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Abducted security commander released

By: Imad Ahmed Abdullah

TAIZ, Dec. 28 – Sheikh Hameed Ali Abdu, chairman of the General People's Congress (GPC) in Shara'b Al-Salam district, confirmed the release of Abdul-Nasser Al-Qawsi, commander of central security in Taiz, along with six of his escorts, all of whom were held hostage in Al-Aquos in Shara'b Al-Salam.

An armed group comprised of Al-Aquos locals abducted on Wednesday the commander, along with a group of senior officers, using a landmine and gunfire, then looted their cars and kept them hostage for two days in an unknown location.

Al-Qawsi denied that he provoked or confronted any Shara'b district locals. After his release, he told the Yemen Times that what has been said about the incident is "a mere justification for the betrayal" he and his escort were exposed to by some people in Al-Mahjal area in Shara'b. The commander was wrapping up his visit of a military base in Shara'ab, for the purpose of greeting soldiers stationed there.

Al-Qawsi mentioned that he was very surprised when an armed group opened fire at him, killing three of his escorts and injuring nine. He added that the group abducted and held him for three days without harming him.

He went on to say the "betrayal I was exposed to is a criminal act that goes against Yemeni community norms and people should not remain silent," demanding the arrest and prosecution of the attackers.

Continued on page 2



Angry citizens surrounding the military car (inset) which they abducted in retaliation of the security harassment.

Sheikh Al-Ahmar dies

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Dec. 29 — It was announced Saturday that the sheikh of Yemen's most dominant Hashid tribe, Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, who also was Speaker of the Yemeni Parliament and chairman of the Islah Party's supreme committee, has died at age 74 after suffering with an incurable disease for many years.

Al-Ahmar's eldest son Sadiq, his successor to the Hashid tribal sheikdom, released an obituary stating that his father had died at Saudi Arabia's King Faisal Hospital. The body will be buried Monday in Sanhan district, which belongs to the tribe and is located south of Sana'a.

The sheikh's health woes began after his involvement in a traffic accident in the Senegalese capital of Dakar in early 2004 during the third Islamic Parliamentary Conference held from March 5-12.

At that time, it was announced that the vehicle's tire exploded, resulting in



Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar

it overturning several times and thus breaking the sheikh's left hand, among other wounds. His two escorts, one of whom was the driver, were uninjured. Al-Ahmar immediately was transported to Paris, where he underwent surgery. Since that time, he had fought disease until his passing.

Continued on page 3

33 children and 54 women Sa'ada war casualties

By: Mohammed bin Sallam

SA'ADA, Dec. 30 — Army units deployed at Meftah Mountain and others positioned in Marran area struck Wald Nowar village of Haidan District with mortars and tanks Friday afternoon, Sheikh Saleh Habra, Representative of Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, told Yemen Times on Sunday. Up to 33 children and 54 women have been killed and dozens injured in the prolonged confrontations between military and Houthi followers.

The tribal leader noted that the most recent strikes, taking place on Friday, killed three children, including two little girls aged 6 and 11 respectively, and

wounded another three children as they were playing in their village.

According to Sa'ada tribal sources, the military forces occasionally attack some areas controlled by Houthis with mortars and medium arms, without clear reasons. The sources said that security forces in the restive governorate are hunting Houthi supporters, adding that policemen kill any Houthis whom they can't capture, despite the Houthis' commitment to the truce announced by the government.

Regarding attempts at mediation between the government and Houthis, Sheikh Habra stated that a new mediation committee arrived in the governorate last week, with the purpose of investigating facts about violations by the army against Houthis. Such violations include assaults with heavy arms and arrest campaigns against Houthi loyalists, notably in the areas of Haidan and Sehar.

Habra confirmed to the same sources that the Qatari and Yemeni presidential committees are still tasked to resolve the Sa'ada crisis, adding that both committees were formed under a Doha agree-

ment that ended the war between Houthi supporters and government troops in June 2007.

"People are enraged by military troops targeting children and women in their random strikes," Habra told the Yemen Times. "You must know that the army's targeting of women and children is not a new phenomenon; as many as 54 women and 33 children have been reportedly killed and dozens injured since the war broke out. Such behavior implies a lack of morality and values on the part of those who exercise barbaric acts against innocent women and children and randomly attack their villages and homes."

Local sources in Sa'ada confirmed the breakdown of the fact-finding committee's first meeting, chaired by Sheikh Fares Mohammed Mana'a, an arms dealer, who met Abdulmalik Al-Houthi on Tuesday in Matra.

The sources mentioned that Abdulmalik Al-Houthi set up a number of conditions for the newly formed committee during a lengthy speech, which he delivered before the committee members. According to Al-Houthi, the committee must be in charge of monitoring the situation and reporting any violations committed by either side. He said

the new committee must not exceed the limits of its jurisdiction, taking into consideration that the previously constituted Qatari and Parliamentary committee is still doing its job, and any other committee must not replace it.

Describing Abdulmalik Al-Houthi as "a man of peace", the sources added that the Houthi field leader harshly criticized members of the former committee over allegedly being incredulous and not fulfilling their promises.

Aidarous Al-Naqeeb, member of the former mediation committee, expressed that the committee stopped functioning before Ramadan because its members became extremely busy with other duties. Only three members remained, who could do nothing to calm the inflaming situation in Sa'ada.

In a statement to Al-Sahwa.net, Al-Naqeeb expressed his desire that the newly formed committee will succeed in its conciliation efforts and benefit from the former committee's experiences. Concerning the religious celebrations by the Shiite and Zaidi sects on the day of Ghadir, the occasion appeared to have a totally different color this year in the war-ravaged governorate that has come under fighting since June 2004.

Continued on page 2

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In brief

ADEN

Romantic comedy play

Aden Refinery art group, along with Aden Theater Association, are rehearsing a romantic comedy play called Nour, Daughter of the Desert. The story is about a child raised in a different tribe than his own, who falls in love with the daughter of the tribe's sheikh. The couple face many challenges against their union. The play has a happy ending.

8 hikers rescued

After 12 hours stranded without food or water, eight Yemeni hikers were rescued by a Coast Guard patrol surveying the hiking area. The hikers lost their way while climbing Jabal Shamsan on their way to Sahil Al-Oshaq beach. Their cell phones did not help much because of weak coverage; however, they were found after authorities traced back the signal from the last calls they made.

LAHJ

Traditional customs festival

A traditional customs carnival is being held at Labous district in Lahj. The festival includes a number of art performances, dances, singing and poetry recitation. The point of the festival is to create a joyful atmosphere for the locals as a part of extended Eid celebrations, and to celebrate local traditions.

Farmers use modern irrigation techniques

One hundred and forty one farmers benefited from using modern irrigation techniques over an 816 hectare area. A field project unit on preserving soil and underground water provided the facilities. The project will last two years, and will include construction of water tanks and training on how to maximize agricultural production.

