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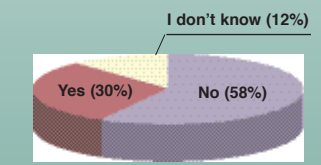


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The neglected value of greetings

Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:

Do you think that micro financing would boost economic development considering the current business environment?



Why do you think only 2 percent of Yemenis donate blood?
- Many Yemenis suffer from malnutrition and are not healthy enough to donate
- They are not aware of the benefits of blood donations
- They fear contamination because they don't trust the medical system
- I don't know

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Only 2 percent of Yemenis donate blood

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

SANA'A, June 16 — According to the latest statistics from the National Blood Transfusion and Research Center, only 2 percent of Yemenis voluntarily donate blood as unpaid donors. According to 2006 statistics, the remaining 98 percent depend upon paying for donors and family substitution when asked to donate blood if needed for a relative or friend. "In Yemen, most patients' families pay to substitute a relative or friend's family as a type of encouragement for donors, regardless of our advice not to do so. Some families are forced to pay for donors because some donors refuse to give blood to unrelated patients," explains Bathina Mogabil, a lab specialist at the National Blood Transfusion and Research Center. However, due to the extensive campaign the center organized to mark this year's World Blood Donor Day on June 14, participation from voluntary unpaid donors increased notably. "Based on my observations of the campaign's first days, attendance was high, with approximately 20 percent being unpaid donors," Mogabil noted. For the fourth time, Yemen celebrated World Blood Donor Day on Saturday under the auspices of the



Part of the march that started from Al-Saba'een Street in celebration of World Blood Donor Day. Top: "Renew your blood, reaffirm your belongingness" was the banner of World Blood Donor Day in Yemen.

Ministry of Public Health and Population and the cooperation of international organizations. As part of activities for the big campaign and celebration, a large march was held in Sana'a on Saturday, for more than 1,000 marchers including children, youth and several official and international organizations. The march began from the National Blood Transfusion and Research Center on Al-Saba'een Street and continued to include several main streets in Sana'a. Dr. Arwa Awan, director of the

National Blood Center, stated that the activities aimed to increase awareness about the need for safe blood by encouraging current and potential donors to donate regularly and on a voluntary unpaid basis. She noted that the campaign will continue for the next five months. "It's important that the involved authorities arrange national and medical campaigns to enlighten citizens about the importance of blood donation," she added.

Continued on page 3

Media presence keeps Al-Shuaibi's accusers from attending court



Five lawyers volunteered to stand by Anisa in her case against the security officer who raped her in prison.

SANA'A, June 17 — After 440 days of waiting to take legal action against Anisah Al-Shuaibi's accusers — Rizq Al-Jawfi, head of the Criminal Investigations Unit, and Saleh Al-Saleh, head of the unit's investigations department — they did not attend yesterday's 9 a.m. court session due to the presence of the media, according to Judge Abdulkarim Al-Shami, head of the criminal cases department. Al-Shuaibi claims the Criminal Investigation Unit arrested her illegally and that she was raped at the Central Jail

in Sana'a. Al-Jawfi has denied Al-Shuaibi's accusation and refused to attend the investigations several times. When he finally did attend, her attorneys weren't present for the same reason — the media. However, while Al-Shuaibi's attorneys were awaiting Al-Jawfi and his attorney this time, Judge Al-Shami received a telephone call at almost noon from an anonymous individual who, in the court hall and in front of all of the attendees, protested the media's presence at the trial. The judge apparently was responding to someone more powerful than himself, as he kept repeating, "Sir."

Continued on page 3

Government and Houthis to negotiate, no ceasefire yet

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SA'ADA, June 17 — Field leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi on Saturday announced a one-sided ceasefire by his fighters in anticipation of similar steps by the Yemeni government. In a statement, of which the Yemen Times received a copy, Al-Houthi declared, "We announce the halting of violence, fighting and our commitment to the republican system, the Yemeni Constitution and the effective laws of Yemen, as well as implementing the conditions agreed to following mediation by Qatari prince, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani." The announcement follows mediation efforts over the past month in an attempt to halt the more than five-month-old war in Sa'ada between Houthi loyalists and Yemeni government forces.



Yemeni army head back to base in Sa'ada after a heated combat with Houthi insurgents last week.

The government is expected to announce a ceasefire later according to the agreement between both sides brokered under the patronage of Qatari leadership. Official sources revealed last Thursday that the Yemeni state will suspend all military operations immediately as soon as "Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, his brothers and their followers halt the fighting and commit to the republican system, the Yemeni Constitution and effective laws, as well as hand over their medium-sized

weapons and descend from the mountains and sites they have seized." The official announcement falls within conditions aimed at stopping the Sa'ada war. The agreement reached Saturday between both warring sides dictates that Qatar and the committee about to be formed, which will include heads of parliamentary blocs, will guarantee its implementation. Special sources told the Yemen Times that the two sides have agreed to form two delegations for negotia-

tion. The government delegation will include Col. Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh and Yemeni Ambassador in Cairo Abdulwali Al-Shamiri, while the Houthi delegation will include Abdullah Al-Hakimi, who now resides in Cairo, and fired member of Parliament, Yahya Al-Houthi, who is now in Qatar. A source close to the Houthis welcomed the Yemeni state's readiness to suspend military operations and affirmed that they too are ready to halt the war on all fronts once "the state's seriousness about this call is confirmed. "We pledge our full readiness to stop the war on all fronts and we won't carry out any act against the army, except in defense of self or when attacked," the same source stated.

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In brief

ADEN

Four tons of foodstuff destroyed
June 13 — Four tons of various expired food products have been destroyed in Seyra district in Aden governorate. The food products were confiscated from the market by the General Works Office at the governorate after field visits to shops and restaurants in the district.

No swimming in Aden Gulf

June 14 — Aden Gulf Marine Authority warned citizens of swimming in the sea starting from now until end of September. This is a dangerous season for both fishing and swimming because of the high waves and sea storms. This warning is a regular one that takes place every year during this season.

SANA'A

Visit to the park for children with disabilities

June 16 — One hundred and fifty child with disability enjoyed a day full of fun at Al-Sabeen entertainment park in Sana'a last week. The trip was sponsored by the Physically Disabled Care and Rehabilitation Association which carries out such trips at the end of every academic year for its students.

ALMAHARA

New college for girls

June 16 — A college of education will be established soon for girls in Saihout district in Al-Mahara governorate. The college will be affiliated to Hadramout Science and Technology University and will be focusing on scientific studies such as Physics, Mathematics, and English. The college is anticipated to cover a dire need for higher education for girls and hence will cover the districts requirement of female teachers once the first batch graduates.

TAIZ

Investing in youth talents during summertime

June 17 — A discussion round was organized on Saturday at Taiz University on how to invest in youth talents during summer vacation. The round was organized by the university in coordination with Al-Jumhouria Newspaper. A number of working papers and recommendations were given during the discussion regarding the role of cultural and social establishments in promoting talents and creativity of the youth and how to utilize their free time especially during the summer. Some of the discussions were about the serious influence of satellite channels on the youth and how many entertainment program may cause negative impacts on the Yemeni youth personalities.

MARIB

spread of locusts in AlJawf and Marib governorates

June 16 — Because of the wide spread of locusts in AlJawf and Marib governorates, locust combating specialists have headed to the infested areas armed with pesticides. In Marib, the density of desert winged locusts reached 13 locusts per one square meters and the total infested area is about two square kilometres. A unit from the National Center for Combating Locusts has been sent to the area to control the spread of the locusts and to prevent them from breeding. The head of the center indicated that the situation is under control especially that the circumstances are not favourable for mating and he suspected that the locusts will be out of the governorates within the next few days.

ADEN

Electronic library network launched

June 17 — The National Library of Aden has added a new service to its customers through the inauguration of an electronic library through which the various online journals and electronic materials are included. The network connects the various departments of 16 computers and contains an indexing mechanism of the current publications within the library. It will facilitate the visitors research and their access to information.

Cuban official promises to manufacture anti-cancer vaccines in Yemen

SANA'A, June 16 — In a press conference held at the Sana'a-based Taj Sheba Hotel on Thursday, the Scientific Advisor of Cuba's State Council Fidel Castro Dias praised the 35-year relations Yemen and Cuba enjoy. Further, he hinted that his visit to Sana'a was a successful one and the discussion with the Yemeni counterpart involved many aspects like health, education, and energy. He also declared that his side intend to manufacture anti-cancer medicaments in Yemen to face the increasing cases of cancer among Yemenis.

Dias also expressed his happiness over visiting Yemen as it helped him to know closely the country and its people. "Your country is beautiful with a deep-rooted history and I have dreamt for long time to visit it one day and now my dream came true," said Dias.

As for his visit to Sana'a, Dias indicated that the officials of both countries reviewed completely all the agreements signed between senior Yemeni and Cuban officials and expressed his delight over the developed relations both countries keep, adding future plans were also discussed especially in fields related to education, energy, and health. He hinted that his county will increase the number of Cuban doctors in Yemen particularly those with rare specializations.



Scientific Advisor of Cuba's State Council Fidel Castro Dias

"Health cooperation reached higher levels and both countries are keen to maintain such cooperation, especially in training doctors either in Cuba or through Aden University built by Cuban support. Since the launch of the faculty, over 3,000 doctors graduated from it and this is a great achievement," maintained Dias.

He added both countries discussed granting scholarships in specialized higher studies for Yemeni students as well as manufacturing medicaments in Yemen under direct supervision of Cubans especially those medicines used for curing cancer, one of the most common diseases among Yemen, pointing out a new vaccine for cancer was innovated by Cuban doctors and will be produced in Yemen to help the relatively quite large number of cancer-afflicted patients.

Dias further stated that he discussed establishing a hospital for bones and they will send Professor Rodrigo Alvares Cambras to Sana'a next September with the details of the project. Moreover, he expressed his country's readiness to help Yemen in energy generation using gas as Cuba has had an experience in this field.

Concluding the press conference, Dias pointed out that Cuba is keen about developing and reinforcing its bilateral ties with Yemen, commending the supportive attitudes of Yemen as to the different Cuban issues and at different levels especially with the ban imposed on it by the US.

Over 500,000 students head to exam centers across the Republic

SANA'A, June 16 — Over 500,000 students in primary and secondary schools tend to 561 examinations centers across the republic to do their final examinations for the academic year 2006-2007.

