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Inside:



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Israeli air raid
kills six in Gaza



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World Population Day

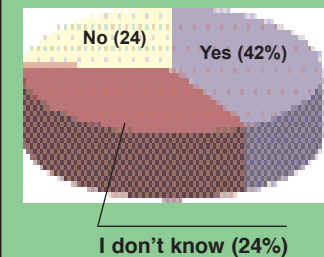


8

YLNG: We are the largest
Investment in Yemen

Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
 Yemeni courts acquitted 19
 individuals accused of terrorism
 after they spent years in prison.



This edition's question:

Do you think the
 Yemeni Journalists
 Syndicate's new
 leadership will put a
 stop to commonplace
 attacks on journalists?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I do not know

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

Mustafa is YJS President

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, July 12 — The Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate (YJS) electoral committee declared Nasr Taha Mustafa as president of YJS. Seven hundred and twenty seven journalists from different Yemeni governorates came to the capital city on Wednesday to elect a new president for the YJS to succeed Mahboub Ali, who resigned from the post last March. In a statement to the Yemen Times Mustafa said that the electoral process was a democratic one and that he would do his best for the best interest of journalists and freedom of speech in Yemen.

The YJS General Assembly held an extraordinary meeting on the same day at the Cultural Center to organize the poll. Nine journalists are competing for the post; however, Nassr Taha, Chairman of Yemen News Agency, Saba, and Ahmad Al-Haj, Associated Press Reporter, appear as the most prominent candidates with the greatest chance of success. Many journalists applied for the post, but announced their withdrawal a few days before the poll.

The ballot was inaugurated by Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal and Minister of Information, Hassan Al-Lawzi. The result of the vote is scheduled to be announced immediately after the poll, which has been in continuation until the time of writing.

Candidate's electoral programs focused on defending press freedom and journalists' rights, proposing a law which would ensure rights and freedom for journalists. Also proposed was the establishment of a social security fund in the syndicate to support journalists.

The programs promised to exert pressure on the government to increase journalists' wages and salaries and improve their living standards.

A day before the event, the Yemen Times organized a debate between the most outstanding candidates for YJS Presidency Ahmad Nassr Taha Mustafa and Ahmad Al-Haj. The debaters briefed attendees on their electoral programs and gave answers to several



Nasr Taha Mustafa

questions raised by participants.

Contender Nassr Taha emphasized the necessity of adopting tolerance and transparency and exhibiting care for the pace of elections. He noted that the journalism community must maintain friendship and work hard in order to defend the freedom of expression, which is the primary goal of the

YJS leader.

Taha affirmed that the winner must expend efforts to unify journalistic work and maintain a unified profession. According to him, success in journalism needs unified efforts. For promises to be fulfilled, the YJS leadership has to cooperate with the General Assembly to enhance teamwork-related concepts, as well as to enable all YJS members to participate in decision-making and determining their syndicate's future.

Taha stated that his program will focus on upgrading the syndicate's main system, establishing a financial and administrative inspection and monitoring staff in the syndicate via amending the main system and making available a syndicate-owned building.

He mentioned that his program plans to make available a journalism code of ethics, rejecting the draft press law in its current formula and replacing it with



From left: Nasr Taha Mustafa, Nadia Al-Saqqaf and Ahmed Al-Haj at the Yemen Times debate on Wednesday.

another law backing freedom of the press. According to Taha's program, the press law must abolish the imprisonment of journalists over the content of their writing and insist that journalists must not be prevented from writing. Journalists must receive real discounts on phone bills, air tickets and medication and there should be a social security fund for journalists.

Taha concluded: "as the journalism community has a uniformed goal, we must not be shocked at any similarity between the electoral programs of different candidates."

However, Ahmad Al-Haj, the strongest contestant, ascertained that competition for the YJS presidency is

the right of every journalist and the post does not imply roseate dreams.

Al-Haj said that his program concentrates on rectifying the unstable situation of the profession. His program is entitled "The Situation is not Healthy", implying that journalists have been subjected to organized attacks by authorities.

The strongest rival explained that his program rejects the new draft press law that imposes difficulties and restrictions on journalism. He said he will pursue extensive efforts, due to culminate with the issuance of a new press law, to ensure the protection of journalists and improve their standards of living and working atmosphere.

He stressed that, improving journalists' living standards helps defend freedom of the press and make journalists more courageous. According to Al-Haj's program, YJS must be neutral and independent and its business should not be influenced by any person or party. Al-Haj assured that he will establish a fund to support journalists and improve their living standards.

Al-Haj's program contains promises to back the private media, enhance and diversify their resources, defend the rights of journalists and embody the principle "Journalism is a profession and not a job".

Women journalists' defamation condemned

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, July 12 — In a statement distributed Wednesday, the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) condemned an article published by Al-Destour newspaper insulting female journalists Samia Al-Aghbari, Rashida Al-Qaili and Tawakul Abdussalam Karaman. YJS Secretary-General Hafez Al-Bukari strongly denounced the rude words the paper used to insult the women journalists, confirming that the syndicate is ready to confront such inappropriate behavior.

In its Monday issue, Al-Destour weekly

defamed presidential candidate Al-Qaili, Women Journalists Without Chains (WJWC) Chairwoman Karaman and Al-Aghbari, who works for Al-Wahdai weekly.

WJWC expressed solidarity with the three women, who were subjected to disgrace, and condemned the newspaper's illegal act aimed at harming the three writers' reputations. WJWC called on all pressmen to back their sisters and sue Al-Destour for its defamatory article.

In a statement, WJWC said insulting Al-Aghbari targets every Yemeni woman, particularly civil community and civil rights activists. The statement added that WJWC urges all human rights organizations to express solidarity with Al-Aghbari and if such is implemented, it will be a victory for all Yemeni women, who constantly are terrorized to stop work or disappear from public places. WJWC demanded the attorney general immediately summon Al-Destour's editor-in-chief for investigation over the defamatory language his newspaper used. It also urged the prospective YJS

president to play a primary role in defending and supporting Al-Aghbari and other presswomen previously subjected to such insults by malicious newspapers.

Hamid Asem, Secretary-General of the Nasserite Popular Unionist Organization, one of Yemen's political parties, decried the badmouthing against the three women journalists, including Al-Aghbari, who is a member of the party's central committee.

"What Al-Destour published contradicts Islamic values and teachings and reveals the newspaper's loyalty to the regime," Asem reacted. He expressed concern about the silence of concerned bodies, which have shown no reaction to the improper conduct causing harm to the three women journalists.



Journalist voting in the YSP elections last night.



Attendees of Yemen Times debate.

Parliament Council approves 2007 budget

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, July 12 — With a 30 percent increase over last year, Parliament Council approved its annual budget for 2007, totaling YR 3.94 billion.

According to the report, the budget is allocated as follows:

- Current expenses, including salaries, wages, etc., at YR 1.6 billion.
- Services and commodities spending at YR 451.74 million.
- Maintenance expenses totaling YR 250.96 million.
- Current donations and transfers at YR 879.98 million.
- Investment and capital expenditures totaling YR 832.25 million.

Some parliament members requested a financial roll for spending budget allocations. Other MPs said, "There should be a financial panel to define spending aspects. Aid is spent randomly and transferred from one line item into another."

Some criticism was directed to the small allowances allocated for experts

and advisors, upon whom parliamentary committees depend. MPs further criticized allocating YR 54 million for festivals and receptions at YR 5 million per month, while YR 7 million was allocated for experts who help MPs perform their controlling and legislative roles.

Some MPs requested residence payment for all employees and not just for some. Additionally, they requested raising medication payments for Parliament's guards, from YR 7,000, which was paid annually, and changing the contract-based employment to permanent-contract one.

Other MPs called for qualifying Parliament's Presidency Board as well as MPs to make them more competent and the council's performance more effective.

Sultan Al-Atwani, head of the Nasserite party bloc, demanded offices for MPs to perform their work, as is the case with parliaments worldwide. He also criticized those who consider council's budget large, noting that it's half that of the President's Office or the Cabinet. He also called for adopting the

comments raised by the financial committee regarding the council's institutional structure to be finically independent body.

The financial committee noticed that the council's 2007 budget overlooked plans set by the council's general administration and offices. The council did not ask the administrations to submit their plans and the committee responsible for preparing the budget estimated the council's requirements.

Additionally, the financial committee criticized the absence of a clear vision regarding training and qualifying MP employees and staff, as evidenced by the humble sums allocated for training in the 2007 budget, amounting to YR 110,000 for local training and YR 7 million for external training. The committee perceived a setback in this respect, as the budget allocated to this end didn't exceed the budget of previous years and the aim of conducting such training wasn't achieved.

Furthermore, the committee pointed out many deficiencies as to job inflation, interplay of specializations and job

scarcity involving highly specialized and skilled individuals needed by the council and its specialized committees. In return, numerous service jobs exist and few high qualified employee. In addition, many employees don't have specific jobs or aren't distributed to all of the council's apparatuses.

Attributing most of these deficiencies to absence of the council's organizational bylaw, the financial committee requested correcting existing administrative and job situations to ensure optimal benefit for current employees and restructuring all council apparatuses.

Finally, the committee demanded Parliament's Presidency Board and the General Secretariat quickly submit a financial roll to the financial affairs committee, according to the council's internal bylaw. It also called for giving priority to high and specialized training in all aspects. Furthermore, it requested an information systems web, providing books, references and journals for the council's library and allocating sums for studies and research to serve the council's needs.

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AOPF asks for extra margin of freedoms

SANA'A, July 12 — In a statement forwarded to President Saled, Arab Organization for Press Freedom (AOPF) asked for the reopening of Al-Shoura Newspaper, and raising the siege set upon closed newspapers, internet web-sites. It also called for opening doors for press and opinion freedoms in support of democracy and in response to overwhelming wish for changes invading Yemen, as in all Arab countries.

The call reads:

Dear President Saleh,

AOPF wants to express its appreciation to Yemen for the important role it plays in the Arab peninsula. It is the only country who adopts media and political polarity which comes into existence through long struggle of Yemeni people against the Imamates in the north and British colony in the south. The polarity system will be the only way out for defending and protecting the country and its people



against all risks when change winds blow on the unified Yemen.

In the name of press freedom and in defense of citizen's right of expression and opinion, we ask you to direct concerned authorities to cease the occupation of Al-Shoura Newspaper headquarter which has been closed for more than a year and reinstate its employees, allowing more freedom of expression and opinion in Yemen, particularly when you announced your participation in the upcoming elections after hesitation and abandonment.

Yemen, which conducts local and

presidential elections this year, should give the best example for opening doors of freedom of opinion and expression for all Yemeni people, as long as it is expressed in a peaceful way.

Some rulers are afraid from citizens' wish of change by resort to imposing further restrictions on mass media and expanding the extent of security practices regarding silencing people and screening web sites. We, in AOPF, want Yemen not to be of such type, but an example of freedom which people take pride in.

We join voices to our Yemeni friends' voices who are concerned for the continuous screening of web sites and closing newspapers. We appeal to Yemeni President, Prime Minister and authorities to open windows for press, opinion and expression freedoms.

Best Regards,
AOPF Head
Ibrahim Nawar

Judges suspended for violating judicial laws

SANA'A, July 11 — At its Monday meeting, chaired by the Supreme Court Chief Judge, Essam Al-Samawi, the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) demanded that the Minister of Justice suspend three judges and refer them to the council to face interrogation, accused of committing professional violations.

The SJC decided to suspend one of the judges from work and summon him to stand before the council for questioning over violations attributed to him. It

stressed the necessity of confronting judges who violate the judicial laws, considering judiciary to be the safe haven for maintaining justice, rights and freedom.

The SJC said it will never be lenient towards judges who violate the laws. Also, it emphasized the necessity of tackling violations in court and in prosecutions and suggested the best solutions for them via a punitive procedure to be prepared by judicial inspection authori-

ties in the Ministry of Justice and Public Prosecution.

Additionally, the Council of Accountability and Punishment took a hard line stance against a judge for breaking the laws, prior to the spread of this phenomenon.

The council discussed some issues related to the disobedience of judges to court orders concerned with judge replacements, absences from work and the prolonging of case procedures.

Mukalla prepares for Country's Third Tourist Festival

By: Sa'eed Al-Batati

HADRAMOUT, July 12 — Activities of the country's third Tourist Festival in the city of Mukalla are due to kick off on Friday.

"The idea of staging the festival is very old and aims to entertain Yemeni expatriates who come from other countries for holidays during the summer in the tourist city of Mukalla," Anwar Abdullah Abdulaziz, manager of the festival told the Yemen Times.

He said that the idea of holding the festival was fostered by efforts and lavish support from Abdulkader Ali Helal, Governor of Hadramout.

"The festival is still in its preliminary steps, compared to steps carried out by other major festivals, such as the Salalah and Garash festivals in Jordan and Oman. We are at the stage of developing confidence to gain support from the government and social foundations," Abdulaziz added.

Asked about the influence of the festival on tourism in Hadramout in particular, and the rest of the country in general, Abdulaziz, former manager of the tourism office in Hadramout replied: "Foreign tourism is not good due to the worldwide situations these days. So, we preferred to concentrate on Arab tourism and people who have a high income,



The city of Mukalla is rich with tourist sites

such as Arab tourists, who spend much money and stay for a long period of time in any country with a similar culture to that of their own societies."

With regard to any surprises made by the festival this year, Abdulaziz explained: "The event is a heritage, tourism and cultural festival. However 50 percent of it focuses on the maritime heritage of the area, including traditions and songs."

He continued to explain that the festival offers heritage and artistic sections, which involve performances by bands from different areas in Hadramout, in addition to songs by singers from the rest of the governorate and Gulf States.

The festival was held for the first time in 2004, to be then staged on July 14th every year for visitors to enjoy the abundance of seawater, a phenomenon providing cures for skin diseases.

Council, is focusing on eight countries: Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Yemen.

