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Traffic accidents kill six, injure 40 daily

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Dec. 30 — Over the past two weeks, traffic accidents have killed 43, critically injured 132 and slightly injured 69 others, according to a Ministry of Interior report released late last week.

Additionally, the report noted that such traffic accidents were varied, including 111 crashes, 69 instances involving running over, 28 vehicle rollovers and three instances of vehicles falling down a steep embankment. Accidents resulted from recklessness and vehicular technical faults, with total estimated losses of YR 17.6 million.

Ministry of Interior reports for November revealed that traffic accidents either claimed the lives of or injured more than 1,450 individuals.

Sources told September.net last week that, "There were 780 traffic accidents registered nationwide in November, distributed among car and motorbike crashes, rollovers and incidents involving running over."

The same source went on to say that

these accidents resulted in killing 206 individuals of both sexes and all age groups and seriously injuring 1,250 others, together with massive material losses.

Such accidents primarily were attributed to reckless speed, non-adherence to traffic rules or safety principles and lack of technical maintenance or observation of cars and vehicles.

According to the same source, 6,425 accidents were recorded nationwide between January and November, resulting in the death of 2,180 and injuring 11,000 others, together with material losses estimated at hundreds of millions of Yemeni riyals.

In its report last week, the Ministry of Interior considered traffic accidents among the most dangerous incidents, leaving behind economic, social and health effects. Most individuals have lost a relative, friend or a dear one in such accidents across Yemen; however, one rarely encounters those who've lost friends or relatives due to epidemic diseases like malaria or tuberculosis.

Continued on page 2



More than 6 thousand accidents nationwide were reported between January to November this year.

Marshall Stocker: "USA's unconditional support to Israel will not affect American investments in Yemen"

Marshall Stocker is the vice president of World Freedom Select Center. He is an international investor who attended the investment conference in Aden at the beginning of this month. He sees economic reform and fighting corruption as a must in order to encourage Yemeni economy. And that the missing element is a stable economic policy supported by Yemeni businessmen and protected by the government. Abdulwahid Abdullah interviewed him for the Yemen Times.

Would the U.S.A.'s absolute support to Israel affect future investment in Yemen?
 The U.S.-Israel relationship has NO effect on my future investments.



Marshall Stocker

Is your visit to Yemen planned and organized with the U.S Authority within the area?

Our visit was a private sector initiative. Our group, The Center for Global Strategies is not a government organization. We did receive the full cooperation of the US Embassy in Sana'a. We paid our travel expenses personally.

What is your vision about future of Yemen in light of the recent events especially the donor's conference held in London?

Seven years into the 21st century and the tremendous economic assets of Yemen remain woefully under-utilized. With a friendly citizenry, a desirable geographic location, a natural deep-harbor port, an accommodating climate, low-cost labor, and stable political environment, Yemen is an excellent candidate to benefit from an increasingly globalized world economy. Yet, Yemen continues to be beset with low economic growth, socio-economic distress, security problems, and corruption.

The missing ingredient?

A firm policy of economic freedom supported by the business community and defended by the government. Around \$4.7 billion committed at the Donors Conference stands prepared to fund strategic infrastructure development and reforms that will best be complimented by new, free-market economic policies. By endeavoring to become the most free-market country in the region, Yemen will become the jewel of the Arab world and achieve its former status as a center of global commerce.

Talking free markets, what do you think of Aden's free zone?

The harbour is a critical component of Yemen's future. Most important are broad economic reforms that bring free-markets to Yemen. Only once these reforms have been made, will investors and business begin to invest in and use the Aden port.

Do you think the existing relative investment laws are enough to attract investors compared with the other countries specially ECC?

No. Again, economic policy reforms are needed. These reforms will firmly protect private property, dramatically reduce government corruption, lower taxes, and cut burdensome regulations.

Will the existing situation in east Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia) effect the attitude of investing in Yemen?

No.

What are in your opinion is the promised future sectors in Yemen?

I must study Yemen more. But if Yemen reforms its economic policies,

investors will figure out which sectors are best without any direction from a government bureaucrat.

Compared with Estonia what u can say about Yemen?

Estonia once had the same low level of economic freedom that Yemen has today. In less than 10 years, Estonia has become a very economically free country and the results are tremendous.

Continued on page 2

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أرفع ساعات في العالم (فلات)
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What we have learned in Estonia about freedom and growth

By: Mart Laar

Similar to the people of Tolkien's Middle-Earth we are living on the change of the times. World around us is changing faster and faster. We must meet new and new challenges and try to learn from the experiences from just finished changes. Changes of the past decade have really been enormous. Between 1917 and 1950 a lot of countries succeeded from democracy and market economy and launched an experiment in constructing an alternative economic and political system. A massive effort was made to centralise the control of production and allocate all resources through state planning. This huge experiment changed the political and the economic map of the world and set the course of much of the twentieth century. The failure of this experiment has set in move just as radical a transition, as these same countries are trying to change course again, seeking to restore democracy, rebuild markets and reintegrate themselves into the world economy.

This experiment had its impact on democratic countries too. Role of the governments and their intervention in the life of its citizen has grown significantly during last century. Higher taxis, social spending and more regulation have been part of this process. As a result of this even the most developed countries are forced to look on new solutions, make choices and unpopular decisions. We are actually all standing on the crossroads and thinking what road we will choose.

Not all countries have been successful in this road of changes. Some have succeeded, some have failed. Transition is never easy. Every moment of transition to each of us is offered enormous amount of different solutions and options, where to go or what to do. Again and again we are standing on a crossroad, where sometimes options as "good" or "bad" are not available and we must decide between "bad" and "worse".

Free countries grow faster

Nevertheless: looking on countries in transition we can find four main lessons emerged from those transitions. First of those is simple:

To have success you must be free and open to the world

As it was said soon before – the twentieth century was really not the best century for humankind. Devastating wars, rise of National Socialism and communism created huge losses and enormous sacrifice. Hundreds of millions were killed in the attempts to build paradise on the Earth. From my childhood I remember the joke about two men discussing is the communism scientific system or not. At the end one of the man says: no, it is not. Scientists had first tested communism on white mice, but communists did it with people.

But dictatorships not only killed people and burned books, they closed their countries to the World. At the same time lasting development is not possible in closed society. You could not compare your achievements with others, make corrections, and learn from their successes and mistakes. Without openness society dies.

To prove this we can compare developments in communist Central Europe with some of the poorer countries of Southern Europe, namely Greece, Portugal and Spain. These are an important comparison group as Central Europe differed little from these countries before the World War II. Jeffrey Sachs has by example compared Poland starting from 1950s-Poland and Spain were then both largely agricultural, Catholic, peripheral regions of Europe. The two countries had about the same population in 1950 and they were also very close in per capita income terms. By 1988, however, Spain's per capita income was four times that of Poland. Clear difference in income was also reflected in Spain's greater ownership of consumer durables and much higher



proportion of the population in tertiary education. Starting from the similar point in mid-1950s, Spain shot ahead of Poland in the next thirty-five years and started to catch up with the rest of Western Europe, while Poland fell farther behind. The central reason for Spain's success was its shift from being economically and politically isolated from the rest of Europe to

The twentieth century was really not the best century for humankind. Devastating wars, rise of National Socialism and communism created huge losses and enormous sacrifice. Hundreds of millions were killed in the attempts to build paradise on the Earth.

being closely integrated with Europe.

In Northern Europe Estonia and Finland can offer similar example. It would be hard to find in the eve of XX century two more similar countries than Estonia and Finland. Coming both from Finno-Ugric nations, Estonia and Finland are very similar by language and culture. Both countries were largely agricultural, but getting through industrialization in the beginning of the XX centuries. Both countries are Lutheran, peripheral regions of Europe on the border with East. Both declared their independence in the aftermath of World War I and went through fast development during the decades of independence. Finland and Estonia resembled each other a great deal in their socio-economic development between the World Wars in 1922-1938. By some measures Finland was slightly ahead in 1940 in economical development, by other analyses not. More or less, Estonia and Finland were just on the same level in 1940. They both had disastrous experiences just before mid-century. Estonia lost its independence and one third of the population, Finland succeeded to keep its independence, but suffered loss of territory and population. The subsequent period of fifty years under two different economic systems led to vastly different economic structures and behavioural patterns and opened up a huge gap between the development of Finland and Estonia. At the same time people learnt, worked and made an effort on both sides of the Finnish Bay. The advantages though seemed to be given mainly to the Finns.

Starting from the more all less similar point at the beginning of the 1950s Finland GDP started to grow clearly faster and in the 1970s when Estonian development totally stagnated difference between Estonian and Finnish growth-rate became very big. According to the estimations in 1988

household income per capita was in Finland 6 times higher than in Estonia. Very few people had by example private car yet 1950s both in Estonia and Finland. In 1987 there were nearly 400 cars per inhabitant in Finland. In Estonia the same ratio was 150.