TAIZ

Islah charity helps 16,000 families

The Taiz branch of an Islah charity has spent more than 42 million Yemeni Riyals in order to provide poor families in Taiz with meat during Eid Al-Adha recently. 16,035 families were able to feast on Eid because of generous donations to the charity.

Preserving heritage training

A training course on preserving heritage is scheduled between Jan. 7 and Feb. 4 next year. The course focuses on restoring old walls and domes and restoring the colored decorations inside Al-Ashrafia Mosque in Taiz. Twenty trainees, who are graduates from the heritage as well as fine arts colleges at Taiz University, will participate in the course. They will be trained under Italian experts from an Italian Institute concerned with the cultural preservation of Venice.

SANA'A

Training on pesticide usage

Twenty-nine participants from the General Department for Pesticide Use at the Ministry of Agriculture are participating in a 10-day training course on the subject. They are guided on international standards and protocols in using pesticides in agriculture and how to monitor their use in order to preserve the environment and ensure consumer safety. The participants come from various parts of the country and will in turn educate their colleagues in their home governorates once they complete the course.

MAHWIT

Electricity reaches more homes

One third of the residences in the rural town of Mahwit have been connected to the governorate's electricity grid. So far, 12,100 homes in 168 different villages are connected, with approximately 24,000 waiting their turn.

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam
sallammoh@yahoo.com

Yemenis' relations with people of the Persian Gulf or the so-called now Arabian Gulf states date back to the times of exodus from Yemen to other countries following collapse of Marib Dam and the Islamic conquests. Observers can realize these facts very evidently via the Yemeni characteristics spreading in all the Gulf states without an exception, even in Iraq, or the eastern part of the Persian Gulf.

One can say that Yemen enjoys an everlasting and fatal relation with the Gulf States. Having a quick glance at the Yemen-Gulf relations, it appears that such relations occupy rank below the mid point between publicity and privacy although relations in the meantime started to develop and prosper slowly in some spheres, specifically after Yemen conceded the areas of Najran, Jaizan and Assir, as well as the Empty Quarter to Saudi Arabia in 2000.

Recently, Yemen has been engaged in many institutions of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which was considered by those who are not optimistic as merely anesthetization to have Yemen under control. Also, another purpose of this, according to them, is to prevent Yemen from being integrated into a completed political and economic system or to join an alliance with Iran, the biggest state in the Gulf. Iran has been attempting hard to attract Yemen economically and politically to its side and separate it from the Arabian Peninsula, but such an Iranian offer was turned down by the Gulf people who rushed to attract Yemen to their side, according to observers.

As known to everyone, Yemen is an important country in the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf and the Horn of Africa since it has large population and good geographic location. Also, the Arab state is expected to have a vital role in the security, stability and future of the region, in addition to the various mutual strategic interests between Yemen and its neighbors.

Many leaders of the small Gulf states unanimously agree that Yemen's political and economic stability is key to development of the whole region, and its admission into GCC will help maintain balance and ensure that giants (like Iran) can not have dominance over small states in the region.

Qualify Yemen economically:

With regard to qualifying Yemen to cope with economies of the Gulf states, the country still has at least two decades before it to reach such a great goal, according to politicians and economists. The funds pledged by the various Gulf states during the Donor Conference in London resemble some food put in higher place and is difficult for anyone to approach it, said economic experts. They added that the pledged funds imposed conditions, which are so difficult for Sana'a regime to meet during a limited distance of time amid its critical situation.

Though so far elusive, the GCC membership Yemen aspires to would certainly give the country an economic boost, putting it in the mindset of investors and vesting improving the prospects for non-oil growth, according to economic ana-



A scene from UAE (left) and a site of Wadhi Dhar in Sana'a (right). Yemen has been fighting its way to join the Gulf countries council. Yet the differences are more than the similarities. Will Yemen be able to integrate in the highly urban, modern life style and let go of its uniqueness?



lysts closely observing Yemen's efforts to join the Gulf bloc. The term 'poor relation' could have been invented for Yemen, a structurally weak economy with only negligible oil reserves, gazing from the rough end of town at the elite club to the north.

If we question the necessity and importance of closeness between Yemen and other Gulf states, plus the future of relations between these countries, finishing the so-called project of qualifying Yemen's economy primarily depends on the Yemeni government's readiness to understand and bear in mind that qualifying its national economy is an urgent need and requires that a comprehensive reform program be carried out. This project has to start with purifying the government institutions from rampant corruption and then reforming the judicial and political systems before moving to other areas.

According to a consensus reached by politicians and economists, be they from the opposition or the government, Yemen is progressing toward an unprecedented collapse due to the poor political, economic and social situations. Consequently, before inviting the outside world including the Gulf states to help in qualifying Yemen, invest in the country and participate in building a modern and prosperous Yemen, we have to reform our home country from within. Having done this, there will be no need for conducting the above-said reforms.

The Yemeni authority should have a strong political will to reform itself and its systems, particularly as reform originates from within and doesn't come from outside. This authority should have good intent, and get rid of bureaucrats and corrupt officials with the presence of whom, Yemen will never enjoy stability and prosperity, nor can it even lag after the poorest countries in the world.

If we talk about the outcomes of qualifying Yemen's economy and the necessity of doing this, this ultimately will be in favor of both parties: Yemenis and Gulf people. We in Yemen will feel the necessity of qualifying our national economy, not because we want to be integrated into the GCC bloc. But, the main reason is that we are in an urgent need for such an economic qualification and this is part of our need for the help of others at the regional, Arab and international levels, as well as others' need for us, thanks to the country's geo-strategic location and its large population. Yemen's human resources will be

at least of some help to other small Gulf states that rely mostly on the eastern Asian and western workforce.

"As Yemen remains isolated from other rich states in the Gulf, the poor country is possible to turn into a terrorist weapon targeting the Gulf states at first, particularly in case its poverty grows severer, said many strategic experts.

Analytical summary:

Yemen, the Arabian Gulf and states of the Arabian Peninsula constitute a harmonious tissue where all the formation constituents unify and embody unity of such a civilized structure, along with the uniformity of its historic, geographic, cultural, economic and social conditions.

The various changes and their consequences stress the necessity of paving the way toward the future, even if they have become more appropriate in the meantime. They necessarily require expediting the formation of cooperative cartels and planning for the coming periods of time with the aim of entering a future unifying all these countries under a new strategic frame.

The initiative made by the six Gulf states at Muscat Summit in 2001, during which Yemen was welcomed as a member in many of (not all) the GCC institutions, and what followed at Riyadh Summit in 2003 and Abu Dhabi Summit in 2005, which approved the formation of a special committee to work on qualifying Yemen's economy and integrating the Arab country into the GCC cartel by the advent of 2015, all came to meet an urgent need of high concern to the whole region.

The numerous challenges encountered by peoples in Yemen and the Gulf necessitates that all the states of the region formulate a unified vision to bring about a regional solidarity coalition able to meet any international challenges. This coalition should contain all the demands of the future, as well as what is required by the shared characteristics and common denominators of the past, present and future. Only this can ensure extensive work and a serious move toward economic integration and cooperation in a way strengthening political, economic and social stability. Additionally, such a coalition is expected to cancel all the differences between Yemen and other Gulf states, and achieve effective components for Yemen's full entry into GCC, particularly as this country enjoys the best strate-

gic location in the region.