The exams are conducted on alternation between the students of the secondary schools and primary schools, one day for the primary and another one for the secondary school students. Primary school students will start their exams on Saturday with Islamic Education and Quran subject, while secondary school students will do the exam of the same subject on Sunday.

Minister of Education Abdulsalam Al-Jawfi told Al-Thawra newspaper his ministry was keen about making this year's exams more systemized and not difficult as those who set the exam took into their consideration the different levels of students.

Al-Jawfi added that they worked on preventing the errors of the previous years as for repetition, spelling, and grammar mistakes in a way that ensures smooth and successful exams.

He further assured the exams bylaws will be implemented, calling on Members of the Parliament, local authority, and security affiliates to render the required help for examination committees and inspectors for smooth exams.

Al-Jawfi also claimed the education progress in Yemen is improving and



PM Mujawar inspects the examination halls.

SOURCE SABA

more progress is achieved both qualitatively and quantitatively, indicating that over 1250 new schools will be inaugurated next year.

For his part, Deputy Minister of Education Abdulaziz bin Habor, who is also the head of the Supreme Committee for Examinations, pointed out all preparations have been made in order to ensure successful and safe examinations.

Bin Habor went on to say those students in troubled areas of Sa'ada were given special numbers and will be received in certain exam centers to

avoid the problems and difficulties.

Yemeni Prime Minister Ali Mujawar paid inspection visits on Sunday to several examination centers in the Capital and Sana'a governorate. He passed by the examination center in Sumiah School for girls, Al-Tibri School, Khadija School for girls and Jamal Abu Nasser School.

Mujawar urged students to exert more efforts and prepare well for the forthcoming exams. Further, he advised them to answer their exams after giving each and every question its due time.

Attempted assassination



One of the many bullets that hit Al-Habari's car hit the windshield.

SANA'A, June 17 — Yemeni businessman and Member of the Shoura Council Yahya Al-Habari escaped an assassination attempt on his life last Thursday in the capital Sana'a.

Media sources revealed that gunmen opened their fire on Al-Habari's car in Al-Hassaba zone and before one of his commercial companies; however, Al-Habari and his driver managed to escape the attempt on his life, while his driver was badly injured and he is now in the intensive care unit.

The sources mentioned no other details about the incident or the party that stands behind it. Al-Motamer.net reported that the gunmen belong to Arhab area in Sana'a governorate and they were boarding a Toyota car with unreadable plate number.

Al-Habari, a senior businessman, who has strong ties with the ruling party, the General People Congress, has showed his support many times to government policies especially levying taxes on senior businessmen.

Yemeni Chambers of Commerce Union, Freedoms Committee at the Consultative Council, and the Ministry

of Youth and Sport as well as Al-Ahli Club denounced the assassination attempt and demanded the concerned security authorities to catch the perpetrators and refer them to judiciary as such a phenomenon defames Yemen among investors.

Al-Habari told Al-Ayyam he was heading to his office without body guards as per his tradition. Suddenly, gunmen intercept with their car and fired randomly at his car, hinting he personally knows those who targeted him and they belong to some security institutions.

He pleaded upon President Saleh to work on limiting arms bearing as such phenomenon harms the country's reputation and pushes investors out, hinting that he would sell all his belongings and leave the country if the situation remain as it is.

Likewise, Al-Habari called on the Parliament to hasten issuing arms bearing law as arms have become a means for terrorizing and blackmailing citizens, maintaining that investments usually prefer quite and armless environments.

Nass Press and Al-Shoura.net halt publication

SANA'A, June 16 — After continuous demonstrations and sit-ins by different pressmen, political activists, civil society organizations' affiliates and others in protest against limiting expression freedom, Nass Press and Al-Shoura.net websites halted their publications for reasons unknown to none but those in charge of these two web sites.

Pressured by pressmen insistence, the government halted the blocking of websites and news services of Nass Mobile and Without Chains Mobile. It also halted blocking the websites that were early blocked such as Al-Ishiraki.net and Al-Shoura.net.

In a letter published on their web site on Friday, Al-Shoura.net told its readers they will give up updating the website for reasons out of their control. However, they promised to con-

tinue as soon as things get better. The same thing applies to Nass press.

Some observers believe Nass Press halted publication because of disputes with the late Hamid Shahrah's brother which also forced the Editor-in-Chief Ali Al-Jaradi and the Managing Editor Abdulbaset Al-Qa'edi to resign their posts. However, such claims were refuted by Shahrah's brother. On the other side, official media claimed that the step was taken because both sites suffer financial hardships.

Early, some MPs demanded the government to stop its suppressive acts against the websites and the new services provided through mobile phone companies. They also asked the state to give up its monopoly over radio and television and to allow private sectors and individuals to have their own channels.

Transitional Justice and Gender

By: Nisreen Shadad

SANA'A-June, 16- Transitional justice and Gender was the issue discussed in a regional conference for three days. Salah al-Deen al-Wadee and Khadija Rowysi; who were actually the violence victims in Morocco, came to Yemen with the hope to convey their experience to all people who were subjected to violence and how they can release themselves as well as others from such kind of oppression.

During the three days, many issues are discussed; the concept of Transitional justice and Gender, the purpose of Transitional justice and the aim of applying it here in Yemen. "The idea of inviting this panel was before more than a year. It was when the President Ali Abdullah Saleh decided to leave his occupation," said Amel al-Basha, the director of the Arab Sisters forum.

We felt that democratic progress will take place. However; the wheel of the events went in a different way, and democracy got a little bit shaking, according to al-Basha.

To make the purpose as well as the mechanism more lucid for the atten-

dees, Nesiah presented a complete image of the international Justice center. She intended to inform the broader processes to which they are contributing, focusing on how transitional justice can better engage with women survivors seeking justice and acknowledgment, "Transitional justice depends on human rights; we are looking for pursuing the truth, particularly for the countries that have dark history that don't deal with it and change accordingly. We bring mechanism to deal with it," she said.

Afaf Nasir, a previous political prisoner confirmed the importance of such conferences, "Such issue can not be dealt with in Tunisia. The political activists are exposed to illegal arrest or coercive hiding. I was arrested for two years and four months as I was against numerous laws that applied in the university while I was a student. I am as well a wife of political activist who was arrested because of his affiliation to a particular party and up to now he is still under observation. Not only that, we can not find a job, not because we are not professional, but to be compelled to surrender and keep silent whenever our rights are violated."

"My husband was arrested for five years in a secret jail. Most of the political activists are under pursuit(threat). It is applied the hunger policy upon them to stop them," Nasir added.

Brigid Inder, the executive director of the women's Initiatives for Gender Justice in Netherlands, considered this conference a support for the woman, "It is important as it makes woman able to take her legal rights," Inder said.

Rowysi talked about the crimes that took place against the women in particular in Morocco, "Many women are arrested to be tools for threatening their husbands or relatives to submit themselves. They are arrested while they are pregnant. The types of torture they face, both who are pregnant or innocent, are mind-boggling."

"Aisha Sirri was arrested. To torture her, they took off her clothes and kept her naked on the snow in front of a lot of men as well as her relatives," she continued. "Khadija al-Hamidh, another woman was arrested, while she was pregnant. After she gave birth in the prison, they took her infant. One of the mothers said I fed my child blood rather than milk," she added.



Khadija Rowysi shared her experience of being a victim of violence and urged the attendees to come together and stand against this phenomenon.

Though the darkness of the past, Al-Wadee said, "Now we are not afraid to remember the history. We bring it to the light in the aim to reform, not to libel (slander). We all make mistakes, but are we obliged to correction which can take different forms? I can say that the most vivid example of the conciliation is accepting Abdul Rahman al-Usifi, who is a communist and is convicted to capital penalty, to be a Minister."

"Yes we prefer that the victims forgive them but we bear in our mind such

forgiveness is in return of penalizing the violators of the law in the future," he added.

The accomplishments Al-Wadee and Rowysi presented encouraged many of the attendees to apply similar organizations in their countries, however the obstacle all agreed upon is the government, "One of the main reasons that helped such organization to succeed is the facility the government offer it, the lack of this facility may hinder the concerned organization(s)' prosperity," said one of the attendees.

Continued from page 1

Only 2 percent of Yemenis donate blood

This year, the theme of World Blood Donor Day was "Safe Blood for Safe Motherhood" to highlight the lifesaving role of safe blood transfusions in maternal and perinatal care.

According to the World Health Organization, there are more than 500,000 maternal deaths worldwide each year, 99 percent of which are in developing countries.

Approximately 34 percent of maternal deaths in Africa, 31 percent in Asia and more than 21 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean are attributed to hemorrhaging.

The risk of developing complications due to hemorrhaging increases further in pregnant women with underlying conditions such as anemia, sepsis, malaria, HIV/AIDS and female genital mutilation.

According to WHO "Improved access to safe blood transfusions can help prevent death and improve the health of millions of women and their newborns and is a vital component of global efforts to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals"

A 2003 demographic survey estimated that 366 women died for every 100,000 babies delivered; 82 percent of these mortalities occurred during delivery and the postpartum period due to bleeding and hemorrhaging. Yemen witnesses eight maternal deaths per day, which is the highest maternal mortality rate among Arab countries.

Basam Al- Saqqaf found the day's celebration an opportunity to give blood as a humanitarian service. "I've

seen and heard about patients suffering due to a shortage of safe blood, so I came to provide my service to such people.

Today, some people are in need of my blood and maybe tomorrow, I'll be in need too." He advises the public to donate blood, as he says it's the highest service he may give.

Adnan Al-Adima is one of few Yemenis who gives blood regularly, at least once each year.

"First, I believe donating blood is healthy for my body, but at the same time, I present a service to someone who really in needs the blood. I only seek reward from Allah," he commented.

World Blood Donor Day is designated as an annual event to be held on June 14, the birth date of Nobel Prize winner Dr. Karl Landsteiner, who developed the system of classifying blood types.

Media presence keeps Al-Shuaibi's accusers from attending court

Al-Shami then abruptly announced that the accusers wouldn't appear due to the media presence; consequently, the trial was delayed until next Sunday, May 24.

It's very important that the media attend, since the trial procedures may go in the wrong way, i.e., unfairly, according to Khalid Al-Anisi, executive director of the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, also known as HOOD, which is in charge of Al-Shuaibi's

case. "We demand the media's presence because we have no secrets," he added.

Stating, "This trial is delayed as a result of the accusers' nonattendance," Judge Al-Shami declared that the law will be applied to all, with each having his or her rights.