The four year program consists of a number of training events and seminars in addition to three international conferences; the first conference is that which will be held in Sana'a on Sunday 16th July. The second will take place in Cairo in 2007, under the title 'Water Governance in MENA Region: Critical Issues and the way forward'. The third conference will be held in 2008 in Zaragoza, Spain, under the name 'Water future to 2025 for the MENA Region', according to the press release.

The press release also mentioned that "the outputs of the program will include the improvement of institutional performance, the awareness of policy-makers of the priority issues involved, and a functional network on water issues within the MENA Region".

International conference on Water Governance in Sana'a

By: Amel Alariqi

SANA'A, 11 July — An International conference on Water Governance in the Middle East and North Africa, MENA Region, will take place in Sana'a from 16th to 20th July 2006, and will be hosted by the Yemeni Minister of Water and Environment. The conference will be supported by the Yemeni German Cooperation, water sector program, GTZ.

According to a press release issued on Sunday, one hundred and twenty participants will attend the conference, titled 'Water Governance in MENA Region: The Current Situation'. The participants will include high level representatives of ministries and national authorities, senior government advisors, senior researchers, national and international development experts and representatives of private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The press release mentioned that the critical review of the water management situation in the MENA region will analyze trends and future outlooks, reviewing experiences and identifying key issues with water sector governance. Appropriate governance policies and strategies will be identified, focusing on the needs and future direction of capacity building strategies for improved governance. The strengthening of regional cooperation and networking will also be discussed at the conference.

This conference is a part of a four year program on capacity building in the water sector for the MENA region. This program has been formulated by InWent, Capacity Building International, acting on behalf of the Germany Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The program, with its regional partner, the Arab Water

German warship saves sailors

SANA'A, 12 July — A German warship rescued 13 sailors that were in danger of drowning in the Indian Ocean a week ago, according to the German embassy's website.

The embassy's website confirmed that the rescue was carried out by German warship Shlizvich Holstein. It then transferred the survivors to hospitals in Aden. The ship was launched and faced light waves during the daunting task to find survivors of the crew of the ship. The crew was located by helicopter using satellite imagery. They were then brought by air to the warship. One of the rescued crew members was seriously injured and was treated on an urgent basis.

The website did not give any information or numbers about those who drowned, but it did confirm that the ship sank off the coast of Abdul-Kori Island.

The last issue of Yemen Times reported, from the Yemen's official news agency Saba, that the ship, Meryam 4, sank off the Yemeni island of Socotra, which lies about 270 kilometers northeast of the Somali tip of Africa and 960 kilometers east of the



German warship crew members helping one of the sailors.

Yemeni port of Aden.

On Wednesday 5th July, due to bad weather, seven crew members were killed and 12 crew members survived.

The ship, which was on its way to Zanzibar in Tanzania from the Omani port of Salalah with its 19 crew members, was carrying a cargo of around 5,000 tones of Omani cement, said Saba, which confirmed that Yemeni

coast guard vessels and other foreign ships rescued the survivors and retrieved bodies from the water.

It is worth noting that there are six navy ships from the US, Britain, France, Spain, Italy and Germany located in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the waters of the Horn of Africa, in attempts to prevent terrorist activity, such as weapons and drugs smuggling.

Several arrested over cassettes

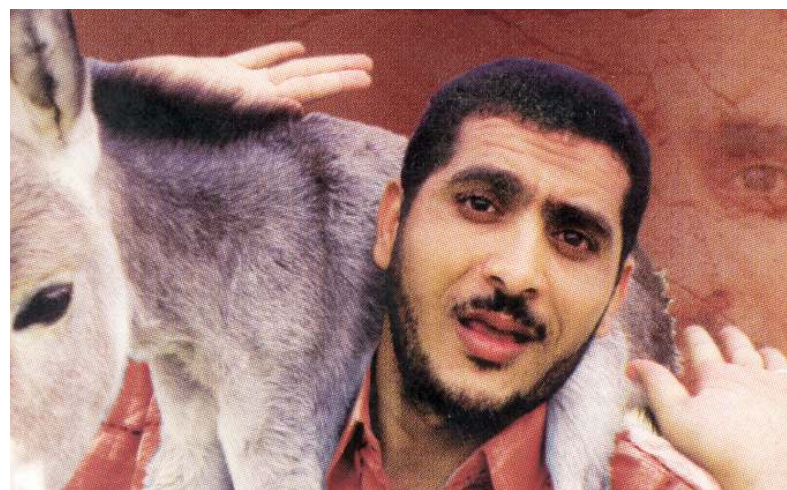
By: Saddam Al-Ashmouri

SANA'A, July 10 — Some soldiers affiliated to the Criminal Investigations Bureau jail arrested a group of individuals, accusing them of selling a popular cassette entitled "Fed Up" (Shabaeen) made by Fahd Al-Qarni, a popular artist. Making use of folk compositions in a humorous and sarcastic manner, the cassette bitterly criticizes governments' policies.

Hamoud Al-Awadi, owner of Al-Ayman record label, pointed out that some soldiers, said to be from Investigations, came late Sunday evening to the shop and they said they had instructions to withdraw the cassette copies from the market. When they inspected the shop and found nothing, they arrested six workers, some of whom were children. Additionally, they closed the shop with a lock they had, and threatened to abuse and take the staff by force, according to Al-Awadi.

He further mentioned that they set children free after one hour, focussing themselves on his brother and two close to him, putting them in Investigations' jail.

In a press statement, detailing the matters of the arrests and closing of the label, the company denounced



Comedian Fahd Al-Qarni.

the actions against it as being law-violating. According to the statement, the actions committed by Investigations shake the security and stability of the country.

The statement further called upon high authorities to follow up the case, and to refer the violators to prosecution. It also demanded to set free all those arrested in the Criminal Investigations Bureau jail. It asked NGOs to side with them to face those who break the law and go beyond their authorities.

For three weeks, Political Security and Investigations conducted a campaign to prohibit the circulation of the cassette in the market.

Last month, Political Security arrested the popular artist, Mohammed Al-Adhrou'ai, under the pretext of mocking the President, following his participation in a festival set up by Joint Meeting Parties in constituency no.8 of the capital. He was set free after numerous protests were made by NGOs in solidarity with him.

YFCA midwives graduate to tackle maternal mortality in remote areas

SANA'A, 12 JULY — The Yemen Family Care Association YFCA celebrated the graduation of 28 society midwives at its head office in Sana'a yesterday. Representatives from the Health and Population Ministry, local councils and both governmental and non-governmental organizations were there to celebrate the occasion along with the head of YFCA and the families of the women graduates.

The 28 midwives, who have been trained for two years under the supervision of the High Institute for Medical Science, belong to different rural regions in Sana'a governorate and Amran governorate. Bags containing delivery equipment and cell phones were distributed to all of the midwife graduates, to ensure that they will be constantly in touch with the association in case of necessary transportation of emergency cases to the maternity section, whose ambulance is prepared with specialized first aid equipment.

Some studies pointed out that 84 percent of Yemeni women give birth at home without a trained attendant and less than half of the 65 district hospitals have the ability to perform cesarean sections.

In addition, 38.8 percent of mothers die during childbirth due to the absence of a nearby medical facility. 14.8 percent die because they cannot afford childbirth operation expenses, 8.8 percent die due to absence of proper medical equipment and facilities, 5.5 percent die because of lack of transportation in these distant regions and 2.6 percent die due to the husband's refusal to transfer the mother to a hospital. Also, 11.8 percent of mothers prefer giving birth at home.



Numbers of midwives in their graduated party.

However, maternal mortality rate is lower than in previous years; the 1990 demographic survey estimated that 1400 woman died for every 100,000 babies delivered; whereas in the 2003 demographic survey, an estimated 366 women died for every 100,000 babies delivered. That is, there are eight maternal deaths daily in Yemen, which is still considered the highest maternal mortality rate among Arab countries.

Media coordinator of YFCA, Hasiba Mohammed Aubadi, said that the graduates are the second group of midwives that have been trained and qualified to offer medical service delivery as well as creating awareness, targeting remote rural areas.

Aubadi said that training and qualifying women in the distant areas is part of a project called Safe

Motherhood Project, which is supported by the British Community Fund. "The number of midwives has now reached 50 midwives that cover 20 villages in Amaran governorate and Sana'a governorate" said Aubadi.

This project, which was launched in 2002 and will be completed in 2007, is targeting a population of 350,000 of which 200,000 live in the pre-urban area and 150,000 in the rural areas, a total population that contains an estimated 50,000 women experiencing childbirth.

YFCA is a non profit voluntary NGO, working in the field of reproductive health and family planning and it provides medical services and support to those experiencing motherhood and childhood. It was established in 1976 and it has centers in many governorates.

US U-turn on detainee rights

The US has admitted that all detainees held by the military, including those at Guantanamo, should be treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

A memo signed by Gordon England, the second-highest official at the defence department, stated that all detainees are entitled to humane treatment.

Certain prisoners held during the so-called war on terror have not previously been given the protections of the Geneva Conventions - international agreements governing the treatment of prisoners of war.

The memo was made public on Tuesday as congress began hearings on how to proceed with the trials of Guantanamo prisoners. The supreme court ruled two weeks ago that the military tribunals set up by the Bush administration to try foreign terrorism suspects were illegal.

The US has faced international criticism over how detainees at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq have been treated.

Military custody

The memo, dated July 7, stated that detainees held in US military custody across the world are covered by



The US has been criticised for its treatment of detainees

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The article prohibits violence against detainees, including mutilation, cruel treatment and torture, and "outrages upon personal dignity" including humiliating and degrading treatment". It also ensures care for the sick and wounded.

The administration said the admission

was not a change in policy because the defence department already treated detainees humanely.

"It is not really a reversal of policy," said Tony Snow, the White House spokesman. "Humane treatment has always been the standard, and that is something that they followed at Guantanamo."

Source: *Aljazeera and Agencies*

Israeli air raid kills six in Gaza

Six people, including women and children, have been killed in an Israeli air raid on the house of a Hamas member, as Israeli tanks and troops pushed into the central Gaza Strip.

Israel has pledged to continue the operation, which has already cost the lives of more than 60 Palestinians, until the abducted soldier is freed and crude rocket attacks over the border are stopped.

Dozens of armoured vehicles moved into central Gaza overnight on Wednesday, cutting the main road down the territory from which Israel withdrew less than a year ago after a 38-year occupation.

Israel has rejected calls from the governing Hamas movement for negotiations on a prisoner swap. Hamas accuses Israel of using the offensive to try to topple its elected government.

In an attempt to kill senior commanders of Hamas's armed wing, an Israeli air raid brought down a three-storey building on the northern edge of Gaza City.

At least six people, including two women and two children, were killed in the attack that turned the house into a tangle of twisted metal, broken concrete, blood and dust.

Israel said the man who has topped its



Palestinians search for survivors after an Israeli air strike

wanted list for a decade was wounded.

But the military said it did not know how badly top fugitive Muhammad Daif, a Hamas master bomber who escaped previous assassination attempts, was hurt.

Palestinian medics confirmed that Daif had been wounded and operated on. Another 23 people were also wounded in the attack.

Hamas denial

But Abu Obaida, the spokesman for Hamas's military wing, squarely denied

the report.

"We categorically deny that Daif was wounded... This deceitful information intended to cover up Zionist crimes," he told reporters.

He also said the attack would "change all standards, opening new options that never have been used."

Nervous Hamas activists carefully inspected the bodies being brought into the hospital.

At daybreak they disclosed that Raad Said, a senior Gaza commander, was wounded and was being treated at a secret location, but they made no mention of Daif.

Israel Army Radio said Ahmad Randur, a Gaza commander involved in the June 25 abduction of the Israeli soldier was also inside the house.

The Israeli military said it attacked the house because it was a "meeting place for terrorists" who were planning attacks and rocket launches.

Mangled bodies

Palestinians medics and officials accused Israel, meanwhile, of using new weapons in its latest offensive, speculating that they might be chemical or radioactive.

Bassem Naim, the health minister, said the weapons were causing severe wounds which physicians were unable to treat while dead bodies reaching hospitals in Gaza were charred and mutilated.

In Gaza City's Shifa hospital, Dr al-Saqqa supported the claims.

"Even bodies of the injured have been almost completely burnt. They have been deformed in a very ugly way that we have never seen before," he told Aljazeera channel.

Al-Saqaa, who heads the hospital's emergency service, said relatives had been unable to identify the dead victims.

"When we try to X-ray dead bodies, we find no trace of the shrapnel that hit the person killed," he said, adding that the bodies seemed to have been chemically burnt.

"We are sure that Israel is using a new chemical or radioactive weapon in the new operation. More than 25% of the injured are children, aged under 16." Source: *Aljazeera and Agencies*

Police seek Mumbai bombs evidence

Indian police are hunting for clues as to who was behind Tuesday's bomb attacks on Mumbai's train network which killed 183 people and injured 714.

Bomb squads and sniffer dogs are combing the wrecked carriages where the seven co-ordinated blasts occurred.

Police have carried out a series of raids across Maharashtra, the state in which Mumbai (Bombay) lies.

Mumbai is India's financial capital and the near-simultaneous blasts happened at the height of the evening rush hour.

Life is slowly limping back to normal, with most of the trains on the city's suburban railway system running on schedule.

Some commuters preferred to travel to work by road instead of taking the train service.

"I am too terrified after yesterday's incident. My friend's father was injured in one of the explosions. I couldn't muster up the courage to take the train to work today," a commuter, Venuka Bharadwaj told the BBC.

Amputations

More than 12 hours after the attacks many people are still frantically searching for relatives, travelling from hospital to hospital for news of the injured.

A spokesman for the chief minister's office told the BBC that 127 bodies had been identified by Wednesday morning.

"Doctors are still working, there are operations going on, there are amputations going on, a lot of people have suffered multiple injuries," Anumeha Yadav, a reporter for the Indian Express, told the BBC's World Today programme.

