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Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
Which do you think is the highest priority to help women's development in Yemen?

Maternal health care (13%)
Legal protection (1%)
All (56%)
Education (19%)
Political participation (13%)

This edition's question:
Do you think the Yemeni government is serious to tackle issues of its citizens detained in Guantanamo?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

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

Yemeni detainees are the largest group at Guantánamo

By: Amel Al-Ariqi
SANA'A, March 11 — A U.S. lawyer revealed that the U.S. military decided years ago that some Yemeni detainees were eligible for release from the Guantánamo Bay detention camp, but they remain in prison until today.
"Some of your countrymen were cleared for release by the U.S. military years ago. Just days ago, after we threatened legal action, the Pentagon revealed previously classified information to us — the names of Yemeni prisoners at Guantánamo who are eligible for immediate transfer back to Yemen, including three of my clients. Some of the men on the military's list were eligible to return to their home countries at least as early as June 2004," noted Marc Falkoff, who for the past three years has represented 17 Yemenis being detained by the U.S. military at Guantánamo Bay.
A statement by the U.S. Pentagon mentioned that the Yemeni detainees are: Mohammed Mohammed Al-Odaini of Taiz, Sadeq Mohammed Ismail Ibb, Mohammed Sa'eed Bin Salman of Hadramout, Ali Yahya Mahdi Al-Raimi of Sana'a and Adel Sa'eed Al-Haj Abdo of Aden. The Pentagon said it expects to release approximately 80 detainees of various nationalities from Guantánamo Bay.
According to a list the Yemeni gov-

ernment received from the U.S., approximately 107 Yemenis remain at Guantánamo; however, lawyers and human rights activists say 150 Yemeni detainees remain at the camp.
The Guantánamo Bay military detention was opened in January 2002 to house suspected Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters rounded up during the U.S. war to topple the Taliban, the fundamentalist Islamic militia that ruled most of Afghanistan at the time of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
However, Yemeni lawyers and human rights activists insist that most of the Yemeni detainees at Guantánamo, who were arrested in Afghanistan and Pakistan following the fall of the Taliban, have no Al-Qaeda links.
"Most Yemenis arrested in Afghanistan were working as Qur'anic and Arabic language teachers for a monthly salary of \$100 for married teachers and half that for singles," explained Ahmed Arman, a lawyer and human rights activist for Yemen's National Organization for Defending Rights and Liberties, also known as HOOD.
More than five years later, only eight Yemenis have been returned to their homeland, Arman noted, adding that Yemenis comprise the largest population at Guantánamo.
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Yemenis comprise the largest population at Guantánamo. Photo: A detainee dragged by two US Gitmo service soldiers while others are lined up as if they are a firing squad.

War continues, citizens' situation worsens

SA'ADA, March 11 — Tribal sources revealed on Sunday that the situation for citizens in Sa'ada is the worst since the crisis between authorities and Houthi loyalists flared up in June 2004. Most citizens living in districts and remote areas outside the governorate's capital experience great difficulties in accessing necessary foodstuff and medicine.
The source added that government forces are besieging all turbulent areas, including those places where tribes live alongside Houthis, and they now suffer critical food and medicine shortages.
Meanwhile, fierce confrontations are ongoing in various areas, particularly in Matarah, where two Russian-made Mig-29 fighters crashed, but the pilots survived. Saba News Agency quoted a military source who confirmed, "The two fighters crashed Wednesday after-

noon while conducting exercises over Sa'ada."
Further, the Yemeni army is mobilizing additional forces to reinforce those already in Sa'ada as confrontations continue in Bani Mua'ath and Sahar district's Al-Abqur area, a place doubted to accommodate Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, who is leading the battle against the Yemeni army. Sources didn't mention the number of casualties on both sides due to the Yemeni government's imposed media blackout.
Local sources in Sa'ada said last Thursday that Maj. Mahmoud Bishr, chief of Haydan's security strip, died at Sana'a Military Hospital following injuries he sustained in the middle of last week. They mentioned that Bishr and his escorts managed to eliminate a Houthi site after fierce confrontations with them; however, one Houthi fighter shot him and killed his brother and one of his escorts.
Eleven unidentified bodies still are being held at Sa'ada's Al-Salam Hospital and six others at Al-Jumhuri Hospital. Sources point out that the bodies belong to underage individuals and it's unclear to which party they belong.
In related news, military and security checkpoints were introduced at major city entrances and main streets to search for suspects regarding various issues and those linked to Houthis.
Continued on page 2

France honors Yemeni director Al-Salami

SANA'A, March 11 — On behalf of French President Jacques Chirac, French Minister for Cooperation, Development and Francophony, Brigitte Girardin, honored Yemeni director Khadija Al-Salami (When) in recognition of her cinematic works and writings which display both a human and a social aspect, together with her role in developing bilateral relations between Yemen and France.
Within the framework of her recent visit to Yemen, Girardin gave the award to Al-Salami and described her as being a cultural diplomat.
"It is my pleasure to honor a distinct Yemeni lady whose name is synonymous with courage, respect and open-mindedness," noted Girardin, further adding that Al-Salami is a role model to be imitated.
Girardin also recounted the roles Al-Salami played in developing Yemeni-French relations, and pointed out that she has struggled for democracy and human rights alongside standing by the poor.
For her part, Al-Salami expressed her happiness at the honor she received, stressing that she was surprised to get recognition from outside of Yemen, rather than from her own country.
Al-Salami, who is a media consultant at the Yemeni Embassy in Paris, directed many cinematic works which gained widespread popularity and acclaim, and further received many prizes at different international festivals.
Her cinematic works include 'Yemen: Thousand Faces and a Face', 'Socotra: Strange and Golden Island', 'In her Town' and 'Ameena'. Later, she published her book 'Saba's Tears' in English, an autobiography. The book will be published in Arabic at a later date.

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Khadija Al-Salami

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In brief

SANA'A

YLS discusses US lawyer's violations

March 9 — The Sana'a Branch of Yemeni Lawyers Syndicate (YLS) held its meeting last Wednesday, during which participants discussed violations committed by Robin Perie, who claims to be a member of the American Lawyers Syndicate. Through the British Embassy in Sana'a, the U.S. lawyer funded programmes and training courses for Yemeni junior lawyers in coordination with the Human Rights Ministry. He has become the executive consultant of the program. The YLS appointed a defense team to sue the Western lawyer for intervening in Yemen's sovereignty and local affairs.

Al-Thawra daily awards women journalists

March 11 — On Saturday, Al-Thawra Establishment for Press, Printing, and Publishing honoured all the women journalists and workers of the establishment to coincide with International Women's Day. Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Yasin Al-Masaodi, and Manager of Financial and Administrative Affairs, Mohammed Ali Hadi, awarded certificates of merit and monetary awards to all the newspaper's female journalists and workers in recognition of their efforts and contribution to improving the newspaper's performance.

IBB

Vice President meets governorate's officials

March 10 — Vice President, Abdurrabu Mansour Hadi, on Saturday met the Governor of Ibb, Ali Al-Qaisi, and many senior officials in the governorate. During the meeting, Hadi stressed the necessity of making satisfactory arrangements for the 17th Anniversary of Yemen's National Unity celebrations, scheduled to take place in the green city on May 22. He mentioned that there are a number of services, developments, and economic projects, due to be inaugurated during the celebrations, stressing that the concerned officials have to complete work on these projects on time.

ADEN

Italy plans to invest in Yemen

March 10 — During his visit to Aden, Ambassador of Italy to Yemen, Mario Boffo, declared Saturday that his government plans to develop and improve economic ties with Yemen. The Italian envoy discussed with Aden Governor, Ahmad Al-Kuhlani, and Chairman of Aden Trade and Industry Chamber, Mohammed Bamashmous, the possibilities of establishing joint investment projects between the two states in the fisheries sector. The Italian diplomat said that several Italian companies have expressed an interest in exploiting the investment opportunities available in Yemen, as well as to coordinate with Aden Trade and Industry Chamber in this regard.

First-aid courses

March 11 — The Aden Branch of the Yemeni Red Crescent Society started on Saturday two training courses on first aid and midwifery. The first course, which involves 50 trainees from different social groups, concentrates on matters related to the methods and means pursued in first aid and the ways of dealing with injuries and critical cases. Meanwhile, the 30 participants of the second course, which is organized by the society in cooperation with the Gulf Society, receive information about first-aid and the ways of treating women during the different states of pregnancy.

HADRAMOUT

Parliamentary committee concludes Hadramout visit

March 11 — The Parliamentary Education Committee concluded its visit to Hadramout governorate after touring many prominent districts such as Sayoun and Dawan. The committee held several meetings with local council representatives in the governorate and education officials, discussing the most important activities and programs experienced by the education sector in the governorate. Additionally, the meeting participants discussed the persistent problems that hinder education progress such as the lack of schoolbooks, teachers of scientific majors, and girls' education.

Oil minister holds talks with U.S. oil giants

By: Raidan Al-Saqqaf
alsaqqaf@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES, March 10 — Yemeni Minister of Oil and Minerals Khalid Mahfoud Bahah currently is visiting the United States for talks with oil industry representatives, as well as to participate in the March 13-14 Yemen LNG meeting in Houston, Texas.

"This visit is also an opportunity to present to U.S. firms several investment opportunities in Yemen's oil, gas and minerals sector for 2007," he noted.

On the sidelines of the visit, Bahah is to discuss international energy demands and open prospects for cooperating with U.S. industry leaders in Yemen's oil and gas sector.

Bahah most recently held talks with Occidental Petroleum Vice President Nigel Hopkinson and other representatives at the company's Los Angeles headquarters, wherein they discussed the firm's operations in Yemen and how the Yemeni government can further extend its support and facilitate the oil firm even further.

They also discussed topics related to international oil demands, innovation in oil production and exploration technologies, as well as the economics and volatility of oil prices on the international market, emphasizing the importance of expanding existing oil exploration and production facilities in order to meet the increasing demand and maintain an acceptable price for crude oil.



Minister of Oil Khalid Bahah [Which one is he among these several men lined up? For example, center or second from left or right, etc.] is keen to bring the latest oil exploration and production technology to Yemen.

After the meeting, Bahah toured Occidental's offshore oil production plants in Long Beach, Calif., which are constructed on four man-made islands along the West coast. He indicated that he was quite impressed with the company's technological sophistication, specifically its offshore oil exploration and production capabilities. He noted that Yemen still has untapped oil reserves in several offshore blocks, according to geological surveys.

The Yemeni oil minister invited Occidental Petroleum and other U.S.

oil giants to participate in the fourth international round of bidding sometime in mid-2007, which will include several offshore Yemeni blocks with substantial oil and gas reserves.

Bahah expressed Yemen's interest in partnering with renowned oil firms like Occidental Petroleum to further develop Yemen's oil industry and increase its crude oil production. He noted that a unique and historical relationship exists between Yemen and Occidental and that it's important to strengthen this relationship further through additional investment and cooperation in the oil sector.

He further assured the U.S. oil firm that his ministry will go to great lengths to continue providing the company full support and cooperation.

Occidental Petroleum is one of the largest U.S. oil companies, operating in several countries around the world and producing more than 600,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Occidental also is one of the first international oil firms to expand into Yemen in a joint venture with a Canadian firm.

They subsequently have partnered with other companies, including Canadian Nexen and Total E&P of France, to operate four of Yemen's main oil-producing blocks, including a 38 percent interest in the 900 million-barrel Masila field in Block 14. One of the world's largest oil discoveries in the 1990s, Masila field supplies more than half of Yemen's total crude oil production.

Parliamentary committee calls for questioning of minister of agriculture

SANA'A, March 8 — The Agriculture Committee at the Parliament demanded the government question Minister of Agriculture Jalal Faqirah about violations it observed in managing a loan project in the southern governorates amounting to US \$45 million.

