society can produce growth, but it cannot enjoy it. Redistribution schemes benefit the population if, and only if, they are controlled by democratic feedback. The Russian Stabilization Fund embodies an

unstable combination of anxiety and greed that is typical for an undemocratic regime.

Dependent on gas, oil, and multinationals, the G-8 countries accept quite a lot of guff from their current chair, Vladimir Putin. Still, the arrogance of Russia's rulers may have breached the West's tolerance. Alternative sources to Russian energy are not the only means to decrease prices. Global civil society has developed instruments to halt consumption that produces harm. Elegant ladies, for example, no longer buy fur coats. Many Westerners eagerly pay more for "Fair Trade" coffee.

Would a similar approach work for the gas in your oven? A century ago, the idea of decolonization sounded just as absurd. Public awareness is as crucial now as it was decisive then.

Alexander Etkind teaches Russian Studies at Cambridge University.

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# Honey exports yield \$9 million

Beekeepers achieve good amounts of annual honey production, whereas cotton farmers suffer great losses, forcing some of them to declare their bankruptcy.

Yemen's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation affirms that the total annual honey production is more than 706 tons, 17 percent of which is exported abroad, bringing \$9 million in revenues. The ministry points out that the number of Yemeni beehives exceeds one million.

In a recent statistic, the ministry added that honey is considered among five important and strategic products and it will support it through a bee breeding development project started in 1993 through German support. Since its establishment, the project has conducted 253 short- and long-range training courses, benefiting 4,037 beekeepers from various areas in Yemen. The project is currently planning a strategy to develop this activity.

Yemen's honey is reputed throughout the world for its high quality and is among the world's most famous due to

Yemen's diverse terrain of high mountains, vast valleys, spacious plateaus and lengthy coast. This gives Yemen a unique climate enriching the quality of its year-round botanic yield. Yemen's kaleidoscopic nature produces rich blossom varieties and various types of honey. Yemeni honey is distinguished by the fact that the bee itself builds its hive without human interference, thereby preserving its natural specifications. All this gives Yemeni honey high therapeutic and food value, as well as a delicious taste flavor and beautiful dark color.

Regarding another agricultural product, local sources in Hudeida governorate, 300km west of Sana'a, disclosed that more than 120 farmers, affiliated with 25 agricultural societies in the governorates, expanded cotton growth during the 2004-2005 season, due to presidential directives to realize possible larger production figures. However, results were quite to the con-

trary. Farmers faced heavy losses, leading some to declare total bankruptcy due to insecticides supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and the state establishment for weaving and textiles. The insecticides burned spacious cotton farms, decreasing this year's cotton production by 20 percent of the targeted amount. Farmers asked that an investigation be conducted and those who caused this result held accountable. They also asked for compensation for the season's insecticide burning disaster.

Farmers also accused the ministry of not supporting them or taking an interest in solving problems they face in growing cotton, particularly fighting cotton diseases. Organizers and sponsors of a workshop recently held on fighting cotton insects and diseases have switched to listening to cotton farmers' complaints. Farmers revealed they do not get needed support and there are no laboratories to examine

soil and water. They said the ministry usually is late in its campaign to fight cotton insects, beginning spraying insecticides after it is too late and exposing crops to damage.

Farmers also said crop losses were inflicted by scarcity of irrigation water, as the ministry does not supply them with diesel fuel; the spread of cotton insects due to lack of agricultural guidance; not examining and determining good cotton growing soil and seeds not supplied in due time, leading to varying growing dates and causing insects to move from one farm to another.



A cotton disease bug attacking the crop.

## In defense of environment against aggressors

Authorities plan to establish a prosecution specialized in holding those who harm environment accountable

By: Mahyoub Al-Kamali

The Ministry of Water and Environment and the State Authority for Environment Protection have planned to bring about a prosecution to be specialized in dealing with issues of environment. The prosecution is to consider violations of laws organizing the efforts meant for preservation of Yemen environment and protection of subterranean waters reservoir.

Sources at the Ministry of Water have clarified that study is underway to speed up the establishment of that prosecution to control different violations committed against natural conservancies and attempts for changing the biodiversity of natural habitats. The prosecution is also to be empowered to tackle resolutely all ecological violations, particularly those of pouring motor oil

wastes in the agricultural areas and valleys, random digging of water wells and exhaustion of waters and to send the guilty persons to court.

Meanwhile, officials from Sana'a University have recently announced there is a study conducted for the creation of a faculty specialized in teaching the subject of ecology. The officials have said the study would be referred to the concerned parties at the Higher Council for Yemeni Universities for the funding of the college establishment at the Sana'a University. The College of Science at Sana'a University has lately organized a symposium on chemistry and industrial development in cooperation with the national committee for education, culture and science, the ministry of education and the state authority for ecology. The participants in the symposium have called for the establishment of a colleges for ecolog-

ical studies at Yemeni universities, the establishment of chemistry departments at colleges of science, reconsider their curricula and to be related to needs of development. The symposium has also recommended that the state should seek help of researchers from university professors to help solve problems facing the state with regard to waters, environment and pollution.

