

YEMEN TIMES TIMES

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## **Inside:**



The spread of qat among women



Yemeni playwrights and actors honored, new festival unveiled



Poisons alleged in Hodeidah's distributed

### Readers' Voice Last edition's question:

Many analysts think the president's current visit to china is a reflection of cooler relations with the west, particularly the U.S. Do you agree with this?

I don't know (6%)

#### This edition's question:

After several years' detention in Guantánamo Bay, the U.S. recently handed over several terror suspects to Yemen. Do you think the suspects will receive kind treatment here?

- I don't know

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## Saleh encourages Chinese businessmen to invest in Yemen

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, April 9 — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh left China after a six-day visit, during which he encouraged Chinese businessmen to invest in Yemen, assuring that his government is ready to grant free lands to investors with capital exceeding \$10 million. With his Chinese counterpart, Hu Jintao, Saleh discussed close ties, cooperation and economic and trade partnership between the two countries.

Both leaders discussed regional and international developments, particularly those in the Middle East, including situations in Palestine, Iraq and Somalia, terrorism fighting efforts and means for activating the United Nations' role. Discussion laid more emphasis on enhancing dialogue between civilizations and cultures to improve world peace and understanding between nations.

Praising China's ties with Yemen, Jintao said, "Trade cooperation

between our two countries began in the sixth century through trade of silk products and by the advent of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a Chinese trotter from the Royal Clan reached Aden five times in his navy. After the People's Republic of China was established, Yemen was among the first countries to establish relations with the new state. For approximately half a century, Yemeni-Chinese relations resisted international changes and developed.

"Over the past few years, trade exchange between our countries has increased at different levels, whether in areas of economic cooperation or in energy, yielding fruitful results. Both countries have close relations in political, military and cultural areas and often are present in international conferences," the Chinese leader added.

He pointed out that his government exempted Yemeni exports to China from customs tariffs, supported trade exchange between the two friendly countries and consolidated cooperation in oil and energy exploration. He mentioned that concerned parties in his government agreed with Yemen to fund many projects.

Saleh stated, "We highly value China's stance with Yemen's revolution and unity. We are satisfied with the growing relations between Yemen and China, particularly in trade areas, as the trade balance between both countries exceeded \$3.4 billion."

Saleh called on rich nations to help those suffering vulnerable economies to overcome poverty issues and development challenges.

"Poverty is a big problem, since it causes the spread of extremism and terrorism. Combating poverty serves terrorism fighting efforts and enhances security and peace efforts worldwide. By eradicating unemployment among youths, citizens will live in peace,' Saleh added. He confirmed Yemen's commitment to join the international community in fighting terrorism and boosting the spirit of moderation.



Board of discussion: Chinese businessmen are encouraged to invest in Yemen.

Saleh declared his nation's support for Chinese unity and hailed Chinese investments in Yemen, whether in oil and minerals or industry. He assured that such investments will be supported and facilitated, pointing out that

establishing Chinese industries in Yemen will be a focal point for improving industries in the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.

Continued on page 2

## 172 Al-Qaeda suspects to be tried

SANA'A, April 8 — Public prosecution is about to complete interrogating large numbers of suspects believed to be involved in terrorist activities or belonging to Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network, an official weekly newspaper reported.

Defense Ministry mouthpiece September 26 reported that security agencies recently referred the files of 172 terror suspects and Al-Qaeda members to Public Prosecution for further interrogation and trial. Some were arrested on suspicion of plotting foreign targets in Yemen, it said, Cole and Limburg attacks. quoting a security source.

He said the suspects were rounded up in recent months on charges of forming armed gangs to carry out terrorist attacks in several parts of the country, jeopardizing Yemen's higher interests in addition to planning attacks against foreign interests. Many also were arrested on suspicion of belonging to Al-Qaeda.

The report said Prosecution was about to wrap up interrogations and the suspects would go on trial "in the coming days," but it did not specify a date.

The Counterterrorism Court has convicted numerous suspected militants after witnessing a series of attacks in recent years, most notably the 2000 bombing by Al-Qaeda militants of the USS destroyer Cole in the southern port of Aden, which killed 17 U.S. sailors. A 2002 attack against French oil tanker Limburg killed one Bulgarian crew member and wounded 12 others.

Yemen, which is cooperating with the U.S.-led War on Terror, cracked down on suspected Al-Qaeda militants in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S., convicting several presumed extremists, including a armed attacks against domestic and number in connection with the USS

> However, the escape of 23 prison ers, including 13 convicted Al-Qaeda members who tunneled their way out of prison in February, caused the Yemeni government to step up its security crackdown. The fugitives include the leaders said to be behind the USS Cole and Limburg bombings, as well as a Yemeni-American wanted by the U.S.

> Six jail breakers since have surrendered or been rearrested, according to Yemeni security officials, who claim that the sixth to surrender is Hizam Saleh Mojali, sentenced to death for his participation in the Limburg

## Yemeni press: numerous troubles, continuous strife

Day after day, Yemen's press faces grave conditions. Last week, a number of journalists experienced several different accidents, in addition to their alarm over a future fabricated crisis against their syndicate.

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, April 9 — Journalist Abdulfatah Al-Hakimi remains in intensive care in an Aden hospital, his health deteriorating after his car was sprayed with an unknown gas. He became asphyxiated when he got into the vehicle

and inhaled the gas, which affected his respiratory system. Thereafter, he suffered severe exhaustion and a drop in blood sugar. He was rushed to intensive care at an Aden hospital.

Press sources confirmed that eyewitnesses saw several unknown individuals spray a gas through the journalist's car window and run away when some children came near.

Al-Hakimi is the former deputy chairperson of Aden's October 14 establishment for journalism, press and publication. He was discharged by republican decree due to his writings about Sa'ada's events more than a year ago. Al-Hakimi is famous for his daring criticism of the government and its departments.

In a separate incident, journalist Abdulsalam Jabir, secretary of Socialist Party mouthpiece Al-Thori newspaper, also was involved in a serious car accident last Saturday, April 8, on the road between Dhamar and Ma'abar as he headed to visit his family.

According to Al-Ishtiraki Net, the accident occurred when the Peugeot commuter car in which Jabir was traveling collided with a Cressida. Both drivers died and passengers were badly injured. Jabir received a badly fractured pelvis and bruises to his head, in addition to fractures on various parts of his body. He was taken to Sana'a Military

Continued on page 2

## U.S. releases three Yemeni detainees, Yemen to receive dozens of Guantánamo prisoners

By: Amel Ariqi

SANA'A, April 8 — After being held for more than two years, the Washington Post reported that three Yemeni nationals have been released without charge by U.S. authorities.

In previous statements and a report released in London Wednesday, April 5, Amnesty International cited the three detainees' cases as a window on what it believes is part of a covert CIA system designed to hide prisoners. Amnesty

officials told the Post that they could not accurately identify where the prisoners had been held, but their accounts indicated they had been held in facilities in Afghanistan, Djibouti and Eastern Europe.

Mohammed Bashmilah, 38, and Salah Ali Qaru, 29 – both living in Indonesia when they were arrested in 2003 – were released last week after a Yemeni judge convicted them of forging personal travel documents and sentenced them to time served in U.S. facilities. Both men

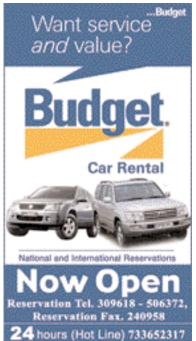
claimed they were tortured in a Jordanian prison before being transferred into U.S. custody.

Mohammed Al-Assad, 43, was arrested in December 2003 in his longtime home of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and ended up in what Amnesty officials believe was a CIA "black site" prison. He was released March 14 from a Yemeni prison.

Continued on page 2 prison.



Several Yemenis are still held at Guantánamo











### Ibb water factory attacked by armed men

By: Nashwan Dammaj

IBB, April 9 — The National Company for Mineral Water in Al-Siani, Ibb was attacked by armed individuals in a military car. Dressed in civilian clothes, five men threatened employees with death and blowing up the factory unless they left and wrote a document confirming the fac-

According to Yahya Al-Siani, general manager of the factory's external relations, the armed men first threatened to kill the guards unless they opened the gates, insulting them and calling them swine. They then stormed the factory and attacked employee Yousef Abdulqadir, the factory's chief accountant.

The attackers alleged that they were doing this because the factory was theirs, as their sheikh, Ali Hizam Al-Buslani, had bought it from businessman Tawfeek Abdurahim Mutahar. They said they were sent to close the factory for an indefinite time.

Factory administration reported the incident to Al-Siani security headquarters, which sent an armed military vehicle with some soldiers. According to factory workers, the soldiers took the five attackers and some of factory employees for questioning.

Al-Siani said all factory employees were interrogated; however, security questioned only three of the attackers, who seemed to have outside intervention. They left Al-Siani area within a few hours of questioning, affirming that they will return with their whole tribe to seize the factory.

Al-Siani confirmed that the region's security commander, Col. Ali

Abu Ghanim, seems to be plotting with the men, as they are from his area of 'Arhab.' According to Al-Siani, Ghanim released them on a written pledge to return Saturday, but they did not. Al-Siani added that a petition was submitted to the governor and the governorate security administration, which directed Ghanim to take necessary measures. However, according to Al-Siani, he did nothing.

The mineral water company was established two years ago under the name "Biladi" in a partnership between Salahadeen Group of companies with 75 percent of shares, Mutahar with four percent and the remaining 21 percent for local area residents. According to the factory's public relations, it is not confirmed yet whether Mutahar sold his shares.

## Yemen's GCC admission discussed

RIYADH, April 9 — The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) technical committee began meeting this week to discuss necessary plans and programs to qualify Yemen's economy so it can be admitted to the GCC.

Yemen's Deputy Minister of International Cooperation, Dr. Yahya Al-Mutawakil, represented Yemen at the GCC meet-

The committee, which includes GCC state representatives, the GCC General Secretariat board and several finance organizations, discussed necessary mechanisms to qualify Yemen for GCC admittance.

Mechanisms were discussed in light

of results from last month's meeting of GCC member states' foreign ministers in Riyadh. The committee discussed contributions of funds and Gulf governments in development plans, according to proposals Yemen presented at last December's GCC summit.

Secretary-General Abdurrahman Al-Atteyah stated that committee meetings aim to specify Yemen's funding needs and consolidate relations between GCC member states and Yemen. He said Yemen enjoys historical and typical relations with GCC member states, which in turn strengthens brotherly cooperation between the countries.

Al-Mutawakil pointed out that the

committee reviewed a study on external assistance to Yemen and its future

Committee members suggested a mechanism to establish a Gulf fund to qualify Yemen's economy so it can be approved as a GCC member state. However, they said Yemen still needs another 10 years to become qualified for GCC entry.

Al-Mutawakil said they discussed forming a technical team from the GCC General Secretariat, Yemeni representatives and some Gulf funds to review studies scheduled to be conducted prior to arrangements for a donors conference soon to be held in

# Ministry of

SANA'A, April 8 – The Ministry of Culture honored 60 Yemeni theater pioneers on Thursday, April 6. Minister of Culture Khalid Al-Rowaishan said those honored were the creative individuals who founded Yemen's theater movement for gen-

He continued by saying that honoring them is a repayment for what they

presented to their country during critical situations, defending the revolution in times of embers and smoke.

Al-Rowaishan added that these stars were on the battlefront line of those who resisted the revolution, unity and the republic's enemies. He pointed out that such stars are pioneers of light and dawn.

## Ministry of Water & Environment and German institute sign MOU

SANA'A, April 3 — Minister of Water and Environment Abdul-Rahman Al-Eryani and the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for technical cooperation within the Renewable Energy for Development - Geotherm Program.

BGR conducts the Geotherm Program on behalf of Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. The program's objective is to promote geothermal energy use in partner countries by initiating development at promising

Yemen is endowed with renewable energy resources like geothermal energy which could vastly support its development process. It is located in one of the world's most active plate boundaries: the triple junction made up by the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the East African rift system. According to initial analyses, the Dhamar-Rada'a geothermal field yields the best evidence of promising resources for near-term exploitation.

While geothermal energy offers a cost-effective, environmentally sound alternative to base-load generation, high upfront costs and risky deep drilling to geothermal power reservoirs are major barriers to geothermal energy development. However, these obstacles can be reduced with specific know-how and technologies. With Geotherm Program support and in cooperation with the Geological Survey and Mineral Resources Board, the Yemeni ministry aims to reduce such risks.

Geothermal energy shows considerable potential to supply people with sustainable renewable energy worldwide. "Access to basic, clean energy services is essential for sustainable development and poverty eradication, providing major benefits in areas of



Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources signed the Memorandum

health, literacy and equity and thereby being environmentally sound. The issue of energy choice is fundamental to the great challenge facing the world at the beginning of the 21st century and how to eliminate poverty levels without further polluting the planet. There does not have to be a trade-off between human development and the environment, which can be achieved with the help of clean sustainable energy," says Dr. Lia Sieghart, CIM-Expert at the Yemeni ministry.

Energy and environment are essential for sustainable development, as the poor disproportionately are affected by environmental degradation and lack of access to clean affordable energy services. In order to cope with energy poverty and supply constraints, poor rural households use a combination of wood and kerosene for cooking and lighting, thereby directly and severely pressuring Yemen's natural resources through deforestation, lost vegetation cover, soil erosion, desertification and land degradation. Such conditions lead to climate change, severe loss of biodiversity and ozone layer depletion.

Geothermal energy is a proven resource for direct heat and power generation. In more than 30 countries, geothermal resources directly provide 12,000 megawatts of used heat capacity and more than 8,000 megawatts of electric power generation capacity. It meets a significant portion of electrical power demand in several developing countries.

"Good exploration surveys of targeted prospective areas have been shown to deliver high success rates for exploration drilling. Cooperation with the BGR will help overcome barriers to geothermal power development by accelerating exploration in Yemen," Al-Eryani noted.

### **Culture honors** 60 Yemeni theater pioneers

Related story on page 7

#### **Continued from page1**

#### Saleh encourages Chinese businessmen to invest in Yemen

According to Saleh, China has open and distinctive moves to help the country develop economically. He noted that Yemen and China signed 18 agreements during his visit, in addition to numerous agreements with Yemeni businessmen.

Both leaders signed agreements in areas of telecommunication, information technology and post, as well as economic and technical cooperation. China agreed to offer Yemen \$5 million in assistance and grant it an interest-free loan totaling \$5 million. They signed another agreement, in which China gave Yemen a \$25 million easy loan at only two percent interest.

Saleh and Jintao discussed their countries' admission to the World Ocean that can be utilized for industri-Trade Organization and signed a memaland tourist investments.

orandum of understanding, whereby China gave Yemen \$1 billion to fund

development and productive projects. While touring Hong Kong Island and meeting Chinese businessmen and company chairpersons, Saleh declared that any investment with capital exceeding \$10 million will obtain land

"We hail Chinese investments, mainly in Aden Free Zone, and we are ready to boost, facilitate and guarantee them. We will give investors lands to establish their projects at low prices and any project with capital of more than \$10 million will receive land for free," Saleh said. "Yemen has many islands in the Red Sea and the Indian

'We observed great development on Hong Kong Island, despite British resence for 99 years. This island was built by its natives. Similarly, Yemen suffered British presence for 130 years," Saleh continued.

In related news, an Interior Ministry source earlier this week denied the authenticity of an Al-Shoura Net report stating that Yemen made a deal to purchase armored vehicles and antiriot cudgels from China.

