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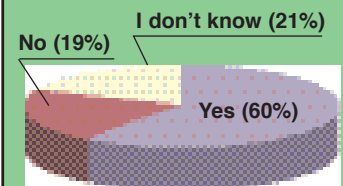
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Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
Amnesty International's recent report accused the Yemeni government of chronically committing human rights abuses. Do you think the report is accurate?



This edition's question:

Official media organizations always promote investment in Yemen, while many Yemeni and foreign investors see that the investment situation is discouraging. Do you think some will risk investing in Yemen?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

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

Journalists harassed at Sana'a Airport

Journalists recently have been searched and their papers taken from them at Sana'a Airport. The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate plans to sue security police members. The prime minister also promised to order an investigation into the violation.

By: Mustafa Rajeh

SANA'A, May 27 — The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) is preparing to hold a plenary meeting to begin protest activities regarding practices against journalists in response to the two-hour airport detention of journalists Jamal Amer, Al-Wasat newspaper Editor-in-Chief, and YJS Secretary-General Hafidh Al-Bukari. All papers and books they were carrying were confiscated after they were subjected to what they described as humiliating searches.

Al-Bukari, who was returning from a conference in Tunis last Thursday, said

airport political security personnel held him for two hours and seized his personal papers, adding that they demanded he admit activity against the nation during his visit to the United States, despite the fact that he was not visiting the U.S.

On the other hand, Amer was returning from the United Arab Emirates where he had interviewed Mujahid Al-Qahali, a prominent opposition member abroad. Amer said political security representatives at the airport searched him and accused him of being a danger to the nation.



Hafidh Al-Bukari



Jamal Amer

A YJS statement released about the incident, a copy of which the Yemen Times received, denounced measures of detaining, searching and questioning such as Al-Bukari and Amer experienced. The statement indicated that the syndicate preserves its legal right to sue security apparatuses committing such practices outside the law and demanded punishing them according to the law.

Continued on page 2

Sultan to arrive in Yemen for GCC entry talks

By: Adel Al-Khawlani

SANA'A, May 28 — Crown prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Aviation, is scheduled to visit Yemen May 31 for talks with Yemeni officials on its accession to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Foreign Ministry announced Sunday.

The Saudi prince is due to tour Hadramout's provincial capital of Mukalla as part of his official visit to the country. He will meet Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal to discuss several other issues, including the fight against terrorism and preventing cross-border weapons and drug trafficking.

The Saudi official's visit is the fruit of a series of Yemeni efforts to join the six-nation GCC. The matter is due to top the two sides' talks in coming days.

Abdullah Al-Ahwal, Yemeni Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said Thursday that Yemen's admission to the GCC will top the prince's agenda during his visit to Yemen this week.

"Yemen reiterates its wish to join the GCC and is qualified to gain GCC membership. Full GCC membership for Yemen certainly will reflect the historical ties linking it to the rest of the Arab Gulf," Al-Ahwal said, "The two bordering



Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz

nations' officials are to discuss steps Yemen must take prior to joining the GCC."

The Yemeni envoy added that his country, with its historical heritage, political strength and important strategic location for security and stability in the Arabian Peninsula and GCC nations, is qualified to join.

According to the diplomat, the Saudi prince will co-preside over a meeting of the newly established Saudi-Yemeni Coordination Council, a joint body responsible for bilateral cooperation on security issues.

Continued on page 2

Yemen unsafe for investment

A European Parliament delegation held a press conference Thursday, wherein it highlighted elections, development, and democracy in Yemen.

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

SANA'A, May 28 — Dr. Ralf Dreyer, European Commission Charge d' Affaires in Sana'a, affirmed that Yemen is unsafe for both foreign and local investment. "You need local as well as foreign investment. Unfortunately, until now, Yemen doesn't seem safe and funds will not go to places where it's unsafe. In order to attract funding, there should be more confidence in the country's economic and political system."

For her part, Avril Doyle, European Parliament delegation vice president, said Yemen doesn't have conditions to attract foreign investment, as there's no confidence in its economic system. "There are rich Yemenis who don't invest in Yemen,

which means they don't trust the economic system. Foreign investors don't have confidence in Yemen's economy."

Regarding elections, European Parliament delegation president Tobias Pfluger clarified that the European Parliament delegation is very much interested in the upcoming elections, particularly local elections.

"It's important to look to the coming elections, as we are parliamentarians, and we think local elections are most important. We've met with President Ali Abdullah Saleh and asked him if he'll be a candidate and he said he's not. But then he said he wants to come to Brussels next time, so we think we'll see him re-elected as president."

Continued on page 2



Tobias Pfluger (center) speaks at the press conference, stressing that a European observation mission should be free to go anywhere it wants, as both government and opposition parties showed interest in receiving such a mission.

Conference examines ways to attract capital

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

The first investment and HR development conference, sponsored by Gobari Investment Group, concludes today under the title, "Development and investment can only be realized by our own efforts."

Seven nations and a number of Yemeni private sector members participated in the conference. Conference head Abdullah Ali Mohamed Abulwahab Gobari confirmed that the

conference's aims focused on recognizing the functions of investment companies and authorities on an international level and principals for typical human resources utilization.

Presenting the private sector's role based on development in some countries was another objective, as well as revealing Western interest in Yemen as a strategic area that can be utilized. The issue of strengthening relations between Arab and Yemeni capital in order to find real partnership was



Abdu Rabo Mansour Hadhi, Yemeni Vice President, launches the conference.

another conference topic. Challenges encountered by Yemen's investment sector also were looked into in an effort to seek appropriate solutions to them.

Motives that may be created by Sana'a declaration were encouraged as well.

Continued on page 2

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Java toll tops 3,000

More than 3,000 people are now known to have died in the deadly earthquake that struck Java, Indonesia's main island, on Saturday morning.

"The total death toll now is 3,002," Direvan, an official at the social affairs ministry's disaster task force in Jakarta, said.

The International Red Cross said that some 200,000 people have been displaced by the massive earthquake.

Witnesses said the brunt of the quake was borne by Yogyakarta, an ancient royal city, near Mount Merapi, a volcano that has been on alert for a large eruption this month. A volcanologist in Yogyakarta said the quake was tectonic and not caused by the volcano, but said it had increased Merapi's activity.

As darkness fell, thousands prepared to spend the night outside ruined homes or in the grounds of mosques, churches and schools.

"It's pitch dark. We have to use candles and we are sitting outside now. We are too scared to sleep inside. The radio keeps saying there will be more quakes. We still feel the tremors," said Tjut Nariman, who lives on the outskirts of Yogyakarta.

Tsunami fears

The 6.2 magnitude quake struck just after dawn and was the third major tremor to devastate Indonesia in 18 months, the worst being the quake on December 26, 2004 and its resulting tsunami which left some 170,000 people dead or missing around Aceh.

The epicentre of the quake, which

struck just before 6am (2300 GMT), was offshore. Many people feared the quake would be followed by a tsunami and fled coastal homes for higher ground.

No tsunami came but the fear lingered on into the night.

Many thousands of people have been injured and medical facilities were quickly overwhelmed.

Witnesses said hundreds of houses had collapsed in the quake. Office and government buildings were also in ruins.

Hospital patients had been moved outside due to fears of aftershocks.

Thousands of residents were taking refuge in Yogyakarta's main square while thousands of others were sheltering at compounds of scores of mosques, churches and hospitals

throughout the region. Yogyakarta is about 25km north of the Indian Ocean coast.

