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Education
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Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
 Do you think that the new Prime Minister has unrestricted liberties in selecting the Ministers of his cabinet?

I don't know (11%)
 Yes (20%)
 No (70%)

This edition's question:
 Do you think developments in the Sa'ada war will motivate tribes to switch sides and loyalties?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know

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Sa'ada war escalates, more victims among tribal volunteers

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SA'ADA, April 4 - Sa'ada city witnessed severe encounters between Houthi loyalists and Yemeni government forces, as Houthis waged their fiercest attack since the war's beginning on Al-Senarah and Al-Abalah camps overlooking Sa'ada in the south, according to residents from the city.

Similarly, tribal sources said confrontations are escalating on various fronts in Sa'ada. Further, Al-Mazru'a, Al-Saifi and Al-Khafgi areas surrounding Sa'ada city witnessed fierce fighting, while confrontations continue in Al-Safara'a district's Bani Muath and numerous areas in Sahar, Baqem and Haydan districts.

Dozens of army and tribal volunteers were killed and injured, with some occurring in Dhahian, where a military unit evacuated after being subjected to Houthi counterattacks and sniper fire.

Other violent clashes occurred east of Sa'ada involving hundreds of volunteers led by elderly Sheikh Abdullah Dares and Houthi followers. A source revealed that clashes erupted when Sheikh Dares and his supporters began attacking Wadi Al-Ghail, an area near

Kahlan. The clashes left dozens dead or injured.

Houthi " sleeper cells " activated, Houthis rearmed

Media sources report that Houthis have begun appearing in large numbers and in numerous areas of Sa'ada, especially those areas and mountains occupied by the Yemeni army. This doesn't mean such supporters are moving between areas; rather, they are those living in such areas as sleeper cells and now activated.

Sources add that the period between the end of the second Sa'ada war on April 12, 2005 and the last war enabled Houthis to reform and restructure themselves in a different manner than they showed in the first and second Sa'ada wars. With the help of others, they drew up new war plans and got accustomed to new weaponry.

Moreover, they bought weapons and stored them in various places throughout Sa'ada and some areas outside the governorate with those individuals now assuming responsibility to lead the party and others who haven't appeared yet.

Yemeni military leaders recently

have been surprised at the weapons Houthis are using and inquired about the source of such weaponry because they know very well the nature of weapons available in the Sa'ada arms market in Al-Talh, which are no more than light or medium-sized arms. The question now is from where did Houthis receive such modern arms and large amounts of money to pay for such arms and still have some to spend on themselves?

Hospitals full, detainees released

In related news, on Wednesday, Al-Ayyam reported a medical source as saying, "The hospital has become full of injured volunteers and no longer is able to contain any more. The numbers already admitted to the hospital exceed its capacity."

Additionally, Dhamar's Political Security Department released 27 Islamic teaching students and political activists belonging to Al-Haq, the Public Forces Union and the Yemeni Socialist Party, who previously were arrested and jailed at the Central Prison for alleged links to Houthis and Houthi thought.

Continued on page 3

American Bureau: Despite efforts, there are many concerns for human rights in Yemen

The latest human rights practices report issued by American Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, showed that significant human rights problems existed in some areas, such as limitations on citizens' ability to change their government due to corruption, fraudulent voter registration, and administrative weakness. Torture and poor prison conditions existed in some prisons. Prolonged pre-trial detention and judicial weakness and corruption were also problems. There were some limitations on press freedom. Pervasive corruption within the government, discrimination against women, and instances of child labor and child trafficking occurred. The government took several steps to reduce corruption, including removing and investigating several judges accused of malfeasance, passing a financial disclosure law for government officials, and establishing an independent anti-corruption authority with civil society representatives.

There were no reports of politically

motivated disappearances; however, during the year there were some reports of tribal kidnappings, traditionally committed to attract government attention to a particular grievance. During the year torture continued to remain a problem in PSO prisons, which were not systematically monitored by other government agencies. During the year the government trained over 300 MOI officers on the illegality of torture.

The primary state security and intelligence gathering apparatus, PSO, and the National Security Bureau (NSB) reported directly to the president. Many of NSB's duties were not clearly delineated and appeared to overlap with the PSO. The police CID reported to the MOI and conducted most criminal investigations and arrests. The Central Security Organization, also a part of the MOI, maintained a paramilitary force. Corruption was a serious problem, and there were no government investigations of police corruption during the year.

Continued on page 3

Sana'a University staff continue demonstrating

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

SANA'A, April 4 - For the fifth day, Sana'a University staffers have continued demonstrating in front of the university administration building, protesting both government and university unresponsiveness to their legal demands.

Sana'a University Staff Syndicate spokesman Abdullah Aziz stressed that the demonstration will continue unless their demands are met, noting that the newly-ordered cabinet reshuffle has prevented them from demonstrating in front of the Finance Ministry.

He noted that some demands have been met regarding releasing salaries that were suspended for three months for 47 staffers, as well as those of another 35 dead staffers. He indicated that the syndicate will sue the Civil Service and Finance Ministries and further request the judiciary freeze the university's finances for not implementing a March 7 ruling by the Capital Western Court.

menting a March 7 ruling by the Capital Western Court.

Aziz explained that university staff will stop teaching for two hours each day, from 10 a.m. to noon, in association with the demonstration in front of the university administration building.

"We've received nothing except false promises that don't meet our true demands or our legal rights," he maintained.

A statement released by the university staff syndicate assured its commitment to dialogue and peaceful expression of staff demands, indicating that both university administration and the government have failed to keep agreements signed with syndicate representatives.

The statement also demanded administrative, academic and financial independence in Yemeni universities, as well as implementing the March 7 ruling dictated by the Capital Western Court.