No-one has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks, which the Indian government says were highly planned.

The blasts all happened in fast trains and inside first class carriages on the Western Railway, one of Mumbai's three main train networks.

Skeleton service

The city's suburban train system is one of the busiest in the world, carrying more than six million commuters a day.

The fast trains run on separate fast tracks, and although trains on the adjacent slow tracks are now moving, in the immediate aftermath of the blasts the city's entire rail network was shut down, strand-

ing hundreds of thousands of people in the city overnight.

Many spent the night at the homes of relatives or were put up in schools and colleges.

BBC's Zubair Ahmed in Mumbai says that a skeleton service has now been restored and the railway authorities said they were hoping to restore two-thirds of the services by Wednesday afternoon.

Appeal for calm

Security has been increased in Mumbai and other Indian cities and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has appealed for people to "remain calm, not to believe rumours, and carry on their activity normally".

Police said the co-ordinated explosions took place at Matunga, Khar, Mahim, Jogeshwari, Borivali and Bhayandar, with most on moving trains and two at stations.

The first blast went off at about 1830 local time (1300 GMT), during the rush hour. Correspondents spoke of scenes of pandemonium, with people jumping from trains and bodies flung onto tracks.

An eyewitness at Mahim told the BBC

some of those who had jumped from the train were run over by another train coming in the opposite direction.

The force of the blasts ripped doors and windows off carriages, and scattered luggage. Clothes and shoes were strewn along the tracks.

Compensation

The Indian railway minister, Laloo Prasad Yadav, has announced financial help for the victims and their relatives. He said relatives of those killed will get 500,000 rupees (\$11,000) each.

He has promised jobs for the victims' relatives and said the railways would also bear treatment costs for the injured.

The attacks are the worst in the city for more than a decade. More than 250 people died in a string of blasts in the city in 1993.

Analysts say Mumbai has been a repeated target because it is a financial hub and a centre for the underworld.

The blasts came hours after suspected Islamic extremists killed seven people in grenade attacks in the summer capital of Kashmir, Srinagar.

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Save the Children Sweden
المنظمة السويدية لرعاية الأطفال

VACANCIES

Save the Children-Sweden is a Swedish non-governmental organization working for the implementation and promotion of children's rights.

Save the Children-Sweden is seeking qualified candidates to fill the following positions:

- 1) A program officer** (two positions) based in Sana'a but with frequent travel within the Republic of Yemen and the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Region.

Requirements

- At minimum, a university degree in law, social studies, economics or other relevant fields.
- At least three years experience with an international NGO, a UN agency or a similar experience.
- Fluency in spoken and written English and Arabic.
- Computer skills
- Knowledge about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights global and regional treaties is an advantage.
- Ability to work under pressure and the ability to work in team.
- Management and leadership skills.

Responsibilities

- Plans and monitors the implementation of activities with the partner national organizations/institutions.
- Works with the country and regional teams to develop the program in Yemen and the MENA region.
- Collects, analyzes and documents information pertaining to children and children's rights in Yemen on regular basis.
- Represents SC-Sweden in forums and meetings as requested by the country manager.
- Submits periodic reports as requested by the country and/or regional office.

- 2) An Accountant** based in Sana'a but with frequent travel within the Republic of Yemen and the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Region.

Requirements

- At minimum, a university degree in accounting and/or business administration
- At least three years experience in accounting with an international NGO, a UN agency or a similar experience.
- Fluency in spoken and written English and Arabic.
- Excellent Computer skills
- Knowledge about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights global and regional treaties is an advantage.
- Ability to work under pressure and to work in a team.
- Management and leadership skills.
- High level of honesty and integrity
- Accurate, thorough, and able to consistently meet deadlines

Responsibilities

- Double entry book-keeping
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- Maintains proper cash controls, and prepares bank reconciliation
- Prepares budgets including monthly cash budgets
- Ensures records are accurate and up to date
- Prepares financial reports to donors
- Supports the local NGO's and review their financial reports

Application

Qualified and interested individuals are kindly requested to send their CV with cover letter (quoting the post title) to Save the Children Sweden only via email to info.yemen@scsmena.org or fax (+967-1) 417636.

Applications are accepted no later than 1 August 2006.

Please do not send supporting certificates and documents at this stage. Short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

For more information about Save the Children Sweden, visit website www.scsmena.org or www.rb.se



Visa International in Yemen sharing opportunity and prosperity

Currently, the Yemeni-based banks who are licensed to issue Visa cards in Yemen are: International Bank of Yemen, Tadhamon International Islamic Bank and the Cooperative & Agricultural Credit Bank. In addition, there is currently one Visa licensed merchant acquirer: the International Bank of Yemen

Visa's role is to provide payment solutions for its member banks, enabling them to issue cards and process merchants' Visa card transactions. Visa does not issue cards nor acquire merchant transactions. When a bank joins Visa as an Issuing Member, it becomes entitled to use the Visa logo and brand marks on a range of card products, and both the bank and its cardholders benefit from a relationship with one of the world's best-known brands.

Not only does Visa not issue cards, it has no dealing with cardholders. It keeps no records about cardholders and does not charge them for any card services. Only member banks can do these things.

Visa also works closely with Members to ensure that they understand and comply with the rules that are the foundation of the co-operative venture, and to help them control fraud and minimize losses. To help them achieve this, Visa offers, as a service to Members, to

assess banks' security and risk management operations, and all such reviews are carried out at the request of the Member bank. Currently, no such reviews have been conducted to any bank in Yemen.

Visa has pioneered the introduction of EMV* chip cards ('smart' cards) in countries around the world. When combined with Visa's Smart Debit/Credit payment application, chip cards provide superior risk management features compared with conventional cards using magnetic stripe technology. Chip cards are not currently available in Yemen, however it is likely that they will be issued at some time in the future.

Kamran Siddiqi, General Manager for Visa International in the Middle East, says that one of the most important features of the Visa system is that all Members are treated equally. "Visa does not discriminate between members and, while we recognize the benefits of healthy competition between banks, we most assuredly do not involve ourselves in such issues. All Yemeni banks have equal access to Visa products, which are safer, more convenient and more efficient than cash. They help to bring people into the banking system, leading to an increase in the funds available for commercial loans to support a growing economy.

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Aden post offices offer distinctive services to teachers and citizens

By: Ridhwan Al-Saqqaf

After several government institutions experienced poor performance and inability to cope with new advancements, the General Post Authority (GPA) decided to provide modern services to tackle such issues.

Among GPA services provided are postal savings, distributing salaries and pensions and settling water, electric and telephone bills. However, steps taken by Aden Post reflect a distinctive move, as explained by Abduladhim Al-Qadasi, General Manager of Aden's GPA office.

Interviewed by Yemen Times' Aden Bureau Chief, Al-Qadasi said, "As of this month, Aden's GPA office will distribute salaries of governorate teachers and educators.

Does this mean the process was transferred from one party to another or is this a benefit for teachers and educators?

First of all, I thank you for your concern for different issues and matters of great importance to government employees. Regarding distributing teachers' and educators' salaries as of this month, the matter isn't a transition process; rather, I

affirm to teachers and education workers that the GPA will offer them special benefits.

What are these benefits?

The most prominent benefit the Aden-based GPA office will provide is enabling educators to receive their salaries easily from any nearby post office in various districts. Teachers and education workers can obtain their salaries at various post offices throughout the republic without any service fees, receiving their salaries in full without any deductions.

And, in the near future, they can obtain their salaries via ATM, as education offices will be supplied with ATMs to enable teachers and other employees to receive their salaries whenever they want during the day or at night via electronic cards. Education field employees will have other types of services soon to be announced.

Have you taken any measures to ensure that teachers won't wait in queues at salary time?

Aden teachers and education workers were assured that such an obstacle will never happen and this isn't merely talk; rather, it's a work plan Aden's GPA has implemented to save teachers time and effort.



The teachers in Aden will now be able to receive their salaries from post offices.

We've completed establishing special sections in post offices to distribute education employees' salaries. For 10 days each month, these sections will be open from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. in five post offices in various Aden districts and will be supplied with computers and qualified employees.

Thus, we don't expect any crowds; rather, teachers will receive their salaries easily at anytime – morning, noon or night – and from the nearest post office.

These are the free benefits and services Aden's GPA office is due to offer teachers and education workers.

Is it true that you plan to deliver pensions of the disabled and the retired to their homes?

Yes. We currently are surveying the retired, disabled and elderly as a first step preceding the process of delivering pensions to homes to help these individuals dispense with visiting post

offices. Improving the level of services for citizens, particularly those associated with delivering pensions of the disabled, retired and elderly, tops the authority's agenda as a type of gratitude for efforts they've expended in the past.

Is delivering teachers' salaries via post in Aden the first trial?

Delivering teachers' salaries via post isn't the first trial; rather, it's an extension of a government strategy involving delivering teachers' and educators' salaries by post in Taiz. The procedure was applied easily and tackled many negative aspects coinciding with salary distribution. Currently, the procedure is being applied in Aden and is planned for other governorates.

In case school administrations mistakenly cut salaries, how can a teacher settle this issue, as salaries are received via post?

We already took this issue into account, giving teachers a 10-day period to review any issue related to salary deductions before receiving their salaries. We assure teachers that we care about their rights and issues because this social class conveys a very important message, which is teaching.

What are your plans for development?

The GPA is witnessing a distinctive move in updating its infrastructure and performance and expanding outreach of services, thanks to efforts and directives by Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology Abdulmalik Al-Mu'alimi. GPA General Manager Mohamed Ali Murghem and his deputy, Abdullatif Abu Ghanem. Additionally, many Aden post offices currently are underway to help expand postal services to other governorates.

Old post offices were updated, expanded and supplied with modern equipment, which in turn improved services and performance. We now have a plan to implement an updating process to cope with what's new and play a tangible role in offering services to citizens.

Any final comments?

To sum up, I reassure Aden teachers and education workers that the GPA will deliver their salaries in a manner better respecting their social status. Also, I commend efforts expended by the Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology and the GPA General Manager with the main objective of offering better services to citizens in general and teachers in particular.

Remorseful family, a story

By: Nawal Zaid

Being the only one in his family, Hamid Humaid's parents gave him everything he needed during his childhood. However, they didn't teach him how to be of help in his society, so he became a parasite, without the ability to help himself or others.

Humaid lived a life full of rashness and waste. He smoked cigarettes at an early age and used to associate with wicked friends, who led him to do all sorts of ugly things like drinking alcohol and watching pornographic films.

He married a girl from a poor and conservative family. She had a very bad life with him because he didn't care about her. Senseless from heavy drinking, he used to come home and beat and abuse her. Furthermore, he forced her to do immoral things, as she had no one to resort to because her parents had died when she was young.

Humaid narrates his story, saying, "My wife has suffered a lot with me. When she gave birth to our first son, I wasn't there, nor did I care about it. The case was nearly the same with our other sons, who now number 10. Unfortunately, I didn't know their names, the number of them or anything about their studies. I didn't ask about them or their health. Also, I didn't know whether they ate or not. I didn't know from where they ate, how they lived or who provided for them. I only cared about myself.

I used to spend most of my time out. When I returned home, I came drunk, not knowing what I did. I didn't feel ashamed from Allah, my children or my wife. In fact, I used to send the children to bring wine. I also forced them to drink and sell it, although they were very young. Most of the time, I let my evil friends into my house without paying attention to the sanctity of my wife, daughters or our house.

I didn't encourage my children to study or provide them with proper conditions for that and this pained my poor wife. Not only this, I also forced my wife to work as a house servant to earn money to cover our children's demands. She refused to provide for the children from my money because it was ill-gotten. She exerted efforts to raise them in a good manner so they wouldn't be like me.

With the passage of time, my children matured. They always viewed me as a corrupt man and had no feelings toward me. I began to feel jealous of my children's love for their mother. She became overtired from her constant work at various houses. Out of jealousy, I used to force her to stay awake until late evening, sometimes ordering her to stand on one leg. Other times, I asked her to prepare fresh bread for me late at night. Despite this, she rose early to go to work and

returned at the end of the day. She became tired from her constant work and furthermore, she was suffering from many diseases, but she didn't complain.

My sons began to feel restless and decided to leave home to rely on themselves. My eldest son, Najeeb, said he felt sad because he was unable to change the home situation and prevent his father from drinking and committing crimes. Feeling unable to do anything, Najeeb left home, followed by another son. They lived together in a small room, worked and studied at the same time. My other sons were under my control and didn't pursue their education. Instead, they worked with me and followed my sinful path.

As time elapsed, the situation didn't improve, rather, it worsened. Sometimes, upon seeing my children's loss, I give up drinking and start praying, but then I'm overcome by my lust and return to my previous situation. Advancing in age, I began to take drugs. I didn't care about my health and I had no mercy on my children or my wife. My fame has become very bad in my surroundings and no one dares to ask for my daughters' hands.

With the passage of time, my problems spiraled out of control, sometimes demanding interference from neighbors or police. Surprisingly, I fought my sons in their work and used to beat them in front of their friends because I didn't want them to be better than me.

Once when I was drunk, I went to visit my daughter who was studying at an institute. I began beating her in front of her friends, so she decided not to attend there anymore out of humiliation.

My case didn't change with time's passing and things became more complex. Suddenly, I was badly afflicted with paralysis. Instead of being sad, my family members were happy to see me paralyzed, maybe because of the sternness with which I used to treat them. Offering help and service to me, they further began to pray for me. I now feel remorseful for the loss of my family. Despite all this, I feel life has become better. My wife has begun singing on occasions of marriage and the like, thereby receiving quite a handsome sum of money.

She restored to me our sons who left home and now I ask them to forgive me. I have caused them to become lost, as well as their future. Some of my sons took the vice road, as Mohammed said, "I'm lost and my future also is lost due to my father. I cannot be a good individual, as I am used to moral corruption since I was a child."