As Al-Anisi maintains, "The only thing that's going legally is referring the case to trial. Al-Jawfi remains in his position with the power to control and seize, both of which violate the law. Moreover, these men are free, although they have committed crimes against humanity."

According to him, discrimination between the powerful and the common is more clear in this particular court.

"The accusers are free to attend or not, having conditioned the non-existence of the media at the trial," Al-Anisi says.

There have been more than one trial before Al-Shuaibi's and procedures go normally, with both sides - prosecution and defendant - attending. However, in this case, Al-Shuaibi's accusers didn't attend, but no penalty was incurred.

According to the law, Al-Anisi points out, the accusers must be arrested because they were informed of the court session, but didn't attend. Lawyer Abdul salam Al-Marwani attended the trial because he believes in Al-Shuaibi's case.

However, he doubts the legality of the trial procedures because since the court is under the government's power, it can't be independent or fair. Although Judge Al-Shami initially

stated that the accusers wouldn't come due to the media presence, he actually delayed the case for another reason.

"It was clarified that the accusers weren't informed about the session and that the general prosecution didn't inform them properly," he said.

He added that the personnel left the notification about the session in Al-Jawfi's office without making sure he got it; therefore, the announcement wasn't correct legally."

Government and Houthis to negotiate, no ceasefire yet

Informed sources report that the ministers of defense and interior, as well as senior military and security officials, held an extensive meeting

Thursday afternoon at the Republican Palace where President Saleh briefed them on the details of the Qatari mediation aimed at halting the war.

Such an exchange of positive announcements is a coronation of the more than month-long efforts of local personalities to halt the Sa'ada war, which erupted in January. Other announcements by both parties are expected soon.

Observers believe the circumstances now are suitable for a peaceful solution, especially when there's no interference by local and influential parties.

They further assure that all of the conditions set by the state regarding Houthis handing over their medium-sized weapons and descending from the mountains are indisputable.

"When there's political will and full seriousness by all concerned authorities to halt the war, everything else can be discussed positively. Holding serious dialogue will help prevent future wars from erupting and make all parties resort to the law and the Yemeni Constitution in disputes between varying parties," observers comment.

According to media sources, Saturday's agreement includes deporting Abdulmalik, Yahya and Abdulkarim Al-Houthi and Abdullah Aidhah Al-Ruzami to Qatar via Saudi Arabia.

Further, they are prevented from conducting any political or media activities against Yemen and are not leave Qatar except by consent of the Yemeni government.

The agreement's nine conditions include halting all military operations and insurrection, handing over

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position with its project "Decentralization and Local Development Support Programme"

Post Title: Local Institutional Development Expert Duration: 12 months (renewable) Location: Ministry of Local Administration

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 - Collect and analyze data
 - Arrange meetings and interviews
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- Qualification:**
 - Holder of Master Degree in accounting, finance, business administration or economics.
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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position with its project Yemen National Mine Action Programme.

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- Supervise petty cash balances regularly with cashier.
- Act as a translator when required and in the case of necessity translate written documents.
- Assist in the procedure of procurement.
- Assist in organizing, documenting and controlling of the store keeping of project equipment.
- Any other task given by the Director of YEMAC.

- Qualification:**
 - Accounting degree & 5 years of relevant work experience in a similar organization.
 - Excellent oral and written communication skills in English and Arabic
 - Experience in translation, interpretation and administration
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Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed terms of reference of the positions and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates. UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448892/E-mail: (hr.ye@undp.org) The deadline for receiving applications is Saturday, 23 June 2007 UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

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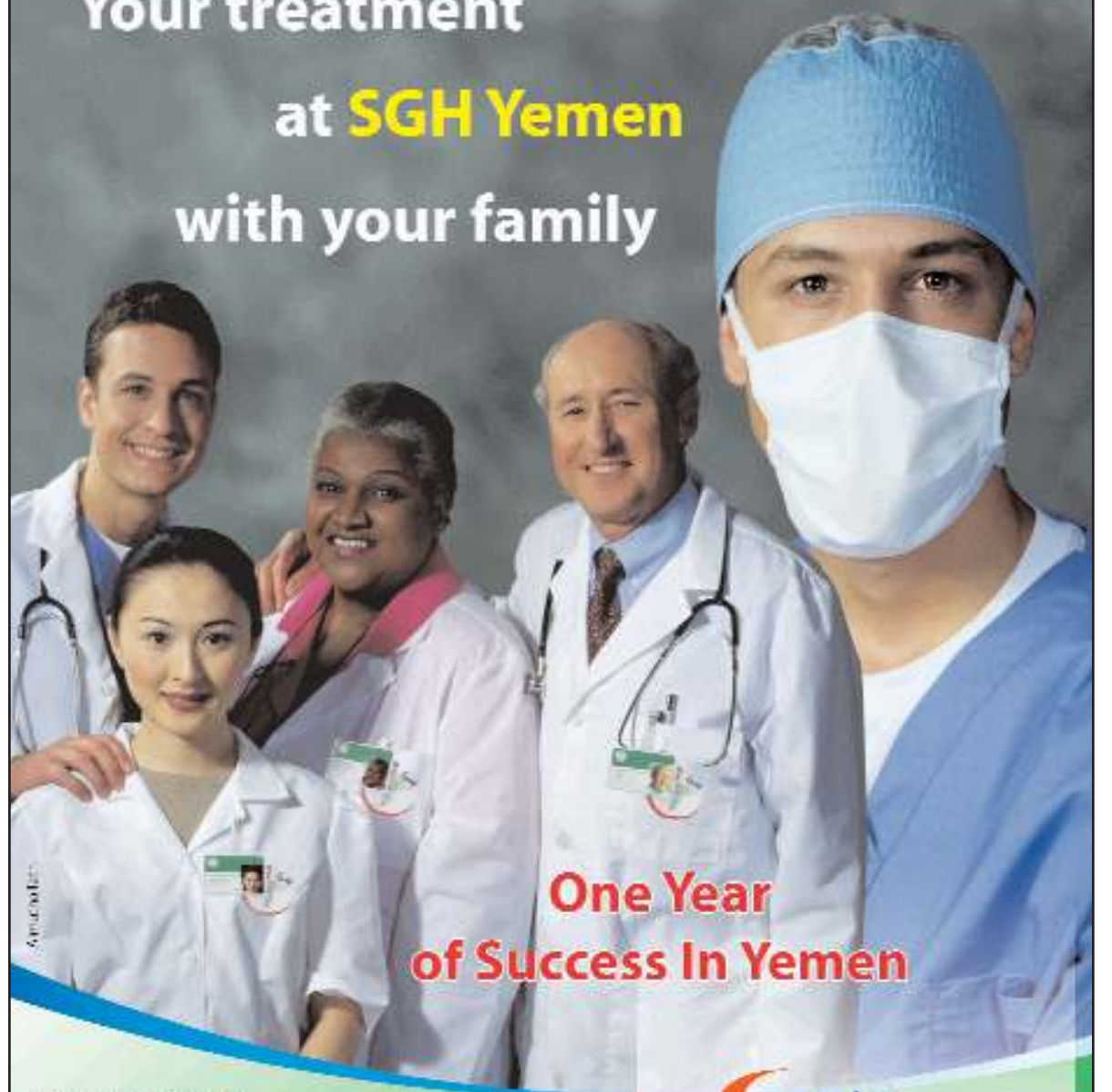
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Breaking the glass ceiling through painting on glass

By: Nisreen Shadad

“I can be a business-woman,” says Manal Lutfi, one of the distinctive students in the glass painting enterprise.

“After I finished the enterprise, which lasted a month, the institute called me to work as a trainer assistant.” Because Lutfi only completed high school, this course means a lot to her and she now feels that she’s more capable to begin a project of her own and succeed at it. “Even though I don’t have drawing skills, I excelled in glass painting because the most important skills needed are patience and accuracy,” she added.

Bushra Abdullah, executive director of the Impact Institute for Women’s Development, explains, “We named our institute impact in order to have a realistic impact on women’s lives.”

She and Iman Hassan, the business partner, insisted on establishing the institute and “digging in the rocks,” as Abdullah describes it, not only to give women a chance to acquire a skill, but also to create new small business opportunities.

Very few institutes in Yemen train in the art of glass. This type of art is more lucid in Yemen, as seen in the qamariyya, but nowadays, it takes other forms. “We create new ideas; for example, we use this type of art with vases and alabaster,” glass painting trainer Maisun Hussein says.

Samya Mohammed, one trainee in the diploma scholarship program for women



Samya has abundance of confidence; she believes she will do something unique in the future.

in glass painting, affirms a big difference in her life. “Since I’m disabled, I feared facing society and their perspectives about me. Because I can’t walk, I didn’t go to school; however, I enrolled in the Challenge Center at age 12 and began studying. I then received the chance for this diploma to prove to everyone that the disabled can make a difference in their society and that they aren’t parasites upon their families, as many in society believe.”

After completing the diploma, Mohammed plans to realize her dream and establish a fashion show. “I’m now thinking about the steps I need to accomplish my project.”

The diploma scholarship is for several months, wherein women have the opportunity to train in glass painting, as well as administrative skills, including management, marketing, accounting principles and preparing a business plan.

Hussein comments, “Trainees must be accurate, patient and clean. They need not be artists because there’s a picture under the glass, on which they then illustrate it.”

She continued, “At the beginning of the course, we give trainees small piece of glass, on which they first learn to draw the outline of the picture and then they learn to fill the space with color. Each trainee receives six pieces of glass and

the sixth evaluates her level.”

Although trainee Mirvat Mohammed Jabir is a chemistry graduate, this scholarship not only provides her the opportunity to learn glass painting skills, she also can put them into action.

After trainees attempt to market their works, they sit together for each one to describe the obstacles she faced. “On this day, we bring in a woman with a particular skill who used it and made a difference in her life,” Abdullah explained. According to her, meeting someone who began at zero and, due to a strong desire, she became a businesswoman, makes the trainees more confident about themselves.

Founded by the Dutch Embassy, the project seeks to provide 20 low-income women and girls the opportunity to be trained within three months on how to make their own products, such as colored vases, painted pictures and other traditional paintings. The project also offers administrative, financial and marketing training in order to help the women become entrepreneurs and start their own businesses.