The Committee also asked the government not to adjust or change the components of projects financed by foreign loans, unless they get Parliament's consent to do so.

The violations were highlighted in a report issued last February by the Agricultural Committee.

"The committee in charge of the project violated the law and wasted funds on things not pertaining to the

project's purposes, which were to help the achievement of agricultural development and alleviate poverty in those governorates," the report said.

According to the report, an amount equal to US \$24.8 million was allocated for reclaiming 9300 acres of land; however, only about 5 percent was actually exploited, with US \$1.2 million, for that purpose. The report further noted that the project reclaimed just 1000 acres, dug up 22 water wells, installed 12 plumbs and extended 20 km of plastic web, for irrigation purposes, out of a total amount of web amounting to 280 km.

It added that the loan, meant for reclaiming lands, was used for financing other official projects by the

Ministry of Agriculture and implementing training courses for local councils, even though such projects are financed by national and international lands.

Parliament approved the loan agreement in 1998 with an aim to help rural societies improve their lives in Hadramout, Lahj and Abyan governorates, especially those who suffer acute poverty after their agricultural lands were given back to their original owners.

However, the Agriculture Ministry and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation restructured the project without consulting the Parliament, which, the Parliament says, is illegal act.

Report reveals MPs' low attendance

SANA'A, March 7 — According to a report by Parliament's Presidency Board regarding attendance, Members of Parliament Hamoud Atef and Yahya Badraddin Al-Houthi, accused by the Yemeni government of supporting the Sa'ada rebellion, failed to attend any Parliament sessions last year.

MPs Mohammed Ali Abu Bakr Al-Mashhoor and Monassar Ali Monassar didn't fare much better, being absent at 99 percent of such sessions.

The report noted that 13 MPs were absent for anywhere from 63 percent to 87 percent of last year's Parliament sessions, as contrasted with 12 MPs who attended every session, thus achieving a perfect 100 percent attendance rate.

Those ideal MPs attending all sessions were: Amin Al-Selwi, Ansaf Ali Mayo, Zaid Ali Al-Shami, Salem Al-Janadi, Saleh Al-Sharjabi, Abdulaziz Karu, Abdulmalik Al-Wazir,

Mohammed Al-Khadem Al-Wajih, Mohammed Al-Saqqaf, Bilqis Al-Shaddadi, Mahmud Al-Rayishi and Nasser Abdu Arfan.

Speaker of Parliament Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar attended 32 percent of sessions, meaning he was absent for 68 percent, while his deputy Yahya Al-Rayi attended 94 percent of sessions. Other members of Parliament's Presidency Board, Abdulwahab Mahmud and Ja'afar Ba Saleh, attended 63 percent and 81 percent of sessions, respectively.

The report justified the absence of MPs who were appointed cabinet ministers; however, they attended only 15 percent of sessions and the same applies for Aden Governor Ahmad Mohammed Al-Kuhlani, who attended only one session.

The rate of absence for heads of party blocs was as follows: Sultan Al-

Barakani of the General People's Congress was absent at 8 percent of sessions, Sultan Al-Atwani of the Nasserite Unionist Party was absent at 5 percent, Abdurrahman Bafadhl of the Islah Party was absent at 7 percent and Ali Abdurabu Al-Qadhi of the Yemeni Socialist Party was absent at 4 percent.

Several MPs, including Al-Atwani, protested the report, saying it contains unauthentic information, as many MPs scored higher attendance rates because their faces aren't known.

Deputy Speaker of Parliament Al-Rayi said Parliament's secretariat is responsible for any mistakes, adding that many MPs sign the attendance sheet on their colleagues' behalf.

According to Parliament's 2007 general budget, every MP receives YR 5,000 per session and up to YR 1 million per month for administrative and technical work mandated upon them.

Ra'ash villagers return back home

SANA'A, March 11 — About 400 citizens from Al-Soufa and Ra'ash villages returned home after spending many weeks in Al-Udeen's Hardh district. The villagers were forced out by Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Mansour. President Saleh has delegated the Attorney General and security authorities to look into the Ra'ash villagers' complaints.

Lawyer Abdulrahman Barman from the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, known as HOOD, told Yemen Times that villagers came back home after Ibb's Governor guaranteed their safety.

Barman added that Sheikh Mansour, who considers himself a main point of authority in the area, set up check points made from his followers, to display his power before the returning villagers. The villagers came back in a convoy of 400 cars headed by the district's chief of security and local

council members.

He went on to say that there was a clear paramilitary presence in the nearby mountains, and that the Sheikh's followers surrounded the convoy in a valley very close to Ra'ash for many hours. The siege was lifted after many hours of heated arguments. The official parties' representatives kept silent.

The parliamentary committee will prepare a report dealing with the difficulties they faced, and the report will be presented before Parliament during the next round of session, detailing everything about their field visit to the area and their meeting with the displaced people.

Some sources mention that President Saleh's directives were not implemented and further the Ibb Governor informed him that he was unable to implement any against Sheikh Mansour.

Rights group condemns summoning judge

SANA'A, March 11 — The National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, a Yemeni NGO also known as HOOD, condemned the Ministry of Justice's Judiciary Inspection Board for summoning Judge Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Mujahid after he wrote a letter ordering President Ali Abdullah Saleh to attend court.

HOOD expressed resentment that the judiciary board intervened in judges' work, and in a statement, said that it's illegal for the Judiciary Inspection Board to summon the judge, who didn't do anything against the law.

In late February, Al-Mujahid, who heads the Appeals Court's Civil Division, ordered President Saleh to attend a March 3 session, wherein the court would hear an appeal presented by Allaw's Advocacy Foundation regarding the case of Ahmad Ali Bin

Muaili, who has been detained at the Central Prison for five years without clear charges.

The political security apparatus arrested Bin Muaili in 2001 and since then, was sent to the Central Prison in Sana'a.

In January 2006, HOOD sued for compensation in a lawsuit against President Saleh over Bin Muaili's detention, urging the judiciary to oblige the president to pay YR 100 million to Bin Muaili for what he lost during his allegedly unlawful detention.

Bin Muaili established a radio station in Iraqi territory criticizing the Saudi government. After relations between Yemen and Saudi Arabia warmed, Bin Muaili was subjected to imprisonment and oppression by Yemeni officials deferring to Saudi interests, legal sources say.

Continued from page 1

Yemeni detainees are the largest group at Guantánamo

"Fully one-third of the Saudis are back in Saudi Arabia, more than half of the Afghans are home with their families and every single European national has been released from Guantánamo. Yet, more than 100 Yemenis remain at the prison — sitting in solitary confinement on steel beds, deprived of books and newspapers, slowly going insane," Falkoff confirmed.

He added, "The U.S. doesn't hear the voices of the Yemeni people. You aren't speaking loudly enough to your representatives, pressuring them to reach an agreement with the U.S. for the repatriation of your citizens. With respect, some of us are concerned that your politicians don't feel obliged to negotiate the return of your sons and brothers."

Falkoff, who is also a criminal law professor, criticized the Yemeni government, which so far has failed to reach an agreement with the U.S. to return the Yemeni detainees. "We lawyers have been frozen out of the process, so we can't tell you exactly what the hold-up has been, but the Yemeni government appears to be anxious that a handful of these more than 100 detainees don't have adequate proof that they are Yemeni citizens."

He continued, "The Yemeni government also seems concerned that by pledging to the U.S. that it won't torture the Guantánamo detainees, Yemen would be admitting that it does torture other prisoners. If these really

are the Yemeni government's concerns — and I'm only speculating that they are — then surely they aren't significant enough to hold up the repatriation of your countrymen."

"All of the other countries that have agreed to repatriate their countrymen have provided similar assurances about torture, so these quibbles about a handful of men without citizenship papers surely are of trifling importance," he added.

In 2005, Yemen received four of its citizens from Guantánamo and secret U.S. military prisons and put them on trial. Two of the men were convicted in March 2006 of falsifying identification documents and sentenced to three and a half years in prison. None were charged with terrorism-related activities. The same thing happened in December 2006, when Yemeni security took five released Guantánamo detainees into custody.

"We've been informed that three of these prisoners have been released, some of them spent three days in jail and some spent two weeks, but we have no idea about the others," Arman noted, adding that the men were released without putting them on trial.

Khalid Al-Anisi, a lawyer and the executive director of HOOD, stressed that imprisoning these detainees without charge is against the law, commenting, "We've already declared our attitude toward these trials, noting that such trials simply are to justify the term these detainees spent in jail without charge."

War continues, citizens' situation worsens

Some travelers told media outlets that security and armed forces have increased their numbers at highway checkpoints and are intensively checking cars and buses. Further, they are requesting identity cards and asking about travel destinations.

Last Thursday, Aden press web site published a statement signed by several Yemeni expatriates in the United States, wherein they denounced the ongoing war in Sa'ada and called for alleviating the injustices upon its citizens.

Likewise, Yemeni Armed Forces organ September.net published a statement in the name of a Yemeni community in eastern Saudi Arabia, in which they announced their siding with government forces and political leaders against Houthis, whom they called a stray terrorist faction. They further called on all Yemenis to help eliminate them and their followers.

For his part, Shi'ite leader and scholar Issam Al-Emad, who now lives in Qum, Iran and is considered by Iran to be the head of the Shi'ite Council in Yemen, criticized a fatwa issued by scholar Mohammed bin Ismail Al-Amrani last week urging President Ali Abdullah Saleh to eradicate Houthis.

In a letter to Al-Amrani, he stated, "I read your fatwa calling for killing Zaidis in Sa'ada, although you know Allah forbids killing a soul without right justification. You know that the U.S. ambassador to Yemen asked President Saleh to continue killing Sa'ada Zaidis, promising to provide him military and logistical support. You know, dear scholar, that the U.S. aims to shed Muslims' blood, regardless of their doctrines and sects, whether Shi'ites, Sunnis or Sufis. The blood, honor and belongings of those who witness that there is no God but Allah aren't protected under U.S. policy."

It continued, "People expressed surprise at your fatwa, which allows killing destitute and wronged Muslims in Sa'ada. Dear scholar,

the Sa'ada issue can't be resolved by a fatwa, which will turn the issue from bad to worse. This fatwa has made you a partner in killing the deprived residents of Sa'ada. Is it right, when you have this rank in jurisprudence, that you should give the regime the justification to kill Sa'ada citizens? I don't know what you'll reply in the hereafter or what you'll do there."

Concluding his letter, Al-Emad called on Al-Amrani to withdraw his fatwa and forsake his mistake.

In a statement published by Aleshteraki.net, a group of Yemeni opposition activists called for abandoning the war in Sa'ada, declaring that it is of no interest to continue. They believe that continuing the war will lead to adverse consequences, including tearing national unity, draining scarce resources and incurring further burdens, together with harming Yemen's reputation.

Summing up their statement, the activists requested an immediate cease-fire, serious treatment of the war's consequences, a prohibition of similar civil wars and firming up national peace to enable Yemen to achieve sustainable development and combat poverty and unemployment.

They also noted that the Yemeni authorities should know that this is the information age, thus, it's impossible to block out what's happening in Sa'ada.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi visited Iran last week for a ministerial meeting of the league of nations overlooking the Indian Ocean. He also conveyed two letters from President Saleh to the supreme leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addressing bilateral relations between both nations and clarifications regarding the events in Sa'ada.

Upon his return on Friday, Al-Qirbi noted that Iran rejected any intervention in Yemen's national affairs.

France to grant Yemen 100 million euros

SANA'A, March 10 — The French government is to grant Yemen around 100 million Euros in order to enhance development in the country, French Minister for Cooperation, Development and Francophony, Brigitte Girardin announced.

In a press conference held Thursday, the French minister said the aid comes in the context of the distinctive relations which both countries enjoy, and pointed out that Yemen is listed among the countries which have a priority in France's international agenda.

