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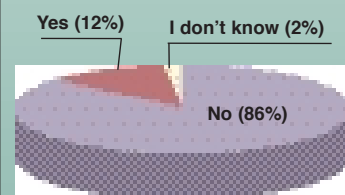


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## Readers' Voice

### Last edition's question:

Do you think the Yemeni government will seriously take up the torture issue in Yemen because of the latest incident in Hodeidah?



### This edition's question:

Do you think that a new government formation will have a positive impact, assuming corruption is rampant in all of the state's institutions?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Go to our website at: [yementimes.com/#poll](http://yementimes.com/#poll) and have your voice heard

## Authorities deny Mareb explosions

By: Yemen Times Staff

Mareb, Jan. 14 — Local authorities in Mareb governorate denied last Saturday the occurrence of any explosions at Balqis Throne Temple.

"There had been no explosion in temple's yard and or any surrounding areas," said the local council's secretary general, Jaber Al-Shabwani, who also expressed his sorrow for some media promote such baseless news.

However, some people assured the occurrence of explosions.

One local in Mareb assured that he heard a powerful explosion on Saturday around 4 a.m.

"The explosion was so strong," said Hamid Abu Nab. "It left behind a deep hole near to Balqis Throne Temple."

He further pointed out that a small gray car was seen the day before near the temple and this is what raised the doubts among the locals.

26 September News Paper, organ of Yemeni Armed Forces, reported security sources as saying the explosions resulted from an old mine buried underground. The explosion caused no damage to the temple or its wall as it happened 5 meters away. The same source said the explosion occurred while there were no tourists and it was an accident.

A security sources expressed fear the explosion could be a terrorist attack aiming to shake stability and security and attract authority's attention away from the case of those accused in attacking oil facilities and Mareb's Safer and Hadramout's Al-Dhabah in September.

## Antonio Costa, Executive Director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime: "I could see a growing presence of foreign organized crime elements in Yemen"

By: Raidan Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

SANA'A, Jan. 13 — During his recent brief visit to Yemen at the invitation of Yemen's Ministry of Interior, Antonio Maria Costa, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, visited many parts of the country and discussed the security situation with Yemeni authorities, as well as with other U.N. bodies operating in Yemen.

Costa had an overall positive experience visiting Yemen and was impressed by Yemeni authorities' determination to ensure and maintain national security. However, achieving this goal requires far more efforts and resources than currently available, especially considering regional instability and risks from organized crime and terrorism, from which Yemen has suffered severely.

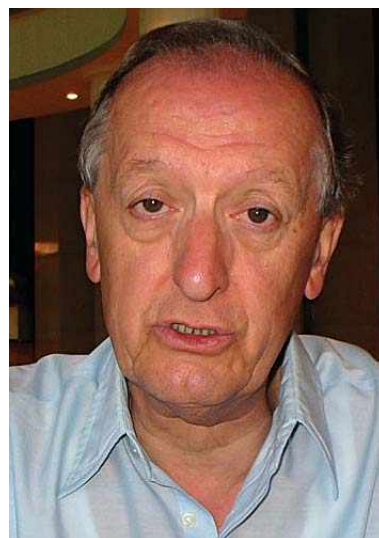
The U.N. official specifically noted that Yemen's security forces need all the help they can get in order to maintain national security and safety, especially in light of regional developments in organized crime. He also indicated that such organized crime groups are

searching for weaknesses in the security system in order to enter the country, especially as security forces still are unable to maintain full control over all Yemeni territories.

He also expressed the U.N. office's desire to help Yemen by providing resources, as well as technical and training support; however, Yemen first must endorse and ratify international conventions regarding organized crime and corruption in order to maximize support from the international body.

Costa also surmised that homegrown organized crime is highly unlikely despite easy access to weapons and economic hardships; however, he emphasized that foreign elements might easily infiltrate the fabric of Yemeni society and plant seeds for organized crime, terrorism and insurgencies if authorities don't prepare for such potential risks.

He also praised the current anti-terrorism strategy and the Ministry of Interior's counterterrorism department for their efforts, which have increased stability and security considerably since 2002 via continuous development. Costa also discussed the economic consequences of increasing



Antonio Maria Costa

trade, investment and tourism, which correlates with security forces' efforts to stabilize the nation.

The Yemen Times met with Costa and asked him about his visit to Yemen, the security situation in Yemen and its national, regional and sociopolitical impacts.

See page 7 for the full interview.

## Ruling party denies new cabinet formation

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Jan. 14 — The ruling General People Congress denied news by several local and foreign media saying that a new government formation will be announced soon. Some of the news sources reported that one of the current cabinet ministers will replace Prime Minister Abdulqader Bajammal.

Well-informed sources told the media that any government reshuffle has to be made in conformity with the constitutional procedures. The sources ruled out any new cabinet formation before April.

The government reshuffle must be preceded by the current prime minister's resignation, and removing Bajammal, who is the GPC Secretary General, from the top cabinet post is unbelievable, except in the case the president is determined to carry out real reforms in the country, which are impossible, according to sources.

Approximately seven cabinet ministers may be replaced by new faces, but this doesn't include the head of the cabinet, sources say.

Political observers commented on the new government reshuffle declaration. They say the president is facing a dilemma in choosing new cabinet ministers, adding that such official procedures must be made according to the constitution, particularly after the news said there is a foreign demand to replace the current prime minister.

Sultan Al-Barakani, the GPC Secretary General for Culture and Media Affairs, stated that reshuffling the government is the responsibility of the GPC's leadership and the state's presidency.

Speaking to News Yemen, Al-Barakani said, "Talk about reshuffling



Abdulqader Bajammal

the government and electing governors and district directors paralyzed the state's institutions. We seem to be renting people in the country, and there is no institutional work."

"GPC doesn't believe reshuffling the government is necessary, as it has been only a short time since the current ministers took the positions.

The ruling party has a great task ahead, and that is implementing the president's political platform," Al-Barakani continued.

The GPC leader confirmed that his party is facing a great responsibility, and people want this to bear fruit in a short time. GPC is responsible for bringing its platform into practice.

A Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) official source declared that the opposition bloc doesn't care about retaining the current cabinet or reshuffling it, and there is no profit associated with such procedures.

"We sympathize with the prime minister, since he is the best one tolerating the hard conditions and internal conflicts which the ruling party has so far experienced," the JMP source said. "GPC has to reform its position in order to be able to run the country's affairs, instead of accusing others and holding some of its members responsible for the state's wrong policies. We wish Bajammal the best of success and prosperity in his career."

The opposition source added, "If the GPC decides to replace Bajammal, we will fear that the top cabinet post will be given to a worse person than the predecessor due to the lack of state's clear policies."

## Investment Conference postponed

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, Jan. 13 — The Gulf Cooperation Council's General Secretariat and the Yemeni Industry Ministry announced the postponement of the Investment Conference from February to April. Neither side indicated why they adjourned the conference.

During his visit to Yemen last week, GCC Secretary-General Abdurrahman Al-Atteyyah said the conference was postponed in order to guarantee more effective participation by Gulf investors.

Official sources confirmed that there had been a dispute between the Yemeni government and the private sector regarding the Investment Conference, whereby Yemen is attempting to attract Gulf capital in an effort to help recover investment in the country.

The private sector is criticizing making conference arrangements in its absence, pointing out that the Yemeni government plans to organize the conference alone despite claiming to respect the private sector.

However, Mohammed Al-Maitami, head of the Yemeni side of the conference's preparatory committee, denied that there have been disputes between the private sector and the government, which participated in postponing the event.

"Yemen and the GCC General Secretariat received requests from large and influential regional and international investors that February isn't convenient for them to attend the conference," Al-Maitami explained.

Yemen's government has revealed its intention to carry out what it calls "a matrix of environmental and investment reforms" with the aim of boosting investment in Yemen and enhancing the private sector's role in investment projects.

The project, which the Yemeni government discussed before Eid Al-Adha, suggests establishing a higher council for partnership between government and the private sector and reinforcing all investment laws concerning production and export benefits, which include exempting products and exports from customs tariffs.

The project recommends the government pass a law to organize the private sector's participation in establishing and running infrastructural institutions, surveying investment opportunities in various economic sectors, drawing up an investment map for these sectors and designing a promotional strategy for such investment opportunities.

According to the project, necessary industrial services must reach several sites nationwide and the government must establish new industry and trade zones on Yemeni borders with its neighbors.

The project also suggests that the Yemeni government will supply power to all promising investment and industrial areas.

The Yemeni government's matrix of environmental and investment reforms contains policies and procedures to construct a railway and conduct a liquefied natural gas project to generate electricity

in order to reduce power costs at factories.

The matrix's policies also aim to develop Yemeni ports, particularly basic services and stores, as well as train governmental bodies and the private sector on how to better run investment projects.

Other policies include boosting NGOs' roles, improving the Yemeni judicial system and establishing a securities market.

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## In brief

Campaign fighting  
child smuggling

Jan. 13 — On Saturday the Ministry of Health dedicated an awareness campaign for fighting child smuggling cooperating with UNESCO in Hodeidah, Hajah and Ryimah governorates. The campaign includes many activities such as seminars, workshops and research presentations about the negative effects of increasing smuggling in the society in general. The campaign will be continued for ten days.

## Dhamar

Students take course  
on health issues

Jan. 13 — The national program for school health is cooperating with the office of education awareness program to talk to many schools in the second semester of the 2006-2007 year. The course aims to teach 10,000 students about health issues and first aid. The campaign indicates media awareness in schools, distributing handbills and medicine for the trainees. The campaign will be continued for one month, according to Mohammed Jarpatien, the coordinator of the national program in the office of the general health and population.

## Hajah

An attractive governorate  
for tourists in 2006

Jan. 13 — The general manager of the tourism office, Fahd Al-Godami noticed that Hajah governorate received more than 40,000 tourists during 2006 and this is because of the historical, natural and tourism locations in the governorate. More than 18 tourist hotels, 29 restaurants and four tourism companies operate in the governorate contributing to the increase in tourism.

## Hodeidah

Vice President chairs local council  
meeting in Hodeidah

Jan. 13 — Vice President, Abdu Rabbo Mansour Hadi, chaired an elaborate meeting for the local council and the executive office. In the meeting, that is considered the first in the year 2007, they discussed the development program, its merits and demerits, and making use of those experiences to create necessary remedies for the faults in the program. The vice president delivered a speech about education and building new schools. He talked about a number of achievements in the governorate and the human needs of health services, communication, transportation, water and electricity, stressing on exerting more effort to develop humanitarian services.

Three commercial  
storehouses burn

Jan. 13 — An electrical fire damaged three commercial storehouses. According to reports source, the losing was estimated more than milliard YR. The firefighting operation was continued for three hours because of the lack of fire fighting tools.

## Riyadh

International agreement  
on social cooperation

Jan. 13 — Deputy Minister of Social Affairs, Ali Saleh Abdullah, discussed Wednesday with Kingdom of Saudi Arabian Minister of Social Affairs, Abdulmuhssen Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Akkas, ways of enacting the understanding memo signed by Yemen and Saudi Arabia in the field of social affairs and translating it into practical programs to enhance cooperation and coordination between the two countries. The two officials agreed on forming a joint committee for preparing an executive program.

## Sana'a

Future cooperation between Yemen  
and France

Jan. 14 — the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Abdul-Karim al-Arhabi met Saturday with French Ambassador to Yemen, Gilles Gauthier. They discussed aspects of current and future cooperation between Yemen and France. They discussed also preparations for the visit of French International Cooperation Minister to Yemen scheduled early next March.

## Socotra

Medical camp carries out 477 surgeries and treats 2341 cases free  
Jan. 13 — The Ministry of Health concluded a week-long charitable medical camp. The medical team carried out 477 surgical operations and treated 2341 cases. The camp aims to bring services to isolated districts which have low medical services. Most of the surgeries were successfully without any kind of side effects, according to the chief of the medical team, lawfeeq al Khatib stated.

## Sealed from the sea and Somalia

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Jan. 14 — The Yemeni government closed its sea border in an effort to discourage armed human traffickers from bringing illegal immigrants to Yemen.

An unnamed high-ranking navy official said several contingents of Yemeni navy forces were deployed to the Red Sea to tighten the security, according to 26 September. He said many armed human traffickers are bringing hundreds of illegal migrants from Somalia and Ethiopia to Yemen.

This week saw 90 Somalis buried in mass graves in Bir Ali area of Shabwa governorate. The bodies were missing at sea on their way to Yemen and were later found floating off the coast of Yemen.

There are still 50 Somali refugees missing at sea. The head of the Somali community in Yemen, Muhammad 'Ali Hersi, called for greater efforts to find the missing Somalis.

"It is really a terrible mishap and we feel very sorry for those who died and those who are still missing," he said.

The survivors were in bad condition and not all of them had been sent to the refugee reception center at Mayfaa, in southern Yemen, said Hersi.

"There are still some survivors in Bir Ali, left without shelter and anyone to care for them. Among them are four children, who lost their parents during the December incident," pleaded Hersi.

Refugee agencies warned that the recent conflict in Somalia between Islamists and the Transitional Federal Government, backed by Ethiopia, has exacerbated the situation and increased the number of emigrants.

Yemen is one of the few countries



Yemen has closed its sea border to Somalis to discourage armed human traffickers.

in the region that signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and based on this convention Somalis entering Yemen are automatically granted refugee status by the government. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, there are currently more than 88,000 registered refugees in Yemen, of whom 84,000 are Somalis.

"Yemen is affected directly with unstable states in Somali," said Interior Minister Rashad Al-Alimi, who confirmed that there are 300,000 Somalis refugees in Yemen which form huge burdens on Yemeni economical, security, and social status.

Yemeni was one of the Arab countries trying to mediate Somalia's defeated Islamists and the transitional government, which is currently in control of most of the country.

In this regard, minister of foreign affairs and expatriates, Abu Bakr al-Qirbi, said the Somali issue will be discussed by the member states of

Sana'a Assembly, which includes Yemen, Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia, to be held in Addis Ababa at the end of January. According to al-Qirbi communications are carried out between Yemen, the Arab League, the European Union and other regional and international mediators for holding a meeting under the sponsorship of the Arab League to achieve reconciliation in Somalia.

Yemen had hosted several meetings between the different Somali factions through out the past few years. The latest event hosted by Yemen was the December talks between Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the leader of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union, and Sharif Hassan, speaker of the Somali Parliament. Both parties had agreed to curb all violence and to resume dialogue between the Islamic courts and the interim government. In Aden the Somali factions signed a treaty in January that was sponsored by President Saleh.

## Jail and torture for innocent women

By: Nisreen Shaddad

SANA'A, Jan. 13 — The illegal arrested, torture and rape of Anisa Al-Shuaibi represents the pitiful condition in which detainees live. She was accused of kidnapping and killing her ex-husband and endured the harsh prison conditions before finally being released after 48 days. The whole time her husband was actually alive in Jamal Jameel prison.

While imprisoned Al-Shuaibi was abused and raped and it was torture she should never have endured if the police worked her case correctly.

"Before arresting, police should investigate about the victim," said Abdul Rahman Barman, one of the lawyers of Allow Corp. "Her former husband who was alive and jailed in Jamal Jameel until April 2003 while she was arrested in November 2002."

Barman claimed the criminal investigation arrested her to satisfy particular individuals.

"The evidences I have is when arresting Al-Shuaibi, they didn't investigate her immediately, as is known in momentous crimes," explained Barman. "In her case, the investigation must take place immediately when she arrives and three times a day to discover the contradictions of her speech. However, they investigated her on the fifth day after her arrest and it was the first and the last during the 48 days.

"The second was she was remitted to the section that is specialized for those who committed immoral crimes rather than to the section for murder," explained Barman

The way they caught her; two



Abdul Rahman Barman.

grabbed her from her hands, two from legs and they threw her in the car. The fifth one stayed on her to not to make her move. These are all the irregularities Al-Shuaibi faced during her time in custody, according to Barman.

What's amazing is another group of men coming to steal from her house, said Barman explaining all the hardships Al-Shuaibi faced.

"Even the plates, they steal them," said Harun, Al-Shuaibi's son.

Al-Shuaibi is trying to prove she was jailed illegally and tortured. It's been something she's been trying to do since her 48 day struggle, but now the suit is moving again.

Some believe the suit is arousing to serve particular political parties, however Barman says they've been trying to keep Al-Shuaibi's case alive the whole time.

"The file of this issue (problem) was at the presidency before two years. It was as well with the general prostitution and the Interior Minister

and no one study her suit. Once we move this suit, they accuse us of politicizing the issue," said Barman.