A witness in Yogyakarta said many people there had fled their homes while thousands of others from areas around the city were trying to evacuate to it, many fearing a tsunami.

Dizzy

One Yogyakarta resident, Nani Kasidjo, said: "I was having a morning walk and suddenly I felt dizzy and then people ran out of their houses screaming 'Earthquake!'."

Indonesia's national airline, Garuda, said Yogyakarta's airport was closed.

Roads leading to the coast were cracked and electricity was off, witnesses said.

Source: www.aljazeera.net

US 'winding up' Iraq deaths probe

An investigation into claims that US marines may have deliberately killed civilians in Iraq is nearing its end, the Pentagon says.

Official accounts from the Iraqi city of Haditha in November said 15 people were killed by a bomb and firefight.

But reports in the US press say as

many as 24 people may have died, and that murder charges may be in preparation.

Moves are being made to prepare the public, perhaps for something shocking, says a BBC correspondent in Washington.

A defence department spokesman

said he believed the inquiry into Haditha - being carried out by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service - was nearing an end.

But he would not say what investigators had found, and added that he did not expect an announcement on charges in the next few days.

Conflicting accounts

What took place in Haditha on 19 November last year is not clear.

The US military said in statements issued after the incident that 15 Iraqi civilians had been killed by the blast of a roadside bomb, or in a subsequent firefight between US marines and insurgents.

But local Iraqis told a different story. The criminal investigation has been seeking to establish whether or not the marines killed civilians in cold blood.

A 10-year-old girl told The Times of London this weekend that US soldiers deliberately shot and killed almost her entire family as she lay hiding in the corner.

Iman Hassan described how she heard the dying groans of her grandfather, mother, father, two uncles and a young cousin.

The Los Angeles Times has also reported that investigators have concluded that marines went on the rampage, killing unarmed civilians, including women and children, after a marine was killed by a roadside bomb.

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TeleYemen lowers international tariffs

SANA'A, May 27 – TeleYemen, the Yemeni Company for International Communication, has launched its fourth general discount on international call rates thus becoming the cheapest company in the Gulf.

Engineer Kamal Al-Jabri, General Manager of the General Corporation for Communications, declared that “this discount coincides with the celebrations of the country on the 16th anniversary of Yemeni Reunification.” He added that “it will facilitate communication between Yemenis inside and outside the country in accordance with the new technical and commercial changes influencing the international market of communications and will create a balance between incoming and outgoing calls.”

For his part, Mr. Jan Michel, Executive Manager of TeleYemen, pledged that “the discount in international calls tariffs has been made in accordance with the company promises. It is also built upon studies and reviews for services fees to match the income [levels] of all Yemeni people. The new tariff is suitable and everyone will be able to communicate with their relatives and friends in the Gulf. TeleYemen is trying [its] best to develop its services to be a leading company through distinctive services and competitive prices.”

“The discount will include those calls from fixed telephones, mobiles, [and] international calling cards to fixed phones in Gulf,” he added.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites International consultants to apply for the following positions its project "Decentralization and Local Development Support Programme (DLDSP)"

1- Post Title: International Consultant on Public Awareness Campaign
 Duration: SSA-50 Working Days

Responsibilities

- Develop trial and refine and implement national and local-level civic education mass media campaign designed to enhance public and civic awareness, understanding and involvement in Yemen's decentralization process.
- Define the parameters of the public awareness campaign such as messages, target groups and mediums used to transmit messages.
- Develop manuals, methods and materials to be used by district Local Authorities to assure adequate citizen participation including a manual on implementation and citizen participation in Public Expenditure Management (PEM).
- Provide districts and their councils with responsive materials and training to facilitate the effective and sustainable engagement of communities and develop methods and mechanisms to institutionalize their participation in local affairs through their elected representatives, and in particular in the planning process, the allocation and use of public resources, addressing of needs, and monitoring of local authorities' performance - with a focus on women's participation.
- Support the institutionalization of citizen participation and including women, in local level planning, tendering, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities funded by public resources.
- Perform any other duties as required.

Qualifications

- A minimum of a university degree.
- The consultant will have proven academic background in the field of information/communication technologies, and significant experience in the design of media campaigns and learning materials and training modules in cross cultural settings.
- The consultant will preferably have some experience in the development of these materials in the context of decentralization, civic developed countries.

2- Post Title: Local Development Engineer
 Duration: SSA-2 months

Responsibilities

- Develop procedures for reviewing project design and costing documents, bidding documents, implementation contracts, contractor's implementation schedules and agreed upon guidelines for keeping the project work site pollution free and environmentally safe, to be used as benchmarks for assessing the efficiency and economy of project execution.
- Carryout an actual review of all project implementation documents for all 2005 in the selected pilot district, to test the proposed procedures as above and introduce refinements as necessary.
- Develop a methodology and procedures for reviewing the efficiency of project implementation. Produce an outline for summarizing the findings and presenting them in a clear and effective manner.
- Develop technical procedures for reviewing adherence of project implementation activities and physical outputs to agreed-upon technical implementation standards and specifications as well as design guidelines that are specific to the function of an asset. Produce an outline for summarizing the findings and presenting them in a simple and effective manner.
- Carryout such an assessment on all 2005 executed projects in one pilot district to demonstrate and test methodology and refine procedures as needed.
- Review project environmental analysis and management plans to establish a clear baseline for assessing environmental impact of projects.
- Carryout an environmental impact assessment on all 2005 projects executed in one pilot district to test the methodology.
- Perform any other duties as required.

Qualification

- Should have extensive experience in local development and international donor standards, implementation of small scale infrastructure and decentralization.
- Should be qualified to assess and evaluate small-scale infrastructure projects.
- Be fluent in English and Arabic – spoken and written

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ve/undp-vacancies.htm> or <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/res.nsf/doc212?> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates.

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The deadline for receiving applications is Saturday, 30 June 2006