Since 1990 Yemen has already joined and signed many international agreements and protocols in this respect. More important of those agreements and protocols are agreements on protection of biodiversity, Vienna agreement for the protection of ozone layer and its annexed protocols, the control of transferring dangerous wastes across borders and that concerned with protection of land and sea species that are threatened by extinction.



Yemeni honey is famous worldwide for its high quality.

## Don't forget Wim Duisenberg's legacy

By: Melvyn Krauss

The most surprising and controversial thing about last December's rate hike by the European Central Bank was that, after two and a half years of keeping interest rates at exceptionally low levels, the bank ventured an increase of only 25 basis points with no promise of more to come. Political pressure on Europe's central bank may be the reason for that timid move.

Jean-Claude Trichet, the current ECB president, may be in the same job but not the same environment as his predecessor Wim Duisenberg, who famously remarked, "I hear the politicians, but I don't listen." Political pressure on the ECB today is much greater than in Duisenberg's time. The political environment is much more hostile. Some of this pressure may be seeping through and affecting ECB policy decisions.

This is an extremely negative development – and one of the central bank's biggest challenges for 2006. Not only will politicians' influence be towards monetary excess, which of course is a serious enough matter for a bank whose primary mandate is price stability, but also the excess will constitute a serious barrier to structural reform, which is essential for European prosperity in a competitive global economy.

Increasingly, Europe's politicians regard excess liquidity and economic reform as substitutes for one another. The more the bank gives on liquidity, the less the politicians will do on reform. Duisenberg recognized this

linkage and held firm. The ECB's paltry rate hike in December, together with the supine promise of no plans for further monetary tightening, demonstrates that Trichet is no Duisenberg.

Europe's finance ministers have played a clever game with the ECB. Even though they were already resigned to a 25-basis-point rate increase, the politicians made a big show of being opposed to it, aiming to prevent what they really feared and what was certainly more warranted: a 50-basis-point hike and a warning of more on the way.

Their strategy worked. Luxembourg's finance minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, diplomatically declared after the December meeting that, "The result could have been worse."

Indeed, even the markets were fooled, giving the ECB a good grade for its unremarkable rate hike. Inflationary expectations, as measured by the rates on certain market instruments, actually fell after the hike, indicating increased confidence that the ECB will keep a lid on price pressures.

Although the meager rate hike was presented as a consensus of the ECB's Governing Council, it soon became apparent that the decision had been controversial. Some Council members, unhappy with Trichet's dovish stance at the December press conference, made their displeasure known via the press soon after.

In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, for example, Bundesbank president Axel Weber made it clear that future rate hikes were very much on the table. Others spoke out as well, and the futures markets

quickly predicted another 25-basis-point rate hike in March. The consensus alleged at the December press conference simply did not exist.

With political pressures encroaching on the bank's policy decisions and a faux consensus, it is not surprising that there is now nostalgia in Frankfurt for earlier times and for Wim Duisenberg, even among his former critics. Duisenberg's great skills – underappreciated by the press and public alike – were genuine consensus-building in a potentially divisive body and, in Trichet's own words, "an exceptional ability to keep his nerve in some highly demanding and extremely hostile environments."

In particular, the stubborn Dutchman understood the extreme danger if Europe's top monetary authority became too cozy with Europe's politicians, especially at a time when many EU finance ministers view economic reform and excess liquidity as being essentially the same thing.

Wim Duisenberg died last year, but his values, philosophy, and wisdom must not be allowed to die with him. The New Year provides a perfect opportunity for Jean-Claude Trichet to resolve that, despite the more trying circumstances in which he must operate, his own policies and procedures will more faithfully reflect Duisenberg and his legacy. Europe deserves no less.

Melvyn Krauss is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

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All candidates applying for these posts must be Yemeni nationals

### Technical Evaluation Engineer - Reference No. 040

Yemen LNG Company intends to support sustainable development programmes within the vicinity of the Balhaf gas terminal and the pipeline route through the Marib and Shabwa Governorates. These projects must be thoroughly evaluated to ensure that they are technically and financially feasible, and provide genuine long-term benefits to the local population. Reporting directly to the Sustainable Development Manager, the Technical Evaluation Engineer will have a broad and challenging remit. The position will be based in Sana'a for the foreseeable future, but frequent trips to Shabwa and Marib will be involved.

The successful candidate will work closely with Yemen LNG Company's Community Liaison Officers and Senior Development Program Advisor and will assess the technical feasibility of the potential projects which they will propose. This will involve visits to the proposed locations and the preparation (personally or via experienced specialists) and review of the proposals, designs, feasibility studies and cost estimates. After approval by the Sustainable Development Manager and YLNG senior management, the job holder will prepare call-for-tender documentation, will advertise the tender and will participate in the evaluation and approval of bids. The incumbent will then supervise the execution of each project, ensuring that the objectives are achieved, that the required standards are maintained throughout and that YLNG management are provided with regular and comprehensive progress reports.