"Add to that instead of making a committee to take a stand in this issue, they called us to know how to solve this problem," he added. "Do they want us to keep silent to not to accuse us of exploiting this issue and serving individual purposes?"

Al-Shuaibi is a soldier worked as a printer in the Interior Minister for fifteen years. She got married at twelve years old and had two children. She divorced after five years because her former husband married several women. She was going to marry her taxi driver; however, after arresting him for a week "he got almost crazy." Now she is seeking a refuge to save her life as well her children's.

"When in prisons, we dare not to talk as the jailors threaten us with torture. Journalists and researchers can never discover the truth because there is a lot who hide it," Al-Shuaibi stated. The state of the jail as she described is like pen.

"Sometimes they prevented us of going to the toilet as a punishment so that some of the prisoners urinated in the food plates. And then they brought the food in those plates themselves," Al-Shuaibi continued.

With her son adding, "The blankets are dirty and lice-infested."

The head of the criminal investigation unit, Rizq Al-Jawfi, refused to justify why he has been absent in the interrogation and said it's the Interior Minister who is in charge of answering the questions, as he said. The Interior Minister said they will issue a statement soon.

Two Yemeni fighters  
captured in Iraq

SANA'A, Jan. 12 — Iraqi security forces captured on Friday two Yemenis charged of terrorism attacks inside Iraq according to a press release of the Iraqi Defense Ministry, said Al-Shura Net.

Officials at both the Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had said they "don't have any information about the news."

The Iraqi TV quoted the media consultant of Iraqi Ministry of Defense, Mohammed Al-Askari, saying the Iraqi forces captured six wanted Arab terrorists of different nationalities. They are two Egyptians, two Sudanese and two Yemenis

captured in Al-Athamia residential area. However, Al-Askari did not give information about their names or ages.

Yemenis are active in fighting against occupation forces in Iraq, according to international media reports that note fighters from Yemen are among the people coming from the region to try to force U.S. forces out of Iraq.

Media sources previously have mentioned that more than 500 Yemenis have gone to Iraq in the last two years. However, the same sources didn't mention the specific party or nation behind sending them to Iraq, nor the country or countries through which they passed.

British Embassy  
opens its new door

SANA'A, Jan. 13 — The British Embassy in Yemen inaugurated its new premises in Sana'a on Jan. 10.

In the frame of his 3-day visit to Yemen, the U.K. Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, Kim Howells, officially opened the new embassy's premises.

The new building, designed by the British Company Design Engine and built by the British Contractor Gibs, is one of the most modern diplomatic premises in the Yemeni capital.

The new embassy, near the Movenpick, replaces the old rented buildings Hadda St. It is one of the British Embassies to be completed following a review of security by the Foreign and Commonwealth office a few years ago.

"I am very pleased to be back on my second visit to Yemen to open this splendid new building. It represent the best of British design excellence, but also incorporates traditional Yemeni elements," said Howells. "It is a practical demonstration of Britain's commitment to the future of its bilateral relationship with Yemen."

Michael Gifford, the British Ambassador to Yemen, noted, "We are proud of the new embassy. Not only will it enable our British and Yemeni staff to work in a secure and modern environment, something we have been lacking for some time, but it will also enable us to offer better services to the public, especially the issuing of visas. We hope to expand to a full visa service over the course of the next few months."

Yemeni students in Iran  
complain of mistreatment

SANA'A, Jan. 13 — The government is withholding the funds for Yemeni students currently in Iranian universities, according to the students.

They also declared they would resort to staging a sit-in before the Yemeni Embassy in Tehran if the Higher Education Ministry does not respond to their demands, aiming to improve their living standard and affording study and books.

Many students told Mareb Press they are subject to continuous pressure from the Yemeni Embassy in Iran and Yemeni security apparatuses when they come back to Yemen, noting they are charged because of their study in Iranian universities and

institutes.

The students further revealed their study in Iran is a government option and it can move them to universities in other countries if it is worried about their study there.

They also denounced the mistreatment they face in Yemeni airports upon their return, appealing to President Saleh to prevent such acts.

"We feel sad for the mistreatment we face in airports and the happiness of returning home turns to sadness," said a student.

In their appeal to President Saleh, the students complain that they are ignored and that they did not receive a single dollar as resource allowance.

Lucky teacher wins new  
car from Sabafon

Mutaher Al-Hassani won a 2006 Toyota Land Cruiser from Sabafon.

PHOTO BY YASSER AL-MAYASI

SANA'A, Jan. 14 — The Yemeni Company for GSM mobile phones, Sabafon, had an award ceremony for its grand competition "Scratch and Win", involving seven 2006 Toyota Land Cruisers along with many other prizes allocated for their customers.

Mutaher Al-Hassani, 38, who works as a teacher in his area, Rayma, received the first prize, a Land Cruiser.

Celebrating the occasion, Sheikh Hamdan Al-Ahmer, head of marketing administration at Sabafon, handed the winner the car keys in

presence of company officials and employees.

Al-Hassani, expressed his happiness for winning the car and thanked Sabafon, declaring he would use the SUV for transport between his home and work.

Pier Emad, marketing and sales chairman at Sabafon, encouraged Sabafon subscribers to keep all cards, as there are still six cars waiting to be awarded.

Sabafon, the first GSM service provider in Yemen, launched its service in February 2002.

## Students march to fight AIDS

HADRAMOUT, Jan. 11 — Titled "Stop AIDS and keep the promise", the National Program for Fighting AIDS, Hadramout Valley branch, organized a student's march, coinciding with the celebrations of the World Day for fighting Aids.

The Health Institute students, together with Scout team members, attended the march from Al-Nahda School in Sayun, passing by the

streets until they reached the public yard in front of Sayun Historical Palace. The participants marched with posters and placards calling top raise the awareness among society members to avoid the hazardous epidemic.

In front of Sayun Historical Palace, many officials delivered speeches including Dr. Hussain Hadah, the general manager of health office in Hadramout, Dr. Salim Al-Kaf, the

coordinator of the AIDS fighting program and Ja'fer Rabi'a, deputy manager of first aid administration in Hadramout's Valley.

The speeches stressed the importance of fighting AIDS by spreading awareness among society members. The speakers also addressed the issue of preventing infections through clean blood transfusions.

Source: www.hadramout.info

# Rice tells Abbas U.S. will expand peace drive

By: Wafa Amr

RAMALLAH, West Bank (Reuters) — U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in a bid to bolster President Mahmoud Abbas, pledged on Sunday to expand Washington's role in the peace process with the goal of establishing a Palestinian state.

"I have heard loud and clear the call for deeper American engagement," Rice said with Abbas at her side in the West Bank city of Ramallah. "You will have my commitment to do precisely that."

Israeli officials said Washington was exploring several options, including the creation of a Palestinian state with temporary borders along the route of the barrier Israel is building in and around the West Bank, an idea rejected by Abbas.

"I have stressed to the secretary of state our rejection of temporary solutions, including provisional borders for our state," Abbas said. Palestinians fear such temporary borders would become final, leaving them with a truncated state.

Rice, who has avoided engaging in the high-speed diplomacy of some previous U.S. administrations, is trying to bolster Abbas in his power struggle with the ruling Hamas faction, which took control of the Palestinian government in March and whose charter calls for Israel's destruction.

Rice said she would focus in the coming months on accelerating the stalled "road map" peace plan in order to "show to the Palestinian people how we might move towards the establishment of a Palestinian state".



U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (L) meets Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the Palestinian Authority headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah Jan. 14. Rice met with Abbas on Sunday, seeking to bolster the moderate leader in his power struggle with Hamas and find a way to restart peace talks. REUTERS

Abbas has called for new elections in a challenge to Hamas, and Washington hopes the Palestinian public will rally around the moderate president if he can demonstrate progress towards achieving statehood.

Washington is also seeking to strengthen Abbas militarily by pouring \$86 million into helping train and equip his presidential guard.

In addition to Abbas, Rice met with Mohammad Dahlan, a strongman from the president's Fatah faction and whom Hamas officials accuse of mas-

termining efforts to bring down their government. Dahlan denies the accusations.

Hamas receives aid from Iran and other Islamist allies, and is building up its own "executive force".

Rice, on her eighth trip to the region during her two years as secretary of state, offered no details on how Washington would accelerate the peace process.

### Pressure from allies

Rice was non-committal in her pub-

lic remarks about the prospects of creating a state with temporary borders.

"I've heard how he (Abbas) sees the 'road map' and to get to that end state. So I think it's not a bad thing to listen. But ... it's also important to act and we'll look for ways to act," she told reporters.

Washington is under pressure from European and Arab allies to get more involved in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Peace talks collapsed in 2000.

Abbas told Rice that he would make one last effort to form a unity government with Hamas but that he was determined to hold new elections if those talks failed, an official who was at the meeting said.

Rice met top Israeli ministers on Saturday and will meet on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem.

The road map peace plan has not moved past the first stage because of the failure of the Israelis and the Palestinians to meet their obligations — Israel is supposed to halt settlement building in the West Bank while Palestinians must dismantle militant groups.

The second stage outlines a Palestinian state with provisional borders.

Rice said all of the road map's requirements should be fulfilled but she did not rule out jumping to the next stage to try to create new momentum.

Rice is seeking Arab help to bolster Abbas and to stabilise Iraq during a trip that will include stops in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as well as Germany and Britain.

# Darfur would need peacekeepers even after deal: EU

KHARTOUM, Jan 13 (Reuters) - Peacekeepers will be needed in Sudan's Darfur region years after any political settlement as even the government has created forces it cannot control, a senior European Union official said on Saturday.

EU special representative for Sudan, Pekka Haavisto, appealed for a ceasefire and said the rebels needed to reach a unified position before any political process could restart.

"I have a feeling there is a need for a long-term peacekeeping force even if there is a political settlement with the government," he told reporters in Khartoum.

"Even the government has created forces that it cannot control and this just indicates just how deep the problems are we have in Darfur."

Some Sudanese officials have said that with a comprehensive peace deal, peacekeepers would not be needed.

Mostly non-Arab rebels took up arms in early 2003 accusing central government of neglecting the remote region.

U.N. officials says Khartoum mobilised proxy Arab militia, known locally as Janjaweed, to quell the revolt.

Experts estimate 200,000 have been killed and 2.5 million driven from their homes in the four years of rape, killing and pillage which Washington calls genocide. Khartoum denies genocide.

The International Criminal Court is investigating suspected war crimes in the region.

Haavisto said the events in Darfur's

main town, el-Fasher, in December, where clashes between militias in the marketplace forced dozens of aid workers to be evacuated, were proof that the government had lost control of some forces.

Haavisto said he had met representatives from the Darfur rebel groups and they had signalled their agreement to restart talks and that the rebel commanders would hold a conference to unite their position.

A U.N. envoy in Sudan this week said government officials had also expressed a need for talks to begin with rebels who had not signed an African Union-mediated peace deal in May.

Only one of three rebel groups signed that deal. Many of those who rejected it formed a new alliance and

renewed hostilities with the government.

Haavisto said the government wanted to stick to the May deal, but had shown some flexibility.

"Those issues where I think that flexibility can be shown include compensation, ... safe return of refugees, a more serious programme on the disarmament of the Janjaweed," he said.

Haavisto said the issue of power-sharing would be more difficult in any new talks. And he urged the rebel leaders to come to the table with realistic aims, describing some of the rebel leadership as having their "heads in the clouds".

Many rounds of negotiations in the past two years have failed because of rebel divisions.

# Venezuela and Iran seek OPEC oil cut

By: Christian Oliver

CARACAS (Reuters) — Venezuela and Iran strengthened their growing ties on Saturday with a stream of anti-U.S. statements, various commercial agreements and a pledge to push for a cut in world oil supplies to counter plunging prices.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez blamed the United States, the archfoe of both Caracas and Tehran, for undermining the significance of the OPEC cartel to bring down oil prices, which have tumbled 15 percent this year during a mild U.S. winter.

"We agreed this afternoon to increase our coordinated efforts in OPEC and with the major oil producers outside OPEC to safeguard the price of our main product," Chavez said at a meeting in Caracas with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"Today we know there is too much oil in the market and we will support decisions taken to cut production and safeguard the oil price."

Iran is the world's fourth-biggest oil exporter, while Venezuela, according to U.S. data, has slumped to eighth place from fifth. Still, both countries are significant OPEC voices.

Ahmadinejad and Chavez, two ex-soldiers who came to power on populist platforms, have developed a close personal relationship, often hailing each other as "brother".

Chavez has backed Ahmadinejad in his battle with the international community over Iran's nuclear



Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (L) receives his Iranian counterpart Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the Miraflores Palace in Caracas January 13, 2007. REUTERS

program, which last month led to limited U.N. sanctions.

While the United States accuses Iran of seeking to build atomic weapons, Chavez has insisted that Tehran wants to use nuclear technology only to generate electricity. Chavez and Ahmadinejad did not address the issue on Saturday.

### Revolutionary reading

Chavez presented Ahmadinejad with a

Persian translation of a book on Simon Bolivar, the 19th-century Venezuelan founding father. In turn, Chavez received a book on the father of the 1979 Iranian revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"Our two revolutions are at heart the same," Chavez said, comparing Iran's overthrow of the Shah with his self-styled socialist movement, which was boosted this week by a slew of nationalizations.

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# Asian nations sign 'terror pact'

Southeast Asian leaders have signed a pact that will make it easier to extradite and try terror suspects.

Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) meeting in the Philippine town of Cebu on Saturday also set a deadline of 2015 to establish a free-trade zone that would cover one-sixth of the planet's population.

The Asean Convention on Counter-terrorism was signed by all 10 member countries at the organisation's 12th annual summit and is legally binding.

The agreement is the first regionwide anti-terrorism edict in an area that has seen some of the world's deadliest terror attacks.

Southeast Asia has seen and according to a copy of the convention the governments expressed their deep concern "over the grave danger posed by terrorism to innocent lives, infrastructure and the environment, regional and international peace".

The accord calls on nations to improve regional co-operation in order to prevent attacks, and to rapidly share intelligence and relay terror warnings.

It also urges counter-terrorism training, but stressed that no member state can undertake anti-terrorist operations in another member country.

The region was also encouraged to strengthen its capability to deal with possible chemical, biological and nuclear attacks.

**Opposition**  
While the leaders debated the proposals, hundreds of demonstrators chanted slogans and beat drums several miles away on the streets of central Cebu in protest at the convention.

They say the new regional anti-terror laws will lead to an increase in human rights violations.

They also objected to the trade liberalisation plans saying it will damage local industries, mainly fisheries.

Asean nations are keen to counter economic pressure from India and China and according to Gloria Arroyo, the Philippine president, "Asean is committed to expanding its trade area to create one of the world's greatest trading blocs".

The group also signed a commitment to create Asean's first-ever charter, aimed at turning the bloc into an EU-style entity with binding rules and regulations.

"Asean has matured into a regional organisation and is expanding its role as an integrated regional economy and a dynamic force in maintaining regional peace and stability," they said in their signed accord.

The bloc has previously acted on informal consensus and refrained from interfering in each other's international affairs, leaving it open to criticism that it is little more than a "talking shop".

Source: aljazeera.net

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**تيلي يمن TeleYemen**

## TeleYemen unveils its business services package for the year 2007.

The leading international telecommunications company, TeleYemen, announced last week, Monday December 18th, 2006, the business services package for its corporate customers in a meeting held at Movenpick hotel. The meeting reflected the company's commitment to continue offering the most advanced technology and services to its clients to respond to the telecommunications needs of the market.

Road Show, the first to be organized and many more will come in the future". Mr. Latute spoke at length to explain the company's strategy which has evolved from the infrastructure made available by the Yemen Telecom Group. He highlighted the excellent relationship existing between TeleYemen and its corporate clients by saying that "TeleYemen is the entry point for important contracts signed with TeleYemen for all services, international and national services, International Direct Dialing and Yemen Mobile services".

We have built a corporate team with sales engineers, dedicated to analyze the needs of our customers, to work on technical proposals with our technical teams in the PTC, Yemen.net, Yemen Mobile and TeleYemen, to follow up on your bills and your accounts and visit you on a regular basis.

Mr. Latute added that TeleYemen is in the process of obtaining ISO certification by the year 2007 for its quality management system.

Mr. Jean-Michel Ranchon, CMO, gave a 20 minute presentation on the corporate services, organization and 2007 projects. He revealed projects in leased lines, low speed data and high capacity digital links using the national private secured telecommunication links and pure digital telecommunications. He went on to explain that the international private leased circuits work for low speed data and high capacity digital links from 64 kbps upward using international secured telecommunications links. The corporate internet services are divided into internet dedicated line access, ADSL and WiFi, he added.

