

In brief

TAIZ

Taiba medical camp

Aug 3 — The twenty fifth Taiba medical camp has been launched in Taiz in two hospitals. The camp is organized by Taiba charity in cooperation with the health office and will continue until the 17th of this month. The physicians participating in the camp aim at carrying out 500 free cosmetic surgeries, ANT and Paediatric operations. The medical team, specialized in the above-mentioned fields, comes from KSA and Yemen

ADEN

Famous musician promises to train 50 gifted children

Aug 4 — Renowned Yemeni artists Abdulrab Idress expressed his will to train 50 12 year olds in Yemeni, gulf, and Arab music. The artist agreed with the Minister of Culture to create a scholarship program for gifted children and he will supervise their learning at the creative arts institute.

Al-Saleh International Championship for Chess

Aug 5 — The General Chess Union is preparing for the sixth Al-Saleh International Chess Championship to be carried out between the 22nd and the 31st of this month. The competition will take place at Aden Hotel and will include participants from 21 Arab, Asian, and European countries. Yemen will participate with a team of 43 players, half of whom are recognized internationally.

MAHWAIT

"Love and Revenge" soap opera underway

Aug 5 — The shooting of the Yemeni soap opera "Love and Revenge" has started yesterday in Mahwait. Director Abdulwazir Al-Harazi has selected the scenarios in Mahwait for 16 episodes of the serial. The story, which was written by scenarioist, Ali Al-Sayani talks about the revenge phenomena in Yemen and the struggle between good and evil. The director promised an exciting series while reflecting the beautiful countryside and architecture in Mahwait.

Training on women's rights

Aug 3 — A trainer-qualifying course on women's rights was carried out for one week by the Ministry of Endowment in cooperation with the UNFPA. The course, which concluded last Thursday, included 17 females who were trained on communication skills, gender concepts from Islamic perspective, and reproductive health issues. The training included how to advocate for women's rights in education, health, and the equality between men and women as well as fighting all forms of violence against women.

SANA'A

Trio line up between the moon, Mars, and the Pleiades

Aug 4 — Yemeni astronomer Ahmed Al-Joubi confirmed that people living in Sana'a will be able to witness an event that takes place once every 13 years. The moon, Marz, and Pleiades will be lined up horizontally on Tuesday (tomorrow) at dawn. He also confirmed that Pleiades would be eclipsed by the moon in North American, north of the Atlantic Ocean, and the North Pole.

80 policewomen trained

Aug 4 — The general authority for women and juveniles at the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with UNICEF has concluded two training courses for policewomen. The courses aimed at enhancing the capacities and skills of Yemeni female security officers and qualify them in human rights as well as in international codes. The first course included a training for 40 policewomen from around the Republic, whereas the second one included a training for 40 policewomen from Sana'a governorate.

Frustrated by their current situation, women seek better representation in 2009

Despite the fact that the number of woman voters has been increasing over the years, reaching 3,900,565 compared to 5,346,805 man voters in 2006, and a separate administration of women was established within the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum in 2005, women's participation is no more than a card to be played in the hands of male candidates and political parties as proven in the numerous elections conducted in Yemen, whether presidential, parliamentary or local.

By: Moneer Al-Omari

SANA'A, Aug 3 — Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights launched a campaign aimed at promoting the political participation of women in preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections due to be conducted in April 2009.

The group also launched a democratic forum involving all parties concerned with women's issues. This included official parties such as the Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Insurances and Social Affairs, Ministry of Endowments, Parliament, and the Consultative Council, together with political parties, civil society organizations, media and donors. The forum aimed at looking into mechanisms that create more involvement by women in decision-making posts as well as boosting women's participation in elections.

Sisters Arab Forum chairman Amal Al-Pasha noted formal trials will be held for all those who violated the law and worked against a real involvement of women during the previous elections, including security men, sheikhs, extreme clerks, and political parties.

Al-Pasha requested the placement of two women among the members of the Elections Committee due to be reestablished soon, including women within the committee in charge of dialogue between the ruling party, General People's Congress, and the



Women movement in Yemen are trying not repeat the mistakes of the past where over 49% of voters were females yet they did not support female candidates.

Joint Meeting Parties.

Other organizations have exerted efforts in raising the participation of women in elections and their involvement in the decision-making process.

Huda Awn from the Women's National Committee revealed the committee is working in two different directions: lobbying decision makers through pressure exercised by civil society organizations and other parties interested in women's issues, as well as raising political awareness among society members, especially women.

Awn also hinted they are thinking seriously of establishing a sector for women affiliated with the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum, whose main concern would be promoting women's participation and encouraging women candidates.

Disappointment

Al-Pasha expressed resentment over the exclusion of women from a committee recently formed, aiming to follow up the implementation of President Saleh's electoral platform. She believed such a step contradicts Saleh's announced stance regarding women's participation and further

sheds doubt on the reliability of his electoral program.

Moreover, Al-Pasha criticized political parties for their failure during the elections of 2006 to include women candidates, noting any future sidelining will force women to boycott elections.

Reasons behind the low representation of women

Nabeel Al-Soufi, chief editor of News Yemen and a member of the committee recently formed by President Saleh to observe the implementation of his electoral platform, pointed out women are absent in the decision-making process even at the level of the household and family, mainly because of social and cultural reasons.

Al-Soufi further stated that women candidates do not adopt the issues of women and thus they do not get the trust of their fellow female citizens. Most of the time voting is made for tribal, sectarian, and political reasons.

He also stressed that the religious address may have something to do with this matter, as it does not support women's issues or their rights.

"Women's activation is in need for a social resolution," Al-Soufi stated.

Minister of Industry reject the increase of wheat flour prices

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

SANA'A, Aug 2 — The Minister of Industry, Yahya Al-Mutawakel, confirmed that the government is currently studying the requirements of establishing mills to be used as a strategic reserve to save flour and wheat. He also stressed the importance of fighting the price hikes for these two foodstuffs.

The Minister also pointed out that the establishment of mills is a strategic demand aiming at stabilizing prices. He added that his Ministry is considering every means and mechanisms regarding procuring flour and wheat as well as producing them for the sake of achieving the principle of encouraging competition as well as preventing monopoly. The Ministry is working hard on using mechanisms and structuring a good infrastructure to double import basic foodstuffs that principally serve the consumers, he emphasized.

On the other hand, he admitted that monopoly process of the commodities is a point of weakness before the Ministry that seeks to coordinate between generating policy of free market economy and accomplishing price stability. He also emphasized the necessity of exerting more efforts to fight monopoly process in coordination with the local authority.

He went on to say that the infatuation of prices is due to the supply and demand, indicating the state's role consist in enhancing the competition spirit and preventing monopoly as well as interfering in providing commodities and insuring the price stability.

However, the Minister stressed the importance of cooperation between the government and the private sector in this regard. The private sector is a fundamental aspect that can not be ignored in the market, he elaborated.

Moreover, he pinpointed that the adaptation of the article 28 of the com-



A traditional Yemeni market in Bab Al-Yemen at the old city of Sana'a where different kinds of crops are sold. The rise of prices has impacted the standard of living for many Yemenis significantly.

mercial law regarding opening the space for non-Yemenis to work in trading and importing sector should be effective.

The Minister also declared that the decision which obligates bakeries to sell loafs by weights will be in action. Further, he pinpointed that the responsibility of applying this decision lies upon the local authorities in the capital secretariat as well as in the other governorates. These councils can report to the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as to its offices in the governorates so as to take legal action against the violators, he stressed.

He also said that the Ministry is concerned about protecting citizens, indicating that his Ministry has confirmed, during the meeting of food assembly, recently held, that it will decrease the price of wheat and flour, asserting the lack of justification of rising prices.

Worth-noting, the Minister revealed that the State Treasury has lost roughly YR 7 billion in 2006, which is attributed to the manipulation of cement bro-

kers due to the existing infringements in the sales mechanisms in the three public factories.

The Ministry is going to put an end for these infringements through building competent administration that can economically deal with the reality and competently face the dilemma, he maintained.

The problem of Amran factory has created paucity in the supplied cements leading to a black market, which dominated the sale process. The brokers are who get advantages from this process, he asserted.

Additionally, the Minister said that the government has agreed upon restructuring the cement establishment aiming at developing the selling process according to market's mechanisms and improving the production process as well as creating a modern sophisticated administration.

Furthermore, he indicated that the difference between factory prices and market prices is unacceptable. "The Ministry has decided to stop this imbalance as soon as possible" he asserted.

JMP refused election law's modification

SANA'A, Aug 2 — The head of the Supreme Council of The Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) Yaseen Sa'eed No'man expressed the JMP's absolute refusal for the modifications regarding the formation of the Supreme Committee for Election and Referendum (SCER), which was approved, by the government, and referred to the parliament, last week, to endorse it.

No'man affirmed that the approval of the government over the modifications in the elections law is considered a violation against the dialogue document signed by the ruling party, GPC.

No'man laid the responsibility of any collapse that may affect the dialogue, due to the modifications, on the GPC, "what the government of GPC has done is considered a clear breach for the dialogue since the formation of the SCER and its concerned issues is governed by law" No'man asserted, adding that "election law is one of the issues placed on the dialogue agenda, while the political and legal committee was formed to change the agreements into texts."

Further, he added, "What the government of GPC did is considered a violation for the recommendations of the European Election Observation Mission that came to observe the election of the 20th of September 2006." He went further to say, "if the government continues in suggesting the laws con-

cerning issues put on the dialogue table, we will lay the responsibilities of the results of those decisions on the GPC."

No'man wandered about the attitude of the GPC, saying that there are only two interpretations to be explained about this law breach: whether that is a discord between the GPC and its government which makes it disable to control its apparatuses, or the GPC has taken a decision to end the dialogue.

"We are in the JMP still believing that dialogue over the important issues is the way to save Yemen and neither GPC nor its government does have the right to tamper with the political life and they have to realize the risks of the collapse of the political life among the political extremes." No'man expressed.

Some sources indicated that the government approved the modifications on the general law of elections and referendum. And, in accordance with these modifications a republican decree will be issued appointing nine members for the SCER out of 15 candidates, elected by the Supreme Council of Judiciary, which is headed by the President. The appointing is supposed to be based on specific requirements stated in the law in case that the ranking of a candidate is not beneath a judge in a supreme court and his age is not under 35 years old.

Zabid Listed for further two years



The oldest schools and mosques are found in Zabid which is known for its historical islamic architecture.

SANA'A, Aug 5 — In its 31st session, held in Christchurch, New Zealand, the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Historic Town of Zabid on the List of World Heritage in Danger for a further two-year period, which is subjected to a regular reporting submitted by the Yemeni government on February 1, 2008, according to UNESCO.

In the Committee's 32nd session, in 2008, the Yemeni government has to present a progress report on the implementation of the activities adopted in 2007 to protect the historical city of Zabid.

According to al-thawra.net, Abdul Malik Azzan, the general manager of international public relations and cooperation in the General organization for

Preservation of historic cities said, "the World committee urges the Yemeni government to carry out the emergency conservation works as well as to activate the Cabinet's decision No.425 - 2006; which is about ceasing all new randomly-built constructions and demolishing all recently-established concrete walls."

Further, it is of a great significance to provide sufficient funding to stop the deterioration of the protected heritage assets of Zabid, Azzan said.

Zabid is a former capital of Yemen, from the 13th to the 15th century. It was a city of great importance in the Arab and Muslim world for many centuries because of its Islamic university, however; today the city is in decline and in a very poor state of conservation.

Al-Touhita's local council removes district chief

HODEIDAH, Aug 2 — The local council in Al-Touhita district, some 10 km. from Zabid city in Al-Hodeidah governorate, held its regular meeting and decided to remove and exclude the chief of the district from all its regular and exceptional meetings as well as from the district's administrative staff.

It also demanded an immediate meeting with the secretary general of the governorate's local council to inform him with the bad situation of the district as well as their demand of the fired chief to hand in the seal and other district-related stuff to the secretariat.

Moreover, the local council asked the governor to instruct the Finance Office in the governorate to stop dealing with the documents signed by the ousted chief of the district. It also asked the Minister of Local

Administration to appoint another chief for the district, replacing the deposed chief.

Such a step was taken after a series of violations committed by the ousted chief of the district such as neglecting official office hours, disregarding the resolutions of the local council, and tearing an official letter approved by the local council and sent to Al-Hodeidah governor as for preventing students from entering an examination center by an armed gang.

Other violations include appointing his relatives in all vacant positions assigned for the district, encouraging the manager of health office in the district to take over the budget allocated for the medical centers, disregarding the follow-up of the implementation of the projects, and writing fake reports about their implementation.

Continued from page 1

Optimism about ending Sa'ada war

Quds Press Agency revealed that the signed agreement stipulated the withdrawal of Houthis from all the sites (mountains and fronts) occupied during confrontations to be replaced by government forces after 48 hours from the withdrawal. The troops also are to withdraw from villages and residential areas to which Houthis can return after 24 hours from the withdrawal.

However, the second article of the agreement, according to the agency, includes the departure of a number of Houthi leaders listed in the agreement namely, Abdulmalik Al-Houthi and Abdullah Al-Razami. They are to depart from Sa'ada to Qatar via Al-Dhahran, Saudi airport.

The agency also pointed out that "this item, according to special information, is still facing obstacles due to the Saudi obstinacy regarding unwillingness to allow the plane to pass Al-Dhahran airport, while Houthis refuse to depart to Al-Dawha via Sana'a airport."

One source revealed that the Qatari delegation refused to return to Sa'ada unless the troops abide by the agreement's items, hurrying the withdrawal of villages, farms and households owned by Houthi loyalists. The Qataris specified one week to carry out these terms, otherwise they will depart from Sana'a to Al-Dawha.

The source also stated, "The issue is now in hands of the president, the supreme commander of the armed forces. He is the only one who can direct firm commands to the army leaders to fulfill the demands of the mediation committee, and to hold sites away from villages and countryside, in order to avoid friction between the Houthis and army elements, as well as to withdraw tribal groups supporting the system from the governorate to their areas."

September.net, the official army media organ, stated, "The presidential committee assigned to supervise implementation of the ending war agreement in Sa'ada governorate had finished its meeting on Saturday. The meeting aimed to discuss the mechanisms related to finalizing the implementation of the agreement's items."

In a joint release of the spokesman of the committee, Yasir Al-Awadhi, and the representative of the parliamentary bloc of Islah party (one of the opposing parties in Yemen) on the committee, Abdulrazaq Al-Hajri, both parties affirmed that the committee is negotiating the timetable related to finalizing the agreement's items, stipulating evacuation of Houthi followers from sites still under their control and handing over their weapons to government authorities. The two members of the committee confirmed that there is consensus among all members of the committee concerning issues related to supervising the implementation of the agreement.

Similarly, local media sources indicated, "President Saleh received last Friday the members of the presidential committee supervising the end of Sa'ada war. During the meeting they discussed the committee activities, telling the president about the obstacles that hinder its work."

The president encouraged the committee members to exert more efforts, advising them to be patient and large-hearted, the sources added.

A well-informed source also revealed, "On Thursday evening, the supervising committee met the Qatari delegation arriving to Sana'a in the morning. The meeting was dedicated to discuss the committee works in the upcoming period. The source listened to the Qatari conditions and their recommendations. They agreed to put a schedule including a work plan for the days to come."

Local sources in Sa'ada governorate stated that the major general, Hussein Mohammed Arab, former minister of interior, who was a member of the committee in the past and is now the chairman of the committee, could convince Abdulmalik Al-Houthi to sit with committee members directly instead of communicating through tribal sheiks. Arab has been communicating with

Abdulmalik since his arrival to Sa'ada. Another source pointed out that the main reason that Al-Houthi sat with members of the committee was related to the departure of the Qatari delegation from Yemen. This made Houthi loyalists along with high-ranking government officials afraid that Qatar would stop its efforts in reconciliation. This fear was exacerbated after reports of Qatari delegation members who left Sa'ada being frustrated because of difficulties and obstacles standing against the supervising committee.

The same sources declared, "The most important subjects being discussed by committee members and Abdulmalik Al-Houthi along with some tribal sheiks were related to the issue of the existence of the army soldiers as well as their forces inside some areas in Bani Mu'ath, Al-Talh, Dhahyan and other areas. The Houthi loyalists demand the departure of the army forces and their supporting tribes from the citizens' areas so they can go back to their houses."

The Qatari committee returned to Sana'a last Thursday after being recalled by the Qatari government due to obstacles faced from Houthi followers in implementing the agreement.

Marib terrorist attack exposed

The investigations revealed that Reheqah was a member of a terrorist cell, which included eight Yemenis and two foreigners, Naif Mohammed al-Qahntani, a Saudi national, and Ahmed Bassiouni Dewidar, an Egyptian who was killed in a shootout with security officers in Sana'a last month.

The terrorist cell also consisted of Naser Abdul-Karim Al-Waheshi, Mohammed Saleh Al-Kazemi, Qasem Yehya Mahdi Al-Raimi, Ali Naser Dohah, Hamzah Salen Al-Qo'aiti, Ammar Obadah Mus'aod Al-Jobari Al-Wa'ailli.