In a statement to Saba News Agency, the same source confirmed that such news is not authentic and is out of place, advising the media to check the authenticity of what they publish and not exploit freedom of expression to publish fabricated sto-

### Despite truce, soldiers kill Al-Houthi supporter

SA'ADA, April 9 — An Al-Houthi that the incident violated reconciliation follower was killed and another two injured Friday evening when soldiers opened fire on their car as it was passing through a military checkpoint in the restive Sa'ada province.

According to Al-Shoura Net, soldiers at Al Mute'e military checkpoint fired at a car carrying eight passengers, killing one and injuring two. This is the first incident since official declaration that the Sa'ada fighting is over, followed by government reconciliation with Al-Houthi followers a few weeks

Sources said the victim was an Al-Houthi follower and confirmed that those inside the car never returned fire on the soldiers.

Abdulmalik Al-Houthi mentioned

and general amnesty, while many area residents complained to the governor about arbitrary practices by soldiers at the checkpoint. Locals insisted that the checkpoint be removed, saying there is no justification for its presence, but their demand was unmet.

Al-Houthi holds authorities accountable for the incident, warning of renewed tension, particularly as it coincided with troop intensification. He confirmed that villagers witnessed 20 military vehicles transporting troops into the area.

Al-Houthi pointed out that many of his followers were arrested in the past few days as they returned home following general amnesty and official declaration that the war is over.

He stated that Al-Houthi followers released never exceeded 80, while the other hundreds of citizens authorities announced they released were captured randomly by security authorities, although they have no connection with Al-Houthi.

"The incident implies that the government is not serious enough to implement official declarations concerning general amnesty, releasing prisoners and stopping the hunt for Al-Houthi followers," Al-Houthi said. He added that they informed Sa'ada's governor and the mediation committee about such illegal practices. Authorities replaced former mosque preachers in Sa'ada with Salafi ones, which locals believe may renew the

#### Yemeni press: numerous troubles, continuous strife

Journalist Arafat Mudabish, a Sawa radio correspondent in Sana'a, resigned from the journalists syndicate in protest of its failure to defend him after some newspapers attacked him.

Journalist Marwan Damaj, journalists syndicate rights and freedoms secretary, criticized the phenomenon of several unnamed newspapers charging journalists and the press with treason and instigation, adding that the phenomenon has become a heavy burden upon the press and threatens to spoil journalism. He added that those in charge of such newspapers think they are doing a patriotic job. Damaj accused them of committing serious crimes against the country, adding that they attack journalists while fortifying

themselves under official umbrellas.

These incidents occur at a time of crisis for the journalists syndicate following last month's resignation of its head, Mahboob Ali. Journalist and parliamentary leaderships believe that the syndicate's crisis is not an excuse to pass the new Press Law, which does not serve the press or its objectives, nor does it advocate journalists' freedoms.

In addition, the Journalist and parliamentary leaderships consider the official campaign against the press an effort to divide them, emphasizing the necessity of syndicate unity. They demanded that syndicate leadership coordinate with the journalists to defeat the new law and develop the syndicate's internal statute.

In another journalism-related incident, a report issued by the U.S. State Department's Democracy and Human Rights office and submitted to Congress contains detailed information on challenges and progress in 15 Middle Eastern states, including

The report mentioned that restrictions against press freedom are on the rise, declaring that harassments against Yemeni journalists "caused great damage to Yemen's reputation, which used to be the free press stronghold in the Middle East." The report also mentioned the Sa'ada incidents and confirmed the U.S. commitment to supporting democracy and respect for human rights among other issues.

#### U.S. releases three Yemeni detainees, Yemen to receive dozens of Guantánamo prisoners

The Post reported from Anne FitzGerald, Amnesty's senior research policy advisor, that the men never have been given information about why they were arrested or why they were being

According to the Post, the men were not allowed contact with the Red Cross International Committee and did not have access to lawyers. Their families thought they had disappeared.

Mohammed Al-Basha, press officer for the Yemeni Embassy in Washington, said Tuesday that he was unable to confirm the specific cases identified by Amnesty. In general, Al-Basha said,

"The Yemeni government will not release any convicts unless they are found to be . . . not or indirectly involved with a terrorist organization." A CIA spokeswoman refused to comment on the subject, according to the Post.

In other news, Yemen announced that it will receive dozens of Yemenis currently imprisoned at the Guantánamo Bay base in Cuba. September 26 Net reported that the agreement came after a Yemeni team met the Guantánamo prisoners three months ago. A security source stated that the team was able to identify

and confirm their identities. According to the report, Yemen has

received a list of names including 106 individuals U.S. authorities claim are Yemenis arrested since Sept. 11, 2001, whereas involved human rights organizations estimate 150 Yemeni Guantánamo Both Amnesty and the National

Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (HOOD) insisted to Yemeni authorities that detainees must not be returned to more abuse by rearresting them and putting them in Yemeni prisons. HOOD stated that many Yemenis returned from Guantánamo in 2004 and detained in prison without charge or trial recently have been released without trial.

## IFC and World Bank present findings on Yemeni investment climate and gender

SANA'A, April 9 International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's private sector arm, conducted a seminar in Sana'a to discuss gender-related findings and recommendations of the Yemen Investment Climate Assessment with key experts and stakeholders.

The event was organized jointly with the World Bank and sponsored by the gender program of IFC technical assistance facility, the Private Enterprise Partnership for the Middle East and North Africa (PEP-MENA).

The objective was to present the assessment's preliminary findings and conclusions while promoting discussion and receiving feedback from Yemeni businesswomen, Chamber of Commerce and Industry representatives, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, donors and other stakeholders with an interest in gender issues.

The World Bank's assessment identifies and prioritizes investment climate constraints, benchmarks progress on reform, provides crosscountry comparisons of investment climate indicators and helps countries forge broad consensus on priority areas for reform. The assessments feed into World Bank and IFC operations and technical assistance.

Andrew H. W. Stone, senior private sector development specialist for the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa region, presented the preliminary findings, which focused on whether changes in Yemen's business enabling environment will positively affect entrepreneurial activities.

"According to the presentation and participants' contributions, key investment climate factors put Yemeni women at a disadvantage in undertaking business activities. These include attaining education, accessing finances and services, weaknesses in the legal and regulatory system, cultural attitudes and lack of networks," Stone noted.

John Speakman, the World Bank's lead private sector development specialist who led gender work on Yemen's assessment, pointed out, "Yemeni women have more difficulties than men in accessing collateral and establishing personal

banking contacts." He added that education is a key factor, as "Seventy percent of businesswomen surveyed only completed high school." Recommendations included integrating gender issues into policy and regulatory processes, as well as

increasing business management skills training for women.

The Gender Entrepreneurship Markets (GEM) program provides technical assistance to women-owned small and medium enterprises by addressing gender-based economic barriers and developing the capacity of women entrepreneurs with the objective of contributing to economic growth and job creation.

Based on results from a recent assessment and stakeholder consultation, the GEM program in Yemen has positively affected the number of women-owned enterprises by improving access to finance and relevant business services.

PEP-MENA is IFC's technical assistance facility supporting private sector development in the Middle East and North Africa. PEP-MENA focuses on improving the business enabling and regulatory environment; strengthening the financial sector; promoting growth of small and medium enterprises and their support services like business organizations and consulting firms; helping restructure and privatize state-owned enterprises and developing viable private sector and public-private partnership projects, especially in infrastructure.

## Deadly blasts kill 50 at Baghdad Shia mosque

Three powerful explosions hit a major Shia mosque in northern Baghdad on Friday, killing more than 51 people and wounding at least 158 others, BBC reported.

Police said three human bombers were responsible for today's blasts at the Baratha mosque.

Reports say one of the bombers blew himself up inside the mosque during Friday prayers while another struck outside the building.

At least two of the bombers were women, police said.

The Baratha mosque is one of the most important Shia mosques in capital. Its Imam, Sheikh Jalaluddin al-Saghir, is a member of parliament and an important figure in Iraq's dominant Shia alliance. Police said Sheikh al-Saghir escaped unhurt.

"It's a very famous mosque - there is a cemetery in there," Layla al-Khajifa, a Shia Muslim who works for the United Iraqi Alliance, told BBC.



An Iraqi policeman views covered bodies inside the Baratha mosque

"Iraqis who don't have money to go to Najaf, they bury their dead there."

Correspondents say the mosque Iraq since the Feb. 22 bombing of a

warnings from Interior Iraq's Ministry several blasts would target Baghdad mosques on Friday.

The warning was issued as Iraqis prepared to observe a four-day weekend to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on April 10, AFP news agency said.

Friday's attacks came one day after a car bomb blast killed more than ten people near the

sacred Imam Ali shrine in Najaf. Sectarian violence has surged in

major Shia shrine in the holy city of Najaf.

Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said today that U.S. occupation forces were behind the shrine attack. "This is not the first time that the occupation forces and their death squads have resorted to killings," he said in his Friday sermon.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, said that American officials held talks with some groups linked to the Iraqi resistance.

"We are talking to people who are willing to accept this new Iraq, to lay down their arms, to co-operate in the fight against terrorists," he said.

Khalilzad also said that he believed the talks have had an impact, claiming that the number of attacks on U.S. troops had fallen.

However, he denied that U.S. officials negotiated with Saddam's supporters or terrorists. www.aljazeera.net

## Leak case: personal paybacks?

According to experts leaks are probably legal but 'amount to using sensitive intelligence data for political gain,' an editorial on Christian Science Monitor said.

Yesterday news reports about prosecutor's disclosure that the U.S. President George W. Bush had authorized former top official, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, to pass intelligence data on Iraq in 2003 to a reporter to protect lies about the reason for going to war on Iraq from uncovering, sparked strong criticism from the American public and administration political foes over Bush's misuse of presidential powers.

But spokesman Scott McClellan argued, during a combative briefing, that "declassifying information and providing it to the public when it is in the public interest is one thing;

"But leaking classified information that could compromise our national security is something that is very serious, and there's a distinction," he added.

McClellan claimed that Bush had the authority to declassify intelligence and rejected charges from Democrats, who seized on the issue, which has dealt a major blow to the U.S. President already facing major slide in his approval ratings over failure in Iraq, that Bush did so for political gains.

"Democrats who refuse to acknowledge that distinction are simply engaging in crass politics," McClellan said.

Pre-trial court papers quote Libby, former chief-of-staff to Vice-President Dick Cheney, as saying he was told to tell a reporter that Iraq was "vigorously trying to procure" uranium.

Democrats accused Bush, who has often spoken against leaks and the great damages they cause, of hypocrisy.

"President Bush's selective declassification of highly sensitive intelligence for political purposes is wrong," said the House of Representatives Democratic leader, Rep. Nancy Pelosi



Valerie Plame, who was a CIA spy, is the wife of former U.S. ambassador, Joseph Wilson.

of California.

But Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada demanded an explanation from Bush.

"Only the president can put this matter to rest. He must tell the American people whether the Bush Oval Office is the place where the buck stops, or the leaks start," Reid said.

"President Bush must fully disclose his participation in the selective leaking of classified information. The

American people must know the truth." Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said the president has the "inherent authority to decide who should have classified information." While the White House refused to comment, since the criminal probe into the leak of the CIA agent's identity is ongoing.

According to Knight Ridder reports, the court documents stand as the hardest evidence to date that President Bush and vice-president Dick Cheney were "engaged in a campaign to disclose selected snippets of highly classified intelligence - much of it misleading, exaggerated or wrong - to a few trusted journalists in an effort to bolster their case for war."

The court filing of Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald, in which he stated that "the president was unaware of the role" that Libby "had in fact played in disclosing" Plame's CIA status, portrays the leak as part of an effort to dis-

credit former ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV, who stated in a newspaper column that intelligence about the former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein's possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction was distorted in the run-up to the U.S. invasion.

#### The Washington Post reported:

"Legal experts say that the president had the unquestionable authority to approve the disclosure of the information, but added the leak was highly unusual and amounted to using sensitive intelligence data for political gain."

Jeffrey H. Smith, a Washington lawyer who formerly served as general counsel for the CIA was also quoted as

"It is a question of whether the classified National Intelligence Estimate was used for domestic political purpos-

News that Bush was involved in the leak scandal "buttresses the contention that many media leaks come from official sources, not whistle-blowers," The Boston Globe wrote, noting that while leaking information to damage political opponents is "hardly unusual" in politics, the revelations that the president authorized Libby to share intelligence data on Iraq in 2003 with a reporter "damages the credibility of a president who has built a reputation for forthrightness, and who has gone further than previous presidents both in keeping information secret and in launching Justice Department investigations of alleged leakers."

Steven Aftergood, director of the Project on Government Secrecy at the nonpartisan Federation of American Scientists, on the other hand, said that "There's a certain amount of gamesmanship going on here,"

"At a minimum it is hypocritical coming from an administration that has claimed that leaks are anathema."

But The Globe said that with the disclosure of the president's authorization of leaks, "free speech advocates have openness in government and for the protection of leakers who don't happen to be president".

And The Los Angeles Times wrote that the president now faces "an uncomfortable choice: he is either a leaker or a hypocrite."

"Let me just say something about leaks in Washington. There are too many leaks of classified information in Washington. There are leaks at the executive branch; there are leaks in the legislative branch. There are just too many leaks. And if there is a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is. And if the person has violated law, the person will be taken care of."

Does the President still believe, if he ever did, in this statement any more? If so, then who in his administration should be held accountable?

Former ambassador Joe Wilson, who emerged as a key critic of President Bush's decision to launch war against Iraq, accused the administration of revealing the identity of his wife, who was a CIA agent, to pay him back for his criticism.

In July 2003, officials from the White House, which started a campaign to respond to Wilson, released portions of an October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate, claiming that Iraq could make a nuclear weapons in less than a year if it managed to acquire sufficient weapons-grade fissile mate-

But inspectors didn't find any signs of a nuclear program in Iraq after the invasion in 2003, supporting the argument that the U.S. President manipulated intelligence to justify the war.

Libby, who testified to a federal grand jury that the Vise President had told him Bush authorized him to share information from the secret National Intelligence Estimate with a New York Times reporter, resigned from the administration last October after being

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## U.S. approaches Gulf states

to lobby support over Iran

**Undersecretary of State** Robert Joseph is visiting a number of Gulf states this week to push their governments for tighter controls to prevent transshipment of nuclear-

Joseph, who oversees non-proliferation issues, started his trip to the Gulf Thursday night, with his first stop in the United Arab Emirate on Friday, according to administration officials.

related equipment to Iran.

He's also planning to pay visits to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar before returning to Washington probably by the end of this week.

"The fact that the Iranians are testing these weapons and conducting these large-scale exercises is not an accident. ... They are working hard to put in place those capabilities that would deny us access to the Straits of Hormuz (a key oil shipping route)", a U.S. official who demanded anonymity, said.

"Iran represents a strategic threat to us and the Gulf states play a critical role in our strategy," he added

with the UAE, a major regional transshipment point, to step up efforts to prevent any nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction-related shipments from getting through the port there.

The UAE government will be asked to start strengthening export controls, monitor materiel coming and going and improving the capacity for interdiction, U.S. officials said.

U.S. officials plan to step up international pressure against Iran, including using financial tools used to isolate North Korea financially.

#### IAEA inspectors in Iran

Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency is scheduled to begin another round of inspection on Iranian nuclear facilities Saturday, AFP reported.

Inspectors from the UN atomic watchdog arrived in Iran on Friday and plan to start routine checks to the country's uranium enrichment facility and other sites, an official of the Islamic republic's atomic energy agency said.