Abdullah notes that the diploma trainees are those women with low incomes and the program aims to increase the number of businesswomen in Yemen and help them become independent. Traditionally, glass painting refers to painting on the surface of a sheet of glass to be included in a stained glass work. This type of painting, which actually is closer to drawing, was done to add details such as faces and folds of clothing, which couldn’t be added with traditional lead lines. It also was used to cover up portions of stained glass work so that light was kept from shining through.

According to Hussein, the origin of art glass emerged in the church, but according to www.thestorefinder.com, the origins of the first stained glass are lost in history. The technique probably came about from jewelry making, cloisonné and mosaics. Stained glass seemed to arise when substantial church building began. By the 10th century, depictions of Christ and biblical scenes were found in French and German churches and decorative designs found in England.

Glass is most like a super-cooled liquid. It captures light and glows from within. It is a jewel-like substance made

from the most ordinary materials: sand transformed by fire.

Before recorded history, man learned to make glass and color it by adding metallic salts and oxides. These minerals within the glass capture specific portions from the spectrum of white light allowing the human eye to see various colors. Gold produces stunning cranberry, cobalt makes blues and silver creates yellows and golds, while copper makes greens and brick red.

Stained glass, or more appropriately, art glass, is all around us today. An explo-

sion of interest in the past 30 years has given rise to many new and imaginative forms of this art. The rise of the individual artist, new technologies and the growing interest in stained glass as a hobby craft all have led to what’s being called a new golden age in glass.

Decorative panels are purchased simply to hang in a sunny window. Marvelous hot formed glass pieces adorn tables, walls, shelves and fill windows. New artists are combining, creating and developing unique new forms and styles every day.

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Old city of Sana'a on glass.

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Words of Wisdom



The problem is the helplessness people feel. Most people feel they have lost control, and even a sense of direction. They drift along with the current. They feel uncomfortable with the flow as they believe there is no one in charge. This is because the Yemeni individual is used to an autocratic system in which things are predetermined and people are given exact roles to play.

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



OUR OPINION

Working together to protect Arab children

Last year there were two incidents reported in Yemeni media about Ghada, a girl of eight and Yousif, a boy of seven, who died because of physical abuse by their stepparent and parent respectively.

Like them, there are many children in our country who are continuously subjected to different forms of abuse and violence, whether sexual abuse, child labor, deprivation from the basic rights such as health care and education, and sometimes even deprivation from a place to call home.

Just this week authorities returned 47 smuggled Yemeni children below 14 years of age before they reached the Saudi boarder. Many of the smuggled children had been voluntarily handed over by their families in search for a new source of income.

Early marriage had been one of the major problems of Yemeni children, especially females. The problem does not end with the marriage, in fact, it starts with it. Many girls face physical and social troubles in addition to the mental complications; where a child of 14 years oldsuddenly becomes a wife, a daughter in law, and a mother. In many cases in rural areas, the marriage was originally created in order to bring more free labor into the household. And hence in addition to the marital obligations, the child bride is actually used in the farm, to take care of the live stock, to fetch water and wood from remote areas, or to work in the house.

Now with the Sa'ada war exhausting our youth, the recent reports from the field say that most of the army's losses are young soldiers between 16 and 18 years old. They are new recruits who don't have much combat experience and who had been pushed to the front line of a heated battle.

Ugly statistics from the Ministry of Education itself indicate that there is an increasing drop out rate of children in the basic education level. Factors including poverty, lack of facilities, difficult syllabus, and unqualified teachers have aggravated this problem. Moreover, most of the children's responses as to why don't they go to school, is "what's the point?" commenting on the high unemployment rate that exceeds 30% according to statistics of 2004.

Yemen is one of the countries with the fastest population growth. More than half of the Yemeni population are under fifteen years of age. And with the people under the food poverty line being 40%, this means half of them are children. UNICEF - Yemen more than once, highlighted the alarming rate of stunted Yemeni children suffering from severe malnutrition.

After drawing such a gloomy picture, there is a bright side after all.

Today the second Arab Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect kicks off. The conference is organized by the Yemeni Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood and ASPCAN. It is under the theme "Let us work together to protect children in the Arab World".

Yes, the challenges are high, yet when committed people come together in order to make a better future for our children, hope rises above the challenges and conquers all.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

Civil community and encouraging creativity

By Mohamed Al-Harbi

Since the world started to pay farewell to the 20th century and welcome the new one, which is the century of sustainable development and growth, there has been a lot of talk that we have become part of this world and should prepare ourselves for integration into the global economy. We usually hear talk that the world has become a small village thanks to sophisticated telecommunication and information technology and that Yemen is a smaller village within the larger village 'the globe' due to the modern technology of the 20th century.

As we started to talk about the fact that the world experiences today the community of information, and that we won't be isolated from this community, which is rich with information technology, we have to bear in mind even the simplest part of information technology in order for us to be accessed into the new economies.

Decades and centuries passed while the world has been experiencing surprising developments as a result of information technology, sophisticated telecommunications, media and financial services, all of which have culminate with cell phones and other similar devices. Our information community appears to lose its significance and dominance of our imagination. Nobody should fear such facts because members of our community of today have turned to spend their time and make a lot of money via providing information technology. They have an access to various and different technological means that helped them dispense with imitation, mimicry, or any requisite efforts required by creativeness.

The world around us moves and never stays motionless. The world's motion involves a negative relationship, and some people, who pursue motion of the information community, said "We move with rapid frequency in an unorganized manner toward a world that gives priority to personal ideas and expressions." In the information world, we are shocked at the new technology introduced by the developed nations while we are still adherent to our own imagination. Despite this, some of us are still engaged in talks but not about the striking technology enjoyed by other countries. We waste our time in talking about changing perspectives, ideas, and simple information. But when we say that we have an idea, we are really expressing a vision that may be personal more than anything else. Any amount of information is enough for carrying out a series of logical steps, however, these steps don't enable us to do the best of the best to be utilized in our creativeness, which is rarely logical except in the late comprehension. This is the difference between creativeness and invention.

When we decided to adopt the policy of markets, economic freedom, and readiness to get integrated into the global economies, we were in need for the information that paves the way for admission into the world economy. We may have some information confirming that admission into the global economy requires the government to stop its being the only effective party or the leader of the development processes. In addition, the government is required to admit there are partners in development, who take part of the responsibility.

In fact, the available information indicates that

acknowledging the private sector and the civil community as partners in development represents one of the options from among the logical steps. However, we haven't begun to pay any attention to the civil community nor did we give it a top priority though information technology proves that civil community is a key partner in the national development.

We need to be very active, stable, and vigilant while handling the available information, as well as to be original, negotiative, and creative. This means that we have possessed a good idea about civil community organizations. Regretfully, we have ignored the four criteria for making a good: personality, originality, meaningfulness, and utility.

These criteria are aimed at fighting poverty and empowering the marginalized groups of dark-skinned people and quacks to participate in developing the national economy. In the meantime, creativity helps resolve traffic jams, misuse and waste of water resources, environmental pollution, as well as makes the educational outputs more effective.

As we exerted hard efforts for highlighting the role of civil community organizations and considering this sector one of the key partners in the national development, the government worked on enhancing the role of this sector by establishing the Social Fund for Development and the small enterprise units and paid closer attention to the ministries of culture and information. We cast doubt on authenticity of the results as the private sector isn't qualified enough to be an effective partner in the national development because civil community organizations don't play any role in adopting and encouraging the creative activities.

We acknowledge that the local communities are full of the creative figures, and the creative and talented people in drawing, writing, singing, shooting, handcrafting, and other crafts exist in every house and village through the country. All these things imply that there is a cultural heritage that can be developed in order to be utilized in recovering the national economy.

Additionally, the roles and duties of civil community organizations should be transferred from extending foods and wears to the deprived groups into building the capacities of those living in rural and remote areas to develop their creativity. As a matter of fact, the national economy cannot be developed via the macro industries as these kinds are governed by numerous conditions and restrictions. On the contrary, the creative, individual and group crafts can be a key pillar for the economic recovery.

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily

SILVER LINING

No more fuel into fire

It seems that the shaky position of the government in its fight with the rebels in Sa'ada has encouraged other similar turmoil in Abyan. Since the fight with al-Houthis erupted in 2004, we all do not know the real causes behind it. The government gives several explanations and interpretations for the reasons which sometimes refute each other; sometimes it claims al-Houthis want to overthrow the political system and then it says that the al-Houthis are backed up by some countries including Iran and Libya.



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

The government sometimes pardons al-Houthis and their supporters and then demands they should lay down their arms and they will be ensured fair trial. Last Thursday, the government announced the suspension of the military operations against al-Houthis provided that the rebels abide by law and order and give up fighting and return homes to live peacefully. Previously, President Saleh said on the eve of the unification day that they should surrender and hence would be granted fair trial. Now, there is no trial. We need to know why they keep changing their positions. Reading between the lines of this government discourse demonstrates its confusion and incompetence to take a solid decision.

Now, there is a similar rebellion taking place for some weeks in the rugged mountains of the southern governorate Abyan and nobody knows the reasons behind it. The government claims the rebellion led by the former military officer Saeed Shahtoor is motivated by the secessionists. Shahtoor who is gaining support of the impoverished angry people alleges that his rebellion has noble objectives and is meant to serve the welfare of the people, demanding equal distribution of power and wealth. Such kind of discourse will find open ears because the number of the hungry and angry people is on the rise. At least they are better than those allegations and the groundless anti-US-and-Israel slogans of al-Houthis; I mean Shahtoor is touching the pains of millions of people who are going through very difficult living situation which can be a good reason for them to back up Shahtoor.

It is reported that the situation in Abyan is worsening, mainly because of the ill practices of the influential military and civil figures. Again, in Shabwa there was fierce fighting between tribesmen and security personnel where a number of people were killed and injured from the two sides. The same thing took place in Marib.

This is really worrying. The people are easily irritated due to economic hardships. And any sort of injustice or ill practices on the part of the influential figures will add more fuel into the fire and would instigate conflicts here and there which by the end of the day destabilize the overall situation of the system in Yemen. We do not need more troubles here and there; we need the government to put off the ongoing fight in Sa'ada which has the potential to duplicate here and there unless the government addresses the real problems of the people. Are you guys in charge aware of this?!

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

Letters to the Editor

Your Editorial: Mr. Allan Johnstan

Congratulations on your bold and courageous article advocating the release of the BBC journalist Mr. Alan Johnstan. In fact, I was very sorry to read about your father. In the meantime, it is really encouraging that you are following you Father's footsteps.