She also noted that Yemen faces economic problems, and that this prompted France to extend assistance to help the country overcome its

difficulties and benefit from France's experience.

The aid is due to cover the period 2007 to 2012, and involves infrastructure and agricultural projects, and it is in the form of interest-free loans. 40 million Euros will be paid this year in to projects set by the Yemeni government.

According to Girardin, Yemen favors France's attention, particularly after Yemen was included within the list of countries in which France has an interest, adding that she will exert great efforts to increase the volume of aid provided to the country over the coming five years.

Meanwhile, she announced that the French Development Agency (FDA)

will open its bureau in Sana'a next September.

Girardin, who arrived Sana'a on Thursday, met with Yemeni Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi, wherein both sides signed an agreement on bilateral cooperation concerning issues relating to wise governance, enhancing the role of women in society, cultural diversity and scientific research.

Al-Arhabi said the visit comes in the context of the good relations between the two countries, and further aims to implement the decisions of the December 2006 summit involving President Saleh and French President Jacques Chirac.

Chirac poised to end political career

By: Crispian Balmer

PARIS (Reuters) — French President Jacques Chirac is expected to confirm on Sunday he will not seek reelection, bringing the curtain down on more than 40 years of frontline politics.

He leaves behind a legacy of strong, symbolic gestures but meagre concrete results.

Chirac is due to make a televised address to the nation at 8 p.m. (1900 GMT) to say he will not seek a record third mandate at next month's presidential elections, officials and commentators say.

Campaigning for the April and May vote has been raging for months with conservative candidate Nicolas Sarkozy, Socialist Segolene Royal and centrist Francois Bayrou locked in a tight three-way race.

Chirac, 74, has clung on to the notion that he might run again so as not to become a lame-duck president, but a string of setbacks and a bout of ill health have left little doubt in most people's minds that he would not try to hold on to power.

The president is likely to defend his record on Sunday, pointing to the way he has protected French interests on the world stage, stood up to the United



French President Jacques Chirac holds a news conference at the end of a EU leaders summit in Brussels March 9. French President Jacques Chirac is expected to announce on Sunday that he will not run for a third term in office after 12 years in power.

States over the Iraq war and promoted tolerance at home.

But critics say he has little meaningful economic or social reform to show for his time in charge.

"Overall ... it's seen as a very weak presidency, especially in the second term," said Daniela Schwarzer, an expert on France at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

A Political weathervane

During his reign, Chirac ended compulsory military service, stood firm against the increasingly popular far right and was the first president to acknowledge that France's Vichy regime had assisted the Nazis in the World War Two Holocaust.

He also played an important role in ending the civil war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and won widespread popularity

in the Arab world for the way he stood up U.S. President George W. Bush over the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

He also suffered some spectacular reverses -- notably in 2005 when the French voted in a referendum to reject the European Union constitution, diminishing his domestic standing and weakening his position as a major international player.

His career was marked by policy flip-flops, which won him the nickname the Chameleon Bonaparte or Girouette (weathervane).

At one point, he fiercely opposed the EU, then supported it; he used to champion U.S.-style liberal economics, then promoted protectionism.

Others nicknamed him Houdini because of his ability to find a way out of difficult situations, while President Georges Pompidou referred to him simply as the "bulldozer" for his ability to get things done.

Chirac has yet to throw his weight behind his conservative heir apparent, Sarkozy, and is unlikely to do so on Sunday.

Relations between the two men have been strained ever since Sarkozy deserted Chirac's side in 1995 to support an alternative rightist candidate who was ultimately defeated.

Iraq warns neighbors to stay out

(Al-Jazeera) — Iraq's prime minister has urged regional powers, including Iran and Syria, not to use the country as a proxy battleground.

Nuri al-Maliki made the plea in the opening speech of a conference in Baghdad on Saturday aimed at ending sectarian violence in Iraq and stopping the violence from spreading throughout the region.

The conference provided a rare opportunity for the United States to meet Iran and Syria, its bitter rivals in the region.

"There was meeting, discussions and consultation at times" between the US and Iranian delegations, Hoshiyar Zebari, the Iraqi foreign minister, said.

"It was a lively exchange, not only with them but the Syrians also," he said "[There were] exchanges regarding

relations between the two in Iraq, not anywhere else. That's why they were very constructive."

Zalmay Khalilzad, US ambassador to Iraq, confirmed that he had spoken directly to Iranian officials.

Iran denied holding one-to-one talks with the US delegates.

'Moral responsibility'

Al-Maliki said that Iraq needed the support of its neighbours and the world in stopping the sectarian violence between Shia and Sunni Muslims, which he said could spill over to other countries in the region.

"We call on all to take moral responsibility by adopting a strong and clear stance against terrorism in Iraq and co-operate in stamping out forces of terror," al-Maliki said.

He demanded that "regional or international states refrain from interfering or influencing Iraq's state of affairs through supporting a certain sect, ethnic group or party".

"Confronting terrorism means halting any form of financial support and media or religious backing, as well as logistical support and the flow of arms and men who transform themselves into bombs that kill our children, women and elders, and destroy our mosques and churches."

Security committee

The 16 nations at the long-awaited conference agreed to establish a committee to look at security co-operation, as well as two others focusing on Iraqi refugees and energy issues.

Zebari described the meeting "con-

structive and positive" and said Iraq and its neighbours had decided to hold another mid-level in Turkey next month.

The delegates, however, failed to agree on a date and venue for a follow-up conference at a higher, ministerial level.

"What the conference achieved was exploration and preparation, explorations of the different positions of people attending this conference and preparation for the upcoming conference in Istanbul," Jasim Azawi, the presenter of Al Jazeera's *Inside Iraq* programme, said.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador to Iraq, urged Iraq's neighbours to do more to stop the flow of fighters, weapons and sectarian propaganda contributing to the violence, saying the

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Anti-Eta protesters flood Madrid

(Al-Jazeera) — Tens of thousands of demonstrators have rallied in Madrid to vent their anger at what they say is the Spanish government's "surrender" to Basque separatist group Eta.

Protesters are frustrated by the government decision to grant house arrest to a serial killer from Eta after he fell dangerously ill on hunger strike.

Protesters thronged Madrid's main 12-lane avenue in one of the biggest Eta-related protests ever seen.

They marched behind a banner declaring, "Spain for freedom. No more concessions to Eta".

Resignation calls

The protesters shouted for the resignation of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, the socialist prime minister. Asuncion Casanova, a business consultant, said: "This is the last straw. We're fed up with this man trying to dismember Spain."

"I used to think Zapatero was an exciting character, with purpose and ideas, but now, no way."

Opponents of the government have taken to the streets on many occasions in the past year, but Saturday's protest is the first to be organised by the Popular Party.

On Friday night thousands attended smaller PP protests in regional capitals across Spain.

Serial killer

PP leaders have recently verbally attacked Zapatero while laying flowers at the spot where Inaki de Juana Chaos, the prisoner in question, killed 12 police in a 1986 car bombing.

De Juana was moved to a hospital in the Basque Country last week after being chained to a Madrid hospital bed and force-fed during a 114-day hunger strike.

Once he recovers sufficiently, he will serve the remainder of an 18-month sentence at home.

He has already served 18 years for 25 murders but went on hunger strike after being given a new term for making threats.



Saturday's rally was one of the biggest Eta-related protests ever seen [EPA]

The government says de Juana would have starved himself to death if he had not been moved, and on Friday Zapatero said his government would not change its decision.

Opinion polls in both left and right-leaning newspapers show a slim majority of Spaniards think the government was wrong to grant house arrest to de Juana.

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Stories from the psych hospital

Fatima Al-Ajel
fatimafnfr@yahoo.com

Every day people hear many stories; some are happy while others end sadly. One place from where such stories come is the psych hospital. People expect only to hear about people enduring suffering in their lives. The following stories concern various people and each has a different reason and ending. Sometimes we need to read such stories, not to bring sadness to our hearts but to learn and understand more about life.

Olafat and Suffering: Companions in a journey of despair and homelessness

The hardest and most alarming cases among the patients that have undergone treatment at the psychiatric hospital are the homeless. These patients have no family or friends that can receive them (sometimes even if they do have family, they are rejected, regardless of being related or not) post-hospitalization. Olafat Al-Ramiy, a 15 year old, is one such patient I recently

met at the psychiatric hospital. She is like many children who have lost their families for one reason or another and end up homeless.

"Are you a journalist? I see you have a camera and you interviewed many patients. Why don't you interview me?" She approached me and I thought she was surprisingly lucid for a psychiatric patient. She wanted to tell me her story, and like most people, I had thought normality was not part of a psychiatric patient's life. Yet here she was, lucid, and I was curious to know more about her.

"My story is long. I was born in Hadhramout. My mother died when I was five years old, and my father has been missing since the 1994 war. My mother had no family, only neighbors that took care of me for three years after her death. Then they told me to leave the house, there was nothing more they would do for me. That day I started my life's journey with suffering as my companion."

"I was on the streets, alone. I knew no one. For a while I was put in a juvenile center, and then into an orphanage. I was kept there for more than three years, and I was able to study until the third grade. Unfortunately, I was a very

unruly child, fighting with everyone around me for no apparent reason. I was rude to teachers, never following instructions." Her life without the guiding hand of a parent or near relatives made her anxious and stressed. She felt she wasn't like many of the children she saw. Yet I wonder, growing up in an orphanage as she did, she would have met many who were in the same state of affairs as she - motherless, fatherless.

The very idea of being alone opened an empty void before her. She felt her life held no meaning and should not go on. "I tried killing myself many times." She had used a knife and medication. Her case worsened; the orphanage administration had decided it was time to have her confined at the psychiatric hospital.

Now, after treatment she says she feels relaxed and better, yet admits that she does get anxious quickly. This concerns me because anxiety is an inhibiting factor in people diagnosed with mental disorders. Could her anxiety escalate and bring on another crisis? Who would see it? Who would take her to the doctor? Would anyone notice? Would anyone care?

She spoke a little about her dreams for the future, "I want to be a lawyer and win for the oppressed their rights and to make them happy ..." This fills you with hope, but she stops mid-sentence, overcome by a deep sadness, "But... I will be back on the streets shortly. It is just a dream!" I tried to assure her of a better future, but that internal voice of hers revealed itself through her silence, 'you know my situation and the difficulties I face', telling me wordlessly that mine were empty words.

After talking to the media personnel, I realized this child would soon leave the hospital to land homeless on the streets. The hospital was releasing her to no one's care. I wonder at the answers to the question she asked aloud, "Will I meet my father one day? Is he still alive? What is he doing now if he is alive? Does he know he has a daughter living alone on the streets?"

More importantly, though never uttered, was 'Would he care if he did?'

Before I left, she held my hand and said "please pray for me that I can find my father and fulfill my dream." "I will" I said, and then I left.

Olafat might, however, go back to the juvenile center to live, I was told by the media personnel.

Struggling wife and her husband's ingratitude

In a small house, they were living happily together. The house had no furniture, food or things to satisfy their basic needs, but it was full of love. The husband worked hard and the wife cared for the kids. For more than 20 years, this family lived in such poor conditions. Years went by, however, and the husband became a rich businessman supported by his faithful wife. Suddenly, the husband left his wife without reason and married again.

"My mother has been ill for 13 years. The shock of my father leaving her and marrying her best friend after 20 years of struggles was just too much for her to handle. She never imagined her husband would even think of hurting her with a word, let alone leave her after accumulating wealth for another woman." Misk, the daughter of the patient commented.

"Normally she lives her life as usual until she gets mad because of seeing my father, or when she is left alone to think about her life. Then she goes into a mood where all she repeats is the sentence - I love Ahmad-

Many times she tried to kill him when he came to visit us. Her love turned to hatred. One day she took a knife to kill my father while he was sleeping at noon. Luckily we stopped her before any harm was done. But she couldn't have gone through with it any way as she broke down, crying the same sentence 'I love Ahmad' Misk said crying.