This is a fact that can never be overcome by the equations of history, geography, the present and the future, coupled with the objective factors that necessitate Yemen's accession into the Gulf cartel. This accession has become a must due to privileges of rights neighborhood and demands of the time, according to official data released by specialized research and study centers.

When we review the obstacles and causes that hindered Yemen's entry into GCC, we will find that they are galore, mainly as Saudi Arabia has been excessively desirous of possessing some Yemeni lands since 1928. The kingdom attained this objective under the current system of government. Consequently, it was impossible for Yemen to be welcomed to the Gulf cartel without abandoning those lands to Saudi Arabia.

Yemen had never thought about joining GCC since its establishment because the country was convinced that its offer will be turned down due to those reasons. Despite all this, it made a bid for GCC membership in 1996, but such a bid was rejected due to wrong accounts, revealed some political analysts.

Had we had reviewed both parties' interests related with Yemen's admission to the Gulf cartel, we would have found that some of these interests are logical and achievable while others are difficult to achieve due to numerous factors, the most important of which is the lack of economic, social and political balance, according to the Gulf people's viewpoints.

However, many hopefuls still have faith in the ability to remove all the barriers that prevent Yemen from making interests related with its accession into GCC such as the entry of Yemeni laborers into the rich Gulf states. These hopefuls are of the opinion that removing such barriers may help at least restore some of the work opportunities that had been once available for Yemenis in the past, specially as the Yemeni government view the just-said work opportunities as a redeemer or rescuer to help it overcome the increasing unemployment rates among citizens, estimated at 45 percent by official scores. Unemployment in Yemen appeared to represent a horrible ghost threatening the Yemeni society and warning it of numerous social and political problems.

In addition to the work opportunities available for the Yemeni workforce, citi-

zens of the poor country still pin a great hope that strong relations between Yemen and other Gulf states may boost investment in their country, thereby helping the national economy to recover, create more job opportunities inside the country and contribute to improving citizens' living standards.

Regarding the Gulf interests, as viewed by economists, Yemen has a broad market receiving Gulf products that are superior to any domestic commodities in terms of quality and specifications. Also, Yemen may provide a service for the Gulf states to utilize its human resources in the military institutions of those states that need a strong force, which may not be available in their territory due to their small populations, to protect their territories and wealth. Currently, some Gulf states, like Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, are recruiting Yemeni citizens as soldiers in their military and security institutions.

Yemen's investment climate:

Having a cursory look at Yemen's investment climate, one can notice that there are multiple issues that need to be addressed immediately, such as fighting bureaucracy and enhancing transparency in dealing with investors. Also, the Yemeni government needs to review its current judicial system and its procedures, improve its capacity and develop its human resources and their skills. Career development can be attained via setting up clear strategies with specific procedures aimed at marketing surplus workforce to several Gulf states, taking into considerations these countries' demand for laborers. In addition, skilled human resources will constitute an important factor for attracting foreign investments into the country.

Initiating joint investment projects between the private sectors of Yemen and the other Gulf states necessitates good support for mutual trade between both sides, as well as removing all the administrative obstacles and the artificial barriers posed to investment activities.

In conclusion, I realized that there is a need for a civilized dialogue between educated people from Yemen and the Gulf states to focus on the future of relations between both sides. But, in fact such a dialogue doesn't exist, and in case it exists, it usually discusses futile matters. We need a real normalization between Yemen and other Gulf states, the elite of which see Yemenis as merely poor and starving people.

Continued from page 1

Abducted security commander released

Sheikhs and influential figures in Shara'b Al-Salam denounced the incident, considering it a criminal act that must be confronted by society.

The Yemen Times reporter Imad Al-Sakkaf covered the event, going to the place where Al-Qawsi was held. He interviewed Ghamdan Abdul-Salam Al-Qaisi, brother of sheikh Ahmed Abdul-Salam Al-Qaisi (who is accused of planning the attack), who said that the incident came after the commander provoked and insulted them and their father, who was shot dead four months previously at the hands of security personnel. He alleged that they were accused of cowardice and weakness, which caused them to lose their self-control.

Ghamdan also pointed out that the commander visited their area to look down upon them as well as to show off, adding that Al-Qawsi told them that judicial verdicts issued against the killers of Abdul-Sallam Al-Qaisi would not be executed.

Al-Qawsi was released after negotiations and mediation by a number of sheikhs and influential figures from Ibb and Taiz governorates. The intervention came after security forces with tanks and rockets, acting under the orders of the interior minister, were mobilized at the outskirts of the district to launch an attack in the area where Al-Qawsi was kept hostage. The Shara'b locals made preparations to con-

front the military by placing themselves on mountaintops and in surrounding areas.

Al-Hada district tribes (to which Al-Qawsi belongs) intervened against the Al-Aquos tribes which abducted the commander. An Armed group of Al-Hada tribesmen on Thursday, before the release of Al-Qawsi, crept toward Taiz governorate, where they concentrated at the entrance of the city in preparation to support the security forces planning to attack Al-Aquos.

Moreover, local sources informed that nearly 500 armed Al-Hada tribesmen came to Taiz with 50 cars loaded with light- and medium-sized firearms. The same sources said that the tribesmen found the way to Taiz accessible, as security forces facilitated their passage through checkpoints on the roads between Dhamar and Taiz.

Additionally, the security forces prepared to pursue the suspects accused of engineering the incident. A security source in Taiz told the Yemen Times that Ahmed Abdul-Salam Al-Qaisi was arrested last Friday in Jabal Ra's in Hodeidah governorate, adding that authorities found him in Hais area in Hodeidah and tracked him down until he was finally arrested in Jabal Ra's. He agreed to surrender after negotiations with Hodeidah's governor.

The incident came as a result of the death of Al-Aquos sheikh Abdul-Salam Al-Qaisi, killed four months previously at the hands of central security personnel. Eight soldiers were convicted, three receiving the death sentence and five receiving varying

prison sentences.

Sheikh Al-Ahmar dies

In mid-November, Al-Ahmar was transferred to London to receive medication at the expense of Saudi Defense Minister, Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz. The Yemeni sheikh was an old friend of the Saudi kingdom and a regular visitor there for several decades.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Bin Nasser Bin Mabkhout Al-Ahmar was born in 1933 in Haboor Front in Dhulaimah area belonging to the historically deep-rooted Hashid tribe.

Prior to the September 26 Revolution, Al-Ahmar's father Hussein Bin Nasser was subjected to restrictions, imprisonment and a death sentence by Imam Ahmed, as the former allegedly was suspected of taking a supporting stance toward liberals who revolted against Yahya Hamid Al-Din's imamate rule during the 1948 Constitution Revolution.

Instead of his father, Abdullah was held hostage for three years in Hajjah and Al-Mahabishah until the September 26 Revolution erupted in 1962.