Nasser Al-Wahaishi and Qasem Al-Raimi pronounced themselves as the leaders of the new generation of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, issuing a statement on an Islamic website days before the attack demanding the release of some Al-Qaeda members jailed in Yemen and threatening unspecified retaliation. Al-Wahaishi and Al-Raimi escaped from an intelligence prison in Sana'a early last year.

Regarding the Marib attack, security reports mentioned that Reheqah was recruited by Hamza Ali Saleh Al-Dhiyani, a taxi driver who gave the suspect driving lessons and then took him to Marib to introduce him to other members of the terrorist cell.

Before the attack, Reheqah was waiting with his car, a Land Cruiser, on the paved road of Mareb-Safer when the tourists drove by. As the tourists' cars approached the pavement, he launched his car filled with explosives at their second car, killing the tourists and himself.

Seven members of the cell were reportedly tasked with planning and supervising the attack, while two others from Marib provided shelter and protection.

The members from Marib, Naji Ali Jaradan and Ali bin Ali Daoha, were wanted for the murder of a high-ranking security official in Marib, according to the reports.

Police thought that the Egyptian member, an alleged Al-Qaeda operative who was killed a few days after the attack while resisting arrest, was one of the masterminds behind the operation. But Saba said the government's investigation revealed Dewidar had offered logistical support to the group.

Fifteen people have been detained in connection with the investigation, but the members of the terrorist cell who are still alive remain at large, according to Saba. However, the investigation committee affirmed that security authorities have obtained significant information which would assist in arresting remaining cell members, warning that anybody who aids any member of this cell will be considered accomplices.

The Interior Ministry has offered a \$75,500 reward for information leading to the capture of those behind the attack.

Authorities repress pensioners' sit-in, Southern governorates devastated

The district of Rasad in Yafa', Abyan governorate staged a crowded festival including armed security, civil pensioners, and local citizens. They expressed their solidarity with the pensioners, denouncing price hikes as well as violations practiced by security men against protesters at the sit-in held in Aden.

During the festival, protesters demanded the release of detainees without any conditions of avoiding the country. They also called for holding those people accountable who injured and killed innocent lives.

The sit-in statement announced the protesters' insistence to continue sit-ins until their demands are met. They demanded the return of all pensioners to their jobs and settlement of their situations morally and financially.

The statement also invited all civil society organizations along with human rights activists to stand with pensioners, supporting their legitimate claims. It further called the state to stop manipulating estates' lands and resources, emphasizing the right of equal citizenship for all citizens of the same country.

Socialist MP Sultan Al-Samai criticized the authority's maltreatment of pensioners during protests in southern governorates. Al-Samai told Al-Eshtraki.net that the authority is back to its old behavior, indicating the all-inclusive system and repressing of citizens. He also denounced Aden authorities' repression of protesting armed and security pensioners, stating, "These measures are breaching the laws, constitution and conventions."

Al-Samai demanded the quick release of detainees, prosecution of the party that issued orders to repress the peaceful sit-in and apologizing to pensioners who have faced injustice since the war of 1994. The socialist leader stated, "Instead of admitting its outrageous mistakes committed against pensioners of the southern governorates, the authority repressed and detained them to be in the prisons."

Another "Freedom Square"

Meanwhile, security forces disbanded the peaceful protest of pensioners organized in Freedom Square on Thursday in Khormaksar in Aden. The security police used tear bombs, pellets and nozzles to repress the sit-in, detaining a large group of pensioners,

including members of the central committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party.

Abdurahman Al-Ja'fari, chairman of the Yemen Citizens League urged people to take lessons from events of the August 2 protest in Aden. He urged people to think deeply and avoid obduracy and passions in tackling important national issues.

He also supported all kinds of peaceful political acts that demand rights. He stated to Al-Ayam newspaper that the alternative to these problems and troubles is to stabilize foundations and principles of unification and its continuation throughout firmly connected systems, achieving balance and independent local judgment.

Al-Ja'fari stated that sky-rocking prices lead our country to experience feuds and chaos. "Our people with their low income are not able to face miserable conditions of living, though our country has resources but is claimed by corruption. Our country is going to have great welfare, if we heed to make comprehensive reforms without hindrance. Otherwise we will miss a great chance that may be the last one to rescue our country, and keeping up with the train of development and upgrade. History will not have mercy upon us nor will coming generations."

He further added, "I personally appeal to everybody to use their intellect and avoid obduracy and drifting behind sentiments. You have to give your mind a voice. Our kind people paid for these reactions and passions and then were left alone to face sufferance. We do not want to diminish a prosperous future for our country. We have to move toward reforms because they are the real solution that will create a good future having justice, security, stability and equality."

National board to defend detainees

Last Saturday in Aden, lawyers along with human rights activists decided to form a national board to defend detainees and injured protesters. This is attributed to the outrageous repression inflicted by authorities against the peaceful protest of pensioners staged last Thursday.

A statement released by lawyer Jamal Al-Ja'bi's office revealed that eight lawyers held a meeting and agreed to form a national defense body to defend detainees and injured people. They declared that their decision is a right guaranteed by the constitution and guidelines laid out in the International Announcement for Human Rights and the International Covenant related to political and civil rights.

The statement also demanded that detainees receive treatment without any intimidation.

Additionally, the lawyers decided to gather a large number of their colleagues to expand the national defense body in order to start working before the weekend.

With regard to the detainees, security sources reported that security forces released a group of detainees from Al-Manssourah prison in Aden while many remain imprisoned.

One of the sit-in leaders stated that security forces detained and imprisoned more than 158 pensioners and citizens.

Security measures

Aden city experienced a traffic shut down coming from Al-Shiek O'thman heading to Khormaksar, Kraiter and Al-Tawahi due to a mass rally organized by the Higher Coordination Council of pensioners that was supposed to take place in Freedom Square in Khormaksar close to the General Security Department of the governorate.

A large number of security forces gathered in the early morning to prevent this rally, deeming it a threat to the security of the city. These forces imposed a firm belt on the inlets, conjunctions and passages leading to Freedom Square, preventing transportation heading to the rally place in Khormaksar.

These security measures were meant to prevent the attendance of hundreds of pensioners coming from Al-Dhala', Lahj, Abyan, Shabwa, Hadhramaut

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and Al-Mahra governorates. A large number of them could not reach Freedom Square due to patrols installed at roundabouts starting from Al-Safina conjunction.

Security forces were sure to enforce concrete rules to block roads leading to Aden international airport and routes leading to Freedom Square. Forces entered the protest location setting off tear bombs among protesters and trying to separate them by force. Consequently, protesters threw stones and security forces retaliated with gunshots, sometimes into the air and other times directly at protesters.

An official source in the security committee stated that the committee released a statement in which it necessitates paying attention to rulings regarding processions and demonstrations. However, some people breached the law and entered the city of Aden attempting to shake security and create chaos.

The Coordination Council of the Pensioners' Associations

The Coordination Council of the Pensioners' Associations issued a statement concerning the events of August 2. In the statement the council reported, "The citizens of the southern and eastern governorates came to participate in the protesting ceremony, invited by the council of the pensioners, and represented by the peaceful sit-in organized in Freedom Square in Khormaksar in Aden city to take their rights back plundered after the war of 1994."

The statement continued, "The peaceful sit-in that was staged to achieve legitimate claims was faced by tear bombs and rubber and live shots and tear gas. This tragic behavior resulted in injuring more than 12 persons. Some of them had critical injuries. It is not only this but some others were detained and thrown into prisons of the political security, criminal investigation and central prison of Al-Manssourah. The detainees were more than 158 persons. The security forces detained the leader of the council, Brig. Nassir Al-Nawbah and some members of the council along with a significant number of the participants."

The statement demanded the instant release of the detainees, allowing activity to continue in Aden governorate. The council also invited the committees of pensioners in southern governorates to maintain solidarity with citizens of these governorates and devise peaceful means of obliging authorities to meet their demands.

They further demanded the state to medically treat those injured and compensate them due to the use of tear bombs and tear gas. They urged the formation of a court to prosecute the perpetrators of such acts, who they described as "killers."

They also announced their complete adherence to pensioners' demands, requesting the issuance of a political declaration that ensures the protection of all rights, including the return of pensioners to their state jobs lost after the war of 1994 and compensation for damages incurred.

The number of pensioners retired by a political decree is 60,000, all of whom belonged to the former popular democratic Republic of Yemen ruled by the Yemeni Socialist Party before the unification.

Pensioners have been protesting going on five months, the biggest protest occurring July 7 in Aden. This protest enraged the ruling party as well as security forces and resulted in a severe counterattack, headed by the president himself, in a rally in Amran city against the Yemeni Socialist Party.

Locust infestation "threatening and extremely serious"

Director of Desert Locust Monitoring and Controlling Center Abdu Far'i Al-Rumai praised local citizens who cooperated with control teams, particularly in heavily affected areas like Wadi Hadramaut. "As we informed the local citizens in Wadi Hadramaut of the existence of locust swarms in their region, they directly collected their bees' houses and animals to make it easy for the teams to start spraying insecticides," Al-Rumai stated.

Al-Rumai confirmed that 30 percent of infected areas have been treated. That is 26,000 hectares. He expected that with the constant control operations, the center will be able to treat 80 percent of infected areas in Wadi Hadramaut. However, control operations have been hampered by the presence of beehives and because many infestations are in extremely remote areas, according to the FAO.

Nearly a dozen teams are working in the field. A fixed-wing aircraft is undertaking aerial control operations that started August 1. "A helicopter assists ground teams in surveying the extent of the infestations and identifying control targets," Al-Rumai stated, warning however, of a new generation of hatching and band formation in September due to the rainfall season.

The FAO has already stated that more swarms will form during August. As vegetation dries out, swarms are likely to move within the vast interior between Marib and the Omani border where they will mature in areas that remain green. "Most of the swarms that form during August are expected to stay in the interior but there is a slight risk that some swarms could move to the Sana'a highlands and to the Red Sea coastal plains where good rains have fallen, or to southern Oman and continue to the Indo-Pakistan border," the FAO reported.



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The voice of the common Yemeni citizen is rarely represented in the media

Press in Yemen dates back over a century, making the country the first in the Arabian peninsula to have an established press. The first Yemeni newspaper was published in 1878, after six years of the second Turkish occupation of Yemen along with entry of the country's first manual printing press. During the 1950s, the Yemeni press passed through a short period of liberalism, especially in Aden, which was under British colonization. At that time, official, partisan and independent newspapers were published representing different parts of the political spectrum and Yemeni intellectual thought. However, press liberalism ended with the emergence of nationalized newspapers, a prevailing model in the Arab world during the 60s. Nationalization changed the focus of the press to one of national allegiance and mobilization with the establishment of a developmental press. The roots of free press in Yemen can be traced to the nineties, after unification of the Marxian regime in the southern part of the country and the capitalist regime in the northern part, under the shade of political pluralism.

Reviewed by: Amel Al-Aiqi

Despite the freedom that the press enjoys in Yemen, it still remains highly un-objective and faces many occupational hurdles, said a study conducted by Yemeni journalist Hussin Al-wadi.

The study, whose title was "The Yemeni Press: Between Professionalism and Politics", revealed that the Yemeni press faces challenge of remaining loyal to its political, propagandist past or shifting focus to a more mainstream, professional style of journalistic reporting.

According to the study, the most important challenges faced the Yemeni media are: the establishment of an occupational culture in a non-professional media environment, the achievement of economic independence within a narrow advertising market, with decreasing readership of newspapers, and the democratization of the press under the continuous scrutiny of the government which continuously attempts to restrict and suspend press freedoms.

Al-Wadi, who is the director of Journalists Trainers Association, said that there was huge controversy and large-scale interest over how to define press-related work: art, craft or profession. "The press is not like the medical field. The former faces interference of intellectual and ideological factors as well as social and occupational pressures. These complicated factors stand as a stumbling block to the development of the free press in a country such as Yemen, despite the existence of official and partisan newspapers."

The researcher reviewed number of phenomena to improve his point, saying that essays and opinion articles range from 70 to 80 percent of Yemeni newspaper content. "The most famous journalists in Yemen are the column writers, not the news reporters or interviewers. This phenomenon dates back to the establishment of the ideology of a developmental and community mobilization press with the aim of achieving national unification and independent development. Despite break down of the developmental school at the end of the Cold war, the Yemeni press continues to be devoid of any substantive and objective news."

He pointed out that there are absence of

reports, the literary style too often reveals that of a feature article, important facts overshadowed by the writer's thoughts on the issue at hand."

The researcher described most of Yemeni journalists as professional, however their eloquent writing seems to compensate for lack of journalistic skills. According to the study this writing style imbalance may be attributed to a historical reason experienced by all Arab countries. At the outset of the establishment of the press in Yemen, the press sought the help of literary writers due to the lack of institutions that specialized in journalistic writing. These writers affected the Arab press with their literary style.

"A significant percentage of famous journalists in Yemen pursued journalism out of their love for literature. Former writers took over columns, front pages and editing. Journalists received training in the field, but were not able to abandon the subjective and critical literary style of their pasts." The author said, insisting that journalism does not merely depend on good language skills. There is a big gap between news writing and literature. Literature depends on euphemism, fiction and narcissism, however, the press relies on objectivity, neutrality and self-denial.

The study pointed out other phenomena that is Yemeni press is inundated with political commentary at the expense of social and cultural news coverage. "The Yemeni press is more interested in the decisions and policies of government officials and the actions of opposing political parties. These issues occupy most of the newspaper pages while other aspects of life related to social and cultural matters do not hold an important place on the Yemeni press agenda. The problem is so pronounced that even when "non-political" subjects are written about, they are treated politically or with a partisan view in order to defend or condemn the government. The voice of the common Yemeni citizen is rarely represented on the newspaper page."

In addition, the study explained that the Yemeni press is predominantly published on a weekly basis. Daily newspapers issued in Yemen are a minority. This is definitely attributed to lack of financial support. Most of the time, important events take place every day, but Yemeni readers are forced to wait until their desired newspaper comes out with the

phenomena is attributed to lack of crafty training as well as absence of an occupational culture. He added "But it appears to be a significant leap for Yemeni journalists to achieve what the partisan press accomplished in Europe. The partisan press shed its politically motivated roots gradually, slowly decreasing the amount of paper space dedicated to party news. This left more room for stories related to community issues."

Talking about electronic media, the study showed that Yemeni newspapers have found themselves unable to streamline between their print and web editions, sometimes leading to many story contradictions and inconsistencies. The electronic copies could update news every day, however, the hard copies could only publish a summary of events in their weekly issues. So, the electronic copies contain more detailed and updated news than their similar hard copies. This has forced many newspapers to choose between focusing more on print or electronic news dissemination.

The author also revealed that many Yemeni newspapers face space restrictions. That is, lack of page space restricts the technical solutions allowed to the press producer, leading to the reduction of publishable materials within a single issue. This limitation imposed on Yemeni newspapers does not only affect the shape but also the quality of material, as journalists are forced to minimize story content and overlook coverage of important issues.

However, the writer emphasized that the newspaper becomes the strongest instrument for political change as well as for expressing the opposition's demands. Thus, newspapers play an important role in the political arena, especially with the limited participation of the opposition parties in the parliament and their absence amid the community.

Authorities methods to suppress press

The writer also reviewed the legal and monitoring problems. He mentioned that Yemen unification on May 22, 1990, led to two important turning points in the country's contemporary history: political and media plurality. This posed a huge challenge to Yemeni authorities, who developed many mechanisms to contain such plurality and reduce the influence of opposition parties and their respective newspapers.

There are many mechanisms were and still used by the Yemeni authorities to suppress freedom of expression said the study; forming press laws, illegal detentions, and Journalists' legal prosecution, can restricting press freedom.

The Press Law

"Press law No. 25 of 1990 marked the beginning of press freedoms in Yemen, despite containing many restrictive clauses. For instance, the editor-in-chief completely bears criminal responsibility of the news items published in his/her paper. This clause places psychological and occupational pressure upon the editor-in-chief, turning him/her into a monitor inside the newspaper more than being in charge of editing and improving it." The researcher said, adding the Yemeni legislature enacted severe sanctions on the violating journalist such as imprisonment and fines. "Although pressmen demanded abolishing the imprisonment penalty, with the president's approval in principle, the imprisonment verdicts issued against journalists have remarkably increased."

The press law also empowered judges to impose hefty fines on journalists. Additionally, it ensured resorting to prosecution in the case of press violations. But, the law contradicted this article by entitling the Ministry of Information to constrain newspapers without legal mandate. The ministry thus is able to censor newspapers, requiring that the latter submit a copy of each issue to be scanned by the publishing staff in the ministry before approval of distribution.

The writer also observed that the abduction and detainment of journalists has become a frequent act. Journalists are

often abducted due to publishing press material seen as a threat to national security. Detention is usually done without any authority or order of prosecution. "The question remains: If the journalist has published something breaching the law, why did the concerned parties not summon him/her officially to the prosecution or kidnapping? The ostensible purpose of this is to enact disciplinary and alarming actions without taking formal procedures against journalists. Official prosecution takes time and journalists are usually acquitted. The disciplinary and monitoring actions, such as restricting freedom of press through abducting and detaining journalists, are done secretly by security bodies along with national intelligence." Said the writer.