The gap between the two countries according to international statistics on human development also increased. Before World War II Estonian and Finnish mortalities were alike. After the war they started to differ. The development of infant mortality in Finland and Estonia in the post-war period shows us again how well it reflects changes in economic and social processes. After World War II infant mortality declined rapidly in Finland. The change in infant mortality was relatively favourable in Finland in the 1970s. The infant mortality rate declined by more than 50 percent – from 13.2 per thousand births in 1970 to 6.4 in 1986 and it is among the lowest in the world. After the war infant mortality declined in Estonia in the same way as in Finland. Since 1970 there has been considerably less success in Estonia compared to Finland. Estonia reached the lowest level of infant mortality in 1988, but it was still two times higher than in Finland.

Comparisons between Estonia and Finland could be continued, but the result is anyway clear: The Finns level of development and standard of living exceeded in 1988 by far the Estonian, despite the fact that during the pre WWII period the level were more or less the same. The main reason for Finland's success was its shift to modern market export orientated economy and fast integration with Europe.

To achieve real breakthrough Governments must give freedom not only to its people but to their economies as well.

To say it again – FREE COUNTRIES GROW FASTER!

So at one moment captive nations became free, but what kind of freedom was this?

Freedom and democracy usually came with collapse of economy and social security networks, which was often followed by hyperinflation, ethnical and political conflicts, sharp rise in criminality, corruption and chaos – and all other problems originated actually from the former totalitarian regime. A change from totalitarianism to working democracy is extremely demanding and a tough challenge. Everybody knows, how to make fish-soup from fish, but who knows how to get a fish back from the soup again?

Foreign aid

One reason why lot of countries in transition have failed is their reluctance to rely not on their own strengths but on foreign aid. This was

of course not so much their failure but failure of leftwing thinking of world economist, seeing in the massive foreign aid medicine against all diseases.

The reason was the perceived failure of free markets and a presumption that incentives, institutions and markets played little, if any, role in fostering economic growth. It can be a dangerous trap. More and more examples have proved that foreign aid had not only not helped, but had positively harmed the developing countries. It encouraged inefficiency and waste and the adoption of perverse policies. It has destroyed local producers and created corruption and through this violence, wars and chaos. If the people are made dependent not from their work but from foreign aid question who distributes and controls this aid can create big amount of conflicts. Because ruling foreign aid you will rule all country. Productive economic activity is replaced by political economic activity.

In reality the only key to reducing world poverty is more rapid economic growth in developing countries.

Aid or trade

In reality the only key to reducing world poverty is more rapid economic growth in developing countries. And experience shows that the private market economy is the most reliable engine of growth. Countries who have understood this have been successful, who does not have failed. We in the Estonia did not want to fail. At the same time were really down at the beginning of our reforms in 1992.

Even during the times of the Great Depression of the 1930s industrial production had not declined as in 1992 by more than 30 percent over two years, real wages fallen by some 45 percent, fuel prices risen by more than 10 000 per cent over the same period, while inflation was running more than 1000 percent per annum. People stood for hours in lines to buy food. Bread and milk-products were rationed. Shops were completely empty and money did not have real value any longer. There were not many who believed in a better future at this moment.

But we understood quickly that to get out of this mess we could rely only on ourselves and not on foreign aid. Because through foreign aid developed countries are often helping themselves not countries in need. We did not want to stay among developing countries, which are helped and where nobody wants to invest. So part of our strategy involved cutting Estonia free from all the various international aid and assistance programmes, which are usually offered to developing countries. Estonia did not want to show itself as a developing

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country but as a country, which could already stand on its own two feet. Soon in 1992 Estonia by example abolished all import tariffs and became one big "free trade zone".

The open economic policy played an important role in the birth of the "Estonian economic miracle". In the World Bank analysis "From plan to market", the advantages of a liberal trade policy are set out against the backdrop of a comparison of Estonia and Ukraine. "There is powerful evidence from transition economies that the benefits of early external liberalisation far outweigh the potential costs. Establishing essentially free trade early on yields a particularly large return in these countries. Firm-level evidence shows that trade liberalisation has indeed spurred enterprise restructuring and helped make markets competitive."

As a result of this and other reforms Estonia has achieved one of the fastest growth-rates among transition economies. Estonia has achieved stable 5-6% growth, which in some years have reached 10%. Budget is balanced, foreign debt small, inflation low. Estonian living standards have grown fast. In the UN Human Development Index Estonia has raised more than 40 places and belongs now to the group of developed countries.

This is second lesson what we can learn from transitions: **free trade and economic growth are making nations prosperous, not foreign aid.**

At the same time we must remember, that decision to go your own way could not guarantee success. To achieve real breakthrough Governments must give freedom not only to its people but to their economies as well. For the past 10 years the Index of Economic Freedom published by The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal has measured economic freedom around the world in an effort to trace path to economic prosperity.

A lower growth usually calculates into lower GDP. Economically free countries have higher per capita income. Countries with higher level of economic freedom are clearly richer as countries with smaller level. The country's Index score is positively related to United Nations Human Development Index as well. Economically free countries are not making only some people rich, they guarantee balanced development all society, better education and health-care. So we have reached the third lesson: **free economies grow faster and are richer.**

Privatise, privatise, privatise

So we must make our economy free. Unfortunately this is easier to say as do. To free your economy it is not enough to cut taxes or privatise state owned enterprises. To achieve economic freedom you must do lot of

more – you must reform and actually free all your society. In 1990s Milton Friedman answered question how to achieve economic freedom during transition with three words: privatise, privatise, privatise. After ten years experience he says that it is not enough. A stable economy requires transparency and effective public administration, defined property rights backed by an effective and independent legal system and free media, a robust and well-regulated financial sector and not-corrupted public sector. Different studies have proved that the strength of the rule of law and the risk of expropriation are critical determinants of development. Without strong property rights, an investor cannot be sure of his ability to lay claim to a business he builds, as a result, the level of risk involved in a business venture increases, and investors are left unsure and likely to put their money elsewhere.

All this is actually part of the Economic Freedom Index. This is put together measuring and weighting 10 different factors:

1. Trade policy
2. Fiscal burden of government
3. Government intervention in the economy
4. Monetary policy
5. Capital flows and foreign investment
6. Banking and finance
7. Wages and prices
8. Property rights
9. Regulation
10. Informal market activity and corruption

We can refer to these 10 factors of the Index as "10 step plan to reach prosperity". The 10 factors provide a road map and only by sticking to the highlighted route can a country achieve economic freedom and prosperity.

Achieving economic freedom is like building a car. It is not possible to say what is the most important component of the car: the engine, the transmission, the steering wheel, the brakes or the tires. Without any one of these components, the car is unlikely to reach the desired destination. In similar fashion, ignore any one of the 10 factors of economic freedom, and abundant prosperity is likely to remain elusive.

Mart Laar (born April 22, 1960 in Viljandi) is an Estonian statesman and historian. He was the Prime Minister of Estonia from 1992 to 1994 and from 1999 to 2002.

This article is an extract from an essay by Laar prepared for "A Liberal Agenda for the New Century: A Global Perspective," a Conference cosponsored by the Cato Institute, the Institute of Economic Analysis and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, April 8-9, 2004, Moscow, Russian Federation.

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The road to insanity

Reviewed by: Aisha R. Masterton

Directed by Michael Winterbottom and Mat Whitecross, *The Road to Guantanamo*, which premiered at the Berlin Film Festival, is a movie about a group of British Muslims who get caught up with fighters in Afghanistan and end up at Camp X-Ray.

The story of Shafiq Rasul, Ruhel Ahmed, Asif Iqbal, and Munir Ali and their journey is portrayed without being romanticized or patronized. Their reenacted personal narratives are interlinked with news reports, subtly highlighting the degree to which reporters are removed from the human dimension of world events. The actors are excellent: earthy and natural in front of the camera. But, since the directors set out to depict the confusing circumstances in which the young men find themselves, one can also become confused about which event is meant to have happened to whom. Sometimes it seems that there are seven people telling the story instead of three.

Visiting Pakistan is an adventure to the four friends; they eat out at cafes, visit fun fairs, and Shafiq goes to visit his extended family. Tension in the streets is building as the US is planning raids in Afghanistan. Preachers exhort crowds to go help the people of Afghanistan, fearing the chaos that will ensue if the US goes

in. The youths say that they decided to go to Afghanistan "to help." At the time, they were not very serious about their religion, and they are depicted as fairly average, secular young British men; this raises the question why some fairly average, secular young men would risk going to a country that is about to be bombed by the US. Winterbottom and Whitecross show how the four friends get caught up in events — perhaps they also got caught up in the emotion, and perhaps they were also curious. On the way to Afghanistan, their bus driver inexplicably disappears. They find another bus and travel through austere, mountainous landscape to Quetta. Here, the landscape and atmosphere of Pakistan and Afghanistan are captured beautifully, but confusion arises again for the viewer once the youths are over the border. Traveling from place to place involves climbing onto crowded pickup trucks, and often it seems that one of them is about to get left behind.

The friends arrive in Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold, and that night the bombing raids begin. They move on to Kabul, where they stay for a few weeks while Shafiq is seriously ill. Then they hear news that there is bombing in the north of Kabul. At that time, they decide to head back to Pakistan, but by then hundreds of other people are also heading for the border, fleeing the oncoming US-backed Northern Alliance. They get taken to Kunduz, where they hear



British director Winterbottom and the cast pose to present the *Road to Guantanamo* (Reuters).

stories of General Dostum, who allegedly cut off a man's fingers one by one and pulled another apart with two tanks.