The CMO said that Y.net corporate services promote your business over the internet in Web Hosting and Domain name which facilitates communications with others around the globe. Mr. Ranchon also described the corporate services such as Bgan Inmarsat, a satellite services which provides mobile Voice, Data and Video Telecommunications from remote sites, and Vaat, a service which provides stationary voice, data and video connection where traditional means are non-existence such as rural areas and deserts. He added that Yemen Mobile services, which TeleYemen offers, enable subscribers to make calls at competitive rates between mobiles within a group and spoke about the existence of Dual handsets which allow both GSM and CDMA to exist in one handset and which facilitates the use of both types of communications and particularly useful for roaming which he said, is rather developed in the GSM networks.

TeleYemen is working as an international telecom operator with the aim of developing customized solutions and establishing long term relationships through commitment, simplicity, security and quality of the services it offers.

Mr. Michel Level, CTO, discussed the projects plan for the year 2007 and services which will facilitate the provisions of advanced telecommunication facilities such as Audio and Video conference systems. TeleYemen plans to establish a conference room equipped with such facility dedicated for corporate clients use. Mr. Level also spoke about plans to introduce Vaat services as a gateway and IP VPN. He added that necessary infrastructure will be built including routers, firewalls and servers.

The presentation concluded with a discussion on many facets of TeleYemen's operations. The management team explained aspects of existing and planned services to the guests who interacted positively with the presentations and were pleased to hear TeleYemen's future plans which would create a new Telecommunications environment that would respond to corporate needs.

At the end of the presentation, every one attending was invited to attend the Luncheon banquet which was organized on their honor.

TeleYemen welcomes its Honorable Guests to its 1<sup>st</sup> Business Services Presentation.

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Customer Service Center 153

# New Yemeni education curriculum considered inferior and backward

The destruction of the Yemeni education process is due to several factors and causes. Some problems regard the quantity or quality of the curriculum while others include premonitions of a pupil's future because there are no job opportunities and bribes determine the priority of employment.

By: Saleh Ahmed Al-Shumaily  
aljeelsaleh@yahoo.com  
For Yemen Times

In the past decade, a new curriculum replaced the old one and despite education critics saying that the old curriculum had more potential than the current one, innovations have occurred. Others praise the new curriculum, but criticize science, which is more practical than theo-

retical, because most schools don't have laboratories except those in larger cities.

The religious sector declares that important and influential subjects from the old religious curriculum were replaced with topics that predispose teachers and pupils to be open-minded toward Western cultures. For example, they say that Qur'anic verses connected with jihad were deleted.

"There are many misprinted verses of the Qur'an in the new religious curriculum," says Abdulfatah Hedrah, teacher of the Qur'an and its sciences. Other reading materials suffered the same fate. "In basic education, the stories of Omer Bin Abdulaziz in the eighth grade; Khalid bin Al-Walid in sixth grade and Waeslamma in ninth grade have been removed. The secondary education series of stories about the men around the Prophet [Mohammed] also were deleted," Islamic teacher Fadhel Al-Dallali notes.

Additionally, the fifth grade geography curriculum in basic education con-

tains information beyond students' mental abilities at that age. "The geography book is so complicated that even the teacher has some ambiguities when preparing lessons," geography teacher Adel Hassan says.

Difficult topics are framed in mathematical formats of problems dependant upon diagrams, maps and their classification. The authority's team didn't take into consideration that at such levels, most Yemeni students still are unable to read and write legible Arabic. Such diagrams and their mathematical sums seem to better belong to the quality and quantity of breeding or productions.

English educators praise innovations in the English curriculum for the Crescent English Course for Yemen, which harmonizes linguistic changes in technology, the press and transactions involving everyday life.

"Texts with colorful pictures attract students to read and understand new words. The Crescent English Course for Yemen depends on a modern communication method in the field of English language teaching," Dr. Boss explained in his book on teaching English language in Yemeni schools.

Although English textbooks from grades 1 to 6 include many contemporary and interesting, illustrated topics, teachers in many schools aren't qualified and thus, increasingly play a major role in decreasing students' abilities to do well in school.

Public opinion is that political involvement in the education process reflects a negative attitude toward education. Economics have a hand in snatching students and teachers alike from school seats onto the streets.

Certain English textbooks require changes involving difficult and complicated lessons, especially those in the fourth grade. Such curriculums involve 70 percent conversational lessons, which can be boring for both teachers and learners. Long and prosaic Art Reader topics like "The Telford Hall" create impatience – not in students, but in teachers who want to complete such texts in one class sitting.

Moving from the curriculum's internal to its outer problems, a casual observer on the street is astonished to see a fishmonger folding pieces of fish in pages torn from a chemistry book bearing a 2007 copyright, when students first receive their books a week before mid-year exams.

It's surprising to meet teachers who can't write Crescent English sentences or who write English "Arabic style" from right to left and in a clockwise direction.

Many English teachers also neglect their various tools. "My teacher seldom tells us to use workbooks and he never plays cassettes for listening lessons," one student comments.

Yemeni schoolteachers take qualifying courses that talented teachers – who know about classroom management, language games and teaching aids such as cards, wall charts and cassettes – would use to develop their students' minds.

Nevertheless, many teachers lack the "teacher's bag" that can facilitate teaching and it's a serious issue when teachers don't read references about English language teaching techniques for the classroom. Thus, all they are then are "walkie-talkies" and their students sim-



Many students depend on the old curriculum as a main source of information and knowledge.

PHOTO BY: FATIMA AL-AJEL

ply are listeners.

Although inadequate, teacher training courses are up and running in many governorates; however, some teachers return to school with "negative" appreciation because most don't practice what they trained to do, as their aim in attending such courses purely was monetary. Overall, such teachers concentrate on the curriculum's quantity rather than its quality and his or her aim is to run the curriculum according to education ministerial policy, which seems to imply one lesson per day.

"Teaching procedures in training courses are interesting and helpful, but in order to practice them, one needs lots of time. One lesson may require three classes to complete; therefore, I can't go along with the ministerial plan," Arabic teacher Naser Itran remarks.

At many schools, an observer will

find the cart before the horse, with an English teacher teaching Arabic or science. "I've forgotten much of my English because I've been teaching science in grades 1 through 4 of basic education," English teacher Yahya Gaed of Yarim admits.

In Yemen, the British Council and GTZ do their best to qualify teachers; however, they must send their own supervisors to schools to write reports about trained teachers and their actions. The Ministry of Education must include in its policies courses to qualify teachers by arranging intensive in-service training courses with the British Council and GTZ. It then needs to reward talented and experienced teachers by placing them in deserving posts.

Saleh Ahmed Al-Shumaily is an English teacher in Ibb.



"Men around the prophet" is one of the most effective materials that is deleted in the new curriculum.

PHOTO BY: FATIMA AL-AJEL

# Fighting drug addiction: Roles for the family and government

Taking drugs spoils the brain and spirit and there are a lot of programs to eliminate drug use. Chief of Taiz's Security Department and Drugs and Alcohols Combating Administration told Yemen Times about drugs and the hidden battles behind such the problem. Yemen Times spoke to Yahya Al-Haisami, the chief of Taiz security department.

By: Taiz Bureau

From your work, what are the symptoms apparent in a drug addict?

A drug addict does not have healthy thinking and he is aggressive when he does not get his needs and also after he gets it. In both cases, his reactions cannot be anticipated. Drug use is on swift increase among youth unless we exert efforts to protect them right from home, school, mosque and ending with mass media.

Is it the ease of getting drugs shapes an assisting factor for drug addicts?

This is an important point and we need laws to regulate the use of medicine that can be abused and criminalize its possession except for sick people. Being easily reachable, youth fall victims to these drugs. There exist four types of medicine that can be turned into narcotics with a strip of 30 tablets against YR 50. When we arrest people involved in resisting police and random firing, we find they are possessing drugs.

For his part, Lt. Col. Abdu Salim Al-Janadi, head of Drugs Fighting

Administration, said their resources are poor.

Tell us something about the formation of Drugs Fighting Administration and the different stages it has passed?

The Ministry of Interior officials realized the importance of enacting a drug fighting process and thus Drugs Fighting Administration was established in 2004. The administration has full independence for planning and implementation and exerting official and public efforts to minimize the extent of this new phenomenon alien to our Muslim society. Later, the administration branched to other govern-

Does this mean the administration did not exist earlier to the aforementioned date?

No. Fighting drugs before 2004 was undertaken by Criminal Investigation via a Drugs and Intoxicants Fighting Department.

What role has Drugs Fighting Administration, Taiz branch, played, especially when it is a densely populat-

ed governorate?

The Drugs Fighting Administration Taiz branch has played a noticeable role to combat the problem as evidence by the number of issues and the confiscated quantities. In January 2006, the administration grabbed the biggest quantity of drugs ever which amounts to about 106 bottles of anesthetics, the same substance used in surgery. Each bottle holds 500 ml. The total quantity was 116 bottles, but 10 bottles had been consumed before the quantity was confiscated. It was stored in a pharmacy since 15 years ago. In addition, considerable quantity of drugs and hashish was also seized. The whole quantity was confiscated and the case was referred to the prosecution.

How did your administration manage to seize this quantity of anesthetics?

What makes us arrest those people is our knowledge that this substance is not used any longer in surgical operations as it was replaced by another substance. Thus, anesthetics have been abused for other ends, particularly with strict measures imposed by the Ministry of Health upon the use of this substance. We were informed that a group of youth is promoting a quantity of anesthetics to hospitals and pharmacies, an act prohibited now. After some investigation we managed to grab the involved people.

Would you please tell the readers something about medicine whose possession, selling and taking should be made only with a legal justification?

Yes, there are certain types of narcotic medicine prescribed for psychological and neurological patients.

What effects narcotic medicine has upon people who need not it?

Taking medicine would effect non-patients as they make sudden change and create imbalanced reaction in their behaviors. Narcotics addiction can lead people, especially youth, to commit criminal acts.

As learned, these narcotic tablets were sold in pharmacies with no restrictions; what is new in this respect?

This is true. We arrested some non-



There have been some observable and cooperative efforts between citizens and the governorate to fight the drug problem.

patient addicts who created problems for others and sent them to the prosecution. However, the prosecution set those addicts free as the medicine is not ranked among prohibited items. The increase of crimes committed under the effect of such narcotics, prompted Interior Minister Gen. Rashad Al-Alimi, to include them among drugs and prohibited substances.

What are the parties that help you perform your task?

Frankly, all cooperate with us, including citizens, who inform us about many drugs and narcotic crimes. Drugs crimes are different from other criminal crimes and they are ranked internationally as organized crimes which require top secrecy. When we receive information, we make investigations to make sure as some inform out of malice or personal ends. We don't arrest anyone only when red-handed. A youth starts taking these narcotics out of venting his feelings and then gets addicted.

Along with public effort there are offi-

cial efforts as for Taiz Health Bureau which directed the pharmacies to sell medicines just with a medical prescription signed and sealed by doctors. Further, the paper will be taken from the patient in order not to be used once again. There is also the role of prosecutions.

What are steps taken after arresting people involved in promoting, selling or taking narcotics?

With people involved in selling and exporting, importing and taking narcotics and drugs, we grab the quantities in their possession and then investigate and later we refer them to the concerned prosecutions to be referred to courts.

Are there health risks for addicts?

Yes, there are risks for the addicts' health as narcotics affect them physically, spiritually and mentally. Further, they will be subject to weakness and a lack of desire to work which leads to future social problems and family disintegration, ingratitude and an escape from reality.

Do you give special attention to awareness on drugs and narcotic risks through your attempt to rid of them?

Yes, we telecast messages about risks of drugs and narcotics through official mass media. Further, we make awareness programs through education and schools administrations together with the role played by endowments through preachers.

Are there any difficulties you face in your try to get desired goals?

In comparison to the weighty tasks laid upon our shoulders in tensely populated governorates like Taiz, the resources are poor. Drugs are planted, prepared, smuggled, stored and distributed and it is an organized crime whose masters move at night seizing the opportunity to spread their toxics and crimes across the globe. Our country, as other parts of the world, is targeted by this hazardous evil. It has afflicted a small portion of our youth; however, the majority of youth are characterized by the spirit of handwork and religion.



Different kinds of drugs and alcohol collected for burning them.



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# Executive Director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa: Yemen needs to maintain full control over its territories

Interviewed by Raidan Al-Saqaf, [alsaqaf@gmail.com](mailto:alsaqaf@gmail.com)

## What's the motivation for and the objectives of your visit to Yemen?

First and foremost, I'd like to pay tribute to the Yemeni government for their important efforts to stabilize the economy, which isn't my area, but the general security situation in the country. Yemen is being affected by developments taking place abroad and we intend to help Yemen resist the impact these events and trends have upon it, such as terrorism, trafficking, narcotics, etc., as well as help Yemen maintain its stability and security.

## Describe the nature of the relationship and areas of cooperation between the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime and the Yemeni government and any future plans for cooperation.

So far, our office hasn't been active in Yemen, but we have offices in Cairo, which provide operational support to many Arab countries. Future plans are maturing, including opening two sub-regional offices in order to intensify our support to Arab nations. One office will be in Libya, with a \$12-15 million endowment to operate in North Africa. The second will be in Abu Dhabi and we're hoping for a \$15-20 million endowment to operate in that region.

Of course, as you know, GCC nations are pretty well off, but they need technical advisory services and can afford to pay anything they must to protect their security. I've asked that the Abu Dhabi regional office extend its operations to Yemen.

Although Yemen isn't a rich country, it requires assistance because, as I mentioned earlier, it's on the receiving end of a lot of international negative trends, be it trafficking, insecurity, terrorism, etc.

## After meeting with several Yemeni officials, including Ministry of Interior staff, what are your perceptions about Yemen's security situation?

My feeling is that security remains a very big concern for authorities. It's also a major threat because Yemen's 2,500 kilometers of coastline and its lengthy unprotected land border with Saudi Arabia are very exposed.

In the past, say 500 years ago, Yemen was part of trade from the Far East into the Mediterranean and Africa because it was a prime location along the trade route. Today, Yemen still is a prime location for all trends, whether positive or negative. So, because of its exposure, openness and vulnerabilities, Yemen has suffered.

We know some problems were domestic, such as the Civil War, while others were imported, such as attacks by Al-Qaeda, insurgents and militants. Since the major terrorist attacks in 2001 and 2002, the situation has stabilized – even more so since 2004.

I can see the progress in stabilization, for example, in the willingness of tourists to visit and the willingness of foreign investors to come as an indicator of stability because investors and tourists tend to run if there are problems. We'd like to help Yemen and indeed this has happened since 2004, but we'd now like to help Yemen even more in this regard.

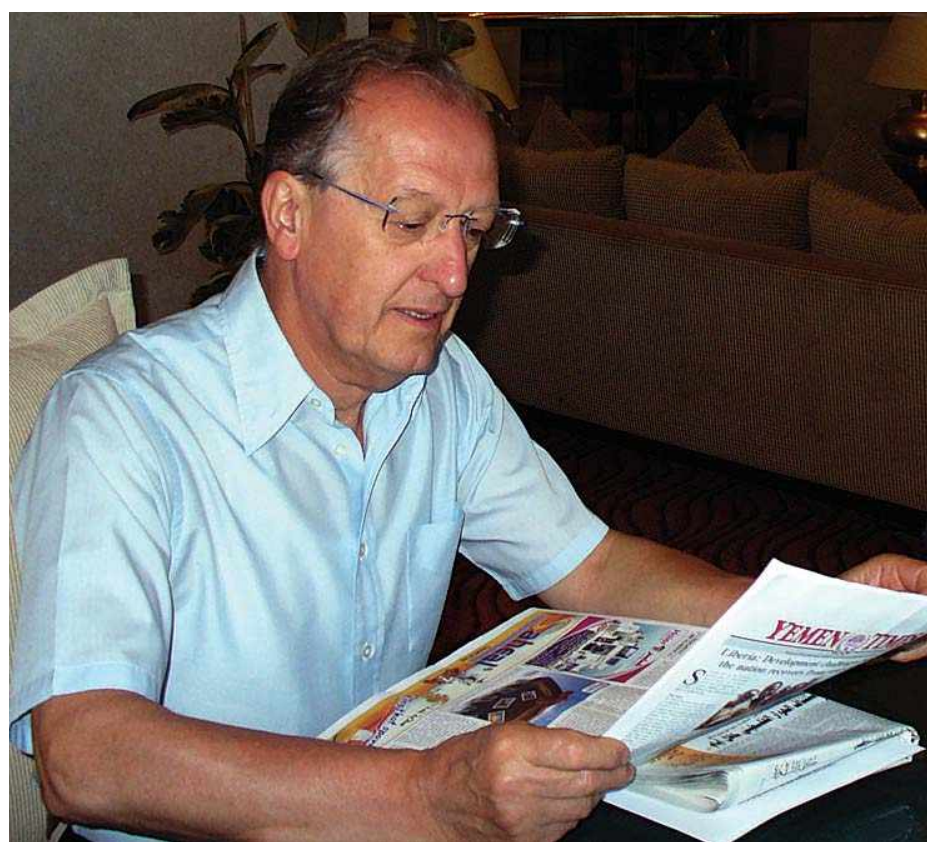
## Can you tell us about your sources of information on Yemen?