The view of her husband's murder While I was taking photos of the hospital, a patient came up to me and



Olafat's suffering will continue unless she finds her father or a human rights organization adopts her.

requested I take photos of her. "Take three photos for me- one for you and two for my brothers," she said. When I asked the nursing supervisor Amat- Al-Razaq Al-Aansari about this patient's story and how she came to the hospital, she replied that the patient's name was Latifa who had suffered trauma right after her wedding. Her husband was killed in front of her on the third day of

the marriage. Her brother subsequently forced her to marry again. But this time her new husband abused her. She was divorced six months later. She returned to live with her brothers, subjected to cruelty until her mind snapped and she went insane. "Two weeks ago her brothers brought her to the hospital to dispose of her. They never came back".



Latifa requested that I take three photos, one for us and two for her brothers.

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New generation prefers boy-girl relationships

Although the relationship between man and woman is viewed with suspicion, the new generation of Yemenis is turning away from their conservative social habits and traditions, as far as the relationship between man and woman is concerned.

By: Nawal Zaid
For Yemen Times

Yemen is a conservative society that doesn't allow relationships between the sexes; therefore, Yemeni youths prefer making relationships without their parents' or relatives' knowledge.

Friendship between opposite genders differs from one society and culture to another. In talking about such a relationship, we hear what's known as boyfriend and girlfriend, which is a legal relationship. When a girl reaches age 18, she becomes responsible for herself, with all rights and freedoms to live her own independent life.

This type of relationship is acceptable for some youths in Arab and Islamic countries; however, Yemen is a tribal-governed society with its own traditions and cultures, wherein a girl isn't allowed to have a boyfriend and vice versa. Yemeni society doesn't accept girls having friendships with boys at school or college - they can't even shake hands with boys.

But nowadays, Yemeni youth no longer are adhering to these societal rules. Secret, unofficial and 'tourist' marriages have become very common as educated young men and women have become more open and influenced by Western societies.

Yemeni society is very conservative and doesn't allow a woman to form a

relationship with a man or vice versa. Additionally, in Islam, a woman is forbidden to sit somewhere alone with a man when there's no one except them, a rule many Yemenis still believe.

In major cities like Sana'a, Taiz and Aden, it's acceptable for educated Yemenis to form relationships with women, whereas others completely reject the idea, just as it's rejected in rural areas, which represent 75 percent of Yemen's 20 million inhabitants.

"I have many women friends at work, but I refuse when a man and woman's relationship develops into a sexual one," notes Yahya Abdullah Al-Rabouei, who works in the Presidential Office.

A suspicious relationship

Many Yemenis view the relationship between a man and a woman with suspicion. If a man is seen talking to a woman, others immediately think he's trying to flirt with, date or seduce her.

"When a woman talks with a man, whether on the street or at college, people think evil of them," says 26-year-old Nasser Al-Hamami, adding that this occurs due to lack of cultural understanding between people.

"For most Yemenis, it's not permissible for a man to speak with a strange woman. When they see a man talking to a woman, they immediately think he's flirting with or dating her," he adds.

Hana Al-Matari, a 23-year-old Sana'a University student, says she's in favor of relationships between men

and women and doesn't care what others say. "Frankly, I encourage relations between boys and girls. I don't care what people will say about me," she affirms.

A new trend in friendship

Some Yemeni youths who worry about social traditions turn to the internet seeking relationships outside of their families' knowledge. These are known as cyber-relations.

"It's easy for both sexes to fall in love or form other types of relationships through chat programs. Thousands of youths do this in our society," Al-Hamami notes.

Official statistics for 2000 showed that the percentage of internet subscribers was 3.51 for every 10,000 people. During the second half of 2002, it was 4.7 percent for every 10,000 people and 8 percent for every 10,000 people by the end of 2002.

In 2000, there were 36,600 computers, which is one computer for every 500 citizens, and 0.82 percent for every 100 people in 2002. Statistics at that time showed that the number of computers in Yemen was 140,000.

Actually, many Yemenis prefer to form relationships through the internet. Such relationships sometimes end in love, marriage or nothing at all. "I like to meet girls on chat programs because we can see and talk to each other without being worried and we can talk freely," comments 22-year-old Ali Mohammed, adding that he has several female friends.

Sana'a University psychological science professor Abdulsalam Ishaish says relations between men and women begin at college or work, but are limited at first. "The relationship sometimes develops into deeper emotions. It's no problem if it ends in love and marriage," he adds.

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Words of Wisdom



At this juncture of human history, the lies of politicians have hit record levels. It may be that the lies of politicians have been at about the same level throughout history, but that now we are more aware of them given the extent of information flow. Even if that were the case, I contend that Yemeni politicians are working hard to hit the Guinness Book of Records in this aspect.

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

OUR
OPINIONIncidents from a
country where human
life has no value

A few days ago a young man followed a girl from school to her home eve-teasing her on the way. When she reached home she complained to her brother who stormed out to thrash him. Unfortunately he was the one who got the thrashing as the stalker gathered four of his friends and beat the girl's brother badly. The next day the brother avenged by killing all five men.

Local reports confirm that every day there are at least 100 people killed everyday around the republic because of disputes between locals, whether in tribal areas or the cities. This number does not include the casualties because of the war in Sa'ada, where the death toll among both military and rebels has exceeded 300 since the beginning of the year.

Earlier this month, two strong tribes fought for more than a week over a 25 square kilometres land. The battle included both light and heavy arms ranging from daggers to bazookas. Members of both tribes, including young children are living in fear, looking over their shoulders whenever they walk the streets because they know they are targeted.

An old incident that was told some time ago reported a man in one of the most "modern" roads in Sana'a, Hadda Road, throwing grenades at some street vendors because they disturbed his sleep on a weekend. Luckily no one died in that incident.

There are three types of people in Yemen, a bellicose, a doormat and the indifferent. The first kind, which are the majority in Yemen, are those who are used to the rough ways of living and are mostly tribal people in rural areas who don't acknowledge the state's authority, don't abide by the law and are armed to the teeth. The second kind, are unfortunately the educated peaceful citizens who just want to get by. They do whatever they are told and always turn the other cheek even if that includes losing a number of teeth in the process. The third category is of those living in ivory towers or their own version of the reality. They are people who have a fixed routine everyday and hardly have any interaction with the common people as they isolate themselves from the community. This type also includes diplomats and the happy tourists who come and enjoy the best this country can offer, and then return to their countries unharmed, most of the time.

You do the math.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

How to reform education?

By: Saleh Basurrah

Higher education in Yemen has remarkably developed today since the first universities, Sana'a and Aden, were established in 1970. At that time, the number of university students didn't exceed 300 in the two universities combined. There were only 7 - 10 Yemeni teachers and the rest of the academic staff was non-Yemeni.

But now, the country has 7 government universities and more than 10 private universities and colleges, with more than 240 thousand students in government universities and around 25 thousand in the private higher education institutions. In Sana'a University alone there are 1,400 academic staff, and there are around 600 additional members being prepared to join the university once they complete their higher education studies abroad. The Yemeni government universities have up to 5 thousand workers and the number is expected to increase after establishing Amran University, the project of which is underway.

In the past, there was no Minister of Higher Education in Sana'a or Aden. This ministry was established after the national unity in 1990, but was abolished and re-established in 2001. The ministry sent more than 7 thousand B.A., M.A. or Ph.D. scholars to 46 countries.

Now that the numbers have been established, let us talk about quality of education. Because today, Yemeni universities can only accommodate between 60 to 70 thousand students each year while high school graduates exceed 180 thousand each year. This means around 60% of school graduates are not enrolled in universities.

Therefore, the ministry of higher education must realign its educational strategies in many aspects. For one, we must study the market needs and not repeat themselves in specializations. For example, if Aden University is to focus on marine and biology disciplines, Dhamar can excel in agriculture, dam construction and veterinarian studies while Hudaidah University can identify physics and arts as their specialization...etc.

The idea is that 87 percent of

students are enrolled in social sciences and humanities, compared to only 23 percent of the students are majoring in applied sciences.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is not the only party concerned with tackling any issues associating with the quality of the educational outputs, rather the three ministries responsible for education should cooperate in this regard. These are the ministries of education, higher education and scientific research, and vocational education and technical training.

There is also a problem in the educational structure and its phases starting from primary education until higher studies. There is a problem in quality that gets carried over from one level to another and the weakness increases over time.

The concerned authorities have to examine whether education and its components cope with the scientific and cognitive development in the world. For now, people without an access to computer are called illiterate but not those who don't read and write. We are in the age of scientific and cognitive revolution. If one doesn't renew his/her information within 24 hours, he/she will become illiterate. To teach students via the CDs or Data Show, teachers themselves have to be trained on computer while authorities should reconsider the school buildings as 70 - 80 students in a single class minimizes the learning chance. We should reconsider the morning and afternoon shifts in primary and secondary schools as students move into and out of classes at noon like sardine cans.

Students' talents should be developed since a student is not an object that memorizes things to give them out. The authorities need to modify the secondary school system after examining whether this system copes with demands of the time. Secondary school leavers have to be prepared for the university, not through the literary and scientific sections in the secondary education systems, but additional two years have to be added to the system to investigate the students' aptitudes.

The education hierarchy is not correct. Those who completed primary school join secondary schools and secondary school graduates move into universities. Such a fact requires reviewing the education hierarchy. Around 240 thousand students are enrolled in higher education compared to less than 15 thousand students, who joined technical training institutes, and such a fact is a negative aspect of the hierarchy. Most of high school leavers should join technical training institutes and community colleges instead of universities. The problem, which is persisting in the underdeveloped countries, confused the university facilities and plans at all levels.

The large number of secondary school graduates find themselves unqualified for the labor market. They leave schools to join universities. They have no skills but theoretical classes preparing them for the university but not for the labour market. Such a large number of high school leavers help increase unemployment rates, thereby leading to severe poverty and numerous social and economic issues.

The same problem persists in the university. So, the teaching process needs be reviewed and investigate whether the Yemen universities teach only theoretical classes or theoretical classes and skills.

The judge graduates from the Faculty of Law but is unable to issue a legal verdict nor can he perform any advocacy duties. Another example is that of an engineer, who graduated from the Department of Mechanical Engineering but is unable to maintain his car. The fact is traceable back to the lack of skills and practical classes. Education is a complete system necessitating coordination between the three ministries concerned with education during the implementation of secondary education, higher education and vocational education and technical training strategies. We have three ministries that serve a unified purpose under any circumstances.

Poor skills

Professor Saleh Ali Basurrah is the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Prior to this, he was the rector of Sana'a University.

Professor Saleh Ali Basurrah is the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Prior to this, he was the rector of Sana'a University.

SILVER LINING

Jeopardy of Sada'a
fight going religious

Two weeks ago, I talked about the mad clashes between the government troops and the al-Houthi rebels in the rugged mountains of Sada'a and the question of the expelled citizens of al-Ja'ashin in Ibb. I said that there is no justification for the armed rebellion. The government has to act to prevent any sort of such insurgences which would embroil the country into chaos and disorder. But, giving a religious motivation for the fight in Sada'a and the issuance of religious edicts or Fattwas, supporting the fight against al-Houthis is really a serious issue. We should not look for a religious background or justification for attacking the rebels; those people should not be cracked down because of their religious beliefs but because of being outlawed, using force against the state. These people are free to espouse any dogma or thought, but they are not free to break down law and order and lead an armed rebellion which would affect all the citizens.

I understand we do not need any religious edict just like that of the highly respected cleric Mohammed al-Amrani to back up the military operations going on in Sada'a, though he did not call them infidels as some other mosque sermons preachers.