Inspectors will visit the enrichment facility in Natanz and uranium conversion plant in Isfahan, Mohammad Saidi, the Iranian agency's vice president,

"We want our rights and nothing more, and we will resist until our last drop of



Joseph will also visit Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar before returning to Washington

Washington, backed by Israel and the European Union, claims that the Islamic Republic of Tehran is using its civilian nuclear program as a guise for hidden preparations to produce nuclear weapons, charges that had been repeatedly denied by Iran, which asserts that its nuclear activities solely focus on civilian purposes, mainly generating power to meet the country's increasing demand for

U.S. officials say they are working

blood," Hojatoleslam Ahmad Khatami said in a Friday prayer sermon broadcast on state radio. "They want to create a crisis. The UN

Security Council, which ought to be an instrument of justice, wants to create insecurity and injustice," the cleric added.

"They have set a one-month deadline for us to suspend our research on enrichment. They can set a one-month delay, one for a year or whatever they want. We will not renounce our rights." www.aljazeera.net

## French former minister implicated in oil for food scanda

By: Paul Michaud

Former French Minister Charles Pasqua, a personal friend of Saddam Hussein, already implicated in an official report of the US Senate, is Officially implicated by France in the Oil for Food scandal, in which several other French officials, including a former French Ambassador to Washington, Have already been charged under the ambiguous French expression of "mis en examen," placed under examination, which more or less amounts to an indictment; as for Pasqua, he's said in the current allegations, which Also make use of the term of "aggravated traffic of influence." to have benefited in 1999 from the attribution by Saddam Hussein of some 11 million barrels of petroleum, and this "in return for his indefectible support," as part of negotiations with Iraqi

authorities that apparently resulted in a contract with a Swiss-based company with close ties to Mr Pasqua.

Charles Pasqua, a powerful former French minister of the Interior, a hero of the French resistance and close friend of French head of state Jacques Chirac, announced yesterday that he'd been notified by French magistrate Judge Philippe Courroye that he's being placed "under examination" in the Oil for Food scandal with Iraq, an ambiguous French expression that more or less amounts to a legal indictment, the charge also including an allegation of his being implicated in am "aggravated traffic of influence." Specifically, according to the former Minister, he's being "suspected" by Judge Courroye of having benefited in 1999 from the attribution by Saddam Hussein of some 11 million barrels of petroleum,

and this "in return for his indefectible support," as part of negotiations with Iraqi authorities that apparently resulted in a contract with a Swissbased company with close ties to Mr Pasqua. As for the former minister, he said yesterday that "his lawyers have filed a request of annulment of the 'mise en examen'," and this before a French appeals court. Already Pasqua, who turns 79 on April 18, had been implicated in the influence-peddling scheme - that saw prominent friends of Saddam Hussein and Iraq accorded important contracts to sell Iraqi oil, under provisions of a UN-supervised Oil for Food scheme - by a commission of the US Senate, and this along with a number of other French personalities, not the least of which former French ambassador to the United States Jean-Bernard Merimee, but also a close aide to Pasqua, Jean-Jacques Guillet.

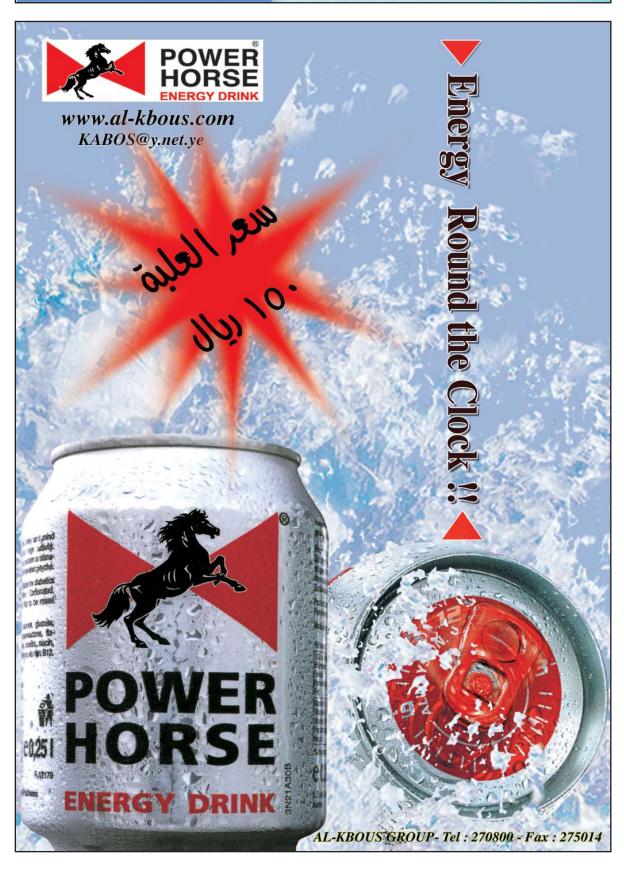
At the time of publication of the US Senate report on the Oil for Food program, Pasqua had let it be known, in no uncertain terms, that he "was not concerned by this affair," the very same terms he used today in refusing to have his name implicated in the French judicial implication by Judge Courroye, who, moreover, is to make his way soon to Baghdad, so that he can personally consult the archives of the Somo, the Iraqi organism charged with selling Iraqi petroleum under the regime of Saddam, for

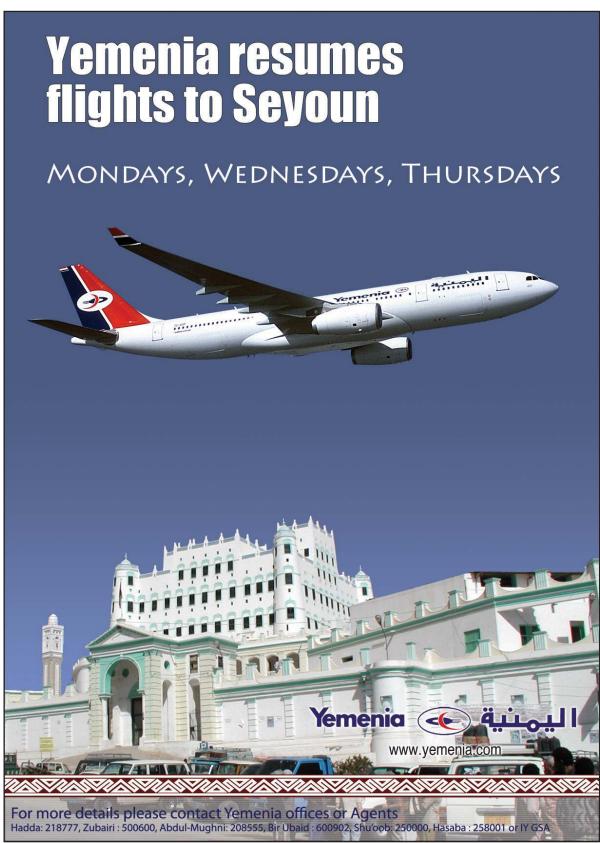
Already French authorities have doubts as to the veracity of the charges, indeed the papers that US interrogators immediately seized upon the US-led invasion of the country all of three years ago, an attack largely opposed by France in general, and by Mr Pasqua's Gaullist political party in particular. Source: Paris newsfile.











## The spread of qat among women

By: Arwa Al-Anesi

or a long time, Yemeni men from certain social classes commonly have chewed qat. Nowadays, qat chewing has spread its wings and is spreading rapidly among all societal groups, including women. As compared to men, women chewing qat is considered a new phenomenon. Lately, the numbers of women chewing qat have increased dramatically and are increas-

In the past, during their leisure time, women drank coffee in their gatherings and sessions, and this is still common among elderly women around the coun-

try.
"Tafrota," the Arabic word for traditional women's sessions, mostly took place without qat chewing. Their gatherings always were related to occasions like weddings, births or death of a relative or friend. Additionally, only married women attended such sessions. Single young women only were allowed to go to wedding celebrations, as society did not accept their attendance at other occa-

But lately, young ladies have begun to



break these customs by freely attending all social occasions. Gradually, and with the changing of everyday life, they began holding their own sessions to chew qat and smoke "sheeshah" as well.

In their qat sessions, ladies discuss new fashions, singers and beauty and when they finish, they begin gossiping while watching video clips on television. Sessions usually continue for four to six hours on average, usually starting late in the afternoon and continuing until the later part of the night. In some instances,

they continue until midnight. "My friends and I usually start our sessions around 5 or 6 p.m. and we continue until midnight or even later, especially if we don't have work the next day," said 24-year-old Amira Omar, a frequent qat chewer originally from Hodeidah.

According to a study done 25 years ago, only five percent of Yemeni women chewed qat on a regular basis, whereas the result of a new study conducted at Sana'a University found that 56 percent of educated Yemeni women chew qat.

At the beginning of its spread among women, qat sessions were limited to a few wealthy families in main cities and it was not allowed for a young woman to chew gat, particularly if she was unmar-

Unfortunately, it is now out

shocked at how quickly it has spread. "I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw my daughter's friends chewing qat and smoking sheeshah. I don't know how their families let them do that without shame," Sumaya Hamoud, a 48-year-old mother of two daughters, said.

"I still remember when I was their age how shameful it was for a young lady to chew or even to stay with women while they were chewing qat. What makes me sad is that the number of those whom we consider highly educated ladies increasingly are becoming chewers day after day," she added.

Ironically, such young ladies consider qat and sheeshah a kind of prestige, viewing other ladies who don't chew as old-fashioned. Ironically, most qat chewing women are highly educated, but when sitting with them in such sessions, nonsense issues usually are discussed.

Nearly all women qat chewers have the same look and behave the same way. For example, in weddings, their actions in some cases are worse than men. They view themselves as being above others and feel prestigious in society only because of the qat they chew and sheeshah they smoke.

"I feel disgusted when I see my old friends behaving arrogantly. They always try to make me feel that they are more stylish than me because of the qat they chew and sheeshah they smoke," said 24-year-old computer science graduate Samira Al-Ariki, who opposes qat.

Obviously, women spend a lot of money when they chew qat, as they like to show off among their friends. Some women work and spend most of their

don't have to spend part of their salaries to help their families.

Moreover, some husbands and parents buy qat for their wives and daughters and in large quantities so they can give to their friends. "I always buy qat for my wife. I encourage her to chew, especially if she's going to chew qat with me," said taxi driver Zaid Al-Malah, who prefers chewing with his wife.

Women who grew up in homes where chewing gat was a normal procedure find it easier to chew qat. However, many parents who chew qat don't accept the habit from their daughters. "I chew qat, but this generation's ladies are chewing worse than us. I will never let my daughters chew gat because I don't want them to be affected by those ladies and their bad personalities," 45-year-old qat chewing mother Fatima Mohammed

A majority of women claim they started the habit after they married. Asma Mohammed, 25, from Sana'a, was raised in a family that forbids chewing qat and viewed it as destructive. After she got married, her husband encouraged her to chew qat every day and she accepted. "I'm embarrassed to let my brothers see me while I'm chewing qat. I know how much they hate qat and I have to respect their point of view, even though I chew," she said.

Women who chew gat don't seem to view what they are doing as wrong, claiming they are just wasting their time in a decent way. They believe such sessions are better than walking around the streets all afternoon and into the late night hours. They complain that there are no decent sport clubs for women or nice entertainment venues like parks or recreational areas. Women qat chewers complain that others should try it before judging them for their actions or give them alternatives.

Over the years, numerous research has revealed qat's harmful effects and the dangers it causes. For example, studies show that chewing qat undoubtedly causes insomnia and weight loss and it may also cause mouth cancer. Doctors said it's even more dangerous for pregnant and breastfeeding women and their child, if she chews qat or stays beside those who are smoking.

Unfortunately, today's women repeat

salaries buying qat, especially if they what men say about qat when they try to convince themselves and others that they are doing the right thing and that there are no other alternatives. In fact, women have many other alternative activities to pass their spare time that are not a health hazard and are more fun, such as social volunteer work, helping the poor or other entertaining programs. They could use the time and money they spend on chew-

ing qat by operating small business activities that they can run and benefit from. They also could use their time by holding such sessions to discuss their culture, science or religion.

Local analysts fear Yemen's future outcome and how it will turn out if both parents are busy chewing qat, leaving Yemeni children to waste more time on the streets.

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Yemen Fisheries MCS project, Ministry of Fish Wealth. Djibouti Street, Sana'a

Po.Box 12145, Republic of Yemen.

Tel: (01) 444156 Fax: (01) 444157 PLT Mobile:-711453300, PIU Director Mobile:- 733200207, Email: degmfwye@v.net.ye The deadline for submission of tenders is before close business 10 May 2006.

## Yemen: early marriage a challenge to development

amira was married to a Yemeni cousin at age 15 and had her first child the following year. "It's normal to marry at age 12 in my village," she said, "and you can't choose the man you're going to live with."

Samira suffered from complications during the birth of her first child. She bled for 10 days after the birth. During the 16 days she spent in the hospital, she could not walk or hold her baby.

Now 28 years old, she continues to suffer from deep-vein thrombosis, caused by the loss of blood during her first childbirth. She continues to have pains in her legs and often goes to the

Her medical problems, due to giving birth at an early age, and the fact that she is now separated from her second husband, have prevented her from maintaining employment in the capital, Sana'a.

#### **Developmental Challenge**

Early marriage is "one of the biggest development challenges in Yemen," said Naseem Ur Rehman, chief information officer for UNICEF in Sana'a. "This is because no groups have yet outgrown the practice."

Available data suggests early marriage is a deeply entrenched cultural tradition in this conservative Muslim and extremely impoverished country.

According to Yemen's most recent Demographic, Maternal and Child Health Survey (DMCHS), conducted in 1997, 48 per cent of women between the ages of 20 and 24 had been married before the age of 18. Fourteen per cent, meanwhile, had been married before 15. While 57 per cent of girls in the poorest 20 percent of the population are married before 18, even in the richest quintile



In Yemen, it is common to see girls like this get complications, such as haemmarried at an early age.

more than 35 per cent were married

Ur Rehman stressed that marriage usually ends a girl's educational prospects, which has wide implications for development in a country with one of the largest education gaps in the world. "A mother who isn't educated and free is imprisoned," he says, "and is trapped in the cycle of reproduction."

#### **Health consequences**

The consequences of early marriage are far-reaching, say experts. Yemen has one of the world's highest child mortality rates. UNICEF's 2006 State of the World's Children report ranks Yemen 43 five mortality rankings.

According to the DMCHS, the largest factor contributing to high infant mortality is that children are often born to mothers under 20 years of age, and are therefore 25 per cent more likely to die before their fifth birthday.

A 2005 UNICEF report on early marriage attributed the dangers of early pregnancy to the fact that women's bodies are still developing until age 20. In early pregnancy, the mother's body competes with the child's for needed nutrients, ultimately depriving both.

Further, when a girl gives birth before her body has fully developed, she often has difficulty passing the child, increasing the likelihood of miscarriage or other maternal orrhaging or obstetric fistula (a debilitating condition where

a mother's digestive organs are damaged during child birth).

Maternity-related deaths represent the largest cause of death for women of childbearing age, accounting for 42 per cent of all deaths of women between the ages of 15 and 49.

Early marriage is also associated with high birth rates, according to the DMCHS. Along with diminishing oil and water reserves, population growth is one of the three most significant developmental challenges facing Yemen, as Jeffrey Sachs, the architect of the UN Millennium Development Goals, told IRIN last year. UNICEF lists Yemen as having the fourth fastest growing popu-

Poverty and tradition fuels early mar-

Amani Salem, executive manager of the Shima Network, an independent network of NGOs focused on violence against women, counts poverty, tradition and lack of education as the primary causes of early marriage in Yemen.

In a 2004 study, sponsored by Oxfam UK, Shima cited poverty as the most important reason for early marriage according to women, while "moral concerns" were most important to men.

