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Bush Praises Yemen's role in combating terrorism

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

SANA'A, Oct 24 — US President George W. Bush praised Yemen for its success in the field of combating terrorism.

This came in a message to President Ali Abdullah Saleh conveyed by the assistant to President Bush for Internal Security and Combating Terrorism Affairs, Francis Townsend.

In his message, President Bush confirmed his country's support for Yemen in development, education, military, security, and fighting against terrorism.

Townsend's visit to Yemen, which began on Monday, comes following a similar visit to Saudi Arabia, where she conveyed a message to King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz from the President Bush. The American official left Yemen on Tuesday.

In related news, General Staff of the Central Security Forces Mohammed Saleh held a meeting in Sana'a on Tuesday with a number of security representatives from the United States of America, United Kingdom and a number of African countries over issues related to cooperation among these countries in combating terrorism.



Members of Yemen's counter-terrorism force stand at attention in their barracks in Sanaa.

During the meeting, Saleh said Yemen is ready to provide assistance and expertise in this area in the light of agreements and protocols signed in this field.

The meeting came after a week fugitive Al-Qaeda suspect Jamal al-Badawi, who was convicted of bombing the USS Cole in Yemen that killed 17 American

sailors, has surrendered himself to Yemen's authorities.

According to AFP, Badawi, who featured on a US list of most-wanted terrorists with a five-million-dollar bounty on his head, had been allowed to return to his home in the southern port city of Aden in return for a pledge not to engage in any violent or Al-Qaeda-related activity.

The American Embassy in Sana'a has not commented on this news yet.

Badawi was sentenced to death in September 2004 for the 2000 bombing of the US Navy destroyer Cole off Aden, which was claimed by Al-Qaeda, but an appeals court later commuted the sentence to 15 years in jail.

Badawi was among 23-suspected Al-Qaeda militants who escaped from a prison in the Yemeni capital in February 2006.

Two escapees remain at large. The others have either given themselves up or were arrested or killed by security forces.

Yemen-US cooperation

The beginning of the terrorism combating cooperation between U.S and Yemen came when Cole was attacked in October 2000. The United States administration started the security cooperation with the Yemeni government to apprehend those who were involved in the Cole attack and to establish their links with Al-Qaeda.

However, that cooperation did not extend to include support for security apparatuses and development of their capabilities. The situation continued in this manner until 11th of September 2001, when Yemen became "U.S partner to fight terrorism".

Since that time, the U.S. declared that it would start to cooperate with Yemen on military and counter terrorism issues and simultaneously to assist Yemen in improving its governance capabilities and its efforts of economic reform.

Analysts say Yemen's success in fighting against terrorism depend getting foreign support to develop the rule of law, economic development, civil service reform, education, and health care.

Experts are worried that Yemen will remain subjected to state failure due to economic weakness unless it undertakes significant changes.

U.S.-Yemeni cooperation includes counter terrorism training for Yemeni military forces, enhancing the role of the coast guard authorities and the provision of equipment and training for Yemen's Terrorist Interdiction Program.

Penal Court tries Second Sana'a Cell

By: Mohammed Al-Qiri For Yemen Times

SANA'A, Oct. 24 — The Penal Court held three sessions this week to try the so-called Second Sana'a Cell on charges of supporting rebellion in the northern province of Sa'ada. The cell includes 15 suspects, of whom two are women.

The group also includes the well-known editor Abdull-Kareem Al-Khaiwani. Another suspect, Hashem Hajar, died inside the prison early this month.

Judge Mohammed Alwan, Head of the Primary Court, chaired the sessions. The suspects are accused of attempting to bomb public interests in the capital city of Sana'a as well as targeting government institutions.

During Wednesday session, investigations the third accused Mahfooth and the fourth one Ali Muhsein Al-Hamzi were accused of transferring explosives, mobile phones and amounts of money belonging to Al-Houthi followers. The defendants, however, denied such charges, claiming that they received and handed over some medicines and detergents as a humanitarian assistance for citizens in Sa'ada province.

Abdull-Rab Al-Murtadha, a lawyer for one of defendants, said in a statement that he was exposed to intimidation by the head of the Penal Prosecution, Sa'eed Al-Agel who said that the lawyer is more "dangerous than the cell and he is the inciter of it".

Another lawyer, Basim Al-Sharjabi said, "The trial is not going on the right track. It lacks the conditions and guarantees of fair prosecution. The suspects were not able to have their legal rights in terms of defending themselves. They were deprived of copying the case's file as well."



The panel of the court during hearing.

Furthermore, Al-Khaiwani said that appearing in person before the court is something extraordinary and illegal due to fabricating charges leveled against him. It is a very critical issue for the court attempts to make use of the issue, he noted, adding that the court does not accept opinions and freedom of expression.

"What is going on nowadays concerning this issue reveals a democracy that is not real. There are a lot of imbalances and infringements inside the courts," Al-Khaiwani said.

At the end of the session, the judge decided to refer the fourth defendant to a specialized physician as the former complained that he was exposed to torture during investigations. The judge assigned the prosecution to answer this suitcase, postponing the session until next Sunday to continue hearing the investigations of the prosecution with the 14 suspects.

The Court had issued its primary verdict on 22 November 2006 by Judge, Najeeb Al-Qaderi in view of the so-called First Sana'a Cell that included 36 people, of whom one is female.. A death sentence was made against one of the defendants. Others received imprisonment terms ranging from 10 to 3 years. However, The Court of Appeal will start reviewing this verdict next Saturday.

NGO calls on president not to approve agreement with Spain

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Oct. 23 — The National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms, a Sana'a-based non-governmental organization known as HOOD, is appealing to President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the Yemeni government not to approve an agreement to exchange convicts with Spain until it [Spain] releases Tayseer Alloni, a journalist working with Al-Jazeera satellite channel detained in Spain.

In an Oct. 21 statement, the organization said President Saleh already has called for Alloni's release.

This came after Yemen's Oct. 21 announcement that it would hand over Nabil Nankali, a Spaniard of Syrian origin, to Spanish authorities. Nankali was arrested in Yemen in 1997 on terrorism charges, along with a number of suspects. A Yemeni court sentenced him to death.

HOOD called on President Saleh to demand Alloni's release in exchange for handing over Nankali.

Abdul-Rahman Al-Kamrani, charge d'affaires of the Yemeni embassy, and Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos signed an Oct. 20 agreement with Spain in its capital of Madrid to

exchange convicts.

Yahya Al-Khazzan, head of conferences and international cooperation at Yemen's Justice Ministry, said Yemen will hand over Nankali after finalizing procedures of the agreement signed between the two countries. He noted that the agreement will become effective after Yemeni Cabinet approval followed by a republican decree issued for its approval.

Yemen currently has no convicts in Spain and Nankali is the only Spanish convict in Yemen.

In an interview with the official Sabanews.net web site, Al-Khazzan stated that there's only one Yemeni prisoner in Egypt and an agreement has yet to be approved to receive him. "That's the only case we know about," he added.

According to Al-Khazzan, there are Yemeni prisoners in other countries, including Syria, but no agreements have been signed with such countries to hand the prisoners over to Yemen.

Moratinos and Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi inaugurated the Spanish Embassy in Sana'a on April 19, 2006. The two nations have signed a number of agreements in various fields since then.

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LH 652	Frankfurt - Sana'a		
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Arrival Sana'a	21:15	21:20	21:05

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In brief

World Bank grants
Yemen \$50 million

Oct. 24 — At World Bank's headquarter in Washington signed a grant for "institutional reform" in Yemen by the World Bank, amounting to 50 million dollars and the World Bank to change funding for this program to the grant after it was allocated as a facilitate loan.

This grant will be allocated to support the components of the institutional reforms in the civil service and strengthening the institutional capacity to complete the implementation of the strategy of administrative reforms, including the use of the Fingerprint and image system.

The agreement was signed from the Yemeni side by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and on behalf of the World Bank Mr. Andrew Stone, the chief of reforms sector in the bank.

SANA'A

Yemen seeks more Japanese aids
and donors' pledges

OCT. 22 — Planning and International Cooperation Minister Abdul-Karim al-Arhabi is to visit Japan, South Korea and Malaysia next week for following up the results of the donors conference held in London last year in favor of Yemen.

The undersecretary of planning and international cooperation minister Hisham Sharaf said in a statement to Saba al-Arhabi will try to convince Japan to increase its support to Yemen, particularly after the election of Yasuo Fukuda, who has strong relations with Yemen, as Japan's new premier.

Fukuda was the head of the Yemeni-Japanese Friendship Association and greatly contributed to strengthening mutual cooperation relations between Yemen and Japan, according to the source.

LAHJ

UNHCR to set up housing units
for refugees in Lahj

Oct. 22- Governor of Lahj province Abdul-Wahab al-Dorra talked with the director of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office Sado Akram on the possibility of setting up housing units for Somali refugees in the Kharaz camp to be supported by the European Union.

Al-Dorra expressed the province's readiness to provide necessary assistance for establishing 300-apartment block for refugees.

Al-Dorra and Akram also discussed the conditions of refugees in the Kharaz camp and services being provided by UNHCR and the province to refugees.

Hodeidah

Students of French
Nimes institute visit Yemen

Oct. 23 — A delegation of French students from Nimes Agriculture Institute arrived on Monday in Sana'a to pay a visit to the agriculture institute in Sordod region, Hodeidah province.

They would apply some scientific application in field of agriculture within the framework of Yemeni-French agricultural cooperation program.

Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation Ibrahim Hajari held a meeting with the delegation and got acquainted with goals of the two-week delegation's visit.

Hajari said that the ministry would offer all facilities to the delegation to do its tasks as that would enhance experiences between the two countries in agricultural sector.

In 2005, a sister agreement was signed between the two institutes to enhance scientific cooperation between them.

The agreement aimed at developing curriculum of Sordod Institute and offer technical assistance to the institute and experience in field of livestock wealth and water management, as well as improving training means.

Random excavations in the Old City
aren't tailor-made, residents complain

By: Hamid Thabet

SANA'A, Oct. 23 — The General Assembly to Protect Ancient Cities has received grievances from residents in Old Sana'a complaining about the poor condition of streets beside the historic Al-Kabeer Mosque.

Their grievances regard carelessness and random construction that have destroyed the streets of the Old City located at the heart of the capital of Sana'a and declared a World Heritage City by the United Nations.

The construction, which began earlier this year, was supposed to fix Old City entrances and streets damaged during the rainy season.

"During Ramadan, Al-Mustaqbal Company committed to take over the streets of Old Sana'a," National Assembly member Ahmed Salah said, "but unfortunately, the job done up until then wasn't tailored."

Moreover, "There was no supervisor to oversee the project and when they were asked to come and oversee it, they ignored it."

Salah added, "Residents in the Old City of Sana'a should stop this project before it destroys whatever is left. The old project was better in comparison to the new one because it was a perfect job. Anyone can see the difference and tell which is better."

He continued, "Streets were broken and dug up randomly and pipeline wasn't done incorrectly, which messed up the streets' appearance."

Additionally, "The differences in size and thickness — which is the most important part of a sidewalk — are clearly noticeable and have made the street unbalanced," Salah concluded.

According to one Old Sana'a resident, "This will cause environmental damage, especially when it becomes a place for excavation, rainwater collection and garbage."



The photo shows the random constructions destroyed old city

The same resident further noted, "The construction workers were the worst thing because they didn't have any instructions to do their work properly. Moreover, there has to be enough cement in order to make the street and the sidewalk last, but there was more sand than cement, which will cause cracks in the near future."

Al-Mustaqbal Company carried out the project for YR 34 million. "Completion, which had to be done on many parts of the project, cost YR 1.75 million, but nothing is done. Moreover, materials cost YR 4.55 million for painting sidewalks with special paint and placing water pipes where they wouldn't be seen, as well as covering the ground with cement, but unfortunately, none of this has been completed," Salah said, noting that an investigating committee will look into the complaints on Oct. 24 and "discover the truth."

Ahmed Al-Wareth, deputy manager of the General Assembly to Protect Ancient Cities, stated, "We stopped workers from continuing the work since the first day of Ramadan (September) due to carelessness." Nevertheless, neighborhood resi-

dents are angry at seeing their old homes destroyed.

However, Esam Badran, manager of contracts administration as well as project manager, stated firmly, "I didn't receive any grievance and I don't know anything about what's going on... All I know is that people there want everything done like they want. We'll send an engineer this coming Saturday to oversee the project."

The UNESCO-preserved site of the Old City of Sana'a is the largest preserved old city in the Arab world. It's one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, according to Yemeni legend, possibly as early as the second century B.C. Once an Arab center for Christians and Jews, the city was converted to Islam in 632 A.D.

Surrounded by ancient clay walls standing six to nine meters (20 to 30 feet) high, the Old City is a wonderland of more than 100 mosques, 12 hammams (baths) and 6,500 homes. Dating back to the seventh and eighth centuries B.C. when the city was a prominent and important Islamic center, most buildings were constructed of brick and dark basalt stone.

MPs intervene to stop tribal
conflict between Ibb and DhamarBy: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For Yemen Times

IBB, Oct. 23 — Yemen's Parliament has agreed to form a parliamentary committee headed by Member of Parliament Ali Al-Amrani to investigate an incident in which Al-Hada' locals broke into Ibb governorate's Criminal Investigation prison and killed a local resident under investigation.

The decision came after nearly 200 citizens of Ibb city marched in protest, joined by dignitaries and social figures, including MPs representing Ibb city, who participated to condemn the attack.

Sources told the Yemen Times that armed residents of Dhamar province went to Ibb last Sunday following the

murder of Gen. Mohammed Nasser Al-Sa'eedi of Al-Hada' district in a land conflict. They located the perpetrator, father of six Salah A. M. Al-Ra'wi, who had been arrested and was being held at Ibb's Criminal Investigation Prison. They subsequently broke into the prison and killed Al-Ra'wi by stabbing and shooting him.

The source also added that Al-Ra'wi, who was from the village of the same name in Ibb governorate, surrendered to the Jibla district security office after murdering Al-Sa'eedi in a land conflict occurring between them in Ibb.

As a result, security authorities detained numerous Al-Hada' locals, prompting sit-ins to demand their release under the pretext that they took

revenge upon the perpetrator.

A statement issued by Al-Hada' locals accused Ibb security bodies, represented by the Criminal Investigation office and prosecution, of attempting to change the evidence and detaining witnesses during verification. It further accused them of falsifying reports and detaining numerous innocent locals from Al-Hada' district.

The secretary-general of Dhamar governorate's local council gave a speech at the governorate's arena declaring that there are presidential directives to form a committee to release the detainees and end the issue. This is in lieu of calming down Al-Hada' tribes and not inciting them to continue conducting sit-ins.

Volcanic activity still
present on Jabal Al-Tyer

By: Almidad Dahesh Mojalli

SANA'A Oct. 23 — An official at the General Authority for Developing Yemeni Islands confirms that steam, smoke and lava continue rising, although more weakly, on Jabal Al-Tyer Island.

Yahya Al-Kayna'e, general manager of the authority, reported to 26 September newspaper that two volcanic recording stations on Kamaran and Al-Zubair islands will be linked directly with the one in Dhamar.

Al-Kayna'e indicated that the authority has nearly completed its report on the Jabal Al-Tyer volcano, as well as finalizing the national plan to face disasters and incidents on Yemeni islands.

He noted that the authority will hold three workshops to discuss the plan in collaboration with concerned authorities in Hodeidah, Mukalla and Aden.

Regarding studying the volcano, Dr. Mohammed Al-Kadasi says some steam and gases continue rising on the island, but this is normal as deep crevices widen.

He added that volcanic activity will continue, but at different strength due to

the island's location, explaining that strength of activity depends upon the ascendance of lava from the bottom of the sea.

Geologists note that numerous seisms occur during a volcano's ascent from the earth's inner layers and these seisms can be recorded before the ascendance of lava

The recording stations, which were established following the Jabal Al-Tyer volcano, have shown that seismic tremors continue, meaning that volcanic activity remains present on the island. If volcanic activity continues at its current strength, the possibility of volcanic eruption spreading to mainland Yemen is weak, as the current area is considered the discharge point for any potential power existing within the earth.

