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Culture: It is time to open the National Museum

Readers' Voice

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

Last edition's question:
Prices have increased sharply nowadays, particularly those of foodstuffs. Do you think the government has implemented a dose reform without announcing it or traders are behind such prohibitive prices?
The government (72%)
Traders (20%)
I don't know (8%)

This edition's question:
The Yemeni government is reshuffled, but some politicians did not attach importance to this government reshuffle, while others are cautiously optimistic. Do you think the new government will be able to implement reforms and reduce corruption?
Yes
No
I don't know

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Trial continues, terrorists receive different judgments

For the first time, heated court sessions were held within a week to try three groups accused of terrorism: the first group of 14 suspects is accused of forming an armed gang targeting foreigners; the second is accused of blowing up foreign embassies in Sana'a; whereas the third is on trial for attempting to assassinate former U.S. ambassador Edmund Hall.

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, Feb. 12 — The Specialist Penal Court for state security held its second session Saturday, Feb. 11, resuming the trial of 14 suspects accused of forming an armed gang and planning to carry out terrorist attacks on Western interests in Yemen.

Items seized with suspects were presented to the court including a mobile telephone connected to a remote control, an electricity measuring device, a device used for encasing identity cards, four Security and Civil Status

Authority stamps used in issuing ID cards and passports, a computer and several CDs. Prosecution accused suspects of using the computer to forge ID cards.

A map of sites to be detonated, another computer, a fan, an old hunting gun, an explosive belt, a sulfur substance, a urine substance and several tins filled with TNT also were among exhibits.

Suspects admitting the exhibits were theirs were: Mohamed Abdulaziz Fateeni, Saif Al-Amaari, Sami Al-Shoabi, Amar Al-Maradi and Ali Mohamed Sofian. Al-Shoabi denied that the electrical circuit is used in detonation, claiming it is for charging batteries.

Several suspects denied accusations against them, while others refused to answer accusations directed at them. Hassan Al-Hada denied prosecution accusations against him, saying they were not his testimony and adding that fingerprints at the bottom of the page also were not his. However, prosecution insists he confessed of his own accord and signed his confession.

Some suspects refused to answer, asking their lawyers to answer on their behalf. Ashraf Al-Anisi, Adnan Wajeih's lawyer, asked the court to free his client and compensate him, demanding the court formally and substantially accept Wajeih's defense. Al-Anisi claimed his demand is based on several reasons, including lack of material evidence, and that political security broke the law by detaining his client seven months without charge. He added that there is no law preventing Wajeih's use of an electrical circuit, as he is an electrical engineer. Al-Anisi maintained that Wajeih did not know what the suspects were planning; besides, he had no connection with them and did not participate in any criminal act. Al-Anisi also criticized the court for denying him access to his client.

First suspect Sofian's lawyer also demanded his client's release and declaration of his innocence, confirming that Sofian remained in prison a whole year since his capture on Feb. 9, 2004 in clear violation of the law.

Continued on page 2



Some of the 14 suspects are accused of forming an armed band which targeted foreigners.



A group of suspects accused of attacking some western embassies in Yemen.

Broad condemnations against journals and journalists

SANA'A, Feb. 12 — The Southeast Court in Sana'a issued a ruling of imprisonment against Khalid Salman, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Thori newspaper, the Socialist Party mouthpiece. Salman received a two-year prison sentence and is banned from writing in any newspaper for six months, under judgment of arrest.

The court also sentenced journalists Nabil Sobaie and Fikri Qasim to a year's imprisonment and banned them from writing in any newspaper for six months, under stay of execution.

The court issued its rulings on the three journalists in cases filed against them for offending the president by their writings against corruption, deteriorating health and living standards and administration failures.

Following the court's ruling, Basim Al-Sharjabi, lawyer for Al-Thori and the journalists, told media, "The problem of the imprisonment and stay of execution sentences is that they are unnatural sentences in an unjust trial. Al-Thori newspaper writers faced unequalled litigation with the president, who heads the Supreme Court and has the right to appoint and remove judges."

In a statement following the court sentences, the London-based Yemeni Human Rights Organization (YHRO) denounced Yemeni authorities' imprisoning and banning journalists from writing due to their opinions.

YHRO called on journalists and human rights organizations to intervene to stop Yemeni authorities from executing the sentences. It said the rulings were a frustration to international expect-

tations of Yemen's improvement with respect to freedom and human rights. The organization called on President Saleh to live up to his commitment to lift restrictions on journalists and journalists.

It added that the trials reveal that Yemeni authorities do not respect their commitments to the international and regional communities. Such commitments, made at conferences held in Yemen, called for respecting human rights and releasing freedoms.

In its meeting at the Women Journalists Without Constraints center, the Civil Society Coalition also condemned instigation of threats against journalists by the weekly Al-Dastoor, a pro-government military and security newspaper.

The international Committee to Protect Journalists (CPIJ) also condemned closure of the Yemen Observer and Al-Raay Al-Aam newspapers.

In related news, press and publication prosecution arrested journalist Mohammed Al-Asaadi, Editor-in-Chief of English newspaper the Yemen Observer, for interrogation about its republishing Danish newspaper caricatures satirizing the prophet Mohamed. Press prosecution also summoned Yemen Observer publisher Faris Al-Sanabani regarding the caricatures' republication.

The Ministry of Information suspended the licenses of three Yemeni newspapers for republishing the drawings: Al-Raay Al-Aam, Al-Huriah and the Yemen Observer.

Cabinet reshuffle oust four ministers

A cabinet reshuffle ousts four ministers, leaving over nine unchanged while the opposition attributed this to the ruling party's panic over the recent Hamas victory

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SANA'A, Feb. 12 — A cabinet reshuffle was formerly declared Sana'a which included 22 portfolios. The reshuffle included 15 new ministers in the newly formed government. The new government included two women, namely Amatelarzag Ali Hamad as the minister of Social affairs and Labor and Dr. Khadija Al-Haisami as the minister of Human Rights.