Traditionally, in Yemeni society, the girl will live with the husband's family after marriage. Her role is then generally limited to domestic responsibilities, while the husband earns money for the extended family.

"Girls are seen as consumers and boys as providers," says Salem. Families place much more value on the education of boys, therefore, while girls - as long as they remain unmarried - are viewed as economic burdens. Thus, "people want to get rid of their daughters",

The Shima study also revealed a high value placed on the virginity and moral virtue of girls throughout all segments of Yemeni society. According to researchers, this places pressure on families to marry their girls earlier so as to reduce the possibility of premarital sex.

Currently, the Shima Network is the most active group working to combat the practice of early marriage.

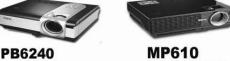
Supported by Oxfam, a campaign of public education and advocacy is currently underway to change attitudes towards the role of girls in society and the development process, and to educate families on the health consequences of early pregnancy.

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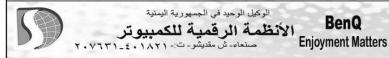
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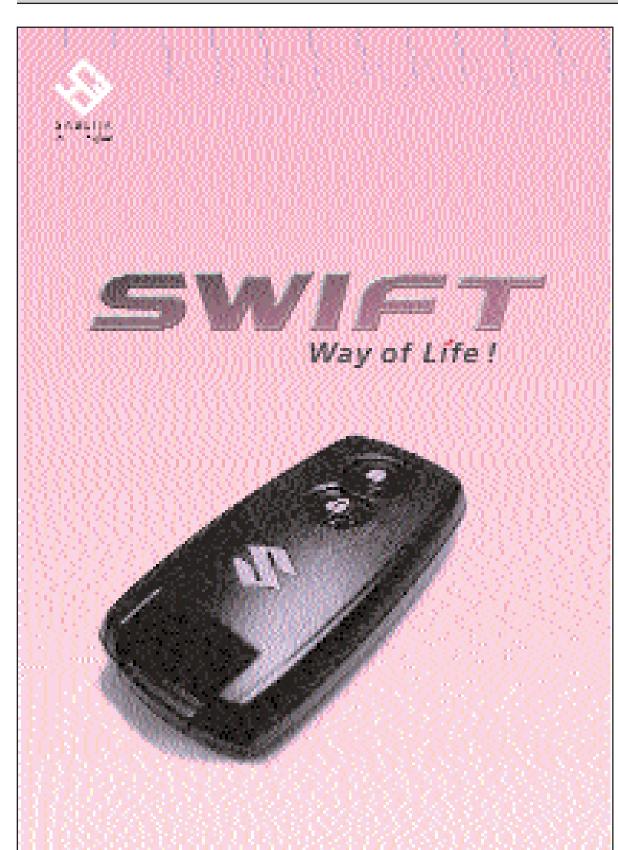
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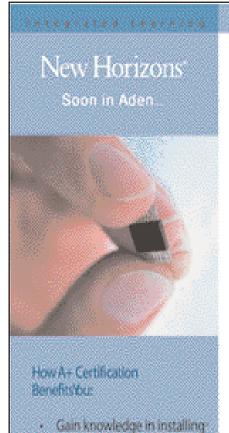
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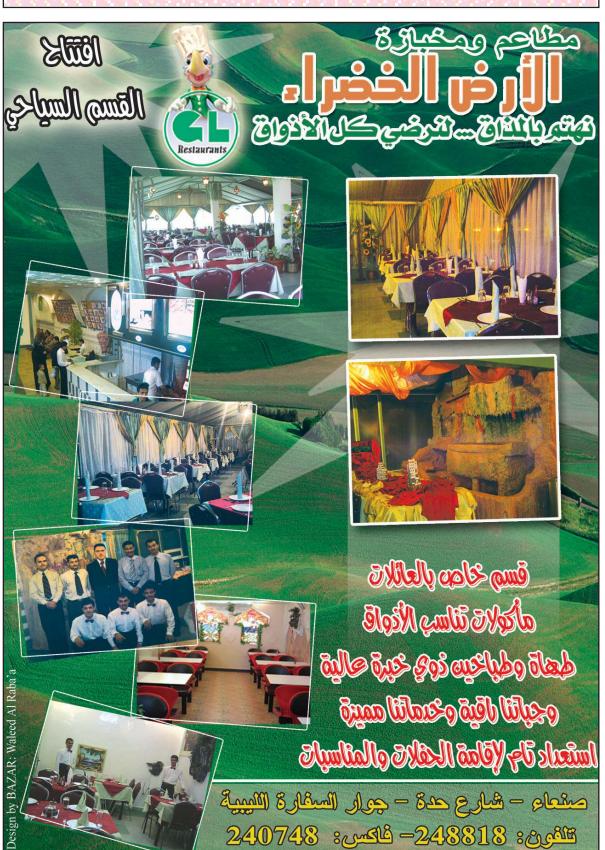
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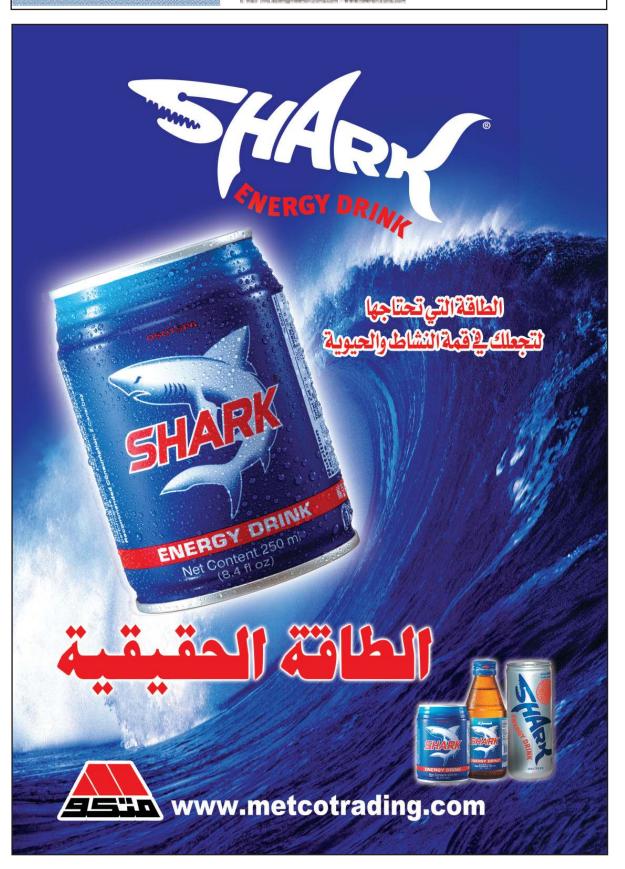
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As Muslims mark Prophet's Birthday

## **Prophet Mohammed** epitomized tolerance and Justiec

oday, Monday 12 of Rabee' Awal, 1427 AH, 10 April, 2005, coincides with the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). In many functions were organized in different cities such as Say'oon and Sana'a in praise of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh).

This year's celebration comes in the aftermaths of the Prophet cartoon crisis triggered by Danish newspaper Jylland Posten.

It is still a debatable issue whether to mark this day. However, the mainstream Muslims think that the day should be commemorated by offering charities and performing optional good works. It is also a great opportunity to seize the opportunity to educate ourselves and others about the great benefactor, the Messenger of Mercy and express love for him by following his footsteps.

Celebrating the great life of the Prophet (pbuh) will go a long way in uniting Muslims on the singular event that all of them will be proud of. So there is indeed a great benefit in these times when Muslims are in need of a unifying event in their history. There is nothing more significant for us and humanity than the coming of the mercy

#### The Prophet's tolerance with people around him:

Throughout his life, the Prophet showed an interest in each and every one, warned them about their mistakes and failings, and tried to educate them in all matters, from cleanliness to matters of faith. That compassionate, tolerant, understanding and patient attitude of his was the means by which many peoples' hearts warmed to Islam and developed a genuine love for the Prophet (pbuh). Allah describes this pleasing attitude adopted by the Prophet (pbuh) towards those around him in the Qur'an:

It is a mercy from Allah that you were gentle with them. If you had been rough or hard of heart, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them... (Surah Al 'Imran: 159)

In another verse, Allah told the Prophet (pbuh) how he should behave towards those around him:

We know best what they say. You are not a dictator over them. So remind, with the Qur'an, whoever fears My Threat. (Surah Qaf: 45)

The Prophet (pbuh) never pressured those around him to accept the religion, nor imposed conditions on them. Instead he always used the pleasantest ways to tell them about it. He always supported the community of the faithful with his strong conscience, and was a benefactor to them at all times. On account of these traits, the Prophet (pbuh) is described in many verses as "your companion." (Surah Saba': 46: Surat an-Najm: 2, Surat at-Takwir: 22).

Those believers who were able to comprehend the conscientiousness of the Prophet (pbuh) regarded him as

closer to them than all others, and humbled themselves towards him. In

The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers... (Surat al-Ahzab:

The Prophet (pbuh)'s human love, kind thought and compassion, which turned those around him to true religion and warmed their hearts to faith, is that superior morality which all Muslims should seek to reproduce.

#### The exemplary justice of the Prophet (pbuh):

In the Qur'an, Allah commands believers to "Be upholders of justice, bearing witness for Allah alone, even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether they are rich or poor, Allah is well able to look after them. Do not follow your own desires and deviate from the truth..." (Surat an-Nisa': 135). With the rules he imposed on Muslims, his just and tolerant attitude towards those of other religions, languages, races and tribes, and his way of not discriminating between rich and poor, but treating everybody equally, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) is a great example to all of

Allah says this to His Prophet (pbuh)

They are people who listen to lies and consume ill-gotten gains. If they come to you, you can either judge between them or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they cannot harm you in any way. But if you do judge, judge between them justly. Allah loves the just. (Surat al-Ma'ida:

The Prophet (pbuh) abided by Allah's commands, even with such difficult people, and never made any concessions in his implementation of justice. He became an example for all times with the words, "My Lord has commanded justice..." (Surat al-A'raf:

A number of incidents testify to the Prophet (pbuh)'s justice. He lived in a place where people of different religions, languages, races and tribes all co-existed. It was very difficult for those societies to live together in peace and security, and to check those who sought to spread dissension. One group could grow aggressive towards and even attack another over the slightest word or action. Yet, the justice of the Prophet (pbuh) was a source of peace and security for those other communities, just as much as it was for Muslims. During the time of the Prophet (pbuh), Christians, Jews and pagans were all treated equally. The Prophet (pbuh) abided by the verse important example of justice. As a "There is no compulsion where the result of this constitution, which religion is concerned..." (Surat al-Baqara: 256), explaining the true religion to everyone, but leaving them free to make up their own minds.

In another verse, Allah revealed to the Prophet (pbuh) the kind of justice and and conciliation he needed to

adopt towards those of other religions:

So call and go straight as you have been ordered to. Do not follow their whims and desires but say, "I believe in a Book sent down by Allah and I am ordered to be just between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. We have our actions and you have your actions. There is no debate between us and you. Allah will gather us all together. He is our final destination." (Surat ash-Shura: 15)

This noble attitude of the Prophet (pbuh), being in total harmony with the morality of the Qur'an, should be taken as an example of how members of different religions today should be

The Prophet (pbuh)'s justice brought about understanding between people of different races. In many of his addresses, even in his final sermon, the Prophet (pbuh) stated that superiority lay not in race but in godliness as Allah states in the verse:

Mankind! We created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. The noblest among you in Allah's sight is that one of you who best performs his duty. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Surat al-Hujurat: 13)

Two hadiths report the Prophet (pbuh) as saying:

"You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors.

"These genealogies of yours are not a reason to revile anyone. You are all children of Adam. No one has any superiority over another except in religion and taqwa (godliness)."

During his final sermon, the Prophet (pbuh) called on Muslims in these

"There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab: nor for white over the black nor for the black over the white except in piety. Verily the noblest among you is he who is the most

The agreement made with the Christians of Najran in the south of the Arabian Peninsula was another fine example of the justice of the Prophet (pbuh). One of the articles in the agreement reads:

"The lives of the people of Najran and its surrounding area, their religion, their land, property, cattle and those of them who are present or absent, their messengers and their places of worship are under the protection of Allah and guardianship of His Prophet."

The Compact of Medina, signed by the Muslim immigrants from Mecca, the indigenous Muslims of Medina and the Jews of Medina is another justice between established communities with differing beliefs and ensured the protection of their various interests, long years of enmity were brought to an end. One of the most outstanding features of the treaty is the freedom of belief it established. The

relevant article reads:

Haci Nazif Bey. A verse from the Qur'an: "... [Allah commands you] When you judge between people, to judge with justice. (Surat an-Nisa': 58)

"The Jews of Banu 'Awf are one nation with the Muslims: the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs...

Article 16 of the treaty reads: "The Jew who follows us is surely entitled to our support and the same equal rights as any one of us. He shall not be wronged nor his enemy be assisted." The Prophet (pbuh)'s companions remained true to that article in the treaty, even after his death, and even practiced it with regard to Berbers, Buddhists, Brahmans and people of other beliefs.

One of the main reasons why the golden age of Islam was one of peace and security was the Prophet (pbuh)'s just attitude, itself a reflection of Qur'anic morality.

The justice of the Prophet (pbuh) also awoke feelings of confidence in non-Muslims, and many, including polytheists, asked to be taken under his protection. Allah revealed the following request from the polytheists in the Qur'an, and also told the Prophet (pbuh) of the attitude he should adopt towards such people:

If any of the idolators ask you for protection, give them protection until they have heard the words of Allah. Then convey them to a place where they are safe. That is because they are a people who do not know. How could any of the idolators possibly have a treaty with Allah and with His Messenger, except for those you made a treaty with at the Masjid al-Haram? As long as they are straight with you, be straight with them. Allah loves those who do their duty. (Surat at-Tawba: 6-7)

In our day, the only solution to the fighting and conflict going on all over the world is to adopt the morality of the Qur'an, and, like the Prophet (pbuh), never to depart from the path of justice, making no distinction between different religions, languages,

I have put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature He does not hold by the forelock. My Lord is on a Straight Path. (Surah Hud: 56)

Your Lord is the Ever-Forgiving, the Possessor of Mercy. If He had taken them to task for what they have earned, He would have hastened their punishment. Instead, they have a promised appointment and they will not find any refuge from it. (Surat al-

Your Lord is the Ever-Forgiving, the Possessor of Mercy. If He had taken them to task for what they have earned, He would have hastened their punishment. Instead, they have a promised appointment and they will not find any refuge from it. (Surat al-Kahf: 58).

Excerpts taken from: www.theprophetmuhammad.org

## The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 24 Translated by Edward FitzGerald Oh, come with old Khayyam, and leave the wise To talk; one thing is certain, that life flies; One thing is certain, and the rest is lies; The flower that once has blown forever dies.

## Yemeni rural songs reflect socioeconomic changes over time

By: Ismail Al-Ghabiri

emen's countryside is the first cradle where Yemeni popular songs were born and it will remain the fountain from which these songs' luscious melodies spring, as long as people continue to feel and express their feelings lyrically.

Yemeni men and women instinctively pine for the past, especially if it contains events worthy of remembrance and nostalgia.