Najeeb says, "I am the oldest son and I'll do my best to keep my family and improve our home situation," whereas my wife says, "I'll pray to Allah to guide my sons and save them. I'll also do my best to improve my house and family and serve my husband for Allah's sake."

World Population Day

History

World Population Day was first commemorated in 1987 when the world's population reached 5 billion. It took all of history for the world's population to reach 2 billion in 1927 – but less than a lifetime to arrive at 6 billion in 1999.

- The United Nations designated October 12, 1999 as the Day of 6 Billion.

- During the 1800s, population increased at progressively higher rates, reaching a total of about 1.7 billion people by 1900. World population grew more rapidly during the last century, with the greatest population gains occurring in the post-World War II period. Today's population stands approximately over three and a half times its size in 1900 – some 6.4 billion people.

- Despite the decline in fertility rates of many developing countries in the last thirty years, population growth has continued. While the rate of increase is slowing, in absolute terms world population growth continues to be substantial.

The State of World Population

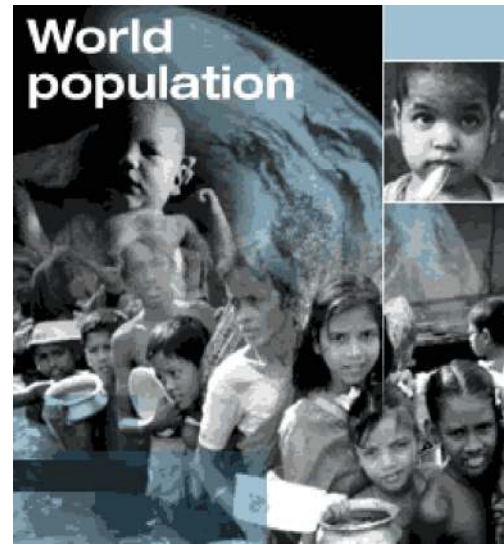
- The world population reached 6.3 billion at the beginning of 2003 and is projected to grow to 9.2 billion by 2050.

- The world's five largest countries in 2003 are as follows (in millions): China 1,289 India 1,069 United States 292 Indonesia 220 Brazil 176

- The United Nations calculates that world population is currently growing at a rate of 1.2 percent annually. This rate translates into a net addition of 77 million people per year. Six countries account for half of that annual increment: India for 21 percent; China for 12 percent; Pakistan for 5 percent; Bangladesh, Nigeria and the United States of America for 4 percent each.

- Total fertility at the world level is expected to decline from 2.83 children per woman in 1995-2000 to 2.02 children per woman in 2045-2050, and the expectation of life at birth is expected to increase from 65 years to 74 years. The expected reduction of fertility should reflect a waning population growth rate of 0.33 percent per year by 2045-2050.

- The U.S. Census Bureau projects that over the course of the next 25 years older age groups will account for an increasingly larger share of the



total population. During the 1998-2025 period, the world's elderly population (ages 65 and above) will more than double while the world's youth (population under age 15) will grow by 6 percent, and the number of children under age 5 will increase by less than 5 percent. As a result, world population will become progressively older during the coming decades.

- The number of people (3 billion) living on \$2 a day or less is equal to additions to world population (3 billion) since 1960. Most of the growth is now in the poorest countries.

- The proportion of the population in developing countries living on less than \$1 a day decreased from 28.3 per cent in 1987 to 23.4 per cent in 1998. However, those percentages reflect population growth; absolute numbers have remained relatively stable at about 1.2 billion.

- Life expectancy at birth in 2003 is as follows in different parts of the world:

- Western Europe 79
- North America 77
- Latin America and the Caribbean 71

- Asia 67
- Africa 52

Family Planning Worldwide

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that family planning programs and population assistance accounted for almost one third of the global decline in fertility between 1972 and 1994.

- Due to the increased prevalence of family planning and the availability of modern contraception, the "reproductive revolution" has been one of the major demographic stories of the latter half of the 20th

century.

- The divide between less developed and more developed countries' contraceptive use continues to shrink in disparity, although rates of use in the less developed countries remain uneven. According to the Population Reference Bureau, rates of sterilization are higher in the less developed countries, while use of traditional methods is reported more often in more developed nations.

- The higher the overall levels of women's contraceptive use, the lower the differential between women in the richest and poorest groups. Once family-planning use exceeds 40-45 per cent overall, the difference between wealth groups narrows considerably, and family planning

becomes accepted as the norm. In sub-Saharan African countries, where contraceptive prevalence is only around 10 per cent, the richest use family planning more than five times as often as the poorest.

- A study published in 2002 states that the female population of childbearing age (15-49) throughout the world is approximately 1.59 billion. In more developed countries, 298 million women are considered to be of childbearing age while in less developed countries the number is 1.29 billion. Estimates show that the number of females in this age group will decrease to 278 million in more developed countries, but will most likely increase in less developed countries to approximately 1.5 billion by 2015.

- Asia represents the area with the largest childbearing aged females at 981 million. That number is expected to increase by almost 15 percent to 1.1 billion.

Source: <http://www.prcdc.org>

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Follow-up and Monitoring Unit / PRSFMU

Vacancy Announcement

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Follow-up and Monitoring Unit (PRSFMU) in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation is inviting applications for the following post:

Librarian (Bilingual)

Qualifications / Requirements

Knowledge and skills: Graduate Degree in "Library skills", Computer skills, Good interpersonal skills

Experiences: Library skills and archives, not less than three years experience

Languages: Excellent Arabic and English languages

(Female candidates are encouraged)

Interested candidates are requested to send their applications with detailed curriculum vitae to the following address, but not later than 27 July 2006

Poverty Monitoring Central Unit
Ministry of Planning and international Cooperation
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
P.O Box :(175)
Tel: 239705

Challenges and tasks of the upcoming elections

While presenting his nomination to Parliament recently, President Ali Abdullah Saleh stated to the media, according to official newspaper Al-Thawra, "I have responded to the call of the millions of the people who took to the streets in governorate provincial capitals and public squares because they believed that there was an alarm bell and beasts baring their teeth, wanting to prey upon the revolution, the republic, unity and democracy. Those masses took to the streets spontaneously, without being urged by others and without a program set beforehand and they have compelled me to go back on my decision that I had made before."

The President here defines the great tasks waiting for him as "protection of the revolution and the republic, protection of unity, protection of the homeland against extremism and terrorism and protection of the revolution, the unity and the republic against advocates of the imamate whose voices rise from time to time in the governorate of Saada with their supporters in some governorate

provincial capitals."

The President pointed out there is a file for comprehensive development, industrial and agricultural, and another file for generating electric power to meet the increasing need, including the generation of nuclear power, indicating that there have been talks with American and Canadian companies. The President adds to the awaiting tasks the use of services projects' infrastructure, fighting poverty, ending unemployment, completing the building of the military and security establishment and protection of security and stability, confirming the scope of the election platform of the President of the Republic, (Al-Thawra newspaper, Wednesday 5 July, issue No. 15211). By announcing his nomination himself, the President may have wanted to create a general accord, replicating the elections of 1999.

The opposition has done well by nominating Faisal Bin Shamlan. Democracy's essence, or in an important part of it, is elections and free and



By: Abdulbari Tahir

democratic competition. If conditions of honesty and freedom are provided, these elections would be a beginning for Yemen's proceeding in the right direction, regardless of who the winner is. The political opposition has asked to stick to articles of its agreement with

President Saleh on clearing voter register that includes more than half of the population, and ensuring the neutrality of the army, security, media, and public property and services.

The 1994 war inflicted heavy damage on the social fabric, harmony and national unity as it restored the formulation of governance by the power of conquer and defeat and overthrew the peaceful unity and building of democracy. Democracy and competitive elections are primary and important steps on the road of return to recognizing the electorate's will and acceptance of their choice, healing the wounds, reinstating trust and building the modern state which is impossible to achieve with tribal spears or army tanks.

We understand that democracy is not just a ballot box. It is rather integrated system beginning with an honest and independent judiciary that is also efficient and just, modernity of the state and society and above all, the expansion of general freedoms and respect of human rights, all of which are now absent.

The free and democratic competition will be a difficult test of the extent of the seriousness and desire of President Saleh to fully establish the democracy for which President Saleh and his partner Ali Salem Al-Biedh laid the first foundations in 1992. Undoubtedly, the upcoming elections will also be an opportunity for the political opposition and a proof of its capability of going to the street and representing the will of the masses that are eager for freedom, dignity and justice.

The opposition has come forward with a document for comprehensive political reform. It is an important document in a country where the ruler is still holding the keys of the three powers and his ruling party monopolizes the army, security, media, public services and public property.

The sure thing is that the mood of

the people in 1999 is to a greatly different to that of 2006. Also, candidate Bin Shamlan is presented and supported by the parties of opposition, the second part in government equation, or thus it should be. In the elections of 1999, the President competed against himself because his competitor was member of the President's party and was calling for his election. It is well known that Shamlan is an enemy of the state of corruption and an expert in economic affairs. During his work in the Parliament and Ministry of Oil he presented a good example of honesty.

Democracy does not mean elections alone. Nevertheless, in a country such as Yemen elections acquire great importance. Yemen is an illiterate country dominated by ignorance. It is heavily armed and its governance has been founded on force and superiority for long periods. Its system and society cannot be modernized without the state of modern age characteristics, a state of law and order, which in turn could not be built without the condition of democracy into which it has been unable to enter, until now.

During the late barren years the country of Yemen as a State has been

heading towards failure and as a society it has been threatened by famine, poverty, disintegration and deterioration. This must be a focal point for the candidates' election platforms and the extent of the truthfulness of his commitment to what he promises. Can the opposition and civil society organizations adopt the issue of the candidate's "quittance" as it is done in all democracies in the world? Moreover, the promise of reform, freedom and democracy begins from immediate obligation of not recruiting the state and its apparatus in the battle of elections, considering it as property of the party or the leader. Would the upcoming presidential and local elections be a beginning of deliverance from corruption and bilateral despotism that threaten the entire Yemeni entity as a state and society? We understand the difficulty of the Arab ruler stepping down from his position of power voluntarily or by his choice. He is permanent but the ambition of the Arab and Yemeni people is more than what the ruler thinks.

Abdulbari Tahir is a Yemeni Journalist and the former chairman of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

GPC's vicious circle of sleaze

Last July 17, President Saleh declared his intention not to run in the upcoming September elections.

His declaration was a surprise, as his desire of retaining power was well-known. He even amended the constitution in 2001 for such reasons.

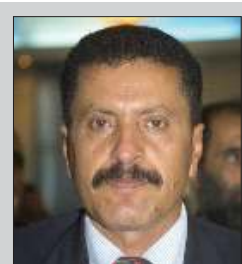
The president's reneging on his promise was not a shocker for those following Yemeni affairs, or for those who encouraged Saleh to make an "Arab Model" in case he willingly gives up the power.

The attempts to attract the real opposition, the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), to the scheme that demands President Saleh to go back on his word not to stand as a candidate were unsuccessful. Further, the coerced crowds gathered by the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) were not to supply a convincing argument that justified Saleh's about-face. The predicament Saleh was put

in led him to voice his anger against his party as expressed in his brief yet bitter addresses. During the opening sessions of GPC's regular conference last week, the president said "I will not be an umbrella for a corrupt party."

Criticizing the ruling party's corruption has become a suitable means for Saleh to remove himself from his dilemma. This could mean that his announcement not to nominate himself for presidency was a protest against the corruption of his party; and his change of mind was not a response to GPC's nomination resolution, but only to the calls of the people to run again for the presidency.

It is unfortunate for President Saleh and his party that time is too limited for the party to submit his nomination



By: Ali Al-Sarari

papers for the presidential elections. In fact, there is not enough time for the GPC to forget what President Saleh said about their corruption. It is natural that voters will ask a question like "If President Saleh is serious about combating corruption,

then why does he accept to be nominated by a corrupt party?"

Sacrificing the reputation of a party, thought by the president to be smaller than the Yemeni people, is an easy task. It is not the first time for him to simply give up on his party. It so happened that President Saleh visited camps and attended the meetings of security and military officials where he planned to incite the members of these institutions against the opposition, indirectly dispensing with the role of the GPC.

Posters of President Saleh in the streets include statements that condemn corruption, indicating stealthily that the war against corruption will take place within the ranks of the ruling party. Thus, President Saleh will announce his new victories over corrupt leaders. The president's credibility will be assessed by holding high-ranking officials accountable for their misdeeds.

Members of the GPC have not acted to defend their reputation, not out of love for President Saleh, but for fear that potential conflict might expose their positions of power. Their strategy is to accept insults and defamations while building their wealth and power, betting on time to make them disregard their loss of their standing.

It seems that there is a deal between President Saleh and the opposition, aiming to pressure the GPC under a pincer movement with

the top GPC leadership on one flank and the broad coalition of the JMP on the other. Yet it is necessary to search for the reasons that made the GPC a corrupt party, deprecated by its leader and criticized widely by the opposition. In other words, what is the source of corruption that runs through the body of the ruling party?

JMP needs to defend itself against accusations of its opportunism expected to be directed against it as the JMP differentiates between the president and his party. According to the JMP's political, social, and national reform project, corruption in Yemen is not caused by a moral defect within GPC's members. Rather corruption stems from the nature of Yemen's political system presided over by President Saleh. GPC's members were not made corrupt by instinct or by how they were raised, but by their work for the existing system and from their role in maintaining it.

The majority of GPC members, formerly belonged to opposition parties, were not corrupt. They only become corrupt when they joined the service of the ruling party, which has the chief aim of preserving power. For the sake of preserving power, the ruling party abolished all other national aims, which could be the object of partnership between the ruler and the ruled.

GPC opens its doors to all those who are ready to discard their convictions in return for obtaining personal gain in an illegitimate manner. The ruling party has become ensnared in a web of sleaze as a result. The president does not care about his party's reputation. Yet, he is the one who pays for it... here lays the core of corruption.

Ali Al-Sarari is a Yemeni Journalist and a well-known politician. He is the head of the information department at the Yemeni Socialist Party.