The writer insisting that there is no opposing the authority's right to prosecute any newspaper seen as breaking the law. "This is one of the principles required by democracy, to have disciplinary procedures. However, encumbering opposition newspapers by way of lawsuits and prosecution routinely makes this right a manipulative instrument used by the authority to control newspapers. You can hardly find a newspaper free of cases filed by the government. Most of the newspapers - partisan or independent - have been prosecuted several times. There is a pressing need for journalists to unite in efforts to face these continuous prosecutions, considered misappropriation of a necessary power."

The writer exposed that many editor-in-chiefs and journalists have been subjected to intimidation, bashing, attacks and life threats by unknown personnel due to their opposing authority or social figures. Though the government denied involvement with such aggressions, there is adequate evidence indicating otherwise.

"Yemeni authorities launched a criticism campaign, backed by armed forces, against journalists under the pretext that these journalists were attacking the military corporation. This campaign incited soldiers to attack a significant number of journalists, newspaper correspondents and foreign media without taking any



Yemeni press is inundated with political commentary at the expense of social and cultural news coverage.

deterrent measures against the aggressors. This is a clear indication that the attack and intimidation campaigns are mechanisms used by the government, whether directly or indirectly to provoke and turn people against the press." He confirmed.

He warned "If written press laws restrict press freedom, unwritten "laws" create challenges to press work in Yemen. The press law had put restrictions for publications on coverage of certain issues, however, there are unwritten bans in the form of censorship of journalists. If we don't seek out other occupational outlets to break such limits as much as possible, then the Yemeni press will remain developmentally stagnant."

Who is the good Journalist?

Trying to answer who is the good journalist the researcher drew a framework of the occupational functions of the media, unanimously agreeing upon the following three roles of journalists:

The first role depends mainly on the credibility of reporting events without any exaggeration, considering objectivity as an essential component of the occupation. Accuracy and verification are also key. The journalists must be impartial and honest when reporting news.

The second role represents the partici-

pating journalist who is active and creative in selecting news worth publication. The journalist has to explain news meaningfully. This role rejects superficial news, considering it an occupational violation. It also stresses the importance of fostering constructive discussion amongst readers in pursuit of the truth.

The third role is monitoring. This role focuses on monitoring government officials and their policies, criticizing and opposing false policies. The journalist also plays the role of defending the rights of the poor masses against wealthy people.

"The outstanding journalist is one who adopts one of the three roles mentioned above within a frame of professionalism and objectivity as much as allowed by human nature, intellectual and political affiliations.

The prominent journalist is the one who is active, neutral and able to go beyond the ostensible grounds of events so he/she can gain truthful news. He/she can seek out various sources in order to present a complete picture of the event. This journalist can be objective and can differentiate between the facts and personal opinions, because without objectivity, the news becomes mere conjecture." He concluded.



According to the study, the most important challenges faced the Yemeni media are: the establishment of an occupational culture in a non-professional media environment, the achievement of economic independence within a narrow advertising market, with decreasing readership of newspapers, and the democratization of the press under the continuous scrutiny of the government which continuously attempts to restrict and suspend press freedoms.


objectivity and prevalence of prejudice in news coverage pervade the Yemeni press. "Opinion pages far surpass noteworthy news columns. Additionally, one will find that a writer's opinion will make its way into an otherwise standard news article."

The researcher confirmed that most Yemeni newspapers mix news with phrases of condemnation, denunciation and allegiance. "Yemeni journalists find it hard to maintain neutrality when writing a news story. For example, many times the reader cannot distinguish whether an article is an opinion piece or a news report. Despite the availability of outstanding

story. This deficit affects the efficiency of the Yemeni press in terms of following up on events and keeping their readers informed.

Many journalists are affiliated with particular political parties and their respective partisan newspapers, said the study adding that the pressman may also have a link to an employee in the public newspapers. "This affiliation will more than likely play itself out in the journalist's writing, which he/she utilizes to express the policies and agenda of his/her respective party."

The writer suggested that such phe-



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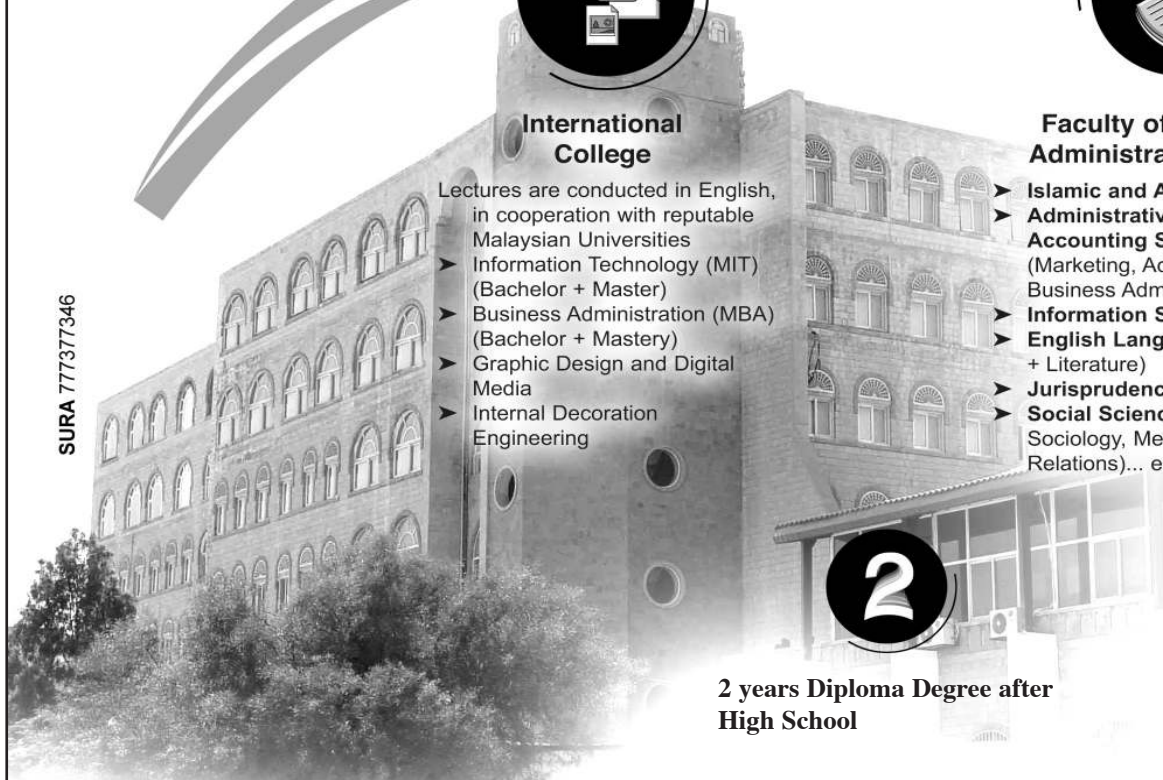
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فَيْرُوز

"HiTs-Unitel" launches its commercial name "Y" through a press conference and a big event



Mr. Mohamed Al Ayban
Member of the Board

Mr. Abou Bakr Nour Taha
Member of the Board

Mr. Imad Hamed
Chief Executive Officer

Sheikh Mohamed Ahmad Abou Rabbo Al Kar
Vice Chairman

Mr. Nader Al Kalai
Chairman of the Board

- We will provide a range of services that cover every personal as well as business need.
- A major investment that will contribute in absorbing the unemployment ratio, thus supporting the Yemeni economy.
- "Y" will provide distinguished services on all levels.
- Chairman: "Attracting investors through the wise Yemeni leadership makes Yemen a magnet for investment."
- "Y" services will meet every need, on both individual and business levels.
- "Y" will adopt state-of-the art technological advancements and will select world leading suppliers in mobile telephony equipment.

Mr. Nader Kalai, HiTs-Unitel Chairman of the Board, emphasized that the political stability Yemen enjoys, has played a great role in encouraging him and all other investors from the Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia, Syria, U.A.E, and Kuwait to enter the Yemeni market and invest in building a new GSM network, which is considered a major investment in the Republic of Yemen.

"We have actually heard great news about president Ali Abdullah Saleh's wisdom and seriousness in inviting investors to Yemen and we have actually touched this from the beginning, as such support and cooperation has been the reason behind bringing HiTs-Unitel into existence, in a vital investment with a plan to invest \$200 million at present and another \$200 million within the next 2 years", Al Kalai said. He also added: "We have full trust and belief in TMT President Ali Abdullah Saleh's non-stop endeavors to create a healthy atmosphere for such remarkable investments in Yemen."

During the press conference, Mr. Nader Al Kalai revealed the future intent of all the investors in HiTs-Unitel to start other investments in Yemen in a number of different fields, aside from the current GSM mobile network project. The press conference was attended by a big number of press people, news correspondents and TV & Radio reporters from local, regional and international channels. The new commercial name of the company, "Y", was revealed in this press conference. The representatives from HiTs-Unitel were:

- Mr. Nader Kalai, from Syriatel Mobile Telecom S.A, Chairman.
- Sheikh Mohamed Ahmad Abou Rabbo Al Kar, Vice Chairman.
- Mr. Abou Bakr Nour EIdin, representing HRH Saoud Bin Fahed Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saoud, Member of the Board.
- Mr. Mohamed Al Ayban, from Kuwait Finance & Investment Company, Member of the Board.
- Mr. Luay Habbal, from Syriatel Mobile telecom S.A, Member of the Board.

The name "Y" was tagged with a very impressive slogan, "and Yemen is Happy", in a patriotic commitment taken by "Y" to contribute in the development of Yemen and its economy, by creating direct and indirect job opportunities. He declared that the total number of employees has reached 300 out of a planned total number of 450 employees in this phase, 90% of whom are Yemenis.

"Y" will be launched within the next three months at the highest global wireless standards and the shareholders have taken a commitment to add strength to this project to make it a flawless success, with the aim of entering into this competitive market and reaching a status of leadership by merit, said Mr. Al Kalai.

A very informative presentation was performed by Mr. Imad Hamed, HiTs-Unitel CFO, in which he displayed the company's business plan headlines, technical and human resources capabilities and the coverage plan during the first phases of operations. Mr. Imad inaugurated his presentation by talking about the Company's Mission Statement, vision, values and objectives in details as follows:

Mission Statement: "we are working towards service excellence to become among the best GSM operators in Yemen, aiming to reach and exceed the expectations of our customers, shareholders, vendors, dealers, employees and community alike".

Vision:

- Lead a real "market" in customer service driven by the convergence of the telecom technology.
- Build a strong partnership with our vendors and dealers to enhance a continual win-win situation.
- Be the employer of choice in Yemen & build a strong motivated team.
- Community Support, through contributing in the development of Yemen.

Values: Integrity - Improvement - Respect - Team Work

Objectives: Best Coverage - Best Quality Of Voice Calls - Best Price and Offers - Best Services - Community Support

A big event was arranged in the evening and was attended by HiTs-Unitel board members, management and staff. The list of invitees included a number of ministers, ambassadors, business people and high officials. The party was inaugurated by Mr. Imad Hamed, who announced to the audience that his company is preparing for launching its services commercially, to be a very well distinguished mobile operator, through providing a wide range of distinguished services.

Mr. Imad added that the company has selected the world's leaders in wireless technology supply, such as Ericson, Huawei, Oracle, Microsoft, Suri Ray, Alcatel, etc. "I am so glad to announce to you that we will be using top-of-the line billing and IN Systems and that we will adopt the most advanced programs and software in customer services applications. We will be following the latest technological standards, and our network will be IP-based as per the 3GPP standardization, with high quality Base Transceiver Stations and radio network. Our network coverage will reach a very good number of urban and rural areas and we will cover up to 70% of the roads connecting these areas, and during the next year we will expand our coverage to reach most of Yemeni areas".

Mr. Hamed also said that "Y" team has saved no effort in building a well-qualified team that is capable of reaching corporate objectives of building, operating, managing and developing the company to reach a distinguished status of leadership in all the offered products and services. The company is also following a very good training and development program, where most of the current team are being trained in Yemen, Syria and in other countries and this training program will continue all through the project lifetime. Market research has also been performed since the early stages of the project, to come up with products & services that will meet all customers' needs.

"Y" will provide incomparable customer service and a range of various value added services. International roaming will be available with most countries of the world as well. Mr. Imad Hamed explained. As for sales, Mr. Imad Hamed listed the main sales distributors as follows: Al Kuraimi Tel, Al AgilTel, Star Telecom, ONE Mobile, Watani Tel.

During the event, the well-known Lebanese violinist, Jihad Akel, who is considered to be the best Arab violinist nowadays, played with his band a number of special symphonies that met high audience admiration and applause.

The Arab star Nawal Al Zoghbi added more excitement to the party, by singing a number of best songs. The audience's interaction with Nawal Al Zoghbi was so extraordinary that she entertained them with more and more songs until the closing moments of the party.

The party cake, coated in the company's corporate colors - violet, apple green and white - was cut by the members of the board as a first step of launching the commercial name of the network "Y". The party was presented by Dina Azar, the former Miss Lebanon.

The next morning witnessed a remarkable outdoor, TV, Radio and newspaper advertisements campaign. The name "Y" followed by the slogan, "and Yemen is happy" with the elegant corporate colors have been noticed, in an unprecedented manner, in most of the Yemeni cities.



HiTs-Unitel board of directors during the press conference



An impressive journalists' presence in the Press conference



Nawal Al Zoghbi the famous Lebanese star



Jihad Akel, the renowned Lebanese violinist



and Yemen is happy!

The new GSM network

Gaza Exodus

By: **Rachelle Klinger,**
The Media Line Ltd.

Ahmad Al-Kishawi has been dreaming about his exit from Gaza for months. But the gates to his freedom slammed shut when the recent crisis broke out in Gaza, pitting Fatah and Hamas supporters against each other in a deadly conflict.

The 24-year-old accountancy student has been accepted to a unique academic program in the United States. The scholarship is in his pocket, the fees have been paid; all that remains to be done is to get a student's visa, which requires his presence at the American Consulate in Jerusalem for a face-to-face interview.

But now that Gaza has been taken over by Hamas, the possibility of entering Israel is extremely small, nearly nonexistent. And so he waits.

Oddly enough, most Gazans would envy Ahmed. The only thing holding him up is red tape. But he has the brains, the know-how and the resources to flee his neighborhood, which has turned into a shooting ground, and seek a better life elsewhere.

Many Gazans do not even have the money to cover the transportation.

"There's no future for youth here at all," Ahmed says.

The prevailing feeling among Gazans is that they want out, and fast. A dwindling economy, a skyrocketing rate of unemployment, Israeli air raids on rocket-launching cells, and more recently, the bloody street feuds – all these are pushing more Gazans to pack their minimal belongings and leave, or at least check out their options more seriously.

Since mid-2006 at least 24,000 Palestinians have applied for visas to leave the Palestinian territories, according to the Palestinian Ministry of External Affairs.

An opinion poll conducted in September 2006 by the Development Studies Program at Birzeit University suggests that nearly a third of the Palestinian population in both the West Bank and Gaza is willing to immigrate.

The poll was conducted six months after Hamas came to power, and an international embargo on the new government exacerbated the economic conditions in the Palestinian areas.

The survey indicated a sharp increase of nearly 13 percent in the number of Palestinians wishing to emigrate, compared to a poll conducted six months earlier in the same areas.

Authorities say it is hard to pinpoint the exact number of Palestinians who have left Gaza for good, but it is estimated to be a few thousand. If the border crossings were opened freely, authorities anticipate a major exodus.

Take Asem, a manager of a water purification enterprise. He is one of several Palestinian businessmen who have relocated their businesses to the relatively stable Egypt.

Gaza was simply doomed after Hamas won the legislative elections in January 2006, he says.

Mousa, an agent for a well-known British painting company, relocated to Canada four months ago after obtaining a business visa.

The brain and money drain has become so acute that it has driven the religious authorities to take action. Last month a Palestinian mufti, Hamid Bitawi, issued a religious decree forbidding Palestinians from emigrating.

Extreme circumstances are calling for desperate measures, says Dr. Nadir Sa'id, director of the Development Studies Program at Birzeit University.

Opinion polls indicate the willingness to leave is particularly notable among male youth. However, he notes that while many people express a desire to leave, very few have the means to actually do it.

Sami, a 25-year-old taxi driver, says he would like to go to Canada for a few years to earn some money and then return home. Sami makes between \$600 and \$800 a month. He has been trying for many years to get a visa to Canada, but to no avail.

Those Departing...

The exodus from Gaza is mostly prevalent among the middle class, professionals and craftsmen, or young, educated

men seeking to leave for work or studies. Fresh graduates are realizing they are unlikely to find a high-income job in the field of engineering, nursing, accountancy or IT and are trying their luck in the Gulf.

Typically, the middle class and professionals are fleeing since they can afford it, says Rafi Dajani, the executive director of the American Task Force on Palestine.