The Ministries of Foreign affairs and Expatriates were fused together in one, with Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi being the minister. The Ministers of Culture and Tourism were re-separated. Khaled Al-Rwaishan remained the Minister of Culture while the Tourism portfolio

went to the Young Minister, Nabil Hassan Al-Faqeh.

Ahmed Sofan left Ministry of Planning and Development, with Abdulkereem Al-Arhabi as the new minister. Alawi Al-Salami left the Ministry of Finance to the Shora Council and was replaced by economist Saif Mahiob Al-Asaly from Sana'a University.

Of the new faces that joined the new cabinet are, Mohamed Ahmed Naser Ali, Minister of defense, Dr. Jala Ibrahim Fakira, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Engineer Mahmoud Ibrahim Saghiri, Minister of Fisheries, Dr. Ghazi Shaif Al-Aghbari, Minister of justice, engineer Omar Abdullah Al-Karshami, Minister of Public Works and Roads, Khalid Mahfoodh, Minister of

Petroleum and Minerals, Abdulrhaman Fadhil Al-Iriani, Minister of Water and Environment, Dr. Abdul Kareem Rase, Minister of Health and Population and Dr. Saleh Basura Minister of Higher Education and Research.

In replacements in the new cabinet, Dr. Ali Mohamed Mojawar became Minister of Electricity, from the ministry of Fisheries.

Dr. Adnan Al-Jafry left the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Legislation affairs. Dr. Rashad Ahmed Al-Rasas became Minister of Parliamentary affairs coming from the Ministry of Shora Council.

A surprising return of Hassan Ahmed Al-lawzi, a popular writer and poet, to the Ministry of Information was welcomed by journalists and writers, where he came from the Shora Council.

Those who stayed in the government included, Hamoud Al-Sofi Minister of Civil services, Ali Mansour BinSafa'a, Minister of Vocational Education. Dr. Abdulsalam Al-Jofi, Minister of Education, Abdulmalik Al-Ma'lami,

Minister of Telecommunications, Omer Hassan Al-Amoodi, Minister of Transport, Sadiq Amin Abu Ras, Minister of Local Administration, Abdulrahman Al-Akwa', Minister of Youth and Sports and Hamoud Obad, Minister of Endowments and Guidance.

Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi is promoted as a deputy Prime Minister and kept his portfolio as Minister of Interior.

In a related issue, the Presidential resolution no (2) for 2006 has appointed Judge Isam Abdulwahab Al-Samawi, as Head of the Supreme Court. Resolution no (4) has also appointed General Abullah Ali Ilaiwa as Consultant of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, after leaving the Ministry of defense.

Resolution no (8) also appointed Ahmed Mohamed Al-Kohlani as governor of Aden. Dr. Abdulwahab Rawih was appointed Rector of Aden University. He was formerly the Minister of Higher Education. Dr. Yahia Al-Shaibi became Mayor of Sana'a.

Continued on page 2

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The CEEFME Conference: An earnest effort to correct the incoherent development of the region

On January 29, 2006 YT Senior Political and Economic Editor attended the Conference for the Enrichment of the Economic Future of the Middle East which was held in Doha, Qatar, as an expert on development. This special report covers the Conference in detail and also provides interesting insights as to the rapidly ongoing changes that Doha was witnessing and the role that Yemenis are playing in Qatar's vibrant and energetic effort to become another model of successful development.

By: Hassan M. Al-Haifi

The importance of the Conference for the Enrichment of the Economic Future of the Middle East is not just apparent from the obvious large number of people that were invited as speakers, moderators and participants, but by the goal of the Conference. As a participant, one could not escape from realizing that the CEEFME sought to come out with viable solutions to the problems that stand in the way of the economic and social development of the Middle East. Though the issues involved are many and complex, it was amazing that, within the three days of the Conference, a long list of practicable recommendations were presented that could be used in a regional framework to help solve some of the seemingly perplexing difficulties that are faced by the region in achieving cohesive development.

The CEEFME was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and the Burkle Center for International Relations in the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) organized by the Conference Organizing Committee of Qatar and Felixia Associates of London. There were some 250 participants, moderators and speakers, who represented a cross-section of relevant authorities in political, economic and social development and a healthy showing from the business communities of both the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The rationale for holding the Conference as related by H. E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar in his inauguration address of the CEEFME was as follows:

"The holding of this conference comes in time where we are badly needing to arrange for the economic concern after the political concern has obtained a great part of the international community in the reform process".

In other words, the politics of the Middle East should not be the major concern of the international community. It really is time to start to look at the issues that matter the most to most of the people in the region: determining the concrete steps needed to improve their economic well-being, raise their standards of living and eliminate poverty. Such sound rationalization is understandable as the majority of the people of the Middle East cannot really be expected to be concerned about their political situations, when their subsistence is the



Left to Right: Former President Bill Clinton, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar and General Anthony Zinni, Former Commander of CENCOMI at the Inauguration of Conference.

prevailing challenge of the day for them. Moreover, it is not possible to expect that regional development in cohesion cannot be achieved, while there is a significant disparity between the levels of achievement reached by some of the countries in the region, not to mention the disparity in wealth.

If the region's economic issues are given greater priority, then there can be greater room for optimism. The factors at play in this context are: the resources are there, the common denominators outweigh the differences among the member countries of the region and the region's strategic position geographically and its importance as a primary source of the energy that most of the economies of the world rely upon for their continued growth. The CEEFME sought to start the activation of these significant factors towards harnessing the potential possibilities of turning the Middle East and North Africa into a dynamic and prosperous economic bloc that presents vast opportunities for the people and the business enterprises of the region, as well as the international community.

The Conference was inaugurated by H. E. Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar, who stressed the importance of the CEEFME in the speech he gave at the inauguration ceremonies.