Al-Kadasi notes that Yemen has two volcanic districts, the first of which are mainland fields represented by Sana'a, Amran, Marib, Sirwah, Dhamar, Rada'a, Bir Ali, Aden and including Socotra. The second type is Yemeni islands like Jabal Al-Tyer, Hanish Island and other Red Sea islands. As long as volcanic activity begins

out in the middle of the Red Sea, such as on Jabal Al-Tyer Island, the possibility of expansion to the Yemeni mainland is remote unless it coincides with strong tremors in the abovementioned locations.

Al-Kadasi adds that volcanic activity on Jabal Al-Tyer Island may produce mainland activity seen in increased steam, sulfur and other gases in Dhamar's Isbil and Al-Lissi mountains.

He points out that although volcanic activity in Yemen has its own specific locations, any future tremors may raise up lava in any weak rocky region influenced by such tremors. "Thus, we recommend focusing on any tremors throughout Yemen, recording them and dealing with them as the tremors following the Jabal Al-Tyer volcano."

He added, "The Geological Survey Authority has integrated seismic and volcanic recordkeeping into the tasks of Dhamar's seismic record center."

The Jabal Al-Tyer volcano erupted Sept. 30, killing at least eight Yemeni soldiers on a military base established on the island since its 1996 conflict with Eritrea over nearby Hanish and Jabal Zuqar islands.

Sana'a hosts 24th
International Book Fair

SANA'A, Oct. 23 — The 24th international Book Fair was launched in Sana'a last Monday, October, 22. The fair will last for the period from October, 22 to November, 2 with participation of 270 local and international publishing houses as well as 14 governmental parties coming from different Arab countries participating with more than 300,000 titles in different cognitive fields.

Worth-noting, several morning activities were staged for many Yemeni and Arab writers delivering cultural seminars and lectures during the days of the fair.

However, the Head of the General

Book Authority, Dr. Faris Al-Saqqaf, said that fair will experience the announcement of numerous projects in the field of book in Yemen. Additionally, at the level of the mutual Arab work, they will announce the admission of the Yemeni Publishers Union to the Arab Publishers Union.

The General Book Authority will start implementing the practical steps concerning the project of the Greater National Library at the cost of US\$ 40 millions. It will also announce the future steps of the project of the national program for libraries spanning the provinces of the republic.

Gulf of Aden crossing
claims up to 66 lives

ADEN, Oct. 23 — Up to 66 people drowned Sunday in the Gulf of Aden after smugglers forced them overboard off the coast of Yemen, the U.N. refugee agency said Tuesday.

"The tragedy involved two smuggling boats that left the Somali coastal town of Bossaso on Saturday with 244 people aboard, mostly Somalis and Ethiopians. The two vessels reached the Yemeni coast off Hawrat Al-Shatee on Sunday," UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmon said.

He quoted survivors as saying, "Passengers were forced into deep water and many drowned."

A total of 28 bodies were buried on the beach, while 38 (29 Ethiopians and nine Somalis) remain missing.

While most arriving to Yemen are Somalis and Ethiopians, recent reports are that Kenyans, Ugandans and Tanzanians also are waiting in Somalia to make the voyage.

"Survivors of the weekend tragedy said the crew of one of the crowded boats had beaten passengers harshly during the voyage, injuring several. After being forced into deep water off the Yemeni coast, a total of 178 people managed to make it to shore," Redmon added.

Some reported being robbed by Yemeni military personnel. Aid workers arriving on the scene provided food and water before transferring the group to UNHCR's Mayfaa reception center.

African refugees registered at UNHCR's reception center declared that they left their country due to conflict, arbitrary killings, threat of detention, drought and lack of work. Many

others said they left their home country to join relatives and family members in either Yemen or Saudi Arabia, citing worsening security in their homeland.

So far this year, more than 20,000 have made the perilous voyage across the Gulf of Aden in boats operated by ruthless smugglers operating from Somali ports. At least 439 people have died this year and another 489 are missing and feared dead.

In 2006, some 26,000 people arrived in Yemen after crossing the Gulf of Aden. Yemen has worked closely with UNHCR and provides prima facie refugee recognition to Somalis. Nevertheless, the numbers show no sign of slowing, despite efforts on both sides of the gulf to warn people of the dangers involved in dealing with smugglers.

Over the past year, UNHCR has stepped up its work in Yemen under a \$7 million operation that includes additional staff, increased field presence, more assistance, providing additional shelter for refugees at Kharaz refugee camp near Aden and training programs for coast guards and other officials.

Additionally, the U.N. refugee agency is planning to expand its presence along the remote 300-kilometer-long coastline by opening two additional field offices in 2008.

UNHCR and other partners have set up information projects on the Somali side to warn people about the dangers, but many of those fleeing say conditions in their homeland are so bad that they have nothing left to lose and are willing to take the risk.

Children mark International Day
to end Violence Against Children

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

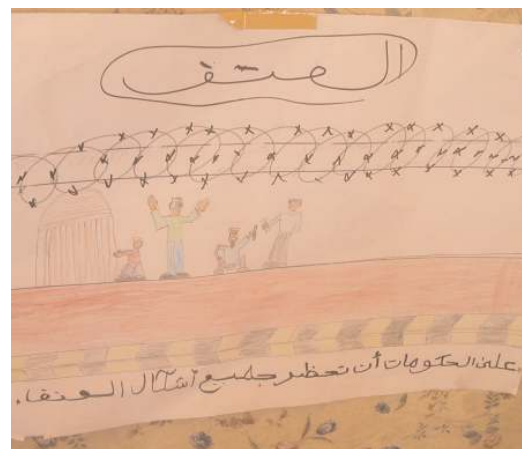
SANA'A, Oct. 24 — Nearly 2,200 Yemeni children participated in activities marking International Day to end Violence Against Children. They called on the Yemeni government to stop violence against children and to limit such violence.

Children from Sana'a, Aden and Lahj's Kharaz refugee camp denounced all forms of violence, especially against children.

Activities included a display of awareness cartoons by children reflecting United Nations recommendations, as well as discussions, holding a march, music performance and doing radio and television interviews.

Save the Children-Sweden arranged the International Day to end Violence Against Children in cooperation with Aden's Safe Childhood Center and Shawthab Development Center and the Democracy School in Sana'a. Children in these organizations participated in the occasion with various activities.

Shawthab Development Center launched its activities with a film for a child named Ala'a Al-Ariani, focusing on violence children are exposed to on the streets, as well as that caused by early child marriage. Additionally, chil-



Through their paintings, children asked the Yemeni government to end violence against them.

dren sang songs related to the occasion. Through their paintings, other Shawthab children asked the Yemeni government to activate laws already available and to make a law punishing those who outrage against children.

The children's exhibition was the outcome of nine days of workshops in Sana'a, Aden and Hajjah governorates. The child painters highlighted study recommendations by the U.N. secretary-general.

Maryam Al-Shawafi, secretary-general of Shawthab Development Center, added that three singing skits will be shown soon talking about how to protect children from sexual abuse, as well as an animated television film about the danger of children carrying weapons.

Turkey masses more troops as raids in Iraq confirmed

By Thomas Grove

CIZRE, Turkey (Reuters) — Turkish warplanes and troops attacked Kurdish rebels inside Iraq this week, security sources said on Wednesday, but Ankara wants to hold back from any major incursion for now and give diplomacy a chance.

Turkey moved more troops to the mountainous border, keeping up pressure on Baghdad to honour promises to crack down on an estimated 3,000 rebels of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) who use the region as a base.

Security sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed a series of sorties between Sunday and Tuesday evening in which Turkish warplanes flew 20 km (13 miles) into Iraq and some 300 ground troops advanced about 10 km.

“Further ‘hot pursuit’ raids into northern Iraq can be expected, though none have taken place so far today (Wednesday),” a military official said.

Thirty four PKK rebels were killed in the sorties, he said, adding all Turkish troops involved in the operations were now back in Turkey.

But Abdul Rahman Jaderji, a PKK spokesman in northern Iraq, told Reuters there had been no direct fighting between the two sides since clashes on Sunday in which 12 soldiers were killed.

He said Turkish troops had been shelling areas of northern Iraq, but little new shelling had been reported on Wednesday.

Baghdad has pledged to act against the rebels. A Turkish official on Wednesday quoted Iraqi President Jalal Talabani as saying Iraq might

hand over PKK militants to Turkey. Talabani had previously ruled out any such move despite Turkish appeals.

The official described as a “final chance” for diplomacy the planned visit to Ankara on Thursday of an Iraqi delegation headed by National Security Minister Shirwan al Waeli.

The lira currency firmed to 1.2100 against the dollar on the back of Talabani’s reported comments.

Reinforcing

Washington and Baghdad fear a major Turkish incursion into northern Iraq could destabilise the whole region. But Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan’s government is under heavy public pressure to take tough action, especially since Sunday’s deaths.

Ankara is sceptical about Baghdad’s ability to crack down on the PKK in northern Iraq, where the central government has little clout. And the publication of photographs said to show eight Turkish soldiers captured by the PKK has added to pressure on Ankara to act.

“We are reinforcing our troops near the border at Silopi and Uludere with men drawn from other parts of the country,” a military source told Reuters in southeast Turkey on Wednesday.

Turkey, which has NATO’s second biggest army, has deployed as many as 100,000 troops, backed by tanks, F-16 fighter jets and helicopter gunships, along the mountainous border in preparation for a possible large-scale strike.

Ankara blames the PKK for the deaths of more than 30,000 people since the group launched its armed campaign for an ethnic homeland in southeast Turkey in 1984.



Turkish soldiers take part in a military exercise near the southeast Turkish town of Cizre, some 50 km from Turkey’s Habur border gate to Iraq, Oct. 24.

Turkey’s National Security Council comprising political leaders and army top brass met on Wednesday in Ankara to mull possible economic measures against the Kurdish administration of northern Iraq over its continued failure to tackle the rebels.

“The prime minister has indicated this meeting could produce economic sanctions, for example, cutting off electricity to northern Iraq or the closure or slowing down of traffic at the Habur border gate,” said Suat Kiniklioglu, an AK Party lawmaker.

“We have gained a bit more time to think about what actions to take and consider the implications of any action. There is a growing understanding in the United States and Europe of Turkey’s legitimate right to deal with the PKK in Iraq.”

Northern Iraq depends heavily on Turkey for power, water and many food supplies. Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani has infuriated Turkey by refusing to act against the PKK. He has said his peshmerga fighters would resist any Turkish incursion.

California fires force mass exodus

Al-Jazeera — About 500,000 people have been evacuated to temporary shelters in southern California as wildfires rage out of control across the state.

More than a dozen fires blazed from north of Los Angeles to the Mexican border 240km south, destroying more than 1,500 buildings, blotting out the sun with smoke and raining ash on the streets.

Most of the destroyed homes were in the southern end of the state near San Diego, where three major wildfires burned unchecked.

The flames, fanned by fierce desert winds, claimed their second victim as they burned for a third day.

Deaths

Officials said an unidentified civilian had died of burns in Santa Clarita north of Los Angeles on Tuesday, the second reported death after the body of a 52 year-old man was found on Sunday.

Dozens more have been reported injured, including 16 firefighters.

Walls of flame spread quickly from mountain passes to the coastline as dozens of new blazes threatened to engulf more buildings.

Al Jazeera’s Kelly Rockwell, reporting from Rancho Bernardo in South California, said in some areas, the fires were raging out of control.

She quoted one official as saying all firefighters could do was to get out of

the way of the fires in one district.

Kirk Humphries, San Diego Fire Captain, said: “If it’s this big and blowing with as much wind as it’s got, it’ll go all the way to the ocean before it stops.”

“We can save some stuff but we can’t stop it.”

Upper hand

Officials were hoping that winds would ease and humidity would rise allowing them to gain the upper hand.

Rockwell said that in some areas, the winds had been starting to die down as of Tuesday evening, but hotter temperatures and fierce wind were forecast.

Hotter temperatures and hot Santa Ana winds blowing in from the desert at up to 105kph were expected to last at least until Wednesday afternoon.

The fires were exploding and shooting embers in all directions, preventing crews from forming traditional fire lines and severely limiting aerial bombardment, officials said.

Thousands of evacuees, as well as horses and family pets, sought shelter at fairgrounds, schools and community centres, with the biggest gathering of up to 10,000 at the Qualcomm football stadium.

Rockwell said some evacuees were staying with church groups and strangers who had opened up their homes.

State of emergency

Arnold Schwarzenegger, California’s governor, declared an emergency in most parts of the state, saying that 68,000 homes were threatened statewide with at least 18 firefighters injured among the 6,000 manning the fire lines.

“We have had three things come together — very dry areas, very hot weather and a lot of wind,” he said. “This makes the perfect storm for fire.”

But he said the response to the fire had been very quick unlike previous calamities.

Schwarzenegger also asked George Bush, US president, to upgrade the wildfires to a “major disaster”, which would trigger federal help.

State officials estimate that the fires have covered at least 1,510 sq kilometres and have caused several hundred millions of dollars in damage.

Katrina lessons

Early on Tuesday, George Bush, the US president, declared an emergency in the state and authorised the Federal Emergency Management Agency to co-ordinate disaster relief in seven affected counties.

“All of us across this nation are concerned for the families who have lost their homes and the many families who have been evacuated from their homes,” he said.

China launches moon orbiter with patriotic blast

By Royston Chan

XICHANG, China (Reuters) — China launched its first moon orbiter on Wednesday amid a blaze of live-to-air patriotic propaganda celebrating the country’s space ambitions and technological prowess.

The Chang’e One orbiter lifted off from the southwestern province of Sichuan at 11:05 a.m. BST. Barring technical failure, it will reach its lunar orbit on November 5 and spend more than a year scanning the lunar surface in preparation for an unmanned moon vehicle planned for 2012 and a manned landing in future decades.

Chinese television broadcast the event more or less live, and senior leaders were present to witness the country’s latest feat in space.

A Beijing control centre called the launch a “complete success”, the Xinhua news agency reported.

A torrent of state media reports has celebrated Chang’e One, named after a mythical Chinese goddess who flew to the moon, as visible proof of the country’s growing strength.

“Without a doubt, the launch of the Chang’e One will again show the world that Chinese people have the willpower, confidence and ability to constantly scale the heights of science and technology,” said a commentator on the Sina Web site (news.sina.com.cn).

The patriotic upswell was echoed by thousands of space enthusiasts, tourists and reporters from across the country who crowded slopes and viewing platforms near the small city to watch the launch, cheering as the rocket disappeared into the clouds leaving a ribbon of smoke.

“I’m very happy. The Chinese people are really great,” yelled a local man surnamed Wu as the Long March 3A rocket heaved the 2,300-kg (5,071-pound) orbiter skyward.

Thousands of villagers in a 2.5-km (1.6-mile) radius of the site were moved before the launch — a reminder that in this country expensive, world-challenging technology sits next to dirt-floor hardship.

Great significance

“This has important significance for

China’s space programme development, in particular technologically,” said Chan Kwing-lam, a Hong Kong-based expert in solar physics, who will study data sent back by the orbiter.

Chan said the feat would help China catch up technically with Japan, which launched its own orbiter last month.

Beijing’s space plans have faced increasing international scrutiny. Fears of a potential space arms race with the United States and other powers have mounted since China blew up one of its own weather satellites with a ground-based missile in January.

Beijing has said that its intentions are peaceful.

“China will not be involved in a moon race with any other country and in any form”, the chief commander of the orbiter project, Luan Enjie, told Xinhua news agency on Wednesday.

But officials have also left little doubt they want to show the world that their country’s capacity for developing home-grown technology is rising along with its economy.

President Hu Jintao told a Communist Party Congress last week that encourag-

ing “homegrown innovation” would be a focus of state policy in coming years.

China is jostling with neighbours Japan and India, as well as longtime space powers the United States and Russia, for a bigger presence in outer space.

In 2003, China became only the third country — after the United States and the then Soviet Union — to launch a man into space aboard its own rocket. In October 2005, it sent two men into orbit, and it plans a space walk by 2008.

As well as Japan, India too is planning its first unmanned mission to orbit the moon in 2008, when the United States also plans to launch a lunar orbiter.

Scientists behind China’s moon effort have been careful to lighten their confidence with warnings that space exploration has always been risky and success is not guaranteed.