"That usually leaves the poorer sections of society who are also more amenable to listen to the seductive call of religious extremism. There is a brain drain in the Palestinian society and it affects its own society the most, but it also has a ripple effect on neighboring societies."

While the lower class cannot leave, the upper class will not go. They simply have too much to lose. Many of them are in leadership positions or have private businesses.

"There's a mix between economic clout and political and economic interests that are intertwined," Sa'id says. "There are people with a huge amount of business interests staying in Gaza."

People working with international corporations or who deal with basic needs such as wheat, flour, olive oil and sugar make a decent living and have the flexibility to travel around and maintain other properties, without a need to emigrate as such, he says.

...And Those Left Behind

As someone who sees the bigger picture, Sa'id says the emigration is likely to have a tremendous negative impact on those left behind.

"The ones leaving are those most needed to bring sanity to the insane situation in Gaza. These are the intellectuals, the open-minded people and the liberals, who have had enough of living in Gaza. These are the ones who were connecting Gaza to the world," he says. "What Gaza will be left with when they leave is a Taliban-style culture."

One argument against leaving is that the educated and well-off Gazans should be investing their skills to better their homeland, rather than taking their money and brains elsewhere.

Mona, a 28-year-old engineering student says she would never leave Gaza. Mona is from a wealthy family and describes herself as an "avid Hamas supporter."

"Anyone who leaves the land of Jihad and the resolute Palestine is a traitor to Allah and to his country," she says. "Everyone should stay and fight the Jews and drive them out of Palestine."

Leila, a government employee who is married with five children, says she would ideally like to go to America. She and her husband obtained visas through a diversity visa lottery. But they are unable to leave because the crossings are closed, and they need to put together more money for the trip. She and her husband earn a total of \$1,200 a month.

"No sane person would remain in Gaza if they had a choice, especially now that Hamas has taken control over Gaza," she says.

Ahmad, a 34-year-old engineer, admits that he is a bit jealous when he hears someone has managed to leave Gaza. He would like to go to Sweden, where it is easy to get permanent residency, but his parents insist he stays near them.

He does not believe anyone should stay in Gaza on principle.

"God forbid, no. There's nothing here worth fighting for," he says.

Those leaving are not to blame, Sa'id says.

"It's not about them. It's about the larger situation, which brought Gaza not to its knees but into the sea. It's like a sinking ship. Everyone is trying to save themselves or their families."

Aitemad Muhanna is completing a PhD in poverty reduction. The 41-year-old Gaza resident has been unemployed for three months and is currently checking out her options.

She does not believe that leaving would be betraying her principles or her people, because she does not think she can bring about change under the current circumstances.

"I've been involved in this for years. We talk about social change, liberalization and democratization, but we have lost our legitimacy. They won't listen to us because the whole society is divided



into two groups – the extremists and the fatalists," she says. "The liberal discourse in Gaza is now lost."

The only thing keeping her in Gaza now is the hope that she will find a secure job. But the future for her in Gaza does not look promising. Her daughter is studying in Egypt and her son, who is finishing high school, is considering his options.

"They still have some national identity," she says of her children. "but I'm afraid they will lose it over time"

As to moving to the West Bank, this is not really a viable option, as far as Muhanna is concerned. The West Bank

is in a similar economic situation and is insecure in the long term she says. Besides, physically reaching the West Bank requires getting a permit to go through Israel or through Egypt and Jordan. Both options involve physical and bureaucratic obstacles.

"Gaza is more deprived than the West Bank, but it's still not a good place to move to," she says.

Meanwhile, Ahmad is still awaiting news about his visa interview.

"I do love my country, but after all you have to think about yourself," he says. "There are a lot of opportunities out there and I need to seize one."

Gnawa World Music Festival in Essaouira A Kind of "Moroccan Woodstock"

The Gnawa World Music Festival in Essaouira has steadily grown in popularity, especially among the younger generation. Islamist guardians of public virtue are watching with disapproval as Morocco's youth let down their hair and dance. Details from David Siebert

When the venerable Gnawa master Maâlem Mahmoud Guinea takes the stage alongside pianist Cheick Tidiane Seck from Mali, the festival reaches its high point. Age-old melodies and songs waft through the Bab el Marrakesh. But the public listening to the sounds of traditional Gnawa music is a young one, a colorful and modern mixture of faces.

Ever since 1998, the festival has every year transformed the quiet port city on the Atlantic coast into a gigantic open-air stage. A hopping festival atmosphere pervades the air and for a few days sleep

is unthinkable.

The public that wends its way night for night through the narrow alleys of the medina could hardly be more diverse: thousands of tourists flock here for the event. They mingle with Moroccans from every walk of life, from old men wearing jellabas to veiled women to hip young students.

Essaouira – a mecca for Gnawa fans

For urban youth, the festival is the highlight of the year. They arrive with their dreadlocks, punker outfits or Bob Marley t-shirts in overflowing buses from Casablanca and Rabat. No one wants to miss the biggest and most

cosmopolitan festival in Morocco, if not the entire continent. The hotels are completely booked – many of the city's residents even move in with relatives and rent out their apartments to earn a few extra Dirhams.

The Gnawa Festival is a success story. It all started on a tight budget, which today at 600,000 euros has burgeoned to ten times the size. More than 400,000 people have gathered here every year since 2004. Big-name international artists have performed with the Gnawas: for example, Joe Zawinul or Pat Metheny. Guests from the world music scene have included Youssou N'dour, Salif Keita, The Wailers and Rachid Taha.

The mixture of mysticism and music offered by the Gnawas already piqued the interest of world travelers back in the 1960s. Jazz musicians such as Randy Weston and Archie Shepp came to Morocco to jam with the Gnawas. Essaouira became a hippie music mecca: Jimi Hendrix spent a few months here, and Cat Stevens and Led Zeppelin were also caught in its spell.

Musical experiments and encounters

Musicians still come to Essaouira today from across the globe to play with the Gnawas. "These are the kind of spontaneous encounters you don't find anywhere else. Improvisation and exchange are what it's all about," commented musician Karim Ziad, co-organizer of the festival. The Algerian jazz drummer also knows about the communication problems involved: "The rhythms of the Gnawas are complex. They are hard to note down. That often leads to confusion."

World music experiments don't always succeed. The "Gnawa Rock Project," an

effort by French bassist Loy Ehrlich to recapture the encounter between the Gnawas and hippies, has degenerated into a mere pose. And Maâlem Saïd Boulhimas' Gnawa combo is mired in Jimi Hendrix clichés.

The most impressive, highest-quality music is still produced in concerts where African artists come together. For example, when the Gnawas of Maâlem Abdelkébir Merchane met with the percussion group Yaya Ouattara Duba Dew from Burkina Faso and the Senegalese kora player Soriba Kouyaté to celebrate African music culture together up on stage.

The youth scene is also a permanent fixture in Essaouira. On the beach stage, Moroccan electro DJs join forces with the "Asian Dub Foundation" from London. The audience favorite is definitely "Hoba Hoba Spirit," representative of a new generation of Moroccan fusion bands that combine the traditional sounds of the Maghreb with rock and reggae, acting as mouthpiece of the Moroccan youth by agitating against political conditions in the country.

A musical backwater comes alive

Up until the 1990s, Morocco's music landscape was more like a desert. Often, all that could be heard on the national radio stations were copied cassettes from the West, insipid Rai pop from Algeria or Arabian tearjerkers.

That's why the Essaouira Festival is such a milestone for Morocco: "In the beginning, skepticism prevailed. Nobody believed that something like this could be organized here. In the meantime, every big city has its own festival," explains Azoul Azoulay, co-founder of the festival and also advisor to the royal family.



Gnawa World Music Festival in Essaouira recently celebrated its tenth year. All concerts in Essaouira are free of charge.

The young King Mohamed VI is trying to modernize the country through democratic reforms. During his father's reign, culture was generally suspected of being subversive. The Essaouira Festival today reflects this process of opening up, while helping to hone the country's image and make it more attractive to tourists.

The Moroccan press even speaks of a "Moroccan Woodstock" and the "Essaouira spirit." "In Essaouira, the street is the guest of honor," writes the left-wing magazine "Journal Hebdo".

Islamists catch a whiff of decadence

It is all merely bread and games for the people? No, the Essaouira Festival is also at the center of a cultural showdown. The Islamist PJD Party ("Party of Justice and Development") could end up winning the upcoming parliamentary elections.

It denounces the "Westernization" of Morocco, accusing the Gnawa Festival of providing a refuge for "debauchery, drugs and homosexuality." The party's invective also extends to the open-air youth event "Boulevard des jeunes musiciens de Casablanca." "The PJD sees in these events a mixture of Sodom and Gomorrah," commented the Moroccan journal "Telquel."

And yet the defamation and threats of the Islamists leave the audience at Essaouira cold. This is where the youth of Morocco come to dance. >From glue-sniffing street kids, to students in neo-hippie look, all the way to the chic "jeunesse dorée" – everyone gets into the music here, no matter whether it's Gnawa or Hip Hop.

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Maâlem Mahmoud Guinea, right with his gembri guitar, and his band at the Essaouira festival. Guinea is one of the major figures of contemporary Gnawa music.

Words of Wisdom



In the Third World today, the rulers have no fixed budgets or allocations, even when these exist on paper. The rulers simply spend as they please. Here in Yemen, this problem exists in a shameless way. Just a couple of weeks ago, a number of government palaces built by foreign aid were simply given away to the top president's men.

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

OUR
OPINION

A country divided

Yemen is going through extremely difficult times today, almost the worst in the last 35 years. The power struggle has reached a point whereby every influential party wants a piece of the cake, and every ambitious group is reaching out to grab a part of the falling body.

It is not an exaggeration. What is happening today in Yemen is a crisis of the highest level, where real threats to divide the country are eminent. Just yesterday, another call came from Taiz to create a federal state, siding by the already loud violent voices in Sa'ada, Marib, Dhale, Abyan, Shabwa, and recently Aden.

The powerful sheikh's of Yemen realize that the changes are coming. Therefore, they started creating their own collations in order to survive the approaching tide. The greatest fear, I believe, is that Yemen would turn into another Somalia, and instead of receiving refugees from the African Horn; now Yemenis would start seeking a place to go, where they can feel safe.

This is the situation today, and although the state is working hard in order to regain its control, it has committed many mistakes in the process. One of which is giving around 27 million dollars to the 60,000 pensioners in Abyan, led by the infamous Shahtoor who demands justice and to break from the Republic of Yemen.

The state thought it could buy the loyalty of such outraged retired soldiers by giving them money like it used to do with the sheikhs. However, the rebels used the money to buy weapons and arm themselves, even further to challenge the state again.

Additionally, the sheikhs seem not to know on whose side they must stand any more, especially when some of their "neighbours" are paying even more money to gain their loyalty. More so, the mistake the state has done in Sa'ada is unforgivable. The use of hard security to handle rebels and angry masses has only fired back and now there are even more people in different parts of the country demanding to divide Yemen.

The people of Yemen are not healthy, not educated, and not secure. They don't have enough jobs, good roads, respectable laws... etc. In short; the people of Yemen are not happy. And as a result, they don't appreciate their country or the ruling system. Further, with more pressure, on the one hand, from the security, trying to regain control, and with seduction from parties, on the other hand, who want a strong place in the new map, the people of Yemen are starting to get agitated and violent.

Change is good, and the current system is too faulty to remain in power, but change that comes by force and through bloodshed is not good, and it will only take us to an even worse situation.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

The first step on the right path

By: Ali Al-Sarari

Once again, the peaceful sit-in, which included thousands of retirees in the in Khour Maksar area in Aden, succeeded to deliver a clear message to the authorities revealing the ugly policies followed by the state toward the rights of civil and military citizens in the southern governorates.

The message clearly explained the massive crime the regime committed against the national unity and its national democratic project because the protestors selected the 7th of July to voice their issue. The intentional selection of this day implies the strong condemnation of the 1994 Civil War and rejection of its results.

Knights of the majority war have turned comatose since the forged victory in 1994. They believed that what has been achieved in their favor at that pessimistic day represents the end of history. Over the past 13 years, they scorned everything and have been convinced that their victory grants them the right to abandon all the national obligations, as well as gives them complete freedom to behave in a way contradicting the national responsibility, respect for human rights, public interests, and the country's need to be governed fairly and justly by the law.

As those who fraudulently won the war remain priding their forged victory, the oppressed retirees kept on protesting patiently and awaiting the moment of hope in

order to overcome the false promises that misled them. Regretfully, they couldn't come to the right path while the oppressed retirees got more trouble and their voices could not arouse any kind of positive feelings on the part of the majority of those running the country, as they (the rulers) are extremely engaged in the illegal earnings. They have no national or patriotic feelings. They were deceived by their behaviors, as well as their ability to change they way the country was progressing.

Symbols of the regime are needed to seriously read movement of earth under their feet as they turned to exercise lies and exchange accusations without any fear of the consequences. Since the 1994 Civil War, the 7th of July regime started implementing ugly policies that concentrated on eliminating partners of the national unity and transferred the southern governorates into permissible places for lootings. In addition, the southern governorates have been changed into an open hall for chaos, whims, and all the forms of human right abuses and violations. They turned to exercise countless practical procedures, loot any available wealth and resources, and dominate public and private sectors' installations and fire workers. They also plundered lands, looted public and private property, fired the military and civil workers, fomented tribal wars

and revenges, deteriorated the living standards of people and forced people to eat from under their feet.

The protests and sit-ins that included thousands of military and civil retirees, who were referred forcibly and illegally to pensions, were not a surprising behavior. They weren't fabricated with aim of extorting property. These protests were the right means for voicing and claiming legal demands, particularly as protestors have proved that their lines can not be penetrated when they refused to accept bribes of giving them higher ranks and partial solutions, stating that hundreds of them be reinstated. Frankly speaking, they announced their strong rejection of dividing their problems and delaying their demands.

The most important thing to be perceived by symbols of the regime is that protests and sit-ins, which began in the southern governorates, are armed with a strong will and determination. In the meantime, protestors' ferocity has originated from a bitter experience during which they faced various kinds of trouble and humiliation. Had Formed the insults exercised against them, they learned that the only means for deliverance depends on organizing their lines and continuing the peaceful struggle in order to restore their rights and put a limit to the arbitrary behaviors exacerbating their lives.



By: Ali Al-Sarari

Tourism culture

By: Mohammed Al-Ariqi

When the Ministry of Tourism organized a workshop a few days ago, during which participants reviewed findings of a survey on obstacles facing the local tourism in Yemen, I commented that the very low income of the Yemeni citizen is not the primary obstacle to the country's local tourism. I suggested that there are many other obstacles, specifically the social obstacle that is related with the lack of awareness and culture about tourism promotion. In addition, citizens seem to have no interest in contemplating on and

enjoying beauty of the natural scenes, nor do they care about searching for the historic sites and ancient civilization ruins scattered in different parts of the country.

The one having the desire to holiday with his family members in any of the near or far historic sites will find himself/herself alone while other people graze at him/her as if he/she is breaking the norms and traditions of the Yemeni society.

One of the workshop participants, who got irritated by my comments that downsized the individual income-related obstacle to tourism development, approached me after the workshop and said, "How do you say that the low income of Yemeni citizens is not one of the primary obstacles posed to local tourism." He went on to say that "My salary is only YR 30,000 per month and I am taking a house on lease and have seven children. How do you talk about tourism while the government employees suffer poor living standards and their incomes cannot cover their basic necessities and daily expenses?"

My answer to his question was: "My friend! We are talking about obstacles posed to tourism in general. And, those whose economic conditions cannot enable them move from one place to another for hiking and tourism don't think about the subject. We are debating over awareness about tourism, which hasn't been spread among people inside the Yemeni society."

I provided clear evident that people of high incomes never think of hiking and holidaying in the historic sites and fascinating scenes. Even my friend who criticized my remarks if his income is improved enabling him to have surplus money, global tourism will not be included in his annual program. All he will do is buying a good quality qat and his qat budget will be YR 2,000 per day instead of YR 500 during the days of low income. He will be living in a better place. He will think about buying a luxurious car and other non-essential things.

I felt sorry when I heard my friend's comments. I thought that I might inflamed his feelings and his difficult economic conditions and poor living standards, as it the case of the majority of Yemen's population. I then went to another friend whose monthly income exceeds YR 300 thousand and is considered one of the educated people and asked him, "Do you organize a tourist program for you and your family, even once per year?" His response was: "Believe me or not, I don't even visit the park, which is in the vicinity of my house. The problem is that we are not aware about the importance of tourism, nor are we interested in visiting any tourist sites. At this point, I totally agree with Minister of Culture Nabeel Al-Faqi that his ministry needs to work on enhancing and spreading the tourist culture."

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily

SILVER LINING

Tribal Order and Democracy Challenges

Last week, the National Solidarity Council (NSC), a new tribal set-up, kicked off its first meetings. The new tribal congregation led by Hussein al-Ahmer, son of the Hashid tribe chief and parliament speaker, is a real demonstration of the weakening position of the state and the civil society organizations.