The special guest speaker at the inauguration of the Conference was former President Bill Clinton of the United States, who spoke stressed the importance of the stability and peace in the region as an important prerogative before any successful reforms can

be implemented. In addition, Mr. Clinton outlined a plan encompassing six points that included expanding infrastructural and capital investment in broad economic sectors; the development of regulatory structures to promote small business, job creation, economic diversity, and the strengthening of the middle class; a system of ongoing investment in education to get more young people in school, increasing opportunities for university education, maximizing the intellectual capacity of the region, including getting more women into the workforce, especially in skilled jobs; guaranteeing more consumer capacity through the creation of minimum wage policies and unemployment insurance; and expanding the capacity of countries to offer business education.

Mr. Clinton also said: "Middle East countries need to diversify their economies and enhance productivity if they are to make optimum use of their resources and potential. Many people in the West and elsewhere in the world believe the Middle East is the hotbed of politics and seat of instability".

The Conference started with a reception and dinner on the eve of the inauguration of the CEEFME. After the inauguration ceremonies, speakers discussed the following topics:

- 1) Energy and the Dynamics of Regional Development: Perspectives from Asia and the Middle East
- 2) The Middle East Energy Scene: Global Perspective
- 3) The Business Environment in the Middle East: Managing Risk, Seizing Opportunities, Private Sector, Investment, and Diversification
- 4) Doing Business in the Middle East: Creating Societies Conducive to Development, Efficiency, and Productivity
- 5) The Iraqi Economy: An on the Scene Report

On the following day, the participants split into various specialist panels, to present recommendations for enhancing the development effort in the region and to improve the chances for the economic cohesion of the region. The panels were

- 1) The Middle East Energy Scene in Global Perspective
- 2) Doing Business in the Middle East: What Could Improve: Private Sector, Venture Capital, and Diversification.
- 3) Doing Business in the Middle

East: Creating Societies Conducive to Development, Efficiency, and Productivity.

Ms. Bahiya Hariri, widow of the late Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Al-Hariri spoke briefly on the prospects for business in the region.

The final plenary was aptly titled: Looking Ahead: Recommendations and Conclusions. In this session, the recommendations gathered by the specialty panels were summarized as follows (from the Burkle Center at UCLA website):

While affirming that all reform initiatives must be locally designed, and reflect local customs, traditions and circumstances, the conference addressed three key areas of reform: improving the business environment in the Middle East; creating societies conducive to development, efficiency and productivity; and optimizing the energy economy to promote sustainable regional economic growth.

On improving the environment for business creation and economic diversification in the Middle East, participants discussed the need to bring more practical solutions to address the regional deficits in three areas identified by the United Nations Development Program's recent report on regional development in the Middle East region: education and training; women's integration into the skilled workforce; and increasing freedom of expression, association and the press. Among the initiatives discussed were encouraging governments and businesses in the region to create public/private sector partnerships to provide computers to each student in the region, and in the longer term to each person in the Arab world.

Participants also stressed the importance of enhancing opportunity for and economic empowerment of the region's women, and recommended the adoption of affirmative action programs for women's employment in government, as well as preferential contracts to promote women-owned businesses.

The promulgation of a national "Bills of Rights" elaborating specific freedoms, roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in the Middle East also was recommended by conference participants.

To enhance international and regional cooperation, participants advocated more people-to-people exchange programs, especially those that facilitate interaction among citizens from the Middle East and else-

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Also recommended were the adoption in the broader Middle East region of binational research and investment projects, such as those established by the United States and Israel to promote technical research and development, as well as expanding the Seeds of Peace program of cross-cultural youth exchanges across the region.

On energy, the creation of an International Energy Development Initiative was proposed, a coalition of governments, corporations and private individuals to address the future of energy resources on a worldwide basis. Such a forum would provide a practical and results-oriented mechanism for international coordination and risk mitigation, and promote international investment in research and development in new and alternative

private and public sector activities through the region also were recommended.

Conference participants affirmed the importance of existing initiatives to establish a regional central bank to serve as a common forum and meeting place for the region's existing central banks, which would continue to have the same functions and responsibilities they now possess. The new regional central bank could be a venue where all central banks could meet and coordinate policies, especially as regional governments face large and growing surpluses.

Participants also discussed the need for a greater Asian role in the Middle East, necessitated by increasing energy demand, especially in India and China. As economic engagement and trade between the Middle East and Asia increases, so too should Asian govern-



One of the panel discussions attended by the writer.

energy policies, technologies and services, as well as a platform for dialogue among energy producers, distributors and consumers. Conference participants reviewed proposals to enhance greater market stability through such initiatives as selling 20 percent of existing reserves to consumer states. More regional involvement in nuclear technologies also was recommended, in addition to other clean alternative energy sources such as solar and wind energy.

Finally, participants stressed the need to increase scientific and technological education and training throughout the region.

Increasing efforts to support education and training was viewed as one of the critical drivers of business growth in the region, as well as the need to create enduring and strong regulatory regimes to enable job growth, entrepreneurialism, access to risk capital and enhancement of property rights.

New policies and regulatory structures to promote the development of the middle class and small business, and efforts to facilitate greater transparency and good governance in both

ments and businesses play increasingly active roles in supporting economic development and assistance in the region.

The coordination for the Conference was undertaken by Felixia Associates of London, with the significant active efforts of Ms. Farida Hashem, Senior Consultant.

Participants from Yemen included:

- 1) Dr. Hussein Al-Amri UNESCO Yemen Board Associate, Member of Consultative Assembly
- 2) Dr. Rasheed Barabba'a, Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources
- 3) Hassan Al-Haifi, Senior Economic and Political Analyst for the Yemen Times
- 4) Mohammed Al-Baidhani, Deputy General Manager of Liquefied Natural Gas Company (Y LNG) of Yemen.
- 5) Abdurrahman Hayel Sa'eed Ana'am, Deputy Chairman of Hayel Saeed Ana'am Group.
- 6) Abdul-Gabbar Hayel Saeed Ana'am, Director of HAS Group.

The report on the Yemeni participation in the Conference and the other aspects of the Doha visit shall be included in the following issue of YT.



Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources of Yemen (left center - in a suit)

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This is Amina (Part 1 of 2)

This is the true story of a woman who married as a child. She suffered terribly during her married life and after the murder of her husband. In 1998, when she was 14 years old, her husband was murdered. She was forced to confess to the crime, was convicted of killing her husband and imprisoned since then. However, she still maintains her innocence. She is awaiting her death sentence at any moment.

By: Shadha Mohammed Nasser

Amina is a beautiful woman with brown eyes. Although uneducated, she is very intelligent and speaks confidently with others. I visited her March 2005 at the Central Prison in Sana'a and she told me about her case, noting that she may be executed at any moment. I could not obtain a copy of her case file, so I left.

In my second visit, she came to me bareheaded and this time her countenance appealed to me as she asked, "Will you help me?" I really did pity her. I asked, "Is this your child?" "Yes it is," she whispered, with sorrow in her eyes.

I returned home. Thinking of her, I could not sleep that night, wishing the weekend would end soon. At last,

Saturday came and I met a friend with whom I discussed Amina's case so we might bring her to life again.

Like other village girls, Amina did not receive education, as there were neither schools nor teachers. She only memorized some verses from the Qur'an with the help of a man who voluntarily taught villagers, studying only two months.

Amina has never known any type of plaything, which is why one of her prison friends suggested I bring her a talking doll. Amina stressed that girls in her village are raised for household and agricultural work. The following is Amina's story.

Marriage

My father decided to help my elder brother marry, as recurring problems had ensued between them. He came to know



a man named Hassan Qaba'il from another village and asked his daughter's hand for my brother. The girl's father agreed on condition that his son Hizam marry me. The two fathers agreed to the marriages and I was pledged to Hizam, although I was too young to be a wife, as I was nine years old at the time. Qaba'il assured my family that I would become familiar with the new family and intimacy would grow between me and my husband. It was important to them that my brother married their daughter who seemingly was as old as he. So, I married, although still too young to understand what marriage was and how to make a family. My only interest was the

new dress, gold and other gifts brought for me. I also was happy with the party they arranged for me.

Marriage party

My brother's marriage ceremony was different than mine. He was an adult, so those attending his wedding ceremony were adults as well. Those who attended my wedding party were all children, except my family members.

I still remember being put on the marriage chair. Not knowing what a bride or marriage were, I left my party and went outside to play, but was brought back inside. People laughed at me as, indeed, I was a child. My poor mother wept over my marriage at such an early age, trying to conceal her feelings by saying they were tears of joy.

Moving to my husband's house

After my marriage party, my family took me to my husband's house in another village. We met my husband's family midway, where they took me and handed over their daughter, my brother's wife, to my family. At that moment, I burst into tears and asked my mother to accompany me. Counter to societal traditions, she stayed with me in my husband's house. However, a week later, she decided to leave and I insisted on returning with her.

As I was weeping and insisting on

going with my mother, they confined me in a room, but I managed to run away that evening. I walked, but went astray when I climbed a mountain I did not know. I was scared and found nothing to eat or drink. I fainted while trying to reach my village, which was five hours' walk from there. After hours searching for me, my husband and his family found me fainted on the ground and brought me back.

Upon hearing of this incident, the village sheikh was upset and asked Qaba'il to return me to my family. "You should let her live with her family until she grows up; otherwise, she will die or harm herself," he said. They agreed to return me to my family and took my brother's wife accordingly. In fact, my brother and his wife had a mutual understanding.

I stayed with my family for four months, after which my father returned me to my husband, allowing my sisters to come with me. My brother's wife returned with my father. After two months, my sisters left me. People tried to make me understand my life, for they thought I was mad.

Qaba'il did not like my visits to my family. He threatened me not to visit them again and put a black substance onto my eyes. I was unable to see anything for two weeks. When my father learned of this, he took me to a Sana'a

hospital. I had three eye operations and the doctor advised me not to return to my husband for fear of complications with my eyes. For two months, I remained with my family for medical attention. In return, Qaba'il again took his daughter, my brother's wife.

Once again, my brother returned me to my husband and took his wife. Two months later, I got pregnant and gave birth to a girl. It was a difficult delivery and I suffered bitterly for two days. At first, I refused to take my daughter because I was not mature enough to understand her rights. However, my mother-in-law helped me, explaining how to look after her, and after that, I began to love my daughter very much.

My husband

My husband Hizam was two or three years older than me. They said he was 14 at the time of our marriage. He was kind to me and I loved him, but neither of us understood the meaning of married life. I helped him on the farm. He was poor, never even having 2,000 Riyals. We depended on the grain we raised on the farm. My father gave me whatever I wanted.

Amina's story will continue in Part 2 published in the next issue.

Shadha Mohammed Nasser is a Supreme Court lawyer.

A 110-year-old mother and her sick daughter

Culture in this part of the world dictates that women are due full physical and financial support from men, especially as they age. Husbands, parents, children, relatives and others ensure that women are secure financially.] Here we meet 110-year-old Fatima Al-Sawari. Her youngest daughter, 80-year-old Taqi'yah, is paralyzed and being nursed and cared for by her only remaining family, her century-old mother.

Hakim Almasmari
hakim_almasmari@hotmail.com

Poverty and the poor health system are two of the numerous fears crossing the minds of Yemeni families. Last year, Yemen was rated the unhealthiest Arab nation in an Associated Press report – yet another

step backward.] Fatima Al-Sawari, believed to be 110 years old, never lived the life of which she dreamed. For the past 30 years, she has cared for her paralyzed daughter Taqi'yah, now age 80. She claims to be living with 13 different sicknesses throughout her body.

Originally from Bani Matar, Fatima has lived below the poverty line for the

past 100 years. She lived in Bani Matar the first part of her life until her house was destroyed due to its weak infrastructure, leaving her with no choice but to abandon it with her sick daughter. They moved from one city to another, having neither a roof to sleep under nor a family to care for them.