Then the US breaks into Kunduz and there is panic, more people running for trucks. Munir is lost forever. They sleep for one night out in the open, but the bombing raids force them to run. The next day, bodies are everywhere: "Everyone was screaming. Legs blown off, stomachs coming out, arms hanging off. When someone is in agony and you can't help them, that affects you," says Asif.

The Northern Alliance and US forces round up the foreign fighters, the Taliban and the young men. All

the men are searched. In the distance, mass graves are being dug, with injured but conscious people being thrown in. One wonders whether one of those people might not have been Munir. While Shafiq and Ruhel are transported to Mazar-e-Sharif in a canvas-topped truck, Asif is taken in a metal container packed with other men. They rapidly begin to run short of air. He falls unconscious. When he awakens, he finds himself lying among a pile of corpses. He meets up with Shafiq and Ruhel and they are taken to Sheberghan prison, where they go for days with no food or water until the Red Cross arrives. Then all the men are brought for questioning before a US officer, to whom they have to answer while kneeling.

After that, the madness really begins. What we witness is a dehumanized system in the business of dehumanizing others. Its spiritual and intellectual aridity is striking. The behavior of the US army reveals a nation with a severely unbalanced psychology. Nevertheless, it seems that the directors have spared the viewer the more lurid and grotesque details of "interrogation methods" at Guantanamo. We see the now notorious Rapid Reaction Force beating up a deranged inmate; the strenuous positions in which the young men are tied for hours while being subjected to thrash metal and strobe lights; the exposure to pornographic magazines. But the mental strain of being detained without trial is not conveyed in the depth that it might have been.

Winterbottom and Whitecross do give us a taste of the bizarre and

illogical questioning techniques employed by the US army. When the youths are transferred to Camp Delta, the same questions are put to them for more than a year and include sessions with a female officer who holds up a grainy photo of a group with Osama bin Laden. She points to a blurry face in the crowd and says again and again, "That's you, isn't it?" no matter how obvious it is not. It is frightening to think that the US army cannot tell the difference between one person and another and is willing to apply medieval measures against detainees based upon grainy photographs.

At the end, the three young men assess their experience. All in all, it has only driven them toward their religion. The film ends with them visiting Pakistan again, this time as serious and reflective people. They attend Asif's wedding in Pakistan. Yet it is an Asif who rarely smiles, who, even on his wedding night, looks troubled.

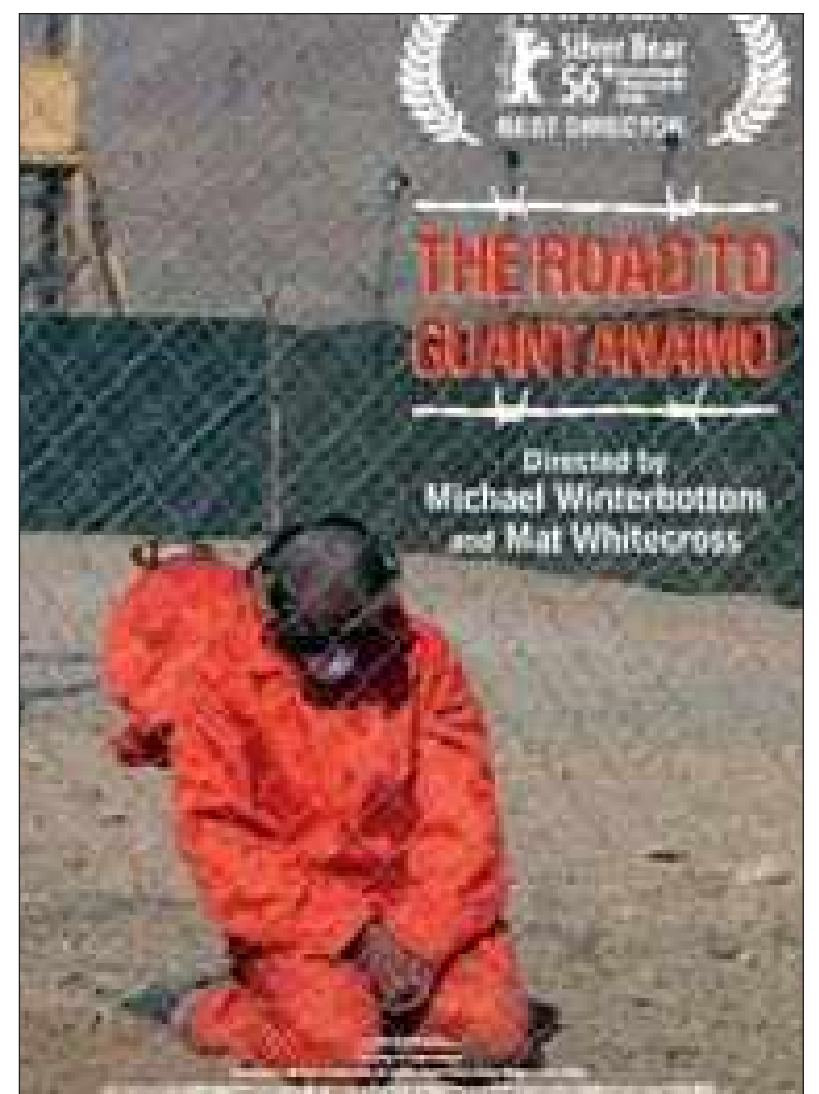
It is important that this film was

made, in order to humanize those on the receiving end of the US mission to shape the world in its image. Reviews show that liberal-minded critics have been duly shocked; yet we know that what is depicted is just the tip of the iceberg. It took a non-Muslim to produce this film. Muslim organizations need to follow their example and fund other such films since cinema is one of the best mediums for conveying the Muslim worldview to a non-Muslim audience.

Aisha R. Masterton holds a bachelor's degree in Japanese language and literature and a master's degree in comparative East Asian and African literature from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. She is working on a doctorate on Islamic mystical and philosophical influences in West African literature. You can contact her at

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Source: www.islamonline.net



Original ideas, anyone?

By: Aijaz Zaka Syed

We can do no great things; only small things with great love, the late Mother Teresa once said with reference to her work. The late Mother's own simplicity epitomised the greatness of her spirit and selflessness.

I wonder if Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh ever met the legendary missionary. The US-trained economist last week received the Nobel Peace prize for his decisive role in fighting poverty in a country that is one of the poorest and underdeveloped in the world.

The utter simplicity and honesty of Prof Yunus's vision and his unshakable belief in the essentially good nature of human beings remind you of the saint who spent and devoted all her life in the service of the world's wretched and rejected on Calcutta's filthy streets.

Like Mother Teresa, Prof Yunus managed to realise his dream because he believed in humanity. He spawned the miracle called Grameen Bank, one of the world's largest micro-credit institutions, with only \$27.

Conventional banking is governed by the principle that banks are there to help the rich get richer. Banks have no money for those who really and badly need it. As Mark Twain famously

argued, a banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining, but wants it back the minute it begins to rain.

Prof Yunus turned this conventional approach to banking on its head by lending to those who badly needed money but had nothing to offer by way of security. While banks everywhere turn their back on those who cannot offer any collateral or guarantee, Yunus questioned not 'whether the poor are credit-worthy, but whether banks are people-worthy.'

It's this vision that has enabled Bangladesh, the world's third largest Muslim country that was once dismissed by Henry Kissinger as a 'basket case,' to lift its impoverished masses out of crushing poverty.

Today, lending about \$800m a year, the bank has 6.7 million borrowers — 97 per cent of them women — and an unmatched 99 per cent loan repayment rate.

Grameen Bank, or Prof Yunus rather, has proved that it is possible to build large and profitable micro-finance operations, and has inspired many imitators around the world. The bank is now entirely self-financing. In fact, some years ago it turned down the World Bank's offer of aid to expand its operations.

This is the most credible example how one man's vision can change a people and make a meaningful and visible difference.

It's this originality of ideas and vision that once took the Arabs and Muslims to heights of power and prosperity and intellectual superiority. It was no accident that within the three decades after the birth of Islam, the Arabs had conquered the whole of Arabia, Persia and were challenging the reigning powers of Asia and Africa.

This year's second most important Nobel prize — for literature — too has gone to a Muslim, Orhan Pamuk of Turkey. Like Prof Yunus, Pamuk has excelled in his area. The Turkish writer, who has in his works repeatedly tried to make sense of the tussle between the West and East or Christianity and Islam, has proved his integrity as an original thinker by persuading his people not to shy away from their past.

But Pamuk is no Salman Rushdie. Unlike Rushdie, who has constantly picked on Muslims cleverly playing to the Western gallery, Pamuk sympathetically holds a mirror to his country and people. He is part of the mainstream. Yet he is also the voice of Turkey's conscience. This is what intellectual leadership is all about.