“We’re convinced of our ability to successfully realise satellite exploration of the moon, but on the other hand there is this invisible pressure and anxiety”, Ouyang Ziyuan, the project’s chief scientist, told Outlook Weekly.

Baggage of past dogs Pakistan probe into Bhutto blast

By: Simon Cameron-Moore

KARACHI (Reuters) — The baggage of Benazir Bhutto’s past dogged a probe into last week’s assassination attempt against her that killed 139 people, as Pakistani officials said the police officer in charge had been forced to step aside.

The chief investigating officer, Manzoor Mughal, opted to take leave, according to Interior Ministry spokesman Javed Iqbal Cheema, after Bhutto complained that he had been present when her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was tortured while in custody in 1999.

Members of Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) had also criticised Mughal’s handling of the crime scene after a suicide bomber, or possibly two, attacked her homecoming procession in Karachi on Friday.

Government officials say the attack was carried out by Islamist militants linked to northwestern tribal areas where al Qaeda and the Taliban are based.

But Bhutto has sown seeds of mistrust by saying she had informed President Pervez Musharraf of three



Security guards stand outside the entrance to Pakistan’s former prime minister Benazir Bhutto’s house at her hometown in Larkana Oct. 24.

influential members of the establishment involved in a plot against her.

The investigation has yet to make a breakthrough and, while some people have been picked up for questioning, no one directly involved in the attack has been arrested.

Musharraf granted an amnesty to politicians accused of crimes during the 1990s in order to allow Bhutto to return from eight years of self-imposed exile without fear of prosecution in graft cases against her.

But police were still raking over related cases.

Midnight knocks

On Monday and Tuesday night they raided the house of Zulfiqar Mirza, one of Bhutto’s most trusted aides, to arrest him over a murder in 1998, but Mirza was not at home.

“They come after midnight to harass us,” his wife Fehmida Mirza, a member of parliament for the PPP, told Reuters.

Mirza accompanied the former prime minister on her return to Karachi last week to help co-ordinate her security.

He is wanted in connection with the murder of former Pakistan Steel Mills chairman Sajjad Hussain, who was gunned down three days before he was due to testify before a panel investigating allegations of corruption against Zardari.

Zardari, who was nicknamed “Mr Ten Percent”, was imprisoned for eight years before being released in 2004,

five years after General Musharraf led a coup that overthrew then prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

While Bhutto and Musharraf have begun a rapprochement as part of a planned transition to civilian-led democracy, the opposition leader has plenty of enemies among Musharraf’s political allies.

PPP officials said the police action against Mirza was politically motivated.

“The police are victimising people in charge of Benazir Bhutto’s security, so that they go underground and can’t protect her, and thereby restrict her movement,” Jameel Soomro, the party’s media coordinator, said.

There is speculation that Bhutto and Musharraf could share power after a national election, and the United States is believed to be quietly encouraging their partnership.

The pair are seen as progressive, pro-Western leaders who will support NATO efforts to stabilise Afghanistan and fight al Qaeda militants in nuclear-armed Pakistan.

Musharraf, whose re-election by parliament while still army chief is the subject of continuing Supreme Court challenges, has promised to quit the army if he is granted a second term.

His position will be weakened after parliamentary elections due by early January unless the ruling PML does better than expected or finds new coalition partners.



The prepaid service by



When girls marry to pay parental debt

In Yemeni society, some girls are forced to marry older men so that their parents can pay off their debts. The marriage section of the personal affairs law states that the marriage contract is considered illegal if a girl is forced to marry or if she doesn't know about the contract; therefore, she has the right to refuse the marriage, but unfortunately, many women don't realize such right.

By: Fatima Al-Ajel and Iqbal Al-Hajjaj

Faiza Ahmed was 15 and uneducated when she had to marry a man the same age as her father, who had tax problems and debt. With no other income source except for his daughter, the neighborhood sheikh said he would help the father if he married her. "As the only solution to my father's problems, I agreed to marry - even if it meant losing my childhood and my life - in order to save him from jail," Ahmed explained.

Married for three years, Ahmed now has three children, but she still feels uncomfortable due to the significant age gap between herself and her husband. Lack of love increases the problems in her family.



Forcing young girls to marry much older men remains a problem, experts say. However, among the many miserable stories of girls forced to marry at a young age are some that began sadly but fortunately, ended happily. What follows are stories from both sides.

Haifa Omar was 10 when her father forced her to marry her cousin who was nearly 15 years older. Her wedding day was miserable. Although she didn't know what marriage meant, she knew she would leave her mother and travel to Sana'a to live forever, far away from her mother. "The entire way from Taiz to Sana'a I was crying that I wanted to go back to my mother. All of

my relatives and neighbors were crying too," Omar recalled.

When she arrived at her husband's, her room was full of toys and gifts and this calmed her down. "Frankly, my husband was too kind to me, treating me as his daughter rather than as a wife. This helped me to accept my new life."

After completing her studies with great support from her husband, Omar, also the mother of five, now is a public school teacher. "I appreciate my husband's patience throughout these years, especially when he faced criticism from his family. Many times, he encountered problems regarding why he let me continue studying. His parents wanted me to serve them as a servant, which was the purpose of the marriage," she expressed.

One of the main reasons parents force their daughters to marry at an early age is money, especially those families suffering poverty. When a rich man proposes to their daughter, they deal with him as a favorable transaction and attempt to convince themselves that in all matters, they and their daughters are the winners.

Alia Ali was in seventh grade when her father forced her to marry a Saudi man who paid her parents a lot of money. "I hated my husband during the first years of the marriage, but once I knew his character, I really loved him, especially because he always gives me whatever I want," she commented.

According to an Oxfam-funded study on early marriage conducted in Hadramout and Hodeidah governorates by the Women and Development Study Center, in cooperation with the Yemeni Network to Combat Violence Against Women, the main factor for early marriage is the spread of cultural orientations favoring early marriage, wherein many think Islam urges the practice.

A study of 1,495 couples revealed that early marriage for women is 52.1 percent, whereas men marrying at an early age comprised only 6.7 percent. The marriage age has increased over the past three generations from between ages 10 and 24 to between ages 14 and 70.

The study also discovered variations in marriage age according to geograph-

ical district.

For example, in Hodeidah, Hadramout and Sayoun, girls marry at age 8, whereas they marry at age 10 in Mukalla. Moreover, marriage age varies between urban and rural areas. It was found that the appropriate age for marriage is between 15 and 16.

Women ignore their rights

Attorney and activist Ishraq Al-Maqatri, manager of the advocacy and legal protection for women's rights project initiated by Oxfam-GB, notes that there's no clear law forbidding forced marriage, but according to the marriage section of the personal affairs law, the marriage contract is considered illegal if a girl is forced to marry or if she doesn't know about the contract.

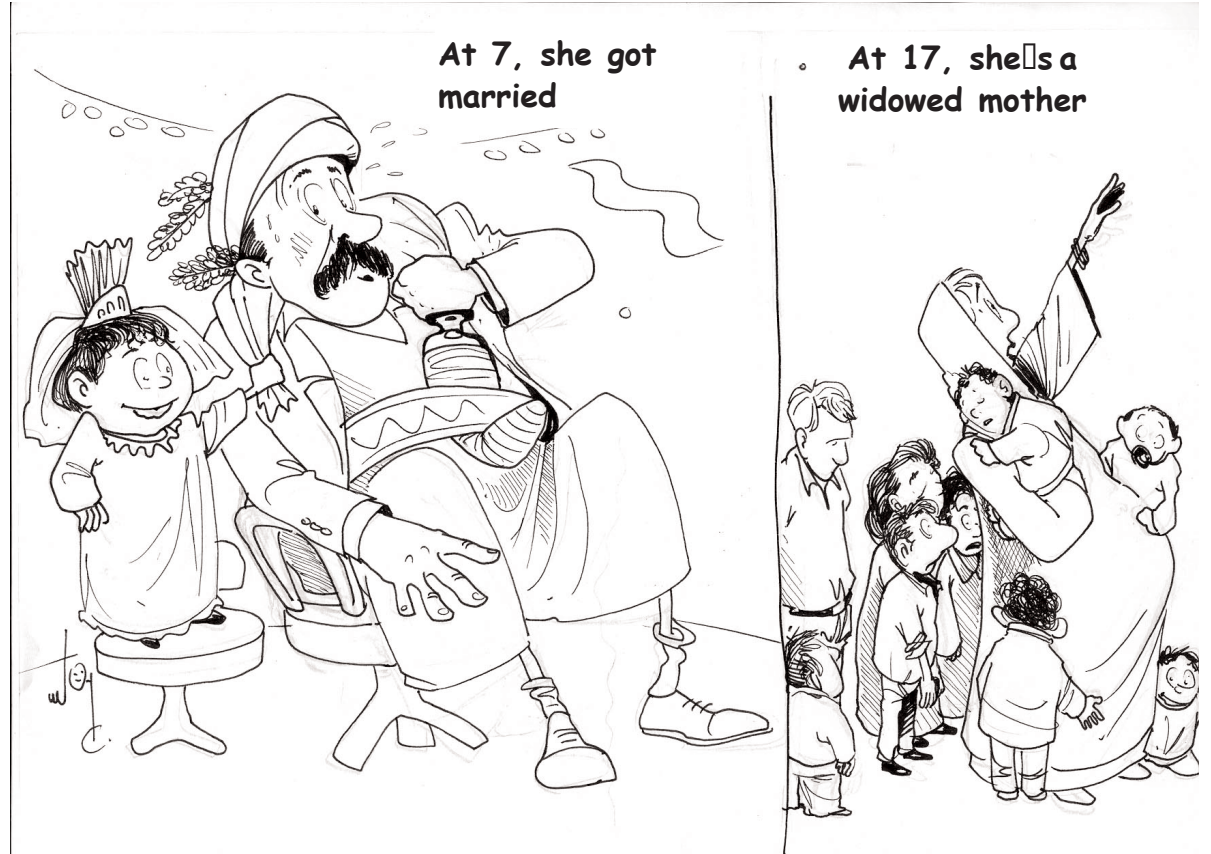
Al-Maqatri clarifies that the girl has the right to refuse or accept the marriage. Islamic instruction and Yemeni law provide women this right but unfortunately, Yemeni women are afraid to sue either their fathers or their husbands.

"Most women's problems and cases we handle, such as conditional divorce and alimony, basically stem from forced marriage," Al-Maqatri noted.

One of the main reasons parents force their daughters to marry at an early age is money, especially those families suffering poverty. When a rich man proposes to their daughter, they deal with him as a favorable transaction and attempt to convince themselves that in all matters, they and their daughters are the winners.

"For a long time, there was only one instance where a girl prosecuted her father who had arranged her marriage contract without telling her. Maryam won her case and married another, but she and her new husband now have fled their village to an unknown location due to the problems they faced after she brought her case against her father," Al-Maqatri recounted.

The advocacy and legal protection for women's rights project initiated by Oxfam-GB reports that their five governorate branch centers register approximately 30 women coming to sue their husbands due to violence or forced marriage. "These are the cases of women who can present their cases to judicial authorities," Al-Maqatri



adds.

Early marriage to escape spinsterhood

Some negative traditional customs control lifestyle in many areas of Yemen, especially in rural communities where most girls must marry at an early age to escape spinsterhood and often end up marrying the first guy who proposes marriage.

"In our village, girls who don't marry by age 15 are considered spinsters. My father accepted the first one who came to propose for my hand, even before I knew him," recalls Aziza Al-Maqatri, adding that, "My father is like many fathers who believe that a girl either must go to her husband's house or be buried in the grave," so I agreed to marry.

"Unfortunately, living with him was like living in hell because he didn't respect me - ever." Her husband was 55 when they married, but due to bad treatment, she got divorced after two months of the marriage.

The Sana'a University-affiliated Woman and Development Study Center conducted another study in March 2006 of the 1,495 couples, arguing that there's a huge age gap between such spouses.

According to the study, 48.7 percent of Yemen's population is under age 15, which means more than 50 percent of girls are likely to marry before age 18. Of the study sample, 381 said poverty

is the primary reason for child marriage while social traditions and values constituted another reason for the phenomenon, as parents prefer their daughters marry to avoid any immoral deviation.

Other reasons are that parents fear their daughters will reach the age of spinsterhood or they are lured into marrying their daughters at a young age by rich men proposing to marry them.

Approximately 32.91 percent of the study's male sampling held the view that another reason for early marriage is the financial situation of families who consider source of income and sufficient finances as a condition for marrying their daughters, even at an early age.

Some poor families merchandize their daughters for marriage as soon as they reach their teens, a fact confirmed by 388 of those surveyed, who pointed out that families offer their girls for marriage at an early age due to poverty.

Psychological problems

Psychologists believe this is a dangerous situation for girls to live in because forcing little girls to marry against their will causes numerous problems affecting them both physically and emotionally. Problems can affect their families too.

Psychologist Ibtisam Al-Shawqi explains that some girls deliberately

take an overdose of pills, preferring death rather than marrying at an early age, especially if the groom is very old, whereas others take pills to prevent possible early pregnancy.

Because some young girls like all of the various bridal gifts, they accept marrying at an early age, regardless of the responsibilities they'll have after marriage, and do so without advising their families.

"Most women's problems and cases we handle, such as conditional divorce and alimony, basically stem from forced marriage," Al-Maqatri noted.

Ameera Saif married at an early age but now she misses her childhood, as she became a mother early. "I'm raising myself while I'm raising my children. There are sometimes problems regarding the kids that I can't figure out or solve because I'm uneducated," Saif admits that her daughter died in an accident caused by her neglect.

Obstetrician Ahlam Al-Amam explains that young wives face numerous problems if they become pregnant at an early age. "Most of their first children die or are born with problems, whereas the young mothers themselves may die due to bleeding or bearing children at home," she points out.

Concerns over growth of cheating among students

There's growing concern that Yemen's education system is being undermined by students cheating on exams. Parents, teachers, universities and employers are calling for action to stop the practice and guarantee greater fairness.

The Yemen Times has been investigating this issue. Reporter and recent student Alia Ishaq answers questions regarding how widespread cheating is and who's responsible.

By: Alia Ishaq For Yemen Times

Cheating, or what students refer to as "helping each other," is a problem that occurs in nearly every school worldwide. It is a major complaint of teachers and educators who consider it a catastrophe that will affect generations, especially in Yemen where the number of students copying answers - and sometimes, whole exams - is worrying.

It's a strange phenomenon where some students spend hours creating new methods of cheating rather than simply studying. "We cheat with rulers, erasers, benches, our hands - even tissue paper!" Sana'a high school student Bushra Al-Basheri explains.

But the creativity doesn't stop there, as some students confess to writing answers on small slips of paper and inserting them in their shoes! Teachers also have witnessed students pulling

long slips of paper with the answers through their shirtsleeves or even writing them on money.

During my middle school years, opening the book to catch a glimpse of



Crowded class in one public school.

the answer or whispering to a friend was the best we could do. However, the increasingly sophisticated methods nowadays reveal the vast imagination and intelligence of some students, although misdirected in the wrong way.

So, what are the reasons for this phenomenon and what's the solution?

In the absence of a good education system, dedicated teachers and relevant curriculums, especially in public schools, cheating becomes a matter of survival.

Public school graduate Najla Al-

Hatami recalls, "There was always obvious negligence by our teachers, most of whom were unqualified, and to make matters worse, they were unsupervised by the school administration," which meant that a lot of average students therefore had no choice but to cheat in order to pass.

In 11th-grader Abeer Al-Ward's opinion, the intensity of homework and class syllabuses are the two main reasons for cheating, as she thinks they make it hard to find time to study and achieve good marks. In this case, many students cheat because it offers an easy way out and a shortcut to avoid the long hours of study needed to achieve good grades.

The nature of exams themselves is a reason for others. "Answers to exam questions usually have to be copied literally from the book, which as a result, lessens inventiveness and encourages copying the answers," says Alla Mohammed, graduate of a private Sana'a high school.

When asked, "Who's responsible?" students have different points of view. Twelfth-grader Mawadah Sharafudin believes students are under constant pressure, whether from their parents, who punish them, or from their teachers, who threaten to call their parents if they don't pass.