The loving mother said, "I had a son who at least tried to help us, but he died. I wish he was still alive. That way, I could have someone to count on." Fatima has sacrificed her time and wealth for 30 years hoping that one day her daughter will live like any other. "I have reached the age where I can't even take care of myself. God forbid if I die. What will happen to my lovely daughter? In my eyes, she is still my baby."

With no one to care for them, their only hope lies in God's hands. "My husband is dead. My son is dead and I only have this daughter left. My father died more than 50 years ago. I was destined to live this life, so I thank God," she said.

Fatima has given her daughter medical attention for many years now leaving no stone unturned in trying to find a possible cure for her daughter's innumerable sicknesses. There is no proper health system available for those who cannot afford it and have nowhere else to go.

Recently, after selling all her possessions, Fatima has considered giving up. "How can you give someone medical attention in this country without money? People like us have no place in society. I have no more money to spare," she lamented. "Officials are building mansions and palaces while we can't even build ourselves a wooden room or a roof to cover our heads."



Fatima (left) hopes her daughter will get better one day, as time is running out for both.

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With great pain, her daughter Taqi'yah, who cannot even stand on her feet, said, weeping long and quietly, "My mom is so great. If it had not been for her, I don't know what would have happened to me. I owe my life to her. Will I ever be able to repay her? If not, surely God will not forget her sacrifice for me."

The two women never buy food as all is given to them by their caring neighbor and relative, Mohammed Al-Sawari. Rent is 6000YR monthly for this family with no financial income. Life has reached the extreme for this

family. They share the one 20-year-old blanket they possess, keeping them together and warm during the cold nights of their long battle against poverty.

Every now and then, street workers volunteer to clean the bathroom for the two women, who together are nearly 200 years old. "Two years ago, I was kicked out of my small, shabby apartment. I couldn't come up with the rent so I was brutally thrown in the streets," Fatima said. "The neighborhood here is nicer. Old ladies often pass by and offer us some bread."

Stories like this surely are heart-breaking and make you realize the severity of the problem we are suffering. Many Yemeni families hover between life and death, but honor and respect for themselves stops them from reporting such news. Fatima and Taqi'yah are two of nearly 11 million Yemenis living near or below the poverty line, as mentioned in the United Nations report. Will all poor people in Yemen need to openly cry out before the government offers a helping hand to these proud, desperate citizens?

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Italian delegation: Yemeni medical personnel need training

By: Amel Mohammed Al-Ariqi
amel11ariqi@yahoo.com

Al-Jumhori Hospital in Sana'a is considered one of the largest hospitals in Yemen, daily receiving thousands of patients, accident victims and emergency cases from various governorates and regions. The hospital recently hosted an Italian delegation of eight doctors and surgeons of varying specialties. They stayed at the hospital six days, performing many surgeries and diagnosing many patients.

Since the medical state at Al-Jumhori Hospital mostly reflects the medical state of many government hospitals, the Yemen Times interviewed delegation members about their experiences during their time there.

Bilateral cooperation

Delegation head, Professor Paola Leponelli, explained the reason behind their visit to Al-Jumhori Hospital,

saying, "We received a request from Yemeni medical coordinator, Dr. Hathim Al-Murthi, to visit the hospital. After a while, we came up with the idea of establishing bilateral cooperation between Al-Jumhori Hospital and the hospitals we represent in Rome."

According to Leponelli, this cooperation will concentrate on providing Al-Jumhori with experts, training, medical equipment and rehabilitation of the hospital's medical personnel.

He pointed out that Yemen's medical state needs support and aid. "It is clear that Yemen's medical state needs help, so we hope such cooperation will not be centralized only between the hospitals, but will expand to become official cooperation between our government and Yemen's government."

Randomness and lack of knowledge

Leponelli described the hospital's inner working mechanism as semi-random. "There is no arranged mechanism inside the hospital to receive patients. There is

no way to link the patient with his or her doctor," he wondered.

Such randomness negatively affects the hospital's service level. "We will do our best with our government and our medical administration to develop this cooperation to reflect upon the hospital's achievement and service level," he said.

Leponelli referred to the existence of some medical equipment that has been in the hospital for years, however no one uses them, no one knows how to use them and no one knows the purpose of their existence at the hospital. On other hand, some departments lack tools and equipment.

According to Leponelli the surgeries performed by the Italian team were not rare or difficult; however, due to lack of experience by Yemeni medical staff in using such machines, some operations could not be performed by them. For example, Italian doctors performed many endoscopic surgeries using an instrument that has been at the hospital for a year but never used because no one



Al-Jumhori Hospital in Sana'a receives thousands of patients daily.



Leponelli: We seek to implement mechanisms to improve the abilities of medical personnel inside the hospital to enable them to use medical tools and modern equipment."



Lombardi: "Providing the hospital with skilled human personnel able to use such techniques, besides financial support to buy such instruments, are the main things to generalize in the hospital."



Luigi Lorigo: Yemeni gynecologists, lack medical facilities and equipment. Sometimes there are no surgical gloves or threads."

knew how to use it. "Therefore, through this cooperation, we seek to implement mechanisms to improve the abilities of medical personnel inside the hospital to enable them to use medical tools and modern equipment."

Leponelli said the hospital's doctors are characterized by good talent and experience, however they need more experience and they need to develop their knowledge of what is new in medicine. "In this regard, we are thinking of preparing training courses for hospital medical personnel. These courses could be in Italy or at Al-Jumhori Hospital, under Italian professors' supervision," he added.

General surgeon professor Marco Lombardi referred to the new technique of using an endoscope by which many operations can be performed easily. "By using this technique, patients who were supposed to sleep in hospital beds for 10 days can now go home after two days," he asserted. "This technique means less pain and fast recovery," he added.

Lombardi confirmed that such a technique can be generalized in all surgical departments. "Providing the hospital with skilled human personnel able to use such techniques, besides financial support to buy such instruments, are the main things to generalize in the hospital."

Family doctors and suffering women

Leponelli noted that there is no "family doctor or neighborhood doctor" in Yemen. The patient arrives at the hospital suffering a lot of pain due to his advanced condition. "To protect from disease in any society, medicines and medical care must be close to citizens. A hospital like Al-Jumhori is supposed to be for emergency cases."