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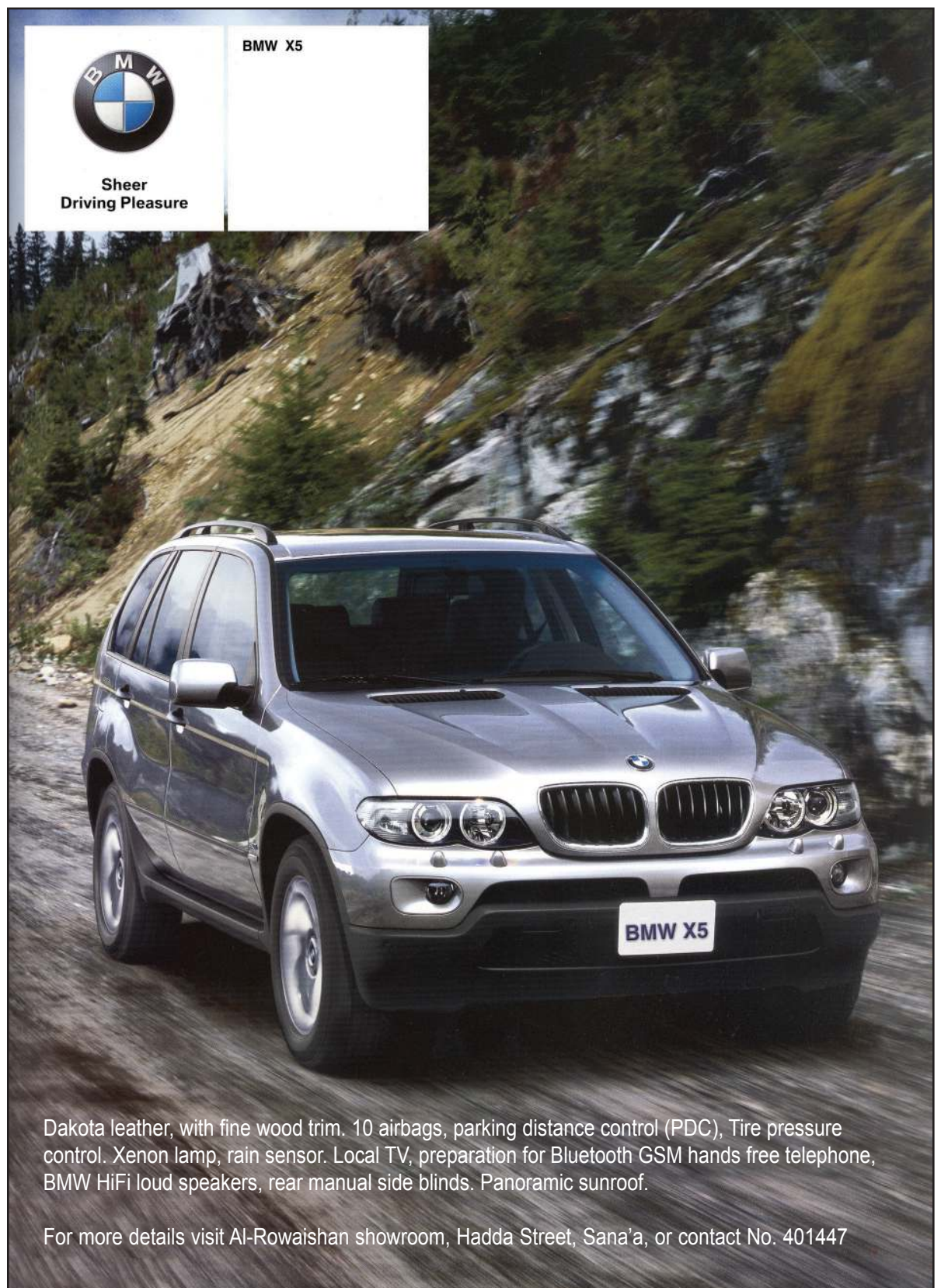
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Child Parliament: Dream or reality?

By: Mohammed Al-Jabri

For the first time in Yemen's history and amid government fears, a Child Parliament was announced in 2000. "At first, official media refused to announce the Child Parliament for fear of comparing it with Parliament," Democracy School head Jamal Al-Shami said. "The idea of Child Parliament was unacceptable. The government, represented by the Human Rights Ministry, tried to take the project from us at that time."

Despite all difficulties, Child Parliament members were elected; however, this first experience was conducted only in the Capital Secretariat. Thirty-three students were elected from a handful of schools, among them eight females. Al-Shami explained that Al-Noshata Foundation first adopted the idea of forming a Child Parliament in 2000.

"We faced difficulties because we received no constant government funding. The government itself interfered in Child Parliament, as the Human Rights Ministry sought to take the great project. Al-Noshata

Foundation could not continue this way and ended in 2002," Al-Shami added. But then the idea was welcomed greatly, especially after President Ali Abdullah Saleh met with Child Parliament members.

The Democracy School was established a few months later, roughly in April of that same year, and used as Child Parliament's General Secretariat since then. No new Child Parliament elections were held in 2002; however, 2004 witnessed widespread elections, with some 20,000 students participating nationwide. Thirty-six students were elected, including 10 females.

Child Parliament's 2006 elections were conducted nationwide, with approximately 30,000 students participating. Thirty-nine members were elected, including 13 females. Nada'a Al-Sherai was elected president and Hamoud Ja'fer vice president.

2004 Child Parliament

Nabil Afif Al-Yafei was elected 2004 Child Parliament president and Marwa Jamal vice president. During their sessions, members conducted a number of activities, most notably

regarding child trafficking. They also questioned several ministers and the U.S. Embassy.

During its third session, Child Parliament members questioned the education minister regarding making education free of charge. They asked about the ministry's role in fulfilling international conventions of compulsory and free education. They also questioned Deputy Human Rights Minister Ali Tayseer on the same topic and the ministry's role in following up the compulsory education law.

After concluding its third session, Child Parliament members organized a student march in an effort to submit third session recommendations. Beginning from Parliament's premises, they marched to the Education Ministry where they met Minister Dr. Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi, to whom they submitted their recommendations. Below are some of those recommendations:

- 1- To enact the free and compulsory education laws
- 2- To impose penalties on those parents depriving their children of education
- 3- To include a Child Rights and Democratic Education subject in the curriculum
- 4- To add special passages for physically handicapped students in schools
- 5- To forbid the U.S. from interfering in molding the education curriculum

Its fourth session stressed child trafficking. During this session, Child Parliament members questioned the U.S. Embassy regarding its not signing the Child Rights Treaty. Political attaché Faris Asaad and information attaché Mr. Tim replied to their questions.

In their fifth session, they questioned Information Minister Hussein Al-Awadi about the ministry's role in bringing out child rights. They also questioned media program and news directors.

Unknown Parliament

Child Parliament is not known to all Yemeni children, as very few know about their Parliament. Al-Shami attributes this problem to media's less active role. "Another reason is that there are a lot of schools. Elections are held in only a very few schools. For example, only four Capital Secretariat schools were chosen."

In this regard, Jamal explained, "The media was ignorant during 2004 and 2005, except for announcing Child Parliament's first session. Thus, children have no idea and know nothing about their Parliament in order to demand their rights."

When asked about Child Parliament, seventh grade student Abdulrahman Mohammed replied, "What are you talking about? What is this Child Parliament? I can elect it? What is election? What do you mean by child rights? Do we have rights? What are they then? I have never heard of Child Parliament. Do you mean politics? I know nothing of the sort."

Eighth-grader Shadi Al-Nuzeili, 14, said, "I didn't participate in electing Child Parliament members, as our school was not selected to participate. I learned about Child Parliament when I heard a radio program about it. Students are elected to maintain children's rights. When we face any problem, we just complain to school administration. That's all I know of Child Parliament."

Eighth-grader Mohammed Abbas Al-Moshki, 17, said, "This is the first time I've heard of this so-called Child Parliament and I don't even know what Parliament is. I think Child Parliament's main objective is to defend our rights. My teachers always hit me because I don't do my homework or I make noise. I didn't know that there's a Child Parliament to defend our rights."

Eighth-grader Al-Zubair Al-Badani, 13, said, "I once nominated myself for Child Parliament in 2004, but immediately withdrew because I knew nothing of Child Parliament. I was given a form to fill out, but then



Schoolgrounds are where students elect their representatives to the Child Parliament.

didn't nominate myself. Of course, I participated in the elections, but frankly speaking, I don't know why I did. I don't even know what children do in Child Parliament. I know none of my friends who went there to complain or do anything."

Funding difficulties

Child Parliament mainly faces problems regarding funding. Jamal noted that such funding difficulties were evident in 2004 and 2005. "Child Parliament is a community-related organization and a new experience for Yemeni society, whereby children become accustomed to democracy, opinion and counter-opinion and asking for their constitutionally guaranteed rights. Thus, government should finance it," she added.

Al-Shami also clarified that Child Parliament's main obstacle is funding. "The government doesn't provide us with funding. Sometimes, organizations receive funding through personal relations with some organizations and embassies. We wonder why other organizations are

funded without reason."