However, surprisingly, some students hold themselves 100 percent responsible. "When my dad pushes me

to get good marks, I should study rather than create a way to cheat," says 11th-grader Hassan Al-Jafari, who still admits to cheating on some occasions. He sometimes cheats using the book or allows fellow classmates to cheat from him because he hates refusing to help a friend.

Amat Al-Karim Abdulkader, principal of the private Yemen Modern School in Sana'a, believes that some teachers and employees clearly participate in the growing phenomenon, pointing out that many teachers overlook the fact that their students cheat. Moreover, "Some teachers deliberately help their students cheat as a way to

cover up their failure."

She believes some students also are raised unaware that cheating is wrong, as certain parents demand high grades regardless of how they are achieved.

"Some parents and teachers are setting a very bad example for our young people," she warns, "Students are like a blank page on which we grownups write what we want."

However, Zeyad, a high school Islamic teacher at Yemen Modern School, refuses to accept that some teachers are responsible; rather, he blames students who cheat and their parents, who lack education themselves.

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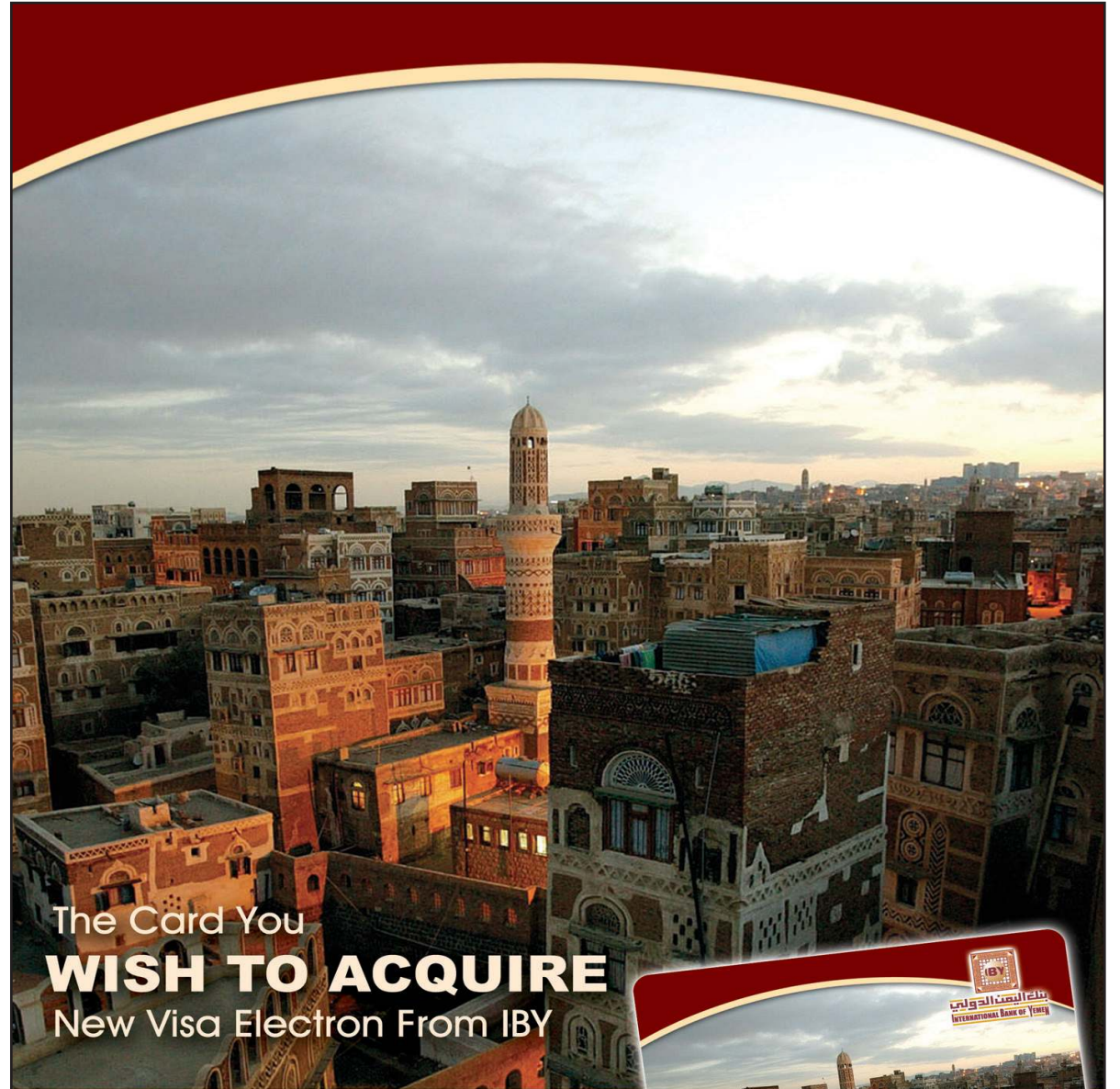
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Land degradation threatening farmers, says senior official



95 percent of Yemen's agricultural land was at risk of deterioration, threatening the government's goal of improving food self-sufficiency.

A senior Agriculture Ministry official has said he is worried about farmers' future livelihoods as agricultural land was at risk of degradation, but government funds were inadequate to tackle the problem and prevent creeping desertification.

Ali al-Dhameri, head of the Anti-Desertification Unit at the Forests and Desertification Control Department (FDCD) at the ministry, told IRIN that 95 percent of Yemen's agricultural land was at risk of deterioration, threatening the government's goal of improving food self-sufficiency. At present, Yemen imports about 75 percent of its food, according to government statistics.

"The future of farmers is at risk. Internal migration from rural areas to cities will increase as their [the farmers'] fields deteriorate," al-Dhameri said. He made the remarks after the publication on 16 September of a study entitled The Agricultural Map in Yemen, by researchers at the Agriculture Ministry. According to the study, about 85 percent of Yemen's agricultural land is deteriorating due to water shortages, partly caused by the widespread cultivation of qat (a mild narcotic requiring a lot of irrigation), and desertification.

The study said the area of fertile land (only about 13.6 percent of all Yemeni land) was shrinking due to construction work and desertification. Of the fertile land only about 20 percent (1.2-1.6 million hectares) was used for agricultural purposes, including qat cultivation.

Agriculture is the main source of income for the majority of people in Yemen as about 80 percent of the population live in rural areas. Farmers represent 54.1 percent of the country's workforce, according to the report.

Lack of funding to combat desertification approved a national plan to combat desertification but the plan has yet to be implemented for lack of funding, according to al-Dhameri. He said some US\$24 million was needed but his department's budget was six million riyals (about \$30,000) a year.

He said his department had been trying to increase the budget to 70 million riyals (\$350,000). "This amount could help ease the problem. We would be able to make a lot of field visits and conduct studies on how to improve the situation of agricultural land. But this solution

remains partial. At present, we can't cover all areas of Yemen as our resources are limited."

"If no action is taken, the problem will grow as the portion of agricultural land diminishes. There will be a shortage of vegetables and fruit."

Al-Dhameri also said there would be a decrease in grazing areas and, as a result, livestock would be at risk. An

additional problem, he said, was soil erosion, with fields on hillsides constantly being eroded by torrential downpours. "Dams are designed and constructed randomly in a way that [adversely] affects agricultural land, instead of improving it. Wells are randomly sunk by farmers, and this depletes the ground water.

According to the report, southern, northern and eastern parts of Yemen,

including agricultural land and residential coastal areas, are exposed to accumulations of sand reaching over 100 metres in height.

Al-Dhameri said the problem had got progressively worse over the past four decades. Mismanagement of agricultural land, the expansion of cities, poorly constructed sewage channels, ground water depletion, unpredictable rainfall and other issues

related to climate change, were factors that had contributed to the country's land degradation.

Yemen ratified the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in 1996,

but the FDCD's limited resources have not been able to stem desertification.

Source: IRIN



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Security lost in the state of heightened security

We have to discuss the security issue in Yemen in a clearer way than what is perceived now. The approach to that are the questions being raised about the reasons behind current security deterioration. Do these reasons reflect disability or failure on the part of security authorities?

In both cases, disability of security authorities can be linked with the lack of facilities and equipment for the security apparatuses to perform their duty in a better way. The issue may be symptomatic of poor qualification of security leaders and their simple experience in the area. But, the failure of security authorities can be attributed to the nature of security policies applied in real-life situation, as well as the nature of goals the concerned authorities seek to achieve.

Due to its current situation, it is difficult for one to label Yemen among the countries, the affairs of which are run in conformity with the effective constitutions and laws.

For the majority of the world countries, the constitution and law are considered the basis for the daily business. The security apparatuses of many countries worldwide work according to the constitutions and do their job as stipulated by their states' laws.

The Yemeni state is governed by a comprehensive security system, which is concerned with controlling and dominating the country's affairs. The state's affairs are controlled by a type of security system imposed by higher security officials, who, at the same time, constitute the political leadership of the country.

For this reason, a country like Yemen is administered by power of

the majority and sometimes with the participation of power forces. In this case, the official security policies applied in Yemen are based on a list of personal interests (or the interests of influential persons). Consequently, ethics of the job as stipulated by the constitution are usually thrown in drawers.

Anyway, no one can say that the deteriorating security condition in Yemen is the result of weak performance of the security apparatuses. Instead, it is the product of unwise security policies that direct duties and goals of security institutions.

Yemen is a country rich with its security installations, but in several cases, the military institutions turn to behave as if they are affiliates to the security authorities. This has been very clear during most of the domestic wars when the army and other military forces were used for purposes other than those stipulated by the constitution. They join any tribal and sectarian conflicts, or any clashes for the sake of illegal plundering of lands.

In other cases, the armed groups, who have relations with influential persons and high-ranking officials, play a major security role, thereby violating the concerned law. Similarly, the official media call armed tribal groups and militants volunteers. These groups are delegated powers to kill innocent people and replace the security forces, which were formed by the law.

In all cases, the security matter in



By: Ali Al-Sarari

Yemen is run according to the administrative system of arbitrary orders, and not according to the concept of the security institutions that were formed and organized by the law. In the ideal states, the objectives, jobs and duties of security agents must

be exercised as stipulated by the law.

However, in the backward countries like Yemen, the administrative and disciplinary style for organization performances of security apparatuses is the basis of discrimination and inequality between recruits.

The main issue that concerns us here stems from a bitter fact, the core of which is the loss of security in the state of heightened security. The issue is embodied by the tragic consequences of the terrorist bombing in Marib that killed at least six Spanish tourists and two local tourist guides, and injured others.

According to the official statements by President of the Republic and Interior Minister, the authorities obtained information indicating the involvement of Al-Qaeda Organization in the bombing. But such information had nothing to do with identifying the suicide bombers.

Such allegations couldn't help beatify the image of Yemen and its security authorities that claim to explore intents of Al-Qaeda elements. Such behavior foolishly implies a historic and strong bond between security authorities and Al-Qaeda Organization in Yemen.

The use of terrorist groups in the domestic political conflicts is part of

the official security policy that remained employed by the authorities for a long time period, particularly after the government found itself obliged to fight with terrorist groups due to pressures by foreign forces such as the United States of America. The authorities haven't quit their mechanism of using the same armed groups while shaping their policies.

Also, they don't remain committed to a clear conduct when they declared their partnership with the United States of America in the war on terrorism. They demonstrated no clear stance during their fight with terrorism as they have been attempting to deceive both parties of the conflict: terrorism and the United States.

This is the primary reason that made the security authorities, which claim to know about all the intents of Al-Qaeda Organization, indifferent toward foiling Al-Qaeda terrorist plots. In the meantime, they exceptionally engaged themselves in fabricating dangerous and immoral security accusations against the journalist Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwan and the so-called the Houthi terrorist cell in the capital city. It is an evident fabrication and those who invent it can find no one to have faith in it. Loss of security in the state of heightened security is the result of invented security fabrications, which authorities are engaged in at the expense of real and authentic security measures.

Ali Al-Sarari is a Yemeni Journalist and a well-known politician. He is the head of the information department at the Yemeni Socialist Party.

Source: Al-Nass Weekly.

COMMON SENSE

A dying heritage

Those of us Yemenis who had a chance to experience the life that existed in this country in pre-Revolution days and in the hectic and highly materialistic world that has now enveloped our lives have often looked at their rapidly changing surroundings in bewilderment and now often wonder what happened?

What happened to the peace of the land, when one could literally criss-cross the country on foot and felt safe even if he was carrying a sac full of Maria Theresa thalers?

What happened to the serenity of the dawn hours, when the chirping birds and the crooning roosters were the only sounds one heard to as one admired the enchanting colors brought on by the slowly creeping blue sky and the sun rising above Jabal Nuqum to the East?

What happened to the hired shepherds roaming around the city of Sana'a to collect the herds of goats, sheep, cows and whatever livestock were kept by the vast majority of the city dwellers, who still felt that living an urban life did not mean deprivation from the delight of drinking fresh warm milk every morning and evening?

What happened to the refreshing walks that most of the residents of Sana'a took up the Mountain of Jabal Nuqum to have a breathtaking view of the vast open landscape of greenery intertwining with the architecture of the city that was stretched westward below them?

What happened to the city dwellers, who used to realize that they must live in harmony with their natural surroundings and conserve as much as possible of the beauty that only God can create with his infinite wisdom and mercy – for the love of mankind?

What happened to the hearty smell of breakfast meals in the Suq of the finest foul modammas that anyone can have along with the fried liver or kebabs of all kinds eaten with freshly baked bread in the marketplace or at home with the household gathered around the stone plate that beckons one to eat and savor slowly for there is no worry about the meal getting cold?

What happened to all the friendly salutes that one receives from the exuberant faces one meets up with while proceeding to work, reflecting a full possession of this world and all the rights to the enjoyment of a happy peaceful life without the slightest of care as long as one is assured that the family has its sustenance needs fulfilled for the day and tomorrow's needs haven't even come to mind yet?

What happened to the great sound of the Noon Prayers coming from the circular balconies that beautifully decorated the center of the towering minarets that truly evidenced Sana'a to be a city of God fearing people, who knew that if one kept God in mind all the time, God is bound to reward with all the blessings of a peaceful and carefree happy life?

What happened to the feeling of security one senses in this city of peace, where people simply put up a piece of cloth to signify that the stores were closed for lunch or prayers? Similarly what happened to the sense of security that made the people of Sana'a keep the doors of their homes unlocked, even if they were not home, because they were sure that their neighbors guarded their neighbors' homes more than they would guard their own?

What happened to the many scholastic "rings" that filled most of the bigger mosques of Sana'a where many of Sana'a's young men obtained their learning in poetry, letters, philosophy, theology and civil administration and even commercial dealings with a heavy taste of ethics and morals?

What happened to market practices that prevented merchants from cheating the customers or following cutthroat competitive practices that prevented equal access to markets and goods?

What happened to the creative artists who dished out beautiful poetry or prose that enhanced the guitarists to dish out beautiful melodies that none of the modern artists could match?

What happened to the beautiful garden towns of Rawdha, Hadda, Wadi Dhahr and all the other enchanting rural surroundings that modern urbanization is rapidly eating up without even allowing for breathing space between buildings?

Yes! What happened to the heritage we should have really sought to preserve as much as possible, because it did bring a lot of peace of mind to most people and assured them that they were at peace with their Creator, because they truly believed in Him and abided by all the mores and values he prescribed for his worshippers?

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

Be cautious of cement and plastic invasion

By: Badr Bin Aqeel

One of the most prominent titles associating with the traditional and contemporary civilization of Yemen, which calls for pride, is that this civilization knew how to deal with and benefit from clay/mud.

It mastered well the production of fascinating geometrical shapes and attractive decorations that speak about themselves with high pride and wonder. It is enough for the reader to be told by the Old Sana'a City and Shebam Hadramout about such striking features, as the Yemeni mud architecture constitutes a unique source for attracting tourists and visitors from different parts of the globe.

On more than one occasion, and during his visits to several cities rich with unique mud architecture, including the visit to Tarim City in Hadramout Valley, the President of the Republic called for maintaining mud buildings and sites in these cities. He also advised people to refrain from constructing concrete buildings, which, he believes, damage beauty of the ancient architecture.