Many middle-aged Yemeni women particularly continue remembering wistfully the 1980s "golden era," which witnessed more prosperity and economic welfare nationally while simultaneously being a time of much emotional suffering. Especially throughout the '80s, it was commonplace for Yemeni women to suffer psychologically due to their husbands' or breadwinners' immigration to countries like the Gulf states. Such a situation provided a suitable atmosphere for pop songs and lyrics to thrive. Women often voiced their sentiments in a folkloric air, pleading for their spouses to

From the early 1990s onward, disillusioned by an economically unpleasant reality, women were victimized and paid the price for their husbands' and relatives' repatriation during the Gulf crisis. Women began singing another type of songs calling for immigration, as they experienced tough material and psychological conditions. Suppressed, their inner torture fermented in the form of pop tunes and lyrics versified in simple slangy words.

Sighing, they would sing to relieve themselves and lessen the hardships they faced. A woman would sing different songs, all of which explicitly requested husbands to re-immigrate or do anything to make money and meet their life requirements. The following is a line from a popular song prompting the husband to go away, work hard and bring money back: "I want pennies, even if you work with ghosts. I will bring firewood, water and knead dough."

This is a straightforward request to the man to provide money. Also in this line, the woman indicates the fact that she also bears part of the brunt, for she is the one who brings water and firewood and kneads dough. These chores are her contribution to bettering their family's living standards. During the prosperous immigration days, women had water and firewood brought by pickup to their doorstep.

She then insinuates, hinting to the man about the immigration option through another lyric: "I pray to God that He may blind the one who would seize you. May a boulder blast his bowels."

The singer prays to God that nobody in the neighboring country will seize her husband, who would be an illegal immigrant. Not only that, she also prays to God to inflict torture on the unknown policeman who would seize and expel her husband, thereby depriving her and her children of livelihood and sustenance.

Although she urges him to immigrate, the woman pays attention to her husband's health and shows him that she wants him to take care of himself during his expatriation: "I would like you to come back well and not to work locally in a miserable

She implicitly tells him to take great care of himself because he is still important to her. She wants to see him healthy and sound as in the previous immigration days. Her words suggest that everything will be OK with her and their family. Although she understands the risk of immigration, she tries to boost his manliness by stressing the fact that he is the family's supporter. She also tries to convince him that remaining in the homeland will be of no avail as it can hardly meet their life

Another class of women are those who got married after the Gulf War to men with no external immigration experience. Having been comfortable with their families supported by "sponsored" fathers, they realized the gap between their father's home and their husband's home. Therefore, song lyrics became ironic like: "I thank God for being married to an abjectly poor man who has finished my hens.'

She thanks God for her inconvenience due to her marriage to this man, causing her to leave her father's comfortable household and depriving her of an equally affluent life. She adds the epithet "abject" to underscore her dissatisfaction and her suffering. Her exaggeration reaches a climax when she claims that her husband has sold all of her chickens to cover their domestic expenses.

Another line of the same lyric stigmatizes local immigration and says that traveling abroad for work is much better and rewarding.

Rural Yemeni women will continue to utter simple and expressive tunes and lyrics as they go about their daily chores, giving themselves some sort of relief and catharsis. Their hearts are full of emotion as they bear the brunt of their husbands' idling, joblessness and low income. Political and economic changes have modified the face of their art, coloring it with remarkable tones of struggle, toil and above all, responsibility.

The art and habits of Yemeni women will survive time and modern changes and their poetic nature will continue to permeate the texture of rural life, giving it a permanently unique look and flavor.

## Yemeni playwrights and actors honored, new festival unveiled

By: Yemen Times Staff

mass honoring for Yemeni theatrical writers, actors and actresses took place Friday evening, April 9, at the Sana'a-based Cultural Center with Minister of Culture Khalid Al-Rowaishan presenting awards to actors and actresses from various parts of

The celebration included both deceased and living Yemeni theater pioneers like Ahmed Al-Zurqah, Ra'oofah Hassan, Zahrah Talib, Hamoud Al-Amrani, Farid Al-Dhahiri and others.

The evening's festivities kicked off with television shows of famous old Yemeni plays. Ali Sa'eed Yafi'ee delivered a speech on behalf of the honorees wherein he set forth the theatrical community's wishes to construct a theater house and a



The Yemeni theater emerged over a hundred years in Aden

as well as increase actors' wages.

Al-Rowaishan announced that his ministry is studying a plan to organize a new theatrical festival in addition to "Aden Theatrical Nights Festival" and "Sana'a Theatrical Nights Festival," both of which were announced recently.

The new festival is to be named the "Bakathir Theatrical Festival" after Ali Ahmed Bakathir, the late Yemeni playwright and thinker who was born and lived in Hadramout and moved among Yemen's various provinces, as well as several Arab countries, before eventually residing in Cairo.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, the festival will be devoted to boosting senior and young theatrical talent, as well as concentrate on performing Bakathir's plays. Al-Rowaishan added that the festival will be organized during the next few days.

COMMON

SENSE

By: Hassan Al-Haifi

#### Words of Wisdom



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

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



### **OUR OPINION**

### In search of a U.N. redeemer

s United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan has been doing his utmost to save whatever is left of the U.N.'s prestige as an international governing body. However, his failure to keep peace during 1994's Rwandan genocide never has given him the chance to take over the reins of his own throne. Now that this position soon will be vacant, the search is on for the next individual to take charge of this troubled institution. Speculations suggest that the upcoming candidate will be from Asia this time. Yet the most important factor about this decision is that if the U.N.'s position is to be redeemed globally, this individual must be strong enough to face the world's superpow-

In light of today's world, it seems that the U.N. preamble stated in its charter is wishful thinking. To bring this spirit back to life, the U.N. needs a man like Scandinavian Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, who had the personality and strength to stand up to both Cold War superpowers in the late 1950s. In a Jordan Times article last month, Jonathan Power contemplated this question. He concluded that there is perhaps only one person who can resuscitate the U.N. and make the big powers work together again: the soon to be ex-prime minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair. Power believes that he is the only one on the horizon who has the stature, the entrée and the skills to make the U.N. at last live out its true poten-

In light of recent developments in the UK and Blair's deteriorating reputation, this conclusion may not be entirely acceptable. Especially if you need someone to stand up to Washington, you need someone who has had a history of independent political stances at least. Because of Blair's policies, to the general spectator, the UK's global position seems as a follower of the United States. And both countries gave very little attention to U.N. decisions in their alleged War on Terror in the Middle East, for example. Moreover, the U.N. needs an individual with no historical burden; otherwise, he will be chained to his political mistakes and not be able to be his own man.

I feel that the U.N. needs an individual with a revolutionary vision, someone who has enough courage to restructure the whole institution and someone who is popular enough to gain approval easily. The U.N. needs someone under whom it will be reborn again. Perhaps the U.N. needs a woman this time. After all, women are the natural life bearers, aren't they?

> Nadia Al-Sakkaf Editor-in-Chief

#### Letter to the Editor

A topic for debate: Arab views on Jews

see anti-Jewish political cartoons in virtually every online issue of the Yemen Times and the Arab News. Of course, this serves to maintain a high level of hostility toward Israel. But then, that is the purpose of these

It is consistent with the Arab view of Jews. But others around the world also have their views of Arabs and other fundamentalist Islamists. These are also reflected in political cartoons.

The violent Islamic reaction to the cartoons printed in the Danish and other newspapers is essentially selfdestructive. It only serves to reinforce an already negative image toward Islam in the West.

I have had many negative and false things printed about myself. But, I take it in stride as part of the price of free speech which I have enjoyed all of my 67 years.

Adulthood; whether individual, culture or religion, means taking life as it comes to you. It means to accept the fact that there are others with differing views, and they are as entitled to their views as you are to yours. Marvin C Cruzan

mcruzan@mo-net.com

## Is the US on its way to a dictatorship?

t's now crystal clear; democracy is suffering a recession in its home land, America. It is being subjected to retardation or is presumably perishing. A seasoned Egyptian writer in the seventies expected the Soviet Union to disintegrate. The Soviet collapse, however, was a catastrophe for America as well. The US lost the challenge and the rivalry that had attracted sympathizers and made it a free-world leader.

Ultimately this lose will turn the democratic system in the US into a tyranny whose grip on its people would be far worse than the former Soviet practice. Under the pretext of protecting its citizens against terrorism, the US will find itself in the long run beleaguered by dictatorship. This can be seen is the foundations laid down by George W. Bush in this war on terror. It is eminent sign that the country is sinking into a totalitarian regime based on absolute individual dictatorship. Its actions and reactions mirror German Hitler's Nazism and the subsequent dictatorship this has propagated.

There are indications that the US is changing into a dictatorship. Take for example the notorious laws recently and then defiantly reinstated by the White House and its neoconservative hawks. One of the more serious indications lies in the lack of any opposition to President Bush's push to go to war under erroneous assumptions. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and there is no proof of

Saddam's links to Al-Qaeda, allegations that have brought about the present ordeal of the Iraqi people. It is an ordeal that has also served to bring misfortune to Americans. Many American soldiers have died without justification because of miscalculated risks.

Risks that added to the perverse US image and to the alarm of nations in the face of the stupidity of its ruler who could unexpectedly launch a sudden destructive war on them as a result of misinformation.

The worst of dictators is the one who leads his nation into a useless war and does not resign while at the same time the legal institutions stand helpless to



By: Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh

By: Prof. Abdulaziz

**Al-Tarb** 

procedure expected in a country which used to be democratic. The US, however, has had a precedent for indicting some of its former presidents who did not do even five percent of what this president and his administration have committed against America and its people. This president and its administration are

arranging for the worst dictatorship in

the 21st century.

Wiretapping one of the American institutions in the seventies, contributed to forcing a president out of the White House. It is a wonder it is not happening now with a president who practices wiretapping on American citizens and institutions. The excuse that is now circulated is that the wiretapping was only restricted to Muslim citizens, however, this is constitutionally condemned under any

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Magaleh is Yemen's prominent poet and intellectual. He is the director of the Yemeni Center for Studies.

## "151", the mark of our real achievements

ell folks, I am pleased to advise all of you that our beloved country is ever so closer to rock bottom, when it comes to development", said Nabila as she entered her

Economics Class at the University of Sana'a. "What are you talking about Nabila?", said Faris, who is regarded as the genius of the class.

Nabila answered him in bewilderment: "Did you not see the United Nations' Human Development Report for the Year 2005? It took me hours to find our country's name in the statistical indicators on development that the book has in abundance of. I had hoped initially to find Yemen listed among the countries of 'Medium Development and Medium Income', considering all the great achievements that our TV and newspapers speak of when they praise how much the government has done to improve our welfare and well-being. WE are even in the lowest of the low among the "Low Income and Low Development" achievers. It turns out all that gibberish is no more than hot air. How can anyone stand to hear all the rhetoric about the great progress we have made and the tireless efforts and sleepless nights of our leaders and government officials, as they work so hard to make sure that we land comfortably in Rank 151 among the nations of the world when it comes to development."

The teacher came in: "Look students this is not a political forum and I will not have my class become a place for political arguments."

"But Professor Ali, we are strictly talking about economic and human development and it is quite clear according to published reports that Yemen is really got a lot of climbing to do if we can ever hope to reach the status of a truly respectable nation. You can't help but agree that with a rank of 151 among the 177 nations of the world in terms of level of development, we really have a problem", said Faris as he took his seat, beside

"What Faris is saying is that there is really no excuse for us to be such at such a low level of development when considering the ample resources we have and the dynamic nature of our people to achieve progress and success. What have we been doing with all these resources? Where are all those hundreds of billions of Rivals our government is daily blurting out on television that it is spending on development projects?" Nabila was elaborating on her classmate's statement.

"We are not just talking about economics when talking about the Human Development Index that the UN gauges the state of development of nations by, we are talking about standard of living, governance, education, health and all those important factors that make human beings feel they are truly human beings and good citizens catered to by their government. To get into the nitty gritty of the HDI, would you believe that our literacy rate is only 50% and that is really based on government figures, which have a lot to be desired when it comes to accuracy. In terms of some of the individual components of the HDI, we even rank lower that those poor countries that just tail us from 152 to 177". Again, Faris had no need for anyone to elaborate on what was on his mind.

Nabila was not about to be left without a final comment before the class started: "It is imperative that our government starts to get its act together, because its media is loosing credibility not just on its media assertions, but by the facts on the ground. We have not only 50% illiteracy, we have 50% of the people living below or near the poverty line and that in itself is a time bomb of unpredictable magnitude.

When people are hungry and lack the jobs they need to sustain themselves there is no telling what they will do, especially as they see the gap widen between the haves and the have nots. There is no question about it, corruption is the root of our economic and social demise and unless it is cleaned up, we will continue to race to have our HDI reach the rank of 177."

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years.

### **State of suspense in the Middle East (2-2)**

hird, The double standard policy the United States pursues at the present world seems to be clearer than anytime before. It has adopted a slogan of democratic reform in the Middle East and simultaneously refused the Iranian elections and results of the latest Palestinian legislative elections, taking an obstinate stand against the movement of Hamas.

That has led to have the file in the occupied territories open and inflammable at the same time. The Palestinians have witnessed the formation of their government and the have seen the results of the elections and the kind of alliances emerging from them. Security and peace are the actual victims of that dangerous situation that is liable to explosion at any time. Israel does not understand anything but the language of threatening and does not care about instruments of political influence and effect on the course of events but at the same time possesses all means of impediment, procrastination and time-

That has almost become the chronic problem in the essence of conflict in the Middle East and the tensest and most disturbed spot in the region. Therefore the state of suspense in the Palestinian arena is not something new but at the present time it appears to be more heated, especially under the situation of the religious emergence throughout the map of the region.

Fourth, The strained situation in the relations between various political forces in Lebanon and the ruling regime in Syria represents another new dimension calling for concern and capturing attention. The two countries have certain peculiarity of relationship that has begun to change negatively against both of them. The assassination of the Lebanese former prime minister had become a bad omen affecting the situation in the Greater Sham. Investigations are still continuous and there are sporadic explosions, security is lost and fear prevalent and the only losers are both the Lebanese and Syrian peoples, as he relationship between them appears in a state of suspense and watching. All that is associated with a beginning of security wantonness and prospects of political chaos. That is happening as part of the endeavor to oust the Lebanese president Amin Lahoud and effect changes in the essence of the relationship between the two Arab countries: Lebanon and Syria.

Fifth, The Egyptians would feel concerned and worried if harm befalls and affects one of the Arab countries, but their concern would be greater if that Arab country is the Sudan. For that there are historical reasons and coexistence in the Nile valley for thousands of years. The astonishing thing is that the problem of Darfur has broken out during a conflict tribes working in agriculture and others working in grazing, all of them are armed.

Nevertheless, internationalization of the problem was a matter, as it seems, wanted and intended for creation of spots of conflicts in one of the important crossings of Arabism and Islam in the west of Sudan. It is a choice intended for exploding a conflict to continue for long time before it subsides and to exhaust energies of the state and deal a blow to unity of this African country. This country is passing through a stage of test of its regional unity and integrity of its north and south. When the United Nations Organization expressed its stand concerning the replacement of the African Union troops by other foreign forces, the Sudanese have sensed there was a certain agenda for exploding the situations in Sudan in a manner similar to Iraq, believing it was something on the agenda. That represents a factor causing concern regarding the Sudanese and Egyptian national security. It is especially so at a time we raise a slogan saying African problems are to be solved by the Africans and we also realize that foreign interference carries with it tragedies, disasters and long-term suffer-

Sixth, the situation in Yemen, while it is preparing to hold the presidential and local councils elections, require more awakening by the ruling party and the opposition parties, away from altercations that will not serve the country. They have to resort to work and dialogue, consultations and to choose the elements that respect the public. The public is on alert, particularly due to suffering from absence of security, equality as well as rise in prices and inflation. The strikes of teachers in protest to wages strategy can be n inlet for the people to have their say in the peaceful transfer of power and implementation of justice, equality and the state of law and order.