It is heartening to learn that Mr. Allan Johnstan, is yet fighting. It is also stirring that "A Mighty Heart" has been filmed on the slain American journalist, Mr. Pearl Daniel, of Wall Street Journal. Increasingly, writers and journalists are being targeted for murder and kidnapping, to bulldoze political agendas. This is culpable. Consider:

- BBC's Allan Johnstan is in captivity in Gaza, for over 2 months, an inhuman and cruel form of blackmail.
- Around 135 journalists have died in Iraq, in the line of duty, since the war commenced, 4 years ago.
- Last year the Russian writer Ms. Anna Politkovskaya, was slaughtered, in Moscow. Her auto-

biography, published after her death, "A Russian Diary", details by date, the violations of human dignity, and the plight of the suffering sons who fought in Chechnya and their agonizing mothers.

Even in a democratic India, eminent journalists like Frank Moraes, Rajinder Puri, Khushwant Singh, have had to undergo terminations of services/transfers, because they peeved the powers that be.

What is the blunder of these writers, journalists?

That, they chose a profession, which involved reporting incidents truthfully, on the ground?

That, they described/defied powerful personalities, as they saw them?

That, they visited battle zones, where bullets, bombs, and death are freely available, but not water, food, and rest?

That, they took the road, less traveled?

It is really harebrained to target writers. A writer carries no gun or knife. He carries a cause, to the larger world through his words. His only weapons are the 26

alphabets, which he uses like bricks, mortar, and cement, to construct a report, which could influence the readers.

Militants who kidnap journalists should garner their support, rather than annihilate them. The words of a journalist, will survive those who seek to throttle them, and will impact people for all times to come. It is one matter to shoot soldiers armed with guns. But, shooting bullets into journalists, who carry a pen, laptop, or camera, is loathsome. Today, the words of Plato and Aristotle are cherished, not the luster of Alexander's sword, though he conquered the world.

Granted, that a journalist projects a story from his unique perspective, and perhaps, his bias too. So what? We are free to disagree with the writer's views. But, his right to express himself, is unassailable! Governments, have a challenging duty - to prevent such killings and the oppression of the truth.

From times immemorial, writers and thinkers who spoke their minds, have been victimized. Dictators,

despots have tried to silence reason with bullets, but eventually they have always been vanquished. Time will prove, once more, that the pen will be mightier than a sword or revolver.

Mr. Daniel Pearl's martyrdom will metamorphose into a legend, through the screening of "A Mighty Heart." However, the sacrifices of many journalists and writers, will remain unsung. Agencies, for whom the slain writers worked, should provide and care for their families, wives, and children. Money is no alternate for the presence of a human being, but it can facilitate the daily lives of the aggrieved, till they can overcome the shock and grief, and reconstruct their lives, to the extent possible.

Words of truth will prevail, over bullets. Truth can never be throttled. That which deserves to live, will live! So, Mr. Alan Johnstan, Never Give Up!

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SKETCHED OPINION



By: Samer

YEMEN TIMES

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Sahwah Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Islah Party
Thursday, June 14

Main Headlines

- JMP leaders call for settling Sa'ada crisis, blame government for prohibitive prices
- Fierce clashes between Al-Damashaqa tribe and army in Marib leave 18 deaths and injuries
- Political security arrests teachers over asking students to write about efforts required from President and Prime Minister to fight corruption
- As MPs attribute unstable prices to official's exercise of trade, Parliament summons Prime Minister over price hikes
- Senior government officials accused of harboring Ibb projects-related scandal
- As Houthi thanks top Iranian officials, his supporters suffer heavy loss, army controls Razeh and Ghamr areas.

The Islah Party-affiliated quoted Sa'ada sources as saying that fierce clashes are taking place in Sahar area. This came after leader of the rebellion Abdulmalik Al-Houthi thanked top Iranian officials including the President Ahmadinejad while his followers suffered loss when the army resumed control of Razeh and other bordering areas. The weekly continued to say that up to 40 armed Houthi aides and five soldiers were killed while dozens on both sides were injured in the most recent fierce clashes. The newspaper added that several areas in Haidan district witnessed armed confrontations and shootout between the military forces, backed by tribesmen loyal with the government, and Houthi

followers for the first time since the war broke out last January.



26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, June 14

Main Headlines

- Ministry of Youths and Sports prepares for holding 600 summer centers in different governorates
- Donors and Gulf funds to meet in Sana'a on Monday
- Yemeni people eat locusts infesting their country
- Yemenis and Indians plan to invest \$2 billion in different projects throughout Yemen
- Attorney-General decides to establish new prosecutions in Capital City
- Penal Prosecution starts investigating elements of Sana'a terrorist cell

The Specialized Penal Prosecution will start investigating the Sana'a third terrorist cell, composed of 15 suspects including a woman on Saturday, May 16, the Army organ reported on a front page story. It went on to say that the cell is led by the top terrorist Jaafar Mohammed Al-Merhibi, who is aided by another four suspects from Al Al-Kuhlani tribe, of whom one is a physician. The physician has paid several visits to the restive province of Sa'ada to treat the Houthi followers, who were injured in the fighting with the military forces.

According to the newspaper, the suspects confessed that they have been plotting to assault and bomb important economic, military and security installations. Their plots targeted military and civil transportation means,

as well as distinguished personalities and senior government officials.



Al-Wasat Comprehensive Political Weekly
Wednesday, June 13

Main Headlines

- Tactic change in the management of Sa'ada fighting
- Large numbers of armed groups join Abyan Security officers' coupe, Houthi praises stance of Joint Meeting Parties
- Joint Meeting Parties call for ending Sa'ada fighting but government accuses them of backing rebels
- Journalists: Information Ministry not qualified to run media work
- Parliament fails to discuss, suggest possible solutions to price hikes
- Hundreds of children stage sit-in claiming their legal rights
- Desert locusts infest governorates of Marib and Al-Jawf
- As U.S. report criticizes Yemeni authorities for poor performance, Novak declares that a military group is ruling Yemen
- Five soldiers killed, others injured in Marib clashes

At least five military troops including commander of the campaign have been reportedly killed while eight others were injured in fierce clashes between the Maghaweer 111 Military Division and groups of armed tribesmen in Marib governorate, the independent weekly reported on its front page. It added that five of the eight injured troops were taken to Sana'a hospitals, pointing that three tribesmen were wounded in the fighting, one seriously. According to the independent weekly, media sources quoted tribesmen as saying tension grew

sharp between Al-Damashaqa tribe and Al-Hashidi Firm over the distribution of job opportunities among applicants. The Interior Minister Rashad Al-Alimi intervened in the issue and made a pledge to Ibn Ashwan, one of the prominent tribal sheikhs in Marib that his fellowmen be given priority for job opportunities. But locals claimed that the firm doesn't abide by the agreement they reached with it.

Al-Damashaqa tribesmen blocked the road leading to the firm with the aim of pressuring the firm to abide by the agreement. Tribal sources told that their tribes reached an agreement with Al-Hashidi Firm, under which three representatives from the tribe are appointed to follow up any employment-related issues.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, June 12

Main Headlines

- Son of Prime Minister's brother murdered in mysterious circumstances
- Al-Dhale' arms depots explode just few days after Nuqum Mountain armory's explosion in Sana'a
- Al-Dhale' locals stream into streets protesting and oppression human rights abuses, denouncing wrong policies
- NUPO leader asks government about the role it played for Guantanamo detainees' homecoming
- Opposition parties call for ending Sa'ada fighting, insist on dialogue as a means to resolve crisis
- Joint Meeting Parties condemn price hikes, violations of rights and freedoms

The Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) renewed their call for immediately ceasing fighting between the army and Al-Houthi supporters in the restive governorate of Sa'ada, the weekly reported on its front page. It added that the opposition parties criticized the government for being unable to control price hikes but commits flagrant violations against press freedom. The JMP insisted on activating the peaceful means and solutions to put a stop to the fierce clashes that killed hundreds and injured dozens from the military troops and Al-Houthi loyalists.

The weekly newspaper said that after their last Saturday's broad meeting, JMP leaders stressed the necessity of conducting extensive dialogues on the reasons and policies behind wars and conflicts in Sa'ada. During their meeting, JMP leaders approved the mechanism, proposed by the Higher Council for Implementing JMP Initiative, which called for holding a national meeting to include representatives of political parties and organizations and human rights activists before June 28. The opposition parties attributed the deterioration of people's living standards, severe poverty, high unemployment rates and skyrocketing prices to the authorities' unwise policies.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (GPC)
Monday, June 11

Main Headlines

- Small armory in Al-Dhale' governorate explodes
- Unidentified people shoot dead relative of Prime Minister

- President of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate: Government orders reviewing job description of journalists
- Prime Minister: Yemen enjoys distinctive ties with Gulf states, trade exchange continues to increase
- Fish quality inspectors and officials attend training course
- Government accuses Joint Meeting Parties of backing terrorists
- German investors demonstrate their desire to initiate businesses in Yemen
- Locusts spread in Hadramout, threatens food security in Yemen and neighboring countries

Swarms of locusts are terribly spreading in different areas and farmlands in Hadramout government, thereby threatening food security in Yemen and other neighboring countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, the ruling party-affiliated weekly quoted Abdu Fare' Al-Rumaih, Director of the National Center for Observing and Fighting Desert Locusts, as saying after his center received reports on the infestation of locusts. The newspaper added that Al-Rumaih told Yemen News Agency, Saba, that locusts are spreading, according to the reports, in the desert valleys, north of Hadramout and near the border with Saudi Arabia. The areas suffering the spread of locusts include the valleys of Ghubari, Washa, and Dhaba'at, as well as other agricultural lands in Sayoun.

The official clarified that the teams in charge of observing and fighting locusts in the affected areas have moved immediately to new areas to assess the current situation of locusts' infestation and provide the center with the requisite information. He ascertained that his center cares for fighting locusts and controlling their spread, plus preventing them from reaching other bordering countries. Al-Rumaih stated that his center has prepared a plan to avoid massive locust infestation.

Saudi bloggers know the do's and don'ts

By: Carolien Roelants

Egyptian bloggers are real activists, and some are languishing in prison as a result. But Saudi bloggers too are very active these days. The Saudi government, although very conservative, seems less concerned with the blogs than the Egyptian authorities. On the other hand the Saudi bloggers are less confrontational. Bloggers here know the do's and don'ts, says Ahmed Omran, who is one of Saudi Arabia's most important political bloggers. That means: a cautious hand with religion and no critical reference to Saudi monarchy.