Actually, for the time being, we don't have that many sources of information because we don't have any ground presence in Yemen and we don't deal much with Non-Governmental Organizations. I've met with lots of media representatives and I spoke to many individuals in various parts of Yemen, including Aden, the harbor and beyond, but for the time being, we don't yet have strong sources of information about Yemen.

However, the other source of information we have is the network of other U.N. agencies and the U.N. country team, which I met here in Sana'a a few days ago, and all of the representatives of U.N. bodies, who gave me a very comprehensive briefing on the situation – at times consistent with what the government is saying and at times perhaps not so consistent with what the government is saying, but it's nice to diversify.

## In your opinion, how qualified are Yemen's security agencies in their current abilities to combat organized crime, should such a phenomenon arise?

They need assistance to recognize Yemen's vulnerabilities and the risk from imported problems. They require training, equipment and IT in order to develop databanks and matching information to see when criminals move from one governorate to another and so forth.



Costa: "We have an international convention against corruption. Yemen isn't a part of it..."

I think we're at the beginning of a process. The drug control agency is relatively new, but it's made major progress. The Coast Guard also is very new with much progress to be made. The anti-money laundering body also is new. So in a sense, the government and the nation has realized that it needs all of these instruments and bodies in place to control criminal trends, but they're very new and inexperienced and therefore, they need assistance.

## That's from a control perspective, but what about the criminals themselves, considering the easy access to weapons, the relative unsophistication of police forces and the economic hardships many face? Drawing on your experiences in other countries, do such factors constitute a recipe for the emergence of organized crime in Yemen?

At the moment, I don't see organized crime networks being born here in Yemen. It may be a cultural issue because I found Yemenis to be a peace-loving society, which doesn't even have a history of violence. By the international standards for crime, there isn't much crime being committed in the country itself, even in Yemeni cities.

There are cities in the world – it's needless to mention in Africa and Latin America – that are off-limits where I can't go and even the police can't go. Such cities also exist in the United States, by the way. You don't have that here, so I don't see Yemen as being a source for organized crime.

But certainly because of its nature and geographic location at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen always has been a central place for trade, not only because of the overland Silk Road, but also the spice trade sea routes.

Yemen is an obvious midpoint for trade, which we call a transit or transshipment point, and that's where we see its vulnerabilities, coupled with what we said earlier about its inexperienced law enforcement agencies.

You see, criminals look for weak points to enter and if Yemen is weak, then they enter Yemen. If Somalia and the neighboring Horn of Africa are weak, then they enter Somalia. If Afghanistan is weak, then they enter Afghanistan.

I don't see an emergence of organized crime, but I could see a growing presence of foreign organized crime elements if the government doesn't continue its efforts; therefore, we need the Yemeni government to continue its efforts.

## Recurring escapes from Yemeni jails has created a negative perception about the security agencies' infrastructure. What help can your office, the U.N. and the international community offer in this regard?

Well, I visited the central prison, Noman Al-Masoudi was with me, and I was impressed – nice people. Obviously, corruption is a problem everywhere in the world. Some people just walk out the main gate and we need to stop that. We have a strong program we used in Afghanistan, so we want to have that here as well.

## Yemen's strategic location and sociopolitical geography makes it a potential safe haven for international terrorists, thereby jeopardizing regional and international security. How do you

## evaluate the counterterrorism efforts of Yemeni authorities?

As they say in English, the proof is in the pudding. If you like the pudding, it means the recipe is good. There was a time when there was a problem of a very major terrorist presence in Yemen and attacks on land and at sea. During the past four or five years, this presence has ended and I hope it'll remain so because it means that the government is being taken seriously.

Now, I don't want to get into the ideology of terrorism about who's right or wrong, but certainly any nation experiencing terrorist attacks is blacklisted – no tourists, no foreign investment and no trade – so the country at large suffers greatly. This means that anti-terrorism efforts are here, recognized and able to bring about some results, so the recipe is good, but we need more.

**"The Coast Guard is very new and there's almost no control over the Yemeni waters."**

We visited the free trade zone in Aden harbor, but there were only 18 shipping lines when there should be 150. The potential is there, so I inquired about why shipping companies don't go to Aden. I asked some ambassadors here and they said it's because of insurance costs. With the risk of an attack, insurance premiums go through the roof and shipping lines can't afford it; therefore, they forget about Aden and Yemen.

In order to keep insurance costs against terrorism low for shipping lines to stop here, Yemen must fight terrorism even more effectively. That's what we'd like to begin with shortly in a few months, to be able to place a counterterrorism and terrorism prevention official from our office here in order to assist Yemeni authorities.

## Bearing in mind the failed attempts to legislate an anti-arms possession law, which the Yemeni Parliament blocked, in your view, how effective is the current legal framework in combating crime and what sort of reforms might be needed?

It's inadequate and I'll tell you why. I've been raising this same point with the authorities. The crimes we deal with as the U.N. aren't petty crimes like robbery or even rape and murder because those are under national jurisdiction. We deal with organized crime like terrorism, counterfeiting, organized money laundering, etc.

In order to foster internationally joint work in this area, the U.N. and numerous member states have agreed on five major international agreements: a convention against organized crime, a convention against corruption, a protocol against trafficking humans, a protocol against arms trafficking and a protocol against smuggling migrants.

These are the major international agreements and they've entered into force. Approximately 100 countries already have ratified the convention against organized crime and 80 have ratified the convention against corruption.

However, Yemen didn't sign or ratify any of these five agreements, so I've been telling your government, "Come on," regarding signing the conventions.

The interesting thing about your government is that it isn't against the agreements. It's a good and serious government, but they say it can wait until tomorrow and then the next day and then going through Parliament, etc. So, that's the obstacle, although we'd like to help your government.

## Yemen's security problems include corruption, terrorism, trafficking humans, refugees, piracy in the Gulf of Aden, arms trade and smuggling goods, among others. What should the Yemeni government's priorities be?

First and foremost, ratify the international agreements. Second, establish domestic legislation in Parliament to deal with all of these areas. Regarding corruption, there's a new agency here which we met. There's another new agency regarding money laundering and trafficking from abroad, there's the Coast Guard which we met, etc.

In my view, controlling the territory is the foremost priority. We traveled to Marib governorate yesterday under heavy escort. We were told that by U.N. standards, that's an area of Yemen that's security degree two. Degree one means everything's OK, whereas two means one can travel only with an escort. This means that the Yemeni government doesn't have full control of the territory; otherwise, you wouldn't need an escort.

And the same is at sea, as the Coast Guard is very new and there's almost no control over the Yemeni waters. So, first and foremost – if we can get the money – I'd like to assist Yemen to strengthen its border control and strengthen control over all territories. I understand that there are tribal presences and there are contrasts between the tribes, but Yemen is now united and it's time to bond together and look ahead to the nation's development.

## Although qat is said to be a narcotic drug and is banned in many countries, it constitutes 10 percent of Yemeni agricultural production and its use is widespread. What's your office's stance regarding qat?

This is a tricky question. Qat isn't a narcotic drug. Let me put it this way, I'm in charge of drugs in the world for the U.N., so I'm basing my work on conventions and international agreements. There are three such agreements – 1961, 1971 and 1988, which define what is a drug, which commodities are drugs, how to control and/or correct their use, cultivation, production, trade of drugs, etc. Qat isn't among them.

From my vantage point, there's nothing I can do, but when I met with U.N. officials like the World Food program, the U.N. Agricultural Development and the World Bank, among other bodies, they were very concerned about qat due to its health consequences, especially for young bodies.

I've heard that whenever there's a genuine effort to provide food to youngsters going to school, they take the food home

and share it with their family. There's evidence that qat chewing and the liquids and juices from chewing deflate the body's proteins. So, if we spend so much money and search worldwide for money to provide food for people who then chew qat, which fights against that food, then that's a problem.

Then there's the problem of productivity. Some chew while working. For example, my driver yesterday had to chew qat in order to drive the car or do something else. However, many others just sit around chewing qat for up to six or seven hours. I'd like them to work! So, there's the productivity loss.

Then there's this agricultural problem. I'm told that cultivating qat consumes up to one-third of all water and now there's very little water in Yemen. We traveled to Kawkaban and I saw the qat fields there. If Yemen was producing coffee and selling it abroad, it would be far better for the country than producing leaves that are chewed leisurely.

So, there are social, environmental and economic problems, but not necessarily a narcotic problem. It's less my business than it is the business of other U.N. institutions.

## It's said that corruption is the most sophisticated phenomenon of organized crime in Yemen, with hands reaching into government circles. What will it take to combat this sort of organized crime?

Corruption is a big problem everywhere. It's a problem because money – oil money – that should be used for the country and spent on roads and schools is taken away by some corrupt official. Corruption is also serious not only because money is stolen, but because of its consequences.

For example, when an official turns his head and allows a cargo to go ahead with weapons, drugs or people inside, it does a lot of additional damage. It could be terrorism or it could be something else. So, corruption is serious because of the damage it does, as well as the consequences in which it results.

We have an international convention against corruption. Yemen isn't a part of it, but I'd like Yemen to be a part of it. A new anti-corruption body or authority is in the establishment process and I hope it'll be strong enough. We specialize in assisting this type of authority by making it strong and honest with hi-tech technology to monitor financial transactions and check what officials do.

The convention is divided into four parts and has a very important preventative set of articles dealing with officials disclosing what they receive, their salary and disclosing what they own to determine why they drive a Mercedes when they only make a \$200 income. You know there's something wrong there. In the tender process, when there's a road to be built, it shouldn't go to the one who has a lot of money to grease his way. This is prevention.

We also have criminalization, so we need precise articles in the penal code dealing with embezzlement, graft, abuse of power, illicit appropriation of state assets, etc. We want to see this legislation. Then we have international agreements because we need to extradite individuals. There are people from Yemen who go somewhere else and put their money there, so there are international agreements to bring such individuals back with mutual international legal assistance.

The last recovery of assets because there's money abroad, perhaps not so much from Yemen, but from countries like Nigeria. We were told that there are billions of dollars which ought to be brought back to build roads; however, Yemen is passive regarding this convention, so I invite it to do something and we'll help it succeed.

## Did meet with any civil society representatives during your visit? What role can and should civil society and NGOs play in combating organized crime in Yemen?

No, I didn't meet with any civil society representatives during this short period, as I spoke mainly with the government, the media and the U.N. However, civil society's role is important everywhere in all areas, especially drug prevention and stimulating the government.

NGOs are society's eyes and ears – they're the whistleblowers. If there's something wrong, they report it, informing us and the government. We have a great expectation that civil society can play an important role, especially helping women to become more active in politics and the government.

## You traveled to several parts of the country. What can you tell us about your experience as a tourist in Yemen?

I'd like many more tourists to come. I'm Italian and many Italians visit Yemen, so I invite many more to come. Of course, Yemen requires security and the hotel structure is OK because there were good hotels in everywhere we visited. There are also spectacular restaurants with great food and they're not expensive.

The conditions are there, but people don't hear about Yemen, so Yemen must sell itself more abroad in terms of publicity and media because it has a lot to offer. This is a historic place because much of humanity was developed here, including trade, commerce and culture. The other day, we visited ruins that were 5,000 years old – not many countries can claim the same and represent such a proud history! This is a proud society, proud of what it has done during the past five millenniums and even longer.

I myself would like to become a promoter for tourism in Yemen. I'm planning to return on my own, not sponsored by the Yemeni government, and bring my family to show then what humanity did in this part of the world so long ago.

## I'm glad to see that Yemen has made a new friend in you.

Oh yes. I must add that I didn't know much about Yemen before coming here, but it's certainly a sensational nation that has protected its treasures quiet well. The Old City of Sana'a is still vibrant compared to old cities in other parts of the world, which have been destroyed and rebuilt.

But here you have kilometers of buildings that are well-kept as they were 400 or 500 years ago and this is amazing. The sea in the front and the desert behind have kept this cocoon protected, which is quite amazing.

Antonio Maria Costa has previously worked with the United Nations and the European Commission in several posts, including senior economist and Under-Secretary-General at OECD and the European Commission's Director-General for Economics and Finance.

**"Yemen is a sensational country with protected treasures."**

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**Words of Wisdom**



The rate of population growth is an extremely vital factor in the ability of the country to successfully develop. It is imperative that the government, Non government organizations, the media, educationists, and intellectuals join hands to make it clear to families that a large number of children is a burden which neither the parents nor the society can handle

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

**Where will the Arab battle head? (Part 2)**

In the previous article I refuted the misleading idea claiming that what is going on in Iraq is a civil war and I argued that it has always been a national war of liberation. Promoting that black rumor was to divert the attention from the battle of Iraq to that of Lebanon and Palestine where decision in both cannot be achieved. By virtue of this media delusion and the purposeful eruption of the Lebanon on one hand and the American and Iranian decision on the second hand, many people changed their attention to Lebanon and began to legitimately think the resistance in Lebanon is the hope, rather than in Iraq. Despite all our appreciation and support for the Lebanese resistance the objective affirms that decision of the Arab nation's central issue, which is the issue of the conflict with Zionism on Palestine and the war of Iraq that branched from it, will be decided in the arena of the central conflict in Iraq.



By: Dr. Salah Al-Mukhtar

than restoration of Shabaa farms. Its secretary general said frankly after the aggression on Lebanon that his party did not mention that it wants to liberate Palestine from the front of Lebanon. So, the objective circumstances dictate on the fronts of Lebanon and Palestine to work for humble goals that do not represent ambitions of the Arabs and their legitimate rights to Palestine, the original goal of Fatah and Hamas which is the liberation of Palestine from the sea to the river. The moderate goals are a dwarfed state and the restoration of the Shabaa farms in Lebanon. What is the change that the regaining of Shabaa Farms and the establishment of a Palestinian State would create?

Taking into consideration the Iraqi resistance we will reach radically different results. The conflict going on in Iraq is between America, the essential power constituting the incubator for Israel and the source of its strength. America is the protecting shield and basic guarantee to change any defeat of Israel before the Arabs, whether partial as the crossing of the Suez Canal in 1973 war or total, as the Arabs want. It is to change all that into Israeli victory by supplying it with all that enables it to change its retreat or defeat. In 1973, Syria liberated the Golan Heights and the Egyptian army crossed the Suez Canal and thus Israel was facing real defeat and it gave its orders for its nuclear power to be ready for use. But the American air bridge saved Israel and enabled it to change the preliminary defeat to a victory by reoccupation of the Golan and surrounding the Egyptian army in Dafirswar. So defeating Israel militarily is not possible with the existence of the origin of Israel's existence, America and the west. All the battles with Israel, however important and dangerous, are battles with the snake tail rather than its head, which lies in Washington. Hence comes the strategic value of the liberation of Iraq. What happens in Iraq is that the head of the Israeli might and its source has fallen into the trap of Iraq and has been led to the verified defeat we can witness now. When America is defeated in Iraq it will in the first place reflect on Israel. This change means that the battles of Lebanon and Palestine are happening in the environment of the fait accompli and according to its laws. As for the battles of Iraq they take place in a hostile environment to the fait accompli and are destroying it to build a new reality aimed at the liberation of Palestine despite America and whoever supports it. These battles pave the road to the inevitable liberation of entire Palestine. By inflicting a defeat on America in Iraq, the resisting Iraq is creating a regional and world reality entirely different from the present one and its essential characteristic is the Arabs' renaissance and their regaining of all their rights peacefully or by war.