Continued on page 3



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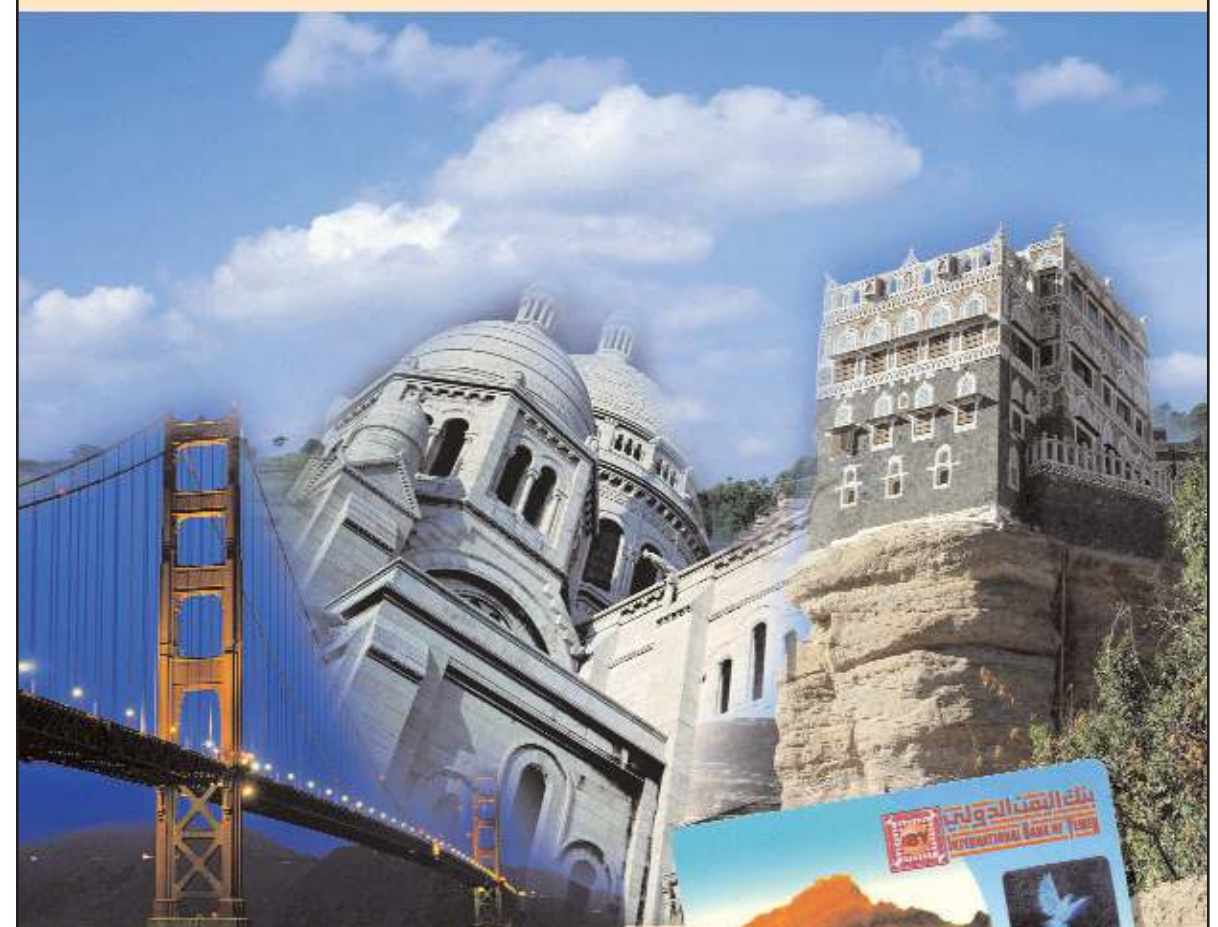
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Globalization and God

A Culture of Religious Exchange

Relations between the Islamic World and the West were already tense before the Pope's lecture at Regensburg University lent grist to the mill of those who believe that a clash of civilizations is all but inevitable. And critiques of the Pope's theological and historical judgments abound, but do not address questions raised by this episode.

By: Pratap Bhanu Mehta

Does globalization require an ethic of religious exchange? Should there be a set of norms, unstated conventions, restraints that govern religious exchange?

What makes the challenge of a religious exchange particularly acute is the fact that reported acts of terrorist violence are, in the public mind, associated with one religious group: Islam. A religion already on the defensive, seeing itself under a state of siege, is doubly sensitive to any portrayals of the religion. But this heightened sensitivity, paradoxically, only reinforces stereotypes of Islam, thus creating a vicious cycle.

Avoiding a discourse of religious conflict

One response to this vicious cycle is to be

more honest about the complex roots of political violence in the modern world. Terrorism is not the preserve of one creed; it has its roots as much in nationalism as in religion. Terrorist violence should not exempt state-sponsored forms of violence, like the war on terror, from scrutiny. This is not to excuse terrorism, but to create a space where discussions of violence are not seen as a pretext for targeting Islam.

Opening this space is an uphill battle at both ends: the papal Regensburg indiscretion and US-President Bush's remarks on "Islamic fascism" remind us how quickly we can descend into a discourse of religious conflict. Meanwhile, the Muslim world in West Asia does not have a leadership capable of breaking the stereotypes being imposed upon them.

Heightened religious sensitivities dot the global landscape. They raise profound

questions for an ethic of religious exchange. Hindus protested when textbooks in California suggested that Hinduism was associated with caste oppression. The film, "The Da Vinci Code," led to demonstrations in many parts of the world. Muslim groups often protest how their religion is represented. Religious groups constantly protest how they are represented by others.

These protests have an underlying assumption: that there is a correct way to represent a religion's historical tenets and doctrines. The test of this correct way is that the representation should not offend or impugn the adherents of the group being represented.

Cultural achievements of religion

Even those who are non-members of any religion whose adherents feel hurt by particular representations implicitly agree with this demand. The idea that we should respect all religions and be mindful of the sentiments of believers seems like a good counsel of prudence. It might even teach us to value a diverse range of resources upon which members of different cultures and faiths draw to understand the world and give their lives meaning.

Misrepresenting a religion both insults adherents and turns a blind eye to immense cultural achievement.

The call for respecting all religions seems as plausible a candidate for an ethic of global religious exchange as any. And on the face of it, it seems reasonable. Global politics would be in better shape if different groups were mindful of one another's sensitivities. But, paradoxically, the demand for respect has itself become a source of discord, because it is an impossible one to meet.