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By: Samer (samer_art@makoob.com)

Letters to the Editor

Presidential Election

I hope Yemen Times will suggest for 3 televised debates in the coming Presidential Election. Its fair for every Yemenis to know what the incoming Presidential candidates have to offer.

Thank you

*Farid Omar Ali
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Dear Mr. Presiden

While I was reading about the history of the Arab Nation and its multitude of governments over the centuries, I tried to look for one man who reached the pinnacle of authority in his country and then left it under his own will without a struggle or the killing of his people. I only found one instance of such an occurrence: the Sudanese Lt. General Abd Al-Rahman Sewart Al-Thahab. He reached the summit of leadership in his country and then handed authority over with flexibility, conviction, virility, and pride. Afterwards, he returned to where he was from: the military.

When I reviewed other Arab nations' rulers, I found that all of them left

authority by natural causes—Jamal Abd Al-Nasser, King Hussein, King Hassan II, and the Saudi kings— or by assassination — Anwar Al-Sadat and the martyr, President Ibrahim Al-Hamdi—or by force—Jaafar Al-Nomeiri, Saddam Hussein and Weld Al-Tayee. All these men ruled their countries with an iron fist for at least twenty years.

I mentioned the above because of what Yemen is currently experiencing. The president, Ali Saleh, is now in the seventh decade of his life and has ruled the country for more than 28 years by means of absolute power. During his period of rule, the country has lived in poverty, corruption, and mass unemployment that was previously uncommon.

The weak authority governing the country at present has duly plotted some electoral histrionics when the ruling party's conference was held in the brave city of Aden. Thereafter, the authorities started to spend millions from government coffers on the military and started to buy the consciences of many people. The

republican guard, central security, and special units started flocking into Aden preparing for this day that was a lie.

Here, I would like to ask you, Mr. President, some questions that I have always wondered about: Would it not have better for you, and your government, to give those millions that you are spending from the public wealth to the public and to return the properties of people in Aden?

Mr. President, if there are any advisers who say that you are the indispensable leader, they are lying. The proof can be seen in the situation in Yemen that has gone from bad to worst under the shadow of your authority.

Mr. President, the people around you have created hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people who have no purpose in life. If you do hand over power to your son, it will be the biggest disaster in the modern history of Yemen. Please reconsider detaching presidential authority from the military/security agencies.

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YEMEN TIMES
www.yementimes.com

First Political bi-weekly English Newspaper in Yemen. Founded in 1990 by Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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The World Health Organisation report 2006: Working together for health (4/6)

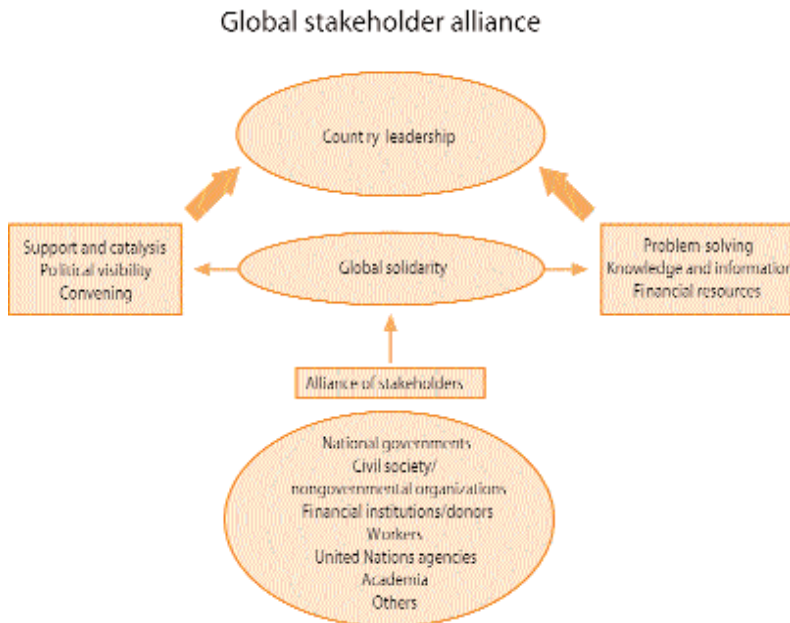
The World Health Report 2006 - Working together for health contains an expert assessment of the current crisis in the global health workforce and ambitious proposals to tackle it over the next ten years, starting immediately. The report reveals an estimated shortage of almost 4.3 million doctors, midwives, nurses and support workers worldwide. The shortage is most severe in the poorest countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where health workers are most needed. Focusing on all stages of the health workers' career lifespan from entry to health training, to job recruitment through to retirement, the report lays out a ten-year action plan in which countries can build their health workforces, with the support of global partners.

Workforce: Enhancing performance
Strategies to improve the performance of the health workforce must initially focus on existing staff because of the time lag in training new health workers. Substantial improvements in the availability, competence, responsiveness and productivity of the workforce can be rapidly achieved through an array of low-cost and practical instruments.

- Supervision makes a big difference. Supportive yet firm – and fair – supervision is one of the most effective instruments available to improve the competence of individual health workers, especially when coupled with clear job descriptions and feedback on performance. Moreover, supervision can build a practical integration of new skills acquired through on-the-job training.
- Fair and reliable compensation. Decent pay that arrives on time is crucial. The way workers are paid,

for example salaried or fee-for-service, has effects on productivity and quality of care that require careful monitoring. Financial and non-financial incentives such as study leave or child care are more effective when packaged than provided on their own.

- Critical support systems. No matter how motivated and skilled health workers are, they cannot do their jobs properly in facilities that lack clean water, adequate lighting, heating, vehicles, drugs, working equipment and other supplies. Decisions to introduce new technologies – for diagnosis, treatment or communication – should be informed in part by an assessment of their implications for the health workforce.
- Lifelong learning should be inculcated in the workplace. This may include short-term training, encouraging staff to innovate, and fostering teamwork. Frequently, staff devise simple but effective solutions to



improve performance and should be encouraged to share and act on their ideas.

Exit: Managing Migration And Attrition

Unplanned or excessive exits may cause significant losses of workers and compromise the system's knowledge, memory and culture. In some regions, worker illness, deaths and migration together constitute a haemorrhaging that overwhelms training capacity and threatens workforce stability. Strategies to counteract workforce attrition include managing migration, making health a career of choice, and stemming premature sickness and retirement.

- Managing migration of health workers involves balancing the freedom of individuals to pursue

work where they choose with the need to stem excessive losses from both internal migration (urban concentration and rural neglect) and international movements from poorer to richer countries. Some international migration is planned,

for example the import of professionals into the Eastern Mediterranean Region, while other migrations are unplanned with deleterious health consequences. For unplanned migration, tailoring education and recruitment to rural realities, improving working conditions more generally and facilitating the return of migrants represent important retention strategies. Richer countries receiving migrants from poorer countries should adopt responsible recruitment policies, treat migrant health workers fairly, and consider entering into bilateral agreements.

- Keeping health work as a career of choice for women. The majority of health workers are women and "feminization" trends are well established in the male dominated field of medicine. To accommodate female health workers better, more attention must be paid to their safety, including protecting them from violence. Other measures must be put in place. These include more flexible work arrangements to accommodate family considerations, and career tracks that promote women towards senior faculty and leadership positions

more effectively.

- Ensuring safe work environments. Outflows from the workforce caused by illness, disability and death are unnecessarily high and demand priority attention especially in areas of high HIV prevalence. Strategies to minimize occupational hazards include the recognition and appropriate management of physical risks and mental stress, as well as full compliance with prevention and protection guidelines. Provision of effective prevention services and access to treatment for all health workers who become HIV-positive are the only reasonable way forward in the pursuit of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care.
- Retirement planning. In an era of ageing workforces and trends towards earlier retirement, unwanted attrition can be stemmed by a range of policies. These policies can reduce incentives for early retirement, decrease the cost of employing older people, recruit retirees back to work and improve conditions for older workers. Succession planning is central to preserving key competencies and skills in the workforce.

Dimensions of health workforce performance

Dimension	Description
Availability	Availability in terms of space and time: encompasses distribution and attendance of existing workers
Competence	Encompasses the combination of technical knowledge, skills and behaviours
Responsiveness	People are treated decently, regardless of whether or not their health improves or who they are
Productivity	Producing the maximum effective health services and health outcomes possible given the existing stock of health workers; reducing waste of staff time or skills

Democracy limited by local conditions

By: Barkatullah Marwat
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There is no escaping the fact that Kuwait is one of the richest states of the Middle East, but in the same way it is the very state that suffered the most as the result of Saddam's invasion. The damages and losses it incurred can be judged from the fact that United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) still disburses compensation in installments to cover Kuwait's losses.

Now let's take a look at its job-market situation that has begun to become saturated by the day to day influx of migrants from different countries. They don't know what's going on over here. All of them tend to see Kuwait as a dream state. But once they reach Kuwait, they realize that only the sound of distant drums gratify.

Usually, there are two to three types of unemployment: those who intentionally prefer not to work, those

who fail to find jobs, and those who find jobs but have problems with it. These problems might include undue pressure, withholding of salaries, increments, fringe benefits, and finding jobs that are step down in terms of qualifications and pay. The question arises, can a doctor become a lawyer or can a lawyer become a doctor? Of course not.

Let's not forget that no one leaves their homeland willingly, rather they do so under compulsion. During my stay in Kuwait, I noticed countless cases that showed that sometimes an economic migrant may take a long time to find his feet in their adopted country, while some are quick.

For example, one of my friends worked here with a private company as a mechanical engineer. He was not satisfied with what he was doing and what he was offered. Finally, he somehow succeeded in moving to Canada and joined a sensitive project related to Uranium exploration. Two years ago, his efforts were recognized with a presidential award. So, the possibility of becoming a success is

the main reason why people are trying to migrate to Kuwait.

Kuwait is populated by citizens and by expatriates. Many expatriates are not come from Third World countries. Many immigrants are from the most developed and advanced ones, such as the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Europe, and Japan.

A question arises. Were expatriates from developed countries jobless in their home countries? They come to Kuwait to make it a better place for business for everyone. I would not be wrong if I cite the example of the U.A.E. which has seen record levels of growth and that's why the U.A.E. has become a hub for business activity for regional and global entrepreneurs.

I agree with Ahmed Jarallah's comments about the Al-Sabah ruling family, which asked them not to participate in the forthcoming elections as they are different from other ruling cliques. Kuwait is a democratic state but is not yet fully developed. Why is that? Because the portfolios for the premiership and other key ministries like defense,

foreign affairs, and interior are managed by the members of the Al-Sabah, while in democratic state, the election of a president, a prime minister, and ministers are conducted through a democratic process.

The concept of democracy, especially as introduced and enforced by the West, has failed miserably due to several reasons. I summarize some of the key reasons here. The first setback a nation witnesses is the loss of unity. There is no more unity among the bigwigs of a nation. They are divided and re-divided into different groups and factions. In other words, the sense of 'nationalism' is naturally obscured into 'tribalism'. Second, there is no electoral institution that trains candidates on how to deal with the national and international issues after making their way to the corridor of the parliament. We see that most of them are either legal or medical practitioners. A very few of them possess the in-depth knowledge of politics and political science.

Third, after an election, two bodies come up: the treasury and the

opposition. Needless to say, constitutionally, the majority is asked to form the government, but unfortunately, they pay attention more to their personal needs instead of the problems found in their constituencies. They grill ministers on nominally issues of national concern, but have their own personal motives behind their action.

Fourth, the elected politicians are always seen making incredible claims and promises to their electorate, yet ironically, they forget those promises upon their election. During electioneering, candidates are easily approached and ready to help each voter, but once the elections are over, they wear the glasses through which they don't recognize you.

Let me go into greater detail about my first point that politicians always lose their unity. Yes, I have a valid reason to say that. It holds true not only in Kuwait but everywhere 'democracy' is in practice.

In Kuwait, you would have to be blind not to have looked at election banners, posters, and other

paraphernalia of elections erected along the roadsides? If you have seen them, then surely you must have noticed that no one mentions "Al Kuwaiti" with their names. Everyone uses their tribal names indicating that they are more concerned about their tribes instead of their state, Kuwait. Therefore, I failed to find the phrase "Ana Kuwaiti" on their posters and banners. And that's a definite indication of disunity. So, that's one of the demerits of democracy that rears its head globally.

I agree with Dalal Nasser Al Otaibi's write-up "Kuwaiti govt should act to stop vote-buying" in the Arab Times on June 15. Al-Otaibi wrote that if candidates fail to stop the practice of vote-buying, it will damage the very foundation of democracy. By the way, a similar dispute arose in Florida when George W. Bush and Al Gore were contesting elections in 2000. The episode has not been forgotten. The dispute escalated and eventually the advanced technology used to record votes was put aside and the votes were counted manually.

Europe's racist schools

By: Ivan Ivanov

I am what many people call a "Gypsy." I prefer the term "Roma." There are more than 10 million of us across Europe. The vast majority of us live in Third World conditions – denied access to adequate housing, health care, and education.

I was born in a provincial town in Bulgaria in the late 1960's, when, like the rest of Eastern Europe, the country was under Communist rule. The Party recognized no ethnic minorities – we were all, formally, equal. Indeed, we were so equal that the government gave many of us new, Bulgarian names. One day, when I was a teenager named Husni, my name became Ivan.

But we were not equal. Roma lived in segregated ghettos. We were second-class citizens.

One of my clearest early childhood

memories is of my father telling my younger sister and me, "Education is the key to success." He said, "If you want to be accepted as equals by Gadje [non-Roma], you must be better educated than they are. This is not easy. But if you succeed, this will change not only your life but also the lives of many of your people."

Education is the only way out of the ghetto for many Roma. But in societies like Bulgaria, where racism is rampant, Roma have to fight for equal schooling.