Following this, Al-Ahmar contributed greatly to establishing 1967's November 5 Movement, which saved the September 26 Revolution from breaking down. He also had an outstanding role in fighting both domestic and foreign challenges to which the revolution and the republic were exposed, particularly the 70-Day Siege of

Sana'a, the capital city of the revolution and the republic.

In 1969, Al-Ahmar was elected president of the Arab Republic of Yemen's National Council, which was charged with formulating the nation's permanent constitution, as well as establishing the foundations of the Shoura Council, upon which the republican system of today's Yemen rests.

The following year, in 1970, Al-Ahmar was elected chairman of the Shoura Council for the Arab Republic of Yemen, thereby representing *shoura* (consultation) and democracy at the very point where the Yemeni nation was experiencing and suffering due to backwardness and poverty. The council continued its duties until the constitution was suspended and the council disbanded in 1975.

Sheikh Al-Ahmar agreed to the peaceful transfer of power made by Gen. Ibrahim Al-Hamdi on June 13, 1974 following Yemen's exacerbated political crisis

33 children and 54 women Sa'ada war casualties

Media sources said that the provincial capital of Sa'ada and all its districts witnessed unprecedented celebrations on the religious occasion Wednesday evening, featuring the use of firecrackers, firing in the air and setting fires on mountaintops, despite government fliers warning citizens against joining in the event.

One Sa'ada inhabitant attributed the excessive celebrations to citizens' strong

desire, after authorities prevented them from marking the occasion since the first Sa'ada war broke out in June 2004.

Islamic Shiite and Zaidi sects in Yemen usually mark Ghadir Day on 18 Dhu'l Hijjah (Islamic Calendar). The occasion marks the day when the prophet Mohammed supposedly authorized Ali Bin Abi Talib as ruler for the Muslims in the area of Ghadir Khumm as he was returning from his last pilgrimage before his death.

In Sana'a, a group of policemen severely beat and insulted Zaidi cleric Mohammed Mufftah in front of his wife and children as he was returning from Ghadir Day celebrations organized in Bani Heshaih, northeast of Sana'a, last Thursday. The police took Mufftah to a security prison, where he is presently jailed.

In a statement distributed to different media outlets, the human rights organization *Change* condemned the assault on the Zaidi cleric and expressed concern about such malpractices the government exercises against its citizens. It held the government accountable for any consequences of the unjustified attack, saying that such oppressive acts contravene the constitution and law that ensure citizens the right to exercise religious rituals freely.

The organization appealed to local and international civil and human rights groups and organizations to express solidarity with the victim and condemn the authorities' arbitrary conduct.

RJ transports 2,141,000 passengers during last 11 months

The number of passengers RJ transported in the last 11 months increased by 17% over the number during the same period last year.

President/CEO Samer Majali said that the Royal Jordanian fleet carried 2,141,000 passengers during this period, against 1.8 million passengers in the corresponding months of 2006. He pointed out that the seat factor increased from 66% last year to 71% this year, marking a 7% growth, which is an indication of the improvement in utilizing the available seats, and thus of an increase in the revenues much more than the increase of the costs.

Majali also said that departures registered an 18% increase, with the airline operating 27,332 departures throughout the last eleven months, whereas it operated 23,214 departures for the same period last year. The aircraft mileage also grew from 47 million kilometers to 51 million kilometers, that is by 7%.

Fleet utilization went up by 11%. It reached 10 hours per day in the period between January and November this year, against 9 hours per day for the same period of last year. This shows a large progress in deploying the operational resources of the company. Flying hours rose from 70,086 in 2006 to 79,888 this year, marking a 14% increase. The on-time performance



increased by 2%, from 81% last year to 83% this year. The unprecedented increase in the number of passengers has come to support the financial position of the airline and cover the rise in operational costs resulting from the sharp hike in fuel prices during the year.

Majali stressed that RJ passengers started feeling the improvement of the company's services in general, especially the food and beverage menus, and the entertainment services, and these are the main reasons for the positive results, aside from the new aircraft recently added to the fleet, which offer some of the highest standards of entertainment services and comfort. Each Crown and Economy Class passenger can now enjoy watching his/her favorite program on individual screens.

Majali said that the company will continue modernizing its long-, medium- and short-haul fleet. He also said that RJ's membership in the oneworld airline alliance has broadened its route network from 54 to 700 international destinations served by the alliance's members. Passengers can now fly from Amman to any of these destina-

tions, with one stop only, on any of the oneworld member airlines. The oneworld alliance brings together some of the biggest names in the airline industry, among which American Airlines, British Airways, Iberia, Cathay Pacific and Japan Airlines.

Montreal and Budapest, said Majali, are two important destinations added to the RJ route network. The airline will also open a gateway for Jordan to the People's Republic of China on January 22, 2008, when it will start operating a regular three-weekly service to Hong Kong, passing via Bangkok, in order to serve the active traffic between Jordan and China.

UNDP tops global accountability ranking



UNDP received top ranking on the 2007 Global Accountability Report launched in London earlier this month by One World Trust, a leading expert in the field of global governance and accountability.

UNDP is among 30 of the world's leading organizations from intergovernmental, non-governmental, and corporate sectors assessed by One World Trust according to four widely-accepted dimensions of accountabili-

ty: transparency, participation, evaluation, and complaint and response mechanisms.

Commenting on the report, Administrator Kemal Dervis said, "UNDP finds the key dimensions of the Global Accountability Framework -- transparency, participation, evaluation and complaint/response management -- to be particularly useful and instructive. The Framework independently validates UNDP's current work and sheds light on areas of possible improvement. This feedback is critical to UNDP's continued progress in this area and adherence to the best practices of accountability."

Value-based journalism: a global survey

Professor Prem Lal Joshi at the University of Bahrain is conducting an online global survey on value-based journalism. The questionnaire is available at the following website:

<http://www.acadjoshi.com/questionnaire.htm>

The concept and objective of the survey are explained in the questionnaire. The survey closes on January 31, 2008.

Prof. Joshi invites media to participate in this survey, which is purely for academic purposes. There is lack of empirical studies on this topic, which is very current. Your opinions will immensely help analyze data and draw definite conclusions from this survey.

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موبى
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الضمان المعتمد

Poverty is delaying youth marriage

Despite the fact that they live in a conservative society that considers marriage one of its main priorities, many Yemeni men over the age of 27 delay marriage indefinitely, for which there are many reasons within Yemeni society.

By: Fatima Al-Ajel
fatimafnfr@yahoo.com

Fahed Omer, an educated 30-year-old man, lives in a tribal community where the marriage age is very young. However, like many youth in his neighborhood, Omer can't marry due to his poor economic situation and the expense of the marriage requirements, which forces many youths to delay marriage.

Essentially, poverty and inability to provide material goods are the main reasons increasing the marriage age for Yemeni men, who already have begun thinking about the huge requirements of marriage – both before and after the wedding celebration – such as the bridal dowry, the various wedding parties, the luncheon, etc.