Elections

Not all students or schools participate in electing Child Parliament members, as only eighth and ninth grade students are allowed to participate. The Education Ministry appoints those schools that will participate in elections, while the government makes election requirements available. Voting occurs in schools under Democracy School supervision. Once elected, Child Parliament members hold sessions every three months on Parliament premises.

According to Al-Shami, some headmasters and parents display fanaticism during elections, with the Democracy School receiving contested cases. However, no political party interests were found. "I participated in 2004 elections and witnessed no party interests," Al-Badani recalled.

Comparing Yemen's Child Parliament with those in other Arab states, Al-Shami said Yemen's Child Parliament is the best, as it is run by a non-governmental organization.



Hundreds of students, some Child Parliament members, gathered at the Yemeni Parliament building demonstrating for a new education law.

VACANCY

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مركز خدمات الزبائن ١٥٣

Studies warn of public's lack of medical knowledge

By: Mohammed Rajeh

In an attempt to publicize the poor state of medical conditions in Yemen by examining the spread of diseases and epidemics in a country where most of the population experiences is impoverished, a group of graduate students from Sana'a University College of Medicine have undertaken studies to bring to light information about the public's medical knowledge and how such knowledge may affect their way of receiving medical attention.

The studies, conducted at the medical students' own expense, reveals the following important information.

Disease ignorance

The first study concentrated on diabetes in Yemen. According to the study, the main problem is not Yemen's constantly increasing number of diabetes cases, but lack of patient information about the disease.

Diabetes is a disease wherein the pancreas produces little or no insulin, a hormone that helps body tissues absorb glucose (sugar) so it can be used as an energy source. The condition also may develop if muscle, fat and liver cells respond poorly to insulin.

In those with diabetes, glucose levels build up in blood and urine causing excessive urination, thirst, hunger and problems with fat and protein metabolism. This type of diabetes is called diabetes mellitus, which differs from the less common diabetes insipidus caused by lack of the hormone vasopressin which controls the amount of urine secreted.

Diabetes is classified into two types. In Type 1 diabetes, formerly called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile-onset diabetes, the body does not produce insulin or produces it only in very small quantities. In Type 2 diabetes, formerly known as non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or adult-

onset diabetes, the body's delicate balance between insulin production and cells' ability to use insulin goes awry.

Researchers conducting this study visited many clinics and public hospitals, meeting 250 diabetes patients - 151 men and 99 women. Eighty-nine percent had no idea about diabetes types or its causes. Fifty-three percent believed it is a hereditary disease, while 38 percent couldn't answer the question. Regarding the diet that diabetes patients must follow, 44 percent only followed it rarely, 36 percent don't follow it regularly and eight percent don't follow it at all.

Epilepsy considered madness

Another study considered the health and social problem of epilepsy, confirming that most Yemenis have no idea about how to deal with epilepsy patients. However, the most important point that the study referred to is the absence of studies and statistics reflecting the disease's spread in Yemen. The study also revealed society's lack of medical knowledge, which considers epilepsy madness.

Epilepsy, also called seizure disorder, is a chronic disorder briefly interrupting the brain's normal electrical activity, thereby causing seizures. It is characterized by a variety of symptoms including uncontrolled body movements, disorientation or confusion, sudden fear or loss of consciousness. Epilepsy may result from a head injury, stroke, brain tumor, lead poisoning, genetic conditions or severe infections like meningitis or encephalitis. In more than 70 percent of cases, no cause is identified.

The study involved 1,328 families in Azal district in Sana'a, where 168 epilepsy cases have been discovered, which is considered a high number in a small region. The study estimated that the rate of its spread, according to gender, is 14 cases for every 1,000 males and 11 cases for every 1,000 females.

Seventy percent of those infected are

poor and suffer low living standards. Their situation is not considered the illness's cause, but it prevents most patients from obtaining medication.

The study referred to the fact that most epilepsy patients live in complete isolation, as the community deals with them very uncertainly, and patients

Eighty-nine percent had no idea about diabetes types or its causes

Herbal medicine is the most common alternative medicine in Yemen.

The studies, conducted at the medical students' own expense

frequently are abandoned. It warned that many epilepsy patients are mistreated and do not receive medication at all.

Stroke - a real problem

Another group of students visited Al-Kuwait Hospital to study brain strokes. The study involved 505 patients, 51 percent of whom are between 45 and 65 years old.

Stroke, which is caused by a lack of blood flow to part of the brain, results in permanent damage to brain tissue and in many cases, permanent disability for the patient. For example, a patient who has had a stroke may develop paralysis on one or both sides of the body, have difficulty walking, eating or performing other daily activities or lose the ability to speak or understand speech.

According to the study, high blood pressure is the main factor causing strokes among Yemenis.

Regarding stroke types, the study pointed out that 82 percent of patients suffer hemorrhagic strokes, whereas 61 percent suffer ischemic strokes. The study found that strokes are one of Yemen's leading causes of death and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability.

Therefore, researchers conducting this study recommended the Ministry of Health pay more attention to this issue by supporting studies and research in this field and raising public awareness on how to deal with this disease.

Toxemia threatens pregnant women
Research also focused on the medical

state of maternity issues like pregnancy, delivery and complications due to early marriage. Maternal fatalities during pregnancy and delivery are estimated at 365 cases for every 1,000 deliveries.

The aim of the study, conducted by 10 students under the supervision of Dr. Ahmed Al-Haddad, was to learn the factors leading to toxemia in pregnant women. Considered the main reason leading to death among Yemeni mothers and infants, the study found that toxemia causes 15 percent of maternal deaths, compared with two percent in developed countries.

The study included 2,686 pregnant women in public hospital delivery departments in the capital and in other governorates between August 2004 and February 2005. It exposed that illiterate women, those who chew qat and those giving birth many times are most subject to toxemia during pregnancy.

Study results raised questions of the impact of medical awareness campaigns conducted by NGOs and involved local authorities. According to the study, such efforts weren't able to encourage pregnant women to request regular care. It pointed to medical facilities in many regions, particularly rural areas, which lack equipment and qualified personnel, although huge governmental budget sums are devoted to supporting maternal health care.

Disability and a hard life

Disability occupied a large portion of the studies, one of which involved 400 disabled individuals over 18 years old who visit the Artificial Limb Center in Sana'a. The study estimated that 58 percent of handicapped are males, whereas 42 percent are females. Sixty-five percent live in urban regions, whereas 35 percent of disabled individuals who can reach the center live in rural regions.

Fifty-one percent of disabilities were due to amputations resulting from car accidents. Other types of disabilities were from polio, cerebral palsy and disabilities due to accidental falls, firearm accidents and medical errors.

The study referred to low quality of services offered to the disabled in some institutions and the absent of these services in many other establishments, which create difficulties and obstacles that obstruct their uneasy life. Research concluded that society must make certain changes to enable those living with disabilities to participate more easily in business and social activities.

Alternative medicine

Another study focused on the state of alternative medicine in Yemen,

Most epilepsy patients live in complete isolation, as the community deals with them very uncertainly, and patients frequently are abandoned.



Bloodletting is a common alternative medicine in Yemen.

mentioning that most citizens feel that alternative medicine is more effective. Lack of trust and dissatisfaction with offered medical services were the main reasons for their return to such types of treatment.

Herbal medicine is the most common

alternative medicine in Yemen, followed by massage and acupuncture. The most common diseases this kind of treatment attempts to heal are: chronic pain, arthritis, headaches, stomachaches, respiratory diseases and mental illness.