We all do not blame the government for cracking down the rebels who refused all sorts of initiatives of reconciliation and ceasefire and are fighting for nonsensical reasons. This is because those people having sympathy with the rebels or sharing their religious thoughts would feel this fight is religiously motivated. Consequently, the religious gap would expand tremendously, causing many problems. We do not want to see the Iraq model staged here in Yemen, regardless of the differences in the situation of the two countries.

Last week, the capital has been a stage for armed confrontations between gunned tribesmen from Al Awadh tribe of al-Baidha and others from Sinhan, the clandestine tribe of the president of the country. Armed tribesmen from Sinhan killed the little child Taha al-Awadhi after they failed to kidnap him following a dispute with his father. The tribe of Al Awadh demanded the authorities to interfere and arrest the predators. The interior ministry gave deaf ears to their warnings that the law should be enforced by holding the killers accountable. Given the interior ministry failure to address their legitimate demand of arresting the predators, the result is that they took the law into their hands and wanted to take revenge. Then, the interior ministry interfered and arrested some people of the warring tribesmen.

The stand of the government towards the dilemma of the people of al-Ja'ashin in Ibb is really disgraceful. The people have been tenting in Sana'a in lookout for a solution to their problem caused by the influential Sheikh and member of the Shoura Council Mohammed Ahmed Mansur but to no avail. Even the parliament failed to investigate into the case. Does the government want these helpless people to take the law into their hands and carry suicide attacks against their oppressor?

By and large, if the government does not respect the law and deal with the people on an equal basis, the law of the jungle would dominate. I am afraid that the result might be more violence and probably more insurgences here and there. In fact, the people want to see a serious act on the part of the state to enforce law and order in many parts of the country as they see now in Sada'a.

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



By: Mohammed
Al-Qadhi

SKETCHED
OPINION



By Samer

Letters to the Editor

Politics a game of words

Politics is sorted to be a game of words, so in case a nation or country wish to present their fair case and gather international support for it there should be a set of steps before filing the case to the international counter.

1. Speech message

The world is no longer that of the 17th or 18th century that it may think of the background of the story, yet we are in materialistic world where every thing is measured with the income that is expected to come. our grave mistake is that our speeches are to great extent vacant, only one out of ten words is said with a purpose. to present a case we need fat speech that in every sentence conduct a message. I am quoting a speech said by Israeli official "we really want peace with palastinians but did not have real partners" this speech forms the international ideology: that is: Israel saved no mean to reach peace and it is mainly palastinians who are savages, so any action is held by Israel against those savages is counted as self defence.

2. Who is in need for whom

We should bear in mind that friendship relation does not matter nowadays, and with a glimpse of a moment a friend can be an enemy for interest conflicts, so lets evade dreams and know that a

cheeky lady is not loved, but for her youth. what I mean is to speak before the international committee as exchangers not as beggers.

Ba Matraf
bamatraf1984@yahoo.com

India and the Sri Lanka solution

The prominent Indian print & electronic media for the last one week is disseminating the news & stories of (i)- imminent bloodshed in Sri Lanka in view of the failure of truce brokered by international community between thoroughly brutalized both Sri Lankan Government & LTTE, and (ii)- the need for India to immediately intervene, also in order to tackle the likely huge influx of Tamils from Sri Lanka to India.

But India is finding it difficult to intervene in this matter on account of:-

- (1)- Fiasco of Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) experiment in Sri Lanka.
- (2)- Murder allegedly by LTTE in 1991 of ex-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (responsible for sending IPKF).
- (3)- Despite law of India which defines Hindus as inclusive of so called Santani Hindus (forming 95 % of Indian Hindus) Buddhists, Jains & Sikhs, the constitutionally secular India has degenerated into a majoritarian morbid communal India biased in favor of Sanatani Hindus and against not only

minority community the Muslims but also against Buddhists especially in relation to Sri Lanka problem.

(4)- India not mustering enough courage in taking a lead for the formation of Federation of Democratic Secular SAARC countries (the only solution to this terrorism infested troubled region of Indian sub continental south Asia).

But taking the advantage of fast emerging globalization India as a regional leader ought to take the lead & first step towards Federation of Democratic Secular SAARC countries by inviting Sri Lanka (other countries may follow gradually) to join hands with India for making this Federation a reality in the interest of protecting the human rights, of Sri Lankans (who are reportedly soon going to be in a blood bath), and also if:-

(A)- Secular forces in India have to prevail (in tandem with the secular forces of other SAARC countries).

(B)- Sonia Gandhi the widow of Rajiv Gandhi and de-facto ruler of India wants to prove that the martyrdom of her husband has not gone in vain.

World community ought to impart its influence and good will for this first step towards Federation of Democratic Secular SAARC countries in the interest of human rights in this region of south Asia.

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Yemen Press Review

By: Adel Al-Khawlanj



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, An Organ of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, March 6

Main Headlines

- Fierce confrontations between the army and Al-Houthi rebels in Bani Muadh, 11 people including 5 troops die in the fighting
 - NUPO Secretary-General holds authorities accountable for kidnapping Al-Wahdawi editor and raiding the newspaper's office
 - Ibb governor prevents the Parliamentary Fact-Finding Committee from visiting Al-Ja'ashen where a tyrannous sheikh oppresses citizens.
 - Yemeni Specialist Party Secretary-General appointed Chairman of the Joint Meeting Parties' Higher Council
 - Teaching staff files a lawsuit against Sana'a University Rector
 - Two Sanhan tribesmen killed in Sana'a armed confrontations
 - Swiss Federal Court clears Yemenis of Riyadh bombing charges
- The newspaper reported that the Swiss Federal Court acquitted last week eight Yemeni nationals, an Iraqi and a Somali from Riyadh bombing charges. The ten people were arrested in January 2004 on suspicion of belonging to Al-Qaeda Network and supporting the terrorist operations in the Saudi capital city of Riyadh.
- The paper added that media sources denied that the Swiss court ordered compensating the suspects with a sum of 60 – 90 thousand French Franc, but the Swiss Attorney-General Claud Nikati opposed to the verdict and vowed to appeal

against it. The media sources pointed out that the Swiss Attorney-General relied on the evidence of witnesses, who are policemen in the federal court, while accusing the ten Arab nationals of terrorist acts.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress
Monday, March 5

Main Headlines

- Saleh: our unified community rejects extremism and all the forms of fanaticism and seditions
 - Foreign Minister: terrorists use arms against the state and its institutions, the Constitution and Law uphold confronting terrorists
 - Several elements of the terrorist gangs and traitors killed in different parts of Sa'ada
 - Qatar has new program for the UN Population Fund in Yemen
 - Civil Service Ministry concludes a study on the government job role
 - Yemen and France sign partnership document, youth and sports support project
 - Yahya named Man of Youth Development and Peace in the world
 - Vice President: the cabinet is serious to fight corruption and punish corrupt officials
- The paper's lead story reads that President Ali Abdullah Saleh confirmed that the Yemeni society is Muslim and unified and rejects extremism, arrogance and all the forms of sectarian seditions and fanaticism. The newspaper quoted Saleh as saying that Yemeni people coexist with each other in an atmosphere of love, sympathy, forgiving and solidarity.

The statesman mentioned that religious scholars have to play a great role in protecting Islam from extremists and terrorist, hinting to Al-Houthi-led rebellion in the northern governorate of Sa'ada. He added that religious scholars and mosque preachers must increase awareness of people about the risks of terrorism to Islam and Muslims.



Al-Tajamu Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Unionist Congregation Party (YUCP)
Monday, March 5

Main Headlines

- Saudi authorities follow up the case of French nationals' murderers, who fled to the Yemeni territory
 - YUCP mourns death of the famous poet Mohammed Hussein Haiham
 - Secretary-General of the Yemeni Socialist Party warns of sectarian conflicts
 - 20 Aden citizens detained after gunmen raided their homes
 - Military escalates operations against Sa'ada rebels, Parliament rescinds Yahya Al-Houthi's immunity
 - Sa'ada fighting casualties on the rise
 - Judge interrogated after he summoned President Saleh to trial for imprisoning a citizen without charge
- The newspaper quoted a human rights organization as saying the Judicial Inspection Authority (JIA) summoned an appeal court judge for interrogation after he sent a letter to President Saleh demanding him to stand a trial for imprisoning a citizen without any charge.
- Mohamed Naji Allaw, Chairman of the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, known as Hood,

said the appeal court held its first session regarding the citizen's imprisonment in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Legal Affairs. The organization denounced referring the appeal court judge to the JIA in the Ministry of Justice.



Al-Nass Independent Weekly
Monday, March 5

Main Headlines

- Yahya Al-Houthi enjoys the ruling party's immunity after MPs voted for rescinding his parliamentary immunity
 - MP Abdurrazaq Al-Hejri denies reports saying he refused to vote for rescinding Al-Houthi's parliamentary immunity
 - Bin Mu'ailli's lawsuit against President Saleh provokes controversy over the law of higher ranking officials
 - Capital's West Prosecution summons suspects involved in the illegal imprisonment of the woman citizen Anisa Al-Shu'aibi
 - Parliament demands questioning two cabinet officials for wasting public money
 - Armed clashes break out between Al Awadh and Sanhan tribes after killing the child Taha Al-Awadhi over land disputes
 - Victims of municipality workers on the rise amid indifference of courts to try perpetrators
- The newspaper criticised the daily killings of street vendors by municipality workers, who exploit the non-reinforcement of judiciary and human rights laws. The paper quoted Khalid Al-Anisi, a human rights activist and lawyer, as saying he doesn't pin any hope in the authorities to put a stop to the murder of poor

citizens, who strive hard to earn livelihood, at the hands of municipality officials.

Al-Anisi regretted, "As the concerned parties in the government are not serious to end the phenomenon, such inhuman crimes are bound to multiply. Those, who open fire on innocent citizens, believe that they won't be held accountable for their conducts.



Al-Wahdah Comprehensive Political Weekly
Tuesday, March 7

Main Headlines

- 100 investment opportunities before April's Investment Opportunity Exploration Conference in Yemen
 - Cabinet approves establishing the Corporation of Ports and Land Transportation
 - Legal Affairs Minister: Amending Parties Law aims to make political parties stronger
 - Authorities reduce income taxes, facilitates tax collection procedures
 - Procedures to qualify Yemen for Millennium Challenge Account funds
 - Parliamentary report attributes poor healthcare in Al-Jawf to financial and administrative corruption
- The newspaper reported that the Parliamentary Health and Population Committee released a report, of which a copy was obtained by Al-Wahdah weekly, stressing the necessity of inquiring about the fate of the money allocated for the Drug Fund in Al-Jawf governorate.
- The report revealed that financial and administrative corruption in the fund is responsible for the poor healthcare in the governorate. It added that the fund offi-

cials wasted a sum of 1.2 million Euros, which the German Government donated to the Drug Fund via GTZ for restoring Al-Hazm General Hospital.

The report insisted on interrogating those involved in the case and referring them to the concerned judicial authorities.



Al-Balagh Independent Weekly
Tuesday, March 6

Main Headlines

- Sa'ada locals warned to evacuate their homes, the city houses those who flee the fighting
 - MPs claim Parliament to summon Interior Minister and Ibb governor to be questioned over the case of Ra'ash residents
 - Publications distributed in Taiz and Sana'a describing Shiites as disbelievers
 - Pressmen claim free climate and dignity for journalism
 - Doctors stage sit-in at cabinet
 - Relatives appeal to President Saleh to intervene in releasing fishermen detained by Saudi authorities
- The newspaper reported that relatives of more than 200 fishermen from Hodeida governorate, who are detained by Saudi authorities, appealed to President Ali Abdullah Saleh to intervene in releasing the detainees.
- The Saudi marine authorities have been detaining the Yemeni fishermen along with their boat for more than ten days after they unintentionally entered in the Saudi regional waters for fishing. The fishermen's relatives told the newspaper's reporter that the detainees have no other people to sustain their families.