Candidates must be qualified Civil Engineers with at least 8 years of experience of assessing and implementing developmental projects in rural communities within Yemen, ideally on water, electricity, health and educational matters. Extensive experience of working directly and constructively with the representatives and members of local communities and with Governmental and Non-Governmental bodies is also essential.

**Deadline: Wednesday, January 25, 2006**

All applicants for these positions must have excellent IT skills including extensive experience of Microsoft Office systems. Fluency in written and spoken Arabic and English are essential, and candidates will be tested to assess their current level and training needs.

Applicants should send their CV with a short covering letter explaining why they believe they are qualified for the post either to the address below, or by e-mail to [HR@YEMENLNG.COM.YE](mailto:HR@YEMENLNG.COM.YE)

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# Pet birds: Love at first sight

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

The first lovebirds came to Yemen fifteen years ago. Since then, the interest for pet birds has increased remarkably. By the beginning of the 1990s, the trade of pet birds started to flourish in Yemeni markets, especially in Sana'a city. Since then, lovebirds have gained popularity, and most young people still prefer to own them instead of other kinds of birds, because lovebirds are linked with love affairs. Before that, people used to own local birds such as nightingales, falcons, doves, and goldfinch.

Mr. Bilal Al-Sabri, owner of a bird store in Sana'a, says that Yemenis who have traveled abroad were influenced by pet bird stores business. Some local tradesmen began to adopt the idea of importing some of those birds to Yemen.

A lovebird is very affectionate, lovely and cute. It is the smallest kind of parrots. It is about 13-17 cm in size and 40-60 grams in weight. Lovebirds are kept in pairs, because they form a very close bond with one another. They can be trained easily to perch on fingers, heads or shoulders. People like to buy them only for their attractive form. Some others buy them as a present, and at times, a young man gives them as a gift to his fiancée, because these birds are the symbol of love. Mr. Bilal explains that children like these birds the most. The child who sees them for the first time insists on his father to buy them. A pair of lovebirds may cost 22,000 Yemeni rials.

Pet birds differ from one to another. Some are small and some are medium in size. In Yemen, there are many kinds of these birds. The most famous are the nightingale, blackbird, goldfinch, pigeon, falcon, paradise bird, canary, parrot, and cockatiel. Some of these are imported from Australia and Holland, but the nightingale, blackbird, falcon, goldfinch and pigeon can be found in different regions of Yemen.

Before the coming of pet birds from foreign countries, the most well known birds in Yemen were pigeons, falcons and, to some extent, nightingales. Young people paid special attention to pigeons more than other kinds. They found in them a profitable trade as they

I will not follow you, my bird,  
I will not follow you.  
I would not breathe a word, my bird,  
To bring thee here a new.  
I love the free in thee, my bird,  
The lure of freedom drew;  
The light you fly toward, my bird,  
I fly with thee unto.  
And there we yet will meet, my bird,  
Though far I go from you  
Where in the light outpoured, my bird,  
Are love and freedom too.

George William Russell

George William Russell



Love birds have become a part of many Yemeni families

used to sell them. Others liked to gain them for hobbies. At times, owning pigeons was considered a kind of pride, especially when they had very rare kinds of pigeons.

It has been a hobby for most people in Yemen to own as many pigeons as they can. Some prefer to build special places for them over the roofs of their houses.



The nightingale bird singing on a tree

Here they build rooms at about 30 cm height and two meters long, with at least seven holes on each room to allow as much light pass through. Some others find it sufficient to shelter their pigeons in ghee or oil tins. Very few people do use cages for keeping their pigeons.

Training pigeons is very easy and does not take much time. To train pigeons, you only need to train them on how to identify their place, so that when they are allowed to fly, they can recognize it easily upon their return. Mr. Ahmed Taher, owner of pigeons, says, "I have many pigeons. I let them fly every morning, and they come back easily and never get lost."

White pigeons are most endeared to people, because they originally form the Peninsula. In fact, people prefer to buy pigeons in pairs. A pair of pigeons may cost 4000 Yemeni rials.

In fact, pigeons are sometimes exposed to danger while flying from place to place. Some boys take pleasure in killing these birds. They make special bows to kill them. Most of them do so just to eat these birds, while others do so for amusement.

Cockatiels are attractive and can be trained to mimic whistles and short phrase. A cockatiel bird is famous for its fine-looking colors and the crown over its head. It has a long tail. The pair may cost 15,000 Yemeni rials. However, the canary is the more expensive than cockatiels, because it has melodious sounds. The canary was named after the Canary Islands. A pair of canary birds costs up to 22,000 Yemeni rials.

The falcon is another famous bird in Yemen. Some tradesmen import this bird from Yemen to Gulf countries. Owning a falcon has been a hobby for some people, and some others show a great pride in having it. Very rarely do people use it for hunting.

It is observed that most photographers in Sana'a city like to have falcons with them, for most people like to take photographs with a falcon on their heads, shoulders or hands. There are different kinds of falcons, the most famous known as the Free (Al-Hurr), which is very white with black eyes and long nick. This falcon costs up to 150,000 Yemeni rials.



A pair of cockatiel



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