Most of the children I grew up with received an inferior education that did not train them for university or skilled jobs. They are either unemployed or working as unskilled laborers in Bulgaria or in the black market abroad. By contrast, in large part because of my father, I managed to complete high school, then medical school, and become a general

practitioner.

By the early 1990's, Bulgaria had changed. The transition to democracy promised freedom and prosperity to all who had suffered in communism's stranglehold. Yet the Roma found themselves losers of the democratic transformation. Their situation, always tenuous, dramatically worsened. Their poor schooling left them ill equipped for the new economy. The communist dogma was shattered, but so was the pretense that we were all equals in a homogenous society. The government allowed employment discrimination to go unchecked, leaving the majority of Roma without jobs, and communities were plunged deeper into poverty.

I obtained a law degree to help advocate for members of my community. Today, I live and work in Brussels, where I lead an organization that advises the European Union and national governments on Roma-related

policies. I support my family and have achieved fulfillment in my career. But I am an exception.

It is because of the importance of education in making me an exception that I am so deeply troubled by a recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights.

The case was brought by 18 Roma children from the city of Ostrava in the Czech Republic who had been assigned to special remedial schools for the "mentally deficient." In Central and Eastern Europe, Roma are often unfairly placed in these special schools, which provide sub-par education that all but guarantees a life of poverty and manual labor.

I served as one of the lawyers for the children. The evidence showed that more than half of the Roma children in Ostrava were placed in special schools, and that more than half of the population of special schools was

Roma. All told, Roma children in Ostrava are more than 27 times more likely than non-Roma to be placed in such schools.

This is not a unique situation. Far from it. The same disproportionate patterns of school assignment exist throughout much of Central and Eastern Europe. As a United Nations expert body has declared, this is racial segregation, plain and simple.

But the Court was unmoved. Its judgment recognized that the claimants raised "a number of serious arguments," and that the education system in Ostrava perpetuated racial segregation. But the Court ruled that, absent a showing of actual racial bias in the minds of testers and administrators – virtually impossible to prove – the pervasive reality of racial disadvantage was not unlawful.

In what could have been a landmark victory that would open the doors of

opportunity for Europe's Roma, the Strasbourg Court instead chose to keep Roma locked out of a decent education. Its decision reverberates across the Continent – not just for the Roma, but for all who have a stake in promoting the values of tolerance and equality in a democratic Europe. Anyone who believes in the rights of all children to quality education should be troubled by a decision so myopic.

For decades, racial segregation in European schools has stigmatized generations of Roma children as stupid and disabled. The Court's decision allows this brutal and systematic violation of fundamental rights to continue. The Roma, and Europe, have suffered a great defeat.

Ivan Ivanov is the Executive Director of the European Roma Information Office.

Source: Project Syndicate

YLNG: We are the largest Investment in Yemen

The Yemen Liquefied Natural Gas Company (YLNG) is one of the largest investments in Yemen and it holds the hopes of the Yemeni government as the prime means to finance Yemen's Development. In this interview Yemen Times spoke to Mr. Joel Fort, General Manager of YLNG and discussed a number of important subjects related to the project and its environmental impact in detail.

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

YT: Could you please brief us on the motivation to establish YLNG, a summary of the establishing partners and the potential of the projects?

JF: Let me begin by saying that the launch of the Yemen LNG Project comes at a time when the international demand for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) has grown tremendously. LNG offers an alternate source of energy which is both clean and cost-effective and can be used in a variety of industrial fields.

Recognizing this economic potential, the Government of Yemen - represented by the Yemen Gas Company - together with the other shareholders in Yemen LNG made the decision to launch the Yemen LNG Project. The current shareholders are Yemen Gas Company, the General Authority for Social Security and Pensions (GASSP), Total, Hunt, Kogas, SK and Hyundai. Upon completion of the construction phase, the project is expected to generate the largest single revenue for the country during the period of 20-25 years.

YT: How do you assess the economic returns of this project, considering that Natural Gas will be the main source of revenue for the government of Yemen by the year 2015?

JF: The economic significance of the LNG deal can be seen through two different lenses. First, the size of the project in numeric terms is indicative of the benefits that the project will generate for Yemen. The US\$ 3.7 billion capital allocated by shareholders, including the Government of Yemen, makes the project the largest investment and operation ever undertaken in Yemen, at around 40 times the average large investment in the coun-

try. In addition, the size of the plant and the pipeline that will be constructed is very big even by international standards. Equally important are the complexity and modern technology used by the project which makes it among only twenty similar projects in the entire world.

Second, the project will directly contribute to macroeconomic development of the country, with Yemen expecting to generate something between US\$ 10-20 billion over the course of 20 to 25 years—the lifespan of the project according to the gas development agreement.

This is not all, as the project is providing major investment opportunities for national companies, taking HAWK for instance which won big contracts in the project. Many job opportunities will be created by the project, particularly during the construction phase, with also several

hundred permanent highly-skilled positions for Yemeni citizens throughout the lifespan of the project. Over 300 Yemeni technicians will be receiving intensive training both in Yemen and in other parts of the world to take over operational and supervisory functions in the operations of the project in the future.

All this puts Yemen on the world investment map, thereby making the country a destination for foreign investors. It also provides opportunities for local investors to move international-ly.

YT: You mentioned Yemen will get something between 10-20 billion over the period of 20-25 years, giving a best case scenario of 1 billion annually and a worst case scenario of 400 million? Any research or forecasts?

JF: It is impossible to state positively that these indicative figures are worst case and best case, although the lower figure appears quite robust in any circumstances. The reality is that the revenue will be a function of the prices at which the gas will sell, and this price will vary depending upon the economic conditions over time. The range which has been supplied here is representative of a conservative approach. In fact there is a case to build to demonstrate that the revenues may be higher than the top of the range given here above (\$ 20 MM), if fossil energy prices were to stay at high levels for long. Conversely the gas sales contracts or the agreements between YLNG and the State incorporate guaranteed minimum selling prices, which in turn are protecting the State of Yemen from a very unlikely collapse of energy prices. In other words the State can benefit of high prices and is protected against depressed prices.



Mr. Joel Fort, General Manager of YLNG

ly organized by the Central Organisation for Control and Accounting (COCA) and the French Embassy.

YT: With Regard to the Belhaf Plant at the Arab Sea Coast, could you inform us about the planning and construction of the plant, as well as its importance to the success of the project?

JF: YLNG is currently constructing a liquefaction plant in Balhaf on the coast of Shabwah, 200 km south-west of Mukalla, a pipeline to connect the two gas processing centres in Marib, where the gas will be coming from, a spur line to the city of Ma'bar to supply domestic consumption, and a 320-kilometer, 38-inch pipeline from the processing centres to the plant.

The construction involves building and operating two-train liquefying units for exporting LNG, expandable to three trains in the future. The plant has a guaranteed production capacity of 6.7 million metric tons per year. A thorough survey of all potential port sites in Yemen identified Balhaf to be the most suitable location on a balance of technical and environment protection considerations.

Balhaf has the lowest geotechnical risk, natural protection from the main eastern waves of the winter monsoon—thereby eliminating the need for a breakwater, the lowest downtime due to wind, and a naturally deep harbour which reduces jetty length and dredging requirements and which can accommodate large-capacity LNG carriers.

YT: When was the site selected and were there any alternatives?

JF: In 1995 commenced the initial process to identify the best LNG plant location and the most appropriate pipeline route connecting the upstream facilities to the LNG terminal. Every effort has been made to ensure that both the plant location and pipeline route would have a minimal impact on the environment and local communities.

A thorough survey of all potential port sites in Yemen identified Balhaf to be the most suitable location for a number of reasons. Balhaf has the lowest geotechnical risks, natural protection from the main Eastern waves of the winter monsoon, eliminating the need for a breakwater, the lowest downtime due to wind, and the naturally deep harbour which reduces jetty length and dredging requirements and which can accommodate large capac-

ity LNG carriers. On the environmental and social side, the selection of the plant location and pipeline route was made in order to minimize impacts on livelihoods and natural habitats by mainly passing through deserts and thinly populated areas.

YT: Balhaf enjoys the highest diversity of coral reefs as well as fishing communities in the region. What is the environmental impact of the project on marine life and fisheries wealth in the Gulf of Aden and how was this impact assessed?

JF: Let me start by referring to the comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) studies that the company has undertaken since 1997, completely revised and updated in 2005, to carefully examine all possible effects on the environment and communities. The ESIA was officially disclosed and discussed with various concerned stakeholders, including government and non-government organizations, and is available in full on our website [www.yemenlng.com]. We realized from the beginning the likely effects of such a big construction work in Balhaf and the 320 km of pipelines connecting the liquefaction plant to the Marib processing fields on the overall environment and/or the populations. Bearing this in mind, ESIA sought to identify concrete measures to avoid or at least mitigate any potential effects but also to leave a positive legacy in the communities in which it is operating. Most of these measures were based on consensus reached in debates with local communities and/or government authorities, founded upon the principles of fairness and transparency.

The company has identified some inevitable impacts, primarily related to the loss of a property or land or prevention of ownership and/or utilization of one because of the project. The other relates to the loss of source of income, such as the situation that may be lived by the fishermen who lost the fishing harbour and safe haven due to the dedication of Balhaf to the purposes of the LNG plant. For each specific concern, the company has developed a comprehensive analysis and is taken careful measures to compensate for any loss.

YT: Do you have any plans or mechanisms to compensate for any such marine loss similar to that of Land Compensation Committee?

JF: For the compensation of fishermen, for example, fishermen associations and confederations in the affected regions are represented in the Company's fishermen compensation committee, providing specific measure to address both the loss of shelter and safe haven (caused by dedicating Balhaf to the project) and the loss of income that would have otherwise been generated through fishing activities. I will also give you one concrete example which should give you a sense of how the company is addressing environmental concerns from which you can draw analogy with other aspects of our community and environment work. This relates to the effects on coral reefs in the Balhaf shores.

1- The design of the plant has undergone several modifications from original plans to avoid areas populated by sensitive coral reefs, as advised by YLNG experts.
2- The location of the off-loading facility and harbour was selected to cross less sensitive coral areas.

3- At the advice of specialists, the end of the harbour towards the shore has been constructed in the form of a bridge to ensure the continuation of water circulation on both sides of the harbour. The purpose is to maintain an environment within which sea life can have minimal interference.

4- A team of experts from the Hadramout University of Science has been commissioned to check water turbidity in the areas surrounding the harbour/jetty construction on a regular basis and such information is documented and analyzed for future planning and enhancements.

5- To ensure that dust and particles resulting from the construction of the harbour do not reach the corals around it, the Company has installed water silt curtains—a shield to prevent such particles from getting through to coral reefs.

6- YLNG on top of all this has commissioned an internationally recognized organization, called CREOCEAN and an independent reputable coral specialist to conduct regular surveys for the coral reefs to continually provide feedback on impacts on the corals, if any, thereby advising the company to take action as deemed necessary.

On the compensation of fishermen, on the other hand, agreements have been reached with fishing communities on some concrete compensation measures. These include:

1- Installing a 750-meter breakwater to substitute for the lost 'safe heaven' which can accommodate up to 255 fishing boats.
2- High-tech aggregation devices both around the breakwater and in certain locations along the shore to help attract fish for easy fishing. The design and studies were commissioned to a British specialized company called McAllister Elliot & Partners.

Additional measures are also being taken, including the construction of an access road at Jela'a near Balhaf port, technical mechanisms and computers for better monitoring of auction markets at Bir Ali area—a regional fish market about 30 km from Balhaf, in addition to many smaller services in this respect.

YT: What are your corporate social responsibility strategies considering that you are the largest corporation to exist in Yemen? And, have you done any social impact studies according to which you will ensure that compensation is reasonable and satisfactory?

JF: To summarize what I indicated earlier, we are undertaking several levels of action to this effect: 1) preventing whenever possible or at least mitigating any potential effects on the people or the environment; 2) fairly compensating those who are adversely affected by the project; and 3) taking measures to leave a positive legacy in the communities in which we are working. As such, we are committed not only to address the effects but also to make a contribution to the development of the country, particularly the communities most affected by the project or those in close proximity to its construction and operational activities. All of this has been captured within the continuously updated ESIA document mentioned earlier.

YT: Has your damage limitation program been endorsed by the Environmental Protection Authority?

JF: The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Ministry of Water and Environment have approved in writing the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and mitigation measures by means of a letter dated December 5, 2005. In addition, the Ministry of Oil and Minerals has endorsed the (EPA) and Ministry of Water and Environment approval in a letter dated June 26, 2006.

YT: Any last comments?

JF: Let me reiterate the centrality of the project to Yemen's economic development. It will contribute to improving national capacities and attracting more national and international investment to Yemen. It is also an important private-public venture owned by both the Government of Yemen and the shareholders that will set the ground for further joint economic initiatives in the country. The company's commitment to Yemenisation could also set an example for other companies in the future.

Business In Brief

Yemen Announces Nuclear Energy Program

President Saleh has announced that Yemen plans to establish a Nuclear Energy Program including a nuclear reactor facility; President Saleh also indicated that nuclear energy development will be a focal point of his next term as president of the republic of Yemen. Saleh has previously supported Iran decision to enrich uranium and has recently called on all Arab nations to produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

A prospected Joint Yemeni-Egyptian Oil Exploration company

His Excellency Mr. Khalid Bahah discussed with his Egyptian counterpart the prospect of establishing a joint Yemeni-Egyptian oil and gas exploration company to operate in Yemen taking advantage of Egyptian expertise in the explorations field as well as providing supplementary services including geological mapping and developing a petro-chemical industry following on the footsteps of the current petro-chemical industry of Egypt.

New Banks to venture in Yemen

Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Samawi Treasurer of the central Bank told the Yemen Times that a number of regional and gulf-based Banks are negotiating with the central Bank in order to expand into Yemen through green field investments and joint ventures with Yemeni Bankers. He also indicated that fundamental changes will take place in the Yemeni Banking industry once licenses are granted to the new banks to operate in Yemen, explaining the recent instructions of the central bank to raise the capital of local banks as well as endorsing commercial leasing as attempts to help local banks compete with the new banks to operate soon.