It is funny that the congregation has addressed serious issues mainly the rule of law. The tribal Sheikhs who have called for the respect of law are the first people to break law and order. The organizers of the event said their congregation is meant to challenge the fragile position of the state that has incited religious or sectarian sentiments here and there, I wonder how they demand an end to the political, security and economic disorder while their armed bodyguards who spread around the hotel yard and inside demonstrated their complete indifference to law and order. How can such people build a state of law and fight corruption? In fact, the organizers of the congregation are all leading members in their own parties including Hussein al-Ahmer who is a leading figure in the ruling party. I guess if they are serious about reform, they can do it within their own parties.

I understand some tribal Sheikhs have always been a source of headache and have thwarted all efforts meant to build a modern state based on law and order; they have been exercising all sorts of illegal practices including jailing their own citizens in their private jails.

After 17 years of co-existence between the multiparty system and the tribe, the organizers of the new tribal structure are anxious about stronger tribal order that ensures their grip over power. It seems the second generation of the influential tribal figures is more ambitious for further influence which can be attained only through tribal-based formats.

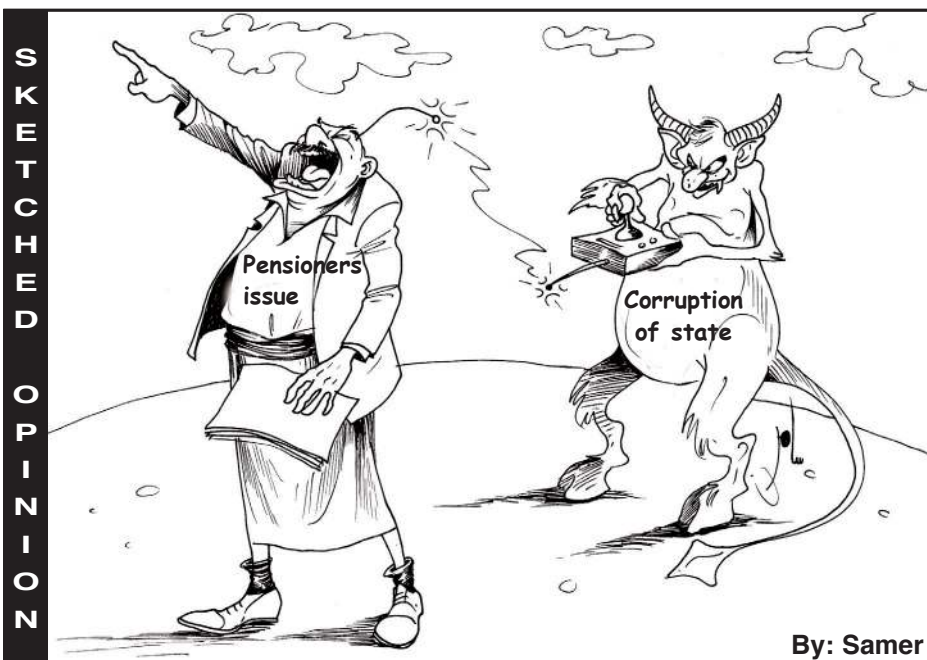
The influence of the tribal leaders should have weakened and even vanished away with the function of the democratic instruments. Unfortunately, the cozy marriage between the political regime and tribe has encouraged them to break law and order and to seek further influence and power. Their influence have been intentionally boosted while political parties are split and weakened further, something that has led to the weakening of the state and hampered all attempts to have an institutionalized society.

By and large, the announcement of the new tribal assembly is, in fact, is a real setback and threat to the multiparty system and the civil society we all aspire to boost as the new tribal gathering is trying to revive the tribal sentiments at the expense of democracy. In a democracy, people are treated equally but in such regional assemblies, it is only Sheikhs that remain in power while the citizens are just their subjects. Therefore, such tribal arrangements are a real threat to democracy in the country.

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



By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi



By: Samer

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Yemen Press Review



26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, August 2

Main Headlines

- President of the Republic to meet heads of retirees' associations on Sunday
- Joint Meeting Parties and Qatari mediators set ten days for implementing Sa'ada agreement
- Minister of Oil and Minerals: New oil blocks enter production phase
- Chief of Ministry of Defense's Financial Department: Military servants who stopped work between 1994 and 2003 reinstated
- Yemeni Football Federation schedules a playoff between Wahdat Sana'a and Telal
- Foreign Minister: Arab leaders reach consensus on significance of Palestinian factions' participation in international meeting
- Tow French Parachute men hover over Haraz mountains
- Ten-element terrorist cell behind Marib bombing
- Yemen, UK sign partnership agreement

The Yemeni army's organ reported that the Yemeni government and the United Kingdom signed on Wednesday in Sana'a a development partnership agreement for ten years. Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi noted such an agreement is the first of its kind. Signing the agreement with the British Secretary of International Development Shahid Malik, Al-Arhabi said that the British aids under the agreement are due to increase up to \$ 100 million by 2010/2011, making the

United Kingdom the top donor-European state.

According to the weekly, Al-Arhabi described the Yemeni-British relations as prosperous. In a press conference that has been held in the presence of the British official, he said "British official visits Yemen as the first country after assuming office, and this indicates the high respect the UK government shows for Yemen.



Al-Sahwa Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Isha Party
Thursday, August 2

Main Headlines

- Arm markets still open for customers in Yemen
- Minister of Local Administration discuss pensioner's complaints, promise them of prompt solutions
- Aden Political Security arrests four people including Iraq returnees
- Minister of Endowment and Guidance donates YR 7 million to grooms of collective wedding
- Nasserite Organization's central committee begins fifth session
- U.S. court convicts Yemeni citizen of illegally transferring money to Yemen
- Sa'ada rebels drive out damage survey teams

The weekly newspaper reported in a front page article that local sources in Saada governorate said that Al-Houthi gunmen in Dahian province have driven out teams tasked to survey damage and destruction in the war-torn province and held their cameras on Tuesday.

It went on to say that the parliamentary committee formed to oversee the Qatari-mediated truce left

Saada to Sana'a in order to meet the Qatari delegation which has just returned to Yemen to resume its efforts for the sake of ending the sedition and stopping bloodshed. The Qatari mediation team left Saada to Qatar last Tuesday in the wake of obstacles and barriers posed to mediators' attempt to end the crisis.



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, July 31

Main Headlines

- Unidentified gunmen storm office of Al-Share' newspaper, threaten to kill chief editor
- A new black year for press freedom in Yemen, says a report on the situation of press in the Arab world
- Authorities block Al-Isheraki.net website for the fourth time, press freedom abuses on the rise
- SAFHR launches a campaign to support women's political participation, organizes democratic forum
- Victims of traffic accidents in Yemen on the rise, an official report reveals
- Yemeni scholars in Morocco protest suspension of 50 classmates
- Sana'a security authorities hunt prominent politician
- Yemeni authorities arrest four Kuwaiti citizens upon their arrival at Sana'a International Airport

The weekly newspaper reported in a front page story that media sources said the Yemeni security authorities arrested four Kuwaiti nationals upon their arrival at Sana'a International

Airport. It added that the Kuwaiti Watan Newspaper mentioned in its Tuesday issue that the four Kuwaiti people, whom the paper declined to reveal their names, departed Kuwait via a Gulf flight for Bahrain and stayed there for three hours before they flew to the Yemeni capital Sana'a.

According to the Kuwaiti paper, the four nationals were investigated and prevented from entering into Sana'a. They were interrogated about their suspected links with active terrorist cells in Yemen. As there are no clear reasons behind the capture of the four Kuwaiti citizens, Kuwaiti sources expect that the captives will be released within 24 hours unless new developments with regard to their case emerge.



Al-Wahdah Comprehensive Political Weekly
Wednesday, August 1

Main Headlines

- Yemeni government signs partnership agreement with United Kingdom
- Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda formed from judges
- Strategic coalition formed to support reforms in Yemen
- Egyptian boats fish illegally in Yemen's territorial waters, parliamentary report reveals
- Sheba Queen's historic ruins subjected to burglary and demolition
- Rockslides threaten lives of thousand people in Amran governorate
- Hajjah-based Qahera Fort threatened of collapse
- Qatari mediation returns to Sana'a

to finalize implementation of Sa'ada agreement

The weekly newspaper quoted reliable sources as saying that the Qatari mediation committee is scheduled to return to the capital Sana'a on Thursday to finalize implementation of the Sa'ada agreement, which was reached between army and Houthi followers. Another goal of the return of the Qatari mediation to Sana'a is to ensure that the sedition has ended, as well as to exert sincere efforts for the sake of fostering development and reconstructing the war-ravaged province.

According to the newspaper's sources, the Qatari mediation team has left Sana'a for Qatar to hold deliberations with senior Qatari government officials in light of the results, which the mediation committee reached over the past few days. While in Qatar, the mediators clarified to their government the arbitrary behavior exercised by leader of the rebellion Abdulmalik Al-Houthi and his aides as they attempted to resolve the crisis. The mediators complained that Houthis' behavior complicated their efforts and hindered implementation of the agreement. Local sources in the restive province reported that on Tuesday al-Houthi gunmen in Dahian province drove out damage survey teams and confiscated their cameras.



Al-Methaq Weekly, Mouthpiece of the General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Monday, July 30

Main Headlines

- Ruling party calls on other political

forces to demonstrate clear attitudes toward behaviors damaging national principles

- Republican Decree to establish fund for reconstructing the war-torn province of Sa'ada
- Public Money Court continues discussing Sam Yemen's case
- Authorities train policemen on how to handle child issues in police stations
- Parliamentary report estimates crude minerals reserves in Nihm Area at 13 million tons
- Sa'ada committee exerts hard efforts to persuade Houthis to implement the reached agreement
- Government drafts national plan to control and curb spread of bird flu
- Parliamentary report obliges government to investigate waste of public money

A recent report, released by the parliamentary health committee, confirmed that the Ministry of Public Health and Population committed several violations while supplying natural gases from MTAC Company, the weekly paper reported. It added that the report recommended that Parliament obliges the government to fulfill all the financial and contractual obligations it has undertaken to do for the company, as well as not to offer any new tenders to company before exhausting the remaining gas quantities.

The report also recommended that concerned authorities conduct a thorough investigation into the wasted public money and resources, and question the concerned officials in the Ministry of Oil and Minerals. It insisted on obliging the government not to repeat such direct contracts and take firm procedures against the violating members of the tender committee, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Public Health and Population.

The Picture is Alarming

By: Jihad el-Khazen

One day I thought there would be no setback after the one that befell Palestine and I lived to see the setbacks of Iraq, but even the joy of winning the Asia Cup was not void of a setback that accompanied the event.

I had sat in front of the TV set to watch the match between the Saudi and Iraqi national teams and I decided that the result would be a success as the winner is an Arab team. Then, I followed the Iraqi's joy at the victory but I did not rejoice long because my day was spoiled by the report published by the international Oxfam organization on the deterioration of the conditions in Iraq. Another report on that day said that there are in Afghanistan a million drug addicts and this country alone has become the producer of more than the entire world's need of cocaine.

Oxfam, which relied in its report on the work of the United Nations, the Iraqi government, and international humanitarian organizations, did not state anything we are not aware of. It has rather confirmed what we are sure of or we think is likely to happen. It has also confirmed what other humanitarian organizations and academic authorities of the highest international standards had earlier reached.

What these sources say, not me or any Arab source, is that there are in Iraq eight million citizens in need of urgent humanitarian aid. This number represents the quarter of a population living in the richest of all Arab countries in terms of natural resources after it was one day at the forefront among all. There is also a report on four million Iraqis who do not find food every day and another on 43% of the Iraqis who live on less than on dollar per day.

The picture is alarming: millions of children out of 70% of citizens drink polluted water and a greater proportion lives in areas without a sewage system or a draining system, while 90% of hospitals lack adequate equipment and medicine.

We also know that roughly one million Iraqi has been killed during the American war on Iraq of because of it, two millions

have emigrated, another two million have been displaced inside the country and those are like foreigners in their country facing famine as well as daily threats to their survival.

While Saddam Hussein was able, after the liberation of Kuwait and his forced return and confinement to his burrow, to restore electricity supply with the country's capacity, the greatest military and economic power in the world has not succeeded after four and a half years of war and occupation to produce power for more than two hours a day.

On top of all this, Iraq succumbs to the highest corruption rate in the world. The gangsters are known. They are either a criminal militia dominating entire ministries, or traitors who came back with the occupation and who were given governmental feudal estates whose revenues they are plundering while leaving their people die of illness or out of famine or by bullets, which is more merciful.

One day of joy at an unexpected victory in a football game stands in sharp contrast with consecutive days of hellish occupation.

The worst thing in Iraq, bad as it is, is that there is no solution tomorrow or the day after as long as George W. Bush is in the White House. The president is not aware of what is going on and he is led like puppets.

In the past weeks he has not focused on providing potable war or power to the Iraqis, or on expelling militias from the state institutions. He rather tried again and again to draw a link between Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the other Al-Qaeda or the genuine one, to conclude that Al-Qaeda operates in Iraq and its terrorism must be defeated there due to the threat it poses to American interests in the region and inside the United States itself.

I will not discuss the fact that the two versions of Al-Qaeda could be one thing or two allies. I accept any information given by the president on condition that he takes it from me and acknowledges publicly that Al-Qaeda did not, in any way, exist in Iraq before its occupation, and that he is personally the first person responsible for Al-Qaeda's entry into Iraq and for all subsequent misfortunes that struck this country..

President Bush's talk on this or that

version of Al-Qaeda could be either wrong or true, but in spite of this I accept it. Yet, my words are true in absolute terms: in fact, before Iraq was occupied Al-Qaeda did not exist there. It was the occupation that led it inside Iraq and facilitated its mission in enlisting terrorists. Consequently, the threat of terror mounted all over the world and today it is more serious than it was in 2001, as admitted in official American reports.

I need to add another thing that is true in absolute terms. Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organization that kills innocents and it is the duty of all Arabs and Muslims to resist it. In this respect, they have higher interests than the United States does, as the enemies of Arabs and Muslims, who are numerous in the Bush administration, justify the persistence of the illegal occupation and the destruction of Iraq on the ground that Al-Qaeda and its terrorism exist there. In case this organization suddenly ceases to exist, it will deprive the Bush administration of the strongest pretext it has used in occupying Iraq, though I estimate that the war cabal will then come up with another justification.

American commander, General David Petraeus is supposed to submit in September his report on the impact of increasing the number of troops on the security conditions in Iraq. I am embarking on an adventure but I hope the readers will correct me if I am wrong. I need to say he will not be talking about success or failure, he will rather bring out points and then he will say 'We have achieved success in these matters, we have made progress in those ones and we have failed in others.' In such a way, the report comes flickering, lends itself to various interpretations and justifies the persistence of making mistakes. The result is that the setbacks will continue to produce murder, famine, diseases, displacement and devastation in Iraq as long as the Bush administration exists. I expect its pillars to be tried one day in the United States or in The International Criminal Court, for the crimes they have perpetrated against Iraq and its people, out of ignorance on the part of some and deliberately on the part of others, with ultimately the same result.

Source: english.daralhayat.com

India in Africa

By: Alex Vines and Gareth Price

China's increasing influence in Africa has attracted great attention in recent years. But Asia's other rising power, India, is also becoming more active on this front, as its economic links are moving beyond its traditional partners in the British Commonwealth. Indeed, India's non-oil trade with West Africa currently stands at more than \$3 billion and is rising fast, accounting for 1.2% of the country's total foreign trade.

India's economic activity in Africa goes far beyond its ever popular Bollywood movies. Indian investment in Côte d'Ivoire is expected to grow to \$1 billion by 2011, which represents 10% of total Indian foreign investment in the last decade. India's state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC Videsh) produces Sudanese oil, and over the next two years Indian diplomatic missions will open in Mali, Gabon, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Until 2003, the Indian Foreign Ministry had a single Africa division; it now has three: West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa, and West Asia and North Africa.

A study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry identified five main sectors that can act as "engines of growth" to boost Indo-Africa trade: pharmaceuticals and the health sector, information technology, water management, food processing, and education.

Nigeria is India's largest trading partner in Africa. Bilateral annual trade turnover exceeds \$3 billion, with oil constituting more than 96% of Indian imports from Nigeria. India maintains a three-pronged strategy: term contract for crude purchase, participation in the upstream sector, and refineries.

This puts India in direct competition with the West and other Asian countries to secure West African

resources. But India's quest for energy in West Africa is not a core component of the government's energy policy; rather, it is part of its effort to diversify energy sources by offering infrastructure investments, in addition to cash bonus payments when contracts are signed.

Seventeen of the 45 blocks are being reserved for unknown companies that will be given a first right of refusal on acreage in exchange for promises to invest heavily in projects not directly related to oil production, such as new power plants and refineries. These negotiations have been ongoing, and India's ONGC, in alliance with Mittal Energy, part of the Mittal companies run by Indian billionaire Lakshmi Mittal, is tipped to get the right of first refusal for a number of blocks.