The UN at 60: Still misunderstood

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon assumes leadership of the world's oldest and most visible international forum, the old French phrase "plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose" (the more things change, the more they remain the same) comes curiously to mind.



By: John Tessitore

Will a new UN head really make a difference in the seemingly endless love-hate relationship between the US and the UN? Indeed, it seems remarkable that an organization that has now been in existence for fully six decades continues to invoke such strong, visceral, and competing responses from the American public—from a sort of nostalgic veneration (particularly from older Americans who remember the promise of its founding in the wake of World War II) to an almost hysterical vilification (in general, by the political Right), in which the world body is blamed for virtually every act of global inequity and malfeasance—including, of course, illegal parking on the streets of

New York City. While it is crucial that the UN continue to evolve and to reform—something it has done continually since its founding—it is also crucial that it be better understood. To this end, perhaps the UN's greatest shortcoming has been in public relations. The simple fact is, in sixty years it has done an absolutely terrible job of explaining to the American public exactly what it is and what it does. Oh, yes, we all know what it is and what it does. But where does our information come from? A recent study of American public school text books showed that there is virtually nothing taught about the United Nations in our classrooms beyond the fact that it was founded in 1945. A paragraph or two at most. As to television news, long gone are the days when the national networks actually covered the United Nations. Americans over 50 might dimly recall veteran CBS correspondent Richard C. Hottelet reporting nightly (!) from UN Headquarters, the flags blowing behind

him on First Avenue (in black and white, of course). But that was nearly a half-century ago. Today, we no longer have reporting on the United Nations, we have judgments on the UN—and these judgments are good or bad, depending largely upon the editorial perspective of the news agency or the political affiliation of the commentator. For example, the so-called "Oil-for-Food scandal," in which a small number of UN officials were accused of corruption in overseeing the sale of Iraqi oil in exchange for much needed food and medical supplies, generated countless anti-UN and, more particularly, anti-Secretary General Kofi Annan articles (in as much as a personal figure always makes the drama that much more sensational). One of the loudest members of the UN lynch mob was Claudia Rosett, a former member of The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board—a group known for its enmity toward the UN and any other organization that might threaten to curtail US unilateralism. Ms. Rosett, who now identifies herself as a journalist-in-residence at the rather paranoid-sounding "Foundation for

Defense of Democracies," recently addressed the Providence Committee on Foreign Relations on the Oil-for-Food scandal (which she takes credit for having revealed) and called for not simply the reform of the organization but for complete US withdrawal. When a distinguished member of the audience pointed out that the United States was itself complicit in the so-called scandal, her response was that we should withdraw from the UN because we should not belong to an organization that would tempt us to behave in such a manner! Such tortured reasoning would be comical if it were not for the fact that there are some who actually take such comments seriously. Of course, by extension such logic would mean that the US must cease to do business with Halliburton immediately, but that is not part of Ms. Rosett's or The Wall Street Journal's agenda. So what are some of the myths and misconceptions that continue to prevent the American public from better understanding the complicated and sometimes delicate US-UN relationship? Briefly, they are these: 1. The United Nations is not a world

government. Indeed, it is not a government of any kind. It is simply a meeting place, where the nations of the world attempt to conduct their business in the same competitive, self-serving, and (dare we say it) even deceitful way that they always have and surely always will. The one difference is that everyone is in the same place at the same time, which makes for obvious economies. 2. The United Nations has no standing army. In fact, it does not possess one gun, one troop, one armored vehicle. Every ordinance and every blue-helmeted soldier is loaned to the UN from a sovereign nation and under the command of professional military officers—largely, by the way, drawn from among US allies (Ireland, India, Pakistan, Australia, Canada, to name a few). 3. The Secretary-General does not have the power to create a peacekeeping mission. That power rests with the Security Council alone. Further, in the entire 60-year history of the United Nations, no Security Council resolution (and thus no peacekeeping mission) has ever been passed with-

out the consent of the United States. Why? Very simple: The US is one of five countries with veto power. 4. The UN has made peace where the US and other nations have failed. Over the past two decades the UN has brokered the peace of inter-state and civil wars all over the world, including many that defied all US efforts at mediation (Iran-Iraq, USSR-Afghanistan, El Salvador, etc.). In so doing, it also won the Nobel Peace Prize—seven times. 5. The US does not pay the majority of the UN budget. Contrary to a very popular misconception, the US actually pays less than its fair share of the UN budget—22 percent—based on an agreed upon formula that considers the wealth of each nation. Japan, with a much smaller economy, pays nearly 20 percent. What's next for the US and the UN? A fair question. And an important one. It deserves thoughtful consideration. John Tessitore is the Executive Editor of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs and a Columnist for MaximsNews Network.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is the story of women's organizing for equality, justice and peace. Marked by women around the world, it is rooted in the age-old struggle of women to bring about a better world.



By: Noeleen Heyzer

Its commemoration began in Europe in 1911 with a rally on 19 March for women's right to vote, hold public office and work outside the home and took on new momentum when more than 140 working women lost their lives in a fire in the Triangle Factory in New York City a week later. It grew over the next three years as women held rallies each year to protest the devastation of World War I. This year as always the day is an opportunity for reflection and renewal. In the 12 years since the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the

signs of progress are many. There is global recognition that gender equality is central to human development and human security, as stated in the Millennium Declaration. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is now seen as a gender issue as well as a health issue; rape has been recognized as a weapon of war and a crime against humanity. Women's human rights—monitored and upheld by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), now ratified by 185 countries—are now on every major agenda, national, regional and international. At the country level too, there is much to celebrate. Laws and policies are being adopted to strengthen women's economic security in such vital areas as land, property and inheritance rights, decent employment, and access to credit and markets. Quotas or other affirmative measures

have been adopted to increase women's representation in political decision-making in at least 95 countries, including many countries emerging from conflict. But all of this progress can be destroyed through violence against women. Deeply rooted in structures of gender inequality, violence against women fuels the spread of HIV/AIDS and destroys women's ability to break through inter-generational cycles of poverty. Already horrific in times of peace, it intensifies during armed conflict as legal and justice systems break down along with systems of social and community support. Whether in peace or in war, violence against women takes a huge toll— from individuals and societies both. Fortunately, more and more countries are recognizing these links, acknowledging that until they eliminate persistent gender inequalities and discrimination, both human security and human development will remain a distant dream—along with all of the Millennium Development

Goals. Governments are beginning to act: according to the Secretary-General's recent report, 89 states have legislative provisions on domestic violence, 104 countries have made marital rape a crime and 93 states prohibit trafficking in human beings. What is urgently needed is implementation. UNIFEM has worked with women's groups and governments for over two decades to end the multiple forms of violence in women's lives. What we have learned is that ending violence against women requires multiple strategies working across sectors and at different levels. Laws must be accompanied by resource allocations, institutional regulations and guidelines and systematic training for officials who will monitor and enforce them—including police and judiciary, health and social service providers. Ending violence against women also requires changing public perceptions and breaking through barriers of culture and

tradition to find non-violent ways to resolve conflicts in personal and public life. In the last decade, UNIFEM has spearheaded a set of regional and global advocacy campaigns, working with governments, women's groups and the media to change laws, develop national action plans and scale up community-based interventions to end violence against women and girls. Since 2005, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which UNIFEM manages, has supported Governments and NGOs to implement these laws, policies and action plans. Now we are taking this struggle to the next stage—to institutionalize the strategic, practical actions that can bring about change, and incorporate them into national development planning, and state accountability mechanisms. This year marks the tenth Anniversary of the UN Trust Fund. Ten years of innovation, experience and activism have shown that ending violence against women is possible.

What is needed now is a serious strategy and resources to upscale the work through a strong gender entity within the UN system, bringing the system together to promote the strategies and practices that have worked. Only then can the UN, in partnership with Member States and the women's movement, be at the forefront of efforts to end this scourge. Only then will violence against women become a rare occurrence rather than a global pandemic. On this International Women's Day we owe it to women around the world to take this challenge seriously—to end violence against women, and strike a blow for equality, justice and peace. Noeleen Heyzer is the first executive director from the South to head the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the leading operational agency within the United Nations to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Source: (MaximsNews.com, U.N.)

Yemeni qarqush: A head covering for the Yemeni single lady

Yemen is one of the countries most rich with unique dressing fashions as well as head coverings. Yemeni women wear various types of dresses for special occasions. Head coverings called al-qarqush also are one of the most attractive items women of the past used to wear on their heads.

By: Ibtihaj Al-Akwa'a
For Yemen Times

“Why did we abandon one of our Yemeni traditions? Why don't we make al-qarqush part of the uniform for schoolchildren to get back some of our traditions?” asks Amat Alrazak Jahaf, head of the Women's Development Center for Traditional Heritage.

Al-qarqush is a cloth hat or bonnet with two ties tied around the neck. It was made of various types of fabrics, the most common of which was al-jez or cotton (called zakma in Yemen).

Children between one and two months old used to wear it for the first few months for different purposes: in cold

weather, sunny weather, to cover the hair or for adornment. Al-qarqush for boys is different than al-qarqush for girls, the main difference being that girls' qarqush has ruffling (karkasha) along the edges, but those for boys don't.

Yemeni boys then began wearing kufaya made of cotton or other fabric, with the type of head covering varying depending on the boy's age. “Yemeni girls began wearing al-qarqush at age 5 or 7 and it would be made from more expensive fabric as the girl got older,” Jahaf notes.

The shape and form of al-qarqush depends upon the geographical characteristics in which Yemeni citizens live, as those worn in mountainous regions are a far cry from those worn in desert regions.

Jahaf explains, “Al-qarqush worn in desert regions are square-shaped, long in the back, open at the sides of the ears and



A little girl with Yemeni qarqush.

decorated with shells. However, in the mountains, we find the mountain's conical form is reflected upon it, as it's cone-shaped and decorated with what's called qiateen, which is woven along the edges of this type of al-qarqush.”

She adds, “In Sana'a, little children used to wear a round qarqush with slight ruffling, but young girls used to wear the conical one.”

The Yemeni Jewish qarqush is inscribed and rich in silver. It's long to

the middle of one's back and seems like the Sana'ani qarqush from the front. This type of qarqush is distinguished by its precise decoration and placing the shells in exact locations.

There's also the Harazi qarqush made of the same fabric Harazi people used to wear, while in Sa'ada, al-qarqush is combined with shells and handmade embroidery.

The custom was that a girl shouldn't take off al-qarqush unless she gets married. However, if a girl reached age 25, which was considered the age for a spinster at that time, her parents would hold a small party, buying her clothes, gold, etc., so she could remove it during that party. By doing so, she then would have the right to wear what other married women her age were wearing.

After marrying or after age 25, a Yemeni woman may wear any of several head coverings for special occasions.

Getting married is an important event in a Yemeni girl's life and if she's still single after age 25, she removes al-qarqush. “This custom shows us the humanitarian aspect of Yemenis, as society seeks to protect unmarried women's feelings by not letting them feel that they have any shortage because they didn't get married,” Jahaf observes.



Jewish Qarqush decorated by shell



Another Jewish Qarqush decorated along the edges by silver and some inscriptions

The image of women in Yemeni proverbs

There are many Yemeni proverbs about the position of women. Most give women inferior status and very few give them self-esteem. This series aims to discuss Yemeni society's projection about women's status, as well as how cultural and social factors affect mechanisms that perpetuate women's under-representation in managing and controlling power levers.

Since Yemen is an Islamic country and Islam plays a vital role in shaping its people's perspectives, it's essential to gauge to what extent Islam affects their understanding about the status of women. Most important is how Yemenis interpret the religion to justify their individual interests.