Several symposiums and workshops on this respect have been organized, but no positive response was seen, particularly as there are no laws and regulations regarding the

maintenance of Yemen's ancient architecture and historic sites. In addition, a broad media campaign was launched with the aim of increasing public awareness about the significance and vitality of conserving mud architecture. This campaign highlighted civilized, aesthetic, cultural, tourist and economic values of the architectural sites scattered throughout the country.

The cement invasion that violated the mud cities and buildings appeared with an ugly face and intimidated us with its horrible teeth, and amid indifference at the long term, it will uproot our identity and originality.

The clay civilization was not only confined to the ancient times and stopped at a specific stage of history, but it is a kind of civilization, which the Yemeni man maintained and innovated in a way not staining its beauty and historic color. These facts embody the Yemeni man's ability to exercise creativity, retain the original heritage and master clay/mud construction.

This type of industry (Mud-brick Construction) helped the Yemeni man obtain a meritorious certificate as his work was appreciated by the Prophet Mohammed (Peace May Be Upon Him). While the Prophet Mohammed was reconstructing the Exalted Prophetic Mosque with mud and bricks along with his fellowmen including the Yemeni man Talaq Bin Ali, the Prophet said to his fellows:

"Let the Yemeni and mud alone. The Yemeni is the most skilled one among us in mud construction."

Another harmful and dangerous invasion experienced in our country is the plastic invasion. Our ancestors and forefathers had been using bags, baskets and some articles made of leather, cloth and the likes. By this, they maintained the environment tidy, clean and healthy. But the plastic invasion of today and its heavy use in our daily life, as well as its spread over trees and on the ground constitutes a terrible threat to the nature and man.

What is the solution? And, how can we eliminate this phenomenon? I by chance found an answer to these questions while reading the impressions of a German tourist, who recently visited Yemen. He said, "Yemeni is beautiful, particularly as it is rich with its ancient sites, heritage, topography, unique architecture, luxurious and clean hotels, diversity of meal dishes and availability of various services. But, the spread of plastic bags, waste of beverages and foods bothered me."

The strangest thing is that we don't know why some factories, specifically the ones producing cement, never care for conducting economic studies to benefit from them as one of neglected energy sources, which are offered for free. This will help Yemen get rid of such waste and maintain the environment

tidy and clean.

No doubt that this idea is feasible and worth-studying. It is nice for Yemen (Arabia Felix) to remain happy and proud of its mud architecture. It is good for Yemen to be free of cement and plastic invasion.

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily.

SKETCHED OPINION



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Europe's World

How Europe could be a force for good in the Middle East

By: Prince El Hassan bin Talal

“Payers not players” said Israel’s Ariel Sharon of the EU, and Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan agrees that Europe’s aid and investment spending is not what will bring peace to the region. He proposes an EU-backed Stability Charter that would give Europe a new and positive Middle East role.

The forging of the “new order” since the closing post-Soviet decade of the 20th century has left many nations questioning their own roles in the inexorable process of political and economic globalisation, and perhaps Europe, with its long history of political and cultural dominance, is the most at sea in all this realpolitik. Yet surely the continent that forged so many ties, both productive and painful, with the Middle East has a vital role as the facilitator of dialogue and development? Chris Patten, the EU’s former external affairs commissioner has pointed out how, just as the “reconciliation of France and Germany was the necessary and admirable European accomplishment of the 20th century, ... (so)... reconciling the West and the Islamic world, with Europe acting as a hinge between the two, is a major task for the 21st”.

European policy in the Middle East became the litmus test of a new common foreign and security policy after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Now, almost 30 years after the groundbreaking 1980 Venice Declaration in which the EU’s then nine member states expressed their support for Palestinian self-determination, surely the time has come to take stock of Europe’s involvement in the region, and to ask how Europeans can help to move it forward to peace and prosperity.

Many Europeans seem to share this belief, but as Brussels considers yet again how to enter the fray of talks it must respond to former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s scornful comment that in the region “you are payers, not players”. Some parties in Europe may have aligned themselves too closely with the United

States to command general respect, but the contribution that might still be made by a united European voice should not be underestimated. Similarly, the need for this voice to express a vision that crosses the boundaries of race and politics cannot be overstated.

Europe’s financial contribution to the Middle East has, of course, been consistent and impressive. Between 1995 and 1999, some €3.435bn was spent by it in the region, to which the European Investment Bank added a further €4.8bn in loans. From 2000-2006, Europe spent €5.35bn and the EIB approved €6.4bn in loans. This year, the European Commission has since January already committed €320m in Palestine alone.

But has Europe’s financial aid brought peace any closer? The Palestinian Authority has received more per capita aid than did post-war Europe under the Marshall Plan, but the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have scuppered any hopes of a broader regional Euro-Mediterranean framework offering a policy of dialogue and investment capable of making a real impact on the lives of millions. Project-based investment has had little effect on the peace process. From the Barcelona process, the Five Plus Five Dialogue, the European Neighbourhood Policy, to the Mediterranean focus of the OSCE, Europe’s well-meaning participation in peace and prosperity-building in the Middle East has lacked durability and vision.

It has become starkly obvious, therefore, that peace in the Middle East will not be born out of projects. Rather, it will emerge from a concept that respects identity and addresses existential needs. A stability charter to address the concerns of people in terms of land ownership, economy, demography and supra-national cooperation must form the core of future dialogue and investment. For peace to take root, long-term regional interests must overcome national agendas. It is this vital multilateral ethos that Europe must champion, so that division and disillusionment can be consigned to the history books just as they were in Europe after World War II.

It should in any case seem strange to us that the Middle East lacks a regional declaration of principles focused on human stability. Politics, economics and security dominate discussions, while culture, human dignity and human solidarity get scant attention. The Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG) of the Middle East Peace Process which emerged from the 1991 Madrid Summit and, which was shepherded by the European Union, is a prime example of a hopeful initiative that failed because it was not rooted in a vision of the future. Among its main activities were the Copenhagen ‘shopping list’ of projects and the MENA Economic Summits. The entire multilateral process, including REDWG, floundered in the quagmire of the Israeli-Palestinian stand-off after the election of Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud Government in 1996. Surely Europeans, above all, should appreciate that to weather political and economic storms, any attempt to build regional common policies must be based on more than investment opportunities.

A decade ago, the Jordanian government proposed to the American co-sponsors of the Multilateral Process two additional working groups. The five areas which they had defined – Refugees, Environment, Water, Regional Economic Development and Arms Control and Regional Security – seemed inadequate as an agenda for regional cohesion. The Jordanian government believed that Human Rights and Energy could not be ignored if true and lasting peace was to be achieved. Their response was that these were very sensitive issues, yet in the wake of 9/11 democratisation and human rights became priorities for a very different agenda.

As the Middle East lurches from crisis to crisis, it has become ever clearer that we need nothing less than a new regional order in which human security is underpinned by hard security mechanisms. This is the vision that will facilitate peace for future generations. The recent Arab League Peace Initiative marks an important step forward in regional thinking, but as Tony Blair has said, “principles without power is futile”. I believe a stability

pact for the region could help to match what was achieved a decade ago in the Balkans. An enforced template of international law is essential, and it must be one with which all state and non-state actors have to comply. Violators of international law must be made aware that the Middle East is subject to the same norms as other regions, and that the principles of democracy belong as much to her people as to those of more politically developed nations.

Time is running out for the Middle East as the fault-lines deepen and grow. Nowhere is the gap between rich and poor more apparent, while divisions between and within states seem to increase by the week. Meanwhile, civil society struggles to find a role in community and state decision-making. Regrettably, EU policy towards West Asia North Africa (WANA) often reinforces these divides by applying very different terms of reference to the haves and have-nots – European Neighbourhood Policy for the poor contrasts with the EU’s Gulf Cooperation Council dialogue for the rich.

The Middle East urgently needs support in creating a regional stability charter to encompass codes of conduct, goals for regional cooperation and the mechanisms of a regional cohesion fund to tackle under-development and fund the building of infrastructure. This international commitment to stability will require some brave steps from regional and non-regional players. The complementarities between countries rich in human resources and oil-producing states should be harnessed, while energy-derived investment must be diverted from the old markets of the West to the Gulf’s troubled hinterland. The ultimate result would be an intra-independent Middle East that fosters stability and nurtures growth.

The crisis-ridden Middle East region needs more than troops to end friction and suffering, and Europeans might well look close to home to find the sort of model we need. The Helsinki Process which emerged from the tensions of the cold war addressed basic security, economic and social concerns. Admirably, Helsinki held that a human dignity divide

between Europe’s peoples could not be allowed to endure. Recognition of cultural rights and humanitarian norms underpinned the activities of those brave and creative individuals who knew that a better future was not only possible but also essential. In all conflicts, human rights are among the first casualties, and in the Middle East the degradation of human dignity has now undone the conventions on civilians’ rights agreed over several generations. So we should look to the Helsinki Process to show us how to retrieve what has been lost.

A Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME) was called for in the Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel, yet now over a decade later that idea has disappeared from the agendas of governments both in the Middle East and Europe. The establishment of a CSCME based on the experience Europe accumulated and which led to the creation of the OSCE now needs the backing of powerful and committed allies.

With today’s emphasis on military action in the so-called war on terror, the need for a CSCME combined with a stability charter has become more urgent than ever. The CSCME must articulate mechanisms for enforcing regional peace. A regional matrix can be drawn up to help identify priorities through a three-pronged strategy based on energy and water policy, arms control and debt reduction. This process must inevitably involve us in the interlinked issues of our age, including the strategic dimensions of energy and global resource allocation.

In its 2003 European Security Strategy, the EU stated that “effective multilateralism” must form the core of Europe’s foreign relations’ mindset. Javier Solana added at the United Nations Security Council in September 2004 that without the framework provided by the UN, “international relations would amount to nothing more than destructive competition”.

The continuing crisis in the Middle East offers Europe an opportunity to act on these past declarations. Portugal’s EU presidency aims to renew EU foreign policy in the Mediterranean and Africa

following the eastward focus of the German presidency. In the words of the Portuguese: “We seek to develop a fresh approach towards the entire Mediterranean region. Its strategic relevance to the EU is clear. The instruments already at our disposal need to be properly applied, but there is a need to think beyond them” (emphasis in the original text). Foreign Minister Luis Amado has stressed the need for Europe to build closer ties with Arab nations and the wider Muslim world so as “to avoid an escalation of mistrust and resentment”.

Current EU initiatives at home as well as abroad will probably culminate during France’s presidency in the later half of next year. President Nicolas Sarkozy has already spoken of a “Mediterranean Union” modelled on Europe’s post-World War II peace and integration project, and although much clarification is needed of this Euro-Med “Union” and how it might fit with the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy, it looks the sort of initiative that could breathe new life and high politics into a now ineffective Barcelona Process.

Tony Blair’s new role as Special Envoy of the Quartet creates another “new” European protagonist on the Middle Eastern stage. His task is, to say the least, daunting and his mandate has yet to be defined. The end of mission report of the former UN Envoy, Alvaro de Soto on the intricacies of Quartet proceedings shows how difficult the peace process has become, and it seems obvious that Blair will have to include Hamas and Syria in any new discussion as a “West Bank First” policy is surely destined to the same fate as former peace plans.

Europe’s contributions to our region have been great. Funding from Brussels and from member states has helped to alleviate the suffering of many people while compassionate community-building efforts by European individuals and organisations have emphasised the true closeness of those who share a common Mediterranean history. It is vital that experience and commitment be framed in a vision for our region and that Europe’s heritage of hope becomes a model for the peoples of the Middle East.

The Haunted America

By: Naseem Javed

Countries are like little homes; they house a nation, hold ideologies and provide shelter and comfort to its people in hopes that the occupant will nurture better ideas for themselves and further flourish humanity. Such are primary desires and goals of most countries on this small planet. America is no exception.

For decades, billions of people around the world slept at night on empty stomachs amidst dreadful circumstances, often dreaming of the freedoms and liberties of America, which they likened to a great land, a paradise and a final destination point. The best and brightest of the world gravitated to the great USA in search of golden opportunities; in hordes they came, and en masse they settled. America became the nation which acknowledged greatness and provided the driving force to allow the dreams of small, ordinary people to take form and flourish. Free from restrictions, allowing grand expressions with extraordinary liberties, that no other nation in the history of mankind has been able to match at such a grand scale.

But currently, it seems that this home of the American nation has started to resemble that old mansion, elegantly pristine but known to be haunted, sitting at the end of that dead-end street where ghosts, mysterious apparitions and unexplainable signs have emerged. This planet, like an old street is already full of such haunted houses, which at times seem abandoned, lifeless and unable to give or receive neighborly warmth; factors so critical for any country on the global scene. But is America really haunted?

The Three Americans

We can easily divide the citizens of America into three key groups. The first group makes up the majority of the American population; the 70-80% of which live happily across the rich land; the nicest bunch who are content with their daily lives, sports, cheap tobacco and liquor, often oblivious to the affairs outside their own state, never mind the globe. Often challenged with the simple and basic choices between paper or plastic, smoking or non-smoking, they hardly vote, hold faith in their flag and their pres-

ident, and ask very few questions.

Secondly, the 20-30% of the population is comprised of first to few generation immigrants and their extended families that have settled primarily within urban sectors and have succeeded in commercial enterprise, focusing on growth. They make up a significant portion of the economic pillar in society, and are forced to keep a close eye on global affairs, which may directly or indirectly affect their ventures. They are active on the global scene.

Then there is an extremely small remaining percentage of people comprised of the administrative gatekeepers, residing within each state capital, overseeing the remainder of the population with specific agendas to lead the country. This power group has become so preoccupied with identifying an evil that exists outside its doors, that it has lost the capacity to identify any possible evil within.

These three groups of the nation are coexisting despite their three very separate directions. There is nothing wrong with this as similar breakdowns exist in majority of the other hundreds of nations.

Trillion Dollar mask

Can this badly damaged image of America be fixed today and by whom and at what cost? What must it include a new costume, a new mask or a new heart? These are very important underlying questions, but the biggest question remains; can an entire country be branded to the rest of the world in the same fashion as a breakfast cereal or laundry detergent? The answer is a flat no. Only the branding-circus would come up with such a fake, superficial, logo-centric slogan-happy attempt to rebuild a nation painted with banners and billboards. In reality, countries cannot be branded in such a simple process from the past; firstly, nations are already branded over decades and centuries by their histories and cultural interactions and exportable identities.

A global image is not in the hands of a polling company or controlled by a branding agency, rather, they take form in the minds of the global masses, who paint their own mental picture based on their own interpretation of a nation. Therefore, it demands an awesome force, as the global public will not be swayed by ad-campaigns, rather by the exuberance of sincere and honest truth and internal fixing

leading to an inviting charm. After all, this is how American image was built in the first place.

As a rule, if it has cost trillions to get where America is on global public opinion today, then it is easily understandable why it would cost a similar amount to fix the damages. Nations can only hope to improve their domestic issues first, before reflecting out to the world and preaching to the rest of the neighborhood.

In commercial terms, American brands have lost their luster at an alarming rate during the last five years, and are now in serious danger of being overpowered by brand new identities arising from all over the newly repositioned world. This super-accelerated nouveau-consumerism has all the making of this global shift increasingly permanent on brand image leadership, a position that the USA once proudly held. The future is clearly drawn out for new countries currently engaged in trying out this global-image-creation-wizardry with full force while the early signs indicate a major world-wide mega branding and global-image-repositioning shift.

How can this great nation housed in America immediately nurture harmony within, balance the out-of-touch extreme ideologies among republicans and democrats, educate its youth that is currently the lowest among G8 and slipping into the level of developing countries? It must have a nation that deeply engages in voting and really take care of its own people. Most importantly, it needs real guts and must once again re-learn to face the truth and move forward in the good, old-fashioned American style.

Come next Halloween, after all the trick-or-treating and childish pranks are over, the real hunt will start again, this time the masked people will beg for the votes at the doors, the voting will occur via untraceable digital wizardry and on that chilly November night, the complex electoral system will toy with American democracy. The big question now is whether the haunted house will turn full bloom or become scarier, as it engages in more unexplainable events and craves for more burnt offerings?

Naseem Javed, columnist, lecturer and world recognized authority on brand identity and global image repositioning. nj@njabc.com - www.abcnamebank.com.

The transatlantic index

By: Dominique Moisi

How should we assess the state of transatlantic relations nowadays? With a nod to Wall Street, we can say that the Alliance is up, Europe is flat, and the United States is clearly down.