During a Nigerian mini-bid round in 2006, ONGC-Mittal was offered the right of first refusal for three blocks. ONGC-Mittal Energy is keen to secure blocks with proven reserves, but also is less concerned about the fine detail of the infrastructure packages than their Asian competitors. The creation of ONGC-Mittal in late 2005 seems to have been intended to cut through bureaucratic processes, learn from the private sector, and strengthen bids as an infrastructure provider.

In 2005, the Indian Cabinet's Committee on Economic Affairs prevented, on due diligence grounds and at the last moment, the overseas arm of ONGC Videsh from entering into a \$2 billion deal for a stake in a Nigerian oil block. But the 2007 licensing round appears to have been rushed through to raise cash during the dying days of the Obasanjo administration, and it would serve India's government well to watch this process closely, too.

Other parts of the Mittal dynasty have also raised eyebrows in West Africa. In late 2005, Mittal Steel, the world's largest steel company, signed

a \$900 million deal with Liberia's Transitional Government to mine iron ore, which many claim allowed Mittal to opt out of human rights and environmental law. The elected government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2006 reviewed the deal, and the Liberian Senate is currently scrutinizing it.

India's business engagement in Africa attracts mixed opinion. Mahatma Gandhi once said that "commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not of manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of western exploiters." However, according to Zambian opposition MP Guy Scott, "People are saying, 'The Whites were bad, the Indians were worse, but the Chinese are worst of all.'"

India should not regard Africa as simply a source of natural resources. Instead, it needs to invest in the region's human capital and share Indian know-how. Many Indian goods have much greater suitability for African than Western markets. Sales of Tata cars, for instance, are booming in many African countries.

But shared know-how should move beyond economic links. India's democracy in a post-colonial setting has relevant lessons for Africa. India also offers important experience in agricultural expansion, clean water management, and confronting the growing threat of climate change.

Whatever role India ultimately plays in Africa, perhaps its most important contribution could be to introduce competition. India's government needs to carefully watch how its companies and others rise to this challenge.

Alex Vines and Gareth Price are, respectively, head of the Africa and Asia programs at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, in London.
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Announcement

Tender No. 100/2007 400MW Gas Power station Extend the deadline for submission of tenders for the second and last time

The Public Electricity (PEC) Announced to the Internationally qualified, specialized and experienced tenders who will participate in the tender No 100/2007 to extend the deadline for submission of tenders, qualification documents and bidding opening date till Wednesday 12 september 2007, instead of 13 august 2007, at 11 a.m. local time, the Tenders will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of those Tenders representatives who choose to attend.

إعلان

تمديد فتح مظاريف المناقصة رقم (١٠٠/٢٠٠٧م) الخاصة بمحطة مآرب الغازية المرحلة الثانية للمرة الثانية والأخيرة

تعلم المؤسسة العامة للكهرباء للشركات العالمية المتخصصة والداخلية في المناقصة رقم (١٠٠/٢٠٠٧م) بأن موعد تسليم العطاءات مع وثائق التأهيل وفتح المظاريف قد تأجل من يوم الاثنين الموافق ١٣/أغسطس/٢٠٠٧م إلى يوم الأربعاء الموافق ١٢/سبتمبر/٢٠٠٧م الساعة الحادية عشر صباحاً بالتوقيت المحلي وسيتم الفتح بحضور مندوبي الشركات المتقدمة للمناقصة المذكورة.



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فرص

شركات عالمية تطلب وكلاء في اليمن

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My Experience with the Czech Health Care System

By: Dr. Khaled Yehya Baker
For Yemen Times



Recently I returned home from the Czech Republic where I spent 17 years studying, practicing and teaching medicine. In 1996, I completed my study of medicine at one of the oldest medical schools in Europe. It is 659 years old! After graduating, I worked at a major teaching hospital where I received my master's and doctoral degrees. I then became a consultant in urology, a teacher of surgery at Charles University and finally a chief doctor at a clinic in the teaching hospital's kidney transplant center.

The Czech Republic is a small yet developed and beautiful country in

primary health care services.

The full range of primary health care services currently provided in the Czech Republic includes general medical care, maternal and child health, gynecology, dentistry/stomatology, home care (home attendants), 24-hour emergency cover and a number of preventive services such as immunization and screenings. There is also open access to some specialists, including psychiatrists, venereologists and dermatologists. There are no restrictions on patients' choice of primary health care physician.

As soon as a person receives their health insurance card, they are eligible for free visits to the doctor. This is unlike some countries where a patient must pay out-of-pocket and later be reimbursed by the state. In the Czech Republic doctors' fees and lab work are free, and prescriptions are mostly covered, though there may be a very small fee to be paid by the patient. Overall, the care is of great value.

Generally, a person may approach any doctor and request to be their patient. Additionally, one can ask colleagues at work who they recommend, or simply visit the local medical complex located in each district.

All information about a patient's health history and current condition (blood tests, x-rays, etc.) are entered into a database which is accessible to the medical staff via the internet by entering a patient's name and specific password. It is a great advantage that a doctor can check a patient's information online at anytime.

The administrative staff, in my experience, was helpful. Czech doctors have the time and patience for a question-and-answer session with each patient. I find this to be crucial because when you have a condition, it is important to know as much about it as possible.

The health care system in the Czech Republic is very decent and is comparable to those in western countries. Many countries can learn a lot from the Czech health care system. Modern medical equipment and a high level of scientific knowledge made working in the country ideal. Additionally, interacting with such hardworking professionals enabled me to learn a lot about medicine.

Dr. Khaled Yehya Baker is a visiting physician in Yemen at Azal Hospital in Sana'a. He is chief of the kidney plantation section at Charles University Educational Hospital in Czech Republic.



أكاديمية الشرق الأوسط للطيران

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للمرغبين في دراسة الطيران وهندسة صيانة الطائرات
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Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Oil and Minerals
Yemen Petroleum Company

Yemen Petroleum Company invites interested qualified and experienced consultants for supervising and providing the overall bidding document study based on turn-key (EPC) basis for Al-Mukalla oil products storage installation project (Hadrout Governorate).

The General frameworks is:

- a. On-Shore Facilities
 - Tanks construction work (total capacity of 101,000 m³)
 - Tank farm piping.
 - Mechanical works.
 - Civil Works.
 - Electrical and instrumentation works.
 - Fire Fighting and Cooling System.
 - Truck loading facilities (Gantries and pumps).
- b. Off-shore loading facilities, incorporating Single Point Mooring System which will be connected to on-shore storage facility through sub-marine oil products pipelines.
- c. Constitution of the tender document (general condition of the contract, commercial and technical part, invitation's applications, time of completion).
 - Health Safety and Environment, the estimation cost of the overall project and time schedule of execution. (Prepare the overall project design concept and bidding documents based on turn key (EPC) basis (finance, design, build, operate, including all other required studies / environmental impact studies etc.) as well as prepare the overall project TOR and guidelines of all facility component).
- d. Participate in the project evaluation of bids received and prepare the evaluation report with recommendation to select the most appropriate firm who may be awarded the contract, based on detailed technical and financial analysis for all bids received, clearly define all advantages and disadvantages for each bid.
It is anticipated that the assignment will be spread out through 3 months.

Interested consultants that are experienced in this field should provide a technical proposal indicating their qualifications in this field with a financial proposal.

A copy of the Terms Of Reference required for the study must be obtained by the interested consultations from the purchasing and warehousing department for a non-refundable fee of YR100,000 with the provision of the following:

1. Bank Letter of Guarantee for 2.5% of the tender value valid for a period of 90 days.
2. Copy of tax identification and insurance identification (for local bidders).
3. Financial performance, during the last 5 years.
4. Attachment of documents and certificates of experience in this field.
5. Copy of Business License (for local bidders).
6. The validity of the bids should be 90 days from the date of bid opening.
7. The bid opening of only the Technical offers will be on 1/9/2007 at 11.00 O'clock in the presence of firm's representatives.
8. Firms failing to pass the technical qualification and evaluation process will be disqualified from contest.

The closing date of obtaining the bids documents will be on 1 Sep. 2007. Bids must be sealed with red wax and addressed to the executive director general – Yemen Petroleum Company, written clearly along with the name and address. To the address below:

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New forms of violence against Yemeni women and persisting discriminative laws

By: Rasha Jarhum
For Yemen Times
jarhum@gmail.com

The second Shadow Report on the implementation level of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Yemen in 1984, was out to reveal persisting discriminative legislations, policies, procedures and practices against Yemeni Women.

The Shadow Report was initiated and coordinated by the Sisters Arab Forums for Human Rights (SAF) and sponsored by the UNDP. It comes as an effort by the civil society to tackle the issues that the sixth National Report published six months earlier and prepared by the Woman National Committee (WNC) failed to address. Both reports are to be presented at the 41th Session of CEDAW Committee in Geneva for 2008.

Whilst the Shadow Report focused on the legislative measures that should be taken under serious considerations, the National Report focused on the legislative measures that have been achieved, highlighting 6 laws that have been amended and the 15 laws that the WNC are working on amending. Both reports touch upon some of the discriminatory provisions in the Yemeni Legislations which do not promote gender equality. For example, the Crimes and Penalty Code Law, the Citizenship Law, the Personal Status Law, and the Labor Law. However, both reports reveal that no amendments have been approved since 2005 to alter any of the discriminatory Yemeni legislative provisions.

Furthermore, the Shadow Report illustrated the gap existing between the law and its enforcement referring to issues such as the inability of women to obtain personal identity cards or passports without their guardian's consent. Additionally, practices to deprive women especially in rural areas from their rights in inheritance. Furthermore, the miserable status of pregnant imprisoned

women regardless to Law No.(26) for organizing prisons, as well as, article (27) to take care of pregnant imprisoned women.

It is also worth mentioning that the Shadow Report has highlighted an important point in relation to the Crimes and Penal Code Law No.(12) for 1994, Article (232), as it mitigates the penalty on a man who kills his wife if he finds her in adultery situation. The Report also notes the WNC's proposed amendment to add a text to mitigate penalty on women who commit the same crime. However, the report indicates that both the law and amendment contradicts the Sharia'a (Islamic Law) itself. As the Sharia'a requires the man to prove the claim by providing four witnesses, otherwise to practice Lia'an rituals (swearing to Allah 4 times that he's telling the truth and on the fifth time he calls upon Allah curse on him if he's telling lies. The wife also follows the same practice and on the fifth she calls upon Allah wrath on her if she's telling lies).

Both reports reflect on the gender gap that exists in education, political participation, economic participation, and health. However, the Shadow Report revealed new forms of violence against women referring to press violence. It reported on quasi official newspapers such as Al-Dostour, Al-Bilad, and Akhbar Al-Yum, publishing slander articles against female journalists and civil society activists to defame their honor and provoke traditionalist against them. The report shed light on some females who were attacked by such slander articles like Ms Rashida Al-Qaili, Ms Samia Al-Aghbari, Ms Mahasin Al-Hawati, and Ms Rahma Hugairah.

Another form of violence that the Shadow Report highlights is the accusation of infidelity and apostasy. The report indicated that such violence is a form of cultural violence that provokes the community against female activists and journalists and call for their execution. The report referred to what happened with journalist Ms Nagla Al-Amri, and with human rights activist Ms Amal Al-Basha,

when Akhbar Al-Yum Newspaper issued on 17th March 2007 published a quotation of an official in Al-Eman University accusing Ms Al-Basha of infidelity and apostasy against Islam.

Violence in the form of illegal detention and torture was also highlighted in the report, referring to what happened to Ms Anisah Al-Shuaibi who was detained along with her 6 years old son and 9 years old niece on the accusation of murdering her ex-husband. In addition to what happened to Ms Intisal Al-Siani who was arrested due to claims of involvement in terrorism acts. Along with Ms Basma Al-Zagheer who was accused of taking drugs and killing her parents. Moreover, what happened to Hanan Al-Wadee, who was abducted by security personnel from the street and sent to the central jail, under the allegations of entering Iran Embassy in Sana'a.

The Report also shed light onto the violence against female candidates in elections. Violations were reported in terms of slanders and defamation to their honor, tearing their elections campaign posters and pictures, threats to be dismissed or denied promotions at the workplace, influencing voters with misinterpreted Islamic teachings, and even pressuring and discouraging them by their own political parties to give pace to their male counterparts to run for the elections. The report referred to the suffering of a female candidate during the parliamentary elections in 2003, in Ibb governorate, constituency (199). As she was forced to withdraw after being threatened with a fake marriage contract to a husband she never knew and spreading rumors that she is illegally married to four husbands.

Furthermore, street violence was also identified as one form that Yemeni Women suffer from in terms of verbal abuses, deliberate physical contact and even abduction crimes. Additionally, violence against marginalized women was described to be double as they suffer in all social, economical, political and cultural levels.

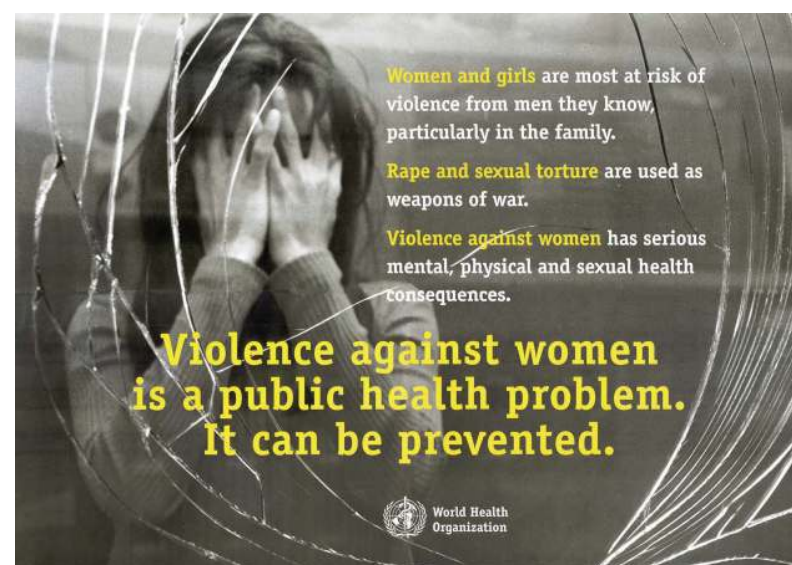
The Shadow Report urged to establish

a law to incriminate violence against women in all its forms. Additionally, it was recommended that an amendment is needed to articulate some vague texts such as the meaning of a shameful act in Article (273) in the Crimes and Penalty Code Law. As it opens the doors for interpreting a shameful act and so what is considered shameful in one area could not be considered as shameful in the other. For example, an Oxfam GB program, implemented by WNC, revealed that many women were imprisoned because they got married without their father's consent or acknowledgment or escaped to get married to men of their choice. Many of those women were imprisoned on accounts of committing adultery crimes or for perpetuating shameful acts.

The Shadow Report also called upon adapting a quota system of 30% in elected and appointed councils, as well as executive posts such as deputy ministers, section directors, councils, cultural attaches and in the parliament and Shoura Council secretariats. Something that the WNC is incorporating as an objective in the National Strategy for Women Development set by the WNC.

Most importantly the Shadow Report called upon amending the Yemeni legislative provisions according to enlightened Islamic interpretations. For instance, the report recommended amending the Personal Status Law to allow women to travel without the requiring the company of a mahram (male guardian). Additionally, the report called upon accepting the testimony of two women as a requirement to obtain the Personal Identity Cards; as following the Islamic Law, the testimony of two men or one man and two women is accepted.

Hooria Mashour Editor of the National Report and Vice Chairperson of WNC commented to Yemen Times: "the government signed and approved the CEDAW in May 1984. Additionally, article No (6) of the Yemeni Constitution indicates Yemen's commitment to international agreements and conventions. The CEDAW consists of 30 articles that the accepting states are committed to



WHO's Gender and Women Health Department has produced a poster which presents, in simple and effective graphic form, some of the central facts about violence against women, along with the message that such violence can be stopped.

achieve. Mainly the Convention aims at creating equality between men and women in the legal, political, economical, social and cultural levels". She further added that one of the articles obligates the declaring states to submit regular reports at least every four years that shows the implementation level of the CEDAW. Mashour elaborated that the WNC is the government's main mechanism that is concerned with women's issues. She further added, that Yemen has submitted previously two reports to the CEDAW Committee in August 2002. Mashour also stated that "We have followed the standards set by the CEDAW committee when preparing the 6th Report. The Report shows the improvements and progress in many areas that our country achieved in relations to the lives of women at all levels, as well as, to the challenges and difficulties that constraint the complete application of the CEDAW articles". She further indicated that the WNC have invited all related bodies on the national (central) and local level to participate in the preparation of

this report through direct involvement as a team member or by providing information on the situation of women. She added "the civil society was represented by the Yemeni Women Union in the Report Preparation Team. We were careful in preparing this Report by being transparent and objective, however, other civil society organizations that they have the right to prepare a Shadow Report that covers the areas that were not addressed in the National Report and this is normal and it applies to all international Conventions. It also enhances the democratic principals through active participation of the civil society organizations to follow-up, monitor, and evaluate the performance of the government bodies".

There is no doubt that both reports are useful in providing a comprehensive picture about the level in implementing the CEDAW. However, there was a degree of redundancy of information. Perhaps, it would be more efficient if efforts and financial funding are given to one committee that represents the government and the civil society to draft one report.