This had been the characteristic strength of the Muslim world in its formative centuries. It fought the battle of ideas from a position of strength, challenging reigning ideas and ideologies of the time. At the same time, it had been open to new ideas

and change. It embraced and adopted the best from around the world. Which was how the science of arithmetic from India and political thought and philosophy from Greece were passed on to Europe and the rest of the world through Arabs and Muslims.

An insatiable hunger of knowledge and culture of ideas across the Islamic world coupled with their willingness to learn enabled the Muslims to conquer new lands and establish a utopia that stretched from Morocco in the West to Malaysia in the East and Austria in the north to Africa in the south. Governments across the Muslim world actively encouraged and supported the quest of knowledge and spirit of scientific inquiry. Muslim countries were home to scores of universities and libraries long before Oxford and Cambridge had been founded in Europe.

When the Mongol armies ran over the Middle East sacking eminent centres of power and learning like Baghdad, Damascus and Alexandria killing hundreds of thousands of people, it is said there was more ink than blood in rivers. The invaders had burnt and dumped in the river the hundreds of thousands of invaluable books and rare manuscripts authored and collected over the years.

The Arabs made great strides in the fields of geography, astronomy and navigation which the Europeans later used to chart their own progress.

Indeed, the Arabs' contribution to science played a crucial role in the Industrial Revolution of Europe and the phenomenal progress the West has made over the past few centuries. Arab scientists established as early as the ninth century that the earth was round and not flat, as it was believed until then. Again, it was the Arabs who created the first map of the globe. These scientific theories, that were available in Latin translations, paved the way for the discovery of America by Columbus.

Europe benefited immensely from the invaluable sources of path-breaking scientific research and discoveries in the Muslim world. Terms like alchemy, algebra, cipher and countless others that are derived from Arabic are a tribute to the deep imprint the Arabs have left on Western Renaissance.

How would you then explain the current intellectual stagnation and listlessness in the Muslim world? Why aren't Muslims part of the global knowledge revolution any more, let alone leading it? Have they run out of steam as a people and as a civilisation?

But what we are witnessing is not the beginning of the end of Islamic civilisation. Its decline and fall began long ago, at least five centuries back. In fact, the scientific and intellectual renaissance in the West began about the same time that the Muslim world marked its own fall.

It's no coincidence that power began to slip Muslim hands just when they stopped exploring and expanding new horizons of knowledge and scientific inquiry. The culture of knowledge, intellectual freedom and scientific inquiry that marked the phenomenal ascent of the Muslim world for over a millennium died a quiet death centuries ago. Muslims do not produce intellectuals and thinkers of the stature of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sena, or Averroes and Avicenna as they are known in the West, any more.

Why? Because the powerful movement of knowledge and ideas that once drove Muslims and fired their imagination has lost itself somewhere, if not totally killed itself.

But the shining example of Prof Yunus, and some others before him, goes to demonstrate that original ideas do exist in our midst. Only they need to be nurtured and promoted with great love, as Mother Teresa put it, as Prof Yunus has. Looks like there is still hope.

There is no dearth of talent or resources — human or material — in the Muslim world today. What it needs is original ideas. And men like Yunus who can translate these ideas into reality. Original ideas, anyone?

Aijaz Zaka Syed is Assistant Editor of *Khaleej Times*. He can be reached at aijazsyed@khaleejtimes.com

Source: www.khaleejtimes.com

Spanish photographer Manuel Vilches Benitez to Yemen Times:

“I wish for Yemenis that all their dreams come true, that they can live in peace and the rest of the world doesn't judge them without knowing them.”

After a trip to Yemen, during which he crossed the whole country, the Spanish photographer Manuel Vilches Benitez, displayed his 50 photographs in a marvellous exhibition March this year on Yemen, its people and its architecture the title of the exhibition “Yemen, una Mirada al pasado” (“Yemen, a glance into the past”).

“This exhibition comes from my heart, I have had great happiness with the people, they have treated me exquisitely, and the form to return their gratitude is to present them as they are, generous and proud people not only of their past but of their present. They deserve it.” Said Benitez when interviewed by Nadia Al-Sakkaf editor in chief of the Yemen Times.

Let us first know about you and about your art.

I am a self-taught photographer who always follows my instinct. I have spent over 20 years of travelling dedicated to photography around the world. I have been to countries such as: Portugal, Cuba, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen, Niger, Italy, France etc.... I have prepared a piece about Africa which will be published on a web site in the internet and is called “El Angel caido” (One fallen angel).

I am specialised in taking portraits because I feel I have special gift of getting close to people of all places and cultures; I can get on with everybody very well and this made me able to detect the humanity in everyone.

I have just returned from Niger and am preparing an exhibition on Niger and the ethnic group Peul Bororo called “El agua de la vida” (“aman iman”) (“The water of life”). I have done several exhibitions about different trips to different countries.

I have done an exhibition on Syria and its proximity to the conflict in Iraq titled “Te presto mis ojos”. (“I lend you my eyes”). I held an exhibition on Jordan, its caravanserais and Petra.

Why among all the countries in the world, why did you choose to visit Yemen?

I have heard about Yemen and its mysterious and this intrigued me. I was carried away by the constant longing that my dreams brought me Yemen, the land of the divine Queen of Saba and the intelligent Queen Arwa, a place of the time where the legendary caravans looked for the prized treasure of incense, Yemen a place that entered history with the nickname of “The happy Arabia”. A place that takes up a place in my heart and that I had a need to visit.

What are the cities you visited while in Yemen and what are your impressions

about each city?

I went on a 20 day tour around Yemen and visited: Sana'a, Shibam, Shibam Hadramut, Tarim, Taiz, Aden, Mukalla, Jibla, Ibb, Manakha, Wady Dahr. I have been to endless markets and small villages where the people live in complete harmony with nature.

My impression of Sana'a was that it is a city from your dreams. I was amazed by the preservation of the old city, its streets, mosques and its big market, a place to lose oneself to and be overcome by it in all senses.

I loved having a cup of tea up above Bab Al-Yemen's door, seeing how the Yemenites lived their lives around their shops and how life flows with joy through their streets as if it were a river.

One of the things that caught my attention the most was how well cared for the city is inside the city walls, the old houses and their characteristic architecture of dark brick and their windows with the wonderful decorations in plasterwork and coloured glass how when night falls they light up making it seem as though you were in a fairytale.

As for Marib, I would have liked everything regarding its archaeology, both the Queen's Palace and the Moon's temple, to have more support from the countries expert in this matter, because it's a wonderful place to visit and breathe the true air of history.

I was fascinated but at the same time saddened to set foot in the ancient city of Marib; its old houses were in ruins as if it were a colossus. It fascinated me and at the same time, an immense sadness ran through my heart, a sadness that I now feel again in evoking so many memories kept inside of me, one of them being Fatima's face which I took a photo of as a memory of this place.

Thula is a wonderful city. It was there that I really felt I was living through the Middle Ages. A city situated in the very depth of history and kept in a wonderful way.

Its doors and walls remain untouched as if time had stopped. Thula mimics with its ochre surroundings its façades and its mountains. Thula is a place from where one can dream. Until today I can hear the echo of my footsteps on its streets.

Shibam Hadramut is known throughout the world for being the place that Pier Paolo Pasolini chose for his film “A thousand and one nights” and for the nickname “The Manhattan of the desert”. Going through its arched door and down its side streets is a pleasure to the eyes, especially when you discover the astonishing height of a building all built in adobe. Feeling that you're in this place is like the culmination of a dream, it's like the city has been built by magic. It seems impossible that with only mud, straw and the hands of the men, a city such as this was conceived.

Its streets are full of life, the children running free engrossed in their games and suddenly they stopped to follow travellers while their shouts and laughter echoed so beautifully and filled up the whole world. The children's laughter, all want a picture taken and I don't need to be asked twice.

I said goodbye to Shibam remembering some poems by Pasolini: “There, behind, opened as far as the field, a road that I don't know if I walked in my childhood or if I dreamed it”.

And then the sun took out its red handkerchief and I still remember the outline of the palm trees, which like butterflies blown by the wind gave me the last goodbye.

The first memory that I have of Jibla is Rima's face. She received us just as we went up one of her bridges and welcomed us to her city.

She accompanied us for the whole tour, telling us the story of her city. The sweet murmur of her voice with her wonderful city rivals each other in beauty.

Its streets of stone, its small mosques with their decorated minarets. Surrounded by cultivated earth in terraces and leafy greens.

In one of its streets with lot children around us we stopped in a small shop which sold tea, there we stopped to invite everybody to a cup of tea.

The men came up to us and they greeted us sincerely and the children put music to my memory with their laughter.

We arrived at Arwa's Palace and there a girl, she had an awareness of her past and she felt pride of it. We said goodbye to Jibla and Rima, the woman of sweet voice and singsong with a look as sweet as honey.

In Manakha I found the spirit's resting place, situated in the Haraz's mountains with its breeze and its rain cooled the soul.

People in Manakha paid attention to us in a kind and cordial way. We walked around their mountain towns and the sight was strikingly beautiful.

The children once again set their selves as the protagonists, in the afternoon I usually went with them to play football and after they fought over who took me their house and there I was received and invited to drink tea.