This week proverb:

“Al-mara ma laha illa al-beit aw al-qabr.”

“A woman has no place except the home or the grave.”

By: Nisreen Shadad

“As I understand it, what's meant in this proverb is that a woman will be safer when she's among her family and in her home. I don't think this proverb is encouraging Yemenis to prevent women from learning; however, Yemeni men sometimes use it to oppress women and prevent them from studying or working.” CD shop employee Ahmed Al-Buhairi says.

Stationery store employee Musa Mohammed Ali disagrees with this proverb and those who use it because he says they apply it out of ignorance of women's rights. “Here in Yemen, we see loads of women studying and working without any problem because they have the right to learn as well as work,” he adds.

“I have two daughters. Both of them studied and now they are working. Since the girls go out modestly, saving their honor and dignity, why should we prevent

them?” tailor, Al-Shamiri, said.

However, fellow tailor Hassan Hamoud Al-Shihari agrees with this proverb completely, saying, “Women have no place except to stay at home or be buried in the grave. I have four wives, nine daughters and 11 sons. I allowed my daughters to finish high school, but I don't let them work because it's shameful in our traditions and customs.”

He continues, “Learning is obligatory in Islam and women can go to work as well. However, in our tribe, it's shameful to allow them to work. For me, I stress that the woman's job is in the kitchen and educating her children. I have no problem when girls excel and are better than boys, but their home must come first.”

Al-Shihari adds, “Many Yemenis implement this proverb because they are against girls' education, even if they are provided a safe situation in which to study (such as studying at a women's university). However, some actually are against coeducation and once girls are provided a good situation in which to study, they encourage them to go to school.”

Iman University student Wafa' says, “In Islam, a woman can study or work, but she must be modest in both her dress and her behavior. This isn't only for women, but men also are ordered to be modest in both behavior and dress.”

“The point I'd like to make is that women mustn't destroy their homes or children at the expense of building society. The home is of the whole building (society), so we as women need to be interested in educating healthy members of our own family who are able to lead society. If every woman can raise healthy and erudite youths, our nation will be something different,” she says.

Honey store employee Ali Al-Maliki says, “Women can go and work, but they should be modest and follow Islamic instructions. However, I don't want my daughter to attend university because there are many boys who try to mislead girls. I can't have peace in my heart about sending my daughter to such a place.”

Arhab University teacher Fawzia Yahya notes, “Nothing can prevent women from working, but they should find a job that helps them balance between their home and their job.”

Housewife Taghreed Mohammed Abdu comments, “This proverb is applied in my village and others around my village in Dhamar. It's shameful for girls to go to be educated. For those who do struggle to go to school, people begin rumors about her and consider her an impolite girl. The situation is so different here in Sana'a because women are freer and their parents encourage them to study and work.”

School deputy Huda Al-Dubai says, “Regarding a woman's right to seek employment, it first should be stated that

that he was hearing some sounds; therefore, he was going to check the rooms to see what was there.

The thief ran to the roof to hide and hung onto a drainpipe, but fell unexpectedly. Hearing the sound of his fall, the homeowner looked out at the thief from a window and asked, “Do you have any broken bones?” The thief replied, “Your opinion is worth seven crises.” It means the homeowner's opinion causes the thief's fall, so in the thief's point of view such opinion doesn't help him to steal money, but to reveal his existence.

The previous issue's proverb, “A woman's opinion is worth seven crises,” originally was, “Your opinion is worth seven crises.” The word ‘woman’ intervened in this proverb and circulated among Yemenis in such a way.

As written in Ismail Al-Akwa'a's book, “Yemeni Proverbs,” the story behind this proverb is as follows:

A man was sitting at home with his wife when he suddenly heard sounds. Guessing that it might be a thief in his house, he decided to play a trick on him. So he said to his wife loudly, “When I was young, I used to steal. One

day, as I was entering a rich man's home, he discovered me, so I ran up to the roof and he ran after me.

“Luckily, I saw a drainpipe, so I hung onto it. The homeowner looked for me, but his search was in vain. He thought I had left the house, so he went back inside his home peacefully. Afterward, I returned to his house and stole many precious things.”

Upon hearing this story, the thief decided to apply such a plan when the homeowner discovered him so he would lose neither his life nor his money. The homeowner told his wife

Modernist Yemeni poet Haytham departed this life

By: Yemen Times Staff

Haytham's eyes closed to farewell this life – dark and meaningful words for anyone who has suffered a loss. Famed Yemeni modernist poet Mohammed Hussein Haytham passed away March 2.

Although Haytham now has left this life, he had made something particular and real of his life. His creative and distinctive poems remain alive to relate his life journey and reflect his innovative method of writing development. Not only was he a poet, he was a thinker, writer and researcher as well.

The first of Haytham's six poetry collections was, “Seen Iktemalat.” “Haytham published six collections, which caused him to attain the highest level of any Yemeni modernist poet. Before his passing, he was about to publish a seventh collection, which involved his recent works and the innovative method of writing they represent,” said Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh, the Advisor to the President, Director of the Yemen Center for Studies and Research.

Many poets consider Haytham's death a huge loss for Yemeni culture in particular and Arabs in general because his poems carry the signs of modernism in terms of vocabulary and issues.

Throughout his life, Haytham's various works dealt with intellectual and moral issues of public concern. His poetic works include numerous fields of criticism and literature and his writing reflects his intellectual perspective



Mohammed Hussein Haytham.

on social issues.

Haytham was a great man possessing a huge heart, a boundless dream and a bright view of life. The father of three also was positive in his relationships with his family and friends.

Fellow Yemeni poet Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh hopes Haytham's final collection will be published soon and added to his works to be republished, especially his prose regarding art criticism, in addition to intellectual and social issues.

Haytham was born in Aden in 1958 and was one of the pioneers of free verse poetry. He graduated from the Faculty of Education's philosophy department at Aden University.

In 1990, he worked at the Center for Studies and Research as a researcher in the linguistics and literature section before occupying the position of the center's deputy until his death. He also was a general trustee of the Yemeni Writers Union until his death.

Moreover, Haytham was a journalist for the culture section and an editor of Al-Hikma (Wisdom) magazine for several years.

Homsa dedicates a charity Luncheon for charity activities

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

The Head of mission spouses association (HOMSA) arranged a charity Luncheon on Wednesday at Movenpick Hotel. Many ambassadors' spouses in Sana'a participated in the party.

“The luncheon's profits will be given to some public and private organizations equally, we are trying to help Yemenis whether public or private charitable foundations,” said the chief of Homsa association, Ms. Najaba ba-Bashiekh, spouse of the Tunisian ambassador state.

The aim of such activities is to participate in improving the Yemeni conditions in different fields with the simple facilities that the organization has. “We like Yemen and many times we think of how we can do some thing for these kind people. Through cooperation with civil society organizations we can achieve a lot.” Said Ms. Gifford wife of the British ambassador said in her word at the beginning of the party.

The luncheon included a fashion show where designs from many countries were displayed.

Different cultures came together on one stage and many groups from different Arab and Foreign embassies in Sana'a presented a special show for its traditional cloths. The wedding procession was a special show in the party. The participants showed the variety of wedding rituals and



Although photos were not allowed, keeping special care to Yemeni culture the Tunisian and British wives were kind enough to let us take theirs.

women occasions in their countries and showed off their wonderful dancing.

The Yemeni precipitants showed many traditional women cloth designs, which reflect the richness of Yemeni civilization and rituals. Furthermore, the wife of the Indonesian ambassador presented a piece of music with a group of Indonesian women, which was very interesting.

The Homsa association has many activities in various fields such as participating in exhibitions, arranging especial ceremonies. During 2006, the Homsa association has made visits to many Yemeni public and social organizations such as the female and handicaps male in the central prison, Al-Thowrah and Al-Sabeenn hospitals and many charitable foundations and orphanages and provided them with the basic needs. “after charities call us and give us their needs, we try to support them and create a committee to evaluate the situation and provide help,” Ms. ba-Bashiekh added.



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Al-Saba'een Hospital lacks essential medical services

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

Upon entering Al-Saba'een Public Hospital in Sana'a, one might think that it's the only hospital in Yemen or that all Yemenis are sick. The hospital constantly is congested with patients coming from various Yemeni governorates and rural areas, especially given that it's specialized for women and children.

Additionally, it receives many cases transferred from other hospitals, thus creating much crowding. However, the hospital also is experiencing miserable conditions due to lack of medical care, shortage of equipment, negligence and scarcity of medicine.

Nearly everyone in the hospital complains about their sufferings: patients bemoan the lack of medical services and hospital employees are discontent with their low salaries and allowances, while hospital administrators express the problems and obstacles they face.

Qassim Mohammed from Ibb governorate comments, "I'm poor, but

I was obliged to bring my sick son to this hospital. I was surprised to find that it's very crowded. My son is lying in the emergency unit with three others in one bed.

"Moreover, there's neither medicine nor medical care," he notes.

"Frankly, the medical services at this hospital are deteriorated, but we can't go to a private hospital because it's very costly," says Yahya Ahmed Badiq, whose son is being treated at the hospital. "The hospital is a source of sickness due to mistreatment. So far, I have no idea about my son's disease. Doctors simply prescribe medicine and my son takes it, but there's no sign of recovery," he adds.

Hospital manager Dr. Amat Alkarim Al-Hori confirms that the reason for the overcrowding is a shortage of beds and other essential equipment. "The pediatric emergency unit's capacity is limited because we have only 11 beds, but we receive 30 to 40 children every day. We urge our doctors to hasten treatment, but since the children sometimes require oxygen, we keep them in the emergency unit. In this

case, we put three or four children in one bed," she discloses.

Al-Hori also maintains that some citizens are uncooperative because when they arrive at the hospital, they want doctors to begin treating their children immediately. "The doctors decide who needs immediate treatment, so some children are delayed for some time, but that doesn't mean hospital personnel are negligent. However, we do have a complaints box, as well as a punitive council to punish those staff who are remiss in their duties," she notes.

Citizen Abdulkarim Wahass believes that only some people receive good medical services. "Everything here goes well if you have mediation; otherwise, you won't be served. When you arrive, you think the hospital is good, but unfortunately, there's nothing good here," he laments, adding, "The hospital doesn't provide even the simplest medicine. Also, we feel like we're in a desert because there's not even a telephone if we need to contact someone."

Al-Hori reveals that Al-Saba'een Hospital no longer receives medicine from the Yemeni government. "The hospital had received some medicine from the Ministry of Health's Medicine Supply Fund, but the fund now gives us nothing. We can't buy medicine from drug companies because we don't have support," she points out, adding, "We sometimes resort to hospitals like Al-Thawra, Al-Quds and military hospitals to provide us with medicine because those hospitals have budgets, but not as many patients or employees as us."

She further disclosed that the hospital experiences a shortage of incubators because many newborns require incubation and intensive care. "We often have anywhere from 10 to 15 babies, but we only have seven incubators. In this case, we're obliged to put two babies in one incubator," she explains, emphasizing that the Yemeni government should pay



The hospital which receives many cases transferred from other hospitals, undergoes shortage of medicine and equipment.

attention to the hospital's needs.

"We call upon the incumbent bodies in the government to provide the hospital with medical supplies and incubators, as well as build an annex in order to increase the hospital's capacity; otherwise, the door will be shut in citizens' faces," she warns.

The hospital's obstetrics and gynecology department also has many problems, including too few beds to serve all patients, particularly those coming to the hospital at great risk and requiring intensive care. Additionally, there's no intensive care unit to care for women after childbirth.

"In the obstetrics unit alone, between 50 and 70 patients arrive at the hospital every day. At least 10 of them arrive late from rural areas with many risks, such as a ruptured uterus or bleeding due to pregnancy and delivery complications," Al-Hori notes, "Unfortunately, we only have 20 beds, which aren't enough for all

patients; consequently, we must put two patients in the same bed."