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Under the general supervision of the Country Director for Yemen, and the direct supervision of the Programme Officer, the incumbent will:

- Co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of WFP assistance in Sa'ada Governorate, in close collaboration with the Cooperating partner;
- Monitor and review the overall commodity movements such as food deliveries, storage, transport and distribution at the site and verify if the amounts received have been properly recorded, damaged or suspected to be damaged;
- Supervise the efficient distribution of food items at the site and ensure proper distribution of entitlements and verify appropriate entitlements are distributed and provide feedback to Head of sub-Office or country Office and others on the distribution;
- Assist in the conduct of regular meetings of IDPs representatives and implementing partners on the commodity pipeline, distribution arrangements, food entitlements and other relevant issues;
- Assist in the implementation of the plan of action, review achievement and constraints and provide feedback accordingly;
- Assist the Head of Sub-Office and implementing partners in encouraging women's access to economic skills development and sensitizing public opinion on gender issues and gender focused activities;
- Report periodically to the Head of Sub-Office or Country Office on relevant events regarding food management, distribution and other related issues;
- Identify any apparent issues in the programme and report them to the appropriate personnel;
- Maintain records on programme activities, from formulation stage through completion, by extracting relevant information from reports, project committees, budget records and other documentation; make information available for country briefs; country profiles and other related purposes; ensure project cycle deadlines are met;
- Analyse contract terms and conditions, and correct any observed discrepancies between contract rates and invoice amounts;
- Carry out advocacy and information related tasks for project/programme activities such as making interventions and presentations in meetings, workshops, seminars, missions, etc.
- Prepare status and progress reports by providing information and background material for use in discussions and briefing sessions;
- Provide guidance, on-the-job training and supervision to clerical staff.
- Perform other related duties as required.

Qualifications:

Education: University Degree in related field.
Experience: Three to four years of progressively responsible administrative, and field work, of which at least one year was closely related to programme functions.
Language: Fluency in both written and oral English and Arabic.

Applications must be received by the deadline and only short-listed candidates shall be contacted. (Snr. Programme Assistant vacancy, at WFP Sadaa) at the following address: World Food Programme, Sana'a, Villa No.22-Nwakshut St. No. 21, Diplomatic Area, P.O.Box 7181, Republic of Yemen Tel : 01-214100/101, Fax 01205515



Medecins Sans Frontieres Spain, an international medical humanitarian NGO, is opening a programme of emergency health care & humanitarian assistance to Somali refugees in the South of Yemen and will run an office in Sanaa.

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Medical coordination assistant	Licensed doctor Pharmacy management experience compulsory Work experience of two years, preferably with an NGO Good communication skills Computer skills Fluent English
Liaison Officer	Good acquaintance with customs and ministries Good communication skills Previous experience with an NGO would be a plus Fluent English
Administrative & Financial Assistant	Accounting degree Work experience in an INGO or international organization Computer skills Fluent English
Logistics Assistant	Engineer or technical degree Work experience in an INGO or international organization Computer skills Fluent English
Receptionist/Translator	Translator degree Work experience in administration Computer skills Fluent English
Mechanics/Driver	Mechanic diploma Two-year work experience Fluent English
Driver	Driving license over five years Work experience as a driver in an INGO, an embassy or international organization Good knowledge of Sanaa Fluent English
4 Guards	Work experience in an NGO Good English
Cleaner	Work experience in an NGO Good English
Cook	Work experience in an NGO Good English

Applications and curriculum must be in English

Last date for applications: **Saturday 18th August 2007**
No application will be received later than this date

Applications can be sent at:
Medecins Sans Frontieres - Spain
P.O. box 16308 Haddah post office
Sanaa

Please note:

- Only selected applications will be contacted
- No phone call will be attended

Flying Clean-up Crew on Socotra Island

By: Abdulqadir Al-Emad
ab.alemad@gmail.com
For Yemen Times

Socotra, with its absolutely spectacular scenery and fascinating domestic life, is considered the magnetic jewel of Yemen in particular and the Arab Peninsula in general. Recently nominated as one of the seven wonders of nature, it is bestowed with a rich variety of birdlife.

From amongst this birdlife are the Egyptian vultures. In Socotra the locals call this bird "Soeeda." It is worth mentioning that vultures are surprisingly common throughout the beautiful landscape of this island.

Physical Appearance of Socotra Vulture (Also known as Soeeda): It is about four pounds as it is one of the smaller Old World Vultures according to some sources. It is about 25 inches in length. Its color is a mixture of bright yellow and white. Most of the vultures have a mane of white feathers on their heads.

Preferable Geographic Atmosphere: Wide and open lands such as pastures, deserts and grasslands. They usually build their stone nests on the caves of mountains.

Secret of Being Common in Socotra: People of Socotra do not abuse or harm these birds; rather they warmly welcome them as sweepers or a clean-up crew. Mahmoud, a resident of Socotra, revealed many facts about this vulture. They usually build stick nests in rocky caves of mountains. The waste of carrion, dead animals and food is cleaned up by this self-volunteer crew. Egyptian vultures are scavengers by nature in the sense that they sweep every particle of dead animal carcasses and other waste.

Soeedas Benefit from Humans Too: The Soeeda regurgitates the waste and garbage it swallows, which it then feeds to its young. This kind of benefit is of no use to other creatures. The garbage and waste of the island serves two purposes for these birds—feeding themselves first and then feeding their children.



The Flying Clean-up Sweeper (Egyptian Vulture) is probably the most common bird on Socotra. The photo shows it proceeding towards some remains of a dead animal.

Moreover, humans benefit especially in areas that lack sweepers, as the vultures clean the area of garbage, which is usually a main cause of environmental pollution.

In this sense humans are indebted to this helpful sweeping crew. Vultures should be awarded for their service of protecting the environment from pollution.

tion.

Egyptian Vultures are Equal to Human Beings:

It is narrated that once upon a time an Egyptian Pharaoh made a law that anyone who killed an Egyptian vulture would be sentenced to death. He thought the job these birds did in cleaning up people's waste was very important. People still value the bird for that reason. More than a century ago, the bile from Egyptian vultures' livers was made into a medicine and their skins were tanned to make leather according to some historical references. These are reasons why this bird deserves more care and attention. Fortunately, their life is not threatened in Socotra.

Mahmoud pointed out, "These birds are very common here and we do not allow anyone to harm them. They are cleaning up our environment asking for nothing in return. We do not pay them salaries and they do their mission concisely." When we asked him about bad characteristics of these birds he indicated that they have little shortcomings.

"Sometimes if this bird does not get its food it depends on chasing live prey. Sometimes these birds chase and attack our domestic birds such as chickens, but anyhow we manage and prevent them. Good features of these birds are more than bad ones."

Human Cleverness is an Aspect of Humor in Soeeda:

Mahmoud told us about the Soeeda's diet and its eating mechanisms. The Soeeda diet varies from time to time according to the prey available. The vulture never feels exhausted from the constant search for food. As a scavenger, the Soeeda mostly eats carrion. It also eats insects, eggs and very rarely it will eat domestic live prey. A sign of the Soeeda's cleverness according to Mahmoud is the vulture's method of eating eggs. Soeedas are famous for their ability to break thick ostrich eggs by throwing stones at them. This is humorous about vultures. Mahmoud added, "This is the Creator's concreteness in showing each creature the proper and easy mechanism of handling its own life."

Taiz Zoo: Animal sanctuary in need of attention

By: Nassri Al-Saqqaf
For Yemen Times

Taiz zoo is the first zoo established to save wild animals threatened by extinction in Yemen. It was established and opened in 1998, funded by the Cleaning and Improvement Fund in Taiz City.

The zoo passed through two phases during its erection. Prerequisite studies for carrying out the third phase are currently being conducted. The third phase involves expanding overcrowded with animals.

A significant number of visitors venture to the zoo to view the animals threatened with extinction. According to the zoo's deputy manger there are about 400

The zookeepers take care of roughly 50 species of animals as well as birds, most of them indigenous. As these animals are threatened to vanish in wild life, there are some attempts to increase them in the zoo. "However, some animals are not being increased due to the high costs of their sheltering. It is because they make extra burden on the zoo budget that suffers from a continuous shortage. It is for the first time that the specialists succeeded in increasing the number of tigers to reach 23 tigers," the zoo's deputy manger Jamal Ghabl stated.

Mohammed Al-Shawafi, head of the zoo's veterinary care, stated, "We have got three tigers as gifts presented by the president. We also bought three others from the tradesmen. The process of increasing tigers was very difficult how-

ever. It takes more than 7 million Yemeni riyals per month, whereas the zoo budget does not exceed a third of this amount. Subsequently the Cleaning and Improvement Fund bear the other two thirds, including operation expenses and keepers' salaries. The paucity of the budget stands as a stumbling bloc to improving and developing the zoo, including erecting more facilities.

Despite financial problems, Al-Shawafi mentioned that the zoo is looking forward to expanding and opening facilities that meet the animals' natural environment. "The stables of the animals will be separated from each other by steel bars, allowing visitors to watch the animals. This project needs some kind of support from [outside] parties as well as organizations concerned with protecting the environment of the wild animals," Al-Shawafi stated, adding, "Despite the large area of the zoo, it is not well exploited. There are unfenced areas and some of the stables of the animals are outside the zoo, making the protection process more difficult."

He went on to say that the main center of the zoo consists of a circular construction that has a number of opened rooms. These rooms are fenced with steel bars and doors but most of them are mainly for the tigers and lions only. One room is for the African cheetah and three other rooms are for administration offices as well as the veterinary clinic. The other animals are put in cages and stables outside the zoo. Al-Shawafi hoped that the concerned authorities could establish a center in order to utilize the existing animals in the field of scientific research.

"The zoo is lacking the basic services. The network of the water is not connect-



The zookeepers take care of roughly 50 species of animals as well as birds, most of them indigenous.

ed as well as the landline phones needed for administrative work. The zoo needs a veterinarian specialized in wild veterinary medicine. The zookeepers need more training in the field of care and attention of animals," Al-Shawafi asserted.

Ahmed Al-Qadasi, the zoo veterinarian, stated that there are several tasks of the veterinary clinic in the zoo. "The clinic takes care of sick animals. It also conducts preventive care for the animals throughout necessary vaccines. The sick animals should undergo surgery assistance when giving birth whether normally or through cesarean section. The clinic should also carry out regular tests for all animals to make sure if there are contagious diseases or parasites," Al-Qadasi explained, adding, "The zoo administration provides the necessary requirements

according to my orders. The administration informs the concerned parties."

The zoo provides sick animals with medication from Jordan, Egypt, the Netherlands, and Germany.

Although many animals have died inside the zoo, Al-Qadasi assured that the zoo environment is suitable for all Yemeni animals. "The most suitable areas in Yemen are Taiz governorate and the middle areas of Yemen. In case if there are animals that need special care, we put them in a suitable place, allotting two zoo-keepers to watch them and to inform the specialist with updated things that happen to such animals," Al-Qadasi explained.

He added that the zoo is still in its first phases but full of animals. To quarantine is to put animals in a place set up for

receiving new animals. "The quarantine needs to be clean and disinfected to be a permanent place for animals. These animals take preventive vaccines and are tested in case there are symptoms. This is one of the problems faced by the zoo. We hope that they will erect a quarantine in the future."

Al-Qadasi aspires to make Taiz Zoo the best at the level of Arab region and worldwide. "I personally seek to establish a special center separated from the animals show place in order to increase the number of the rare and dying animals particularly the Arabic tiger. We aspire to make the zoo have a spectrum of animals as well as new species spanning the world so as to be a teaching and tourist zoo, attracting tourists from all over the world," he concluded.



Occasionally, zoo visitors reach to 10,000. This huge number makes the zoo an important tourist spot and a showcase for Yemen's animal environment.

to 1,000 visitors daily. Occasionally, zoo visitors reach to 10,000. This huge number makes the zoo an important tourist spot and a showcase for Yemen's animal environment.

The deputy manager of Taiz Zoo stated that the purpose of the zoo is to protect animals threatened with extinction, particularly Yemeni animals such as tigers, wild cats, wolves and falcons. The zoo works to increase the number of these animals.

There are also simple programs and environmental guidance about existing animals in the zoo.

ever we failed three times to protect the [newborns] because their mothers eat them immediately after delivery. We took the [newborns] away and used female dogs to give them milk. This method was a new precedent because the tiger's [young] do not accept the artificial suckling."

However, the zoo worked on decreasing the number of lions because they add extra burden upon the zoo budget.

The deputy manager of the zoo confirmed that the inadequate budget causes an obstacle if the zoo receives more animals that need continuous care and atten-

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مهرجان صيف صنعاء السياحي 2007 Sana'a Tourism Summer Festival

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Sana'a Summer Festival Schedule in 8/8 . 9/8/2007

Day	Date	Event	Place	Time
Wednesday	8/8	Egyptian national circus French acrobat AL-Dara'a AL-Mizmar Band Free drawing for children Folk games Cinema chow	Alasbaeen garden.	4:30 pm 7:30 pm 9:30 am & 4:30 pm 9:30 am & 4:30 pm 10:30 am 7:30 pm
Thursday	9/8	Egyptian national circus French acrobat Al-Dara'a Al-Mizmar Band Singers Dragon Band Free drawing for children Folk games Puppet theatre	Alasbaeen garden.	4:30 pm 7:30 pm 9:30 am & 4:30 pm 8:00 pm 4:30 pm 9:30 am & 4:30 pm 10:30 pm 4:30 pm

Learning the Qur'an: From Memorization to Implementation

By: Nisreen Shadad

The ability to act in solidarity with other people is a secret of belief that can be seen in gatherings that are attempting to highlight the spirit of self-sacrifice. With this mutual self-sacrificial support and the Qur'an's moral teachings, Muslims have been able to spread Islam and the Qur'an's morality throughout the world. "Muslims are like a palm tree," said Anas Hassan Karazon, representative of the International Organization of the Holy Qur'an Memorization, an organization intent on displaying the characteristics of normal Muslims, as well as fostering the morality of those who have memorized the Speech of Allah.

More than fifty representatives of Qur'anic associations from throughout Yemen joined together in an effort to educate people who are memorizing the Holy Qur'an, instilling in students its moral teachings.

The gathering lasted for two days. Topics discussed included development of Qur'an centers for males and females, as well as displaying the successful experiences of existing centers in teaching the Holy Qur'an.

Karazon highlighted six principles all associations and centers of the Holy Qur'an should possess: sincerity, integrity, accuracy, determination, tenderness and belonging. He also stressed on the importance of reciting the Holy Qur'an and acting upon its regulations, stating, "The Qur'an is not only a book to memorize, but to act on its moral teachings."

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and



Memorizing the Quran and learning its moral teachings is one of the main principles the associations worked on.



Prophet Muhammad (mpbh) told: Once a man set off on a long journey to visit a brother in Islam. While on the way an angle appeared to him and asked him: "why take the trouble?" He answered, because I love my brother for the sake of Allah. The angle replied: "I have been sent to tell you that Allah loves you as you love your brother for Allah's sake," narrated Karazon.

blessings be upon him, said, "The example of a believer who recites the Qur'an and acts on it, is like a citron which tastes nice and smells nice. And the example of a believer who does not recite the Qur'an but acts on it is like a date which tastes good but has no smell. And the example of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'an is like a Raihana (sweet basil) which smells good but tastes bitter and the example of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'an is like a colocynth which tastes bitter and has a bad smell." (Bukhari)

The Qur'an is the Best Educator

The Qur'an is the best educator as it deals with issues man needs not only for salvation, but also to achieve peace, justice and prosperity. It is the Book Allah chose to be the seal of the Heavenly Books. Allah descended it upon Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) as the source for the last religion. Through its theology and law, basic principles necessary for planning and leading a good life are provided.

During the gathering of Qur'anic educators, poor people outnumbered rich, however, they were interested more in how they can study the sciences of the Qur'an and teach it to others. Some talked about salary and the importance of providing those who are memorizing the Holy Qur'an with a better life. Many agreed, however, this point was not their priority as they recognized that those group of people in whose hearts the words of Allah reside

are wealthy beyond measure.

The study of Uloom Al-Qur'an (the sciences of the Qur'an) is the study of all subjects that relate to the Qur'an's memorization and implementation. The Qur'an is definitely the most marvelous and unique book as it speaks to the scientist, the doctor, the economist, people of every profession and most importantly to the common man.

There are four essential categories which make up the sciences of the Qur'an. The first category is the history of the Qur'an and evolution of its sciences. The second is recitation. The third is Tafseer or explanation of the Qur'an. And the last is Fiqh or effecting and implementing the Qur'an.

Quran Center Success Stories

Representatives from the Holy Qur'an centers displayed the routine of their centers while in Sana'a. The first step is to repeat the verses after the teacher collectively, and then the students read them individually, paying particular attention to those verses that involved difficult sounds and words. The teacher observes the movement of students' mouths to check their pronunciation. The number of students should be few to enable the teacher to follow them most effectively. Students are also required to study Tajweed, which involves reciting every letter correctly, i.e. from its proper origin of pronunciation coupled with its stipulated attributes.