World Bank approves US\$ 20 million to support agriculture

The World Bank has approved US\$ 20 million to support the Rainfed Agriculture and Livestock Project in order to improve the effectiveness of the poverty reduction strategy in rural Yemen where 70% of the population resides and their livelihood is based on agriculture. The Rainfed agriculture and livestock project will synergize with other World Bank project aiming at improving quality of live in rural areas of the country.

Over 378.5 Billion Riyals for Electricity generation

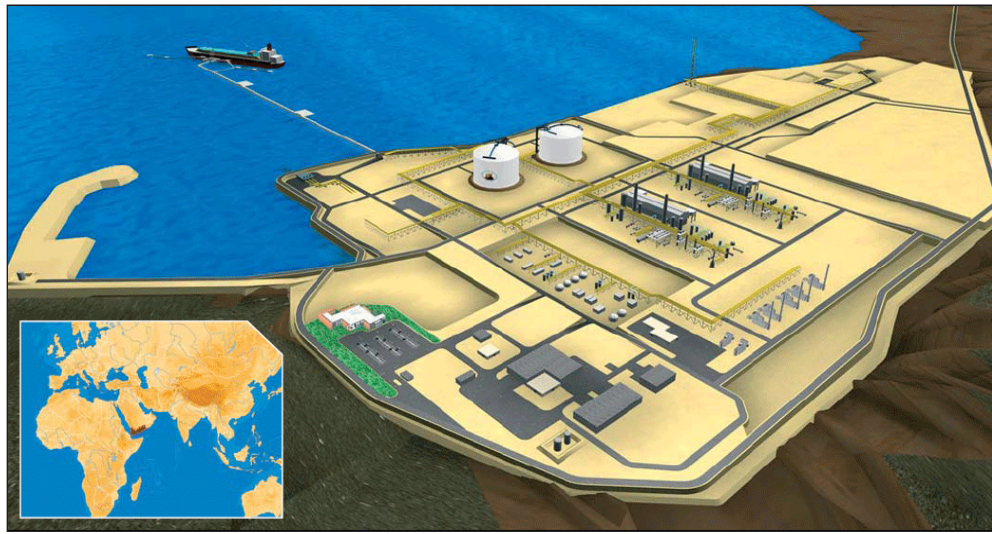
The General Establishment for Electricity has announced a plan to invest over 378.5 billion riyals in electricity generation plants to be completed by the year 2010, and will provide an additional 1200 Mega watts focused on serving undersupplied areas in Dhammar, Aden and Hodida, indicating that the new plants will operate using Natural Gas which will be locally produced mainly through the Yemen LNG company.

Dr. Al-Asali: Milestones in Economic & Fiscal reforms

Dr. Saif Al-Asali Minister of Finance announced that his ministry has undertaken great improvements in the financial and monetary administration of the country especially with regards to transparency and fiscal strategies. He said that while attending a workshop discussing National fiscal strategy and financial management with many employees of the ministry of finance and relevant authorities participating including his Excellency Minister of Planning and International Cooperation.

United Insurance Company celebrates 25 years

United Insurance Company celebrated 25 years of operation since its establishment in 1981, during which United Insurance has pioneered the local Insurance Business with a market share of 39% of the local insurance with a number of excellent insurance solutions ranging from automotive and health to engineering and life insurance. United Insurance is the first Yemeni insurance firm to be awarded the ISO 9001-2000 in recognition to the sophisticated level and quality in their client-oriented service.



Although the Belhaf plant is located at the most diverse coral reef in the region, YLNG took measures to minimize the environmental damage following best practice of the industry.

try. In addition, the size of the plant and the pipeline that will be constructed is very big even by international standards. Equally important are the complexity and modern technology used by the project which makes it among only twenty similar projects in the entire world.

Second, the project will directly contribute to macroeconomic development of the country, with Yemen expecting to generate something between US\$ 10-20 billion over the course of 20 to 25 years—the lifespan of the project according to the gas development agreement.

This is not all, as the project is providing major investment opportunities for national companies, taking HAWK for instance which won big contracts in the project. Many job opportunities will be created by the project, particularly during the construction phase, with also several

YT: In January 2006, the cabinet approved a decree that included the intention to start the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Is there a plan to include YLNG into reaching new levels of disclosure in revenue transparency and accountability, considering Natural Gas to be Yemen's most valuable resource?

JF: Both Yemen LNG as a company and its international shareholders are supportive of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) principles and welcome their implementation in Yemen. Recently, Yemen LNG sponsored a presentation by TOTAL experts on this approach. This presentation was delivered during the Franco-Yemeni conference on the implementation of the Merida Convention in Yemen, a conference joint-



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Fifa investigates Zidane red card

What happened in the dramatic final?

Fifa is to investigate Zinedine Zidane's dramatic sending off during Sunday's World Cup final in Berlin.

The Frenchman was dismissed in extra-time for a headbutt on Marco Materazzi which happened seconds after the Italian apparently insulted him.

Materazzi has denied calling Zidane a "terrorist" or insulting his mother.

Fifa will now launch an investigation into Zidane's conduct to enable it to clarify the circumstances surrounding the incident as exactly as possible.

Zidane and Materazzi exchanged words with 10 minutes left of extra-time before Zidane lowered his head and rammed Materazzi in the chest, knocking him to the ground.

Materazzi defended himself on Tuesday in the Italian newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport, when he said: "It was the kind of insult you will hear dozens of times and just slips out of the ground."

"I didn't call Zidane a terrorist and certainly didn't mention his mother," Zidane, who was born and grew up in Marseille, is the son of Algerian immigrants and has suffered taunts about his heritage throughout his football career. But Materazzi added: "I am ignorant, I don't even know what an Islamic terrorist is; my only terrorist is her," he said pointing to his 10-month-old daughter.

"I did not bring up Zidane's mother; for me a mother is sacred."

Materazzi and Zidane became involved in a verbal spat with 10 minutes to go in extra-time with France and Italy drawing 1-1 in the World Cup final.

After Materazzi's insult Zidane shoved his head into the Italian's chest and was sent off, with Italy going on to win the match 5-3 on penalties.

"I held his shirt, for only a few seconds," said Materazzi, who had scored Italy's equaliser after Zidane put France ahead from the penalty spot.

"He turned towards me and scoffed at me, looking at me with super arrogance, up and down."

"He said 'if you really want my shirt, you can have it later.'"

"It's true, I shot back with an insult."



Zidane reacted to Materazzi's insult by headbutting the defender

Media organisations across Europe have been trying to decipher what Materazzi said to provoke such an extreme reaction from Zidane.

But it remains unclear exactly what was said and the BBC has broadcast two different versions.

BBC Radio Five Live asked for help from a deaf lip reader, Jessica Rees, who read the words phonetically to an Italian translator.

She deciphered the insult as being "you're the son of a terrorist whore" - a translation also carried by many national newspapers in Britain on Tuesday.

The BBC's Ten O'Clock News also called in experts to study the television footage of the incident and determined the following:

Materazzi's first word to Zidane was "no" before he then told him to "calm down".

He then accused him of being a "liar" and wished "an ugly death to you and your family" on the day the Frenchman's mother had been taken to hospital ill. This was followed by "Go f*** yourself".

Zidane's agent, Alain Migliaccio, has hinted that Zidane will soon reveal exactly what was said by Materazzi.

Piara Powar, national co-ordinator for the anti-racism group Kick It Out told Five Live, said: "If there was a racial slur then Fifa needs to act."

Keith Hackett, head of referees in England, said that if it can be proved that Matterazzi racially abused the

Frenchman, then Fifa should take retrospective action for "the good of the game."

Fourth official saw Zidane action

The fourth official who told referee Horacio Elizondo to send off Zinedine Zidane during the World Cup final says he saw the incident as it happened.

Luis Medina Cantalejo did not rely on video evidence after France's Zidane headbutted Italy's Marco Materazzi.

Cantalejo told Spanish radio: "I saw it happen live, I didn't invent anything."

"The ball was elsewhere and that was where the referee was looking. I always tell my fourth official to watch the players because things can happen."

France coach Raymond Domenech said after the game the sending off had been provoked by television replays.

Domenech was seen to sarcastically applaud Cantalejo as Zidane left the field having received the red card.

But Cantalejo said: "I respect his opinion but that is not what happened."

"This incident shows how important the fourth official is. My job is to help the referee and that is exactly what I did."

"I don't know what Materazzi said to Zidane but there were protests about the action and Gianluigi Buffon went to talk to the linesman."

"When everything calmed down I told Elizondo what had happened."

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The Youth Forum section is an uncensored space for youth-related issues written by Yemen Times readers.

A victim of love

By: Ghaleb Al-Ahlasi

I looked at my watch, it was 12:30. "Where the hell is he?" I asked myself, "He is thirty minutes late." I ordered another cup of tea.

That was three years ago when I was waiting for my friend, Sameh, 19 years old and son of a very rich family. Ten minutes later he arrived in his big, red, new car. He asked me to get in, and then he drove as if in a dream.

"Hey man," I asked, "wake up! What's on your mind?"

"I'm in love," he said.

"I'm a love victim," he continued as if he didn't hear me.

"A love victim?!" I said with a loud laugh.

"Yes," he said so calmly, "she is so beautiful. Her eyes are a sea, her lips are apples and her cheeks are as red as flowers."

"Hold on man!" I interrupted, "who is she?"

"My love," he answered so dreamily, "my beautiful angel."

"Oh really? Your love? Can I know her name?"

"No, you can't," he answered with a smile.

"Come on, friend. Maybe I can help you. Don't you trust me?"

"Of course I trust you. But I can't tell you her name."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't know it myself. I just saw her for a few seconds."

"You're joking!" I said.

"No I'm not," he answered.

"Then how the hell can you love her?"

"What? Haven't you heard about love at first sight?" he asked with a smile and I laughed so loudly.

"Why are you laughing?" he asked.

"Love at first sight?!" I answered

"You are crazy to believe in something like that!"

"Well, I didn't, but then I experienced it ... now I believe."

"Experienced what? What if she is married?"

"No she is not. There were no rings on her fingers."

"Maybe she loves another man."

"No. Her eyes and smiles said she loves no one but me."

"Smiles? I assure you that she loves your car and money, not you. Listen friend, you are lucky to have a family like yours and to have a future like the one you will have. Don't lose them in such stupid ..."

"You think I'm a child or what?" he interrupted angrily.

"No you are not. But you are a fool to believe in..."

He raised his hand to my face to stop me. "Get out of my car!" he said angrily. "It's not your fault, it's mine – for being a friend to an insect like you! Out...! Get out of my car!"

And so I did.

That night I didn't sleep. I spent the whole night thinking of him; of what he said and what he did. I tried my best to find any excuses for him but I couldn't. So I promised myself to forget about him and to not think about him anymore.

I continued my life and education until I graduated, then I got a job with an excellent salary, from which I saved enough to buy a car, and today I did it. I bought a used, but good, car, and then I went for a drive around the city until I was near my old college. I stopped, got out and entered the café to have a drink. In the café I saw the empty chair where I had sat three years ago waiting for Sameh. I smiled and said, somehow loudly, "A love victim!"

At that moment I felt a hand on my shoulder, and I turned around to see a young, very thin, tired and sad man in

dirty clothes. I searched my pockets, found 200 riyals and gave it to him.

"What is that?" he asked with a very sad smile.

"What! Don't you like it?" I asked.

"Don't you know me, friend?"

"No...who are you?" I answered very slowly.

"Don't you remember your old friend?" he asked so sadly.

"My old friend?"

"The one you were just thinking about."

"The one... you mean.... you mean Sameh?"

"Yes. The love victim."

I was shocked. I couldn't think, couldn't talk and couldn't move for a while. Is that Sameh? The rich, good looking and strong man? I couldn't believe my eyes. No, I didn't believe him. HOW?! How it could be and why? A lot of questions were in my head and needed to be answered. I took his hand and we took our seat in the café and ordered two juices.

"Three years," he said sadly, "three years and 29 days since we fell out."

"Are you counting the days or what?" I said, tried to bring some humor.

"Yes I do," he said smiling, "I have nothing to do but count the days." He sighed. From his sigh I realized that I was sitting with a very sad mess.

"What have you been doing all these years?" he asked me, trying to hide his sadness. I told him about how I had graduated and got a job and what had brought me here today. Then I asked him the same question, and after a long silence, with tears in his eyes, he said, "It's a very long story."

"Can I hear it?" I asked.

After a long thankful silence he said, "Remember the girl I told you about that day?"

"The one you loved?"

"Yes, the evil woman that I loved."

"Yes, what about her?"

"The next day, after our falling out, I went to her and told her how I felt and how much I loved her. She said she loved me too and she couldn't imagine her life without me, which made me a really crazy and absent-minded man. I wanted to meet her everyday and I did, of course, with presents of jewelry or clothes."

The waiter brought the juice.

"Are you married now?" I asked him.

"Married! Hah! No, we aren't. I haven't seen her for 34 months."

"What? 34! You mean you saw her for... for only 3 months?"

"No," he said crying, "it was only 81 days." He sighed again. "After the first 30 days I was broke. I...I couldn't give her anything and she stopped talking to me. She didn't believe I was out of money. She said that I had just stopped loving her or I had found another girl. You know, she said I was cheating her and her heart. Three days went like that. I felt as if my soul had been taken out of my body. I couldn't stand it anymore, so I went and sold my car." He said in a very tired voice, "I sold it very cheaply, and then I told my father it was stolen."

"Are you crazy?" I shouted, "What if he had gone to the police and...?"

"No, they couldn't," he interrupted, "I sold it to a man whose job is buying and selling stolen cars. You know, he would change its look completely so it wouldn't be found."

"Then what happened?"

"I bought some expensive presents and went back to her until I became broke again."