As Omer explains, "I'm making my plans to meet the future economic situation to marry at the soonest opportunity, but a man can't obtain everything easily. I must determine how I can provide the marriage requirements before I can consider marriage itself."

Raisah Ajlan, a mother of seven sons, says that her sons' poor economic situation is the only thing delaying their marriage. She laments, "Although they're educated, employed and older than 27, they haven't married yet. New marriage requests have attacked Yemeni society, causing many youth to be unable to marry."

Hajji Mohammed Nasser, 70, blames the younger generations, who he says have created problems for themselves because both men and women like to

show off at their wedding celebrations, regardless of their ability to pay for such futile rites.

Yemeni men delaying marriage increases spinsterhood among young women – especially those who are educated and age 25 or over.

He went on to compare the marriage rites of the past to what's happening today, noting that marriage was simpler then because after the wedding, a man lived with his family and didn't need to think about a new house or any additional requests.

"Now, everyone wants to copy each other by increasing the dowry and marriage requests – except that only the young men and women are the victims," Nasser asserts.

Seeking to improve their situation within society, many Yemeni men today prefer to delay marriage until completing their studies and obtaining employment in an attempt to prepare themselves for the sizeable marriage responsibilities.

While educated 29-year-old Ahmad Jaber has a good income, there are other reasons for him to delay marriage, as he admits, "Marriage is a difficult decision requiring much consideration regarding a suitable spouse to share the rest of my life," in addition to considering how life will change following marriage and how he'll acclimate to that new life.

"I decided to finish my master's

degree and obtain a high position in order to provide for the welfare of me, my wife and my children in the future," Jaber explains.

Some well-educated Yemenis refuse their social traditions, opting to delay marriage by immigrating to the city in search of an educated partner.

One such example is 27-year-old Mazin Al-Saqqaf, who refuses the traditional concepts of his community, which compel him to marry from among his relatives or face social criticism. "In my village, girls aren't educated and I'm looking for an educated girl to share my life and ideas."

He continues, "Most of my friends and relatives are married, so people always ask why I don't marry soon. For them, it's strange for me to refuse marrying, especially at my age. Because I believe marriage is only supplementary, it's not among my priorities, unlike for many others. Instead, I'm busying myself with youth and political activities, which I think are more important than marriage," Al-Saqqaf maintains.

the huge requirements of marriage – both before and after the wedding celebration is a reason of increasing delaying marriage among men.

However, those living in similar poor conditions understand the circumstances in which youth live and the difficulties preventing them from marrying. "Despite the fact that we're from tribal origins, because of my poor economic situation, people don't blame me for not marrying yet," Omer notes.

On the opposite side, those Yemeni young men with a good income and the ability to marry often are the brunt of rumors and speculation from within



Sociologist Adel Al-Sharjabi proposes that the reasons for men delaying marriage reflect both positive and negative social aspects.

their community regarding why they haven't married.

As Jaber explains, "Many times, I've heard rumors that I was secretly married in the city and that I have children. Such rumors cause my family – especially my parents – to want to see me married with children."

Sociologist Adel Al-Sharjabi proposes that the reasons for men delaying marriage reflect both positive and negative social aspects. For example, it's a positive thing if a man seeks to improve his position or continue his studies, but it's also negative in that it reflects the poor economic conditions of youths, with the main reason for the phenomenon being poverty.

While many studies have determined that early marriage is a negative

phenomenon and creates problems within Yemeni society, delaying the marriage age of men presents an additional problem as well, as the phenomenon spawns yet another problem – spinsterhood, as most Yemeni men over age 30 marry wives 10 or more years younger than themselves.

Only the young men and women are the victims of increasing the dowry and marriage requests

Yemeni men delaying marriage increases spinsterhood among young women – especially those who are educated and age 25 or over – because, as Al-Sharjabi clarifies, most educated

Yemeni men prefer marrying younger girls, particularly uneducated ones, thereby creating a gap between men and Yemeni women of marriageable age. Thus, a Yemeni young woman then only has the choice either to marry someone younger than herself or not marry at all.

According to a recent study by Sana'a University's Gender Development Research and Study Center and SHIMA, which is the Yemeni Network to Combat Violence against Women, as well as Britain's Oxfam organization, 1,495 couples surveyed revealed that early marriage for women comprises 52.1 percent, whereas men marrying at an early age comprised only 6.7 percent, which means that early marriage is only increasing among girls.

Where do Yemeni girls go for entertainment?

A brief survey conducted by Wojoud Mujalli reveals that many women in Sana'a complain that there aren't enough entertainment venues for them to spend their free time.

"My entertainment is walking from the kitchen to the other room in my house. That's it," complains teenager Sarah Mohamed, describing how she spends her free time.

She continues, "I once expressed to my parents my desire to go out with my friends and have fun. The first thing my dad said was, 'Here in Yemen, where would you go and what would you do? There are no places especially for women's entertainment and even if there were, I wouldn't trust them.'"

These issues were raised with several young women and parents, as well as young men, to discover how girls entertain themselves and whether or not Yemeni society accepts the idea of women's entertainment.

"Many parents don't trust or believe in our society, which causes them not to trust their own daughters because of how men and boys act on the streets. When a young lady or woman walks on the street – simply going from one place to another or even taking local transport – all eyes stare at her like she's some kind of criminal. What makes it even worse is that bad words also start spewing from their mouths," Sana'a University student Ahmed Abdullah observes.

"What if girls think about having fun? I think they'll find a lot of trouble if they don't know where to go and the right places to do so, that is, if there actually were any," he adds.

Fellow university student Hanan Saria's remarks, "There are no places

for girls to go out and have fun. I believe they have the right to enjoy their time, but the problem is that there are no appropriate places for them. Because of new trends within our society, girls instead chew qat, smoke shisha and waste their time rather than

"What if girls think about having fun? I think they'll find a lot of trouble if they don't know where to go and the right places to do so, that is, if there actually were any,"

benefiting or improving themselves."

Another Sana'a University student Laila Al-Maflahi says, "Shopping is the best way I entertain myself. When I'm bored during my free time, the first thing I do is go to the malls and buy different things and my parents are ok with that. I once considered playing games or sports, but I remembered that there are no such places in [Yemen] and even if there were, they wouldn't be qualified or trustworthy enough."

Student Maha Said goes to the Bilqis Club, the only public club in Sana'a especially for women's sport. "I spend my afternoons there and I go to some other private clubs as well. My father trusts this place because it's closed to men; it's only for ladies and there are women trainers has only women trainers," she adds.

Director Lutfia Hamza, who also heads the Arwa Girls School in Sana'a, explains that the club, which opened in 2005, accommodates Yemeni women's entertainment needs, as well as helps them spend time in sports so as not to be accused of being ignorant in that

field as well.

"I believe the best way for girls to spend their free time is by playing games and different types of sports such as chess, football, volleyball, etc. – not chewing qat and smoking," Hamza asserts.