That has been a review of open and heated files around us, giving a sense of a prevalent state of suspense I the region. I may not be exaggerating if I assume that they would affect the entire world. Current international relations are tense

and fraught with some aspects of religious conflict instead of political dialogue. Also, there is a great amount of exchanged suspicion and lost trust dominating the world nowadays. Some Arab countries are trying to tone down heat of the stands but the affairs are increasingly deteriorating with the course of time. The

stability and comprehen-

sive peace in the region will

not be attained but by activating the logic of international legitimacy, discarding of double standard policy, adoption of peaceful coexistence, international cooperation, removing chains restraining peoples freedoms, respecting nations dignity and making democracy as stabilized dimension of contemporary international relations. It is to be observed that the principles on which the international community was built after the first and second world wars have begun to recede. The principle of one vote for each nation, embodied by the UN general assembly as an international parliament, now has become questionable. Big powers swallow the smaller and the super power swallows all. We are against an unprecedented situation in the international community where the policy of hegemony is superior and principles that governed international relations during most decades of the last century are disap-

I think as Arabs, we are in front of a big opportunity for advancing towards the age and keeping in pace with big variables of today world through a joint vision moving positively, taking the initiative courageously and establishing a regional order that achieves balance between our legitimate interests and historical rights on the one hand and harmony with the spirit prevalent in international relations. Isolation is a stance nonexistent in this world that full of succeeding trends and ideas, becoming almost a genuine example of chaos of violence, absence of values and disappearance of vision.

Is it possible that we believe in peaceful transfer of power and the ruling parties change into opposition so that they could benefit from returning to power via balloting boxes and is it possible that we will not see a number of rulers in the next sum-

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



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Arab

Summits





#### Main headlines

- A GPC delegation to Riyadh to meet the parliament speaker Sheikh al-
- Yahya al-Houthi accuses the security of beating prisoners and storming houses of hose released
- PM Bajammal blasts a crisis with the opposition
- Journalists Syndicate condemns the language of al-Zindani followers of accusing others of infidelity
- The President criticizes the GPC's media in dealing journalists and those seeking nomination for presidency
- MPs hold the parliament chairmanship responsible for not presenting the parliament budget for this year

The political editor of the newspaper says in his article that since President Ali Abdullah Saleh has announced he would not run for the upcoming presidential elections, the talk about who will succeed him dominates the political circles inside governance circles and by the public. Predictions have gone as far as arrangements of the transfer of power to Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, commander of the presidential guard, though as a candidate of the ruling party. On the other hand, announcement by the MP Hussein al-Ahmar on his intention of founding a new political party including a number of leaders and MPs from the General People's Congress was widely understood as an early indication on refusing the transfer of power to the son of the president, even if via balloting boxes.

The GPC media campaign against the MP al-Ahmar and his relations with parties of the JMP reflects concern regarding the role the sons of al-Ahmar want to play in the coming stage, unlike the situation that was with regard to their father who was in close alliance and partner of the president throughout the period of his rule.

Since the dialogue between the ruling party and parties of the JMP has reached a deadlock, it is expected that the next few months will witness a strong process of polarization inside the opposition, specifically inside ranks of the Islah party. The goal is to support the tendency calling for nomination of president Saleh to a new presidential period.



weekly, organ of Nasserite Unionist Organization, 6 Apr 2006.

Al-Wahdawi

#### Main headlines

- Financial manipulation at Sana'a and Thamar Universities
- The ruling party backs down from dialogue results
- JMP refuses the authority options

Government campaign to silence the journalists prior to the presidential elections

A new board of directors for Parliamentarians Against Corruption Organization

The newspaper's political editor writes that trade unionist work is considered an expression for social segments and it regulates those social segments inside entities recognized by the society and state authorities. Upon that the trade unionist action plays a great and effective role in taking care and defending those social

The syndical work maybe required more in least developed countries than the developed ones. The first are still passing through the stages of their growth, politically, legally and in ideological and cultural concepts.

The syndical work represents a strong and fertile space of competition. It is strong by the attack it comes under by the political forces that do not look at it from the angle of its ability of serving only the social segments it represents but rather because of its general national goal, i.e. the participation with a big role in achieving the comprehensive development and the speeding up of the civil society's growth and the greater resultant in civilization battle. The syndical work is fertile due to the law of competition that removes individuality of the syndical work and deepens the characteristic of partnership, which is an undeniable democratic basis.



Al-Nidaa weekly, 5 Apr 2006.

#### Main headlines

- Yemeni Journalists Syndicate demands cancellation of decisions of closing the newspapers of Al-Hurriyah, Al-Rai Al-A'am and Yemen Observer
- Medicines smugglers hide behind offi-
- Washington asks al-Mouayad aide to testify against al-Mouayad in return for acquitting him
- In Taiz, five newly born infants found killed

In his article writer Mohamed Mohamed al-Maqaleh says it is clear up until now and in reliance on their stances and statements hat the opposition parties in the JMP refuse categorically to concede their legitimate demands with regard of providing guarantees of justice and transparency in the upcoming presidential elections in September. It is completely impossible to think that the opposition will take part in forging the presidential elections through taking part in the Elections Supreme Commission, which is difficult to accept its legitimacy.

Until now, there is no serious dialogue between the GPC and the JMP on any issue of guarantees of honest and transparent elections, particularly on legitimathe strange insistence of the GPC on legitimacy of this commission or the clam of legal difficulty of changing it the dialogue will be a waste of time that will not lead but to falsify the awakening. The GPC realizes well that changing the commission does not need a judicial decision to prove the extent of the opposition claims of violations perpetrated by the present commission. What is really needed is the existence of the political will for the authority on the importance of holding correct presidential elections in which all will participate and defend their results. With the presence of this will, the amendment of the law is enough to cancel this commission and replace it by another one by the law.

The opposition parties will not boycott the elections but will not take part in their various procedures and will not recognize the results if there are no enough guarantees on their justice and trans-



Annas weekly, 4 Apr 2006.

#### Main headlines

- GPC nominates Qahtan and Nouman to compete with the president in elec-
- Islah party stands in solidarity with the closed newspapers and Allaw requests interrogating al-Zindani
- Dr Bafadhl: The important thing is changing the system, the president is free to stay or leave
- Illegal prison inside YEDCO Company for drugs industry
- University security attacks a student
- MP: The government floods Yemen with loans policy and does not use them

Writer Ali Mohammed al-Surari says in his article that instigating and provoking armed forces and security against the opposition parties and creation a spirit of hatred against the opposition points to the intentions aimed at using the members of those two establishments outside their national and constitutional tasks and duties as defenders of national sovereignty and protectors of democratic legitimacy. It is meant to render them to instruments for carrying out political intentions and whims of those ambitious for practicing illegal domination. The opposition parties have actually felt that instigating armed forces against them and changing the military ideology from protection of the homeland to enmity against the opposition implies various dangers leading to involve the armed forces in internal political conflicts and putting them outside their national and constitutional duties. And that is within a context with the aim of attacking the legitimacy and practicing aggression on the people's rights and stability of the society. That also aims at undermining the values of justice, and equality and meanings of the republican

N By: Samer very time while the country is preparing for the presidential and local elections. This means creation of a fabricated crisis the aim of which is to create abnormal atmospheres precluding the elections to be free and just and to define their results beforehand in favor of the ruling party.

Khartoum

Summit



As-Sahwa weekly, 6 Apr 2006.

#### Main headlines

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- Dialogue setback after the GOPC backed down from its promises, JMP expresses disappointment; observers do not consider it a surprise
- Educational Unions hold the ministry responsible and threaten of maintaining protests if violations continue
- Official campaign against journalists syndicate, IPI considers the year 2005 the worst year of Yemeni press

A disease kills tens of cattle in Utmah Writer Zaid al-Shami says the past months have witnessed peaceful demands by Yemeni teachers working in public, technical and vocational schools. The demands focused on putting pressure on the government to meet its commitments to implement the law of wages and salaries that had become valid since July 2005. The government is still selecting the parts of the law it wants and postpones those articles of the law it does not want. The teachers insistence on their demands and patience in the face of harm and pressures as well as some of them exposure to arbitrary transfer and other kinds of harassment, made them more patient and persistent in their demands.

In its attempt to tackle the problem, the government ahs settled the situation of more than 29 thousand cases and promised to settle any grievances reaching it. The government also approved spending a job nature allowance by 110% of teach-

Although wisdom was absent in dealing with issues of teachers, we have to admit that teachers should thank the government for recognizing some of their rights and promising to implement the

## SILVER mhalqadhi@hotmail.com

## Current dilemma and the West share of responsibility

n the Silver Lining column of last week. I wrote about the exaggeration of the Muslims in their conception about the West and its conspiracy against them; how much it is working to pervert their youngsters through some cultural programs. I also talked about the important role public diplomacy can do to bridge the gap between the West and Muslims.

I received a good feedback from readers, particularly from the US. They have been very supportive of the idea of public diplomacy as a key element in the dialogue that can take us away from the impasse we are going through. One of my diplomat friends here in Sana'a told me that he was expecting another article giving the West their share of criticism and their responsibility for the current lack of understanding with the Arabs and Muslims. Some might understand that I have been very harsh in criticizing the Arabs and Muslims, holding them accountable for the ongoing problem, neglecting the West responsibility which my Western friend talked about, as if he was reading my mind that another article would talk about this I know the West is partially respon-

sible of the plight we are going through and can do a lot to bridge the gap and understand our reality in a better manner. The West is to bear its share of responsibility for those people who have been brought up and educated to think confrontation is the only way out in the fight with the West. Let me tell you how. The West, mainly the US, mobilized the young Muslims to fight against the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan. They were considered heroes in the great battle for Islam victory and once the task was over, they turned into terrorists being hunted down wherever they went. They were pregnant with Jihad ideology and it was not easy for them to forget it all of a sudden. They had no choice but to confront in their own countries plagued with tyranny and absence of freedom and democracy. Egypt was the first to confront with the Jihadists while the international community was watching the trauma. The congestion grew up and the result is the current dilemma of terrorism acts we see everyday here and there. We now see horrible scenes of human throats being cut on camera

as if they are hens. The West has not realized the sensitivity of the Palestinian cause, being a focal point of concern to all Muslims. I once was talking with a Western diplomat about the Middle East conflict; he was surprised that the Palestinian problem was inviting the interest of all Muslims. He said it was the business of the Palestinians only and that others have nothing to do with it. The West is being heedless to the religious sensitivity of the Palestinian cause and what Jerusalem means to all Muslims and how this issue can be manipulated by the extremists to justify their ideology of confrontation.

In this way, the West has helped in the emergence of some extremist groups, demanding confrontations with the whole West, and giving a religious ground for this conflict. The result is a strong support among the public, including intellectuals for the Jihadist ideology of Bin Laden, al-Zawaheri, al-Zerqawi and many others.

The West supported dictatorial and tyrannical regimes, giving no attention to their abuse of human rights and freedoms. It neglected calls for democratization and modernization pronounced by some leftists and reformers. These regimes have even manipulated the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a pretext to get armed at the expense of development. They even now put conditions that reform can take place after the Middle East conflict is sorted out. In this way, you can see how the Palestinian cause is being manipulated by these tyrannical regimes in an ugly manner. I am myself not convicted that development in all Arab countries should be halted because of the Palestinian issue.

However, when the September 11 terrorist attacks had taken place, the West realized the grave danger of tyranny and dictatorship in producing extremism, violence and terrorism. It has also realized that terrorism of such Muslim youngsters will hit it in the bud, maybe before it hits some Arab or Muslim countries. It has understood the jeopardy of the absence of democracy and public participation on the future of these countries and that of the West itself. The West has to consider its ethical responsibility towards these peoples. I know that the West is driven by its own interests but part of its interest now is the support of these peoples to democratize and liberalize. It has to work towards initiating dialogue with the Muslim countries so as to understand Muslims better.

As I said in my article of last week, dialogue is the only way to understand each other closely. This dialogue should go beyond the official diplomacy to public diplomacy, going far away from closed rooms and workshops whose outcomes usually do not reach the masses, the prime target of this dialogue. It should be open and reach as many people as possible, utilizing all sorts of media to address the public and targeting various aspects of mutual interest.

This sort of multi-faced dialogue will succeed only if we are proactive, capable to present our views in a rational manner to people who have been brought up to think rationally and pragmatically. When we go to dialogue, we have to be satisfied that it is for the interest of both the West and us. The purpose of the dialogue is mutual understanding. Otherwise, extremists will be more resistant and reluctant to such initiatives, imaging it as another way the West is using to influence and control. It should primarily target the religious leaders who should be convinced with the dialogue principle and its urgency to calm down the tension and repress confrontations mongers in order to live in peace and harmony.

By and large, dialogue is not the mere responsibility of the West which is scared of the danger of terrorism that can hit it at home. It is not also our business only. It is rather a two-way process for we both need understand one another and should work to that

## Africa's bitter harvest

By: G. Pascal Zachary

ouley Madi is one of the most productive cotton growers in the Badjengo Cameroon, an area where the lush forests of central Africa give way to the semi-arid Sahel. Thanks to a combination of intense heat and periodic Sahelian rains, Madi consistently produces clean, high-quality cotton on the gently sloping hills that surround his walled compound.

But, as the next growing season approaches, Madi, who is 40, faces a difficult decision: how much cotton should he grow this year? Prices for cotton were so low last year that Madi cut his acreage. He earned less from cotton last year than the year before, and much less than he earned five years ago. "I'm angry, but what can I do?" he asks.

This year Madi may grow even less cotton, even though the crop is the main source of income for himself, his two wives and his five children. On some of his land, he now grows corn and peanuts instead of cotton.

But cotton potentially offers the best payback, because it has cash value on the international market and can be stored for long periods of time. Like millions of other African cotton farmers, Madi has advantages over cotton farmers in other parts of the world. His land costs are low. So are his labor costs, since he relies on family and friends to weed and pick the

Nor does he needs expensive machinery to plant his seeds; his plow is drawn by cattle, and he pushes seeds into the ground with his bare hands. A stateowned cotton company collects his cotton relatively efficiently, gins it nearby to produce lint and then sells the lint on the international market, generally paying Madi promptly and fairly.

Madi's earnings help him keep his children in school, even at the height of the cotton harvest. Having attended secondary school himself, he believes that his children will better their lives through education. He knows his children's future depends on better prices for cot-

But forces beyond Madi's control even beyond his awareness - are restraining cotton prices, creating a global glut that is largely the result of policies followed by the world's richest governments. The United States government pays billions of dollars to cotton growers, mainly in California, Texas, and Mississippi. The European Union also contributes to low cotton prices, paying farmers in Greece about \$1 billion a year to grow the crop at a loss.

Such subsidies are a global scandal, yet large payments to largely wealthy American and Greek cotton growers seem likely to persist for many years. The best chance to end cotton subsidies soon was lost last December, when African countries, aided by India and Brazil, pressed hard for the elimination of cotton subsidies, at the World Trade Organization's meeting in Hong Kong. The US and Europe offered only a token reduction, scotching a deal.

The only chance to end cotton subsidies is now somehow to convince US and EU leaders to assist African peasants by curtailing payments to their own cotton farmers. A revision to what Americans call "the farm program" is scheduled for next year. The powerful US cotton lobby wants no change in the level of payments, however. European farmers also want to maintain current subsidy levels, and EU members say that they are unlikely to make any reductions before the end of the decade.

Take away subsidies and cotton prices will rise, perhaps as much as 15%. There's real money here for the individual African," says Daniel Sumner, an economist and cotton expert at the University of California.