The nights were full of wonderful Yemeni gastronomy and I got drunk on the sound of their music. A friend asked me once “have you found your place in the world?” and I answered him: “I think that if at some stage I get lost look for me in Manakha”

If going to Yemen was a dream to carry out, to visit Shahara was the crucial stage of the tour. A small village that had importance in the past as a place of defense.

To get there wasn't easy; it was a hard journey by road and an ascent towards the small village with a frightening precipice. But never mind, every thing was worth the effort to be in a place with so big an importance in Yemen's history had its rewards and the sights are wonderful.

It's very impressive arriving at the stone and hanging bridge that today joins the two small villages. It's in Sharara where you really feel the whirl of Yemen's history

How did you arrange for the exhibition and what was your message through it? I counted on the help of cultural Area of the council of Ubrique in Cadiz to carry out this exhibition. I had at my disposal the exhibition of the council and financial help for the publicity expenses.

I tried to create an exhibition which reflects as objectively as possible a country which is so different from that which most people know. In this exhibition I wanted to show not only the country's geographic monuments, but also its architecture, the oldest places and over all its people. The Yemeni men, women and children are a true treasure. In their faces you can see joy, charm an above all pride.

Will you come again to Yemen? And what do you wish for the Yemen and Yemeni people?

My wife and I would both like to come back to Yemen and for my son to come with us. I think this is a trip that has to be done, not only for historical interests but also for the senses and experience for the soul and spirit. It is to know a country with a wonderful past but especially to live with a kind people, cordial and exquisite in their behaviour. A working population that opens their door to you making you feel at home.

I wish for Yemenis that all their dreams come true, that they can live in peace and the rest of the world doesn't judge them without knowing them.

I wish that they fight so as not to lose their identity and that they value the treasure that they have in their country. I wish that together they find the path into the future because the Yemeni population must be a big family.

What are your ambitions career wise and personally?

My aspiration in the field of art is to keep showing the world images of places and existing realities. To show that there are other worlds and that each one has its idiosyncrasies, and that all have the right to fight for their freedom, for their way of life.

And regarding my family, to continue as we have up until now, respecting our way of being, fighting everyday to remain together and to live and share, but every thing is easy when there is love.

A lesson learnt through your travel?

One of the things I have learnt through travelling is that in my heart there are a lot of people and a lot of worlds and in a part of it is Yemen and its people.



AL HAJJARAH



RIMA DE JIBLA



RANDA LA NIÑA DE LAS FLORES



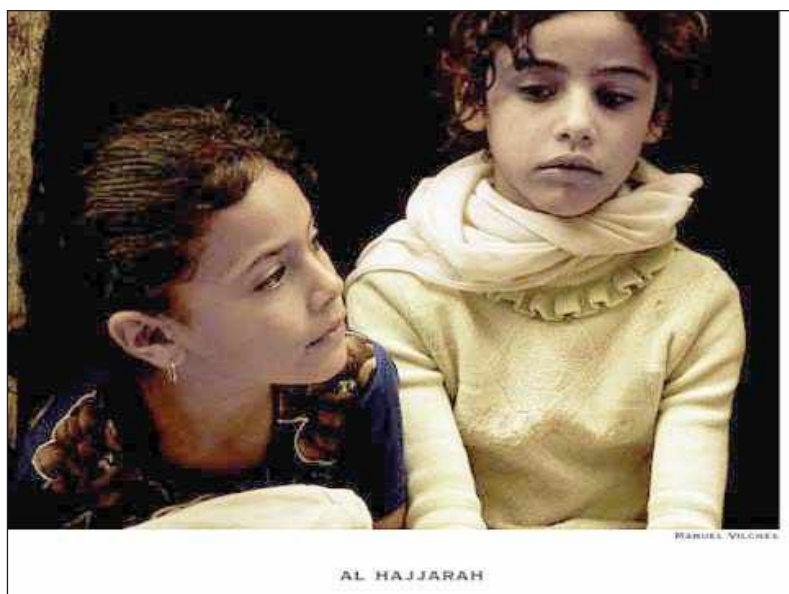
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Yemen secures a berth in second round of Arab Cup

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

Yemen's national team qualified for the Arab Cup's final 16 after a well-deserved 4-0 victory over Djibouti last Wednesday at Al-Meraysi Stadium in Sana'a.

The national team topped Group A, which includes Yemen, Djibouti and the Comoro Islands, with 6 points from two successive wins over the two African teams.

The second round of the Arab Cup involves 16 Arab teams divided into four groups. Although the Yemeni team won the two games, fans weren't satisfied with the team's performance.

The team still requires much more practice to overcome numerous negative aspects. It played with a modest formation that seemed to have better harmony between teammates than any previous formations.

Yemen scored several goals in the first half and caused the Africans to submit to defeat, but teammates passed balls hurriedly, thus losing many golden opportunities.

Ahli Sana'a leads basketball tourney

Ahli Sana'a tops the basketball tournament involving men's and under-17 teams after defeating host Sha'ab Ibb 72-64. The game was part of the eighth round of first-grade basketball teams.

With this victory, the Sana'a team increases its points to 4, while the hosts retain their 3 points. Other games in the men's round witnessed Al-Telal beating host Sayoun 88-62, thus increasing its points to 4.

In under-17 competition, Ahli Sana'a barely defeated guest Sha'ab Hadramout 77-76 to lead the tourney with 4 points, while Al-Telal's under-17 team easily thrashed guest Tali'at Shibam 70-23, thus raising its points to 4.

Newly-hired Egyptian coach Mohsen Saleh conducted numerous substitutions in the second half, thus helping the team achieve more ball possession and win the game. An Arab referee oversaw the meeting.

Yemeni teammates carried the Palestinian flag during the tournament, which its team missed due to the ongoing political situation in its homeland.

In related news, Yemen's national

team is in Cairo to hold its first external camp in preparation for the 18th Arabian Gulf Championship scheduled for Jan. 17-31 in the United Arab Emirates.

During the 10-day camp, the Yemeni team will play numerous practice matches with Egyptian teams with the aim of assessing players' performance and then determining eligible formations for the Gulf competition.

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Director General of Environmental Emergency, Ministry of Water & Environment, National plans do not give priority to disaster risk management

In the past two decades, Yemen has experienced different types of disasters including earthquakes, flash floods, and epidemics of communicable diseases as well as civil wars. Yemen Times interviewed the general director of Environmental Emergency Unit at the Ministry of Water and Environment. Engineer Abdulkhaliq Al-Ghaberi who highlighted the current situation of the environmental disasters and risks in Yemen.

By: Amel Al-Ariqi
amell11ariqi@yahoo.com

How would you describe the current situation in Yemen regarding environmental disasters?

Yemen has undergone significant changes since 1990, and these changes are expected to continue and pose a challenge to improving human development conditions in Yemen. Moreover, the concentration of more than 70% of the country's population in rural areas, who are financially poor and lack access to basic services such as safe drinking water, education facilities and sanitation. Government resources are very limited to elicit the needs of geographically distant, vulnerable and isolated communities. In addition, there are a lack of programs to handle the effects of natural hazards and risks, which include flash floods, earthquakes, technological hazards, civil conflicts, urban migration, extreme climate events, desertification, soil erosion, landslide, mudflow, locust invasions, and tsunamis, depletion of groundwater, aquifers and disease epidemics.

According to the world disasters report 2000, within the period 1990-

is there a difference between natural and environmental disasters?

Of course, an environmental disaster is a disaster that is due to human activity and should not be confused with natural disasters. In this case, the impact of humans' alteration of the ecosystem has led to widespread and/or long-lasting consequences. It can include the deaths of animals, humans and plant systems, or severe disruption of human life, possibly requiring migration.

What are the main existing risks and environmental risk sources of natural hazards in Yemen?

We should note that there are many human factors that play a main role to influence the expected risks from the natural hazards:

1- Earthquakes

Yemen is one of the highest vulnerable areas for earthquake activities.

2- Land and terraces degradation

Due to the physiographic characters of the country, most of the arable lands are located within watershed entities. The accelerating degradation of watershed basin of Yemen has serious economic and ecological



Engineer Abdulkhaliq Al-Ghaberi

5- Land and rock slides

Most of Yemen's highly populated areas are located in the highlands. So this hazard must be considered a major risk. Many areas in Yemen are exposed to land slide events every year. Most of these events haven't been assessed environmentally

6-Tsunami

Yemen has experienced the huge Sumatra Tsunami. There are several points that are primarily appointed as high vulnerability for tsunami risk.

How do humans cause such environmental risks?

Manmade factors influencing the risk have an impact on and may cause environmental emergencies:

- Industrial units especially those which are located in the main cities, among the urban areas



The palms trees remains after the fire that broke out in "Wadi Almuloq" in Taiz governorate in 2004.

activities that have a negative impact on the environment?

There are many laws such as the environmental protection law, water law, and civil defense law, but to implement these laws, the government needs to pay attention to establishing a national policy that addresses only disaster risk reduction. Unfortunately disaster risk reduction is not always addressed in any plan. For instance, the national water strategy does not give priority to the subject of disaster risk reduction while giving more attention to drinking water shortage and depletion problems.