I met Ahmed Omran pharmacy student in real life, Saudi Jeans on the web

for lunch in a rather desolate restaurant in a street that according to him at night is a hotspot for Riyadh's youth. He told me he started blogging three years ago, in English to attract more people. Even in financially powerful Saudi Arabia internet penetration is only 10 percent, even among people who only speak Arabic even less.

His aim is twofold: make clear to foreign readers that Saudi Arabia is normal country rather than source of all terrorist evil, and to help Saudis accept the idea of reform and freedom. "I blog most of all about freedom and equality, that everybody should be treated equally, women, men, shia, sunni," he told me. "Something is changing, but very slowly. Change should come faster, the young can't wait."

Female blogger Hadeel Hodhaif, who blogs in Arabic as Heaven's Steps, is a daughter of a philosopher who in the nineties was in prison for four years because of his ideas. According to her internet is a force for change in Saudi Arabia. "In 2001 we got Internet at university and an enormous gate opened, especially in Saudi Arabia, with its closed reality. A different world became visible." Her sister Arwa, also a blogger, warned Internet creates a widening gap inside society, between people with and without internet, between the big cities and the countryside. But: "We are the next generation, we are the leaders of the future."

Carolien Roelants is Middle East editor of Dutch daily NRC Handelsblad

"Hearts with holes"

By: Rajendra K. Aneja

It is heartening to learn that Mr. Allan Johnstan, is yet fighting. It is also stirring that "A Mighty Heart" has been filmed on the slain American journalist, Mr. Pearl Daniel, of Wall Street Journal. Increasingly writers and journalists are being targeted for murder and kidnapping, to bulldoze political agendas. This is culpable. Consider:

a) BBC's Allan Johnstan is in captivity in Gaza, for over 2 months, an inhuman and cruel form of blackmail.

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It is really harebrained to target writers. A writer carries no gun, or knife. He carries a cause, to the larger world through his words. His only weapons are the 26 alphabets, which he uses like bricks, mortar and cement, to construct a report, which could influence the readers.

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By Rajendra K. Aneja*
*The author is the CEO of a Foods Company in the Middle East. Prior to this, he was the Managing Director of Unilever Tanzania, Africa.



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UNICEF: Overexposure to fluoride in drinking water, poisonous

By: Amel Al-Ariqi
amellariqi@yahoo.com

When Ali Ali Abdullah Saleh learned that journalists had arrived in his small village of Al-Maqwal, located south-east of Sana'a, he ran out to receive them.

Although conservative traditions and tribal norms characterize the village residents, he asked female reporters to visit his home and talk with his wife and daughters. "I want you to interview them and see how much we are suffering due to this problem," he insisted.

Saleh's six daughters are suffering dental fluorosis, which is characterized by discolored, blackened, mottled or chalky-white teeth and a clear indication of overexposure to fluoride.

"Our father told us that sulfur in our drinking water caused this damage to our teeth," said the oldest daughter, 16-year-old Ghadah. Like other girls in the village, Ghadah didn't complete her education at primary school, so she had no opportunity to discover that what she thought was sulfur actually is fluoride.

Fluoride naturally exists in water and is derived from fluorine, the 13th most common element in the Earth's crust. It's well known that fluoride helps prevent and even reverse the early stages of tooth decay.

However, constant intake of excessive fluoride can lead to dental fluorosis, as well as severe and permanent bone and joint deformations of skeletal fluorosis. Early symptoms include sporadic pain

and stiffness of joints. Headache, stomachache and muscle weakness also can be warning signs. The next stage is osteosclerosis (hardening and calcifying of the bones), and finally, damage to the spine, major joints, muscles and nervous system.

Whether dental or skeletal, fluorosis is irreversible and no treatment exists. The only remedy is prevention by keeping fluoride intake within safe limits. The World Health Organization estimate of a permissible upper limit for fluoride in drinking water was set at 1.5 milligrams per liter.

"Death from poison is better than dying of thirst"

According to the latest information, fluorosis is endemic in at least 25 countries worldwide, including Yemen. However, the situation in Yemen is worse and more serious because the nation suffers severe water shortage, which leads most of its population to depend on underground water.

"We don't have any other choice. Our only water source is the wells. Now, they've told us not to drink from the wells, so the only options we have is to drink from the two surface water wells or buy water, which costs a lot," Saleh said, also mentioning armed conflicts that have occurred between locals due to lack of water.

"Many people drink from the well, knowing that the water has a high fluoride rate, but they keep saying that 'Death from poison [fluoride] is better than dying of thirst,'" says Ali Mohammed Taher, engineer at the Public Authority for Rural



Many children in Sanhan ar have dental fluorosis.

Water Resources, warning about citizens' random digging for drinking water. He said some dig to 1,000 meters in mountainous areas where water contains high fluoride.

Studies conducted by the same rural water authority discovered that residents of Sana'a, Ibb, Taiz, Dhale' and Dhamar drink water with high percentages of fluoride.

UNICEF involvement

A field visit by rural water authority specialists to Al-Khaw'h village in Sanhan district southeast of Sana'a revealed that of 149 children in the village, 47 have advanced stages of rickets, including 32 males and 15 females. All of those affected are under age 10.

Field tests show that the level of fluoride in the region's drinking water varies between 3 and 6.5 milligrams per liter



This village like many Yemeni areas suffers from severe water shortage.

from one village to another.

Testing also found that children and the elderly suffer dangerous bone problems. The team warned that children are more prone to osteomalacia and rickets, while the bones of the elderly experience corrosion and osteoporosis, which may develop into skeletal fluorosis.

High fluoride concentrations in water also lead to bad material effects, eroding plumbing components such as the pump and pipes, particularly when in the presence of high concentrations of some other elements.

Such warnings have led Yemeni authorities to request UNICEF's help and support to fight excessive fluoride levels in water to save people, especially children.

"The government isn't yet fully aware of the fluoride problem or convinced of its adverse impact upon the population. For

example, some have suggested establishing defluoridation stations in these regions, but I believe such a solution isn't practical, particularly because these regions lack electricity to run such stations," says UNICEF engineer Sami Abu Bakr Sa'eed, general director of the Water and Environment Unit.

He calls for further efforts to support more research on the subject and promote systematic policy responses by governments. He added that UNICEF will consider other countries' experiences in this field, such as India, which uses water filter technology.

Abu Bakr's statements came following a meeting last Thursday that brought together leaders of Sanhan district's local council and officials from the Rural Water Project.

UNICEF and local authorities reviewed the results of the field studies

regarding the negative impact of fluoride on area inhabitants. They stressed the important role that the local council must play in order to increase public awareness regarding random digging of wells, coupled with monitoring the digging process and preventing people from drinking water from wells containing fluoride.

"We recently asked residents to use such water for washing or cooking, but not for drinking. We also advise those who've already been infected to take care of their nutritional status and eat large quantities of food containing calcium and phosphorous," Taher noted.

However, such advice doesn't supplant the urgent need for sources of clean drinking water. "Digging new wells, establishing a water station, distributing water filters or whatever the solution is, we need it now urgently — both for our sake and our children's health," Saleh concluded.

The market in Jordan's spare body parts

Organ trade is banned in Jordan and anyone caught selling or buying organs faces serious trouble with the law. However, knowledgeable officials and volunteers say the number of backdoor sales could easily surpass 300 a year. Who are the main players in the business? What is the procedure? And who would be ready to give up a vital organ for cash?

By: Mohammad Ben Hussein
The Media Line Ltd.

Ziad, 20, desperately needed to come up with \$1,500 to propose to the girl he loved before her parents could talk her into marrying a school teacher.

Unemployed, with a criminal record and no skills to offer the job market, Ziad could not have been more desperate.

He knocked on the doors of friends and relatives to borrow the dowry, but the economic recession hitting the country made it impossible for others to assist him.

Selling a kidney would be the perfect solution to his distress, he thought to himself.

"That was the magical solution to my problems and on top of that I could start a small business," says Ziad, who was offered \$4,000 for a kidney.

Within a week of making his decision, Ziad received a down payment and had all the necessary medical tests to have his kidney transplanted. The deal was done in secret as organ trade is banned in Jordan and anyone caught selling or buying organs faces trouble with the law.

"I was told to keep my mouth shut until

illicit organ selling is a lucrative business thriving in the shadows of society.

Brokers like Khalid (not his real name), who arranged Ziad's organ sale, earn five times as much as professionals. Such brokers have developed contacts with the wealthy as well as with the impoverished. The poor are the organ suppliers while the rich get restored quality of life for their money. Khalid, a school dropout, became involved in the kidney business five years ago when he sold a kidney in Iraq for \$2,000.

"I am neither stealing nor forcing people to do wrong. What I do is to help patients get what they want by finding them donors," says Khalid.

In the past, Khalid used to send his clients, the donor and the recipient, to Baghdad. But since the war broke out, neighboring countries like Syria, Lebanon and Egypt have provided the perfect venues for transplanting organs.

It is simple: the deal is done in Jordan but the surgery takes place outside the country, thus allowing the brokers to escape the wrath of law.

In some rare cases recipients can have the operation in Jordan, but it is more risky and much more costly.

In Ziad's case the choice was made for the recipient, Um Jihad, to have it done in Egypt. The woman was confined to a wheelchair, her pale face swollen and constantly suffering from acute abdominal pain and occasional seizures. Her family needed to find her a kidney fast because her health was deteriorating at an alarming rate.

Um Jihad used to go with her son, 'Salih, for dialysis sessions at King Hussein Medical Center three times a week, each session lasting three hours. Um Jihad has been on dialysis for seven years and doctors told 'Salih his mother might not survive for more than a year.

'Salih and his brothers were ecstatic when they heard from Khalid about the donor. They agreed to pay a staggering \$15,000 for the transplant.

"None of my brothers or sisters had a

blood type compatible with my mother's," says 'Salih, a popular hairdresser in the up-market area of Shmeisani.

The mother had her name on the national waiting list for two years, but it would have been too late by the time her turn came around.

When the transplant date approached Ziad was sent to Cairo, where he was given papers to sign.

Ziad waited a few days in an apartment before being called for the operation, during which time he ventured into the bustling markets of Cairo and indulged himself in lustful nights.

"Everything was at my disposal — women, drugs and alcohol. The host used to give me everything I wanted," says Ziad. The operation, which lasted nearly four hours, was declared a success.