The Alliance is “up” for one key reason: the warming of France’s relations with the US following Nicolas Sarkozy’s election as French president. For the first time since Charles de Gaulle established the Fifth Republic, France’s priority is no longer to live in opposition to the US.

The signs of this shift are profound, even spectacular. From a toughening of France’s position on Iran to a real warming of relations with Israel, not to mention symbolic gestures like Sarkozy’s summer vacation in America, or Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner’s arrival in Baghdad, this is a New France, one seriously considering a return to NATO’s integrated military structure.

France’s shift is the result of both political calculus and deeply felt emotion. For Sarkozy, the French are not anti-Americans, but simply anti-Bush. In his willingness to break with the past – in particular with Jacques Chirac’s legacy – and in adding a global spin to his “mandate for change,” Sarkozy is paving the way for the post-Bush America that will soon be here.

He knows that the “return of France” as an influential actor in Europe presupposes a France that is closer to America, which will automatically bring France closer to mention Poland and Italy. Emotionally, too, “Sarkozy the American, Sarkozy the doer,” who wants to be judged by his actions, tends to see himself as a Gallic

incarnation of the American dream. He is the son of immigrants, the outsider whose rise to the top is living proof of French openness.

In the US, too, the attitude towards the alliance with Europe has changed mightily. The failure in Iraq, the risk of an “Iraqization” of Afghanistan, and Russia’s newfound assertiveness have moved America from the arrogant diffidence that characterized most of Bush’s presidency to a rediscovery of the Alliance’s value.

America needs allies, and is not preoccupied by their potential independent strength. As one top American diplomat put it, “The last worry I have when I wake up at three in the morning is that Europe is becoming too strong.”

But rapprochement between France and the US should not hide other realities. First, in Afghanistan, NATO is in danger of suffering its first military defeat. Where will the new troops that are needed come from? And a key member of the Alliance, Turkey, may be about to embark in a dangerous military adventure in Kurdish northern Iraq.

Second, one cannot speak of NATO without making noting that the Alliance’s twin pillars – Europe and the US – are not in great shape. If Europe is “flat,” one reason is Sarkozy. He may be encouraging news for the Alliance, his European policy is a source of worry for Europe. While Sarkozy claims that Europe is his priority, his methods seem to contradict his intentions.

The difficult personal chemistry he has with German Chancellor Angela Merkel is reinforced by his constant attacks on the European Central Bank and its president, Jean-Claude Trichet. One cannot simultaneously defend the Alliance in the name of Europe and weaken Europe with fits of populism and economic nationalism.

Europe’s three key new leaders –

Britain’s Gordon Brown, Merkel, and Sarkozy – all belong to a generation that is no longer emotionally moved by the project of European integration. Their links with Europe – if they exist at all – are at best rational, not emotional. But will cool rationality be enough to create a European security pillar within the context of the Alliance?

As for America, it is “down” in terms of both “soft” ideological power and “hard” military power. The US remains by far the world’s strongest country, particularly in military terms, but it is confronted with fundamental questions about the use and utility of force at a time when power is relative.

Today, Americans and Europeans alike must demonstrate modesty. Unlike when the Alliance was created, a multi-polar world system has taken shape, in which the West’s demographic and economic share has fallen, and in which it must now compete with successful authoritarian models such as China or even Russia.

In this new context, solidarity is as crucial as ever. Opinion about the US remains largely negative in Europe, and will remain so at least until the US presidential election in 2008. Likewise, US perceptions of France and of Europe are only slowly improving.

It is only by respecting our common values and not exacerbating our differences that the West will be able to reinvent itself. The Alliance may be “up,” but its outlook remains uncertain.

Dominique Moisi, a founder and Senior Advisor at Ifri (French Institute for International Relations), is currently a Professor at the College of Europe in Natolin, Warsaw.

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Mandaeism: A religion in peril

About 106 Mandaeans were murdered in Iraq because of their religious beliefs, 207 kidnappings were reported along with 227 threats and assaults from 2003 to 2006, according to the Mandaeans Human Rights Report of 2007.

But who are the Mandaeans?

Yaniv Berman looks into the beliefs and persecution of one of the smallest faiths in the world.

Written By: Yaniv Berman,
The Media Line Ltd

With between 50,000-70,000 believers worldwide, Mandaism is one of the tiniest religions in the world; and if nothing dramatic changes soon, it is probably a matter of a few decades before it will vanish from the world.

In the past two millennia, the Mandaeans have resided along the banks of the Lower Euphrates and Tigris rivers (in southern Iraq) and along the nearby Karun River (Iran). The rise of Saddam Hussein to power and more so the civil war which followed his demise in 2003 have caused this tiny community to spread around the world and face one of the greatest threats to its existence.

Waiting for a Call

In 1992, 'Abd A-Razzaq Finjan Shamkhi, a communications engineer and a dissident, was under constant surveillance at the hands of the Iraqi security services. At one point he was arrested and faced the death sentence. Luckily for him, Shamkhi was released and escaped with his family from Iraq to Denmark. His arrest had nothing to do with his being a Mandaean. Saddam's security services persecuted him just as they did any other political dissident. But Shamkhi's relatives, who remained in Iraq, are now facing a completely different kind of persecution.

"I still have cousins and sisters there, in Falouja," Shamkhi says in an interview with The Media Line.

"They are in a terrible situation. Minorities and followers of non-Muslim religions are exposed to grave dangers such as murder, kidnapping, rape and forceful conversion of religion," he says. Shamkhi's family in Iraq was threatened with death if they did not convert. Some of them were bitten in the streets by local thugs for refusing to do so. The civil war in Iraq is causing many power cuts and most areas in Faluja, where Shamkhi's family lives, are disconnected from the telephone system. Shamkhi therefore has to wait, sometimes over a month, until he gets news from Iraq.

According to the "Mandaean Human Rights Report" of 2007, from 2003 through 2006, 106 Mandaeans were murdered in Iraq because of their religious beliefs. For the same time period, 207 kidnappings were reported, as well as 227 threats and assaults. In addition, there have been 41 displacements within Iraq and 33 forced conversions. According to the report, Mandaeans have fled their homes in response to threatening letters and their property was confiscated. Since Mandaeans have no voice in the Iraqi parliament and no direct connection to any member of government, the government has taken little action to protect them, the report added.

As a result of their persecution, over 90 percent of the Mandaeans had left Iraq in the past four years since the war in Iraq started.

Religious beliefs and rituals

The Mandaeans' monotheistic religion is one of the oldest in the Middle East. Followers of John the Baptist who do not recognize the authority of Jesus, the Mandaeans follow a religion which has strong ties to ancient Gnosticism.

The Mandaeans believe in a Supreme Being, Alaha. According to their holy books, Alaha deputed the governance of the material world - and even its creation - to regents. These were spirits, 360 in number, who sprang into existence as their names were pronounced by the Almighty, the tradition tells.

According to the Mandaean holy books, Adam was the first to receive the religious instructions of Mandaism. Their last great teacher was John the Baptist (Yahya), who was not considered

by the Mandaeans as a Christian, nor as a Jew.

The most important ceremonies in Mandaism are baptism and the "ascent of the soul" ceremonies.

Baptism takes place on Sundays. It consists of a threefold complete, a threefold "signing" of the forehead with water, a threefold draught of water and the crowning with a myrtle wreath. Baptism can take place only in flowing water, hence in rivers. All rivers fit for baptism bare the name Jordan (Yardane).

The other important rite is the mass for the dead, or rather the ascent of soul to the World of Light. It is a characteristic feature of the Mandaean religion to resolve the problem of death by firm belief in the after life of the soul. The ritual performances include ceremonial meals.

Hospitality

Living today in the United States, Esselle Hattom was born in Baghdad. A story which runs in his family goes as follows:

Back in the 19th century, Hattom's

According to the "Mandaean Human Rights Report" of 2007, from 2003 through 2006, 106 Mandaeans were murdered in Iraq because of their religious beliefs. For the same time period, 207 kidnappings were reported, as well as 227 threats and assaults. In addition, there have been 41 displacements within Iraq and 33 forced conversions. According to the report, Mandaeans have fled their homes in response to threatening letters and their property was confiscated. Since Mandaeans have no voice in the Iraqi parliament and no direct connection to any member of government, the government has taken little action to protect them, the report added. As a result of their persecution, over 90 percent of the Mandaeans had left Iraq in the past four years since the war in Iraq started.

great grandfather received a guest who he believed to be a Mandaean. After 2-3 days of feeding and sheltering him, he chanced to find out during a conversation with the visitor, that he was not a Mandaean and that he had in fact arrived at the wrong house.

"My great grandfather assumed this guy was a Mandaean and did not even ask him what his purpose was, or what his lineage was, but immediately treated him like he was a part of the household and did not enquire further," Hattom says.

According to Hattom, there is a very strong family sentiment within the Mandaeans.

"There is a very strong trust that Mandaeans have towards each other," Hattom adds.

Most Mandaeans today are refugees living in close communities, mainly in central Europe, Canada and Australia. Many also live in Syria and Jordan, countries bordering Iraq from which they escaped.

Hattom, 35, is an exception. Working in Rosetta Stone, a language teaching software company, Hattom is living in the U.S., isolated from fellow Mandaeans.

"I have to practice my culture by myself," he says.

Pacifism

The Mandaeans share a very strong belief in the sanctity of all life. They are extreme pacifists in the way they interact with each other and with the external community. There is a preference among Mandaeans to be vegetarians so as not to take a life of an animal, although eating meat is not considered a sin.

Their pacifism is also one of the main reasons why their religion is threatened. Most, if not all, Mandaeans do not carry any kind of weapon. Not having an armed organization to protect them in post-Saddam Iraq has turned them into easy targets to Muslim extremists, Sunnis as well as Shi'ites.

Today, only 5,000 Mandaeans are left in Iraq. Difficult economic circumstances make it hard for them to

escape, as well as a new reality which makes it almost impossible for them to obtain a refugee status.

"Western governments by and large turned a blind eye to the Mandaean cause," Hattom says.

"For years and years we struggled in Australia to have Mandaeans recognized as a persecuted minority and the conservative government in Australia was basically not interested in recognizing them. Even countries like the U.S., which has been instrumental in causing the massive catastrophe in Iraq, only agreed to take in 7,000 Iraqi refugees per annum, and those people who the U.S. is taking are mostly Kurds,

who work directly in assisting the Americans in trying to maintain the situation in Iraq," Esselle explains.

Mandaeans in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The situation of the Mandaeans in Iran is better than in Iraq, but only when it comes to their personal security.

"Their sons and daughters are not allowed to complete their higher education, nor are they allowed to practice various occupations," the Mandaean religious leader, Kenzeffrah Sattar Jabbar Hilu, told The Media Line.

Hilu says the 6,000 Mandaeans living today in Iran have no representative in the parliament or the government and are lacking civil rights.

The 2004 report of the Mandaean Human Rights organization affirms Hilu's claims. According to the report, job possibilities, as well as educational opportunities, are very restricted for Mandaeans and other non-Muslim minorities in Iran. Because of their status, by virtue of their religion, Mandaeans are considered unclean and cannot be employed in any job related to the production or sale of food.

One occupation long open to Mandaeans has been jewelry making. However, according to the report, the Iranian Jewelers' Association, who exercises control over the issuance of official licenses, has decided in 2003 to issue new job licenses to Muslim jewelers only. Mandaean jewelers were not allowed to apply for new licenses, thus depriving young Mandaeans of one of the few occupations they were allowed to practice.

Marriage outside the Religion

The fact that the overwhelming majority of Mandaeans is scattered around the world nowadays, is working as another catalyst toward the annihilation of Mandaism.

"Unfortunately, I think because of facts governing, being at the Diaspora, which is where the majority of the

Mandaeans are now... having to assimilate in western cultures, it does seem likely that eventually the Mandaeans would die out," Hattom says.

Hattom himself is an example for this process. Hattom is married to an American-Christian, who shows much interest in Mandaism, but could never become a Mandaean, as this religion does not accept new believers. Although he strives to preserve the old customs,

Hattom's future children - and more so his grandchildren - will probably forget them with time.

"You would have to conclude, based on logic, that dispersing them and then forcing them to assimilate for their own survival in western cultures... and the fact that people begin to marry outside of their religion more and more, that it would get increasingly diluted and eventually would become extinct," Hattom concludes.

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Positions Available for

TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE

YALI, the Yemen-American Language Institute, is seeking qualified and experienced **Teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language** for the coming year, with positions available as early as November, 2007. YALI was established by the U.S. Embassy in 1975 and is now managed by AMIDEAST, an international educational non-governmental organization with programs in 12 countries throughout the Middle East. It is now the largest English language institute in Yemen. YALI offers positions with a competitive compensation package and the opportunity to work in a dynamic, international learning environment.

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree with certification in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language preferred.
- Previous experience teaching ESL/EFL, with minimum two years preferred.
- Fluency in English with a solid background in English language and basic classroom teaching methodology using the Communicative Approach.
- Highly developed communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills, ability to coach students and work cooperatively with colleagues, adaptability, flexibility and creativity a must.
- Yemeni citizenship preferred. Applications from especially well-qualified non-Yemenis will be considered.
- Women are especially encouraged to apply for these and all positions at YALI.

Responsibilities and Duties:

- Teach English as a Second/Foreign Language following established YALI guidelines, using acceptable communicative language teaching strategies and methodologies.
- Prepare lessons, supplemental materials, activities and quizzes as required.
- Assign and correct homework, score quizzes and exams, evaluate student progress and assign end of term grades to each student fairly and objectively.
- Work individually with students as needed and collaborate frequently and routinely with other teachers to ensure state-of-the-art teaching methodology and creative activities.
- Attend staff meetings and workshops as required.

To Apply:
Submit cover letter and CV by hand to the YALI Reception Desk, to the attention of the Academic Coordinator or by email to yali@amideast.org



Vacancy Announcement

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency(ADRA) is an international humanitarian NGO providing development services in Yemen Since 1995. ADRA announces a job vacancy for the position of a female Project Manager in Al-Hodida governorate (Hais district).

Qualifications:

- University degree in Physical Therapy or Social work.
- Field Experience, preferably someone who has worked in rural areas.
- Good verbal and written communication skills in English.
- Excellent computer skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines, strong sense of responsibility
- Ability to take initiatives and process a problem-solving attitude.
- Strong self-drive and time-management skills

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate the implementation of the project in accord with the proposal, donor agreement and ADRA Yemen policies
- Submit monthly, quarterly and annual reports as scheduled.
- Submit monthly and quarterly work plans.
- Build the capacity of the project staff and mentor the management team
- Clearly define and coordinate the roles of all project staff and collaborators
- Analyze financial statements to ensure appropriate charging of line item and a managed approach to cash flow
- Establish strategic relationships with the beneficiary representatives
- Represent the agency in meetings with the other implementing partners and other meeting as necessary

The deadline for receiving applications is Thursday, November 8, 2007

Interested candidates are asked to submit their applications (including an application letter with CV) to ADRA-Yemen fax: 01-510010 or E-mail: adra@y.net.ye

Only short listed candidates will be contacted.



The British Council Yemen wishes to recruit a

Receptionist

The Receptionist is responsible for:

- answering telephone calls, in Arabic and English
- dealing with visitors to the office
- managing the reception area
- sorting and dispatching post
- routine office administration tasks: filing, making travel bookings, some translation work

Essential competencies and skills:

- Minimum of 2 years experience in a similar post
- Excellent communication skills
- Good team-working skills
- Fluent written and oral Arabic and excellent written and oral English
- Computer literacy

How to apply?

Applicants should email recruitment@ye.britishcouncil.org for a detailed job description and an application form. CVs are NOT accepted.

Closing date for applications will be 7/11/2007

The British Council is an equal opportunities employer.

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“Y” announces its Prepaid Service “تامام” in a big concert hosting the Super Star “Ragheb Alameh” in Sana’a



An unprecedented audience over 40,000 people attended the Concert in Sana’a, adding exceptional joy to Eid Al Fitr Occasion.

For the first time in Yemen, Sana'a hosted the Lebanese Super Star "Ragheb Alameh" in a great concert in Al-Thawra Sports City on Wednesday Oct 17th, organized and hosted by the new GSM Company "Y" celebrating the announcement of the Prepaid Service, "Tamam".