What is the role of the Environmental Emergencies Unit, and what are the main challenges the unit faces in this field?

Let me clarify one point: EEU contains two parts, the first is The General Directorate of Environmental Emergency (GDEE) in the Ministry of Water and Environment, and The National Team for Environmental Emergency and Risk Reduction (NTER), in which most of the related governmental bodies are represented. The GDEE will play a technical and coordination role for NTER. NTER will consider a National platform for EE management and RR under Civil Defense Council as a higher umbrella.

In general our role will be to enhance, contribute to developing of national, regional and international partnership programs for Environmental Emergencies (EE) and Disaster Risk Reduction (RR), to introduce and integrate EE and RR provisions among the National Development Plans and Strategies in Yemen, to work on and support developing of National EE management & RR Policies, strategies systems, and legislation, to work on and support developing of national standards and guidelines of recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation of disaster-affected areas and communities., to issue and implement NECP when EE occurred, to contribute and work on developing, approving, implementing, and supervision of national environmental safety standards guidelines and risk reduction prevention, and mitigation measures to contribute and work on developing, preparing and implementing of EE & RR awareness programs based on a proposal from EE general Directorate, and to review study the International, Regional resolutions, policies and strategies related to EE & RR to identify the best options to deal and apply them at the national and local levels.

EEU has undertaken a number of important initiatives including starting an emergency and contact database, carrying out rapid environmental assessments after disasters, adding environmental emergencies to the National Environmental Statement, proposing updates to national environmental legislation and developing a network of focal points in

Yemen. However we faced many difficulties and challenges including:

- Lacking or absence of environmental emergencies awareness at officials, academic and public levels
- Lacking or absence of the basic facilities to deal with EE such as technical equipments, communication and transport tools and early warning system
- Absence of risk maps, and basic information on EE
- Lacking the clear safety legislations, standards, guidelines and principles
- Lacking the appropriate expertise
- Lacking the financial sources to strengthen the coordination and operation mechanisms
- Absence of response equipment

Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct an immediate awareness program that should cover all levels. In addition, support is highly needed for the National Team for Environmental Emergencies & Disaster Risk Reduction in terms of capacity building and institutional arrangements.

What about the updates and ongoing activities?

Some work has been done so far on applying the recommendations by the international experts to the immediate

action in the first three months.

- Developed proposal plan to apply the immediate action recommended in the report. This proposal has been approved by the Minister and secure financial resources for activities.
- Contact with civil defense general directorate (Disaster Management Unit) and identified that the response for the disasters should be the responsibility of disaster management unit and risk reduction would be the tasks of environmental emergency unit.
- EEU has developed a Draft National Environmental Contingency Plan through cooperation and support from Joint UNEP/OCHA Environmental Unit, UNOCHA and UNEP/APELL. This draft is now on modification and adjustment by the NTER member's agencies. Hopefully the final plan will be officially issued mid-2007.
- Translated the draft contingency plan and distributed it to other agency members on the national team of environmental emergencies and disaster risk reduction.
- EEU organized a workshop on applying the Cairo principles on rehabilitation and the construction of Tsunami Affected Areas from 16-17th of April 2006.



Flood in Taiz governorate causing damage to the infrastructure and land in 2006. Flooding occurs during the monsoon season, leading to a loss of productive agricultural lands along the wadis, increasing sedimentation and significant widening of the downstream wadi bed.

1998, the average number of people affected by disasters annually was 52,561 while more than 100 individuals were killed every year. The report estimated that in 1999 alone about 19,782 persons were affected by disasters in Yemen. Most of those affected have been the vulnerable segments of the society including women and children

In addition to that, many unaccountable risks can be observed to continuously take place in Yemen. A good example is the elevated number of car accidents every week. The number of casualties rarely goes below 50 deaths a week. Yemen also faces a variety of difficulties: desertification, pollution, drought and a scarcity of water.

Yemen offers a unique example of environmental diversity. The preservation of healthy and diversified model environment requires a coherent institutional and legal base, and that is what we are endeavoring to establish. However the considerable material resources necessary for the attainment of this objective still fall short of the essential needs, whether at the level of technology, training or the dissemination of information and awareness among the various population strata regarding this issue of significance for all generations.

According to your previous answer,

environmental and social implications. Insufficient information, however, is currently available on the magnitude of resources degradation, on the extent of soil erosion and sand encroachment. Most arable and watershed areas are subjected to extensive soil erosion and desertification. Sand encroachment on agriculture lands areas in the south (around Aden), west (especially Wadi Mawr and southern Tihama) and east (especially around Marib and wadi Al-Jawf) probably represents the most immediate and serious environmental threat in Yemen at present. Erosion from steep basins has resulted in talus fans with coarse gravel and silt along the foothills and gently sloping areas of fine silt along the alluvial plains below the outfalls of wadies (valleys) in the coastal and interior plains

3- Flooding

Flooding occurs during the monsoon season, leading to a loss of productive agricultural lands along the wadis, increasing sedimentation and significant widening of the downstream wadi bed.

4- Firewood

The natural vegetation of acacia scrub in the foothills has been degraded by the search for firewood. Natural forests have almost disappeared due to overcutting for construction, fuel wood, and fodder.

which lack effective governmental control and environmental monitoring systems.

- Transport activities of hazardous materials is lacking to applicable safety measures
- Mining activities
- Power energy plants where several of these factories are located near environmentally sensitive areas such as the coast of the red sea and gulf of Aden
- Waste water treatment plants in the main cities. Many of these plants are overloaded.
- Food industry factories and activities. It is noted that most of these plant discharge their wastes to the environment without any treatment.
- Public service plants such as vehicle services.
- Infrastructure projects such as roads and building in mountains areas without referring to environmental impact assessments. A Good example for this case is the landslide disaster that happened last year near Taiz. The report of this disasters indicated a road project in the affected area was the main cause of the disaster.
- The extensive use of the natural resources.

What is the role of the law to prevent



damage in due Tsunami in Yemen was much less, mainly because of its distance from the epicenter of the earthquake. Nevertheless, the impacts on the livelihoods of local people, especially fishermen, were significant, as many of them lost their main form of income.

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Bicycling adventures in Sana'a

By: Alan George
For Yemen Times

When one is holding together a happy family, a steady job and a place to live and can surround himself with a few material possessions, his next concern is living long enough to enjoy such pleasures.

Thus, the eternal struggle for an ordinary solvent man approaching half a century is the never-ending battle to remove excess weight from around the waist and replace it as muscle around once youthful shoulders. Or perhaps, settling for not being out of breath from leaving one's bed in the morning! That's why I bicycle to work.

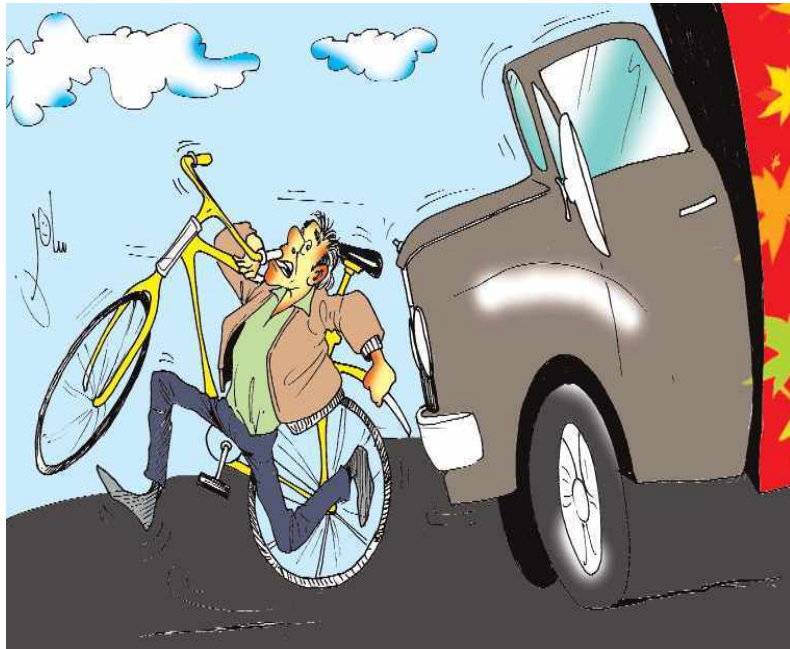
My school is approximately 12 km. from where I live. Shortly before dawn, I set off on my bike with headlight shining onto the deserted suburban streets of Sana'a. Starlight soon fades into dawn, which blazes into another Yemeni morning.

My neighbors puzzle as to why the 'Chelsea tractor' remains snoozing in the driveway and my work colleagues later wonder why I recklessly risk my life on Yemen's streets.

But cycling in the early morning is a time for meditation and later observation. The steady rhythm of the wheels revolving on their slightly buckled axis soothes a new day. At this early hour, a handful of the many laborers soon to assemble by the gas station with pickaxes, shovels or buckets and paint rollers in hand sit sipping their piping hot Lipton tea while patiently awaiting the arrival of their friends and the chance for some casual work.