According to Leponelli, because Al-Jumhori is a government hospital, its medical personnel treat patients for free, which causes increased numbers of patients. "Huge numbers of patients arrive at the hospital, there are huge pressures and limited facilities and all that creates a state of mass confusion," he said. "We [doctors] feel sorry for the poor patients," he added.

Gynecology specialist Dr. Luigi Lorigo described the medical state of Yemeni women as "very serious and difficult." He said there are many advanced cases whose diagnoses were very late. "Most female patients I diagnosed were experiencing uterine tumors at 30 or 35 years old," he noted.

He affirmed that such diseases are not found among European women under age 40. "My advice to Yemeni women is to do regular testing, like taking a sample from the tumor and measuring the hormone level to avoid such a serious problem." According to Lorigo, such tumors are treated easily and at minimal cost if discovered early.

He pointed to the problem of Yemeni tradition and costume that make it difficult for women to do regular medical testing, particularly with male doctors. "There is no awareness by Yemeni women of the importance of such tests. We experienced this problem 50 years ago in Italy, but we started to launch awareness campaigns through media, seminars and lectures. We established a health system to educate Italian women. Many women shared in raising the awareness of other women. Therefore, the tumors' rate in Italian women has been remarkably and

sharply reduced."

Referring to the skills of Yemeni gynecologists, Lorigo said, "Whatever they undertake, they lack medical facilities and equipment. Sometimes there are no surgical gloves or threads."

Protocols

Last Thursday Al-Jumhori Hospital and the Italian delegation representing Italian hospitals Sant'eugenio and the Traumatic Orthopedic Center (CTO)

signed a protocol for medical cooperation. It includes 33 annual scholarships for Al-Jumhori medical personnel to receive training in Italy and aims to connect Al-Jumhori with Italy's largest hospitals.

Moreover, it states that Italian hospitals will receive Al-Jumhori's incurable cases for medical procedures. The protocol also aims to have Italian medical teams conduct medical operations at Al-Jumhori.

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UNDP Project on Strengthening National Human Rights Capacity Terms of Reference Project Manager – Gender Equality Activities



Position : Project Manager – Gender Equality Activities
Project Title : Strengthening National Capacity in Human Rights
Project No. : YEM/03/006/34/A
Budget Line :
Duration : 12 months

Background:

The UNDP Project for Strengthening National Human Rights Capacity (hereinafter referred to as the Project) aims at strengthening national capacity (both governmental and non-governmental) to promote, protect, and respect human rights in Yemen. The promotion and protection of human rights is a commitment professed by the Government in its Constitution, international obligations and the many organs that have been created for that specific objective. A new Human Rights Ministry has been created to oversee the realization of this objective. The main objectives of the project are:

- To strengthen the national institutional capacity to advance, in a meaningful way, protection and promotion of human rights through fulfillment of international obligations mainstreaming human rights into national development efforts;
- To strengthen the capacity of civil society to enable it to develop its advocacy and networking skills for promoting and defending human rights.

A new and substantial component on women's human rights has been added to the UNDP Project. The services of a Yemeni gender specialist with the ability to function in both Arabic and English is needed to manage activities under this new component..

Expected results:

The provision of technical assistance and support to MHR, UNDP Project and other partners on women's rights and gender equality and management of UNDP Project gender activities.

Specific Tasks: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) of the Human Rights Project, the gender equality project manager will undertake the following specific tasks:

- Develop comprehensive work plans for gender activities under the Human Rights Project;
- Supervise the implementation of gender activities under the Human Rights Project;
- Prepare first drafts of reports (both financial and narrative) for donors;
- Provide advise to the CTA and the rest of the Human Rights Project Team with regard gender equality and women's human rights;
- Supervise the activities of the designated project assistance;
- Undertake any other tasks assigned by the CTA.

Qualifications:

- Possess a master's degree in social sciences, preferably women studies and human rights are assets
- Human rights experience/knowledge is an asset
- Excellent command of the English and Arabic languages.
- Excellent Communication and writing skills (in both languages).
- Proficiency in major computer software (Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point), database use and development, and advanced Internet search engine tools.
- Minimum of 5 years of experience in project management (preferably UNDP's) and gender activities.

نيوهورايزن
مركز لتدريب الكمبيوتر

حان الوقت لتطلق ليديك العنان
مع برنامج التاهيل للشهادة الدولية للحاسب والإنترنت IC3

نقدم مراكز نيوهورايزن برنامج تدريبي للتاهيل للحصول على الشهادة الدولية للحاسب والإنترنت IC3 وهي شهادة دولية لا عنى عنها، لكل الناس، وتعتبر معياراً دولياً يؤكد أن حامل الشهادة يملك المعرفة والمهارات الأساسية للحاسب والإنترنت. يتم الحصول على الشهادة بعد اجتياز ثلاثة اختبارات بنجاح.

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- أسئلة عملية تتيح أحدث تقنيات الاختبار الإحترافية من خلال مزيج من الأسئلة المعتمدة على المعرفة Knowledge-Based والتهام المعتمدة على الأداء Performance-Based.
- حساب النتيجة تلقائياً يعنى نتائج اختصار فورية والحصول على نسخة رسمية من النتيجة في الحال بمجرد إكمال الاختبار.
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It is time to open the National Museum

By: Yemen Times Staff

It is remarkable that Yemen's National Museum has been closed to the public for nearly three years. Although there are other museums in Sana'a such as the Military Museum and the Popular Heritage Museum, it is the National Museum that cherishes within it an archeological collection best reflecting Yemen's glorious history. It is this country's landmark, containing its treasures, promoting its tourism and contributing to its national income. Previously a palace of Yemen's Imam, the National Museum with its attractive exhibits introduces Yemen to foreigners.

Closed for maintenance

"I wish I could open it this month, but the decision is not mine," museum director Abdulaziz Al-Gendari said.