'Salih paid the money and headed home with his mother, who started looking at life through different eyes thanks to Ziad's kidney.

In the meantime, Ziad moved back to the apartment to recuperate. The excitement of having a new life and marrying the girl he loved overrode the pain of his surgery. Next day, the host, an Egyptian, arrived to conclude the deal. But first Ziad had to pay some bills.

"They made me pay for every glass of juice I drank or joint I smoked and all the women they brought me," says Ziad, who ended up wasting the price of his kidney



Abd A-Salam Nabulsi, a leading neurologist and member of the Jordan Society for Organ Donations.

on drugs and women.

He was left with \$200.

"I had no choice but to take the money and return home. I know I had been conned, but there was nothing I could have done about it," says Ziad.

His dreams of marrying his beloved evaporated in the blink of an eye. Now he is hooked on drugs and minus one kidney.

It is very hard to tell how many people sell kidneys in Jordan, because such operations are done secretly, but knowledgeable officials and volunteers say the number could easily surpass 300 a year.

Jordan's health minister went on record last month as saying the organ trade was thriving in the country. He warned that certain groups tended to target individuals from poor backgrounds to persuade them

to sell their organs.

'Abd A-Salam Nabulsi, a leading neurologist and member of the Jordan Society for Organ Donations, says everyone must shoulder his responsibility to stop this problem from spreading further.

Although Nabulsi admits to the existence of the problem, he insists Jordan is among the countries in the region to suffer least.

"We have to develop a strategy that includes civil society groups and other organizations to encourage people to donate their organs after their death. If we implement such a system, then no one would have to sell his kidney," he says.

Kidneys can fetch the equivalent of \$20,000 to \$50,000, depending on the buyer. The transplant is done in Lebanon, Syria or Egypt, "because they are less strict there," says Nabulsi, who insists Jordan is free of illegal transplants.

Despite Nabulsi's assertions, clandestine transplant operations have been increasing in Jordan, where private apartments have been turned into makeshift clinics. Organ brokers recruit Iraqi doctors to do the surgery.

Officials from the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) admit there are hundreds of Iraqi doctors working illegally, with some practicing prohibited operations such as abortions and organ transplants.

"We are worried about the practices of

Iraqi doctors. The government must step in and close down illegal clinics," says Bassim Kisswani, secretary general of the JMA. Talib Assaf, a lawyer and human rights activist who has done extensive research on the organ trade, says the absence of legislation encourages the grey market to flourish.

"This is the perfect crime; the financial arrangements take place in one country and the transplant in another."

The cure is to legalize the organ trade, according to 'Abd A-Rahim Malhas, a former minister of health.

"Let's legalize kidney sales and control it. Tax and price it," he says. "We are acting like ostriches by burying our heads in the sand. We know the sales are happening. Even relatives take money from each other for donation, so why don't we step in and do something about it," Malhas told The Media Line. But Nabulsi thinks such a move could be disastrous.

"Imagine Jordan turning into a kidney sale tourism destination. We should not encourage poor people to do wrong things."

Nabulsi is also worried about the health complications that illegal transplants could cause. A few months ago, a 44-year-old Jordanian man slipped into coma because of a bacterial infection he picked up while being operated on in Cairo. He died in Amman after he was discharged from the clinic.



Ziad sold his kidney for money. He is not the only one.

after the operation," recalls Ziad.

In any case, in a tribal-dominated nation where social relations are very strong, Ziad would have committed social suicide if he disclosed to relatives or friends that he was selling a kidney.

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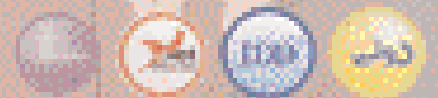
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The neglected value of greetings

By: Dr. Qazi Shaikh Abbas Borhany
qazishkborhany@hotmail.com

In this age of technology and science, moral values and religious teachings taught in order to promote a refined society largely are neglected by all nations, and most unfortunately, Muslims are one of them.

These moral downfalls are leading the ummah toward the ditch of destruction; thus, it's time we examine our attitude and improve it. Each community has words of greeting that are used when members of a community meet. Such greetings are to express courtesy and promote positive feelings.

The greetings granted to Muslims by the Qur'an hold the highest spiritual as well as moral values among the greetings of other nations.

Prior to Islam, it was common among the dwellers of the Arabian Peninsula to say, "Hayak Allah" (May Allah grant you life) and "Sabah ilkhayr" (Good morning).

A person once came into the presence of Hussein ibn Ali and said, "Kayfa anta? Aafak Allah." (How are you? May Allah keep you safe). Ibn Ali immediately corrected him in the best manner, nicely giving him the basic teaching of Islam and responding with the following words, "Assalaamu qabal ilkaalamu, aafak Allah" (Say Salaam prior to talking, may Allah protect you). He then taught, "La tazanut ahad hatta bisalaamin" (Don't give permission to anyone until he says Salaam).

At another place, Ibn Ali described the reward of Salaam very precisely in these words: "There are 70 good deeds in Salaam: 69 for the one who says it and only one for the person who responds. One who doesn't reply to Salaam is a miser" ("Bihaar Al-Anwaar", Vol. 17,



Qum).

Surat Al-Nisa, Ayat No. 86 directs us to respond Salaam in a more courteous manner. "Waalaykum afzalul salaam" is one of the best responses to "Assalaamu alaykum." Proud and arrogant people never initiate saying Salaam, considering it below their dignity to reply. They only slightly move their head and smile instead of saying "Waalaykum assalaam." They are misers of the worst class, as per Nabawi traditions.

Ibn Ali said, "Abkhal al-bakhil yabkhalo fi Salaam" (The greater miser is the one who displays misery in reciting Salaam). Not only this, but the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) declared in crystal clear terms, "Whoever does not reply 'Salaam' is not from us," while one hadith notes, "The principal of humility begins with Salaam."

Greeting in Islam not only increases friendship, harmony and respect, it simultaneously signifies fulfilling the rights of doa (supplicatory prayer) for Muslims. Additionally, Salaam is one of the asma al-husna (names of Allah).

Salaam is highly recommended when visiting the ruzat al-nabi. At the graves of the chosen people of Allah, whom the Qur'an addresses as "Ibadeh'il lazi'-nastafa," reciting Salaam is highly recommended.

It's also one of the Sunnat to recite the following doa when entering a graveyard, "Assalaamu alaykum, ya ahl al-qubur, min al-mu'mineen. Antum assabiqun wa ana inshallahu bikum lahiqun" ("Salaam upon you, O people of the graves, from the believers. you preceded us and we shall meet you, inshallah).

One hadith recommends reciting Salaam in a manner that each one can hear clearly. The one who initiates the Salaam first is closest to Allah. Hadith literature provides us glorious teachings in this regards.

When someone questioned who should initiate Salaam, the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) answered, "The one who (wish to) is closer to Allah. A rider should greet a pedestrian, a pedestrian should greet one who is sitting and a small group should greet a large number."

Salaam should be offered to all Muslims, irrespective of whether they are acquaintances or strangers. Saying Salaam aloud to everyone in a gathering is sufficient, as it's unnecessary to greet each person individually. However, it's incorrect to greet only a particular person in a gathering. Additionally, always convey Salaam cheerfully.

In this regard, the following conversation is worth mentioning and available in the sacred scriptures. When Yahya (pbuh) met Issa (pbuh), he began by saying, "Salaam," and was answered with, "Salaam." Whenever Yahya (pbuh) met Issa (pbuh), Yahya (pbuh) always was happy and smiling, but Issa (pbuh) was sorrowful, as if he resembled a crying person.

Issa (pbuh) asked Yahya (pbuh), "You smile like a happy person, as if you're secure and protected," to which Yahya (pbuh) replied, "You display such sorrow, as if you've given up all hope." Then the commandment appeared, "The one who smiles the most is the dearest to Me."

If a person is at a distance where Salaam may not be heard, then Salaam can be offered with a hand signal. Tirmizi provides a tradition, according to which the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) passed a group sitting in the masjid (mosque). He signaled greeting with his hand, coupled with saying, "Salaam," and Abdulhamid signified a reply with his hand. When entering an empty place, a house, a shop, an office, etc., then too, Salaam should be said, but as follows, "Assalaamu alayna

wa ala ibadillahil salayheen." However, it's undesirable to recite Salaam when a person is engaged in the following activities:

- While performing salaah (prayers)
- While one is engaged in tasbeeh or zikar; gathering for remembering and thanking Allah.
- During khutbah, majlis or daras; sitting together to study or listen to lectures.
- While one is busy in tilawaat; reciting the Holy Quran
- During azaan or iqamaat; is to repeat the wordings of Azaan at the beginning of each prayer. It is a call to pray together in the Mosque.
- While doing doa (supplicatory prayer)
- While occupied in discussion or research of religious sciences
- While a judge is delivering a verdict
- While eating or drinking
- While reciting talbiyah at the Kaaba; Talbiyah is repeatedly invoked during the Hajj, or pilgrimage.

If one says, "Convey my Salaam to your parents," don't reply on behalf of your parents, as you aren't authorized and have no right to do that. An amazing practice prevalent on written invitations is, "Salaam from our late parents." Does anyone have the power to visit, meet and hear Salaam from the deceased and then forward it to others? All credit goes to the silly writer who designed such a text and which others blindly follow.

Another unpleasant practice very common today is using "Hi" instead of Salaam in email and SMS prior to beginning a conversation.

The Sunnat regarding the neglected Musaaafaah also is linked with Salaam and should be done after offering Salaam by placing your right palm fully against the right palm of the one you're greeting and then clasping it with both hands and shaking them. Whoever initiated shouldn't withdraw his hand until the other does so.

Musaaafaah is a sign of affection and the most perfect form of greeting and, according to one hadith, it increases affection, develops relationship, eliminates hatred and decreases sins.

However, it's incorrect to grasp or touch each other's right fingers as Musaaafaah because this is the practice of Hindu Brahmins, the so-called royal superior race, who consider it below their dignity even to touch the lower castes. Among a few Indian Muslim communities in Gujarat and other places, such feelings continue, as mass conversion didn't allowed them the opportunity to remove the Hindu spirit fully.

Sirat literature provides the added traditions of kissing the hand and feet as a mark of Salaam. As per tradition in Abu Daoud, Wazza bin Aamir said, "We reached Medina and were taken into the presence of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). We embraced and kissed his hands and feet in reverence."