On my \$100 Yemeni bike, I quietly and conspicuously cycle on, gliding downhill to Sixty Meter Road and weaving around patches of broken glass or plastic in the road.

I'm indecisive while waiting at the junction of Hadda Street and Sixty



Meter Road. Do I go like a skater venturing onto thin ice, even though there's a red light which drivers always ignore at this time of the morning? Or, do I wait patiently for the green and be a Westerner doing what he thinks is the right thing, regardless of where he finds himself?

I know that if there was a policeman, drivers would await his wave while their cars continually seem to be in motion, reminding me of cows straining to get through a narrow gate at milking time.

I can see men wrapped in scarves against the morning air crammed into the backs of Toyota and Suzuki pickups on their way to the fields. I look to my left and right and realize how much I'll miss the surrounding mountains topped by motionless animals silhouetted against the powder blue sky.

About half an hour from school, I can pick out the faces of those in cafes or waiting at roadside gathering points. A polite nod of the head or an acknowledging smile and beam of the eyes provides the necessary contact and human interconnectedness that's so important in daily life.

There's a different feel to early morning in sleepy southwest England. One is claustrophobia from being enclosed between houses and shops as I peddle along the narrow viewless roads. Although it's safer along these roads because I can follow dedicated cycling lanes, the pollution is much the same as rush hour in Sana'a owing to the greater density of traffic crawling from traffic light to traffic light. Cycling is more popular in southwest England than in Sana'a.

The ubiquitous bicycle can be seen in greater numbers on many German streets, where I see various species of machine: a custom-made bike below a parent towing a child trailer/buggy, a sit-up-and-beg bicycle used for shopping or a flashy Olympic bulimic-type racer.

If my journey to school is an opportunity for reflection and observation, then the return journey home calls for

tolerance and restraint because I see all sorts of mind-blowing stuff that would make the toes curl.

It's common knowledge that pedestrians don't have safe places to cross Sixty Meter Road; however, women often drift nonchalantly across it as if on wheels, pretending they're made of an indestructible substance able to withstand the impact of the oncoming speeding traffic. Men are more likely to jog across like ducks in a fairground shooting gallery. Both get frighteningly close to passing traffic, which makes my hair stand on end (what little I have these days!).

Sixty Meter Road at about 4 p.m. is an opportunity to sharpen those Formula One driving reflexes and experience the excitement of Arabia Felix on the road. One interesting phenomenon is the function of the car horn, whose use in Great Britain is regulated by the Highway Code. I remember that it shouldn't be sounded between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. It's most commonly used for frightening away parading pigeons or a stray cat absent-mindedly venturing into the road.

Are Yemeni horns louder than those in Great Britain? When I'm cycling home, horns in Sana'a seem to sound like claxons blasting either to alert me of imminent collision, neighborly presence, kind acknowledgement, a forthcoming wedding or local rubbish collection, which seems to be an emergency situation. Then there are the opening notes of a horn concerto played by the chronic honker approximately five meters behind me. As if my wheels don't wobble enough already!

Another particularly frightening situation for a cyclist is when a vehicle approaches while heading down the wrong side of the road. It's definitely disconcerting to suddenly look up and see a laughing motorist heading straight for me.

Speaking of life or death situations reminds me of the most serious threat to the lives of travelers on Sixty Meter Road - a vehicle turning into the path of other vehicles traveling at speed.

You certainly need your wits about you because it's a recipe for a disaster, although I understand there's a reason. If a vehicle is being pursued by a police or army vehicle and the pursued car suddenly turns left between the central median and goes in the opposite direction, then the pursuing car can fire some bullets at the car as it goes by.

I believe one type of motorist in Sana'a has a secret vendetta against cyclists - dabab drivers! These gentlemen who drive small people-carriers have laws unto themselves, swerving curbside at the drop of a hat, usually without looking. This is definitely a risk for a cyclist, as I'm either forced off the road or close enough to open the door of the dabab and hop inside.

What makes road use worse are nonexistent give way road markings or signs at junctions and roundabouts, which have occasional oil spills, thus transforming cars into mechanical ice skaters. Then there are the water trucks that look like they haven't seen water for eons, chugging along in the center lane at about 35 km. per hour (20 km. if going uphill) and belching enough exhaust fumes to form London pea-soup fog.

Let's face it, many cars in Sana'a have body work to die for, looking like they've been in a demolition derby making them unlikely to be roadworthy. Break lights often don't work or are nonexistent and you can forget about turn signals because the lever on the steering column is used to suspend plastic bags full of qat, which slowly transforms healthy, chestnut-brown eyes into sagging, thick-lidded, lifeless ones hidden above stretched out, squirrel-like cheeks.

God willing, I'll reach my next birthday. My advice: when driving or cycling the streets of Sana'a, look after yourselves because it's "Wacky Races" out there!

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A tale of two teachers: Need for emotional intelligence



Prof. M.N.K. Bose
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These are two incidents involving two different teachers, who had problems with their students.

One, a female teacher, middle aged, experienced, was teaching a class of 60 students at the tertiary level, a subject, which most of the students felt, was difficult. She had taught subjects similar to the one she was teaching several times earlier, but the present situation was different as the students were new to her and she had been teaching them only for a few weeks. In the fifth week of the course, in the middle of the class, one of the students stood up and said, "Could you go a bit slow? This subject is new and difficult to us, the names involved are quite new." She got a bit disturbed, and she turned red. She asked the class "Is it true?" and to her surprise and dismay, the class in chorus said, "Yes." She developed a sort of unpleasant impression about the student who initiated the interaction and tried to find

fault with him in whatever he said and did in the classes; he has become a black sheep, in her view.

The other one, also a female teacher, in her teenage, not much experienced, was teaching a class of 100 students at the tertiary level, a subject, which she loved to teach; not a very difficult subject to the students. Though she was teaching it for the first time, she was teaching it with good preparation, as she was a sincere and motivated teacher with intelligence. This is what she says about the incident that happened in one of her classes:

I had one of my students who was in his twenties. He was so arrogant. I observed this the way he sits on his chair in the classroom and the way he asks his teachers questions, the type of questions he asks, the way he deals with his classmates, his observing looks and sneering smiles. Once he asked me a question about the phonetic transcription of a word while I was teaching reading and I said, "I will not answer this question. I am explaining the meanings and you are asking me this question now. Do you test my knowledge?" I replied angrily and loudly and his face turned red. He retorted, "So I will not continue in this class." He left the class banging the door. I felt as he slapped me. Consequently I developed a severe headache the whole day. I marked him absent three days and ignored him. After the third class, he rushed into the staff room and asked me in a sharp voice, "Who told you to mark me absent in your classes? Is it the head of the English Dept.?" I got frightened inside but vigorously replied, "I'm

free. You deserve this." When the matter went to the Dean of the college, he was about to expel him from the college but I stood against this decision. The HOD asked him to apologize to me, which he did reluctantly. When I asked him why he behaved that way in the class, he said, "You embarrassed me in front of my classmates and I felt that I should do something to save face. You hurt me."

Both these were good at the subjects they were teaching, competent as teachers, sincere and motivated, whose mother tongue was the same as that of the students. They had no difficulty in communicating with the students what they wanted to. Then why did they get into problems in their classes, one developing prejudice against an intelligent student and the other falling out with the student? What was missing in them? As the second teacher recollected, "Practically, I felt my communicative competence isn't everything I should have to be a successful teacher and I am still missing something. Also success in teaching shouldn't be measured by what I convey to students but by how I get along with students and how to be emotionally intelligent in order to regulate my emotions and solve disputes in the classes peacefully."

What the teachers lacked was emotional balance to tackle the situation peacefully, understand and respect the other's (student's) feelings and emotions. A teacher should know why a student interrupts in the class (asking questions) or behaves in an abnormal way (leaving the class banging the door), try to study his/her feelings and emotions

and solve the problem amicably; otherwise he/she would unnecessarily complicate things and the students, even if sincere and motivated to learn, will be lost. Most often the students who interrupt the class with questions are the interested ones and their questions are intelligent and genuine, may be wrongly timed, as in the case of the second incident; if they are tackled carelessly, as in the cases above, they become frustrated and lose interest in the subjects and as a result their performance will be affected badly, as in the case of the first incident. This might lead to unnecessary friction between the teacher and the students too.

Emotional Intelligence is defined by scholars working in the field of psychology as "the ability to discern other individual's feelings, beliefs, and intentions" and "being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and gratification;... to empathize and hope". Unfortunately, it has been neglected in the teacher preparation programmes, though it is an essential ingredient for successful teaching. Emotional intelligence has been found to have a positive influence on the students' performance as well. An emotionally intelligent teacher is one with high self-esteem and self-control and he/she alone can create self-esteem and self-control in his/her students. It is time the Faculties of Education in the country planned to include activities for developing emotional intelligence in the trainee teachers in their curriculum in order to avoid repeating 'the tale of these two teachers'.

The finer points of a literature review

Morgan Hamilton

Generally speaking there are two kinds of literature reviews. The first type is the more informal one, it is a review of a written piece of work, a summary and an evaluation of it. A perfect example is a review of a new book. The first type of literature review has a wider readership because it is more popular, while the second type is the scholarly resource.