The invitation to the Concert was open and no entrance fees were required. It was attended by a huge crowd exceeding 40,000 people who rushed to the stadium starting 5:00 PM on Wednesday. Everybody was excited to see and listen to the super star, Ragheb Alameh. This obvious enthusiasm was truly expressed through their constant cheering all through the event.

The concert witnessed an incomparable attendance from the public. This fact reflected both the significance and seriousness of this initiative undertaken by "Y", which made a free public invitation for such an event at such a time, adding an exceptional joy to Eid Al Fitr occasion.

Ragheb Alameh inaugurated the concert, at 8:00 pm, with a small speech in which he showed his deep love for Yemen and asked God to protect the country unity and political leadership.

"I consider Yemen my second and first country. For this reason, I am really glad to welcome you at this event, which "Y" sponsored, at the announcement of its prepaid Service, "Tamam". Ragheb said at the start of his first song at the concert. He also added: "I really wish for all of you to be always "tamam" (line) with "Y", which allowed me to visit the country I love very much."

"Y" enabled me to come from Lebanon to Yemen, and to bring along tons of love and warm greetings from the Lebanese people to all Yemenis who are celebrating today the launch of "tamam" from "Y", he added.

Ragheb sang a number of hits that marked his career as a singer. He started the evening with a Yemeni song dedicated to all Yemenis, "Sirru Hobbi", which

revealed his true love to Al Mehdhar (the famous Yemeni writer and composer), Yemen and the Yemeni art as a whole. He also performed various Yemeni songs with his orchestra, in an atmosphere full of joy, music and rhythm. The artist's performance was met with applause and admiration from everyone around.

Ragheb kept on delighting his cheering audience through this unique concert that "Y" presented to the Yemeni people, as part of its commitment to contribute in the development of the Yemeni society and to spread the smile on every face.

At the end of the show, Ragheb Alameh addressed the Yemeni people, government and President Ali Abdullah Saleh, with a word of gratitude and wished everyone success, thanks to the services offered by "Y", raising his both thumbs up, more than once, in what was the trademark sign "Y" used for its "Tamam" product.

Ragheb Alameh was hosted by Yemeni foreign affairs minister, Dr Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, who offered him a Yemeni gift in appreciation to his achievements in the domain of art.

The artist ended his trip with a visit to "Babb el-Yemen", which he considered to be one of the most important tourist sites. He admired the place and its historical value. He was also surrounded with crowds who offered him souvenirs, reflecting thus the Yemenis' usual generosity and their love and appreciation to him.

"Y" has made a commitment to the public to follow the latest global technological standards in GSM wireless telecommunications and enter the mobile market in Yemen aggressively through providing highly competitive services. The company is in the final stage to get ready commercially, and will soon announce its official launch date and schedule of SIM cards distribution to subscribers.



and Yemen is happy!

The new GSM network

The Automotive Market in Yemen: surprising realities

By: Yemen Times Staff

The Yemeni Automotive market has witnessed several transformations during the last decade, mainly because of globalization. There has been several trends which the market has witnessed, first from the entry of large numbers of used cars from Europe and other parts of the world to be sold in Yemen as pre-certified cars, to the arrival of several brands of Chinese cars into the country, to the more recent popularity of importing one or two-year old cars from neighboring countries, to the extent that Saudi Arabia was the largest exporter of Cars to Yemen in 2006. Yemen Times surveyed the local market and spoken to several dealers, businessmen, and customers about their choices and the options in the local market.

Hussain Naser, a used car businessman, stated that there is only one brand which most buyers have confidence in, i.e. Toyota. He said that Toyota Vehicles have all the factors that people look for within a car, mainly quality, power, good resale value, availability of spare parts,

and serviceable in most parts of the country. He said that in buying a Toyota one cannot go wrong.

Most other retailers agree that Toyotas are vehicles which are fairly appreciated in the second hand market, which makes them an attractive purchase for most customers, says Ahmed Dhab'an, another used car dealer: "Toyotas have the advantage of being trusted by Yemeni customers, and in turn are welcome in the used car market because demand for these cars is almost constant".

Indeed, Toyota is the market leader in Yemen, it controls the largest share of new car sales, with sales exceeding 7000 units in 2006, thereby making a huge gap between it and the second-best seller, which is Korea's Hyundai, selling around 2,200 vehicles in 2006.

Deputy Director of Natco, the Sole Agents of Hyundai in Yemen, Mr. Jamal AbdulWasea' told Yemen Times that there will be some serious transformations within the new car automotive in the next year, stating that Hyundai has achieved this sales surpassing several other more-established brands in Yemen in a few years. He added that Hyundai



Modern cars have better technology which prolongs the life of the vehicle and lower running costs

has gained the confidence of the Yemeni consumer because of its superb quality and suitability to the local market, stating that although Hyundai is being sold at a price on par with other Japanese brands in Yemen due unfavorable currency fluctuations, Hyundai is still doing very well in Yemen.

A third group?

Apart from the Toyotas and the Hyundais, Chinese cars have succeeded in capturing a considerable segment of the new car market as well. Brands such as Cherry, GreatWall, chena, and Futan have started to create their own market due to their competitive pricing. Nashwan Mahmoud, a Chinese car sales cleric, says that once consumers know that our designs, engines, and other components are identical to older Toyotas and other Japanese cars, with the only difference that they are only built in China, many customers welcome this knowledge especially since they see the considerable price difference.

He adds: "we sell a pickup minibus for 7 thousand dollars, while the Japanese counterpart sells a similar one for 12 thousand, the price difference certainly

Buying a car? Some advice

Given the fact that automotive technology is advancing significantly, all customers are advised to buy newer car who are more fuel efficient and are more capable compared to older generations, which are very likely to rundown your budget because of wear-and-tear as a result of using the car for many years.

It is also important to buy vehicles which are popular and provide good value at the time of resale, as well as vehicles who are serviceable and there is abundance of spare parts in the local market. Another tip is to buy vehicles with high ground clearance since the roads in Yemen are in constant need for repairs.

justifies the decision to buy the Chinese pick up, and in turn our sales continue to climb".

Customers also welcome Chinese cars, Hashim Al-Jarmouzi said that Chinese cars may not be as well-built as their Japanese counterparts, however, they give an excellent value proposition which makes them an attractive buy.

Used cars entering the market

It has become a phenomenon to find the latest models of cars on sale in the domestic market at a considerably discounted price, says Khalid A., you find last year's model sold with a 30 percent discount compared to the new one you drive off the show room, he added that the significant difference in price between the same car from the show room and another one with 20 thousand kilometers divert sales from new car dealers.

However, Tariq Sabha, Commercial

Manager of Sabha Trading company, an agent of Suzuki, disagrees, saying that customers when they buy a new car they are sure that this car is under warranty and will serve them for many years trouble-free, and that peace of mind is very important for many customers, especially since new cars are increasingly more technologically advanced and need specialist care.

Roaming through the used car market, one finds other models of cars which have been imported from lands as far as the United States and the far east. Vehicles which have traveled many kilometers but are still in good condition are brought into the country and sold for competitive prices. Said Yassin Ghalib, an importer of used cars: "we buy vehicles for significantly cheaper prices from the United States, put them in containers and ship them to Yemen, where we are able to sell them at competitive prices in the local market and yet make a good margin".

However, not all customers are satisfied with buying used cars from other regions, says Thabit Saeed, I bought a used Toyota Camry which was brought from the United States at a competitive price, however, I could not find suitable spare parts in the local market and it troubled me every time it needs maintenance. Along the same lines, Jamal Abdulwase'a reaffirms that as agents of Hyundai they meet with customers who bought such imported cars but were unable to find spare parts for, advising them to restrict themselves to buying vehicles which were made for this region.

He added: "we test each and every model before selling it here, to ensure that it will be suitable to the local market and the driving needs in Yemen", he also added that Hyundai offers conditional five-year warranties because of the company's confidence in their cars which were made for this region.



CARS: Used cars from the United States and other regions are available in the market, so buyer becomes which vehicle do you buy.

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ALFA شركة ألتا المحدودة
الوكيل الوحيد في الجمهورية اليمنية

Business in Brief

National Wage strategy ready to be implemented

Costing over 100 billion riyals per year, the second phase of the national wage strategy will be implemented starting this November, with an average ways increase of 15,000 riyals (25 percent). The strategy will also include a mechanism to alter the pay of employees in accordance to performance, through monitoring and evaluation forms which will be distributed to all government bodies.

Al-Mutawakel: We ought to cooperate better with privet sector

Minister of Trade and Industry Dr. Yahya Al-Mutawakel admitted that the government of Yemen ought to cooperate better with the privet sector especially with small and micro enterprises. He also stated that upcoming Arab regional conference which will be held in the end of upcoming November would be an opportunity for the Yemeni Small and Micro enterprises to exhibit its products and business opportunities on the sidelines of the conference.

Yemen approves negotiation agenda with WTO

Committee to negotiate Yemen's accession to the World Trade Organization, headed by prime minister Mujawar, has approved the negotiation agenda with the WTO, including proposed sectors to be exempted from liberalization, along with other conditions to be negotiated in order to ensure that the Yemeni economy is positively affected by this accession.

Hodieda Social welfare office steps up poverty reduction activities

The Hodieda Social welfare office has announced that over 700 thousand persons have been assisted as a result of the office's social welfare programs. Director of the office stated that an additional 21 thousand families have been assisted during 2007, through social welfare payments and small grant schemes.

Yemen Postal Service to be reformed

The General Post Authority has approved a reform plan aiming at doubling the network of post offices, as well as establishing a speedy courier service within the country. The plan includes reforming and digitizing the current systems of the postal system in Yemen.

Yemen & South Korea discuss economic & development cooperation

Officials from Yemen's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation have met with a South Korean delegation and discussed South Korean developmental assistance to Yemen, including the establishment of a vocational training institute, as well as enhancing business relations between the two countries.

GIA to reform Investment laws in Yemen

The General Investment Authority will reform the legal framework and investment law in Yemen, through a US\$ 6 million 3-year consultation project, which will be undertaken in cooperation with the International Finance Corporation.

Shrimp-farming restarted in Aden

The center for fisheries farming in Aden has announced ambitious plans to restart shrimp farming activities with the objective of exporting the produced output to overseas markets. Shrimp farming has been suspended for five years due to lack of operating resources for the project.

Hadhrumout expands wheat production and marketing

Over 213 tones of locally-produced wheat has been distributed to local markets at a retail price of 3600 Riyals per a 50-kg sack, compared to over 5000 Riyals per a 50-kg sack of imported wheat. The center for increasing agricultural production in Sayun, Hadhrumout stated that it plans to produce over 500 tones of wheat during the agricultural season 2007/2008 in order to expand local production of wheat.

OPM Aden



Tender for providing Lashing / Unlashing Service for Aden Container Terminal

1. OPM (Aden) LLC wishes to invite tenders for the provision of Lashing / Unlashing Service for Aden Container Terminal.
2. Interested parties can get a copy of the tender documents and submit their bid to the following address:

ACT Business Centre
Aden Container Terminal
Caltex - Aden

3. The interested party will have to provide a copy of their Trade Registration Card, experience testimonials, list of existing customers and Company profile together with their duly sealed and priced tender and submit by hand to the tender box located in the address above no later than 12:00 noon 15 November 2007.
4. Any quotes received after this time will not be entertained.

New XL7



The New Generation



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Way of Life!

The Youth Forum section is an uncensored space for youth-related issues written by Yemen Times readers.

The miens of joy and fraternity during festivity

For an educated person, it's not ambiguous that festivals are different in their targets and kinds from one country to another. Feasts can be classified as political, historical, social, aprioristic or religious, and as many know, the Islamic and Arab world just celebrated a great religious occasion – Eid Al-Fitr.

On the day of celebration, an exemplary family awakens early morning, its male members going to the mosque to perform the dawn prayer after taking a hot shower. They also are required to eat a few dates or something like that, symbolizing the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

From this moment, life begins to spread out into veins and the day's splendor commences its appearance in the atmosphere with the golden sunrise. The male family members then attend special congregational prayers – held only on this occasion – in mosques, large open areas, stadiums or arenas. Women sometimes get to pray in those mosques with a second floor especially for them.

The prayer generally is short and followed by a sermon. After completing the prayer, images of fraternity and overwhelming joy attract one's attention as congregants embrace each other in a spirit of sympathy, tolerance, peace, purity and love, congratulating one another with a flow of joyous words. Afterward,



By: Adel Hassan Al-Adlany
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social solidarity and merriment commonly are observed in visits to the homes of relatives, neighbors and friends to exchange congratulations.

In fact, Eid Al-Fitr is a time to make peace with all bodies standing in front of you and a manifestation of cheer, splendid happiness and pleasure wherein people come together with their souls and goals.

Eid is the melodious chant sung by many poets, as it's a day bestowed for childlike innocence. With merriment on their faces, children reflect upon adults because children are the flowers of life that splash their essence onto a certain space of existence.

Indeed, the festival day has a distinct flavor from the rest of the year because it's a day uniting souls and spirits. Throughout history, we find that feasts have existed since the creation of humankind, as down the

ages, humans have celebrated with special occasions.

For instance, ancient Egyptians celebrated the festival day in order to come together to express their pleasure and delight after completing their work. The Qur'an speaks of this when Moses came to Pharaoh to confront him about the pretext of believing in God but supporting that with supernatural miracles:

[Pharaoh] said, "Have you come to us to drive us out of our land with your magic, O, Moses? Then we will surely bring with you magic like it, so make between us and you an appointment, which we will not fail to keep and neither will you, in a place assigned." [Moses] said, "Your appointment is on the day of festival when people assemble at mid-morning." (Taha 20: 57-59)

Thus, feasts in the ancient ages were either for relieving one's feelings after a long period of hard work and fatigue or for reminding people via an actual incident that sometimes related to their living, such as specifying a certain day for harvest, etc. It can be said that in ancient nations, feasts were times of amusement and diversion.

On this excellent occasion, I'd like to address those fathers who give their children absolute freedom to play wherever and whatever they wish, particularly the crackle of fireworks. Don't you see that it's perilous for children to do this? I'm afraid that the inundating happiness of this day will

turn into lasting gloominess.

Also noticeable are some people lamenting and moaning about something lost that has been covered with the dust of time or something out of hand, as if these people couldn't find any other day to think about or lament their problems except this beautiful day.

Actually, regret and sadness on the day of eid will never be the remedy for tragedies. Rejecting delight, extinguishing every beaming cheek and submitting to gloom and grief have nothing to do with solving even a simple problem. Such things spoil the cheerful spirit of eid through lamentation and sadness over trifles.

Let us rejoice together at festivity! Let hearts be reconciled and souls be loyal toward one another. Let us happily and peacefully play and leave worry aside.

Let us renew the treaty of fraternity and unity. Let us dream of a promising future for our homeland. Let us live a life full of optimism, happiness and animation.

In fact, eid is a radiation dispelling the dark that engulfs souls and the despair that confines hearts; however, the joy of festivity isn't sensed by those whose hearts are malevolent, whose consciences are deceitful or whose souls are overwhelmed with greed. Last but not least, please, dear reader, don't raise the white banner of sorrow, but always smile because it is eid. Happy New Year!

THROUGH THE MIND'S EYE

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy
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Many happy returns, dear readers

Happy Eid dear readers. We must be happy for this occasion. It is noticed that some people start hesitating to do the religious duties which they used to do in Ramadan. Some of them also behave in a different, paying no attention to any religious or social instructions.

Actually, Ramadan's end does not mean the end of worship, and moral behaviors. It is, on the other hand, the best chance to prove the sincerity, and honesty of the repent that we usually declare at the beginning of Ramadan. Here, I want all of us to keep in mind that we have to keep in mind, first and for most, that "Allah is the God of all the months, not only of Ramadan".

To prove the seriousness of our repent, we should do best to save the promises and vows that we declare at the beginning of Ramadan. Everything good can be done in the other months "if we want to do". We can pray on time in mosques, and do all the other religious duties. We also behave morally with others, help poor people, etc. The only thing we need is a strong determination to keep our repent; otherwise it will fail.