Religious oppression and violence

Religions must recognize four facts: As glorious as religious heritages might be, most organized religion comes with unsavory baggage. All kinds of oppression and violence have been licensed in their name. We can debate whether this constitutes the essence of a particular religion. But it is near impossible to debate historical religions without representing any in a way that does not offend some of its adherents. These representations should not be malicious or undertaken with impunity, but will be discomforting nonetheless.

Second, despite calls for respect, the blunt truth is that almost no religion can, from within its own theological premises, grant parity to other religions in some deep and meaningful sense. In this way, religious speech intrinsically creates hierarchies of one kind or the other.

Third, belief is not a matter of will. We cannot oblige other people to think about history or theology in a particular manner. All we can hope is that their conclusions about religion are made in good faith, not a product of willful misinterpretation. But the line between good-faith inquiry and demeaning conclusions is very thin in the eyes of most adherents.

Finally, the form that the demand for respect takes is inherently competitive in two ways. First, it constantly escalates. We have gone from a state where outrage used to be expressed against grossly malicious representations, to a state where



© AP

ordinary historical discussion can occasion outrage. Religious groups are quick to defend against any offense, but are silent when others are offended.

Power and respect

Muslim groups rarely protest appalling representations of the West or of Jews. Hindu groups, normally quick on the take when someone is deemed to offend their co-religionists, usually remain silent when Islam is denigrated. In short, the politics of respect is not a universal ethic. It is instead a competitive game where different religious groups show how much power they have by demanding respect.

It appears that the prospects of a global ethic of religious exchange are at an impasse. The demand that any mention of religion requires an expression of respect is an impossible task. It has generated a competitive politics of seeking respect. The second option is a kind of global pact, where mere mention of other religions is seen as, at the very least, lacking in tact. Such forbearance would impose its own costs on freedom and will be impossible to sustain.

The third option in global religious exchange is some form of inter-religious dialogue. While such a dialogue can obvi-

ate gross misunderstandings, it is too much to hope that it will allow serious differences to be overcome.

The culture of rights

The only solution is to shift the ground of the debate from religion. We cannot have a global discussion expunged of all references that religious groups may find discomforting; nor can we oblige people to think and speak of other religions in particular ways. What we can do, however, is to help create a culture where everyone's basic freedoms are protected.

A culture of rights is a more honest response than the demand for respect. But this culture of rights has two requirements: Religious differences will have to be detached from political fault lines. But most importantly, religious groups must overcome their sense of fragility, and have more confidence in managing constructions others place on them.

A culture of religious exchange can be sustained only when adherents of religions begin to trust that "Our God can defend himself better than we can."

Pratap Bhanu Mehta is president of the Center for Policy Research in Delhi, India. Source: Yale Center for the Study of Globalization 2006.0

Ras Issa Oil Terminal Project Republic of Yemen

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- 1) The **Project Directorate, Ras Issa Oil Terminal Project** established under Yemen Oil & Gas Corporation, the Ministry of Oil & Minerals, Republic of Yemen, invites application for pre-qualification as EPC Contractor for the Construction of Oil Terminal at Ras Issa, in the Red Sea.
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Haddah Street, P.O. Box 15564
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Phone: 00967 446854 / 440283 Telefax: 00967 1 440723
E-mail: ras_issa_proj@yahoo.com
- 6) Applicants may seek pre-qualification for the whole project or for on-shore or off-shore works only.
- 7) For expeditious project execution, the Employer invites the Contractor to indicate his capability for arranging finances for the Project. The Contractor, if interested, must clearly indicate the probable source of financing, mode of repayment and percentage of Project Cost to be financed.
- 8) **Project Directorate, Ras Issa Oil Terminal Project**, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications seeking pre-qualification, without assigning any reason thereof.
- 9) Only pre-qualified Contractors will be contacted for issuance of Bid Documents.

Request for Expressions of Interest Impact Study and Implementation Completion Report Basic Education- Expansion Project Credit No. 3422-YEM

This request for expressions of interest follows the General Procurement Notice for this Project that appeared in the Development Business dated November, 2006.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the Basic Education Expansion Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this to payments under the contract for the above-mentioned consulting service.

The Project Administration Unit now invites eligible **Individual Consultants** to indicate their interest in providing the service. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (CVs, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.).

The main objective of this technical assistance is to help MOE assessing the impact of the Basic Education Expansion project and verify if the project development objectives have been achieved through implementing project components; Study the girls' enrollment indicators in the five project governorates and compare them with the prospective results and the baselines; Investigate whether the project has reduced the gap between the enrollment of male and female in the targeted governorates.

This TA is also aims to assess the experience of the community participation and the mechanisms used in the governorates of Sana'a, Amran, Al-Mahweet, Al-Dhale'a, and Raymah; identify strengths and weaknesses of this experience and its effects in order to improve the educational process in these targeted governorates.

The output of the consultancy is:

The implementation completion report which should review and prepare the assessment of the operations undertaken by the Project. The Impact Study Report is the background report for the preparation of the ICR, which should reflect the views and evaluation of project execution from the borrower's point of view.

The selection of the individual consultants will be in accordance with the procedure set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: "Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers, May 2004" Interested consultants may obtain further information during working days Sat.-Wed. From 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon at the address below to which the expression of interest must be delivered by April 16, 2007.

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Email: info@bedp-yemen.org

SpaceTel is now MTN Yemen

SANA'A, April 3rd — In a Press Conference held in Taj Sheba Hotel, The GSM mobile telecommunications provider SpaceTel announced that its parent company Investcom LLC has been acquired by South Africa's MTN group. This means SpaceTel is now a subsidiary of the MTN Group and will be operating under the name MTN-Yemen. The acquisition was for US\$5.526 billion.

Raed Ahmed, General Manager of MTN Yemen, indicated that the merging process was swift and is considered a milestone in the history of mobile telecommunication in Yemen. Ahmed also added that this synergy will bring international expertise in the management of mobile telecommunications, which in turn will considerably improve the service quality of the company. "Our merger with MTN will benefit our customers in Yemen with the advantages of being a part of a truly global telecommunications giant" said Ahmed.