She adds, "Registration is easy; all it requires is a photo and an approximate \$3 fee for the entire year." Club members can play chess and billiards while volleyball and basketball also are offered.

The Bilqis Club is open from 8 a.m. to noon and again from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., thus accommodating most Yemeni women's free time. Susan Al-Masabi, a supervisor at the club, maintains that it's better for young women to spend their time at the club instead of going to chew qat.

Samah Al-Bawsi agrees, recalling, "I used to chew qat in the afternoons because I had nothing else to do, but then a friend told me about this club, saying that I'd be able to spend that time chatting with some other girls and playing games and sports, so I tried it. I'm actually having fun here and enjoying my time. I wish there were many places like this in Sana'a to spend free time!"

Siham Al-Garsi laments, "My father says that I'm allowed to go out and have fun, so long as there are places especially for ladies and that they are trustworthy. However, the problem is that such places still don't exist here, so I'm wondering when there will be. I also wonder about if there were any, how long it would take them to gain the public's trust."

In this regard, internet cafés are becoming important places for women of all ages to spend time chatting via the internet or with a group of friends. However, while some internet cafés have special women's sections, the majority don't.

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Assassination of Benazir Bhutto

Democracy in Pakistan needs western support

The tragic assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto highlights the central crisis of Pakistani society: Democratic change in the country still needs the support of the West, says Thomas Bärthlein

In the aftermath of the killing of Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan is facing difficult times. Far from being an exceptional case, this assassination is the result of the political violence which has been escalating over the last few months.

Even if it is too early to talk about a civil war, this much is known: The military-dominated government has failed because it can no longer ensure public safety.

One can only speculate who the backers of this attack were. On the one hand, Bhutto has received threats from Islamic militants for taking what many view as "pro-American" stances against the Taliban and al Qaeda.

On the other hand, after the deadly suicide bombing that killed over a hundred people upon her return from exile, Bhutto herself accused persons with connections to the powerful military establishment and the party of President Pervez Musharraf of being behind the attack.

In either case, it is alarming that Bhutto's assassination occurred in the

city which is home to headquarters of Pakistan's military. The incident begs the question: Is there a place in which Pakistanis can feel truly safe?

It is hard to imagine that the election will now take place as planned on Jan. 8. The security situation in the country remains precarious. Also on Thursday, just before the assassination of Bhutto, four people were shot dead at a political rally for another former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Over the past decades, Pakistani society has been marked by militarism and violence, a development that has largely spilled over from neighboring Afghanistan.

The western-supported war against the Soviet Union has strengthened not only Pakistan's military and secret services but also the country's Islamic militants. Weapons and the propensity for violence continue to spread. Militancy as an ingredient of political disputes is unfortunately still a reality of everyday life in Pakistan, whether between religious, ethnic or political factions.



Militancy as an ingredient of political disputes is unfortunately still a reality of everyday life in Pakistan

The way out of this spiral of violence will by no means be easy. But it should build on the developments over the past few months in which civil society became strong in Pakistan and in which lawyers and journalists established themselves as political forces amidst the growth of resentment against the military rule.

Pakistan needs trustworthy civil institutions. State of emergency, martial law and expanding the powers of the security forces would not stop the spiral of violence. The international community, too, should insist on Pakistan becoming a true democracy.

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Benazir Bhutto salutes from her bullet-proof vehicle, October 18, on the day of her return after eight years of exile



Benazir Bhutto speaks to the media at her residence in Karachi. She blamed militants for trying to kill her and said she would not "surrender our great nation" to them

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Legal Translator

Qualifications and Skills:

University degree in English, preferably majoring in translation, and excellent command of English language are extremely essential. Must be computer literate with at least 3 years of experience in trade-related translation from Arabic to English and vice versa. Previous experience with an internationally aided project, legal firm, or international company/organisation is a plus. Secretarial skills are also welcomed.

Duties:

- Translation into English of all accession submissions to the WTO Secretariat, including answers to questions from WTO members;
- Translation of WTO-related materials into Arabic;
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- Preparation of correspondences and reports in English; and
- Any other duties related to translation/interpretation from English to Arabic or vice versa.

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Words of Wisdom



If more meaningful change is to be made in respect for human rights, the daily violations against the rights of ordinary citizens have to be addressed. This means introducing new values through education and re-education. One clear target is to train law-enforcement agencies and officers on the rights of citizens and how to respect them. Another has to do with re-training of prison wardens and personnel.

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

OUR
OPINION

Happy 2008!

It is impossible with the start of the New Year not to reflect on the past or turn with anticipation to the future. 2007 has been a significant year in terms of political, social, cultural, economic happenings. Yemen has always been going through some kind of turmoil, but this time I feel it is different. For one, the players at the top level are changing. Some have died, like Late Sheikh Abdullah bin Hussein Al-Ahmar, who was supposedly the most powerful man in the country (even more powerful than the president himself). And some have risen, such as some of the opposition leaders in the south who have been using less sophisticated methods to display their displeasure at the system, such as blocking roads, kidnapping oil containers, or simply holding violent riots.

Amongst all this, there is the Yemeni citizen, from all over the country, barely surviving. And here comes the ridiculous poverty report issued by the Ministry of Planning saying that some poverty indicators have improved.

Facing a new year is one of the times when I wish I had any other profession than being an editor. Perhaps having a night club at this time of year would have been more profitable, but then again it's not about money, is it?

Being an editor, I feel obliged to do the math for Yemen Times readers and try and summarize the events of the exiting year, as well as look into my crystal ball and tell the readers what their advancing year will be like. Luckily, because of the climate change my crystal ball is a little foggy, and so I will not be able to say much about the future, other than it looks "foggy" full with turbulences. But I have no global warming excuse to help me escape from reminding us all what a horrible year it has been.

Well, other than the creation of "freedom squares" all over the country, and having one doze after the other of price hikes. There is the fact that many new products which are not suitable for human consumption have been flooding the market throughout the year. There is also the water problem, as some of the organizations working in the water sector have been raising the red alert trying to draw our attention to an eminent drought. There is the population explosion that would at least triple the number of Yemenis in 40 years time. There is the ongoing Sa'ada war in the north and the thousands of dislocated people.

But hey, we have a new center for treating cancer just inaugurated in Aden. It's true that it does not have enough equipments or qualified staff, but it's a start. There are those projects that we keep having in every place we celebrate the Yemeni Unity, like the projects in Ibb governorate which were designed for the occasion, and collapsed the moment the last VIP left the city heading back to Sana'a.

And of course the tens of training courses on gender, development, education...etc. Maybe it wasn't a bad year after all. Might as well celebrate the New Year anyway.

All being said and done, I know what my New Year resolution is going to be; From 2008 onwards, I promise never reflect on the past, and never to look back. What is yours?

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Future of Yemeni-Gulf relations

By: Dr. Waheeba Fare'a

Enhancing the course of political relations between Yemen and Gulf states is not only a political requirement. Rather, it is a popular and human desire for communities where the political element and its human counterpart meet, thanks to the geographical location and the historic background that brings states of this region together and help them establish mutual interests.