Eid is a significant occasion for all. People forget the duty that should do on this occasion which is helping others. We must not forget the poor people. We may not be able to know and help all the poor people. But we can do this for poor people, orphans at least around us.

Of course, everywhere there are poor families. The bad circumstances of these people may turn the happiness of Eid to sadness, and sorrowfulness in many respects.

A poor father may commit a suicide when he sees all children around celebrating this occasion with new clothes, sweets, toys, etc, while his children lack these all. He, sometimes, can not offer them the essential food. It is not his mistake to be poor, and it is not the mistake of his

children to be prevented from the minimum things for such an occasion.

We also can not blame society or life for this. But we should blame ourselves in case we ignore their cases. We should imagine ourselves in their places to realize how bitterly they suffer. For this reason, we can offer simple things to them which will surely mean great things for them.

We can not help all, but if every one of us helps only the ones around like neighbors, relatives, or friends, there will be no longer poor people.

Some people can not offer their families even a single thing to celebrate this occasion like others. Their children may keep inside homes because they do not have new clothes like others, for example. In spite of this, most, or even some, do not complain, or ask others' help. It really appreciated to help such people on such a holy occasion.

Visiting relatives and friends is another important pint that everyone should not forget. During the whole year, we claim that we are so busy that we have no time to visit them.

On such an occasion, it is a religious and social duty to pays visits to relatives and friends. This is to break any gab with them, and widens intimacy, respect and love.

It is not necessary to go there with gifts as some people claim. It actually depends on one's ability. In case, anyone can not take gifts, one should go empty-handed, rather than hesitating to go.

Though these things seem to be done for others, we win many things like happiness, comfort and other religious rewards. This is something normal and no need to say that we should think of it through the mind's eye as usual.

Maged Thabet Al-kholidy is a writer from Taiz, currently doing his M.A. at English Dep, Taiz, Uni. He is an ex-editor of English Journal of the University.

Leisure's pressure can be lethal

By: Saif Hamoud Maouad Na'eim
Student in Sana'a Univ
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To express my own ideas in an article and send it to the newspaper to be published is an extraordinary project and motive idea to read more and more, therefore I am appreciator for you all in Yemen Times stuff especially the charger of this page. Here I am writing to negotiate a common and can be a lethal issue belongs the young before the adult of leisure time. Through out our life we face a matter of leisure that can benefited us or hurt us as well, however leisure has gotten a bad rap, and I invite you to rethink your concept of leisure time.

It's not just what you do when you not working, but it is a way of thinking, a way of being, and away of approaching life that brings joy not just a distraction, a waste of time or a way to occupy the hours until one is working again. Hectic life style has made us work, wish and bore rashly, we become immobilized to enjoy our paste time. The big wheel that keeps on turning of rush confuse us putting the new exact steps for us to follow in order to refresh our ambitions.

The most essential question is how do we spend our free time?. Considerable choices to answer this question for instance, some of us goes to the net-cyber in order to have fun or get information, whereas some others prefer chewing Qat in a comfortable corner dreaming and building castles in the air. Going out is a welcome idea for those who used to work full time, while reading and make up mind's information is hardly ever exist. Further more, leisure can be enough reason for depression and suicide in case lack of self-confidence and hesitating mentality along with the instances around the whole world of us including the poor and the wealthy beside the normal and the famous. A few examples had made it through their loneliness; Emily Dickenson is one of them.

Dickenson is one of the greatest American poets whom sparkled through the 19 century and she titled by the hope and frustrated poet cause of her life experiences that ended sadly making her pessimistic, whenever she tried to be optimistic she fell gloomy again. After all, she chose being alone and that's what she did to discover who is she in leisure. Dickenson wrote magnificent poem about what she never achieve through her life but she did posthumously and left an obvious trace

in the poetry world.

Another point of learning to do nothing in your free time is the center of real rest. It isn't easy as it sound, at least for those who become work-addicted – doing nothing may bring up anxiety about being seen as bum or identity crisis of who am I without my

job?. In the long run, don't worry about what still un-known for you and enjoy your life in what you can to get the fruit of success and to manifest your new future steps, just trust the voice within and exploit the opportunity of leisure to find out something new in your personality.

Just For You

By Ahlam Al-Awkabi

FOR ALL LOVERS

Tell me, tell me, tell me,
Tell me what I can do
With the days that follow
When you are with that fellow
When you do not know
That I love you too.
Tell me, tell me, tell me,
Tell me, where are you?!

Are you here, there? Or no!

I can't go, bow and stand so.

I want you to know

That I am not hollow

That is NOT bravado

Ohhh nooo.

Don't say it is just falsetto;

It is reality echo

That tells you my word

Which I cannot swallow.

It tells you that

My life, without you, will be ZERO!

Ahlam Ahmed Mussa'ad Al-Awkabi was born in Kuwait on Feb. 12, 1983. She received a Bachelor's in English from Sana'a University's Faculty of Education in 2006 and was involved in drawing, writing poetry and speech. She died Jan. 19 of this year in Sana'a, may God have mercy and blessings upon her.

Duet of pain

By: Fuad Noman
fn_0012000@yahoo.com

With human respect.

A mere of tears comes loose upon
A maid and a dame's cheeks
Irrigated by a sorrowful fountain
Painting the image of a duet of pain.
Life's malice driving
The wiser into the insane.

With any luck,
All birds drone alluring hymns.
Love has no shameful stain.
It falls in soul profluent
With twangs of rain,
Passing its best
In the river of veins.
Being same
In a thane's blood and a swain's,
A fervent love can be hained.
In the peace fane,
The duct of soul would be so plain.

In veracity,
Love became a big deal of trade,
No more than just a claim state.
It has not become naturally innate.
Only my heart,
For love can translate,
As my soul's waves,
With the dawn's light softly vibrate.

In love's contest
My heart has been chosen
The first and best.
That is why
My gentle song is crammed

Never, never, never,
The lion's eyes have wept!
So, my pain has become a duet.
As usual and maybe soon,
The frames of essence became
As an impassive Goth.
My elation would be quite mute
So, my soul's melody won't lift
A tempting tune.

Oh, my God!
Kindly save and bless
My vibrant heart.
My cute sense
Always terminates
At a bitter halt
In the rain of my eyes.
My soul's scream
Diving to melt my heart's salt
To gain a deep quietude,
To grow with my innocent root
As my survival cure,
To be more pure
And whiter than a wisp of rime,
Trying to avoid
Life's filth and grime.
Our planet is ill
With a cruel time.
Life's canto,
Written by a doleful rhyme.
Feeling my gone days as dolts,
My wit and reverie chained
By ghost's bolts.
But in my soul's ballroom,
My pretty vibes still dance waltz.

بِقُلُوبٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ بِقِضَاءِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْرِهِ نَتَقَدَّمُ بِأَحْرَارِ التَّعَاذِي وَاصْدُقِ الْمَوَاسَاةِ
إِلَى الشَّيْخِ / مُحَمَّدٍ أَحْمَدَ بَقْشَانَ
وَالشَّيْخِ / عَلِيِّ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ سَعِيدِ بَقْشَانَ
وَالشَّيْخِ / مَرْعِيِّ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ سَعِيدِ بَقْشَانَ
وَالشَّيْخِ / عَلِيِّ أَحْمَدَ سَعِيدِ بَقْشَانَ
وَالشَّيْخِ الْمُهَنْدِسِ / عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَحْمَدَ سَعِيدِ بَقْشَانَ
وَالشَّيْخِ / سَلِيمَانَ أَحْمَدَ سَلِيمَانَ بَقْشَانَ
وَذَلِكَ لَوْفَاةِ الْمَغْفُورِ لَهُ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى
الشَّيْخِ / أَحْمَدَ سَلِيمَانَ سَعِيدِ بَقْشَانَ
سَائِلِينَ الْمَوْلَى عِزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ يَتَّعَمِدَ الْفَقِيدُ بِوِاسِعِ رَحْمَتِهِ وَرِضْوَانِهِ وَيَدْخُلَهُ فَسِيحُ جَنَاتِهِ
وَيَلْهَمُ أَهْلَهُ وَذَوِيهِ الصَّبْرَ وَالسَّلْوَانَ (إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ)
الْأَسِيفُونَ:

أسرة صحيفة يمن تايمز وكافة منتسبيها عنهم
أ. نادية عبد العزيز السقاف – رئيس مجلس الإدارة
أ. خير الدين محمد يوسف – نائب رئيس مجلس الإدارة
أ. رضوان السقاف – مدير مكتب عدن

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs: "We are able to serve the world"

By: Yemen Times Staff

For the first time, Shri Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, visited Yemen on 13 October and met with high Yemeni officials including the prime minister, foreign affairs minister and minister of social affairs and labour.

"I came deliberately to this place [Yemen]. This is my first visit. I'm not going to other places. I'm proposed to come again after a few months," he said.

"My purpose of the visit is to visit the country and meet with high officials to discuss the relations between India and Yemen. We discussed bi-lateral relations and ways of improving them," he said.

The minister added that another purpose of his visit was to focus on the welfare of the Indians community in Yemen. "I had a meeting with the Indian community in the Indian Embassy had discussions with them".

According to the minister, in Yemen Indians are working as middle labour technocrats, some of them are company managers and workers and a good number of them work as nurses in the health sector. Some also work in the oil industry. "They are very happy without problems. They have been working in the country for several years. And we are very confident that the government of Yemen will look after them the nurses are very qualified and have been trained in very good hospitals and institutions," he noted.

Ravi praised Yemen's minister of



Shri Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs.

labour and social affairs. "She is concerned with the welfare of people. She is very positive and enthusiastic," he said.

25 million overseas Indians

Ravi said that there are about 25 million Indians all over the world. In Yemen there are about 10,000 Indians. "We are able to serve the world by supplying the man power in technology and education we are already there doing it", he said.

The minister added: India is young India even though we are sixty years

after freedom and we are free market for democracy .we are helping the world in their national building.

Profile

Shri Vayalar Ravi was born in 1937 in Vayalar, a village in Alappuzha District in Kerala, to a middle-class family. His father Mr. M.K Krishnan was a veteran freedom fighter, a social activist who fought against untouchability and continued as Secretary of SNDP Taluka Committee for a long period. His mother Mrs. Devaky Krishnan was a prominent political congress leader of



Kerala. She was the President of Kerala State Mahila Congress. She contested elections in the citadal of communists since 1960. Ravi was married to Mercy, a writer and political activist, in the year 1969. She is presently an MLA in the Kerala State Assembly. They are blessed with a son and two daughters.

Now a Rajya Sabha member and Union Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Ravi has also served as AICC (All India Congress Committee) General Secretary and KPCC (Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee) President.

Ravi , 68, started his political career

as founder president of the party's students' wing in the Kerala Students Union in the early 1960s. He went on to become one of the youngest members of the Congress party's powerful working committee in the 1970s.

Vayalar Ravi was considered a young and dynamic leader since his entry into politics. He has led the Youth Congress in the State and played a key role along with AK Antony (Former Chief Minister of Kerala) in building Congress as a mass force in Kerala by attracting people from all classes and social groups to the party.

The 1969 split in the Congress made Ravi a nationally-known figure as a

'Young Turk' staunchly backing the left-of-the-centre policies of Indira Gandhi. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1971 and 1977.

Elected to the Kerala Assembly in 1982 and 1987, Ravi served as State Home Minister in 1982 to 1986.

Though a key figure of the anti-Karunakaran axis for long, Ravi had a brief stint in the Karunakaran camp in early 1990s. But he soon returned to his traditional moorings as a vocal critic of Karunakaran.

A keen trade unionist, Ravi founded several central government staff and PSU's unions and has served on important labour-related panels at the Centre.

Odd News

Painting found in rubbish is masterpiece

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The treasure that a New York City woman saved from the rubbish — a stolen masterpiece by Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo — is expected to go for as much as \$1 million (488,000 pounds) at auction next month.

Elizabeth Gibson will get a \$15,000 reward for returning "Tres Personajes" ("Three People") to its rightful owners, as well as an undisclosed percentage of the auction price.

Nearly four years ago Gibson was on her way to coffee when she spotted the painting among bags of rubbish set out for morning collection in her Upper West Side neighbourhood.

She walked by it at first but said she "immediately knew I had to go back. I knew I had to take it!"

"It was a huge, powerful and beautiful painting and I said to myself, 'It is wrong to be in the garbage,'" Gibson told Reuters on Tuesday.

Gibson, who had hung up the painting after her discovery, said she learned of its worth when research led her to the Web site of "Antiques Roadshow FYI", a companion program to the PBS show "Antiques Roadshow".

Sotheby's expert August Uribe had featured the painting on "Antiques Roadshow FYI" after it was stolen more than 20 years ago.

"Tres Personajes" was returned to its owners, who wish to remain anonymous, and is expected to fetch between \$750,000 and \$1 million when Sotheby's auctions it on November 20.

If Gibson had not acted so quickly after spying the painting, it might have been lost forever. A doorman nearby later told her that rubbish collectors had come along just 20 minutes after she had left with her new finding.

Parrot imitates fire alarm, saves family

MUNCIE, Ind. — (AP) A noisy parrot that likes to imitate sounds helped save a man and his son from a house fire by mocking a smoke alarm, the bird's owner says.

Shannon Conwell, 33, said he and

his 9-year-old son fell asleep on the couch while watching a movie. They awoke about 3 a.m. Friday to find their home on fire after hearing the family's Amazon parrot, Peanut, imitating a fire alarm.

"He was really screaming his head off," Conwell said.

The smoke alarm had activated, but it was the bird's call that caught Conwell's attention.

"I grabbed my son and my bird, and got out of the house," he said.

The fire destroyed the home's dining room, kitchen and bedroom, Muncie fire officials said. It remains under investigation.

Aside from Peanut, Conwell said the fact that he and his son fell asleep on the couch helped save them. They may not have heard the alarm or the bird if they were asleep in their bedrooms.

Conwell said he runs an air conditioner and a breathing machine in his bedroom and they drown out a lot of noise around the house.

Wis. man finds 3.92-ct white diamond

MURFREESBORO, Ark.(AP) - A Wisconsin man digging at an Arkansas diamond park with his fiancée Tuesday found a 3.92-carat white stone, but the rock will go into his collection because his betrothed already has a ring and a setting.

Eric Blake, 32, of Appleton, Wis., spotted the stone along a trail at the Crater of Diamonds State Park when he set down a 70-pound bucket of mud that he was carrying to a wash basin. "I put the bucket down to switch hands. I looked down and there it was," Blake said.

Blake found a 1.49-carat stone Monday. The larger one is big enough to fashion into jewelry but Blake hadn't decided whether he will have it placed into a setting. "I only found it an hour ago," he said.

Blake, a carpenter, said his grandfather had taken him to the state park about 15 years ago and that he returns two to three times a year. "We usually find something," he said.

His fiancée Susan Gabrielson — who has "only one carat on her finger"

— her daughter Sayde and Susan's sister Sarah accompanied Blake to the park this week. Susan found a 1.47-carat stone and some smaller gems Monday.

"We're going back out today. We'll take a lunch and then go back into the field," Blake said.

More than 700 diamonds have been found at the park this year.

The Crater of Diamonds park is the world's only diamond-producing site open to the public and visitors can keep the stones they dig up. The largest diamond ever found in the United States, the 40-carat white diamond named Uncle Sam, was unearthed in 1924 at the Murfreesboro park

1980 bride finally gets photos in 2007

MANSFIELD, Ohio (AP) - Karen and Mark Cline were teenagers when they got married and didn't have \$150 to pay a photographer for their wedding photos.

But now they've got the pictures, just in time for their 27th anniversary on Thursday.

Their photographer located Karen Cline last week at the diner where she works and surprised her with a photo album.

"About a month ago, I was just cleaning out some of my old things and I found it," said photographer Jim Wagner, who's now 80. "I knew she didn't have any money back then, and I just thought she might like to have it."

It was too much for Karen Cline. "I just stood there and cried and hugged him," she said, tearing up again as she described their meeting.

She said she was 18 at the time, and felt heartsick because she and her husband, who was 19, couldn't afford to pay Wagner. Instead, all they have had was a single photo that someone else took, of her walking down the aisle.

Wagner said he was able to track down Karen Cline after running into her stepfather a few weeks ago. He said she immediately wrote him a check for \$150.

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