By the end of 2006, MTN had over 40 million subscribers in over 21 countries in Africa and the Middle East, and it continued to grow and improve its services by utilizing state-of-the-art technology and exceptional customer service facilities.

The Marketing Director of MTN Yemen, Mr. Walid Akawi, gave a presentation on the milestones of SpaceTel since its establishment in 2000. He stated that the number of subscribers to SpaceTel Yemen reached 1.25 million by the end of 2006, while the 69



From left to right: Ali Abdulwareth, Deputy GM; Raed Ahmed, GM; Walid Akawi, Director - Marketing

percent of Yemen was covered by their telecommunication services. He also indicated that SpaceTel was the market leader when it came to offers and promotions; including an offer to keep the phone line activated for four years at no additional charge, and reduced tariffs for off-peak hours and students. "Now, as a part of MTN, you may

expect promotional offers and discounts unprecedented in the history of telecommunications in Yemen" said Akawi, he also added that the company has been active in community development through the sponsorship of sports initiatives, including football clubs and associations, and tennis tournaments.

Mr. Ali Abdulwareth, Deputy General Manager of MTN Yemen, has stated that the Yemeni authorities have been supportive of SpaceTel, adding that the legislative framework is sophisticated enough to allow the merger and the operation of MTN-Yemen as a subsidiary of MTN international.



"Expect many attractive offers from MTN-Yemen" Akawi said

Economic Development before the Law

By: Johannes Jütting and Denis Drechsler

One of the most pervasive and apparently self-evident assumptions of development economics is that sustainable investment and growth requires the rule of law. Without impersonal, general norms and their enforcement by independent judicial authorities, according to this view, little development, if any, is possible, because the risks facing both labor and capital – including corruption, arbitrariness, and rigid traditions – will be too high. But is this conventional wisdom always right?

Consider an admittedly limited but nonetheless revealing counter-example: South Africa's booming mini-bus taxi industry. The mini-bus taxis developed in response to severe shortcomings in the country's public transport system, one characterized by high prices, low-quality service, and a chaotic operating network, but they operate entirely outside of formal laws and regulations. What makes the industry work is a commonly agreed informal business "culture" that is flexible, innovative, and keeps operating costs down.

The results are undeniable: at peak times, mini-bus taxis hold 65% of the entire commuter market. The mini-bus taxi industry thus illustrates the importance of informal conventions. Local culture and traditions not only matter, but they are decisive in shaping the behavior of people – all the more so in developing countries, particularly those that are labeled failed or fragile states, where the courts don't work and regulations, assuming they exist, thus are inadequately enforced. But malfunctioning formal institutions do not mean that there are no functioning structures at all.

In these societies, the social order is predominantly shaped by informal agreements rather than formal laws and regulations. As the South African example shows, such agreements can even promote a country's development. In many developing countries, village associations that are solely based on trust and peer pressure provide access to credit and insurance, guarantee help in times of distress, and facilitate the construction of public roads and sewage systems. The community-based health insurance schemes that are prospering all over Africa are a good example of this.

Even so, while informal institutions can improve people's lives, they can also be detrimental to development. The very resources that form the basis of informal security systems – solidarity, social capital, and collective action, for example, can have perverse effects. For example, forced solidarity will oblige any hard-working farmer in Benin who has accumulated some wealth over the years to share the fruit of his labor with his enlarged family, including distant relatives.

In economic terms, the "informal institution of sharing" may become a disincentive to invest and thus result in opportunistic behavior, because there is no obligation to reciprocate. For all of their success, South Africa's mini-taxis could

not escape high accident rates, violent incidents over un-commissioned routes and fare levels, and tax evasion, which imposed high costs on society, prompting the government to regulate the service.

Moreover, some informal institutions based on longstanding cultural traditions lead to discrimination and violation of human rights, while undermining the authority of formal institutions like the judiciary, police, or military. In these cases, women are often the victims. They might be excluded from participation in informal networks, or have limited influence in appropriating the accrued benefits of collective action. The reported abuse of micro-credits to pay dowries is one alarming example. Likewise, the tradition of female circumcision is still a common practice in African countries such as Guinea, Sudan, Mali, Somalia, and Eritrea, where more than 85 % of young women suffer from it.

Abolishing such customs is a moral obligation, but in other instances, the international community often needs to decide which institutions to change and how. Indeed, one of the most difficult tasks for policymakers is to identify correctly those institutions that are conducive to development and those that may be harmful. Even then, successfully changing institutions is easier said than done, as they are rooted in deeply enshrined norms and values.

Neither the "romantic preservationist" nor the "bulldozing modernizer" approach promises an adequate solution. Institutional reform is a delicate affair that needs to be done with caution and sometimes against the conventional reform dogma. In some cases, good intentions may even aggravate the status quo. For example, trying to eliminate corruption in environments with strong patronage-based power and redistribution mechanisms while failing to address the root problems can do more harm than good, and might lead to violent conflicts over new resources.

Reforms need to acknowledge the mindsets of people and the incentive structures that govern their behavior. Thus, those who benefit from reforms may champion the process, but losers must be adequately compensated in order to prevent them from resisting the transformation. Without building public support and providing proper enforcement mechanisms, changing laws alone is bound to be ineffective. Sometimes it might even pose high costs for the alleged beneficiaries.

Given the complexity of institutional reform, striving for what appears to be optimal might not always be the best approach. Reforms must be adapted to the specific context of each country, and be applied within the boundaries of what is possible. Institutional change requires a long, tedious, and modest implementation of multiple small steps, in which the correct sequencing of reform is crucial. To obtain sustainable results, policymakers need to accept that sometimes "good enough is enough."

Johannes Jütting is a Senior Economist at the OECD; Denis Drechsler is Policy Analyst at the OECD. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2007.

Saba Islamic Bank joins IFC as the first issuing bank in Yemen

SANA'A, April 4 — IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, announced on April 1 that Saba Islamic Bank has become the first Yemeni Bank to join IFC's Global Trade Finance Program as an issuing bank.