According to Al-Hori, Al-Saba'een Hospital also suffers shortages in both its blood bank and its laboratories, where some equipment is old while others require maintenance. However, the hospital administration can't tackle any of these problems because its financial support is so little. "We can satisfy neither patients nor even our staff. If we had an adequate budget, we could offer better services," she affirms.

Hospital staffers maintain that their financial situation is very poor due to low salaries and rotation allowances, which may adversely affect their performance. Dr. Ali Hassan, vice head of Al-Saba'een's pediatric department, notes, "Overcrowding, lack of support, low salaries and neglecting staff rights frustrate hospital personnel. The Yemeni government and the Ministry of Health

are responsible for our problems because they don't respond to the hospital's needs."

Pediatrician Ameen Mihyaddin Al-Muammari remarks that in the past, employees would receive their rotation allowance from the Ministry of Public Health, but this now comes from the hospital's own income, which is insufficient.

In this regard, Al-Hori reveals that specialists receive YR 3,000 for 24-hour rotations while general physicians receive YR 2,300. However, she stresses that employees should be given the same rotation allowances as their counterparts at other hospitals so they'll perform their duties properly.

She further demands that there should be a strategy to improve Al-Saba'een Hospital along with other improvement strategies for hospitals in Sana'a and other governorates so that it can better serve citizens.



Three children are put in one bed.

Ceramics could save more water, experiment says

Yemen could save more water if farmers use clay pots for irrigation, especially high quality pots, and more citizens can access safe and clean water when they use water filters, according to a recent experiment conducted by GTZ.

By: Moneer Al-Omari

The German Agency for Technical Cooperation, known as GTZ, has recently conducted an experiment in the Hababah area, Amran governorate, utilizing locally made ceramic clay pots to ascertain the advantages of using ceramics in irrigation. The experiment aims to produce greater levels of output but with less input of water.

A small piece of land was equally divided into two parts, and a meter was installed close to the water source. Three different crops - tomato, onion and garlic - were planted. The first part was irrigated with water - the traditional manner of irrigation in Yemen. The second one was irrigated with the use of clay pots.

According to Abdulhakim Al-Duba'ei who supervised the experiment, the piece irrigated by clay pots yielded better crops and saved 30 percent of the water. Farmers can save more water if

they have at their disposal high quality and long-lasting pottery, as the locally made pottery is not well-fired and does not last very long, the experiment observed.

Shamlan's kiln

Considering the problems with local ceramics and the dangers lying behind the traditional pottery industry in Yemen, together with the pollution it leaves behind, GTZ saw that it was necessary to build a kiln that can produce high quality pottery and ceramics without harming the environment.

Dr. Klingler, Team Leader of the German GTZ-IWRM component, contacted several potters who were willing to build and support the construction of a kiln. In the beginning, Shamlan locals had a passive attitude, but Ali Saleh Sa'eed was different from the start, as he had a keen interest in the kiln, and also purchased a small plot of land for that purpose.

At the start, Dr. Klingler formed a small group of potters who were to be in



Producing high quality pottery needs high temperature reaching 900°, something that can not be secured by old means of production.

charge of this kiln. After the kiln was built, more potters showed an interest in having similar kilns.

To that end, GTZ secured the services of long-time German ceramist Mr. Bernd Pfannkuche to design and construct the kiln. The kiln was designed to bear high temperatures up to 900 degrees. It also utilizes gas which is safe and does not harm the environment.

As planned, the kiln is to produce a wide range of potteries, together with irrigation ceramics and water filters, the latter two being the primary concern of the project.

Yemeni potters mostly depend on wood, a rare, expensive and environment polluting material, to fire the pottery. However, with any quality of wood they used, the local potters could not secure the required temperature to make

high quality and long lasting ceramic.

Some potters used crude gas-fired kilns; however, this method poses dangerous problems for the potters. A potter was involved in an explosion caused by such a method, killing his infant and causing him serious injury.

Water filters

Where many Yemeni citizens, especially in the country side, have no access to safe and clean drinking water, GTZ decided to produce water filters in this recently built kiln. In this way they can help locals to get clean water using these water filters for YR 1500, according to Dr. Klingler.

He added that the application of colloidal silver could further enhance their safety and efficiency. The application of colloidal silver, widely practiced in some South Asian countries, would effectively eliminate over 99 percent of all bacteria found in contaminated water, according to Potters for Peace, a Central American NGO.

GTZ involves itself in three different sectors, with the aim of developing and upgrading peoples' lives in Yemen. These sectors are water, education and health. The involvement of GTZ in the water sector comprises both water sanitation and the provision of a clean water



The kiln will not just produce clay pots, but also irrigation ceramics and water filters.



Samples of high quality clay pots to be produced by the kiln

supply. When Yemen suffered from water shortages, GTZ started to think seriously about ways by which safe and clean water could be secured for Yemeni citizens, especially those in remote rural areas.

The Germans, right from the very beginning, realized the problem of the scarcity of water in Yemen, for the country has no rivers and further to this, rainfall rates fluctuate from one year to another. Though Yemen has a long coastal strip, the idea of having of water sweetening stations seems unpractical,

particularly in poor countries which can not afford the high costs of such projects.

The Germans, represented through the German Embassy and GTZ, thought of easy and accessible solutions and alternatives to this water crisis by utilizing what is already available. Both participated in building and rehabilitating water cisterns. They also actively participated in awareness campaigns aiming to warn people against the irrational excavation of water wells and the unwise use of water.

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Seven days in Syria

By: Ryan Fletcher
For Yemen Times

As a tourist destination Syria, is often overlooked yet it has much to offer; from touring the ancient cities, magnificent ruins, and huge medieval forts to shopping for jewellery, spices, and antiques. Because the country is small and costs are cheap Syria can be enjoyed without bags of cash and months to spare.

Aleppo is Syria's second biggest city; it is a squat place with grey buildings and an exciting bustle to it. Just walking down the street people will call out and ask if you are enjoying your trip and if you need any assistance. Unlike other countries where tourism is a major industry, this friendliness has no ulterior motives; people are genuinely interested and helpful. Old Aleppo is a world heritage site, containing ancient and atmospheric covered souqs. You can easily get lost in the myriad of shops and passageways, containing everything from the exotic to the stomach turning. Even if you are not shopping it is a fascinating place. During evening prayer, when the mosques call out and the streets are quiet and bathed in a pale light, it is a special experience to walk along the avenues



Crac des chevaliers.

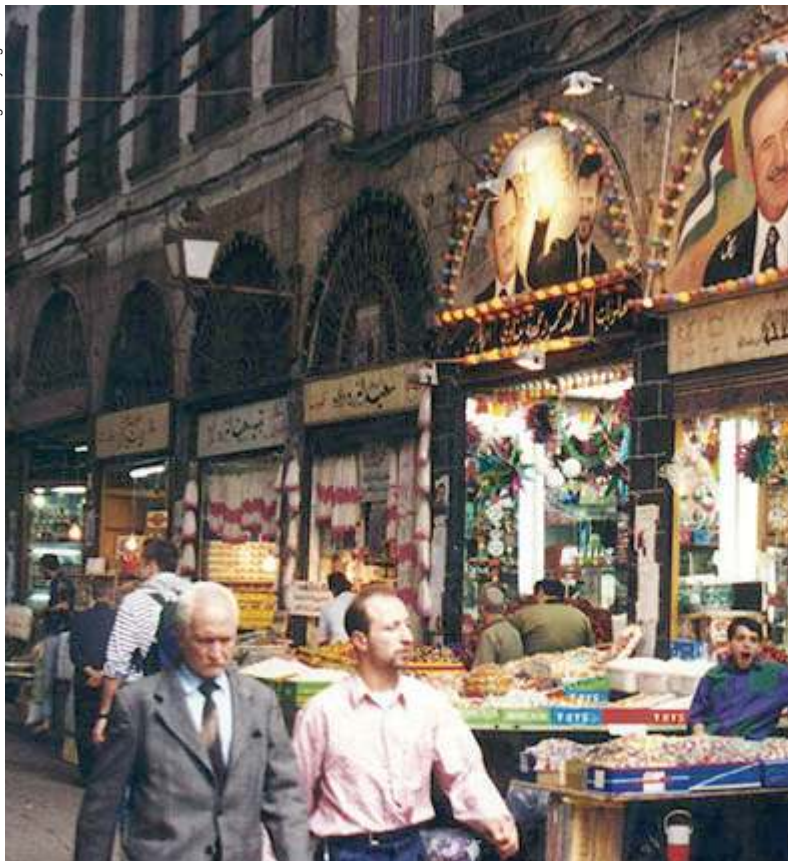
A two hour bus ride from Aleppo is the silk producing town of Hama, although there is not much to do here its pleasant ambience, parks, and huge water wheels, make it a good place to stay for excursions to the Crac des Chevaliers. The castle was built by Crusader knights in the middle of the 12th century, on the sight of an earlier

its dark arched interior and investigating the massive outside wall and turrets that have commanding views of all around.

Perhaps the most touristic destination of Syria is Palmyra; a ruined 2nd Century city in the middle of the desert. The city saw the Greek and Roman dynasties come and go, passed into Muslim hands and then was finally destroyed by an earthquake in 1089. The impressive ruins, especially that of the Temple of Bel, make for an interesting couple of days. The sunset from the Arab castle on the hill over the site is quite beautiful and gives a good perspective on how large the remains are. The town around the ruins has hotels and restaurants, where the evening can be spent eating, drinking, and talking.

Damascus is a three hour bus ride from Palmyra and Syria's enigmatic capital is not to be missed. Damascus has more of an international feel to it than anywhere else in Syria and is slightly less obliging in hospitality than the smaller Aleppo; but this doesn't make it any less fun. Damascus is a one off, it is said to be the oldest city on earth and with its run down charm and impressive monuments is an extremely interesting capital. It is a place where many people meet from all over the world and for all sorts of different reasons: It could be one day that you run into someone cycling from Istanbul to Cairo, or a business man buying antique watches from the mysterious shops surrounding the Umayyad Mosque. From wizened falafel sellers to couples driving to Cape Town; Damascus is full of interesting characters and stories that stay with you forever.

Most of Damascus' sights are concentrated in the old part of the city; the Souq al- Hamidiyya is the main covered market, leading at one end to the citadel and at the other to the Umayyad Mosque. The market is complete chaos; lots of stuff to buy and foods to try. The Umayyad



The streets of damascus.

of the bazaar; you almost feel the weight of ages hanging over the place.

A true delight of the old city is the Turkish baths: The steam rooms are made from marble, and are adjacent to a large lavishly decorated reclining area. The reclining area is domed in the middle and contains chandeliers, eastern ornaments, and sofas on which to lie on after a relaxing sauna and massage. The finale includes being draped in hot towels and served tea in quintessentially Arabian luxury.

Arabian fortress. It was a last remaining stronghold of the holy warriors but was given up after the great Muslim warlord Saladin laid siege to the place. Today the Crac des Chevaliers stands alone in its size and its entirety; Lawrence of Arabia said it was "the finest castle in the world". It is certainly a place where childhood can be recaptured for a day; it would be difficult not to be captivated by exploring

Mosque is directly opposite the exit to the market. It is a lovely place, the architecture and golden mosaics adorning the courtyard of the mosque are a definite sight, and the atmosphere is very relaxed: Children play in the courtyard and chase the birds, women stand around in groups and chat, and on the inside the people at prayer are countered by people sleeping and talking quietly on the carpets. Behind the mosque are the alleys and streets of the old town, and the restaurants and juice stores clustered around there, are a great place to rest after tramping around the sights. Damascus has a lot to offer visitors: museums, mosques, restaurants, and palaces; it is, like the whole of Syria, a very rewarding place to visit.

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