Trade officials in both the US and Europe say that they will no longer encourage farmers to overproduce, and that they will end programs that specifically subsidize exports. For Africans, however, these changes are cosmetic, doing little or nothing to lift cotton

Africans are trying to make the best out of a bad situation. In some parts of Africa, cotton growers are expanding production, providing proof that if the US and Europe did somehow curtail their own cotton output, Africans could plug

the gap. In Uganda, where civil wars in the 1970's and 1980's devastated farming, cotton growers are making a major comeback. In Zambia, cotton output is soaring. In both countries, foreign investors are opening gins and assisting

In Cameroon, where cotton is the main source of income for nearly five million people, record crops were posted last year and the year before. "Our farmers are dedicated and disciplined, committed to quality," says Ali Batour, a manager with Cameroon's Sodecoton, the stateowned marketer. "They deserve a fair price."

But Souley Madi is resigned to receiving unfair cotton prices, perhaps for a long time. During the last harvest, when 100-degree heat forced him, his wives, and his mother to stop picking cotton after a few hours, he returned to his compound to tend to his ducks. He recently started raising a flock and last Christmas earned the equivalent of \$70 on the sale of 18 birds.

Tapping his forehead, Madi insists, 'We are waiting for the situation to change." For how long, he says, "depends on God."

G. Pascal Zachary is the author of The Diversity Advantage: Multicultural Identity in the New World Economy and a fellow of The German Marshall Fund. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2006. www.project-syndicate.org

## Poisons alleged in Hodeidah's distributed water

Water purification stations have become noticeable in many Yemeni cities. However, many citizens in Hodeidah have accused such stations of selling poisons instead of pure water to every home.

By: Abdulwahab Al-Sofi abdulwahab\_alsofi@yahoo.com

octors advise starting the day by drinking two glasses of water and then drinking at least six to eight more throughout the day because water is vital for the body to function properly. Water also helps clean the body, so one should bathe daily. However, when water is blended with chemicals, citizens begin wondering about the safety of using such water.

"Sometimes this purified water tastes weird!" a student in the Faculty of Sea Science's environment department at Hodeidah University, said when describing the taste of water he drinks daily.

Another student expressed his

feeling, saying, "Nobody knows exactly when we will have clean, pure and healthy water in our area. We're used to the bad taste of water. as some of these stations sell water with added random chemical substances. We have no alternative but to use it."

He blamed the majority of water purification station owners who he said do not comply with the main standard measurements. "Alternative installment of tanks and apparatus in many water purification stations likely are hardly unexecuted."

A teacher working at Al-Saeed School said, "We constantly hear many complaints from our neighbors and other friends that this type of water contains tiny things mixed with sand, plus its repeated strange taste." She insisted that since water is the



The photo shows an experiment of water analysis which was carried out to measure the chemical components in the water. In the left, a sample of water which was treated in a purification station being tested. In the right, the same water after the experiment; full of sand, salt and parasites.

main source of life, those working in water purification stations should be subjected to permanent oversight by concerned responsible parties.

English inspector Hassan Baghawi said those working in water purification stations often are not completely clean, hygienic or healthy. "They wash their clothes and sleep in the same station in which they work," he noted.

Some students and teachers are resigned to using such water for the time being, as it is the sole choice. "There is no other choice but to use this water, as it is the only water for drinking," they said. "We may be deprived of any clean water in Yemen's next era," they added

Another teacher noted that pure, healthy water has no taste, color or smell "but this water has a bad taste because of added chemicals."

Fikri Al-Domaini, a laboratory manager in Hodeidah University's, the Faculty of Sea Science, which is an official and authenticable laboratory for the Health Office in Hodeidah, regularly takes samples from water purification stations. He stressed that the main reason water tastes weird or contains parasites is due to station owners not complying with chlorine or Ph percentages. He also blamed grocery owners who often expose tanks to sunlight, which activates bacteria. "Tanks filled with water from these stations should not be exposed to sunlight."

Al-Domaini pointed out that discovering parasites varies from one station to another. Moreover, filters used in such stations expire after six months, whereas they often are used for purification for more than a year, he explained.

He expressed his anxiety, confirming that he often finds fecal bacteria in some stations' samples. "These types of bacteria cause many dangerous diseases to human

Equipments in bad state in one of the purification station in Hodeidah.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Al-Ariqi, a dentist, said that imbalanced combination of chemicals like Ph, which are added during purification, leads to tooth decay. Besides, excessive chlorine added to water also leads to change in tooth color.

Other medical studies revealed an increase in the number of those suffering diseases like cancer and kidney failure, which may be caused by air and water blended with chemical materials.

Station owner Nasser Hussein explained the three stages of water majority of water purification

purification. First, impurities are allowed to settle down by storing the water in tanks. Next, it is filtered through sand. Finally, chlorine and other materials are added to kill bacteria. Hussein asserted that some station owners do play with the materials measurements during purification. "They must comply with standard criteria, as this is honest. We should bear this responsibility on our shoulders and act accordingly," he added.

A statistical study by Faculty of Sea Science students proved that a stations do not adhere to standard chemical specifications. According to the study, some stations either added only chlorine to water or randomly added chemicals. Moreover, barrels such stations used to store water were dirty and even

Hodeidah residents may know that the water they use is not completely pure or healthy, but they are sure that authorities must take immediate steps to save the city from disease and epidemics spread via water that has been poisoned in purification

## World Health Day 2006: spotlight on health workforce crisis

World Health Report, published in 7th April by WHO, outlines need for more investment in health workforce to improve working conditions, revitalize training institutions and anticipate future challenges.

serious shortage of health workers in 57 countries is impairing provision of essential, interventions such as childhood immunization, safe pregnancy and delivery services for mothers, and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. This shortage, combined with a lack of training and knowledge, is also a major obstacle for health systems as they attempt to respond effectively to chronic diseases, avian influenza and other health challenges, according to The World Health Report 2006 -Working together for health, published today by the World Health Organization (WHO).

More than four million additional doctors, nurses, midwives, managers and public health workers are urgently needed to fill the gap in these 57 countries, 36 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, says the Report, which is highlighted by events in many cities around the world to mark World Health Day. Every country needs to improve the way it plans for, educates and employs the doctors, nurses and support staff who make up the health workforce and provide them with better working conditions, it concludes.

"The global population is growing, but the number of health workers is stagnating or even falling in many of the places where they are needed most," said WHO Director-General Dr. LEE Jong-wook. "Across the developing world, health workers face economic hardship, deteriorating infrastructure and social unrest. In many countries, the HIV/AIDS

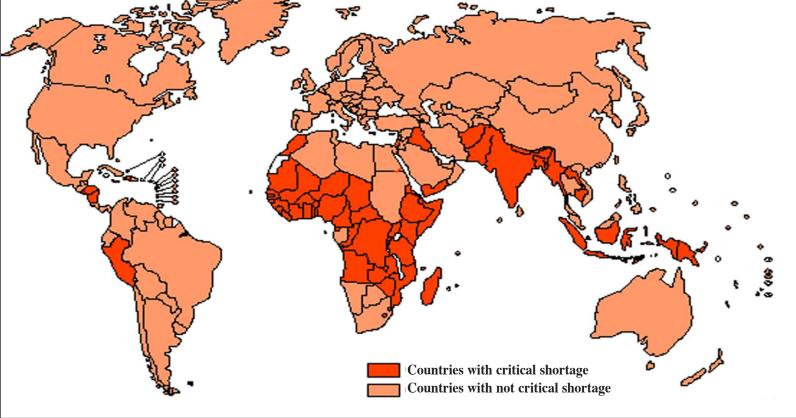
epidemic has also destroyed the health and lives of health workers."

The World Health Report sets out a 10-year plan to address the crisis. It calls for national leadership to urgently formulate and implement country strategies for the health workforce. These need to be backed by international donor assistance.

Infectious diseases complications of pregnancy and delivery cause at least 10 million deaths each year. Better access to health workers could prevent many of those deaths. There is clear evidence that as the ratio of health workers to population increases, so in turn does infant, child and maternal survival.

"Not enough health workers are being trained or recruited where they are most needed, and increasing numbers are joining a brain drain of qualified professionals who are migrating to better-paid jobs in richer countries, whether those countries are near neighbours or wealthy industrialized nations. Such countries are likely to attract even more foreign staff because of their ageing populations, who will need more long-term, chronic care," said WHO Assistant Director-General Dr.

To tackle this crisis, more direct investment in the training and support of health workers is needed now. Initial costs will be for the training of more health workers. As they graduate and enter the workforce, funds will be needed to pay their salaries. Health budgets will have to increase by at least US\$10 per person per year in the 57 countries with severe shortages to educate and pay the salaries of the four million health



Countries with a critical shortage of health service providers (doctor, nurses and midwives).

workers needed to fill the gap. To meet that target within 20 years is an ambitious but reasonable goal, the Report concludes.

Financing this gap will require significant, dedicated and predictable funding from national sources, as well as from international development partners. The Report recommends that of all new donor funds for health, 50% should be dedicated to strengthening health systems, of which 50% should be dedicated specifically to training, retaining and sustaining the health workforce.

At least 1.3 billion people worldwide lack access to the most basic healthcare, often because there

is no health worker. The shortage is global, but the burden is greatest in countries overwhelmed by poverty and disease where these health workers are needed most. Shortages are most severe in sub-Saharan Africa, which has 11% of the world's population and 24% of the global burden of disease but only 3% of the world's health workers.

The Report calls for prompt and innovative initiatives to improve efficiency. For example, HIV/AIDS, TB and other priority disease programmes have implemented ways for health workers with limited formal training to successfully carry out specific health tasks. These experiences should be drawn upon to develop national health workforce strategies.

The World Health Report recommends that in order to achieve the goal of getting "the right workers with the right skills in the right place doing the right things," countries should develop plans that include the following:

•Acting now for workforce productivity: better working conditions for health workers, improved safety, better access to treatment and care;

•Anticipating what lies ahead: a well-developed plan to train the health workforce of the future;

•Acquiring critical capacity: workforce planning; development of leadership and management; standard setting, accreditation and licensing as drivers for quality improvement.

Beyond the national strategies the report urges global cooperation:

•Joint investment in research and information systems;

•Agreements on ethical recruitment of and working conditions for migrant health workers and international planning on the health workforce for humanitarian emergencies or global health threats such as an influenza

•Commitment from donor countries to assist crisis countries with their efforts to improve and support the health workforce.

Source: www.who.net



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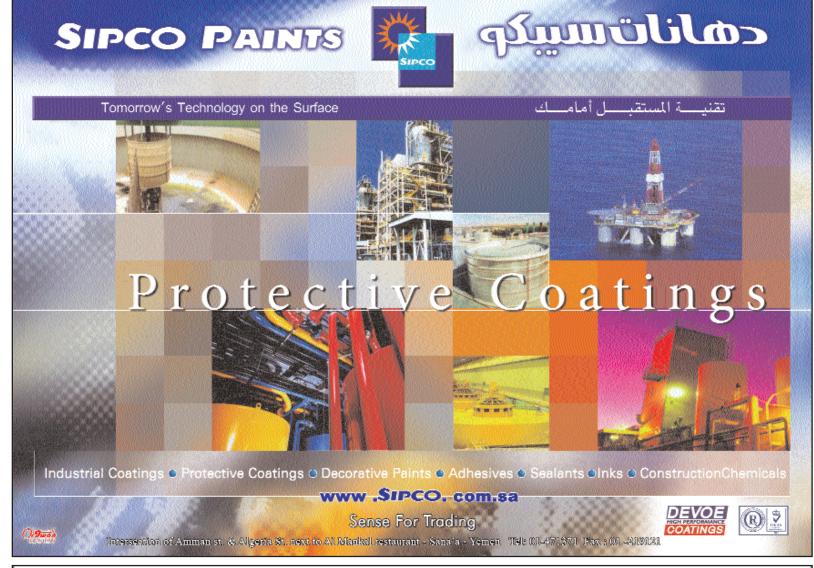


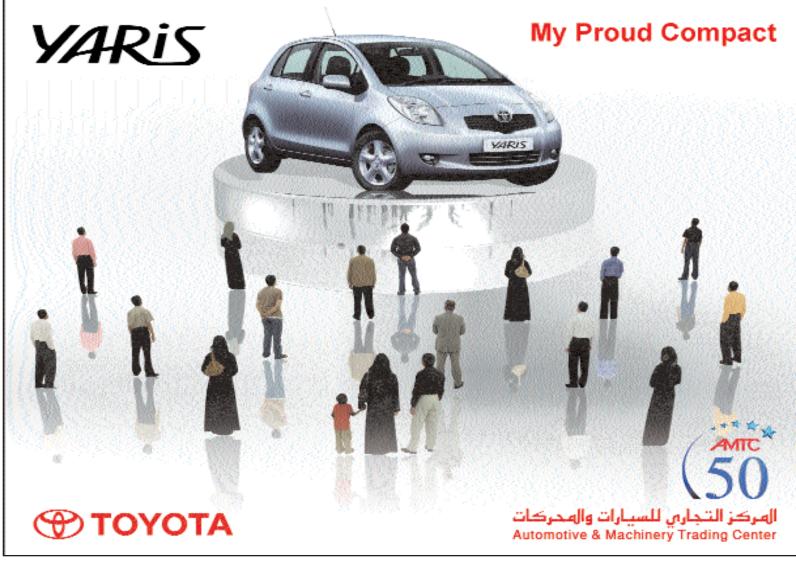


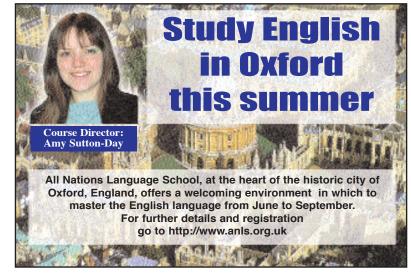


حدى شركات محموعة هائل سعيد أنعم وشركاه











## المنظم والمنظم المنظم ا

بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله وقدره
نتقدم بأحر التعازي وأصدق
المواساة إلى الأخوة:
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وكافة آل دماج
لوفاة المغفور له بإذن الله تعالى
الحاج/قائد بن عبد العزيز دماج
سائلين المولى عز وجل أن يتغمد
الفقيد بواسع رحمته وعظيم غفرانه
وأن يلهم أهلها وذويه الصبر والسلوان
وإنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

المعزون: د/همدان زید مطیع دماج مطیع زید مطیع دماج نشوان محسن علی دماج



### **Vacancy Announcement:**

DFID invites International consultants to apply for the following position with its project to support the integrated justice sector reforms.

Post Title: Programme Manager Location: Sana'a, Yemen

#### **Responsibility:**

#### The Programme Manager will be based in Sana'a. Specifically, s/he will:

- Oversee the implementation of integrated justice projects, including by directly managing some of the projects and constantly liaising with all the stakeholders;
- Monitor progress, learn lessons and make recommendations for programme improvement
- Play a key role in the coordination of donor activity in this area, particularly with regards to any potential future multi-donor trust fund;
- Provide a secretariat function for the donor/government meetings on integrated justice reforms;
- Provide strategic advice to the Government of Yemen regarding policing and justice sector reform;
- Gain a sophisticated understanding of the drivers of change in the areas of policing and justice in Yemen, documenting and applying these insights;
- Develop a network of contacts with an interest in policing and justice in Yemen; and
- Manage any support staff

#### **Qualification:**

#### At the very least the Programme Manager will require:

- University degree in social studies or any related field
- Ability to work under demanding circumstances;
- Timeliness and reliability of delivery;
- Political awareness and sensitivity;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and cultural awareness;
- At least 5 years experience of project management, preferably in a developing country;
- Institutional development and change management expertise;
- Willingness to learn about new subject areas as required;
- Expertise in the areas of policing and/or justice;
- Working knowledge of Arabic, or the potential to learn the language quickly;
- Prior knowledge of Yemen an asset.