The Global Trade Finance Program (GTFF) prompts trade and emerging markets across the world by supporting goods and services flow to and from developing countries. By GTFF, IFC provides coverage against bank risks in emerging markets, allowing beneficiaries to expand their trade finance transactions within a wide web of countries and banks and enhance their trade finance coverage.

IFC's Global Financial Markets Department Director Jyrki Koskelo commented, "IFC has raised the trade finance program to US \$1 billion in order to expand the global coverage especially in border countries like Yemen, strategically important to IFC. What is more important is the involvement of the banking sector in Yemen in this regard.

For his part, Saba Islamic Bank's chairman of the board of directors Sheikh Hamid Al-Ahmer noted, "We are happy to join Global Trade Finance Program and to be the first issuing bank in Yemen. This is evidence of the IFC's strong support to Saba Islamic Bank."

Michael Essex, IFC's Director for



Saba Islamic Bank is the second-largest Islamic Bank in Yemen

Middle East and North Africa, welcomed the joining of Saba Islamic Bank as the first issuing bank in Yemen, adding such a step will increase its correspondent banks network and help the bank increase business ventures for the sake of its corporate and small and medium-sized clients."

Saba Islamic Bank, the second-

largest Islamic bank in Yemen with total assets amounting to US \$350 million, was established in 1997. The bank provides finance and investment in addition to the regular banking services according to Islamic Jurisprudence and Yemen's Central Bank legislations. The bank has extended its coverage to include the main Yemeni cities with 13 branches.

Business in Brief

Parliament Approves Financial Leasing Bill

The Parliament has approved the financial leasing law after debating it for over seven sessions; the law would allow financial institutions and banks to provide financial leasing services to their clients in accordance with the approved legal framework. Financial leasing is expected to help small and tiny enterprises grow through acquiring access to capital assets without having to provide securities needed for loans.

Investors construct a sugar refining plant in Mukalla

Yemeni, Lebanese and Spanish investors are undergoing negotiations with the local authorities in Hadhramout in order to construct a sugar refining plant in Mukalla, with a capital of US\$ 230 million, to produce an annual output of 600,000 tonnes for consumption in the local market.

Al-Arhabi: Half of development Aid is for Education & Water

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation AbdulKarim Al-Arhabi has indicated that half of the foreign Aid for Yemen is directed towards solving the illiteracy problem and the Water Crises, adding that his ministry has adopted a new policy to ensure better efficiency in handling development aid.

Parliament to approve consumer protection act

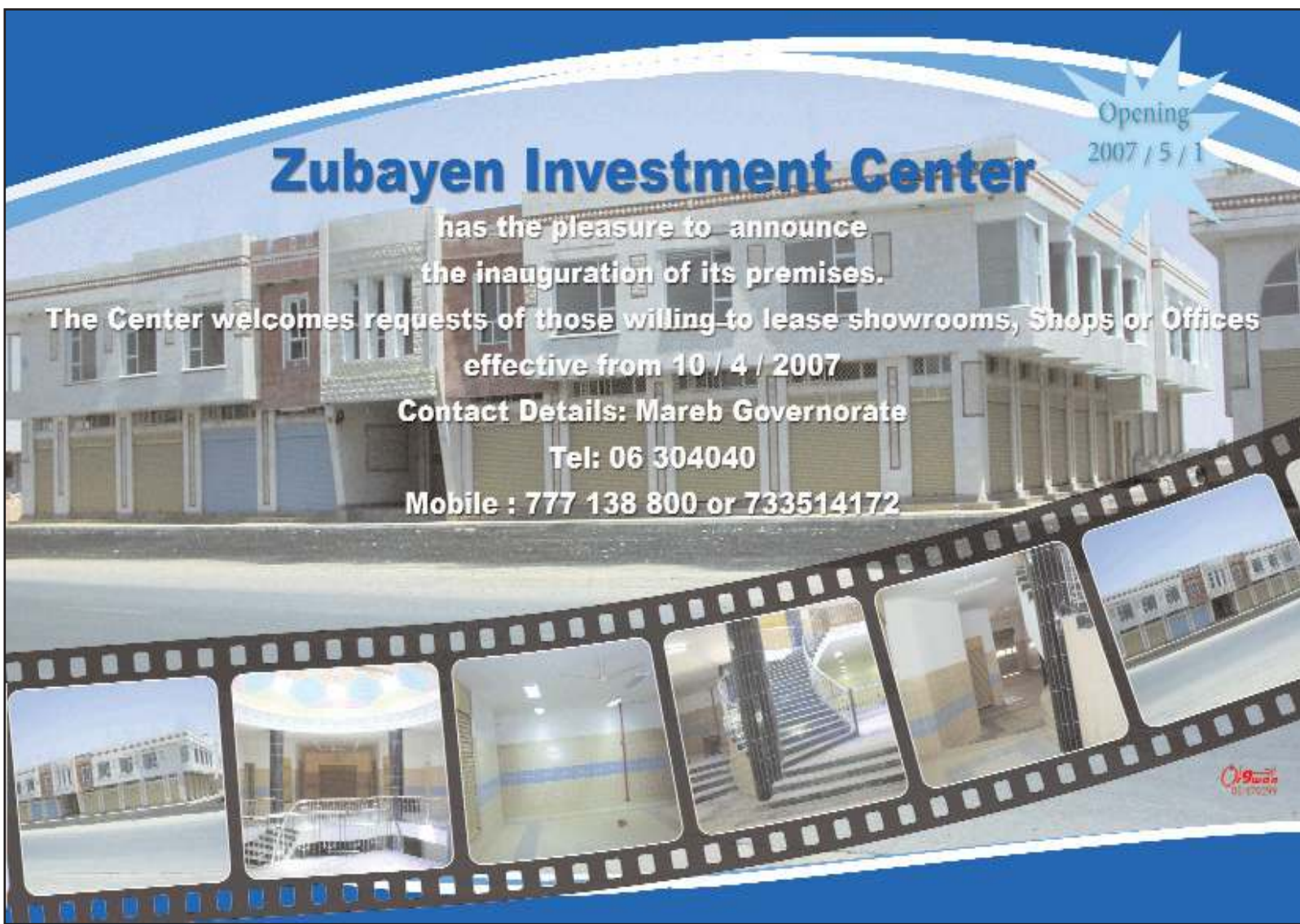
Sources in Yemeni Authority for standards has indicated that the parliament has completed revising the consumer protection act, and that this act would be approved within one month. The act will enforce certain standards and restrictions that aim to protect the rights of consumers in the domestic market.