Thinking with mind rather than with the heart permits man to deal with Arab reality according to objective facts not to the influence of the Western-Zionist-Iranian media. The first fact is that the battle of decision, worldly and at the Arab level is presently going on in Iraq rather than in Palestine and Lebanon or Sudan. Upon this fact there entails a very important matter which is the strategic and tactical criteria of wrong and right in the extent of being close or far from the Iraqi resistance. Since this is the fundamental factor deciding the course of strategic development, the strategic necessities dictate the harmony with the Iraqi resistance and cooperating with it by the Lebanese and the Palestinian resistance movements and to recognize it as the mother of all Arab resistances.

**SILVER LINING**

**When cabinet change makes sense?**

Last week's rumors of a cabinet change spread like a fire in a wind, particularly after the publication of the ruling party's news website published a news brief on the topic. Some sources in the ruling party confirmed the potential cabinet change while others denied that immediately.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

I believe the change has become a significant demand for the donors that would like to see a strong and efficient government that is able to move ahead with required reforms and changes. The donors who committed themselves to pay over \$4 billion towards development projects for five years argue that there must be a competent cabinet for their plans of boosting Yemen's economy to succeed. This desire is completely true because genuine change needs a strong and honest government, but it is not the government change that is the heart of the matter as much as it is the change of the mechanism in which the government handles things.

But what is most important in the change or reshuffle of the government? Is it the prime minister or the ministers? I understand that in some countries where governments have genuine power change it makes sense and becomes successful. In our case it is neither the prime minister nor the ministers that are powerful enough to lead change without the consent of the first man in the country.

We know that some of these ministers go months without communicating with the president while the big guys who run the country from behind curtains are more powerful than the ministers who receive orders from these influential people. Some ministers even exercise lip service to these guys just to ensure their stay in their portfolio.

In other words, a change of the prime minister or the ministers will not be fruitful as long as there is no strong political will to bring about any genuine and drastic change.

I know some good ministers have been successful in moving things forward in their ministries, but their power to introduce real changes remains limited due to the corrupt cronies at the decision-making core. These ministers who are willing to make a difference against the will of the influential cronies face hard times and by the end of the day tend to bow to the pressure as they realize the extent of the influence on the president and his decisions.

We remember after the reshuffle of Abdulqader Bajammal's cabinet the president gave a strong speech, warning these influential people of exploiting their positions to exercise pressure on the government officials. But since then none of these people have been held accountable.

It has become a norm that leading positions are given to some people as a reward and a source of enrichment. The ministers and other top officials know that if they abuse their power for self-enrichment and other forms of corruption, they will not be held accountable. The most severe punishment for them will be a seat in the Shoura council.

By and large, it is a strong political will and a direct support from the president himself that is mostly needed; it is accountability and transparency that would lead to a genuine change and not a replacement by that person. Ministers and any other government officials will do their job efficiently, if they are independent in their decisions, are held accountable for their actions.

Mohammed Al-Qadhi (mhalqadhi@hotmail.com) is a Yemeni journalist and columnist.

**OUR OPINION**

**Rearranging the pawns**

Anyone who plays chess, knows that every piece counts, yet the pawns are usually sacrificed for the sake of strategies and clearing the path for other more significant pieces, king, queen, rooks, bishops and knights.

Our government, however, does not know how to play chess, or if it does, it does not have any strategy. Because all it is doing is reshuffling the pawns and swaying the other pieces back and forth.

I am talking about the alleged cabinet restructuring. Any change is welcomed, except a change of the kind the Yemeni government usually makes for its restructure. In fact, even predictions from outside the political arena have learned the ABC's of cabinet shuffling and the new names suggested for a new government (although denied by 26 September, the official newspaper) were mostly of those who already are in the government.

The previous changes except for very few names displayed a bizarre logic behind the assignments. People whose background had nothing to do with their new posts were appointed for personal reasons. And when they fail in their missions, the fault is blamed on the "system" which does not give them any authority to actually play their roles.

This desperate situation our government is living in today makes hope for actual reform sink even deeper. I know of a minister who could not stand the situation and quit and left the country. Some of my successful friends who studied abroad and who are working abroad have given up completely on the ruling system and decided to pursue their professional development abroad. The number of qualified youth leaving the country is increasing massively - mainly because they don't see themselves playing a role in the future of this country. The monopoly in decision-making positions and the continuous rearranging of the government pawns leaves little hope for the younger generation.

The tragedy is that no donor conference, future prospective of joining the GCC and the WTO or any international pressure seems to make a difference in the reality of this country. If this irresponsible manipulation of the country's fate continues, a time will come when the government really does not have an option but to reshuffle its existing pawns because all the other pieces have already left the country.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf  
Editor-in-Chief

**Yemen role with Somalia**

Yemen's concern and interest in the stability of the situation in Somalia has many considerations although this stability is imposed by factors of geographic relations of historical connection and necessities of keeping regional security and stability. Yemen's interest in Somalia's stability is also because Yemen is the first country affected by Somalia's instability through the waves of migrants and refugees who flood towards it after they had been forced to flee their country by civil wars. This influx of migrants and refugees entails economic, social and security burdens and

complications. In addition, there are its reflections that affect Yemen with what happens in Somalia directly or indirectly.

Against this connection that we remind with Yemen political leadership, under President Ali Abdullah Saleh, has adopted a pursuit towards Somalia, which is drowned in a quagmire of violence, disturbance and internal conflicts for 16 years.

The features of this responsibility have appeared in the efforts continuously exerted by Yemeni diplomacy for the restoration of security and stability to the territories of Somalia and the establishment of accord and reconciliation among the factions and conflicting parties. Those efforts were not interrupted throughout the years.

Any follow-up of that strategy that Yemen has been pursuing and committing to in its dealing with the situation in Somalia to prevent expansion of the fire circle in that country, it must not be overlooked that the Yemeni role focused on encouraging Somali parties to engage into dialogue to tackle their disputes especially after other options had failed to extinguish the raging fire.

Here is Yemen confirming and emphasizing this option by urging all the Somali parties to return to dialogue table out of its conviction that any agreement in order to achieve success it must be founded on a ground of accord and comprehensive reconciliation among the Somali factions. This Yemeni vision is at present received with support by the international community, mainly the United States,

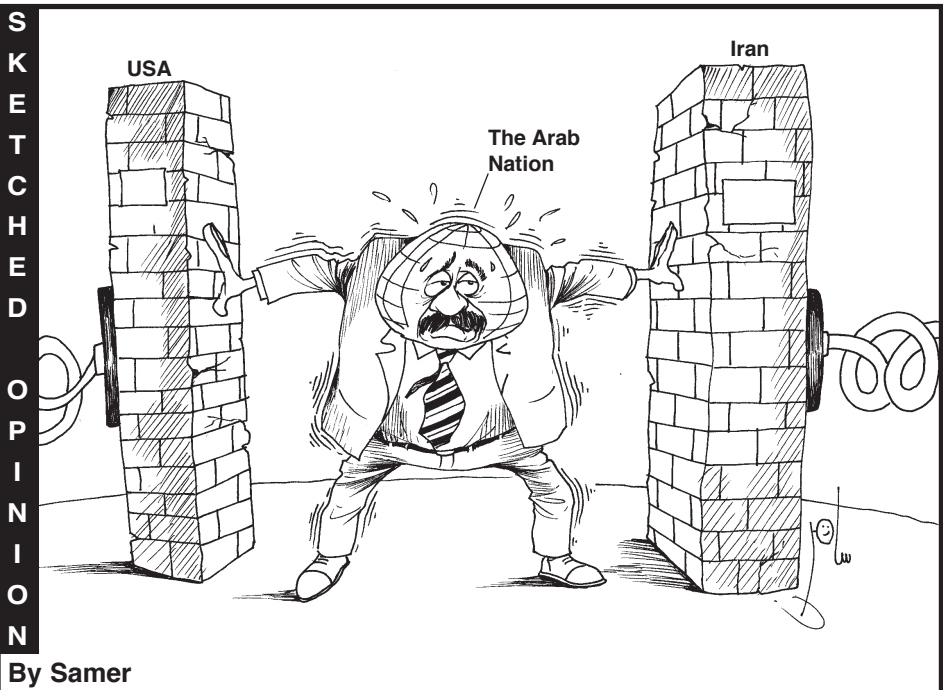
which was frankly expressed by the U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs in the wake her meeting with President Saleh in Aden this month. She affirmed the support of Washington for the dialogue between all Somali parties including the Islamic Courts Union after she found out that the Yemeni proposition contains a reasonable endeavor guaranteeing the salvaging Somalia from the impasse it is suffering and to transfer it to climates of security and stability.

With crystallization of such convictions it is important that the international community speed up its material and political support necessary for the Somali people in the way enabling them to restore building their state establishments and surmounting their pains and wounds and also to turn the chapter of the past and to advance towards the future with the spirit of accord and national reconciliation and unity.

If this will is available the brethren in Somalia can deliver their country from the whirlwind of fratricide and conflict and save it from the fever of seditions, chaos and disputes that deepened its silent and continuous wars and made the distance between it and any attempt to reconstruct a new state of Somalia.

It requires that all concede for the interest of their country and its stability on the way leading to consolidation of national peace in Somalia. It will also lead to salvaging what remains before it becomes impossible.

Editorial of Al-Thawra newspaper on Jan. 7.



By Samer

**Letters to the Editor**

**Students with special needs**  
I read the article "Students with special needs lag behind" and the article mentioned a family with 5 disabled children. Could it be an example of the tradition of in-breeding (marrying cousins), which is common somewhere in the world?

In such areas inherited diseases are much more common than in other populations because the chance of expression of dangerous genes is so elevated.

The best way to reduce inherited diseases is to try not marrying in the near family.

Dr. Lennart Aberg, Kalmar, Sweden  
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I can tell you about Adeni people and how friendly they are. We met a very wonderful taxi driver there. He was Adeni and Aden was him. "I'm madly in love with Aden," he said. In that moment I knew how beautiful this country is. I loved Aden and still love Aden. If Aden is this way it is because of the British occupation. I tell them good job. It's a lovely place to experience life all over again.

For all the people that have not visited Aden, go now! It's the best time to do that! And try to ask for A'ala (the taxi driver) you will see Aden through him.

Afrah Nasser  
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**A trip to Aden**  
What can I say about my trip to Aden in this Eid? It's a must-visit place in Yemen. Especially, in this time of the year the weather in Aden is absolutely beautiful. Just for the record Adeni people have the most beautiful soul. I could not get enough of Aden. I really wish I were Adeni.

I found out a lot of things about this lovely part of Yemen. They have a different culture from the Sana'ani's. They don't stare! They don't STARE! I could not believe it! There are Yemeni people that have this kind of politeness. My ultimate dream was to put some light make-up on my face and walk down the street without covering my face. I did that in Aden and nobody tried to bother me at all. Finally, my dream came true.

Adel Mohammed Qadaha  
adel75q@yahoo.com  
Aligarh - India

**A tribute to Yemen Times**  
Needless to say that your leading newspaper has been able to occupy a significant place in the world of media press. The way it covers news and events at the local level as well as international level is particularly impressive. For immigrant birds, Yemen Times is as essential as water and food. Genuineness, reliability, honesty and professionalism are among the distinctive features that make Yemen Times deserve to top the list of the Yemeni newspapers. We, the Yemeni intellectuals, are really proud of having such a free, independent, and non-compromising institution. I wish Yemen Times and its professional staff all success and prosperity.

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# Yemen Press Review

By: Mohammed Khidhr

## الطريق

Attariq weekly, 9 Jan. 2007.

### Main headlines

- News on Saudi mediation between Yemen and Kuwait by King Abdullah to contain dispute between Sana'a and Kuwait
- In a comment on refusal of the release of Basma al-Zaghiur, director of the central prison attributes the refusal to prosecution
- Saudi company willing to invest in Hajjah
- A study on fish projects to be resented to Investment Opportunities Conference
- To discuss post-London donor conference, the British state minister for foreign affairs arrives in Sana'a

Writer Omar Saeed Ba-Albahiuth says in his article the phenomena of condemning the execution of the ousted Iraqi president Saddam Hussein has come rather late, whether in Iraq, the theatre of events and killings under the name of positive chaos, or in other Arab countries. It was supposed that stand should have been taken immediately after the court had issued the death sentence.

We could not call it a simultaneous action serving the freedom of expression as much as what can be explained as behind it there are narrow sectarian and partisan greed of participating in sharing the pie, maybe the American administration helps in instigating it and pushes it after the absence of the ghost of Saddam dominating the conscience if the Iraqi politics even after toppling him and the Baathist regime.

It is the man who had arrived in power in an American train and we wonder what will be the fate of those attained power on board of an American T 52 plane?

There might be some ambiguity or premeditated intention by those who sped up the implementation of the death sentence, who have offered their service to Iran. Iran announced its joy in person of its president in the revenge from Saddam, here is now the Iraqi government finding itself in an impasse, especially at the moment of execution. Executioners chanted slogans for Muqtada al-Sadr and al-Mahdi army instead of chanting for justice, the republic and democracy and unity. In all events the execution was a deformation of the image of the new democratic regime in Iraq.

## البشاق

Al-Mithaq weekly, organ if the General People's Congress (GPC) 8 Jan. 2007.

### Main headlines

- Renewing welcome of the Gulf investments and confirming his personal care, President Saleh: A mechanist for using resources characterized by efficiency and speed
- Restructuring the Investment and Free Zones authorities
- In the government's agenda this year, New measures for the improvement of investment environment
- Belgium praises Yemen efforts for alleviation of Somali refugees

In his editorial writer Iskandar al-

Asbahi says it is the nature of public opinion to expect quickly the achievement of promises included in the president's election platform. The public opinion wants to see an accomplishment on the ground. This point was one of the remarks that President Ali Abdullah Saleh mentioned in his press conference he held in the wake of the conclusion of the London donor conference last November when he said "The people are waiting for the promises we made during the elections."

In the context of achieving that the last three months have witnessed serious steps have been taken. The direct results of those steps may not appear in reality at present but they are important in the direction of actual implementation of the platform and emergence of tangible results on the ground is what the public opinion quickly wants.

One of the prominent of those steps could be the approval of the 5-year plan for development whose investment program in it includes vital projects the implementation which will have great impact on the comprehensive national development. The good preparation for the donor conference has produced its good results of the conference.

The cabinet prepared an executive group of the election platform of the president. It included measures pertaining to legal, administrative, economic and judicial reforms as well as enhancement of security and stability and those related to the system of infrastructure, public services and human development.

In addition to that is the system guaranteeing rights and freedoms and cultural development since investment represents a suitable environment for the achievement of all that, the govern-

ment has finalized an executive group of the policies and measures that it should carry out during this year to improve the investment environment? Connected to the environment of investment. Are the economic and institutional reforms as well as development of infrastructures.

All of these require much effort and speed in achievement and also demand a new rhythm of performance guaranteeing availability of different institutions of the state in the accomplishment and coordination of efforts.

What increases satisfaction of the public opinion is the personal supervision of the president of the republic on the file of investment. This will lead to deep and quick reforms included in the executive plan for the improvement of investment climate. This will have active and tangible impact on the new Yemeni life.

## الصحوة

Al-Sahwa weekly, 11 Jan. 2007.

### Main headlines

- Media leaks on formation of a new government
- Islah's 4th general conference committee approves necessary measures fro the conference success
- Al-Attiyah affirmed postponement of holding investment conference for its coincidence with other activities and for providing more opportunities
- Sheikh al-Ahmar calls on Palestinian factions to resort to reason arbitration
- Politicians: The way of executing

Saddam a big insult to the Arabs and Muslims

Writer Zaid al-Shami says in an article the Palestinian people have given the greatest examples of sacrifice and tolerance and have stood fast like mountains in the face of occupation. Thus they deserve to be the example to be followed by those clinging to their rights and those defending their freedoms. That has also changed into an achievement as a result of unity of the Palestinian rank and all Palestinian resistance organization direction to facing the usurper enemy.

The regrettable thing is that matters did not continue as it is wanted. Resistance to the Palestinian government led by Hamas escalated to be in harmony with the American and Israeli stands against it, especially under the Arab humiliation that tightened the grip on the Palestinian people

We hope that the brothers in Fatah and in Hamas that they give priority to the general interest to the private ones. They should not allow whosoever to drag them to a domestic sedition that will destroy the accomplishment of resistance and to push them back to the zero point.

## لهبط

Al-Wasat weekly 10 Jan. 2007.