He described renovation and maintenance works to which he attributed the three-year shutdown. He particularly noted that building a warehouse was the real reason behind the museum's inaccessibility.



Abdulaziz Al-Gendari



The National Museum in Sana'a.

"We built a seven-meter-deep underground warehouse. That took about three years while other renovations only began in 2004. The problem lay in digging the warehouse, which isolated the museum and prevented visitors from coming in," Al-Gendari said.

However, one might question the time spent, even if such a warehouse has the following specifications. It is equipped with fire-proof walls, armored doors, central ventilation and high-tech surveillance devices, as well as emergency pumps in case of flooding. It also can accommodate more than a million archeological finds and contains a safe for the most precious pieces.

Because the warehouse was built in front of the museum's main building, it prevented visitor entry. Its roof, which is the museum's front yard, was paved with stones in a way facilitating smooth visitor movement. Thanks to renovation, wheelchair-bound disabled citizens also may now visit the

museum as there are suitable passages, as well as an elevator to all floors.

Warehouse construction and the yard were financed by the Social Fund for Development while remaining renovations were financed by the Heritage and Culture Development Fund, a body of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Finished but not open

The perplexing issue is that although the maintenance work is finished, the museum has not opened officially. "On Jan. 21, we were directed by the head of the General Authority for Antiquities and Museums to allow tourist groups into the museum. A considerable number of tourists have visited the museum and are pleased with it," Al-Gendari said. Nevertheless, he cannot predict when the museum will open to all visitors, but "I hope it will open this month."

He further described other renovation and maintenance work to the museum which he thinks has

rendered it more attractive and appealing.

"We restructured and redesigned the museum building, restoring old halls and making new ones and supplying them with extra archeological pieces. On the ground floor, we redesigned the interior and furnished it with a new collection of Yemeni scriptures written in ancient Musnad Yemeni script. Engraved in the plough style, i.e., from right to left, then left to right and so on, the scripts are sacrificial and were presented to ancient Yemeni deities. Some date back to the seventh century B.C., while others date to the sixth century B.C.," Al-Gendari explained.

First floor renovations to the pre-Islamic section include adding two new halls for the Hadramawt Kingdom and for pre-Islamic archeological gifts given to President Saleh. The level's remaining halls were supplied artifacts according to their specialties.

Two halls also were constructed for Yemeni coins and for illumination, featuring pre-electric means such as traditional candlesticks, oil lamps, lanterns, etc.

Additional renovations include adding two halls to the Popular Heritage section, the first for Yemeni architecture, featuring many types of traditional Yemeni architectural models such as that of the Old City of Sana'a. The section's second new hall is dedicated to ornaments worn head to toe by Yemeni women.

No historical superiority

Al-Gendari personally does not believe any one artifact is historically more important than another.

"I am commonly asked which one is the best. I answer that any two archeological finds have equal historical importance because they give us information about history." He gave the example of a small coin which "actually has bearing on many aspects. If it is made of gold, that tells us the state was prosperous. The date also shows the time span. If there is more than one city for minting, that shows the state's power and the areas it ruled. A coin also tells us about the king who ordered its minting," Al-Gendari explained.

Another example he cited is that of a statue which, by examining the type of attire on it, tells us about the costumes of a certain time period. "The way it was made gives us an inkling about how dexterous the people were and so on and so forth," he added.

Archeological work unstoppable

According to Al-Gendari, work did not stop during the museum's closure. "Yemeni specialists restored some 1,300 archeological wood and bronze pieces. We take pride in this, as the team comprises only Yemeni nationals who have been trained locally and abroad.

"Documentation is conducted professionally and meticulously. We give every piece that comes to us an ID with a special number, a description of its dimensions, type, original location, source, etc. This information is entered into a database, which allows us to retrieve any stolen piece from anywhere in the world because we have proof that it is ours," Al-Gendari explained.

He said the museum's archeological finds exceed 25,000 and come from a variety of sources such as the two committees of the General Authority for Antiquities and Museums and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, artifacts confiscation at Yemen's exits, police seizures, state excavations and foreign expeditions who have agreements with the state.

In the end, Al-Gendari complained that Yemen has relatively few museums compared to the glamour of its history and civilization. He urged establishing more museums to better promote Yemeni culture locally and internationally.

The Sana'a-based National Museum was established in 1971 at Dar Al-Shukr, a pre-revolutionary imamate palace. It originally contained two sections for ancient antiquities and for popular heritage. In the course of its development, it came to include an Islamic artifacts division as well. As it expanded, authorities thought to transfer it to a more spacious location and consequently, it was moved to Dar Al-Sa'dah, another palace.

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 16

Translated by Edward FitzGerald

Think in this batter'd
caravanserai
Whose doorways are
alternate night and day,
How sultan after sultan
with his pomp
Abode his hour or two, and
went his way.

Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalmah Al-Tayyibah

The Qur'an and the universe

Book: The Qur'an and the Universe: From the Big Bang to the Great Conitruion* (1)

Author: Usamah Ali Al-Khadhir

Language: Arabic

Publisher: Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Year Published: 2004

No. of Pages: 833

The Qur'an is indeed one of the most phenomenal spiritual texts of all time. For one thing it is the latest of the spiritual texts that are the textbooks of faith of the three prominent monotheistic religions, the Torah (Jews), the Bible (Old and New Testament - Christians) and the Qur'an (Moslems). For another thing, the Qur'an has underwent hundreds of interpretations by Moslem and non-Moslem scholars, all of which try to decipher the vast fields that Qur'anic text cover. The powerful language of the Qur'an has also remained unaltered since its first publication during the period of the Third Orthodox Caliph, or successor to the Prophet Mohammed (Peace of Allah be upon him) some twenty years or so after the latter passed away, thus insuring its authenticity with the revealed verses delivered to the Prophet.

A French scholar (Dr. Maurice Baucaille) has previously written a remarkable comparative analysis of the Qur'an with the spiritual books of the other monotheistic faiths (See LC in Yemen Times Issues 844, 846 and 848). In that analysis, the author could not help but conclude that the Qur'an indeed is consistent with most of the scientific discoveries about this universe and he could not find anything that would render the book in any way conflicting with even the most recent scientific discoveries.