Yemeni Businesswomen to establish a women-only firm!

Fawzya Nasher, president of the Yemeni Businesswomen Council, has declared that several businesswomen are negotiating to establish a women-only business enterprise, and the new venture would be mutually exclusive for women and only women would be allowed to buy-in this proposed company!

Qatar Airways Awards Agents

Qatar Airways held the annual agents awards night on the 26th of March 2007 in Movenpic hotel, in which it awarded six agents with Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze crystal Accolades, and also awarded five more agents with Appreciation Certificates. The awards ceremony was followed by a Gala dinner and a Presentation entitled: Qatar Airways: Past, Present and the Future.



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Opening 2007 / 5 / 1

Sabafon recounts its success story in the telecom sector



Sabafon, the first GSM company in the history of Yemen, has celebrated lately the sixth anniversary of its operation. The ceremony was stepped ahead to start the new year program with a better performance and excellent advantages for the customers and dealers of the company who have stand by and contributed to the success of Sabafon.

During the event which was attended by a number of prominent figures such as ministers, sheikhs, dealers, customers, the media, and Siemens head office representatives, came to share the success with Sabafon's team management.

A documentary film was displayed which marked the progress of Sabafon in the past six years. The film also showed the statistics of employment, sharing progress, sponsoring major event sports, culture, fun, tourism, international forums and above all that which connected Yemen with the rest of the world and creating a new channel of business for thousands of people.

Speeches were delivered to commemorate the occasion followed by a lunch banquet.



Sheikh Hamid Bin Abdullah Al-Ahmar



Mr. Tariq Al-Haidary

Celebrating six years of operations, Sheikh Hamid Al-Ahmer delivered speech on the occasion. He welcomed the attendees and thanked them for their attendance.

Al-Ahmer maintained that six years have passed since the launch of the company on Feb. 14, 2007, with aim to provide GSM telecommunication services. He also welcomed Sabafon foreign guests including representatives of Siemens Company, the key partner of Sabafon's success.

"Today, we celebrate six years of service under the theme: six years in Yemen and six years for Yemen," noted Al-Ahmer.

He attributed his company success to the efforts of Sabafon's cadre and the support of its customers, noting his company proceeded in providing GSM service in Yemen and further worked on improvising its coverage to include the whole republic with diversified services to cover all needs of customers. Sabafon is covering more than 90% of the populated area of the country.

"Six years of work in the peaks of mountains, valleys, deserts, villages and cities. Six years of services extended to the unreachable areas and Yemeni citizens and also six

years of setting up the infrastructure for this important sector in Yemen. It is also six years of mutual cooperation and competitive prices," added Al-Ahmer.

Sheikh Al-Ahmer also spoke about the competitiveness with Spacetel Yemen over the last six years and the unjust competition with the government company Yemen Mobile, expressing his surprise over the inability to set apart political matter from economic ones. He pointed out that state resources were exploited for its sake and a large section of state employees were obliged to be Yemen Mobile's subscribers.

Despite the monopoly of internet services, land and international telecommunication services, Al-Ahmer stated he is pleased with the level of services and the successes achieved by his company.

He also dealt with absence of official parties during the special ceremonies of private companies, assuring such an absence indicates the Telecommunication Ministry is not pleased with private companies.

Moreover, Sheikh Al-Ahmer recounted the story of Sabafon since the very beginning, noting that most companies were giving up the idea of investing in Yemen, fearing the market may not be prepared enough for such a venture.

However, Sabafon and Spacetel initiatives have changed this mood. Now, many companies aspire to join this sector including NTL and Curitel, wishing they can provide better services.

He also declared that 99 percent of Sabafon employees are Yemenis and most of them received specialized training, maintaining he takes pride in his company's venture to break the monopoly in



Senior staff from Siemens honor Sheikh Al-Ahmar (at right), Chairman of Sabafon's Board of Directors.

this important sector.

He also announced Sabafon has more than 1,400,000 million subscribers and noted his company was an important player in 2006 events. It has influenced and got affected by all economic and non-economic factors.

Concluding his speech, Al-Ahmer renewed his call that all companies whether official or private sector investors should be put on equal footage to achieve just competition and called for breaking the monopoly of Internet and fixed and international telecommunications.

He pledged his company will continue its success and work for meeting the demands of subscribers.

Speech delivered by Mr. Tariq Al-Haidary

Your Excellencies,

Your Excellency Ministers, Ambassadors, and Diplomatic Missions Representatives,

Dear Businessmen, Mr. Chairman and Board members, Honorable guests and of course SabaFon colleagues
Good afternoon...

enable the ease of access and usage of these services provided by Sabafon.

Today, the mobile communications and services form part of our everyday lives, connecting people, keeping families and friends in touch with one another and facilitating our business life.

Since 2001, SabaFon has represented and contributed to a new life style, new opportunities in Yemen, striving to create a healthy and competitive environment in the country and we as a company have invested significantly in our business to provide our customers 1,400,000 with the newest of Telecommunication and technologies.

Our business investment and strategic direction will continue to enable the Yemeni people to communicate easily locally and internationally by connecting the various distant points in the country with competitive prices that are considered as the most competitive GSM tariffs in the Arab region.

It is necessary to mention here the success of our supply chain; we have strategic partnership with the most professional companies in the telecommunications world such as Siemens, Motorola, British Telecom and many others.

We are also very proud of our continued investment in Yemen and the support that we gain from our local suppliers and we thank them for the continued support during last 6 years.

We are proud to say that we are committed to the Yemeni society by creating more job opportunities across the whole telecoms related sector and supporting different local industries.

Since 2001 Sabafon has been proud to sponsor local social events and we are committed to continue to do so in the future. Our sponsorship programs are wide ranging covering the whole geographic areas of Yemen, cities, towns and villages of the country through all social classes, businesses, women, journalists, teachers, students, and other segments of the society.