### Main headlines

- Rumor of cabinet reshuffle paralyzes ministries
- The Houthis engage with Saudi troops
- Dr a; Mujatwari: The government deals with its peaceful citizens with

a kind of toughness

- Despite its being am American, European request, government source denies rumors on request of Qatar and Oman to change Bajammal
- Rainfalls in Yemen kill or displace hundreds of persons
- Hussein al-Ahmar on the list of those banned from entering Egypt

The editor in chief of the newspaper says in his article the Arab region is undergoing its worst stages after the intermingling of what political, religious, sectarian and intellectual and all are suffering from that.

America's political sin in Iraq will not end at all events in its favor without paying a high price of its credibility, efforts and potentials.

The sectarian dispute has erupted in the region in an unprecedented manner. Bush's policy changed the Middle East into an unstable area of conflict. Iraq has become sectarian fragmented with no hope of coming together again, Lebanon has changed into an arena of Saudi Syrian Iranian conflict and likewise the occupied territories where the conflict has become Palestinian-Palestinian.

Saudi Arabia with its religious position and financial weight is still busy with corruption of weapons that are useless and more than that it changed to a party in conflict here and there despite that the factors of explosion inside it are more than any other area.

America continues its losses in the region and it is in a state of imbalance while Bush is no longer the owner of taking decision alone. Rulers of the region have become used to receiving ready-made instructions and have become without any avail and can do nothing so that the condition as it is.

# Downtown Beirut: Frontline to the world

Every time I walk through the frontline of the political confrontation in downtown Beirut between the American and Saudi-backed Fouad Seniora Lebanese government and the Iranian and Syrian-backed Hezbollah-led opposition, I have the sense of walking through a 1970-era American rock festival or a World War II movie set.

The Beirut scene encapsulates today's multiple ideological and cultural confrontations in the Middle East and the world, and may be the most visible frontline of the wider global face-off. Like all other things Lebanese, this serious, often tense, and increasingly unpredictable confrontation is garnished with a bit of levity, and much humanity.

On one side are numerous encampments of government soldiers, amidst armored personnel carriers and several layers of barbed wire barriers, reflecting both the special

camaraderie of their profession and the deadly serious nature of their mission. The relaxed demeanor of the troops suggests that D-Day is some ways away.

One giveaway is that this muscular war scene takes place on a stretch of road that houses a music conservatory, a church, Beirut's Buddha Bar, a Subway shop, major banks, the Serail, and one of Beirut's best cigar shops.

Facing this military encampment across the frontline is the tent city of several hundred full-time protestors from Hezbollah, the Free Patriotic Movement and half a dozen other mini-movements, where young lads seem to sleep most of the day and rally most of the night to fine music and fractious political rhetoric.

When the weather is fine,



By: Rami G. Khouri

especially on evenings, weekends and official holidays, thousands of families converge on downtown Beirut to rally for the opposition. The smell of grilled meat wafts over the scene, music interspersed with political speeches fills the air, and hundreds of young couples, families, and groups of friends sit around on chairs and mats, playing cards or backgammon, waving flags, and, mostly, smoking water pipes loaded with nicely flavored tobaccos.

For an indiscreet moment, you think that this is what one version of Paradise must be like: friendly folks having a good time, with plenty of camaraderie, good food and music, and only pleasant garden smells from a thousand water pipes. That is a passing thought only, for this is serious business, pushing Lebanon towards an increasingly strident

confrontation with no clear outcome.

The dramatic frontline is much more than just an anthropologically fascinating bifurcation of a very pluralistic and tolerant society. It is also more than a great urban center's ability to keep adding to its historical repertoire by inventing new ways for people to congregate and affirm their powerful humanity as well as their simple need to enjoy life.

The sharp cultural and political distinctions between the two camps that face off in central Beirut will now spread throughout the city, following Monday decision by the Hezbollah-led opposition to escalate the peaceful protests to government offices and public facilities. Like the central Beirut dynamic, this escalation is matched step by step by an increasingly self-confident and assertive government.

Among its moves has been the deployment of the army and police force to preserve order and keep open public facilities.

Little encampments of army and

police are visible all over the city at strategic junctions. Mostly they comprise a single armored personnel carrier with a typically dashing young soldier hanging out of the hatch door, smoking a cigarette or munching on sandwich, with a few other of his mates standing around on the street.

The message of all this resonates far beyond central Beirut, reflecting a trend that we are witnessing in several Arab countries simultaneously: incumbent governments facing challenges from Islamist-led oppositions are standing their ground, defending their positions, and fighting back politically; in Palestine, Iraq and Somalia, the state also fights back militarily.

Beirut's standoff remains peaceful, even though politicians on both sides occasionally verge into silly-land with their vitriolic rhetoric.

Here is the long delayed synthesis between anthropology, ideology and politics in the modern Middle East, as groups with very different agendas

and significant domestic and foreign support square off and battle for control of the governance system.

The roughly equal weight and determination of the two Lebanese camps augurs for a compromise in due course, unless foreign interests push for a prolonged battle.

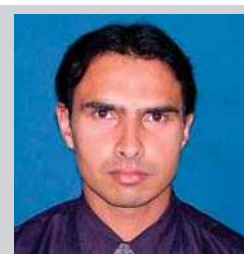
Watch this political battle closely. Lebanon may emerge from all this as a historic beacon of peaceful, increasingly democratic contestation of power in the modern Arab world; or, if things go badly, it may shatter and collapse in an ugly heap, fuelled by a combination of mediocre local, provincial politicians egged on by selfish foreign patrons.

Rami George Khouri is a Palestinian-Jordanian and US citizen. He is the Director of the Issam Fares Institute of Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut as well as editor-at-large of the Beirut-based Daily Star newspaper. Source: www.dailystaregypt.com

# Who needs enemies?

Can anyone believe that weapons could be brought into Gaza Strip (Palestine) openly with the approval of Israel to be used by the Palestinians? I hope no one would believe it. But it has happened whether we believe it or not and it's a reality.

Egypt transferred a large quantity of arms and ammunition in the Gaza Strip on Dec. 27, with Israel's approval. In fact it was done purposely and reason behind that was to strengthen the Palestinian Security Forces loyal to Mahmoud Abbas, president of the



By: Mohammed Imran Khan

Palestinian National Authority.

Palestinian security forces mainly belong from Abbas's Fatah movement and the move was carried out to make them powerful against ruling Hamas movement's paramilitary organizations. In recent months both Hamas and Fatah were engaged in deadly clashes, which resulted in the deaths of many Palestinians.

Fatah groups in Gaza Strip apparently have less firepower than the Hamas groups. Hamas is considered as a terrorist group by Israel and Fatah as more moderate. Though in past, Fatah

was also considered as a terrorist organization but now that label has been removed. So it has been decided to reinforce Fatah against Hamas. The plan also has the backing of the United States. The shipment from Egypt included 2000 AK-47 rifles and thousands of ammunitions magazines.

There are reports that Hamas affiliated groups get arms from smuggling. But the Egyptian government's decision to give weapons to one faction so that it can be used against each other is shocking. Evidently there are no other reasons for Israel to allow Egypt to export weapons to Palestine.

There are differences between Hamas and Fatah, but they are not so severe that could lead towards a

permanent enmity and Instead of trying to clear things between them, Egypt is supporting one with arms and ammunitions. Surely Israeli does not mind such cooperation from Egypt, but what would be the benefits for Egypt? Perhaps soon Egyptians would hear that few more Palestinians killed by other Palestinians with the help of the weapons provided by their country.

One can easily understand the logic behind the decision to reinforce Fatah. As Hamas has more weapons so it can dominate Fatah. Now Israel is trying to give Fatah more weapons to match Hamas's firepower so the both factions can fight each other for a long time.

The divide and rule policy is not something new but it seems to be working again. It is quite clear Israel is

supporting Mahmoud Abbas only to create more rifts between Hamas and Fatah. Israel would never want Fatah and Hamas to become partners in the movement to gain freedom from Israel.

But Israel certainly wants this situation to exist for a long time. The more the Palestinians fight against each other the easier it will be for Israel to enforce their rule on them and continue occupation. The fact is known to the occupiers, but Palestinians just cannot understand it.

Even a country like Egypt, believed to be Palestine friendly, is also falling into the same trap. Currently there is a truce in effect between Hamas and Fatah. But with the new reports of Fatah getting weapons could certainly

bring more violence.

Free Palestine is a dream for every Palestinian, but there is no evidence that it can become reality. Every movement in Palestine including Fatah and Hamas were created with one simple objective: To get a free country. But while Hamas and Fatah engaged in useless fight against each other it is quite certain that the goal of freedom will get even far away.

Muhammad Imran Khan (mimraan.khaan@gmail.com) is assistant director of Pakistan's National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). He is an economic and commerce specialist and a freelance writer for several international newspapers.

# Onyx: The Yemeni agate

By: Nisreen Shadad

**O**nyx, a translucent cryptocrystalline variety of quartz, is one of nature's most beautiful gemstones. For thousands of years, man has prized onyx for personal adornment because this variegated onyx is characterized by oft-contrasting colors that may be arranged in strongly contrasting bands, irregular swaths of color or moss-like inclusions.

Onyx is known for its qualities in terms of brightness and translucency. The level of darkness in color is equal at all its parts as well as its hardness. "Onyx is very hard on all sides and that's what makes it excel," said professor Mohammed Heikal.

The existence of volcanic rock in Yemeni mountains, particularly in

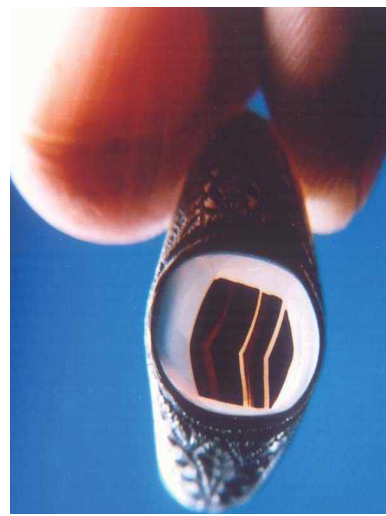


Al-Rumani is a famous onyx whose color is similar to that of pomegranate seeds.

Anis in Dhamar, "gives the onyx a suitable environment to be formed. The melting process of silicon dioxide (or SiO<sub>2</sub>) takes place in the hollows of the rocks and consequently precipitates to form onyx in heat not less than 20 degrees (less than the geothermal of 20 degrees)," says Dr.



Jeweler Mohammed Ali explains how to cut and polish onyx. Onyx necklaces and medals are displayed behind him.



Unique shapes of onyx such as the Yemeni flag, Al-Kaba and an apple, form naturally.

Saif Ali Othman of the Earth Environmental Sciences department.

"According to the visible impurities in the body of the onyx these are seen in dendritic shapes and colors such as rose, smoky gray or white," adds Mounir Ismail, assistant professor at the Earth Environmental Sciences Department. The colors and patterns of onyx imitate forms in nature, such as trees, animals, people, birds and mountains, or particular words like the names of Allah and Mohammed (pbuh) in Arabic. In some rare cases, the Kaaba and the Yemeni flag form.

"We mine the agates from the mountains, and break them down to remove dirt and blemishes. We try to observe the natural pattern created inside the onyx, cut the blemish, and sharpen it until it takes a lucid design," stated Ibrahim Sharhan, general manager of Yemen Onyx Kingdom Industries.

"The first step is tajmeer (broiling), which is used depending on the onyx's size and kind. Some agates are too hard to cut and require additional heating time lasting up to 30 days.

Stones are placed in a specialized fireplace within an iron vessel using temperatures between 250 and 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Tajmeer decreases the agate's hardness, making them pliable while adding glitter.

"Next is tarmeel, where stones are put side by side in a burner covered in two-inch thick ash (approximately two fingers deep). The stones are pressed to avoid ventilation under equally distributed coals. This process lasts up to six days because it helps distribute color into all sections of the agate. During this process, it's better to put the broken side of the stones on the outer edges so the heat affects them directly. The agates are cut into several sizes and the Jalkh machine is used to sharpen and make the patterns within more lucid.

"The final step is to polish the stones with the Dabasha machine, which resembles a plastic jar. It shakes the stones in a special powder for seven to 12 days until they're lustrous and smooth. We can't use the machine unless we have 500 to 1,000 stones," jeweler Mohammed Ali

explained. "However, handmade purifications are better. We use sandpaper spinning around a fixed point on the machine holding the stones to the sandpaper for 15 minutes. We use this method if we have less than 500 stones," Ali added.

## Types of onyx

Onyx is used in jewelry; especially as inlays in rings, necklaces, medals and rosaries, and used to decorate dresses, daggers and swathe. Stones come in a variety of colors and shades of red, black, blue, white, yellow and in patterns such as Solymani and dendrites. Amazingly, no two onyxes are the same. One of the most famous is Al-Rumani named after the color of pomegranate seeds.

Today, onyx remains very much in demand because it's a uniquely patterned gem offering its owners beauty and durability. However, natural onyx is scarce nowadays. Still considered the best for its natural brilliance, color and clarity, Yemeni agate defies those stones manufactured with lasers in neighboring Gulf countries.



Al-Jalkh, the circular stone that's affixed to the pointed side of the machine. Agates are held to the surface of Al-Jalkh while it rotates to polish them.

## Universal Islamic Monument Yemeni agate inlays the Taj Mahal

Yemeni agate, the most famous in the world, was used to decorate the Taj Mahal, the world's most architecturally beautiful tomb. The Taj Mahal is unique in its design and its construction materials. English poet Sir Edwin Arnold describes the Taj Mahal as "Not a piece of architecture, as other buildings are, but the proud passions of an emperor's love wrought in living stones."

By: Adel A. Al-Haddad  
alhaddad.adel@gmail.com  
For Yemen Times

**W**hen India's Mughal emperor Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal, he carefully chose and collected the best construction materials available throughout the known world. He visualized a marble building decorated with precious and semi-precious stone inlays like delicately handcrafted jewelry: Marble in purest white from Makrana in Rajasthan, yellow marble and rocks from the banks of the Narmada River, black marble from Charkoh and red

sandstone from Sikri.

For the intricate pisetra dura, the finest gems were collected: crystal and jade from China, lapis lazuli and sapphires from Sri Lanka, jasper from Punjab, carnelian from Baghdad and turquoise from Tibet. Yemen sent agates, corals came from Arabia, garnets from Bundelkhand, onyx and amethyst from Persia. Mumtaz Mahal's final resting place was ornamented like a queen's jewelry box.

### Mumtaz Mahal's tomb

*Though lovers be lost, love shall not;  
And death shall have no dominion.*

—Dylan Thomas

The white splendor tomb of Mahal was

built in memory of Emperor Shah Jahan's favorite wife, Arjumand Banu Begum, better known as Mumtaz Mahal ("Chosen of the Palace"). This wonderful monument expresses Jahan's eternal love for his wife and his great sorrow at her death. "The building could not have been of this earth, for it is evident the design was given him by heaven." — a quote composed by Shah Jahan and inscribed on the Taj Mahal.

Meaning "Crown Palace," the Taj Mahal is an exquisite mausoleum and one of the world's greatest wonders, as well as a tribute to a beautiful queen and a great love. The Taj Mahal's architectural beauty alludes to several valuable meanings so that one day of sightseeing feels like a minute standing before such charming and intricate designs.

The hues across the Taj Mahal change constantly throughout the day and seasons. Sunrise and morning bring on a pinkish glow, while in the evening, the view turns milky-white and golden when the moon shines upon its precious stone inlays as the white marble reflects the moonbeams.

Men hailing from Baghdad, Shiraz, Delhi, Samarkand and Turkey crafted the marble, India's finest and quarried at Makrana. Their work, the architectural genius behind the design and Shah Jahan's passion are a tribute to his queen, companion and ultimate love. One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Taj Mahal stands through time as the definitive declaration of love.



## Literary Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalima Al-Tayybah

### Yemeni Annals (Hawliat Yamaniyah) (VIII)

**Subject Book:** Yemeni Annals (Hawliat Yamaniyah)  
[1224 – 1316 AH (1809 – 1898 AD)]  
**Author:** Muhsin Bin Ahmed Al-Harazi et al  
Checked and Edited by Abdullah Mohammed Al-Hibshi  
**Language:** Arabic  
**Publisher:** Ministry of Information and Culture  
**Year Published:** 1400 AH/1980 AD  
**No. of Pages:** 661

**T**he reason that this book is being given extensive coverage is because there are no public records to depict what transpired in the period covered by the book, and whatever sources exist for that period are fragmented and this work saves the tedious and timely task of trying to put all those sources together.