Tirmizi, Ibn Majah and Nasae provided another example wherein a group of Jews appeared in the prophet's presence and kissed both his hands and feet. Such examples show that out of reverence, one can offer respect to the dearest people of Allah in this manner.

Muaniqah is another permissible Sunnat linked with Salaam done by embracing a person and drawing him close to you upon meeting him after returning from a journey or after a long absence. Using both arms, hug the person around the neck and shoulders and draw him toward your chest. Men may practice this Sunnat with men and women can do it with women.

Always say Salaam when visiting or telephoning others and care should be taken not to visit or phone anyone during times of rest or salaah.

Additionally, never enter a home - no matter whose it is - without permission. To ask permission to enter, ring the bell and when the person of the house enquires as to who's there, say Salaam aloud and give your name, instead of saying, "Me," as the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) instructed.

If you realize the one inside has heard your ring or voice and is purposely ignoring it, then repeat the ring three times. If there's no permission or answer, then as per the Hadith, you must return.

Dr. Qazi Shaikh Abbas Borhany is an attorney, a religious scholar and a member of Pakistan's Ulama Council. He received a doctorate in the United States at NDI and a Shahadat Al-Aalamiyah in Najaf, Iraq.

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Edward W. Said: A son of Jerusalem

Compiled by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Edward Wadie Said was a well-known Palestinian-American literary intellectual, musician and outspoken Palestinian activist. Born in Jerusalem in November 1935, he was named Edward after the Prince of Wales. His father, a U.S. citizen, was a wealthy Christian Palestinian businessman.

While in Jerusalem, Said attended the Anglican St. George's Academy; however, his extended family became refugees during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, so they moved to Cairo where he attended the Cairo School for American Children and Victoria College.

At age 15, Said's parents sent him to the United States where he entered the Mount Hermon School, a private preparatory high school in Massachusetts. Said earned a bachelor's degree from Princeton, followed by a master's and a doctorate from Harvard.

He joined the Columbia University faculty in 1963, serving as an English and comparative literature professor for several decades. In 1977, Said became the Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia and further ascended to the rank of University Professor, Columbia's most prestigious academic position, in 1992.

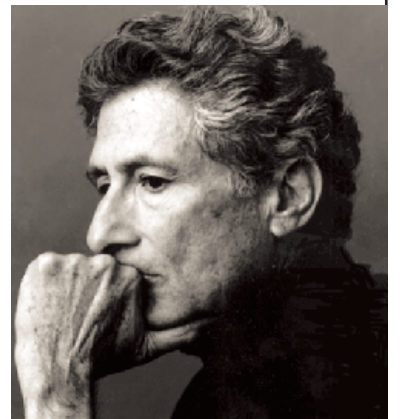
He was bestowed numerous honorary doctorates from universities around the world and twice received Columbia's Lionel Trilling Award and the American Comparative Literature Association's Wellek Prize.

Said published his first book, "Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography," in 1966. However, he didn't begin his academic career as a politicized writer until the Arab-Israeli War broke out in 1967 when he began to review his career and think about his identity as a Palestinian. At that time, his life changed and he began to get involved with his cultural origins, which he had suppressed as a child and diverted into his professional career. Thus, he became intensely involved in literary scholarship and Palestinian rights.

Said wrote his first political essay, "The Arab Portrayed," in response to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's 1969 declaration that "There are no Palestinians." By 1970, he was immersed completely in politics and the Palestinian resistance movement. His second major work, "Beginnings" (1975), was an ambitious attempt to examine the notion of the 'point of departure' in literature.

"Orientalism" (1978) is Said's most well known work and the book that made him world famous. Translated into 36 languages, it continues to prompt debate and inform argument against certain ideological and racist attitudes, which still shape ideology in the United States and Britain.

"Orientalism" has had a significant impact on the fields of literary theory, cultural studies and human geography, and to a lesser extent, on history and Oriental studies. Said concluded in his book that Western writings about the Orient depict it as irrational, weak and feminized, as contrasted with the rational, strong, masculine West, a contrast he suggests derives from the need to create a difference between East and West, which can be attributed to immutable



essences in the Oriental composition.

"Orientalism" spawned a vast academic following. While Said undoubtedly was touched and flattered by the book's success, he was well aware of how it was misused and would often disclaim responsibility for its more monstrous offspring.

Despite objections to Said's conclusions by Islamic and Arabic specialists, the book became a standard text in courses on literary theory and cultural studies, praised by critics as among the most influential works of critical theory in the postwar period.

"The Question of Palestine" (1979) was concerned with the immediacy of contemporary politics and attempted to offer an account of the emergence of Palestinian nationhood in its confrontation with Zionism and Israel. "Covering Islam" (1981; revised 1997) offered yet another perspective on the relationship between the Arab-Muslim world and the West.

Said's activism exiled him from Palestine for most of his life and provoked criticism of him. Subsequently, he was called everything from "the professor of terror" to a Nazi, and his office at Columbia University was vandalized.

In addition to "The Question of Palestine," Said's books on the issue of Palestine include "The Politics of Dispossession" (1994) and "The End of the Peace Process" (2000). In "The Politics of Dispossession," Said discussed the shaping influence he very nearly had on the 1978 Camp David agreements.

His other major works include "The World, the Text and the Critic" (1983), which outlined some of his works' key theoretical foundations and "Culture and Imperialism" (1993), a sequel of sorts to "Orientalism," examining the constitutive role of empire in major works of Western literature and music.

"Out of Place" (1999), a memoir of Said's childhood years in Palestine, Cairo and Lebanon, described his sense of distance from his disciplinarian father and his lonely retreat into the world of novels and classical music.

Said's other publications include "After the Last Sky" (1986), "Yeats and Decolonization" (1988), "Musical Elaborations" (1991) and "Reflections on Exile" (2000) among other books, in addition to numerous other articles regularly appearing in "The Nation," "The London Review of Books," "Le Monde," "Al-Ahram" and "Al-Hayat."

In 1991, Said was diagnosed with leukemia, which he fought for the last 12 years of his life, passing away Sept. 25, 2003 at age 68 in New York City. With Said's death, the Palestinian nation lost its most articulate - and irreplaceable - voice in the Northern hemisphere, but his legacy will endure.

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Bharatanatyam in Yemen

By: Fatima Al-Ajel
fatimafnfr@yahoo.com
and Essam Al-Dueis

As a step in expanding cultural cooperation between Yemen and India, an Indian classical dancer, singers and musicians visited Yemen from June 13-18.

Organizing the event were the Indian Embassy and Indian associations, represented by India's ambassador to Yemen, R.M. Aggarwal, under the patronage of Yemen's Ministry of Culture. Minister of Culture Mohammed Al-Mafalahi inaugurated the evening at the Cultural Center in Sana'a last Thursday evening by lighting a ceremonial candle.

Indian classical dancer Aarshi Shankar explains, "I've been dancing for 16 years, since my childhood, learning various classical dances from my teachers. I now have my own institute for teaching classical dance."

During her first visit to Yemen, Shankar and her accompanists presented such dances through the sponsorship of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The event is considered a continuation of further Indian cultural activities in Yemen after a lengthy suspension of such events.

Shankar is a famous dancer and an expert in performing classical Indian dance. She directs the Lalit Kala Nrityalay Institute for classical dance and music. She also presents a special program on Indian national television, but until now, she hasn't had a good chance to play a heroic role in Indian movies.

Classical or modern?

There are eight types of classical Indian dance, each performed in a special way. Indians give more importance to classical dance because it is a part of religious ties. "Classical dance lets you know more about religion. All classical dances are part of our religious ties," Shankar's dance teacher Saroja Kalaimamani explains.

Both types of music and dance are performed equally in India, as both have their own audiences and devotees; however, because most Indians consider classical dance and music a part of their religious and cultural ties and activities, they mostly prefer classical.

"All dances, music, culture and religious ties are mixed together and related to each other," Aggarwal commented.

Modern dance also is good and has its own audiences. As Shankar says, "There are people who are crazy about popular and modern dance and music in general, but they shortly return to classical. Some people don't consider



Shankar performing the classical dance "Bharatanatyam" in front of the audiences



modern dance a part of religious ties.

"As for me, I perform modern dance only at parties," she notes, "But as a professional performer, classical dance is the focus. The new generation considers classical dance their historical heritage."

"I believe that even in this modern world, where everything can be explained, there remain a few unsolved mysteries and marvels, which I seek to explain through dance," Shankar expressed, adding, "Dance gives me spiritual energy as a sign of hope from God."

Shankar is a recipient of the national scholarship for the classical Indian dance, "Bharatanatyam," from India's Department of Culture. She's also considered a professional artist and dancer able to perform a triple fusion of three classical dances: Kathakk, Bharatanatyam and Odissi.

"My success is due to my teacher, Saroja Kalaimamani, who gives me a lot out of her great experience to make my performance more professional," Shankar explains. Kalaimamani is one of India's most prominent Bharatanatyam exponents, as well as a professional dancer who has traveled both in India and abroad to perform classical dance.

Like many political and economic

activities, cultural activities open a channel for communication between two nations, in this case, India and Yemen. "When we realized how much many people respect our rich cultural heritage, we planned to make trips abroad to display our heritage to others and at the same time, see the heritage of others," Shankar noted.

Shankar's time in Yemen began in Sana'a, then Hodeidah, concluding in Aden. "I'm amazed at the beautiful country of Yemen and the hospitality of Yemeni people. I didn't feel that I was away from home while I was in Yemen," she remarked.

Bharatanatyam is one of the oldest forms of dance of India, having been nurtured in the temples and courts of southern India since ancient times. The art was handed down from generation to generation as a living tradition under the Devadasi system, whereby women were dedicated to temples to serve the particular deity as dancers and musicians comprising part of the elaborate religious rituals.

Today, Bharatanatyam is one of the most popular and widely performed dance styles and both male and female dancers all over India practice it. Its wide range of movements and postures, as well as the balanced mélange of rhythmic and mimetic aspects, lends itself well to experimental and fusion choreography.

"Bharatanatyam can be performed as a romantic dance wherein both men and women perform because some Indian dances are performed either individually or in groups," Shankar concluded.

Indian attendee Sundaramurby was enthralled by the beautiful dramatic

dance, commenting, "For the Indian community, this is the best type of dance and it's exciting to see such traditional dance in Sana'a. Aarshi and her team performed very well."

Following Shankar and her team's performance, a group of school children presented beautiful songs and dances, to which the audience responded by applauding and shouting cheerfully.

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