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Many Yemeni patients have no idea about the nature of their disease.

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Al-Sukhnah: The disease terminator

By: Mazen Al-Saqqaf
Hodeidah Bureau

Despite advances in medical science and its rapid development in probing and curing a variety of diseases, traditional medicine's importance has remained high. Citizens have not abandoned the prescriptions of folk medical practitioners, nor have they stopped visiting natural spas, at which they find comfort and cure.

Al-Sukhnah spas and alternative medicine

Many head for this destination seeking a cure for their diseases, which in most cases, are chronic. This comes after having failed to find a cure at clinics or hospitals providing contemporary medical services. They usually hear about benefits received by patients frequenting therapeutic spas across the country, such as Al-Sukhnah in Hodeidah province, Damt in Al-Dhale' province and Ali spas in Dhamar province.

Al-Sukhnah spas' reputation drew us to visit to learn more about its ancient history and its healing properties.

Enjoyment and cure

Al-Sukhnah is an area lying west of Bara' Mountains, 75 km. from Hodeidah city on the eastern side. It has been famed for its natural spas, historical attractions, picturesque environment and simple people. Traveling toward it, one becomes joyous at seeing the rows of trees alongside the 15-km. road from Al-Mansoura area. They seem as though they have prepared themselves to receive visitors from around the nation and make them happy.

An old military base

Approaching Al-Sukhnah, one's sight is attracted toward a castle erected in the foreground, welcoming visitors with dignity and pride and protecting the area from any dangers. It dates back to the era of Imam Ahmed bin Yahya Hamid Al-Din, who ordered it built in 1952 as a military base to reinforce local security and calmness.

Reaching the castle is difficult due to the ruggedness of the path leading to it. Small openings pierce the castle walls for surveillance. Below the castle is a water tank and ditch used to contain



Imam's palace built close to Al-Sukhnah hot water springs.

rainwater and provide water for locals.

Imam's palace a healing house

Imam Ahmed frequently visited Al-Sukhnah in winter for bathing and recreational purposes, staying in the palace he ordered built as a housing campus. Consisting of two floors, it has several annexes for reception, housing, offices and barracks.

The palace has three main gates and Al-Sukhnah spas lie below the palace. The spas pour into three basins within the palace area and three outside – three for men and three for women. This triple division is due to differences in water temperatures: one reaches 30 degrees Celsius, the second reaches 40 degrees Celsius, while the third reaches as high as 57 degrees Celsius. Temperatures remain stable throughout the year.

Individuals visit the spas to cure illnesses like rheumatism, skin diseases, etc. Therefore, Al-Sukhnah became a tourist and historical area and the Imam's palace was turned into a healing house. Simple old-style dwellings can be found near the spas and are used as hotels for cure-seekers.

Legendary healing capacity

Many citizens suffering various diseases hear about Al-Sukhnah spas' magical capacity to cure illnesses, so they cherish hope and head there.

One such patient was 55-year-old

No'man Mansour Al-Ward, who suffered a clot blocking blood in his left hand and leg, thereby paralyzing them. He also suffered a neurological disorder that made his head and lower jaw involuntarily and continuously move. This condition had continued for five years, wherein he visited various hospitals seeking a cure, which seemed nearly impossible to him.

Hearing about Al-Sukhnah and its healing properties, Al-Ward decided to visit, whereupon he was received by an individual providing massage and medical services. After two weeks of massage and bathing, his jaw stopped trembling and his body became almost normal. He now uses a stick to walk easily, whereas he never could walk before.

Another individual is 65-year-old Haj Fayiz Abdul-Khaleq Al-Shar'abi, who suffered 12 years with gout (as physicians told him during his treatment), which is a swelling at the knees and extending to the feet. As he grew older, the illness intensified. He consulted many hospitals and found nothing but painkillers, whose effects suddenly disappear.

According to his relatives' advice, Al-Shar'abi planned to visit Al-Sukhnah, although he had visited spas in other areas. Following regular one-week bathings in Al-Sukhnah spas, he felt relieved, the swelling shrank and his legs became nearly painless.

Haj Ahmed Al-Dhamari experienced

the same interesting cure trip. His son Abdullah took him to many hospitals in the country and consulted several physicians about his half-paralysis. Finding no improvement, he accompanied his father to Egypt, where he was told that Al-Dhamari's cure was in natural spas.

They then returned to Yemen and went to Al-Sukhnah, hoping Al-Dhamari would be cured. In half a month's time, his condition improved and he was getting better day by day. He could move, talk and walk on his feet, which he previously could not.

Local massager and medic Ahmed Ali, 30, said Al-Sukhnah has a legendary healing capacity characterized by the presence of highly salty sulfur water, which is used to treat the most complicated diseases. He described the medical method he uses with each case.

"I learned it from my ancestors who were like me," he said. "They passed this profession from one generation to another. In the past, there were no medical references to consult in treating cases, so they depended totally on their experience."

Despite its limited resources, Al-Sukhnah has become a center of interest for patients who resort to it and find what they cannot find in modern medical facilities – it restores their smiles and laughter from the mouth of illness. With God's will, it recovers hope for the hopeless.

Ja'far Al-Dhafari: Pioneer poetry researcher

By: Abdul-Bari Taher

Since the onset of the 1970s, erudite and significant researchers began appearing in Al-Thaqafah Al-Jadidah (New Culture) magazine published by the Ministry of Culture in Aden. This research bore Dr. Ja'far Al-Dhafari's name, which was quite famous, as he did his master's in London in the early 1960s on Humaini poetry.

Al-Dhafari's thesis was in English and marked a serious and real scientific investigation into Humaini poetry. This unprecedented academic dissertation was ignored, either because the research community ignored English or due to other reasons.

This important dissertation has not been translated yet, except for two parts published in Al-Yemen magazine published by the Aden-based Center for Study and Research.

Research on Humaini poetry is characterized by accuracy, profundity and scientific spirit. The researcher groups Yemeni poetry into Hakami (standard) and Humaini (tuned poetry written in a daily speech dialect). He notes that dictionary authors do not gloss over the word Humaini, even Nashwan Al-Himyari in his Shams Al-Uloom, as well as Al-Saghani and Ibn Duraid, who visited and studied in Yemen.

In the two parts published in Al-

Yemen, a revered magazine whose editor-in-chief was Al-Dhafari himself, he explained the term Humaini in length. Its ingenuity was apparent in the accuracy of division and the definition's exactness adopted by researchers, unfortunately without acknowledging its origin.

I particularly was drawn to the part of Al-Dhafari's definition wherein he says that Humaini poetry is tuned Arabic poetry written in any daily speech dialect. He adds that the term Humaini in the past referred to a particular type of poetry. He then further dove into reviewing its history, beginning with this poetic genre's first pioneer, Ibn Fulaitah, who, according to historian Al-Khazraji, is one of Yemen's outstanding Humaini poets.

In fact, researchers coming after Al-Dhafari, although numerous, did not add much to his definition and endorsed it. However, there are still differences concerning Humaini poetry's antiquity. Researchers like Ahmed Mohammed Al-Shami and Mohammed bin Ali Al-Akwa' claim that it dates back to pre-Islamic times.

Important additions concern the language of a type of Humaini poetry characterized by the Tihama dialect. There are also differences as to the relationship between Humaini poetry and Andalusian Muwashah and which pre-existed the other.

Al-Dhafari put the groups into three classes, differing in regard to the terms Humaini and Muwashah. He studied each class's opinions and presented an in-depth study of each's definitions, along with objective and artistic criticism of their definitions and viewpoints.