Interested candidates may send their CVs to dfid@yemen.net.ye by 16 April 2006.





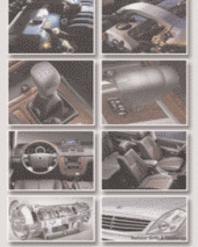


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Mr. Toni Goubran, General Manager of Sheraton Sana'a (as shown in the middle of the picture) leads the Champion's Week 2006 with Miss. Mai Nazzal, Deputy Director of Sales.

### Fitch raises Arab Bank rating to "A-"

Fitch: "Arab Bank capital increase makes it the largest banking group by equity in the Arab world"

#### Shoman says upgrade reflects confidence in Arab Bank

AMMAN, March 26 - Fitch Ratings upgraded Arab Bank's long-term rating from (BBB+) to (A-).

The London based international rating agency also affirmed Arab Bank's other ratings at (F2) for shortterm and (B) for individual

Fitch said the upgrade "reflects improved growth potential for the bank following a substantial rights



issue in January 2006, and in the context of favourable economic conditions across most of the bank's core Middle East markets.'

"Although Arab Bank has adopted a more dynamic growth strategy, its management has confirmed it will maintain its hitherto conservative attitude towards risk management and balance sheet liquidity" it added. The Fitch announcement stressed that this approach has helped the bank to weather difficult operating conditions in the past, as has the diversified nature of its activities.

Arab Bank Chairman and CEO Abdel Hamid Shoman described the upgrade as the "crowning of years of hard work and dedication."

Shoman said raising Arab Bank's rating "reflects confidence in the positioning and performance of Arab Bank, as well as in what Arab Bank stands for." He added that "the effective implementation of the Bank's business strategy by its various lines of business has contributed to this and other successes."

"Expanding our product range and the quality of service are key pillars to this strategy" Shoman concluded.

Fitch stressed that Arab Bank's rights issue added US\$ 1,525 million to its capital, representing a 63% increase on end-2005 equity. Martin Oldham, a Director in Fitch's Financial Institutions Group said "the larger capital base strengthens Arab Bank's competitive position and makes it better placed to exploit opportunities."

"The capital increase", Fitch said, "makes Arab Bank Group the largest banking group by equity in the Arab world." Arab Bank financial results for 2005 have shown a strong improvement in its returns, driven by higher revenues and declining credit provisions.

This year, Arab Bank will start bringing its European branches under the control of a newly incorporated entity in London. The restructuring will enhance operational efficiency and boost the Bank's earning power. Fitch said this will also improve regulatory oversight by putting the European branches under the supervision of the UK's Financial Services Authority.

#### **Arab Bank**

Arab Bank Group is based in Amman, Jordan. It is the first private sector financial institution in the Arab world and the largest Arab banking institution by equity.

Arab Bank was established in Jerusalem in 1930 by the late Abdul Hameed Shoman, whose vision was to create a financial institution dedicated to the development of Arab economies.

The Group has a global network of 400 branches and subsidiaries in 28 countries and 5 continents, and enjoys a prominent position in key markets and financial centers in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the United States.

Arab Bank Group provides a wide variety of financial services to individuals, corporations, government agencies, and other international financial institutions. Its services include corporate, retail, private, investment banking and wealth management.

In 2005, the Group continued its sustainable performance, with a net profit of \$503.2 million (after taxes and provisions) representing a rise of almost 54% over 2004. Today, Arab Bank Group enjoys a shareholder equity base of US\$ 5.4





## **JOB VACANCY**

The Embassy of the United States of America announces the opening of a position within the Consular Section.

#### "ACS Caseworker"

Whether working in a specialized area of American Citizen Services (example: passport and citizenship, judicial, federal benefits, welfare and whereabouts, births and deaths, adoptions, marriages, etc.) or in mixed operations, the demands are similar. At the Full Performance Level, the jobholder receives case assignments from a variety of walk in, telephone, fax or other sources. The issues are varied and require a detailed and comprehensive subject matter knowledge that has been acquired through several years of experience in the consular sub-function. Once issues are recognized, the jobholder will apply a set of relatively complicated guidelines, such as US law, consular regulations (FAM) and established policies.

#### **Required Qualifications**

#### **Education:**

A University degree, or the jobholder may submit 2 years of Consular or 4 years of Embassy experience in lieu of the required degree.

#### **Prior Work Experience:**

The position requires a minimum of two years, but typically three years, of progressively responsible office experience involving the application of complex regulatory material relating to Consular ACS functions and sub-

#### Language Proficiency:

The jobholder should know Arabic at Level IV and English at Level IV.

Other Skills: Basic keyboard / data entry, basic numerical, and standard IT software. The jobholder must use and understand software applications and systems used in Consular and ACS.

Intellectual Skills: The jobholder is expected to read, understand and apply complex regulatory material including FAM, US regulations regarding citizenship, marriages, births and deaths abroad; internal operating procedures of the post Consular section/sub-section, external host-country legal and social policies and procedures, as well as a good understanding of US immigration and visa laws and regulations that relate to the ACS sub-function assigned. The information environment at this level is characterized by the jobholder's range of casework being more sensitive and the decisions and courses of action rendered immediately affecting a client's personal well being and or safety and security.

#### Knowledge:

The Organization: The jobholder must have an in-depth understanding of subject matter of all or most American Citizenship Services functions and sub-functions and how they relate to post's Consular programs and the Consular Section's client base. The jobholder is expected to give subject matter advice to others regarding the policies and procedures of the Mission, as well as USG policies and procedures that relate to the assigned ACS function or sub-

Grade/Salary: \*Ordinarily Resident: FSN-07 (Trainee) \$ 8,395 (Starting Salary) per annum; Or \*Ordinarily Resident: FSN-8 at Full Performance Level \$9,461 per annum

How to apply: All interested nationals should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V. and contact the Embassy Human Resources Office, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, Sanaa. Tel: 755-2000, Fax: 303-182 no later than the April 23, 2006.

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

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### VACANCY

#### HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT **Project Accountant**

#### **General Functional Areas of the Project Accountant**

Under the supervision of the project's Financial Management Officer, the accountant will be in charge of recording of all financial transactions, keeping the supporting documents, preparing the financial reports of the project as required by the government regulations and the IDA credit, preparing annual and interim project's financial statements to reflect the financial positions of the project for auditing purposes.

#### The Project Accountant's basic functions will be as follows:

- transactions of the project under the Higher Education Project (HEP) management.
- Record on a daily basis all financial transactions after ensuring that they have been properly authorized and in accordance with the budget and the HEP procedures of internal control.
- Prepare bank reconciliation between the bank's account and the Special Account (SA) withdrawals on a monthly basis to reflect the monthly receipts and disbursements from the SA.
- Prepare quarterly project financial statements under the HEP direct management, and liaise with the procurement officer, to include procurement quarterly results and the project's physical progress of activities as measured by the project's indicators. Based on the above, prepare the Project Financial Management Report (FMR) to be submitted to the SC and then to the Bank
- Prepare the credit withdrawal applications with supporting

- documentation and submit it to the HEP Manager for approval and then submission to IDA for replenishment of funds as
- Assist the external auditors in performing their annual audit of the project by providing necessary documentation, writter procedures, and annual financial statements.
- Any other tasks as required by the project Financia Management Officer.

- A minimum of five years of private sector accounting experience preferably with an auditing of accounting firm.
- A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in accounting or auditing
- A good knowledge and use of the generally accepted principles. The ability to operate accounting software, keep updated

accounting records and books of accounts, and generate

project's financial statements and other reports as needed by the project management. Proficiency in both Arabic and English

All applications along with a detailed resume should be submitted by April 12, 2006 to the following address:

**Higher Education Development Project** P.O. Box 15643

Sana'a

and other stakeholders.

years;

Email: Info@hepyemen.org

## **VACANCY**

### HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT **Financial Management Officer**

#### I. General Functional Areas of the Project Financial Officer

The Project Financial Management Officer will work within the Financial Affairs department and under his supervision will head the financial management function for the IDA credit and supervise the work of the accountants assigned to work on the credit's accounts. He/she will ensure that a proper financial management system is in place, with appropriate internal control and records and books of accounts; that these are reliable, timely, and in accordance with the generally acceptable accounting principles and government regulations; and that other reports as needed are maintained and prepared on a timely basis, communicated to the appropriate users and properly filed at the CMT

#### The Project Financial Management Officer's basic functions will be as follows:

- 1. The installation and supervision of all accounting records of the credit.
- The preparation and interpretation of the financial statements and reports of the credit. Insurance and review of the internal control system in the Financial Department for the credit. He/she will
- regularly review the internal control system to ensure those appropriate mechanisms, procedures and systems in
- The initiation, preparation and insurance of standard practices related to all accounting matters and procedures and the coordination of systems throughout the project, including clerical and office methods, records, reports and procedures.
- The compilation of all project activities and the credit's operating costs.
- The preparation and interpretation of all statistical records and reports of the credit.
- The preparation of the budget of the project and consolidation of that of the total project in conjunction with the Head of the Financial Affairs Department, and other concerned parties, and government counterparts, reflecting an annual plan covering all activities of the project for review by the Vice Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- The maintenance of adequate records of authorized appropriations and the determination that all sums expended pursuant thereto are properly accounted for.
- The ascertainment currently that financial transactions covered by minutes of the Steering Committee are properly executed and recorded.
- 10. The maintenance of adequate records of all procurement and consultants' contracts.
- 11. The verification of payments to Consultants and Other suppliers.
- 12. Ensure that all disbursements are properly authorized and recorded with all supporting documents.
- 13. Manage the cash balances to ensure the efficient use of funds.

o A minimum of seven years of private sector financial management experience preferably with a donor-funded project or a recognized accounting firm.

A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in financial management, accounting or auditing, with an understanding of

- procurement.
- The ability to translate planned activities into concrete budgets and establish standard unit costs and report on and analyze them for the purpose of recommending improvements in operations.
- Proficiency in both Arabic and English is a must. The ability to supervise accounting and other functions and report financial information usable to the various stakeholders, government, Bank and auditors.
  - The ability to supervise accounting works and motivates other to achieve positive actions and results.
  - Familiarity with computers, accounting and other software applications.

All application letters along with a detailed resume should be submitted by APRIL 12, 2006 to the following address: **Higher Education Development Project** 

P.O. Box 15643

Sana'a

Email: Info@hepyemen.org

## VACANCY

HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

#### HEDP ASSISTANT MANAGER Producing semi-annually integrated reports on project implementation: Quality control over the Contract's implementation progress according to the Terms of Reference and Work plan

The HEDP Assistant Manager will closely work with the HEDP Manager to organize and manage the coordination functions in the implementation of the World Bank Programme for Higher Education Development. Where the HEDP Manager will have the overall responsibility for the work of the unit, he will concentrate on the external relations with donors, ministries, institutions and contractors, the HEDP Assistant Manager will closely follow-up the arrangements of the HEDP Manager through the division of tasks within the HEDP unit. As such, the HEDP Assistant Manager will have the Quality Control over the Procurement, Financial, Monitoring & Evaluation Officers as well as the Secretariat.

#### <u>Duties and responsibilities</u> The HEDP Assistant Manager will assist the HEDP Manager in:

- Internal Organization and Management of the Higher
- Education Development unit; Organization and Management of Follow-up of World Bank Identification Missions, preparation and follow-up of World
- Bank Formulation Missions: Organization of the Assessment of Terms of Reference of HEDP projects
- Organization and follow up of the HEDP Evaluation Tenders; Preparation and follow-up of the Contract negotiations with
- the selected Contractors of the HEDP projects; Assisting in the organization and facilitation of the work of contracted Consultants during the Inception period;
- Organization and follow-up of meetings and workshops
- - Interested persons may send their applications to the following address: Info@hepyemen.org

The Assistant HEP Manager has the following profile:

Fluency in English and Arabic languages

Excellent communication skills;

Proactive approach;

Deadline for Applications: 12 April 2006

Assisting in resolving problems raised during the contract

Quality control over the Financial, M&E and Procurement

Report system of the HEDP unit to the World Bank Office.

Ensuring timely provision of documents to the World Bank

Background in Management (Bachelor's level at minimum)

Experience in management functions of a minimum of five

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### Taix Branch 70251812 Yemen's first and most widely-read English-language newspaper Street weddings: enjoyment mixed with fear

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

peaking about weddings in Yemen is varied and diverse. As wedding ceremonies differ from one area to another, each area has its own traditions; however, the greatest differences are often found in cities.

Economic anxiety and citizens' incomes recently had their impacts, even affecting the way wedding ceremonies are held. Holding wedding parties in cities is more expensive than in villages. In cities, hiring halls to receive men and another for women is added to the cost of paying the dowry. This has caused city residents, especially in Sana'a, to avoid holding wedding ceremonies in halls. Expensive men's ceremonies particularly are avoided.



A huge wedding tent blocking one of the streets in Sana'a.



Despite the economic situation, Yemenis are still holding lively weddings.

became the alternative for wedding ceremonies. Wedding enjoyment and happiness is not an appropriate excuse for those holding ceremonies in the street due to their economic situation.

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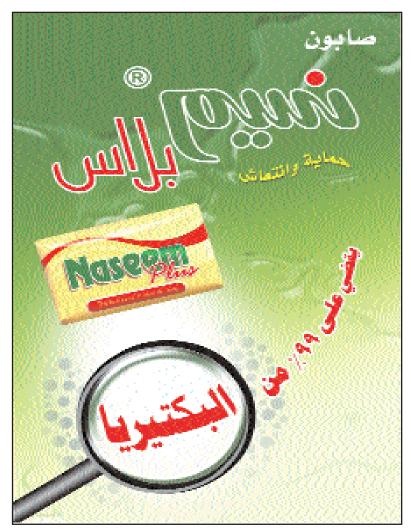
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The inconvenience of holding wedding ceremonies in the street varies from annoyance to blocking side streets for passing cars. A loudspeaker in the living area - placed next to the ceremony tent, which often is set up in the middle of the street - is another source of nuisance. Wedding guests are received inside this tent where they chew qat, listen to songs and enjoy watching distinctive traditional dances.

Most bridegrooms who hold their wedding ceremonies in the street complain of confusion and indiscipline they suffer. They receive both those they know and others they don't, as many intruders and unemployed come to the ceremony tent without being invited. They often do not know the bridegroom nor does he know them. The bridegroom loses focus and cannot sit with his guests and enjoy talking with them, as he obsesses that an accident may happen. Residents near wedding site often complain about the loudspeaker sounds and the fact that others cannot reach their homes by car.

There are many accounts and much talk of holding wedding ceremonies in the street and although all admit it is a negative phenomenon, the fact remains that citizens resort to it due to the expense of holding them in halls.

Each one holding a ceremony in the street and those opposing it have their justifications. While economics control their behavior, their enjoyment remains incomplete.





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#### CONSTRUCTION OF MECHANICAL AND HEAVY CIVIL PROJECTS

- Petrochemical plants, refineries.
- Heavy, light industrial plants. Power and desalination plants.
- Fuel and water storage tanks.
- Oil fields ancillary installations
- Air purification for industry Marine docks, harbours, deep sea berths & refinery terminals.
- Offshore structures and underwater works.
- Pipelines construction and maintenance.
- Sewage treatment plants & collection networks.
- Airports, roads, highways, bridges & fly-overs.
- High quality buildings & sports complexes.
- Water treatment plants, reservoirs & distribution

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