It is written as a review of a book or textbook but also has some points of reference in a synthesized format. The casual literature review is supposed to include emotional, intuitive, aesthetic

or intellectual responses and discussions concerning credibility, creative worth and literature value of the written pieces of work. Literature reviews which are more academic should contain an evaluation which is more intellectually based and focused or they should have analysis and a list of research done. Academic literature reviews should give details about the original research report. For instance, a literature review for the masses, a book review may contain some of the following phrases: "...if someone is certain that you should read The Celestial Jukebox then read it for sure. Of course, you can also wait for the movie, it would follow soon. The Celestial Jukebox reminds about Fried

Green Tomatoes, Magnolia and even bears some resemblance to Gone with the wind in the making."

The second type of literature review, the scholarly review might sound like this: "... Some studies have taken a different approach on concentrating on how same-sex groups produce different types of interaction as opposed to mixed-sex interactions. Maltz and Borker conducted a typical study of this sort in 1982 developing lists of what they considered as men's and women's features of language..." If you are considering writing a literature review of the second type, the scholarly resource, according to professors at University of California, Santa Cruz then it is good to include the following:

- 1) a subject/topic/theory overview; 2) objects of the literature review; 3) a categorizing of the works under review; 4) a comparison of the inner workings of each source being reviewed; and a conclusion which draws the attention to the source with the more valid and more valuable arguments or positions. In case you should write an alternative literature review, a book review or a report, then make sure you cover the several points listed: 1) a summary of the book; 2) examples of characters, plots, setting; 3) your own opinion what was the most interesting moment, what did you not like about the book, your advice whether people should read it or not.

Source: articlesfactory.com

The paradigm of distance education (Part 2)

Dr. Ramakanta Sahu
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Department of English
University of Science and Technology,
Sana'a

Some basic assumptions about distance education

Distance education has its own framework, its own resources, own laws, own teaching potential and its own constraints. In fact, the on-campus, institutionalized education and off-campus institutionalized form of individual study are presumed as two forms of education which are quite separable in terms of the means, methods and goals including division of labor (on the part of the teachers), application of organizational principles, scientific control, objectivity of teaching behavior, concentration, and centralization. The basic dichotomy between the two is based on the fact that traditional education is built on personal communication whereas distance education subsumes a special type of mass education that incorporates industrialized and technological communication.

Alienation of the learner

Distance education is more or less depersonalized for the staff and the students. This deprives the students of the charm of teaching with a human face. It is very difficult to sustain the students' interest and engage them creatively in the program. This in-built and inevitable alien-

ation of the students from the central core of the teaching learning process strains the system to a considerable extent.

Shift of focus

In traditional education, a teacher teaches, whereas in distance education, a whole institution teaches. In conventional education, the teacher is present in the lecture room along with his/her students. There is scope for an intense interaction with them where not only the teacher's knowledge, but a whole battery of factors including his/her interactional pattern, his/her handling of group dynamics, his/her personality, attitude, self-awareness, cultural-awareness including individual idiosyncrasies play a significant role in determining the learning outcomes. But in case of distance learning it is not so. As a matter of fact the teacher in person doesn't come to the forefront. Rather, the materials prepared by one teacher are in most cases used by another teacher with different groups of learners in completely different instructional designs and learning contexts. Obviously, here the personality of the teacher as well as his/her professional competence is played down to a considerable extent.

Language of interaction

Interactional speech is the main corner stone in traditional, face-to-face teaching. The relationship between the teacher

and taught in a mode of direct teaching is governed by social norms. But the relationship between the two in correspondence education, which is an expanded form of teaching, is maintained by emotion-free language, constrained by a limited possibility of analyzing students' needs and giving them directions.

Learning dividends

There is little substance in the view that just because traditional education takes place in the lecture room, therefore, the teacher's role is of crucial importance. Practicing teachers would bear me out that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the input in the classroom (by the teacher) and the intake (by the students). The students' assimilation of the classroom learning is a variable that depends on a number of factors related to the classroom ecology, the learner motivational level and individualization of instruction. Good adult education, on the other hand, is essentially self-education by the learner based on private study in libraries where the learner resorts to note-making, and integration of information from diverse sources at a self-regulated pace. So even without the opportunity of face to face interaction, actual learning dividends maybe more and often of a higher quality than in the traditional education.

Quality control through materials

The success of a distance learning pro-

gram depends on the efficiency with which learning materials are linked to learning. There is an inherent uncertainty regarding the quantity of learning, quality of learning and status of learning once learning materials are developed and dispatched to the students. This makes it all the more important to design learning materials in such a way that the learners at a distance find them learner-friendly, useful and get the desired learning dividends without any difficulty.

Learner-driven

The distance education system puts a greater thrust on the student's own sense of responsibility. Although, he is free from the demands and the tension of the classroom which makes him relatively independent compared to his counterparts in conventional system of education, he needs to shoulder a greater share of responsibility for initiating the learning process and for maintaining it throughout.

Fusion of academic and managerial skills

Like in any industrialized enterprise, a set of managerial skills is an essential prerequisite of distance education. These skills relate to routine scheduling of the lessons, fixing of deadlines for written responses, job schedules including preparation, production and dispatch of materials, collection of feedback and so forth.

Function of Fiction: A perspective



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Art grows out of life, it is fed by life; it re-acts upon life. Life is the focus of art, fiction, poetry and drama. As the writer deals with life, he must deal with the moral facts and issues involved in life. Clearly, it is upon his moral power and insight and upon the whole spirit and tendency of his philosophy that the real greatness of his work very largely depends.

Like drama, novel is concerned directly with men, women, and their relationships, thoughts and feelings, passions and motives by which they are governed and impelled, with their joys and sorrows, their struggles, successes and failures. A novelist is a thinker, a philosopher and an observer of life. His knowledge of character, his insight into motive and passion, his illuminating art of characterization combine to give a comprehensive view of the world and its moral significance.

Like the dramatist, the novelist interprets life. He selects certain

materials out of the mass which life offers to him. Through the selection and organization of material, emphasis, presentation of character and development of story, the novelist shows us in a general way what he thinks, how he thinks and how he deals with life. Both the dramatist and the novelist interpret life with its merits and defects. No novel approaches life without a focus on good and evil which happen in conflict since the struggle of human race from barbarism to civilization. The conflict is continuous and shall remain so.

Since the novelist's theme is life, his area of focus should include presentation of characters and motives under certain lights which make up the human experience. The function of fiction is to provide amusement for the leisure hour and offer welcome relief from the strain of practical affairs. Any novel which serves its purpose in this way, providing pleasure and teaches a lesson is a realistic novel. The novelist must write with the quality of authenticity. He should write with thoroughness and familiarity with his material. He should confine himself within the field of the world.

A novelist must be realistic in his approach. Knowledge of life may be obtained in various ways besides direct personal experiences; it may be obtained through books and through conversation with other people. The true greatness of the novel lies in its sound subject-matter that deals with life from various angle points.

Can translation and interpretation be taught?



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Although the profession of interpreting is as old as man's ability to speak, and although the first translators performed their art when the first diplomatic notes and trade papers were exchanged, it is only since the end of World War I and the international crises that followed that these two professions have developed in their present form. Consecutive interpretation was used exclusively until about 1945, when simultaneous interpretation was used for the first time at the war criminal trials at Nuremberg.

Good translators and good interpreters must possess an extraordinary array of qualifications. Just as an outstanding instrumental soloist or a perfect figure skater must have a flawless technique, translators and interpreters must have a complete mastery of their working languages, including their native language.

Whereas one can still enter the field of translation with every imaginable background (and, in fact, all too often without the proper background at all), the access to the profession of conference interpretation is much more structured.

The most recent statistical survey of the International Association of Conference Interpreters shows that 95 percent of the respondents between the

ages of 30 and 45 were trained in a university program. There is a good reason for these statistics:

One can be a poor translator for a long time before complaints arise, whereas a faulty interpretation is caught immediately, most of the time to the utmost embarrassment of all concerned. Moreover, the fact that interpreters work in teams assures a certain quality control, for nothing is more painful for a conference interpreter than to work with a colleague who is doing a poor job.

There are two important points to consider when attempting to answer the question whether translation and interpretation can be taught:

(1) The first interpreters in our century were all self-taught. They were full-fledged diplomats, whose training and whose professional experience endowed them with extraordinary linguistic and communicative skills. They developed their skills on the basis of an unusually broad general knowledge.

(2) It is sometimes said by members of our profession that "so-and-so would have made it even without a school" or that she or he "became a good translator / interpreter in spite of the school she or he attended". Although remarks of this nature are heard less often nowadays and are based on a time when students were taught by the "sink-or-swim" method, the implication remains that teaching is not everything and -more important- not all the skills can be taught to everyone.

It will come as no surprise to the reader that I am of the opinion that translation and interpretation must be taught, and taught properly.

Only exceptionally gifted people can hope to accede to these professions on their own without developing serious bad habits and making mistakes that will tarnish their professional performance for the rest of their careers.