Al-Dhafari concluded interesting findings. Due to the fact that Humaini poetry adhered to tuned standard verse, it resulted in diversifying Yemeni dialects and changes from time to time. Due to the fact that only Arab words were used, the song was unified, thus deeply affecting taste and sentiments.

The term Hakami is attributed to the Hukm of Kahlan tribe east of Jaizan, now in Saudi Arabia, when he couldn't trace the origin of the term Humaini. Researchers later reached results linking the term to Humainiah village near the town of Hais. The whole area is called Humainiah, which is home to many famous Humaini poets like Ibn Fulaitah, Al-Mazzah, Al-Alawi, Al-Ahdal, and most important of all Abu Bakr bin Ibrahim bin Yusuf Al-Hakkak.

The researcher also noted the semblance between the Arabic term Humaini and the English hymn. He claimed that modification in the phonology of the word is always associated with loan words. He further linked Greece and the pre-Islam Ma'ini State. These are opinions that have bearing on historical facts.

He also goes on to discuss the issue of poetry compilation which lasted for 150 years and in six tribes. Actually tribalism and tendency towards nomadic life played a decisive role in documenting language. This deprived the Arabic language of auxiliary sources especially in the urban areas of Yemen, Iraq, and Hijaz.

The other part deals with the most important Humaini poets and the real start of this fantastic human experience. As earlier researchers did, he also started with the most notable personalities: Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Fulaitah Al-Hakami and imam Al-Wathiq Billah Al-Mutahhar bin Mohammed bin Al-Mutahhar. Researcher Abdul-Jabbar Bajil referred to a poet who came before these two who is Abu Bakr Al-Hakkak from the same area-Hais.

Poet and intellectual Ahmed Mohammed Al-Shami did another study of Al-Humaini in his "From Yemeni Literature." He clearly provided an evidence that the experience in Humaini poetry dates back to pre-Islam namely to the time of Imri'u Al-Qais, the foremost Arab poet ever. He cited many examples as evidence. He also confirmed that the Andalusian Muwashah has its origin in Yemeni Humaini poetry and cited many examples for the purpose, providing explanatory comparisons between the Andalusian Muwashah and Yemeni Humaini poetry.

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 31

Translated by Edward FitzGerald

The mighty Mahmud, the
victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and
black horde
Of fears and sorrows that
infest the soul
Scatters and slays with his
enchanted sword.

Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalmah Al-Tayyibah

Yemen: The People and Culture (IV)

Author: Qadhi Abdullah Abdul-Wahhab Al-Shamahi
Language: Arabic
Publisher: Dar Al-Hana Printing
Year Published: 1973
No. of Pages: 370

The author gives a description of the "Social Regime" in the of the various Yemeni states in the pre-Islamic period. He states that they were all similar. The regime was semi decentralized, with various small states controlled by a central government. Most of these early states depended on commerce, except for the Himyarite, who were viewed by the author as being more military in nature. There was a feudal system, which the author views as being "reasonable", with both the landlords and the sharecroppers reaping benefits.

The early Yemeni states were predecessors in their times in the architectural and irrigation fields, rivaled only by their cousins, the Phoenicians.

The early Yemeni states were broken down into four socio-economic groups:

- 1) military
- 2) farmers
- 3) manufacturers
- 4) traders

The author then points out six attempts to invade Yemen by the Abyssinians, the first and second being in the Eighth Century BC and Third Century BC (with the Greeks) while the next four were usually in conjunction with the Romans beginning in the Third Century AD to the Sixth Century AD. The Persians did attempt to take the country but were only allowed a small area in the Sana'a area.

In the period prior to Islam, Yemen was witnessing divisions and internal fighting and there was intense competition between the Jewish and Christian factions that prevailed in this period, each with their own external allies.

The author also points out that Yemeni migratory tendencies led to the establishment of two prominent kingdom-states in the Northern periphery of the Arabian Peninsula. The Mundhir Dynasty in Mesopotamia (a vassal state of the Persians, and the Ghassanid Dynasty in the Levant (a vassal state of the Byzantine

Yemeni migration led to the formation of the Kindah tribal dynasty in Bahrain and the Qudha'iyah that took over the Sinai Peninsula and some of the Nile Delta area of Egypt.

Yemen in the Post-Islamic Period

From the year 632, Yemen's history became quite influenced by the history of the Islamic world after the coming of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH).

With the people of the city of Medina (the Aws and Khazraj tribes were Yemeni tribes that settled in Yathrib, later called Madina or Medina, the religion of Islam gained its first strong foothold in the world, as the two feuding tribes saw in Islam a means of ending their eternal feuds and in Medina, the first Islamic State was born under the leadership of the Prophet Mohammed (PBAUH).

Yemenis were also at the forefront of the Islamic armies that fanned out North, East and West to spread Islam and eventually overcome the then two leading powers at play in the international arena (the Byzantines and the Persians).

Of course, the Yemenis were often sought by the different factions that sought political hegemony in the new Islamic state, which the author felt helped significantly in reinstating the divisions among the Yemenis. In addition there were many splinter seditions groups that erupted. These included the revolt of Al-Aswad Ibn Ka'ab Al-Ansi, who wreaked havoc, beginning his revolt in Al-Jauf and taking and pillaging Sana'a. The latter revolt was subdued with the poisoning of the latter by his wife in conspiracy with the former Persian princes in Sana'a.

Another revolt was that of Kindah in Bahrain and the Eastern periphery of the Peninsula, when Ash'ath Ibn Qais led a rebellion against the Zakat collectors (sort of no taxation with out representation type of revolt). All of these revolts represented early challenges to the new Islamic State that showed that the Arabs (especially the tribal chiefs) were still not ready to concede their strangleholds on their constituencies and this is a problem that somehow still prevails today in many an Arab country.

The Islamic state after the death of the prophet meant for Yemenis a great migratory movement that coincided with the fanning out of the Moslem armies throughout the civilized world and it is inconceivable to believe that the Moslem Empire could have grown so quickly and to such wide extents without the prevalent presence of Yemenis in all the fronts. Needless to say, this created competition for the allegiance of the Yemenis under the different fighting factions that fought for the Caliphate, or the succession of the Prophet (PBAUH) to the rulership of the new state.

Thus it was not unusual to see Yemenis having to take sides among the different factions of Quraish (the tribe of Mohammed) that ruled the Islamic state after the death of the Prophet Mohammed in 632.

We will see how this eventually played a major role in Yemen's history and that of the Islamic world in the centuries to come in the next issue.

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Aden's warmth never fades: An Indian perspective

By: Rajib Chakraborty

The name of the Port of Aden is known to us by virtue of History since the childhood. But I never thought that I will ever have a chance to visit this historical port. But after being involved in the infrastructural consultancy in Yemen I had to come several times in Aden and every time Aden fascinated me with its ancient theme, natural beauty of sea and hills blended with the dazzles of modern city and especially the warm welcome of the people here.