If it is necessary to remind people of the significance of the joint commercial, economic, political and security relations between Yemen and other Gulf states, as well as review the common interests on every occasion, it will be more important to refer to the cultural homogeneity in countries of the region.

This homogeneity plays a great role in supporting Yemen's admission into the Gulf Cooperation Council in different spheres, including the economic one.

Components of the common human work in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf acquires continuance, away from any temporary justifications due to the crucial importance of both the elements of history and geography, which function as the base for bilateral and innocent relationships between natives of the region.

These days, GCC member states seek to enhance its commercial and economic partnership with the

Republic of Yemen and so does Yemen. They closely observe all the efforts expended by the Yemeni government to create a good investment climate to then attract more foreign investments and capitals into the vulnerable nation, particularly as the country enjoys a unique relation, diverse weather and a population density that helps provide workforce and big market. And, with the availability of natural resources, which are enough to make a distinctive move in the economic recovery and sustainable development, Yemen is by all means eligible for accession into GCC membership.

All such given facts make Yemen and other gulf states before a package of historic entitlements to achieve partnership and alliance for confirming their effective presence in the international arena in light of the rapid variables, which the world of today goes through. From an economic viewpoint, these facts depend greatly on the formation of regional alliances in confronting these challenges and opening markets for free trade, as well as limiting restrictions on trade exchange.

The historic entitlements, as seen by states of the region, are represented by fulfilling the mutual interests, which are governed by shared visions and satisfactions between two sides who possess much of the strengths in the world economic system.

These strengths help qualify the states in question for building a promising regional cartel in the shadow of an international

understanding of the region's need for establishing this kind of partnership, away from politics.

From this point, the future visions of Yemeni-Gulf relations have to be represented by criteria of the economic and commercial partnership, taking into consideration other dimensions that include all the horizons of development partnership with the local private sector.

The visions should also include career development programs for human resources to help flood markets of GCC member states with skilled Yemeni workforce that automatically migrated to the Gulf States following discovery of oil and minerals in these states.

The current political developments in the region play a pivotal role in the future of Yemeni-Gulf relations on the short and long terms, bearing in mind that the region lives an exceptional condition. The situation makes Yemen's entry into GCC a strategic necessity for stability amid the current regional and international developments.

Qualifying Yemen for GCC membership is a process where security and economic dimensions meet and these dimensions are known to have been connecting Yemen with states of the Arabia because of the unique location and common interests.

But, excessive concentration on the aspects of integration is not worthy for strengthening the mutual relations.

Source: Almethaq.net

Ministry of Expatriates' Affairs no longer eligible to continue business

By: Dr. Ala'a Al-Saffar
Editor-in-Chief of Nabanews.net

Recently, I was of the optimism to meet President Ali Abdullah Saleh in order to inform him about the latest Expatriates Affairs Ministry's scores with the hope of persuading him that such a ministry is no longer eligible to continue its business. This ministry has retained nobody inside in the homeland except for children, aged people and women, and its unwise policies brought to 6.2 million the number of Yemeni expatriates abroad.

If we are betting on institutional reforms, we have to reform ourselves before we do such things. We have to admit before Mr. President that we are not talking in the name of his electoral platform.

We only praise Mr. President saying "Allah Protects Him" repeatedly in order for us to remain in our posts and build a good future for our children from public funds. Otherwise, how Mr. President notes that the number of expatriates did not exceed 2 millions, according to the most recent census while in light of estimates released by the Ministry of Expatriates' Affairs, the number of expatriates goes beyond six million.

Is it the fault of those who talk

about another country, which we don't know? Or is the fault of those who laugh at our programs and plans?

We claim that institutional building of the state is based on studies, and accurate stats and data. Please let us show you some of the stats the Ministry of Expatriates' Affairs relied on to set up its action plans.

First of all, the ministry doesn't differentiate between an "immigrant" and an "expatriate". It doesn't learn that the former is excluded from the development plans for being settling down in another country while the latter is included in these plans because he/she doesn't have the country of expatriation as his/her homeland.

The ministry estimated that Yemeni expatriates in Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei number nearly 5.2 million souls. Releasing such stats, the ministry wants even to say that it is sponsoring graves of the dead immigrants, who left the country in the times of Islamic Conquests. Praise be to Allah since the ministry has not counted the Yemeni tribes that migrated from Yemen to other states following collapse of Marib Dam.

According to the ministry's scores, there are around 41,600 Yemeni expatriates in the United States and Canada. Had the ministry but followed up the external visits made by President

Ali Abdullah Saleh to various countries, it would have learned that scores, estimated by the Yemeni community in the U.S. during the most recent visit by Saleh to that country, revealed that nearly three hundred thousand Yemeni expatriates exist in the United States. And, in Canada, the number of expatriates range between 6,000 and 6,500 souls, most of whom entered Canada in the wake of 1994 Civil War while the ministry alleges that the number of expatriates in this

SILVER LINING

When the State facilitates chaos

Once again, we realize the fragility of the state and how the tribe controls it. Following the confrontation between people of al-Salam district in Taiz with the security men, the government did not move to control the situation. It rather gave in its role to the tribesmen from al-Hadda whose man, leader of the central security Abdulnaser al-Qawsi, was seized by the people. I have been told the security in Ibb tried to prevent the flow of fully armed tribesmen of al-Hadda to Taiz, high ranking officials gave orders to allow them pass through all checkpoints.

The officials of the interior ministry have been shrugging their shoulders in pride of controlling arms carrying in cities. What about the heavily armed tribesmen whose trip to Taiz was even facilitated by the state officials? Several months ago, tribesmen from al-Hadda made their way with their arms to Ibb to slaughter Salah al-Rawee in jail and come back triumphantly. This shows the regime cannot relinquish its tribal skin and is completely submitted to the tribal norms rather than the rule law.

The tribesmen arrived and camped at the outskirts of Taiz. They wanted to take revenge for the capture of their man. Wow! This is absurd. What is the role of the state then? Why should the tribesmen come to Taiz and what does this mean? The man went to the area with armed vehicles as a representative of the state rather than the al-Hadda tribe.

I had been told, however, the security leader behaved like a tribesman rather than a state official during his verbal dispute with Ahmed al-Qaisi and his fellow men who felt humiliated. Then, the argument developed to an armed confrontation and then the arrest of the soldiers and their leader. Nobody favors that citizens attack government representatives. On their part, state officials should behave with responsibility and as representatives of the government and this will definitely bring about respect of the people.

I guess you agree with me it is the business of the government to sort out disputes between its officials and the people. Some feel that such an irresponsible position of the government in blessing such a tribal behavior shows the government wants to instigate blood vendetta between al-Hadda and al-Salam people. In other words, if the government gives up its role in enforcing law and allows the tribal norms to function, chaos will prevail and tribal feuds will exacerbate.

To drive the point home, the political regime does not do justice to all people and still deals with them on ground of their regional affiliations. If you have a strong tribe to back you up, you can infringe the law. The state in this way facilitates chaos and lawlessness which cripples any effort of stability and development

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

country doesn't exceed 1,500.