Continuing with a year by year summary of the Annals we proceed as follows:

1263 AH (1846 – 1847 AD continued): The author contends that the country went into chaos and the tribes continued to be unruly, to the point that whenever the Imam went out on a journey or expedition, even his own entourage that followed him would be looted, especially if the looters were aware that the Imam was not accompanying them. Even the officials would renounce their pledges for maintaining law and order would cut roads and rob travelers and prevent the Zakat from reaching the state treasury. One of these was Ahmed Bin Hussein Al-Baraty, who was the Administrator for Dhamar and Anis. The Imam Al-Hadi (Ali Bin Yahya) resigned his post and Al-Abbass Bin Abdul-Rahman Bin Mohammed Bin Hussein Bin Ahmed Bin Al-Mutawakkil Ali Isma'el took over as Imam, who called himself "Al-Moayyad" (i.e., the 'assisted one' by God). He first encountered, the renegade Al-Baraty, but the contingent he sent underestimated Al-Baraty's numbers, thinking that they were only a hundred "bandits", when in fact they were eight hundred, so the contingent was ambushed and defeated. The Imam then set out himself to subdue the Renegade.

1269 AH (1850 – 1851 AD): Ali Bin Al-Mahdi reaches a settlement with Al-Mutawakkil and assumes the Imamate. In the meantime, a new aspirant to the Imamate arose in Al-Sir (Bani Huseish) by the name of Mohammed Bin Abdullah Al-Wazir, who called himself "Al-Mansour".

1270 AH (1851 – 1852 AD): The most notable event is the death of Ahmed Al-Baraty, in addition to the usual fight for the Imamate among many aspirants.

1270 AH (1852 – 1853 AD): Hussein Bin Ahmed (Al-Mutawakkil) proclaims himself candidate for the Imamate. Sana'a is under siege well into 1271 AH.

1271 AH (1853 – 1854 AD): Muhsin Bin Ahmed Al-Shahari and also proclaimed himself Imam entering Sana'a on 26th of Sha'aban and he called himself "Al-Mutawakkil and removed all the other aspirants to the Imamate one by one, but could not fully consolidate his rule, because of the absence of permanent institutions and he had to contend with the usual insurrections and tribal uprisings faced by all his predecessors.

### Taj Mahal: A historical glimpse

**M**umtaz married Shah Jahan in 1612 becoming his second wife and inseparable companion. She died in childbirth at Burhanpur while on a campaign with her husband in 1629.

The dead queen was brought to Agra and laid to rest in a garden on the banks of the Jamuna River. A council of the best architects was assembled to prepare designs for the tomb. Though some attribute the design to Geronimo Verroneo, an Italian in the Mughal service, evidence suggests that it was designed by Ustad Isa Khan Effendi, a Persian who assigned the detailed

work to his pupil Ustad Ahmad. The dome was designed by Ismail Khan.

The most famous and universally known Islamic heritage in India and indeed the world, the Taj Mahal is the epitome of Islamic architecture and its decorative art forms. There are variable geometric shapes throughout the Taj Mahal seamlessly inlaid with precious stones in wonderful colors and variable forms, making it a charming sight from all views like a series of ornate necklaces to the casual viewer.

Two buildings, locally called Sawal and Jawab (question and answer), surround the Taj Mahal, which also includes a mosque on the west end and a guesthouse in the east. Such buildings function as charitable institutions for local and international visitors. Construction on the Taj Mahal began in 1631 with more than 20,000 workers, taking some 22 years to complete in 1654. A fleet of more than 1,000 elephants transported all of the materials used at the site.

Sources: Davies, Philip. "The Penguin guide to the monuments of India," Vol. II. London: Viking, 1989.

Tadgell, Christopher. "The History of Architecture in India." London: Phaidon Press, 1990.



## General Tender Announcement Number (11) Year 2006

For The Fourth and Final Time

Yemen Radio and TV Corporation re-announces tenders for the fourth and final time for the following:

- **Supply, supervise installation, test, guarantee and hand-over of the antenna systems and required peripheral equipments for one FM broadcasting station of medium wave of 600 kilo watts.**

Interested specialized and manufacturing companies in this field are to come to the Corporation's premises- engineering sector, projects department in Sana'a near the Ministry of Public Health and Population during official working hours in order to obtain the tenders documents.

**Tender fees:** Non-refundable US 500\$.

### General conditions:

- 1- Primary guarantee of 2.5% of the total tender cost and valid for 120 days from the date of opening the envelopes
- 2- Valid tax card for 2007
- 3- Valid commercial registration card for 2007
- 4- Valid Insurance card for 2007
- 5- Valid Alms (Zakat) card for 2007
- 6- The envelopes are to be sealed in red wax
- 7- Commitment to the general and special conditions stated in the tender documents

### Place and date for opening the envelopes:

The envelopes are to be opened at 11:00 AM on Saturday 10/2/2007 at the corporation premises.

# Job Vacancy

Republic of Yemen (Ministry of Public Health and Population) has received a grant from the Global fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). The Ministry announces a job vacancy for (**M&E Focal Point**) of the PMU at the National Malaria Control Program.

### Responsibilities:

1. Participate in development of standard M&E tools for use by the levels of project implementation: from community level intervention sites, to governorate Focal Points and Technical Committees, national Sub Recipient institution offices, and ultimately to the Principal Recipients.
2. Work closely with staff of the surveillance department of the NMCP, to enhance the exploitation of the existing malaria case reporting system in the transmission of monthly progress reports of the interventions from the governorates.
3. Compile monthly intervention progress reports into single update reports for presentation to the CCM, feedback to the counterpart PR (NMCP), sub recipients as well as stakeholders.
4. Provide training to sub recipient and intervention site Focal Points in the performance of monitoring and evaluation tasks and activities related to the implementation of The Global Fund NMCP grant, including the documentation and reporting of indicator data.
5. Conduct supervision and technical support visits to the implementation sites of NMCP supported activities, both through governorate Focal Points as well as through sub recipient institutions.
6. Be available to facilitate the work of consultants to perform independent evaluation functions, disseminating theirs and other reports related to monitoring and evaluation activities.
7. Attend and facilitate the work of the National M&E team, which will be the forum for inking The Global Fund NMCP M&E activities to the eventual development of a common M&E framework.
8. Perform other duties as assigned by project leadership.

### Qualifications

- A university degree in social sciences or public health
- Work experience is preferably in a related field
- Fluent in oral and written English and Arabic
- Computer literate
- Yemeni Nationality

Applicants are required to submit their CVs by 30/1/2007 to the following address:  
National Malaria Control Program,  
AL-Jarda'a Area, nearby TB program. Fax No : +9671626105/7 e-mail : nmcp@yemen.net.ye

Al Rowaishan Group **مجموعة الرويشان**

# ANNOUNCEMENT FOR VACANCIES

Al Rowaishan Group hereby announces the following vacancies and invites qualified candidates to send their resumes to the address mentioned herein below:

### Marketing Manager:

#### Qualifications:

- 8 years experience in the field of Marketing
- bachelor degree in marketing management
- fluency in English language and good knowledge in computer
- communications and Public Relations Skills

### Human Resources Manager

#### Qualifications

- 8 years experience in the field of Human Resources
- bachelor degree in Business Administration
- fluency in English language and good knowledge in computer

### Control and Inspection Manager:

#### Qualifications:

- 10 years experience in the field of Accountancy and Audit
- Bachelor degree in Accountancy or Audit .Priority shall be given to those having a CPA or ACCA certificate.
- fluency in English language and good knowledge in computer

### Head of Audit & Control Team

#### Qualifications:

- 5 years experience in the field of Internal Audit
- Bachelor degree in Accountancy or Audit.
- fluency in English language and good knowledge in computer

All application letters along with a detailed resume should be submitted by January 31, 2007 to the following address :

Al Rowaishan Group, second storey of Jeep cars showroom at 60meter road Sana a  
or send the resume to Fax no 01-448928

# A day with a Yemeni medical astrologer

By: Amel Al-Ariqi  
amel11ariqi@yahoo.com

**A**l-Quladh is a small village located 30 kilometers from Yemen's capital city of Sana'a. To reach it, one must travel a long, rough, zigzagging road through agricultural fields.

Despite the distance, Al-Quladh enjoys some urban features in that most village homes are made of bricks and blocks. The approximately 1,200 villagers also enjoy electricity and water services. However, most residents don't complete their education because the village's lone school only takes students (mostly boys) to study at primary levels. Additionally, there's no hospital or medical center in the village.

Villager Ahmed Al-Faqi, who claims to be 110 years old, enjoys special social status among residents because they consider him the village's healer and therapist. "Ahmed Al-Faqi can treat all diseases - even those that doctors in Sana'a can't diagnose," declared one 70-year-old woman.

Speaking with Al-Faqi wasn't an easy mission because he's nearly deaf; therefore, his 30-year-old son Yahya sat beside him shouting in his ear in an attempt to relay what others said. "My father isn't a juggler. He uses certain knowledge and medical science to help

others coming from various areas both inside and outside the village," Yahya insisted.

Al-Faqi receives his patients in his traditional Sana'ani style house. Men, women and children visit him all day seeking his advice.

"Last night, my 2-month-old daughter couldn't sleep. She kept us awake the whole night screaming and we don't know what's up with her," with these words Mohammed Al-Marani described his daughter situation to Al-Faqi who later diagnosed her sickness as "a heart fever due to evil eye affected her when she was taking her shower."

Al-Faqi asked the father to make his daughter drinking small doses of animal grease. Al-Marani was almost confident and satisfied with Al-Faqi's diagnoses "It's a natural recipe, so if it doesn't help my daughter, it won't harm her," he said.

Nawal Zaid is not one of the village residents, but she visited Al-Faqi to ask him about her situation. "Most of the time, I feel scared...I don't know why...I have nightmares of dead people," she told Al-Faqi, who said she was suffering "scruple" and that she went through a painful experience like witnessing an accident or someone dying in front of her, such incident affect her and cause "heart deviation." He asked her to drink

pomegranate juice mixed with

cardamom, chufa and cumin.

Nawal couldn't hide her astonishment, saying that she had indeed witnessed her cousin's death and later she suffered those nightmares, she also confirmed that she had heart problems since that time.

Al-Faqi never tests his patients clinically, he just listens to their complaints and then asks for their names and their mother's name, putting them on a piece of paper and gave each letter a number, collecting this number to find out the sign of zodiacs, then he read a very old, almost torn astrological book, which written in ambiguous letters look like Arabic but without dots, and according to the sign and the patient age he finds out the disease.

Al-Faqi then used another old book called "Al-rahma fi al-tibb wa al-hikma," which means "Mercy in Medicine and Wisdom." Written in the 15th century by Islamic scholar Jalal Al-Deen Al-Swti, the book contains more than 250 chapters, including details of diseases and how to treat them with different recipes. "This book covers all of the diseases man suffers, from head to toe," said Al-Faqi, who claims that he inherited both books from his grandfather who worked in the same field.

Al-Faqi believes that astrological signs have great affect on human body, and by knowing patients signs and their zodiacs, it would be easy to find out the sickness.

What Al-Faqi mentioned isn't far from what's called "medical astrology." Medical astrology is an ancient medical system that associates various parts of the body, diseases and drugs as under the influence of the sun, moon and planets, along with the 12 astrological signs. Each of the astrological signs (along with the sun, moon and planets) are associated with different parts of the human body. Also, many plants are referred to in old treatises on herbs as being "under the influence of" some planet.

It's been noted that the 12 signs cover from head (Aries) to toe (Pisces) because Aries is the first sign of the zodiac while Pisces is the last. Thus, after examining an individual's natal chart, a medical astrologer will advise a client about areas of the body they're



Al-Faqi shows the astrological book that he uses to treat people.

most likely to experience trouble with - for instance, an individual with the sun, moon, ascendant or many planets in the sign of Aries is presumed to have more headaches than others because of the association of Aries with the head. A person with Taurus strong in the natal chart is predicted to have many sore throats and problems with the voice because of the Taurean association with that particular part of the body.

However, Al-Faqi has gone beyond that. According to his son Yahya, he can cure mental and psychological diseases such as depression, stress, epilepsy and scruple. "Most patients who come to us suffer psychological problems that through time can cause physical diseases," Yahya explained, confessing that there are diseases that can't be cured neither by doctors nor

his father.

Al-Faqi, who has started his job as the village healer since his age in 20s, asks his patients to buy the herbs from spice dealers. But sometimes he asks for more than herbs. "Rarely and only in very certain conditions do we ask patients to slay an animal like a black goat or a red cock and paint marks on their body with animal blood. Such a recipe is required as a ransom to dismiss any evil that lives in the patient's soul," Yahya explained.

Needing to get rid of her pain and sufferings, Fatima experimented with this recipe. She told that she was experiencing chronic headache, constant sounds in her mind sometimes sounds like whispers that prevented her from sleeping or practicing her normal life. "I went to Sana'a and visited many doctors. I used alternative therapy such

as cupping, but I finally decided to visit Ahmed Al-Faqi, who asked me to buy a black goat, slay it and anoint my body with its blood, so we looked for this black goat until we found it and I followed Al-Faqi's instructions." Fatima recounted, confirming that she feels better, although she didn't get rid of the headache.

Al-Faqi isn't the only one practicing such treatment methods in Yemen. Astrologers, in general and medical astrologers in particular can be found in many regions, particularly in rural areas where residents are unable to access basic services such as education, medical services and transportation. "People's inability to access such services help these therapists gain people's trust because they're available all the time," Mohammed Al-Marani noted.



Al-Faqi (middle) listens to his son Yahya (left) and one of the villager (right).

## Rabies is the 10th most common cause of death, WHO says

**T**he World Health Organization declared on Tuesday its plan to increase treatment access for victims of rabies and snakebites. "WHO is creating a five-year plan to boost production in developing countries, help authorities forecast market needs and strengthen regulatory capacity," a press release stated on the organization's web site.

According to WHO, more than 12 million people annually are bitten by dogs or snakes or stung by scorpions and the world's capacity to treat them is inadequate. Effective treatment for these conditions is critically dependent upon therapeutic serum, but these essential drugs often are unavailable or unaffordable in those countries where they're most needed.

Production of therapeutic serum in industrialized nations is falling due to inadequate profitability linked to uncertainty about needed quantities. Affordability is an issue in developing countries and production is quantitatively limited and often doesn't reach quality standards required to make such treatments effective and safe. WHO estimates that its plan to boost access to treatment will cost \$10 million.

"We need to boost local manufacturers' capacity and improve the delivery of products to remote rural areas," says Dr. Howard Zucker, WHO Assistant Director-General for Health Technologies and Pharmaceuticals. "There are effective solutions that could save millions of lives."

Rabies is the 10th most common cause of death due to infection in humans. It's 100 percent fatal, yet also 100 percent preventable if post-exposure treatment with therapeutic serum is readily available. An

estimated eight million people receive anti-rabies serum annually after being exposed to animals suspected of carrying rabies. Nearly half of those requiring therapeutic serum and those dying of rabies are children under age 15. More than 99 percent of all human deaths from rabies occur in Africa and Asia.

Medical statistics state that close to five million snake bites and scorpion stings are recorded worldwide every year (mostly in Africa, Asia and Latin America), 50 to 75 percent of which require treatment by therapeutic serum to prevent death, amputation or severe neurological disorders. Young agricultural workers and children are the main populations affected.

Available epidemiological data on the incidence of snakebites, including the degree of associated mortality and long-term morbidity, largely are hospital-based and therefore underestimate the problem's true scale. A majority of snakebite victims seek traditional treatment and may die at home unrecorded.

Since the 1970s, WHO says the number of manufacturers of anti-venoms against African snakebites has dropped dramatically. "It's estimated that there are one million snake bites annually in Africa alone, resulting in more than 20,000 deaths, and a much higher incidence of chronic disability resulting from neurological sequelae and physical handicap from necrotic effects requiring amputation."

More than 10 million vials of anti-venom serum are needed to treat snake and scorpion bites worldwide, with an estimated 2 million vials required for Africa alone. An estimated 16 million vials of anti-rabies serum are needed annually if current international guidelines for post-exposure prophylaxis are fully implemented.

The crisis involving availability of therapeutic serum calls for an international effort to facilitate the transfer of technology to affected countries, as well as address major logistical problems in distribution, particularly in ensuring maintenance of a cold chain.

Additionally, lack of knowledge about the correct medical management of bites and stings from venomous animals, including the appropriate use of serum, further compromises the efficient clinical use of the limited quantity of product available.