Today, we are proud to announce that SabaFon has successfully exceeded the 1.5 million subscribers for the first time in the history of Yemeni Mobile sector.

Our success is due to our absolute commitment and continuous efforts to meet our customers' needs and expectations with high quality of services similar and even better

than those offered in other countries.

We have invested significantly in market research across Yemen, asking our customers what they want, when they want it and how they would use the GSM services and we have listened to our customers.

We have asked our customers WHAT DO YOU THINK OF SABAFON and we are pleased to say that 85% of customers responded that they are extremely satisfied with SabaFon.

We have continued to invest in our most important resource... The Sabafon people or as we like to say "The Sabafon family"... by our commitment quality and training. We respect our people and we strive to meet their individual needs of knowledge and career development to cope with fast ever changing and advancing technology.

In addition to our external market research we have also completed a unique and completely independent internal staff survey asking our people what do they think of Sabafon and are pleased to learn that 90% of our people stated that they feel proud to work with SabaFon.

Sabafon is totally committed to investing in the company and to our people of which nearly 98% of our employees are Yemenis.

We ensure our people are equipped with the high degree of knowledge and efficiency required in order to better serve our customers and move forward into the future with effective contribution in the telecom sector.

Finally, I take the opportunity to express my heart-felt gratitude to you for your attendance to this event. I would like to convey my thanks to our very valued customers who joined SabaFon and for their valuable trust granted to us.

And I would also like to thank the SabaFon people for their continued commitment to the company and for delivering our passion for putting our customers first in every way.

We are committed to continual growth and to our mission statement.

To continue to be the LEADING and PREFERRED telecom provider in Yemen offering EXCEPTIONAL VALUE to our customers.

I feel proud to say that Sabafon continues to be brand of trust to our customers, our suppliers and to our people.

Thank you.



Who has the right?

By: Ghaleb Hassan Al-Ahlasi
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The bus was ready to go and filled with passengers. He searched in his pocket until finding it, opened it, took one and then lit it. "Excuse me," the man sitting behind him said, "I have a sick child here and your smoke is bothering him." He turned to look at the child and just as he was preparing to throw it out, a voice from the back said, "Can't you read this?" He turned to see a 45-year-old man motioning to a small sticker reading, "NO SMOKING." "Well, it's just a sticker," the smoker replied. "Yes, but now there's a law prohibiting smoking on all transportation means," another young man interposed. "Yes, I know. I've heard this millions of times." "Then why you don't stop?" "You see, I have the right to do whatever I want." "Yes, but you don't have the right to bother others or harm them," one of them said. "You have the right to smoke and we have the right to clean air." "Don't you know the famous

proverb: Your rights end where others' begin?" "Tell that to yourself!" the smoker retorted. "What?!" the man replied, "You're just one and we are 20!" "If you want to smoke, get out of the bus!" an old man said angrily. "Who are you to kick me off the bus?" "Who are you to kill us with your smoke?" the old man retorted. "Kill you?" the smoker laughed, "Can't you see yourself? You're already dead!" "You're impolite," a man in the back said. "Look who's talking!" the smoker replied angrily. "Hey, hey! If you want to fight, get out of my bus!" the driver interrupted. Three minutes passed without a word. The smoker felt heat on his hands and upon checking, he discovered that it was his finished cigarette, so he threw it out. "I don't know what you like about it," the man behind him remarked. "It gives me the true meaning of life." "Oh, really?!" one man laughed. "He means the true meaning of death." "Do you know how many diseases it gives you?" "Well, it's my body and I have every

right over it." "What about your family? Haven't you thought about your children?" one man asked. "You know, smoking affects non-smokers more than smokers, especially children," another man added. "Nothing will happen to me and my family unless it's our fate," the smoker replied confidently. "Well, even if your life and your children's lives are so cheap, ours are very expensive." "Hey man," the smoker laughed, "it's just a cigarette, not a machine gun!" "But its effect is more than a gun," another man replied. "If you want to smoke, just get off the bus," the old man said again. "I got on first, so you're the one who must get off," he answered politely. "Yes, but we are 20 more than you!" the man in the back shouted. "Well," the smoker said, "it's my stop and I must go now; otherwise, I'd like to finish this great conversation." The bus stopped and he got off, saying goodbye to the others and giving the old man a cigarette, saying, "Taste this if you want to live more." He then went and the bus continued its journey, but the question remained in everyone's mind: Who has the right? Smokers to smoke or nonsmokers to have clean air?

THROUGH THE MIND'S EYE

By: Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy
maged_thabet@hotmail.com