Long staying in the desert area of Marib acted as a catalyst to go to the Aden, in the lap of the sea. That's why long 6 hours journey by road from Sana'a couldn't put its grip of fatigue in mind. Aden is the second city of the united Yemen and as well its commercial capital. Naturally its look is modern. More over the boundary of deep blue sea gave an extra dimension to its natural beauty. It is one of the largest natural harbours in the world with an area of about 70 sq km. Historical evidence says the natural port first was used by the Kingdom of Awsan between the fifth and seventh century B.C. From the ancient period the port of

Aden played a vital role in south Arabian trade. Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta went here in the 11th and 12th centuries. The port of Aden is located just in the middle of Egypt and India. Its importance was enormous in the sea trade of India, China, South Arabia, Egypt and Europe. After the construction of Suez Canal joining Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea in 1869, the sea trade become more comfortable between the Far East and Europe. To expand the business the British captured Aden in 1839 and reigned up to 1967. Since that time numbers of Indians migrated here for trade. You will find lots of present Adenines here of Indian origin. The influence of Indo-British architecture and culture is very much predominant here, which is completely different from the other part of Yemen. After the return of British it was the capital of South Yemen up to 1990. In that period, Soviet influence was prominent here. Aden is gradually turning to an ultra modern port city.

Being a busy port city here are plenty of arrangements of entertainment. You will find lots of night clubs, pubs and drinks are easily available, unlike to other parts of Yemen. The city is more liberal and open to breath for a foreigner. You



Historic water tanks located in Aden's Crater neighborhood.

will have a touch of metro. Volcanic hilly areas of crater, Malla and Tahawi, plains of Kharmoksar and Monsurah are the main part of Aden. Several times I came to Aden, sometimes simply for entertainment tour- some times in official tour, but every time Aden touched my mind. Main attractions are to sea the sunrise in the calm and quite Abyan beach, swimming and taking bath in Gold Mohor beach, boating in the Little Aden beach up to the coral reef and enjoy the beauty of sunset there and go for dinner in Chinese restaurant in Malla. You can move to the night clubs also to have the flavor of Arabian dinner and the Arabian belly dance. You may have a window shopping in fabulous and specious Aden mall or taste the flavor of traditional "souk" of Crater.

Numbers of people are here from Indian origin in Crater area. Only here in Aden are few Hindu temples. One evening we went to visit Hinglaj temple, located in a huge cave. Every evening there is prayer with sacred song and sacred lamp. This spiritual atmosphere and the tune of the prayer song mixed with the sound of "ajjan" from the mosque will create a feeling of a divine peace of mind.

The weather of Aden is especially beautiful in he the winter. Lots of people come down here from the chilling North in winter. We all together came once here to celebrate New Year's Eve in Aden Hotel. That beautiful memory is still alive. Fabulous course of Arabian menu, tunes of hit Arabian and English songs, dazzling lightings in dais, group dance of Filipino troops and the hot bellydance of a Russian girl made the night so colorful. We could feel how the Western culture entering in the youth of high society of traditional Yemen in these large gatherings.

Apart from of the natural beauty of coastal Aden, passing through the Caltex causeway through the back water or crossing the tunnels at night is an extra enjoyment. Though the present look of Aden is modern, here exists the ancient historical Aden tank in the oldest part of the city, in the valley of volcanic hills which is the combination of 18 cisterns. Probably the Himayarites constructed it at the high altitude to serve water to Aden in the first century A.D. In the British period, it was rehabilitated. Excellence and beauty of the ancient stone works is surprising. The palace of Sultan in Crater

area has now been converted to National Museum of Aden. Different statues, dresses, arms and coins carefully preserved here as the witness of ancient culture and heritage. If you have time, it's worth visiting these.

After declaring Aden as free port zone, all infrastructural development work is running rapidly to convert it as one of the modernised port city of south Arabia. Lots of high rise buildings, hotels, wide roads, shopping malls, entertainment parks, exotic sea beaches, electronic hubs are coming up. If time is not a problem a ride can be planned to go to Abyan in the delta of Wadi Bana or in Lahej in the delta of Wadi Tuban. The natural greens of the papaya and banana gardens of Abyan and the mango groves of Lahej will certainly fascinate one. The hospitality of the

people, expanded hand of their assistance always is a great feeling to me and it is one major thing to remember Aden through the life. The route from Aden to Sana'a is itself a scenic extravaganza and food for the eye. If the journey makes you tired you can take a bath in the hot spring of Damt in the midway. It will wash out all your fatigue and make your memories of Aden so vivid. To all the tourists of the world, who come to Middle East to feel the warmth of Arabian heritage, Yemen and Aden is a must destination.

Rajib Chakraborty is an Indian civil engineer. He has worked on various civil engineering projects in Yemen since 1998 and he is currently Assistant Resident Engineer on the prestigious Marib Dam and Irrigation Project.



Aden is one of the most beautiful cities of Yemen.



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Prof. Dr. Dawood Al-Hidabi to Yemen Times

UST: A glorious leap into the future

Doing is the mother of success. It is the natural and inevitable outcome of vision, dynamism, leadership, an uncompromising adherence to quality, and grit coupled with hard work in the right direction. By virtue of these sterling qualities of head and heart, an individual becomes an institution and often builds an institution that is a fitting tribute to his multi-faceted personality. In this way he becomes a face in the crowd. He leaves behind him footprints on the sands of time and becomes a lofty ideal for the posterity to emulate. Prof. Dr. Dawood Al-Hidabi, President of UST, without any fear of exaggeration, is such a rare specimen whose inimitable stewardship, indomitable will power and high-voltage entrepreneurial talent has raised and nurtured the twin institutions- University of Science and Technology and the UST hospital complex -from scratch, leading them in the glorious path of excellence.

With a view to profiling such an individual, who is an institution by himself, Dr. Ramakanta Sahu and Dr. Mahmood Akhter met Dr. Dawood.

Excerpts:

YT: Dr. Dawood, It's extremely heartening for us to see that UST is growing from strength to strength under your dynamic stewardship. New disciplines are being added to the existing ones to give the student-community an opportunity to brace themselves in the emerging fields of global academic scenario. Could you spell out some of the new streams that have been added in the recent past?

Dr. Dawood: First of all thanks for coming to the UST. We have a wide range of programs. Our endeavor is to mount such streams that are not there in Yemen or in this region. Recently we introduced programs where the medium of instruction is English. Several programs are provided in the

confidently cater to the market needs, especially in streams like Business Management or Engineering, where they can potentially secure well-paid jobs and a better future. So in the ultimate analysis, it is the market needs that our programs are oriented towards.

YT: This University is distinctive for its accent on Quality Assurance in respect of the academic programs. How do you assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programs and how does the feedback help modify the future academic agenda?

Dr. Dawood: Well, the main aim of Quality Assurance is two fold: diagnose and evaluate the current implementation of the academic programs, and at the same time take steps to

As a matter of fact, we have a very fruitful and creative interaction with the British Council. They update the library in terms of books and journals and we provide the infrastructure facilities for running the library in the same line as they had been doing at British Council in the past. Hopefully, this will be the nucleus for a good public library in future, which would be open for everybody. This is not the only project we have in collaboration with the British Council. There is another project in the offing for launching an English Language Teaching Center, in all probability, in September 2006. The third project, which we have just completed, is Post Graduate Diploma in Management for 22 Yemeni key women. Members from several private and other societies participated.

YT: Is there any effort in the direction of training the pre-service and in-service teachers with the help of the British Council? If there is one, it would be a very significant contribution to the educational mainstream in Yemen.

Dr. Dawood: That's part of the agreement. The British Council is committed to helping us in our efforts to improve the commands of English of our pupil-teachers as well as enriching the quality of teaching in our university. Hopefully on the basis of this partnership we would try to mount pre-service and in-service training programs in future.