After memorizing the Holy Qur'an, the student is awarded an Ijazah, a cer-

tificate to indicate that one has been authorized by a higher authority to transmit a certain subject or text of Islamic knowledge. Ijazah in the Qur'an implies that the student has learned the pronunciation of the Qur'an through face-to-face interactions. The teacher from whom the Ijazah is taken, his isnad reaches to the Prophet, meaning the teacher who has Ijazah pronounces the verses of the Qur'an in the way of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

Once Ijazah is obtained, the learner can then study numerous sciences of the Qur'an such as 'Ilm-ul-Qir'at', which is knowledge of the art of pronunciation, because different methods of recitation sometimes convey different meanings, and sometimes one meaning is to be preferred over the other. Another science is 'Asbab-nazul', which are the particular circumstances which caused the revelation of Qur'anic verses. The meaning of a verse will be better understood if we know how and when it was revealed. Sometimes the true meaning of a verse is understood only if we know the circumstances in which it was revealed. 'Nasikh-o-mansukh' is knowledge of commandments that have subsequently been abrogated or changed, so that abrogated commandments may be distinguished from the standing ones.

Al-Mashhad center is one of the typical Qur'anic centers in Sana'a. It is interested in teaching people to memorize the Holy Qur'an and has many students who have memorized the Qur'an in its entirety. "The number of the students in this center is increasing to thousands," Zaid al-Ghaili, a professor of the Qur'anic sciences at Sana'a University stated.

Chad Experience

Karazon talked about one of the most successful experiences with regard to Qur'an memorization. It involved 100 students in Chad who were uneducated and lived in a remote area. Though they were uneducated, they were enthusiastic to memorize the Holy Qur'an. After teaching them the Holy Qur'an, the organization opened schools for them to study. They excelled in their education and received scholarships to study for their master's degree as well as their doctorate.

From this experience, Karazon hoped to guarantee the students of the Holy Qur'an limitless educational opportunities, as they are studying for the sake of Allah.

Ghaiman: Historical and Architectural Wonders

By: Fatima al-Ajel
& Nisreen Shadad

Ghaiman is an architectural region, located in Bani Bahlool. Today it is known as Noqum Mountain, a name, which historians have confirmed was given to the area by ancient Ethiopians who once occupied Yemen. "Noqum" mean mountain.

Ghaiman is located 20 kilometers southeast of Sana'a and is divided into an upper and lower region. Both regions are situated on a stony mountain overlooking the cultivated Ghaiman valley situated 150 meters away and 2,500 meters above sea level. Some historians trace the area's



Inscription on an alabaster found in Ghaiman.

name to the Himyarite king Dhi Ghaiman bin Akhnas bin Hamid bin Zara'ah. A carving found on the door of Ghaiman mosque indicates the king Nasha Karb Yahamen is one of Ghaiman castle's builders. The castle was built in the mid-third century B.C. Additionally, Ghaiman's Al-Maqlab fortress is well-known to be an ancient residence of Himyari kings, utilized for both relaxation and recreation (The rule of the Himyarites lasted till the year 525AD and that is the date when Yemen fell under the domination of the Abyssinians during the rule of Yousef Athar "Dhu Nawas" the last Himyarite King. It is told that he embraced Judaism and to him is attributed the trench event which was mentioned in Al-Burooj Surah in the Holy Koran).

There are many ancient antiques, which can tell us more about Ghaiman that have yet to be discovered. Those that have been found are on display in Yemen's national museum as well as in museums in Europe. "One of the most important antiques is a big head of a Ghaiman statue which is now in a museum in Britain," Yemeni historian Abdullah Al-Kumaim stated, adding that new treasures will never emerge, unless there is systematic investigation.

Historian Usif Muhammed Abdullah revealed that the most eminent remains of Ghaiman can be found in the area cemetery. "Ghaiman cemetery has spectacular remains that attract people today and in the past. It is located on



A bronze statue found in Ghaiman and deposited in Britain museum.

Yooq hill, facing the southeast of Ghaiman. On this hill are a big number of graves, however, it became distinctive and historical as the greatest [burial site of] Himyarite kings," Abdullah mentioned.

The belief that the graves of the Himyarite kings are full of jewelry leads many people to dig them up in order to steal what is inside. Before ruling over Yemen in 1948 A.C, Imam Ahmad dug these graves with the hope to find the treasure of Abu Kareb Asaad, known as Asaad Al-Kamil. Abu Kareb is considered one of the late Himyarite Kings who restored the unity of Yemen and extended the coun-

try's influence over the Arabian peninsula. The reign of Abu Kareb was a turning point in the feudal system structure, respect of personal freedom, property ownership rights, as well as replacement of a barter system with the use of money for goods.

There are many castles and palaces in Yemen and Ghaiman is one of them. The oldest palace in Yemen is Ghamdan palace in Sana'a, also called Azal palace after the name of the region where it is located.

Al-Maqlab palace is situated within Ghaiman castle and surrounded by a big fence measuring 130 meters. Abdullah Al-Kumaim confirmed that historically, Yemen is unique in numerous fields, including the building of vast palaces at a time when other nations lived in caves and huts. He presented verses from the Holy Qur'an, as it is an authentic resource with supportive evidence.

The first verse is: "Of Iram (who were very tall) like (lofty) pillars. The like of which were not created in the land." (Surat Al-Fajr: 7-8) Another verse is: "I found a woman ruling over them: she has been given all things that could be possessed by any ruler of the earth and she has a great throne." (Surat An-Naml: 23) According to Al-Kumaim, both of these verse, particularly the sentences "were not created in the land" and "she has a great throne" show the magnitude of Yemeni palaces.

CULTURAL SERIES FACES & TRACES

Faces & Traces is a cultural series of concise biographies of local or international famous and obscure personalities in fields such as literature, arts, culture and religion in which these individuals contribute affirmatively. It is a short journey in contemporary history, attempting to tackle numerous effective characters in human civilization.

Naji S. Al-Ali: The Most Famous Cartoonist in the Middle East

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Naji Salim Al-Ali (1937-1987) was a Palestinian cartoonist and journalist. He was born in Al-Shajara village near Tiberias in Galilee. At the age of 10, Al-Ali emigrated to Ain Al-Helwa, a refugee camp in Southern Lebanon located near Sidon. He attended primary school at the Christian Churches Union's School in Lebanon, after which he departed to Tripoli and obtained a diploma in mechanics and electrical engineering. He had to work as a seasonal farm laborer picking oranges and lemons. He traveled to Saudi Arabia in 1957 to work and stayed there two years. In the early 1960s, Al-Ali returned to Lebanon to continue his studies in drawing and joined the Academy of Arts but he discontinued his studies due to recurring arrests by the Lebanese Intelligence Service and worked instead briefly as a drawing instructor at Al-Jaafriya College in Tyre.

During his stay in the camp, Al-Ali began to express his political views through painting on walls. In 1961, Ghassan Kanafani, the late Palestinian journalist, visited Ain Al-Helwa and saw Al-Ali's cartoons. Kanafani took some of these cartoons, published them in Al-Hurriya, the Arab nationalist magazine, and encouraged Al-Ali to continue his drawings. Al-Ali traveled to Kuwait in 1963 to work as an editor and a reporter for Al-Taleeh weekly magazine published by the Kuwaiti Progressive Party, after which he worked for Al-Siyasa Kuwaiti newspaper from 1968 to 1975. In 1974, Al-Ali returned to Lebanon to work on the editorial board of the Lebanese newspaper Al-Safir until 1983. During this period he also contributed drawings to Al-Khalij newspaper in the United Arab Emirates. In 1982 during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Al-Ali was an eyewitness to the terrifying massacre that happened in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. He returned to Kuwait in 1983 and worked for Al-Qabas, a Kuwaiti daily and widespread newspaper and also continued his work with Al-Khalij newspaper. In October 1985, he was expelled from Kuwait due to political reasons and settled down in London continuing his work for Al-Qabas newspaper's London branch.

Al-Ali developed a stark and symbolic style during his 30-year campaign on behalf of Palestine. His life was seamlessly interlaced with the trails of exiled Palestinian and ordinary Arab people. The main characters in Al-Ali's drawings are Handala, Fatima, Al-Rajul Al-Tayyib (The Good Man), and Al-Mutakarish (The Potbellied Man) and other secondary characters. "Handala" (which means in Arabic a symbol of bitterness) is the most

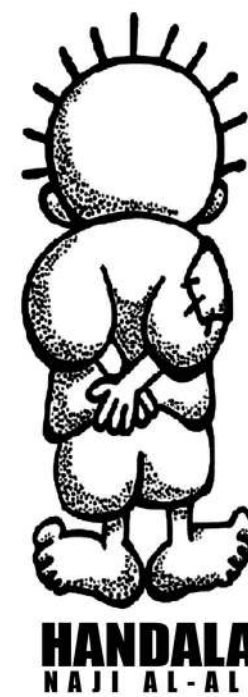


famous of Al-Ali's cartooned characters. He is depicted as a ten-year old boy and appeared for the first time in Al-Siyasa Kuwaiti newspaper in 1969. Handala wears ragged clothes, is barefoot and is not a fat, happy, relaxed, or pampered child. The figure turned his back to the viewer from the year 1973 and clasped his hands behind his back. Handala is now the official logo of the Commission for Freedom and Justice Through Humour, a recently created arm of WATCH and an affiliate of UNESCO. "Fatima" is the female symbol representing the Palestinian or Arab woman, the land, the camp, the nation, and the mother of all martyrs. "The Good Man" is a thin, miserable-looking man representing the Palestinian as the bold victim of Israeli oppression and other hostile forces. "The Potbellied Man" is a fat man representing the Arab regimes and Palestinian political leaders who led an easy life and engaged in political compromises which the artist vehemently opposed.

Al-Ali's works influenced all kinds of people who used to wait impatiently every morning to see his drawings on the last page of many Arab dailies. His works were published daily in Cairo, Beirut, Kuwait, Tunis, Abu Dhabi, London, and Paris in publications ranging from far right to far left. The period of Al-Ali's work in Beirut is the best of his career and the periods of exile in Kuwait and the UK restricted his creativity since he missed the inspiration he got from the daily reality of the refugee camps in southern Lebanon.

Between 1958 and 1963, Al-Ali was frequently detained by police and continually censored. He is said to have received over 100 death threats during his life. He forcefully refused to speak about his oppressors and those who might censor his works; he drew them instead. In his career as a political cartoonist, Al-Ali produced over 40,000 drawings, excluding his banned ones, and published three books in 1976, 1983 and 1985 containing collections of selected caricatures. Time Magazine described him saying, "This man draws with human bones," and the Japanese newspaper, Asahi, once wrote, "Naji Al-Ali draws using phosphoric acid." Asahi also had chosen him among the 10 most famous caricaturists in the world. In 1988, Al-Ali was posthumously awarded the annual Golden Pen Award of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers. In 1992, an Arabic motion picture about his life entitled "Naji Al-Ali" was directed in Egypt and another documentary movie entitled "Naji Al-Ali, An Artist With Vision" was directed in 1999.

On July 22, 1987, Naji Al-Ali was shot in the head by an unknown youth gunman on the threshold of Al-Qabas newspaper in Ives Street, Chelsea. After five weeks in a coma, he died in London on August 29, 1987 at the age of 50. Although his will requested that he be buried in Ain Al-Helwa, he was buried in Brookwood Islamic Cemetery outside London. Undoubtedly, Naji Al-Ali produced thousands of cartoons satirizing the powers that be in the Middle East and paid the ultimate price for his expressions.



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Restoring Shibam, saving an architectural wonder

By: Hussein Al-Hakimi
For Yemen Times

Shibam, located in the Yemeni province of Hadramout, is known as the "Manhattan of the desert." Its ancient center, which at present still comprises 400 inhabitable clay towers, is unique in the world and was declared a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO in 1982. Situated in a fascinating age-old cultural landscape, the city had been a junction of caravan trade routes. But in the course of the 20th century, Shibam lost its historic economic base, and most of its population slid into poverty.

An urban development plan aimed at Shibam's preservation and economic self-sufficiency and based on the potential and skills of its inhabitants and local government is intended to benefit the population and avert the threatened decline of the old city.

An agreement for carrying out an infrastructural development project of the historical city was signed recently in Mukalla. The project has a gross cost of \$500,000 to be funded by the Social Fund for Development, GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit) and Hadramout governorate authorities.

The experimental section of the rehabilitation project of Shibam would import necessary materials for water, electricity and telephone networks. The infrastructural project aims at rehabilitation of the city's full services at a cost of \$4 million.

The project follows the guiding principle that Old Shibam can be preserved only if the population commit themselves to their city and consider it worth living in. Hence the objective is to create more attractive living and working conditions, and to achieve better urban management, taking into account the value of the city as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site.

Why Shibam?

Shibam is one of the most important cities in Hadramout valley, dating back to the third century B.C. The city is situated in the middle of Hadramout valley on a hill 30 meters above the valley level, located 19 kilometers from Si'oun on a paved road leading to Mukalla. Shibam has been mentioned in many referenced inscriptions. The houses form a firmly built castle, rise 8 stories high and are built of clay "bricks." Many European travelers, after visiting Shibam, labeled it "Manhattan of the desert" and "skyscraper city." It is considered one of the most beautiful historic Yemeni cities after ancient Sana'a.

UNESCO announced an international campaign to protect Shibam in 1984. It is considered an architectural rarity which cannot be repeated, its location a gem in



Shibam is considered an architectural rarity which cannot be repeated, its location a gem in the middle of Hadramout valley, perched on a high hill, appearing to the observer as a castle in an ancient valley.

the middle of Hadramout valley, perched on a high hill, appearing to the observer as a castle in an ancient valley. The city's unique history and architecture make it one of the most popular tourist destinations in Yemen. Many people believe that it should be declared among the top wonders of the world.

Being a city in Hadramout governorate is another distinguishing characteristic, as Hadramout is comprised of different topography. Included amongst this topography are coastal plains containing beautiful shores along the Arabian Sea, mountains and hills of heights reaching 2000 meters above sea level, large desert areas of Al-Ruba Al-Khali and numerous valleys, including the largest and most fertile valley in the Arab peninsula, spanning 160 kilometers and pouring into Sihout on the Arab sea in Al-Mohra governorate.

The hot tropical climate in Hadramout reaches 40 degrees Celsius during summer months in interior areas. Coastal area temperatures reach 36 degrees Celsius due to seasonal winds saturated with moisture. Winter temperatures tend to be moderate in the coastal areas at 20-24 degrees Celsius with interior areas reaching 17-20 degrees Celsius.

Hadramout governorate has been presented in history books as the land of Ahqaf. Historians reported that Amir Bin Qahtan was the first to land in Ahqaf after "A'ad" and if he went to war, he killed much. When he went to battle he would leave the message, "Death has come." This became his title and the area was named accordingly where "Hadra" means came and "mout" means death.

Hadramout has a deep-rooted past distinguished with continuity throughout the different historic phases until present. Archeological research done in Hadramout valley indicated that the southern peninsula witnessed human activity in the first stone ages and was home to one of the oldest Yemeni kingdoms, Hadramout kingdom, which flourished at the start of the first millennium

B.C. Many ancient cities flourished in this area and experienced advancements in art and architecture, as well as development in irrigation and political systems.

Hadramout is considered one of the main roots of Yemeni civilization, rich with historic antiquities, particularly the



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region's architecture, represented by its ancient yet well-preserved skyscrapers. The remains indicate monumental ruins of cities, temples and prophet's graves, including Prophet Hud and Saleh, peace be upon them.

Efforts at Revitalization

GTZ supports the cultural, economic and social initiatives of the local government and citizens of Shibam to restore the historic trading center. Culturally sensitive restoration of the ancient clay towers will preserve the famous cityscape, simultaneously improving living conditions. Financial subsidies amounting to 35 percent of the renovation costs, as well as technical advisory services, will enable local residents to implement rehabilitation proposals.

Traditionally, girls in Yemen marry early and cut their school education short. To enable women to continue their education and contribute to the family income, courses in handicrafts, computing and literacy will be offered in collaboration with non-governmental organizations. Additionally, abandoned gardens will be restored, affording farm families an important income source.

To further improve the quality of life in Shibam, renovation of the water and

sewage system is planned.

Since the project began, the social and economic situation, and thus the quality of life for the people in Shibam, has markedly improved. Nearly a third of all house owners have been informed about possible renovations; about 100 owners have already renovated their buildings, raising substantial funds of their own for this purpose. House owners are now being advised by young architects who are familiar with traditional ways of building and can also work with modern techniques.

An important concern of local inhabitants was a functioning waste disposal system, which today is being provided by the local government, mostly on its own, for all settlements in the Shibam district.

In order to enhance incomes and strengthen Shibam citizens' sense of responsibility for their city, three registered associations have been set up. They actively promote youth and women initiatives as well as cultural tourism. Additionally, they aim to revive farming in the region.

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Shibam is one of the most important cities in Hadramout valley, dating back to the third century B.C.

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