Ancestors' sayings & successors' beings

The ancestors left nothing", this is what old people always reaffirm. As a matter of fact, what the ancestors did was comments on things and situations which have been gradually transferred from one generation to another in the form of philosophical sayings, or proverbs. It has become common to refer to a proverb in any situation that suits its implications. I have heard the proverb "if the father is singing the family members do nothing more than dancing". But, I have never uttered it in any real situation, not because I do like not so, but, to be frank, for being unknowing its deep philosophical implications. A day, in fact two hours, in an institutional office, (I do not say governmental office), taught me both the practical and theoretical implications of the proverb. Reading the previous sentence, you, dear readers, may remember the proverb that "a word to the wise is enough", but keep it as a secret. Actually, for the first time, I realize the relation between such institutional offices and such sayings and proverbs. It is my fault, I confess, because I did not try to have any similar transactions ever before otherwise I would have learnt a number of, if not all, similar adages. I also remembered what we studied in the university that "psychology has a relation with all sciences of human beings". The well-looking, costly-furnished office did really make me feel comfortable, unwilling to leave it. This is the real contribution of psychology", I said, thinking that the office is furnished according to a psychologist's consultation with a purpose to calm down "all those" who spend days "waiting" for a signature, "at most". Most offices are occupied with nothing more than desks, and computers. That reminds me of another modern saying that "technology left nothing", thinking that such offices no longer work with human resources. The chairs and tables in the offices, nevertheless, indicated that there must be employees to do the work if there was "any". So it is not "technology that has left nothing". And, I suggest, there must be a new saying (if not already there) that "human beings left everything" which can be referred to in any similar situations. Actually, many dictums came to my mind, when I was walking around other offices. Some of the employees were reading newspapers, while others were talking in the telephones, and others did not come at all. Looking at those who are reading newspapers and magazines, I decided to construct a new saying that "If one is reading a newspaper, the others must be talking in the telephone". It expressed that situation, and can be referred to accordingly. But I forgot the case of those who did not show up. So the proverb would be missing something and it better to be changed, I said. The other suggested saying was that "when some employees do not come to work, the others must read newspapers and talk in the telephone". This is better and more comprehensive, I thought, with a hope to be a common adage for generations to come. Surprisingly, someone came. I thought he was a guest, or like my case, seeking a signature. But only newspapers were in one hand, and a "modern model mobile" in the other. Following him, I got into that office, where he spread the newspapers and started reading fast "as if only looking at the photos". I was eagerly waiting for his "golden pen" to sign that transaction. "Come tomorrow" was uttered from his "golden mouth". The situation provoked me to construct another saying for all the situations I experienced in that institution. "A new saying would be of no use", I said, since the ancestors, who "left nothing", left a most suitable proverb that "if the father is singing, the family members do nothing more than dancing". Writing this is not meant for entertaining readers since I am sure that they might have enough experience in this field (institutional offices). The only thing meant for the readers is the proverb itself, which, I hope, would remind them of their ancestors and of me too. The main aim is; however, to remind those who occupy higher positions like managers or chairmen, with a hope that they "may", "only may", think of their duties and responsibilities through the mind's eye. Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy is a 26 year old writer from Taiz, currently doing his M.A. at English Dep, Taiz Uni. An ex-editor of English Journal of the University.

In either case, she's the victim

By: Abdullah Al-Nahdi
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Some girls wonder why they don't have the right to marry who they love, but let me first ask why they love someone without being sure they'll marry him? Nowadays, love has become a real

social problem affecting marital life. Let's compare between love in the past and nowadays. In the past, girls avoided this problem by staying at home, far from even thinking about love or anything like that. They also couldn't communicate with men for two reasons: first, they obeyed our religious norms and second, they didn't have the communication means we have

now. A girl simply awaited her fortune, trusting that her parents wouldn't marry her to an unreliable man. Thus, when a girl married the one chosen by her parents, she took him as her first and last love and we see how happy their lives were. However, this doesn't mean girls in the past didn't love - they just loved differently. A girl might have been attracted to her cousin or any one of her relatives, but it was just kept to herself to see if it would come to anything. Love wasn't the dangerous emotion we see nowadays. Nowadays, many girls have the opportunity to go out for numerous reasons: study, work, etc. Most have mobiles, email and other modern telecommunication tools; thus, when one wants to form a relationship, she finds it easy because she has many choices from which to begin. For example, we often hear of a girl meeting a guy at college. First, she talks to him and then gives him her mobile number. At first, she thinks she'll just have fun, but she doesn't know how heartbreaking the end can be. They meet and talk for many days, weeks or even months, during which time love is built in her heart, brick by brick. Helplessly, she falls in love and there's no way to escape. She now wants him to marry her. Two possible situations are now possible: First, if the guy really loves her and wants to marry her, there's another thing that might prevent him - her parents (or society). Her parents already might have chosen another one for her and if so, they'll force her to marry the one they've accepted. When this happens, she'll marry him as just a soulless body and it then becomes a societal problem leading to divorce and a wretched life. On the other hand, if she discovers in the end that the guy she's going out with was just playing, she'll suffer a broken heart. In either case, she's the victim.

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“For not repressing orphans”

International Orphan's Day, a festival of mercy

By: Fatima Al-Ajel
fatimafnr@yahoo.com

Iman was an orphan selling gum on the streets, pleading, “Please sir, buy some gum from me. I’m an orphan and I need money to eat. I’m hungry.” On the street, she was treated inhumanely and at night, both the dark and dogs attacked her. Now one of the orphans living in a family atmosphere at Dar Al-Rahma Orphanage in Sana’a, Iman has tried hard to forget those dark days.

Yemen celebrated International Orphan's Day Sunday at the Mövenpick Hotel. Dar Al-Rahma Foundation for Human Development Orphanage arranged the festival, attended by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, as well as numerous businessmen and sponsors.

Ruqaiyah Al-Hajri, head of the orphanage, explained the importance of caring for orphans, describing the facility's activities, from receiving the orphans to bringing them up.

The number of beneficiaries currently stands at 400 male and female orphans, with plans to increase the number to 1,000 at the beginning of 2008. In this regard, Al-Hajri called upon donors to support the charitable and humanitarian project.

She suggested a project to find a fixed income for the orphans, saying, “The project is based on fixed monthly allowances or endowment shares from individuals, agencies, institutions, companies or anyone wishing to have an endowed share in the investment project.”

President Saleh ordered supporting the orphanage with a free tract of land to build more orphanages, in addition to increasing government support from YR 200,000 to YR 500,000 per month. He further directed the Yemeni government allocate YR 500 million for the first stage of building the orphanages, confirming his government's intent to establish a number of orphanages in those



Dar Al-Rahma orphans present a wonderful drama and songs reflecting their life before and after entering the orphanage.

governorates lacking such centers.

Some attending dignitaries and businessmen pledged donations to build Al-Rahma's investment project for orphans. Saleh Al-Awliqi, engineer of the investment project, briefly introduced the approximate \$10 million project, which will consist of 11 floors of offices and three floors for commercial stores and other Al-Rahma investment projects.

The project's outcome will guarantee the orphans a fixed income to provide all of their needs for a better life.

At Dar Al-Rahma, numerous orphans fortunately have found merciful hearts and received the chance to build their skills and capacities. However, large numbers of children remain on the street, suffering all types of inhumane treatment and life.

Will the Yemeni community intensify its protection for these children? Do street children and orphans have the right to seek a safe life and a better future? Only the coming days will tell.



President Ali Abdullah Saleh and some of the attendees at the International Orphan's Day festival.

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