On Jan. 10, the health organization held a meeting attended by area experts, as well as recipient and donor countries, international organizations and manufacturers, to agree on a global action plan. At the meeting, WHO discussed its planned measures in this field, including:

- Defining an international standard for the production, quality control and regulation of therapeutic serum to be used as a guide by local regulatory authorities and manufacturers
- Conducting regional educational workshops to help implement quality and safety requirements for producing therapeutic serum following principles of good manufacturing practices
- Training inspectors and manufacturers on critical parameters of producing therapeutic serum
- Facilitating transfer of technology to developing countries
- Establishing a therapeutic serum pre-qualification scheme based on WHO experience in pre-qualifying other therapeutic products
- Developing guidance and training materials on prevention, diagnosis and management of diseases treatable with therapeutic serum

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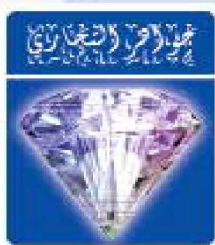
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## Premier League set for first kick

The Yemeni Football Federation and representatives from different football clubs nationwide agreed in a meeting this past Wednesday in Sana'a that the Premier League for first and second grade teams starts on Jan. 18. The meeting was held in the federation's premises.

The meeting discussed several subjects related to arrangements for starting the new Premier League's season. Also, it discussed the bylaws concerned with organizing championships of first and second grade teams.

The meeting participants unanimously refused to postpone the Premier League until the Arabian Gulf

Championship is complete. The proposal to postpone the league was presented by three representatives of top teams: Al-Saqr - who won last season's trophy, second-placed Sha'ab Ibb and Hilal Al-Hodeidah under the pretext that many of their players are involved in the national team's formation, which is participating in the Gulf Championship.

The meeting, which was attended by Khalid Al-Nadhiri, head of the contest committee, approved to allow the league's 14 participating teams to have five foreign professional players each. Of these professional players, only four may be involved in every meeting. During the last season, every

domestic team was allowed to have only three foreign professional players who could participate in each meeting.

According to the meeting, Jan. 15 is the deadline for the registration of players for each team and foreign and native players can transfer between teams only during the first round.

The first round's draw placed Sha'ab Ibb against Al-Telal from Aden while Wahdat Sana'a will host Hilal Al-Hodeida. Hassan from Abyan will host titleholders Al-Saqr from Taiz, Itihad Ibb will play Ahli Sana'a in Ibb, Al-Nasr from Al-Dhale' will host Al-Yarmouk from the capital city. Aden's Al-Shu'alah will counter the visiting team of Shabab Al-Beidha.

## Al-Samoud's stadium ready to host league encounters

The special committee, authorized to prepare Al-Samoud team's stadium in the provincial capital of Al-Dhale'e, completed all the necessary arrangements for hosting the games of top-level teams, including Al-Nasr team from the governorate, which advanced to the Premier League for the first time in its history.

Assistant Deputy Governor of Al-Dhale'e and chairman of the committee Abdullah Hussein Al-Haddi said the stadium is ready for any meeting due to be hosted by Al-Nasr team.

He indicated the stadium's ground was prepared in compliance with the legal requirements and specifications necessary for staging football matches.

According to Al-Haddi, the stadium was fenced and special rooms were built for players to change their clothes, in addition to setting rooms and many bathrooms.

Al-Haddi urged fans and Al-Dhale'e locals to support their governorate's team during its home meetings with other teams.

## Beckham says he still wants to play for England

LONDON (Reuters) - Former captain David Beckham has not given up hope of resuming his England career despite agreeing to leave Real Madrid for Los Angeles Galaxy.

"I don't believe it is the end of my international career because I have always said, and I will always say, that while I am still playing football I will be available to play for my country," Beckham told Sunday's News of the World.

The 31-year-old midfielder is due to begin his new career in Major League Soccer in August after agreeing a five-year contract with the Galaxy worth \$1 million (510,000 pounds) a week, the biggest deal in world sport.

Beckham was dropped by England after the 2006 World Cup in Germany but still hopes to add more caps to his haul of 94.

"Of course, I am (still) going to be available and if I get the call, then amazing," said the former Manchester United player.

"If I don't, then I've had an amazing career for my country anyway."



Real Madrid midfielder David Beckham arrives at Boryspil airport near Kiev Dec. 5, 2006 ahead of Wednesday's UEFA Champions League Group E soccer match against Dynamo Kiev. Beckham will not play again for Real Madrid after agreeing a move to Los Angeles Galaxy, Real coach Fabio Capello said on Saturday. REUTERS

## Lebid outfoxes Farah in Edinburgh

Britain's Mo Farah was out-sprinted by Sergiy Lebid over 4km in the Great Edinburgh International Cross Country event at Holyrood Park on Saturday.

The Ukrainian stalked the European 5,000m silver medallist from halfway before striking in the final 200m.

The women's 6.7km race was won by Ethiopia's defending champ Gelete Burka.

And there was further success for Ethiopia when world number one Kenenisa Bekele claimed victory against an elite field in the men's 9.3km race.

The five-time world champion produced one of the most amazing displays ever seen at this level when, with three laps remaining, he switched into top gear and left his opponents flat-footed.

The 24-year-old Olympic and world 10,000m champion extended his sequence of cross-country victories to 26 since losing to Haile Gebrselassie in December 2001.

"It was a good beginning to 2007," said Bekele, who won in 28 minutes, 14 seconds.

"I am very happy that I won my first race of the year. I expected it because of the training I have done."

Olympic 10,000m bronze-medallist Zersenay Tadesse Zersenay was runner-up in 28mins 24secs with Eliud Kipchoge, the 2005 champion, third in 28mins 51secs.

Burka ran a more conservative race that Bekele but was almost as impressive.

She used her taller rivals for shelter in the gale-force conditions and waited until the last kilometre before making a decisive move.

The reigning world cross-country short course champion powered away from compatriot Meselech Melkamu and Australia's Benita Johnson on the last hill.

Vivian Cheruiyot of Kenya stormed through in the last 400m to grab second place ahead of Johnson.

The men's short race was the closest contest of the day, with Lebid, who was deprived of a seventh European cross-country crown by Farah last month, beating his rival by a second.

"He was on my shoulder the whole way," said Farah. "And he was better on the day."

Britain's Mike Skinner, runner-up for the last two years, finished a distant third.

Source: BBC



Mo Farah

## Yemen loses 4-0 as Gulf Championship nears

Preparing for the 18th Arabian Gulf Championship, Yemen's national football team was defeated 4-0 its Bahraini counterpart in a friendly game this past Friday during its external camp in Dubai.

Under the Egyptian coach Mohsen Saleh, the team headed for Dubai on Wednesday to participate in the championships in Abu Dhabi between Jan. 17 and 31.

"Regardless of the defeat, the teammates were at their best and played well before the Bahraini team, one of the Gulf teams expected to win the trophy this month," Saleh said.

Both sides exchanged offensive, meanwhile the national team worked hard depending on the counterattacks that threatened the Bahraini's net several times.

For the coach, the meeting is a good chance to evaluate performance of the star Ali Al-Nono, who participated in the new formation for the first time since Saleh assumed responsibility of the team. The coach, however, was pleased by the harmony between Al-Nono and his teammate Fikri Al-Hubeishi.

The Bahraini team entered the match with all its stars, particularly as the meeting had been considered as the final practice. Bahrain benefited from the meeting despite the fact there had been some mistakes among their defense and offense lines



The Yemeni team.

showing a lack of organization.

The Bahrainis reached the Yemeni net and scored four times, thus regaining their moral after their heavy defeat by the Italian team Inter Milan 6-1. For Yemen's team, the match was considered as an important lesson, as well as a real test revealing points of weakness among teammates, which the Egyptian coach has been seeking since he took the job.

In another practice match in the capital Sana'a last week, Yemen thrashed Djibouti 4-1 before flying to Dubai to participate in the most important Gulf sporting event.

During the team's internal camp in

Sana'a Minister of Youth and Sports Abdurrahman Al-Akwa visited the players and encouraged them to demonstrate a better performance during the competition. He said they should enter the championship as contenders and not merely for participation or enjoyment, adding that the government and the political leadership are observing every step they take.

Yemen is mated with Kuwait, Oman and United Arab Emirates in Group A and is due to play the opener Jan 17 against Kuwait, which has won the trophy several times. Group B includes Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Iraq.

## Olympics assist activists

In Bobo Freedom City on the eastern fringe of Beijing, human rights activists Hu Jia and his wife Zeng Jinyan joke about the sudden disappearance of the political police from their doorstep.

"They knew journalists were coming so they left and even tidied up a bit downstairs," said Zeng.

Under house arrest since last July, Hu has the Beijing Olympics to thank for being able to step outside and enjoy some fresh air and it's a similar story for many of China's dissidents.

"The Beijing Olympics are an opportunity for us. They are a tool of democracy," he said.

Hu, a prominent environmentalist and AIDS activist, says he and Zang, a fellow rights campaigner, moved to the city a few years ago, but it has struggled to live up to its name.

He has spent much of the intervening period in custody or under house arrest.

Journalists were warned to keep away and an envoy from a European embassy was turned back at the gate.

However there does seem to be evidence of change occurring with the Olympics drawing closer.

The couple said normally a police car is stationed under the lamp post outside the apartment and four guards occupy the lobby leading up to their fifth floor apartment.

But for one evening last week the police were gone and took the garbage from their uninvited stay with them.

The brief disappearance of the police can be explained by China's pledge to allow foreign journalists full access to the country for the first time from January 1, with no limits on reporting as long as they have prior permission from people they intend to interview.

### Phone tapping routine

But because this is China, where phone-tapping is routine, the police know in advance who those people are.

"All our phones are bugged so they listened to your call and knew when you were coming over," said Zeng.

The day after the visit the internal security police who work under the control of China's communist party were back in force.

Still the couple believe that the new reporting regulations are significant even though they are limited to the foreign media and are only temporary as they are scheduled to end soon after the August 8-24 Olympic Games

end.

"When Chinese journalists see foreigners interviewing whom they want, they are going to want to know why they can't. And it will be hard to put the genie back in the bottle after the Olympics," he said.

So Hu is delighted that China is hosting the Olympic Games, despite critics charging that the event will serve to legitimise the ruling communist party.

He points to the example of the 1988 Olympics in Seoul demonstrates how the Olympics can change China.

South Korea was under military dictatorship when it won the right to host the Games in 1981 but shifted to multi-party democracy soon after.

China has been ruled by dictators for 5,000 years and finally has a chance to become democratic, Hu says, thanks in part to the Olympics.

International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge, when asked why he supported Beijing's bid to host the Olympics, said he had 1.2 billion reasons, referring to China's popula-

tion.

"I think he was right. It is a great honour for China," said Hu.

"But is it the Games of the Chinese people, or is it the games of the Chinese communist party?" he said.

China's communist rulers have called for a "green, high-tech, and people's Olympics."

But Hu Jia and Zeng Jinyan are promoting a competing Olympic motto, calling for a "free, democratic Olympics and based on respect for the rule of law."

Hu predicts there will be a wave of arrests before the Olympics as China's rulers try to empty the streets of so-called "elements of instability," people like himself who will be excluded from the Olympics.

"I think the government hopes very much that I will be at home during the Olympics, surrounded by police," he said.

And just what happens to that genie after the Olympics also remains to be seen.

Source: aljazeera sport

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## Lost in migration: Asylum seekers face challenges amid efforts to stem flows of illegal migrants

Against the backdrop of escalating migratory flows and growing concerns over security, the institution of asylum finds itself in need of protection as the line gets blurred between victims who flee persecution and migrants who seek economic opportunity.

**The Story**  
In recent years, with the number of migrants in a rapidly globalizing world reaching an estimated 200 million, the important distinctions between migrants, asylum seekers and refugees have been blurred. With it, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has come a growing degree of "asylum fatigue" in various parts of the world, a process that has threatened and in many cases undermined the protection that the 1951 UN Refugee Convention was intended to provide to refugees and asylum seekers. While illegal migration and security are problems that no state can afford to ignore, the UN refugee agency stresses that control policies should distinguish between illegal migrants seeking better economic opportunities and those people who are in need of international refugee protection.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of industrialized countries — as well as some developing nations — are making no such distinctions, says UNHCR. Ever more often, asylum seekers are portrayed not as refugees fleeing persecution and entitled to sanctuary, but as "illegals", potential terrorists and criminals. A frequently overlooked fact, however, is that asylum seekers and refugees comprise only a very small proportion of the tens of millions of people on the move today, yet they are being inextricably linked with the question of international migration. In a

### "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About"

In 2004, the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) launched an initiative called "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About" to draw attention to important international developments and issues that fall outside the media spotlight. The list includes stories on an array of issues and from several geographical regions. Some of the stories on the list focus on troubling humanitarian emergencies and conflict situations, but they also highlight such vital areas as human rights, health and development. Every issue, we will bring a new story to you, hoping that our little effort to advocate for human rights all over the world would make a difference, some how, some way...  
*The editor*



Asylum seekers from various countries in France, the top receiving country in 2005.

context where governments and electorates are unable to draw a clear distinction between the victims of persecution and the perpetrators of terrorist violence, argues UNHCR, there is an evident need to safeguard the principle of asylum.

#### The Context

- A constant feature of human history, the notion of asylum had been progressively incorporated into international law, culminating in the establishment of the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. By the second half of 2005, no fewer than 146 of the 191 UN Member

States had acceded to these international instruments, which are promoted and supervised by UNHCR.

- The codified principles of asylum set out the rights and obligations pertaining to people who have been obliged to leave their own country and are in need of international protection because of a 'well-founded fear of persecution' on account of their 'race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.'
- Asylum applications in industrialized countries fell sharply in 2005 for the fourth year in a row. The number of asylum applications submitted in

2005 totaled 336,000, or 15 per cent fewer than in the previous years.

- The largest drop in the number of asylum seekers in the last five years was recorded outside Europe. Canada and the United States received 54 per cent fewer asylum requests in 2005 than in 2001, while asylum applications in Australia and New Zealand plummeted by 75 per cent in the same period.
- The largest group of asylum seekers in 2005 was from Serbia and Montenegro, which includes asylum seekers from Kosovo.
- Of the ten leading asylum-seeker nationalities, Iraqis and Haitians rose the sharpest in 2005, both by 27 per cent, while the number of asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Turkey continued to drop steadily.

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## The human cost of 'Fortress Europe':

### Asylum seekers unfairly detained and unfairly expelled

European Union countries are increasingly violating their international obligations on asylum according to three reports released simultaneously last year by Amnesty International to mark World Refugee Day. The reports, covering a range of issues relating to the detention and expulsion of people seeking asylum in the UK, Spain and Italy, show up the terrible human cost of "Fortress Europe".

#### Amnesty International's reports show:

In the UK, Amnesty International estimates that tens of thousands of people who have sought asylum have been detained solely under the country's Immigration Act. Their detention is in many cases protracted, inappropriate, disproportionate and unlawful. For many people who have sought asylum in the UK, languishing in detention has led to mental illness, self-harm and even to people attempting to take their own lives. The report, based on visits to the majority of UK detention facilities, details cases where people presented little risk of absconding but who suffered prolonged misery as a result of their detention.

In Spain, Amnesty International says

the Spanish government's moves to control immigration and the entry of foreign nationals means the right to seek asylum in Spain is in danger of extinction. People fleeing grave human rights violations are being prevented from reaching Spain to seek asylum and obtain protection. The report condemns the serious shortcomings in the attention shown to foreign nationals, both in terms of rescue at sea, and reception facilities on arrival. Amnesty International has also documented the unlawful expulsion of foreign minors in contravention of Spanish law.

In Italy, foreign nationals, including people seeking asylum, are increasingly being placed in detention in violation of international human rights standards. Amnesty International's report details allegations that people in temporary holding centres in Italy have been subjected to physical assault by law enforcement officers and supervisory staff, and to excessive use of tranquillizing drugs. The centres are often overcrowded, unhygienic and with poor medical care. Many of those detained experience great difficulty gaining access to the asylum determination process and challenging the legality of removal orders.

#### Amnesty International's recommendations:

Detention of migrants and people seeking asylum should be treated as a last resort. In each individual case, national authorities should establish that detention is necessary, proportionate and lawful. Detention of vulnerable persons should be avoided.

The decision to detain a person should be automatically and regularly subject to judicial review. People deprived of their liberty should be informed about their legal rights and receive the necessary health care.

No one should be removed from the EU unless specific safeguards are in place to ensure they are not subjected to human rights abuses when sent back to their country of origin. Removal and interception operations should ensure that migrants are treated with respect and dignity and that people seeking international protection have access to asylum procedures.

EU Member States should establish independent monitoring mechanisms to oversee detention and removal of asylum seekers. In addition, EU-wide monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be made part of the remit of the future EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

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