Dr. Dawood (center) in conversation with Dr. Sahu (left) and Dr. Mahmood Akhter.

in fact, in the recent past we have mounted an MBA program in Bahrain with enrollment strength of more than two hundred, which is a joint venture between the Open University of Malaysia (OUM) and us.

YT: It might be of interest for you to know that the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India is acclaimed as one of the foremost institutions at the international level offering a spectrum of practical and relevant courses through the distance and open-learning mode in various streams.

Dr. Dawood: Well, we are willing to enter into a meaningful and productive collaboration with any university in the world and work together for achieving a common objective.

YT: Yet another glorious feather in the UST's colored cap is the sprawling hospital complex. If we are not mistaken, there are few universities in the Arab Peninsula, which have such a rare distinction. UST thereby becomes a nucleus not only for radiating the light of knowledge, but is justifiably a pioneer in spreading health awareness in the region. Thus the university fulfills its social accountability as well. What motivated you to set up a hospital of this magnitude?

Dr. Dawood: Success breeds success. When we started the university, we were determined to offer quality human resources. I am glad to say that we are producing better, if not the best, quality of human resources as signaled by the fact that about 40% of our graduates are recruited into the cadres of foreign countries. That's an indicator of the acceptability of our quality human resources on a larger global perspective. Still we are not complacent. We're continually, relentlessly and rigorously trying to improve the quality of human resource that would most certainly trigger national reconstruction.

As far as the hospital sector is concerned, the idea of a sophisticated hospital with the state-of-the-art medical facilities was originally conceived keeping in view two vital considerations. First, it would improve the qual-

ity of instruction of our medical school. Second, it would provide cost-effective health services and specialized medical care to the common man. You might know that every year some 120,000 to 150,000 Yemeni nationals are flying abroad for treatment. We thought of doing something about this. UST hospital is geared to fulfill the long-felt need of quality health care to the common man at an affordable cost. We felt amply rewarded and our stand vindicated when His Excellency the President of the country visited our hospital and commended the hospital as a great national institution.

YT: That's indeed a great achievement. Is it, in any sense, a super specialized hospital?

Dr. Dawood: The hospital was commissioned only ten months ago. However, within this short duration, in the first phase, we have been able to provide specialized medical care in some twenty departments. We are planning to increase areas of specialization and sub-specialization in the second and third phases of our expansion network which would, inshallah, be completed in 2 or 3 years.

YT: Do you envisage any subsidized medical care for people who are below the poverty line?

Dr. Dawood: Our hospital is meant to provide health services to everybody from the very poor to the rich people at a very reasonable rate. To give you one example, the MRI costs in our hospital YR 20,000, which in some govt. hospitals costs YR 22,000 while in some private hospitals the same is available for YR 24,000. Similarly, accommodation for in-patients ranges from YR 4000 to YR 25000 per night. This wide range in our fee structure is intended to offer opportunity to everybody for availing themselves of quality and at the same time cost effective health care.

YT: What are the facilities for the university employees in terms of health care?

Dr. Dawood: Well, there is a special scheme called the "health care scheme" covering all employees, academic and management, to get a spe-

cial discount in the cost of treatment in the same way as discount in the university tuition fees for their children and wards.

YT: Do you also encourage medical research activities? If so what are the current thrusts?

Dr. Dawood: The Medical Research & Development Center of the UST is currently actively engaged in five research areas such as Immunology, Epidemiology, Community medicine, Pharmacology, and Microbiology.

YT: What are the dimensions of the UST hospital's future growth commensurate with its impressive track record in the past?

Dr. Dawood: You know, any kind of institution whether in the education, business, or health sector consists of different facets, which need to be tackled skillfully. In terms of our hospital services, from reception to nursing, medical and paramedical staff management, maintenance and in-patients, we are trying our best to inculcate quality so that each sector can maximize its potential. You see our consultants are recruited to be the best, so also the other medical and administrative staff. We, for the first time in Yemen, have established a well-laid out system where everything is automatic, in keeping with international standards. Our long-term strategic goals are as follows:

- Providing opportunities for specialized training
- Promoting publication of research
- Building stronger partnerships
- Educational excellence

YT: How do you envision the University ten years from now?

Dr. Dawood: Well I visualize UST as one of the best in the world, let alone in the Arab world. In the wake of globalization, we must all work together with a team spirit to confirm to world standards, be it in Education or health services.

YT: Thanks a lot, Dr. Dawood, for sharing your views with us and enlightening us.

Dr. Dawood: Thank you.



The imposing structure of the UST hospital complex.

International College, in which we offer instruction in a number of different disciplines. We have three programs to promote students' proficiency in English, then six other programs: four at the UG level and two at the PG level. At UG level we have Bachelor's honors in

- 1) Business Administration
- 2) Information Technology
- 3) Graphic Design and Digital Media

- 4) Interior Architecture
- At PG level we have Masters in
1. Business Administration (MBA)
 2. Information Technology (MIT)

All these programs are a joint venture with Malaysian universities. The degrees are awarded by the Malaysian universities and instruction is imparted here with mostly Malaysian teachers and some well-qualified Yemeni teachers.

YT: What is the main thrust of the International College and such other new ventures?

Dr. Dawood: Most of our programs address themselves to the market needs. I would label our university as a 'market driven' university. We found that many of our students study in the secondary schools through English medium. So if our programs are offered through English, the students can consolidate their command of English besides acquiring content knowledge. In fact, most of our clientele are aware of the fact that if they study the programs through English, then they can more competently and

improve it on the basis of the feedback. During the last six years we have developed our own model of Quality Assurance in the light of the global trends. We have our own performance indicators whether on the management or on the academic side. At the same time we have designed tools for measuring these performance indicators. Through this mechanism, we have been able to identify our strengths and shortcomings. We have maximized our strengths and have taken steps to plug the lacunae, bridge the gap and fulfill the remedial requirements pertaining to academic and management aspects.

YT: One of the landmarks of this university is that it houses on its campus Learning Zone, the British Council-UST Joint Resource Center, which is a rich academic resource. Is it a collaborative enterprise? What are the present scope of its operation and future directions of expansion?

Dr. Dawood: The Learning Zone (LZ) seeks to offer educational services to students, teachers and researchers from different educational institutions through the supply of books, references, periodicals, and digital databases in a variety of disciplines and fields of knowledge. It also organizes workshops, seminars and other educational activities in a team spirit type of environment. As envisaged in its mission statement, the objectives of the LZ are a) making educational resources available for students and researchers as well as b) helping LZ's visitors to get the information they need.

YT: As you are aware, distance education is catching up parallel with formal, institutionalized education in the current global scenario in order to give a wider segment of the student population access to ever-widening educational programs. Are there any plans to include distance learning in your future academic agenda?

Dr. Dawood: Yes, we are alive to the need and the scope of distance learning programs. As a matter of fact, we are investing a huge amount of money for this purpose because there is great demand for open and distance learning in this country. We are trying to reach out far-flung areas like Al-Jauf, and Socotra where facilities for higher education are currently unavailable. We have eighteen different programs, mostly in the areas of Management Sciences and Social Sciences. These programs are very well received as signaled by encouraging enrollment figures. The fees are very modest, about 400\$ per year. The clientele have the benefit of earning a university degree which otherwise would be unachievable for most of them and which, in their perception, would substantially improve the quality of life of the community. Since we realize that they cannot come to the university center, we are reaching out to them in their areas. We have a wide network of centers for distance learning spread over several countries such as Saudi Arabia, Somalia and other Gulf countries to provide a large segment of student community there wider access to edu-



Learning Zone, the British Council-UST Joint Resource Center.