The book under scrutiny here seeks to bring the Qur'an in congruence with all the physical laws and suppositions concerning the vast expanse of the universe of which, the Earth and its human dwellers represent a minuscule almost negligible combination in the limitless expanse that sometimes is called the cosmos. This includes the chemical, physical, mechanical and astronomical attributes of the world and its vast surroundings. The effort is worthy of recognition as a monumental feat by someone who has delved into the many aspects that govern the existence and continuity of the universe and our existence amidst it and is very familiar with the scientific knowledge that has accumulated about the nature of the universe since ancient times. In the Introduction the author explains his objective:

"The major purpose of this treatise is to show the full impressive consistency and conformity between the modern scientific discoveries in the various fields of physics, astronomy and cosmology and to show the miracle of Mohammed Bin Abdullah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Holy Qur'an."

Furthermore, the author explains that his motive is not to seek rationales for the irrational behavior of modern man in many spheres that govern human life, but to underscore the fact that the suffer-

ing we see throughout the world and the arrogance of humankind are to a large extent due to a denial of the spiritual orientations that the Creator has laid out to help mankind regulate their existence in this tumultuous world. This stems partly from a poor understanding of the religious doctrine that has been evolving over the ages, with generations of prophets and messengers designated by the Al-Mighty to bring enlightenment to mankind and set the appropriate moral and legislative guidelines that will ensure that peace, justice and harmony are the acceptable norms of human existence. Without mankind recognizing the spiritual forces at play in our own lives and throughout the vast universe we live in, there is little chance that we will succumb to the Ultimate Being, who is responsible for making it all happen.

Thus, the author is seeking to underscore the fact that all that we are noticing in our own limited spheres and beyond the blue and black of day and night that separate us from the almost infinite number and kinds of celestial bodies of which only a very small sampling have become identifiable to our meek capacity to observe and absorb. But that such an enormous agglomeration of force, energy and matter existing and interacting in such a smooth and systematic cohesion surely warrants greater scrutiny as to their origin and intricate arrangement. For the author, relying on scientific observations of some of the greatest scientists spanning the ages of human existence, the Holy Qur'an is far beyond being simply a guide book towards the achievement of spiritual bliss. It is a phenomenal textbook of the science that we have come to know and have yet to fully explore to explain our existence and the intricacies of the universe that are necessary for such existence and continuity. Accordingly, if the universe must be subject to the Awesome Powers of the Al-Mighty to govern their existence and regulate their continuity, then surely mankind must also submit to the ordinances of their Creator, if they are to find peace and tranquility in this life. Furthermore, with the ability of the Al-Mighty to bring us into being in such a vast Cosmos of inter-celestial bodies and forces, there should be no second thoughts about the ability of God Al-Mighty to bring us about in another era of existence that has its own governing ordinances and which entail the elements of reward and punishment for mankind in terms of how they have truly been true to heart in their faith and belief in their Creator and their adherence to the sound rules and guidelines He has set for us to make our limited mundane existence a rewarding one in the here and now and in the hereafter.

We start our exploration of this interesting mix of the spiritual and scientific in the next issue.

* Actually the Arabic word "insihag" could also mean "grounding" to a powder, but contribution would be more fitting with the spiritual context of the book, when we all realize that we probably missed the chance to make peace with our Lord.

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Puppets: the innocent theater

"All of the arts, poetry, music, ritual, the visible arts, the theater, must singly and together create the most comprehensive art of all, a humanized society, and its masterpiece, free man." – Bernard Berenson

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

A puppet is a doll with a hollow head of a person or animal and a cloth body, intended to fit over the hand and be manipulated with the fingers.

The idea of puppets dates back thousands of years – nearly 2,000 years ago – as mentioned in Greek philosophy. Puppets are an artistic medium used to communicate, instruct, delight and convey messages for both entertainment and education.

Puppets are characters, not real people, and most are small and child-sized. A puppet figure has a face with eyes, nose and a mouth. The puppeteer must use his hand to move them and use his voice to make them speak. So, in a puppet show, we see a character that moves and speaks, representing a hero, a villain or a tragic figure.

Puppets and children

Generally speaking, children like



Two puppet characters during a show in the Puppet Theater.

PHOTO BY :EBHAR FOUNDATION

dolls and different kinds of toys with which to play. A child talks with the doll, takes care of it, laughs at it, treats it kindly or badly, walks it, puts it in bed and sleeps with it. This experience makes children love puppets the most and is why they are very much interested in puppet television series. For them, puppets can demonstrate simply what is typical of their simple natures. In puppets, they can discover what they feel, think and love. A puppet show can inculcate children with values, principles and teach them good life lessons. There are different kinds of puppets, such as marionettes, hand puppets, backlight puppets, shadow puppets and light curtain puppets.

Puppet Theater in Yemen

In Yemen, most families do not take notice of any type of art, including puppets, because they must look after their livelihood. Likewise, the government does not much care about children's arts and theaters either. Even in schools, the absence of puppet shows and other arts is markedly obvious. Additionally, there are no special theaters designed for puppet shows. In effect, this deprives children of demonstrating their abilities to express their feelings and improve their skills, as well as encouraging them to mix with society.

But recently, some non-governmental organizations have begun to provide for children and help them develop their talents in various arts. Ebhar

Foundation for Childhood and Creativeness is very involved with Puppet Theater and other art forms, conducting a number of workshops to train children in Puppet Theater, puppet making and drama basics.

Such a workshop was held last month, funded by UNICEF in coordination with the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood. It was part of the foundation's Puppet Theater project initiated in 2005.

Maha Naji Salah, Chairman of Ebhar Foundation, said the puppet project, in all its various phases, aims to defy violence against children on the street, at school and at home. It encourages children who are subjected to violence to express their feelings through Puppet Theater.



Some children who were trained to make puppets in Ebhar Establishment.

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