"And she left you again?"

"No. That time she encouraged me to take money from my father secretly. She said that the money was mine and I had the right to take it anytime I wanted and if I didn't buy her presents

I couldn't see her anymore."

"Don't tell me you did it."

"Unfortunately, that's what happened. I started taking money secretly, started from 1000 riyals and ended in 30,000 riyals, the day they discovered me."

"Anything else, sir?" The waiter interrupted us. I ordered another two juices.

"So what did your father do?"

"He shouted at me and kicked me out of the house, and then told everyone to not give me anymore money. I went to her and told her that. She invited me to live with her."

"You mean you...?"

"Yes, we lived together for five days. In those few days I got to know the real her, but she wasn't who I thought."

"What do you mean?"

One minute passed in silence then he said, "She kept secrets from me, but I was too blind to see."

I waited for him to continue, but he didn't so I asked, "Then what happened?"

"On the sixth day, when I woke up I couldn't find her, but I found this message," he brought out a dirty paper from his pocket and gave it to me. I opened it and read.

"Dear Sameh,
I'm so sorry but I have to leave. When you read this message I will be on a plane traveling to another country. Thank you for everything. I will not ask you to not forget me because I'm sure you won't. Sorry again for not telling you before.
Good luck.
Yours,
Nada"

"I see." I said, "That broke your heart."

"Yes, I think so" he answered.

"You think so?!" I said

"I don't know, but really it didn't hurt me as much as I had thought it might."

"So... What did you do then?"

"Nothing. I went back to my father, apologized to him and he allowed me to come back home. Then I went back to college after a long absence. I tried to forget her and I almost did but..." he stopped and his tears streamed down his face.

"But what? What happened?" I asked him three times.

"One day, few months ago I was very sick. I couldn't move from my bed. My father brought me a doctor and ...and after I had X-rays and blood tests the doctor said... he said I have..." he couldn't continue because of his weeping.

I waited until he calmed down then asked "What is it?"

"Aids".

He dropped the word like a bombshell, and for a while my heart and mind stopped working.

"Yes. That was the only thing I got from her, my love," he continued, "Aids."

I really couldn't get it. I was sitting with an Aids patient.

"Do you know what it means?" he said after he read my shell-shocked expression, "It means to be all alone. No one talks to you, and you can't talk to anyone. It means staying in a single, small and dark room all day and night. I can't work or talk; I can't do anything but cry all the time. If I go out of the house all the people I see try to not touch me or even talk to me; they treat me like garbage. Yes," he said, looking at me with tear-filled eyes, "That's what I am – garbage. Just garbage. Nothing more than bad smelling garbage." He stood up, crying and went out, repeating his last sentences again and again. I felt so sorry for him. I wish I could help him but...I really couldn't.

Universal Crossword

Edited by Timothy E. Parker

ACROSS

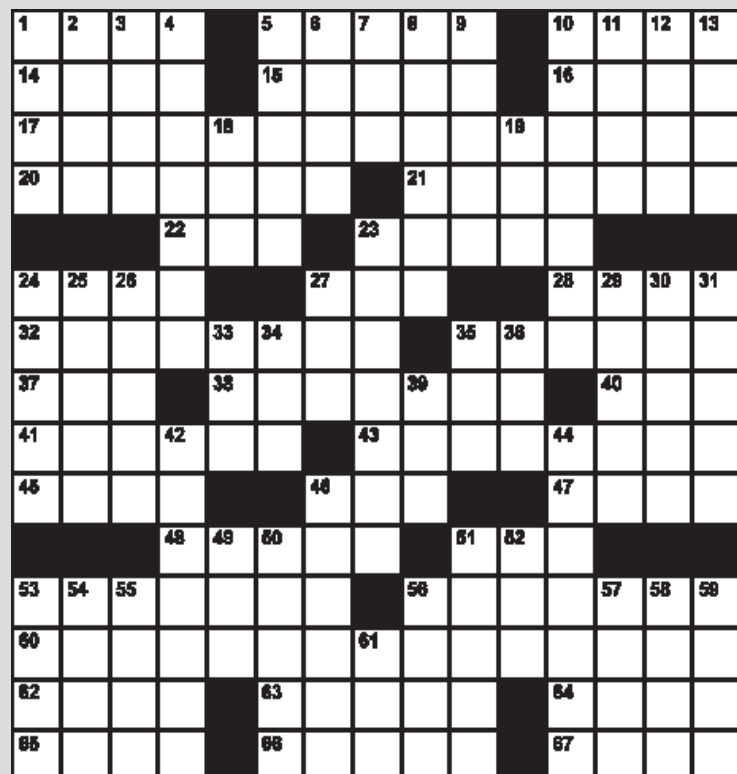
- 1 Barrel staves
- 5 Positive attitude
- 10 "Of ___ are you speaking?"
- 14 Southwest crockpot
- 15 Clownish act
- 16 Council Bluffs is there
- 17 Takes a sharp turn
- 20 Estimated time of arrival
- 21 Large serving bowls
- 22 Free pass, in sports
- 23 Brimless cap
- 24 Answer to a charge
- 27 Hemingway title word
- 28 Follower of the Gospels
- 32 Seeks entry, in a way (with 43-Across)
- 35 Napoleon III, to Napoleon I
- 37 Start of Mr. Rogers' song
- 38 Trailblazer
- 40 Linguistic suffix
- 41 Nervy?
- 43 See 32-Across
- 45 It might need surgery
- 46 Atty. ___

- 47 Stone made of hydrated silica
- 48 Peer among peers
- 51 Linen liturgical vestment
- 53 Changed to suit
- 56 Up to now
- 60 Orbits
- 62 Give off
- 63 Split land
- 64 First name in mysteries
- 65 Some four-footed mothers
- 66 Golf great Sam
- 67 Exploit

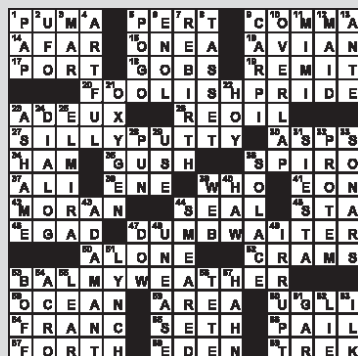
DOWN

- 1 Almighty one
- 2 Moises of baseball
- 3 Filler for some guns
- 4 Common balloon ballast
- 5 Socioeconomic class
- 6 Kick in for a hand
- 7 Utmost degree
- 8 Ate sparingly
- 9 Come about
- 10 Intercept a conversation, in a way

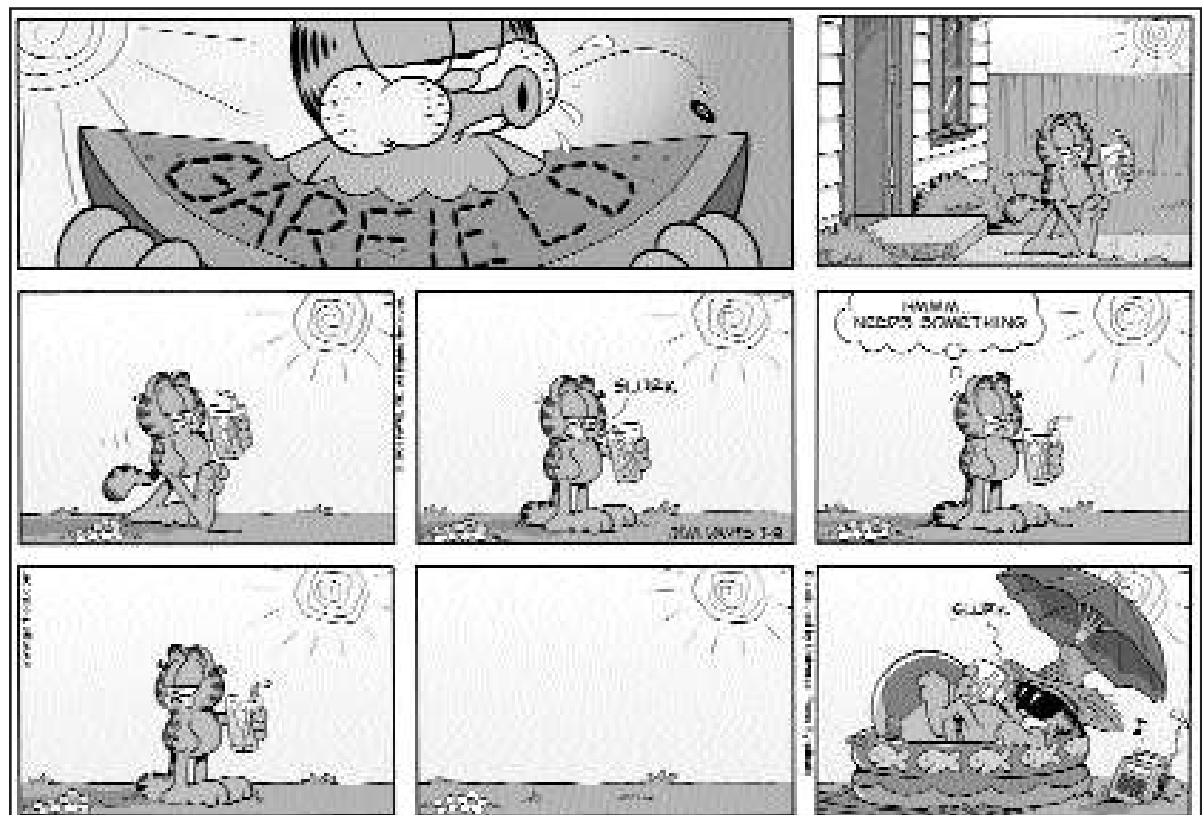
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Yemeni swords and daggers: Skilled craftsmanship

By: Ismail Al-Ghabiri

The word "semsama" refers to one of the most famous swords made in ancient Yemen. However, some historians associate the name semsama with the handgrip of an old masterpiece of a sword that remained buried under the sands in Mecca, originally given as a present from King Solomon to Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba.

Tales differ as to the historical background of the term "al-sem-sama," but all narrations agree that it was a particular name of a special sword.

Yemen actually was famed among ancient countries for the art of manufacturing all sorts of magnificent swords, daggers and other ancient weaponry made of metal. Yemenis were the pioneers in this artistic craft, which later was passed on to those from other countries.

In this traditional sphere, the Yemeni style was exceptional in the sense that Yemeni craftsmen carefully had to render a highly skilled method

of making swords look more luxurious by choosing optimal quality steel for the sword's body and studding its handgrip with gold, silver and other jewelry.

Moreover, some inscriptions and drawings portraying some life aspects at that time also are skillfully designed on the swords' handgrips, thus adding to their magnificent appearance.

The post-Islamic era influenced the art by uniformity of style observed in designing sword grips and their embellishment with Arabic writings and reflections of Islamic ornamental art, which contributed in safeguarding an important component of Islamic artistic heritage throughout the ages.

As such, the art of creating

swords and daggers acquired great significance among Yemenis and later become an essential and distinctive element of their culture. In more modern times, swords have been reflected in the art of painting and become a source of inspiration for artists from which to derive cultural uniqueness over the ages.

This leads one to see how the sword incorporated with Yemeni cultural manifestations to become an integral part of Yemeni traditional

costume, as well as accompany Yemenis as they perform their popular dancing.

Yemen's cultural heritage is rich with various dancing styles, most necessitating that the dancers use swords and daggers. Such use generally represents the power and dignity of the Yemeni people.

Known as "Bara'a" in Sana'a, the sword dance is a popular style of dancing that has become widespread in various parts of Yemen, thus reflecting an essential facet of its people's traditional culture.

This type of dancing exists throughout Yemen and still enjoys popularity and special flavor in the countryside, where Yemeni culture

has been unaffected by the intruding winds from the West.

Yemeni villagers still maintain their natural inclination to respond to the sounds of drums, pipes or flutes, provoking their aptitude to shake their bodies and enjoy dancing, not forgetting to grasp their daggers or swords and shake them high in the air in harmony with their bodies' impressive movements. This depiction is a vivid indication of the sword's significance to Yemeni people and how swords accompany them both



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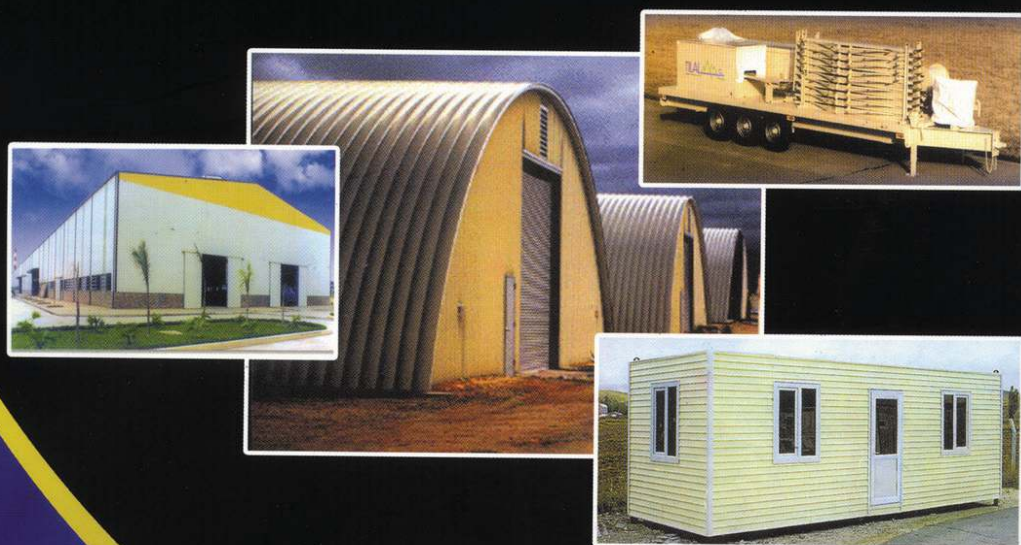
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