The ministry also estimated the number of Yemeni expatriates in the United Kingdom at only 22,000 while their real number exceeds 50,000. It seems that the ministry fears saying that the majority of expatriates belong to the opposition and that they were added to the opposition as the

state neglects them. As the Embassy of the Yemeni government in London stopped sponsoring expatriates in the host country, the British city of Birmingham has become one of the largest cities in the world housing the Yemeni opposition.

Source: NabaNews.net



By: Samer

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Share'e Independent Weekly
Saturday, December 29

Top Stories

- Shara'ab locals hold Central Security Commander, Hada tribesmen assemble in Hoban
- Yemeni governorates mark Ghadi Day amid less harassments by authorities
- A new dilemma for an agreement granting Hunt Oil Company the right to explore gas instead of petroleum
- Five Radfan event's suspects escape from security jail
- Complicated negotiations between government delegation and southern leaders abroad

The independent weekly reported in one of its front page stories that an official delegation, representing the Yemeni government, has been conducting dialogues with some southern opposition leaders abroad for two weeks. The negotiations taking place between both sides are described as 'hard and complicated'. The newspaper quoted well-informed sources as saying that the delegation, made up of prominent leaders in the ruling General People Congress, left the country on December 14 and is currently meeting with some opposition leaders from South Yemen in the British capital London.

According to the weekly, negotiations between the government delegation and opposition leaders in London are expected to continue for some days to come. It added that such negotiations are expected to shift to other capital cities in the Arab world among them Damascus, Cairo and Abu Dhabi.

According to the paper's sources, the negotiations are proceeding in a slow rhythm and are facing numerous difficul-

ties, particularly as the southern leaders insist on returning to the Document of Pledge and Accord as a main goal for the dialogue.

Giving his address to the Yemeni people on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, President Ali Abdullah Saleh described the opposition leaders' demands and conditions as contradictory to the dialogue and its objectives.



26 September Weekly, Organ of the Yemeni Army
Thursday, December 27

Top Stories

- President Saleh to meet Advisory Panel on Saturday to discuss his electoral platform
- Practical steps to complete studies on establishment of military housing fund
- Authorities finalize resolving land disputes in Aden
- U.S. News website selects President Saleh "Man of the Year"
- Assistant Chief of Taiz Security Department exposed to an ambush
- Yemen expends efforts to obtain membership at Arab Labor Organization
- NDI calls for supporting Saleh's constitutional amendments initiative

The weekly quoted Yemen News Agency, Saba, as saying that Director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) Peter Dimitroff called on Tuesday for supporting President Saleh's initiative for constitutional amendments, considering the move toward a presidential system a source of pride due to contest with systems in other democratic countries. "We are happy for these amendments and the call of president Saleh for dialogue with the other political parties and we agree with him that this will have a

positive impact in improving the ruling system as well as the democratic process," Dimitroff was quoted as saying.

NDI Country Director noted that these amendments will lead to reinforcing the importance and privilege of the parliament on contrary to fear of some people.

Regarding the democratic and parliamentary process in Yemen, Dimitroff said that it witnesses a remarkable progress and the NDI chose Yemen as a regional headquarters in four countries to benefit from its democratic experience.

He added that the Yemeni Parliament has taken an advanced step in issuing related legislations on fighting corruption and the continuous questioning of ministers, hoping that Parliament plays a major role in budgets and contacts with civil society organizations. Dimitroff gave a detailed explanation on work of the institute in the field of democracy on the count of politics, noting that the institute has been working in Yemen for 12 years and has four main programs to support Yemen's democratic development.



AL-Sahwa Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Islah Party
Thursday, December 27

Top Stories

- Son of murdered sheikh demands authorities to transfer involved soldiers to court
- Three soldiers shot dead, another nine injured in armed clashes with followers of Sheikh Al-Qaisi in Shara'ab
- Firecrackers spreading among Sa'ada locals to mark the Ghadir Day despite security warnings
- Hadramout Revolutionaries Association to be declared soon

- International Federation of Journalists demands that charges filed against Al-Khaiwani be abolished
- Khab Forum in Jawf province denounces involvement of armed forces in political conflicts

The Khab Forum, made up of citizens from Al-Jawf governorate, urged the authority to review the administrative division of their district, which turned to have one local council instead of two in the past, the weekly reported. It went on to say that the forum released a statement, of which it obtained a copy, denouncing behavior of the employment committee in the governorate that sold their district's share of job opportunities to other areas although the district has qualified applicants for such job vacancies.

The forum insisted that the governorate authorities must investigate the officials who sold their district's share of job opportunities to other areas and give the district's locals a top priority in recruitment, particularly as Khab is the largest and most populous district in the governorate. Participants also urged the government to provide their district with more projects and public services for its being the largest and most populous in the remote province.

According to Al-Sahwa weekly, locals of Khab and Shaghaf districts appealed to Al-Jawf governor to immediately finish implementation of Al-Buqe'- Hazm Road, as well as connect the district villages with the public highway and set up a deadline for finishing the work. The forum denounced involvement of government troops in political conflicts between locals and the government, urging the relevant authorities to do justice in the distribution of service and social insurance projects



Al-Wahdawi Weekly, Mouthpiece of the Nasserite Unionist Popular Organization (NUPO)
Tuesday, December 25

Top Stories

- JMP Spokesman: Corrupt officials will forcibly flee the country, authority will fall
- Neither President Saleh nor his party are entitled to amend the constitution, says JMP leadership
- Sa'ada tribes hold authority responsible for government complex incident
- Traffic accidents kill 48 Yemeni people, injure 413 others within five days
- Saudi nationals face charges of supporting Al-Qaeda operations in Yemen
- UN warns refugees against traveling to Yemen

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has begun a campaign in the Horn of Africa to warn the would-be migrants to Yemen about the hazards of

crossing illegally to the Arab country, located in the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, the weekly reported in a front page story. It quoted BBC News as saying that the UNHCR has published leaflets in Somali and Ethiopian languages in addition to radio cautions of the excessive risks of the journey.

Somali refugees are not the only persons who are risking the crossing but also Ethiopians trying to raise themselves from poverty by seeking work and a better life in the Middle East, or Europe, aid agencies say. The agency says more than 1,400 have died - killed by smugglers or drowned at sea - including some 58 last week.

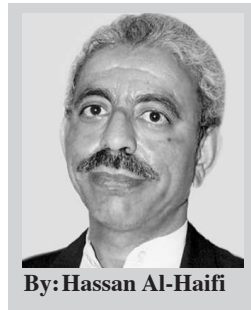
Sheikh Abdulqader, chief of the elders in Bossasso told UNHCR that without the international community support, the Somali government can not prevent these desperate people from crossing, according to the BBC. A Somali diplomat in Yemen said he feared that 180 people had drowned in the past week. Somalia has not had a functioning national government for 16 years. The UN says some one million people are living rough, including 60% of the population of Mogadishu, following recent fighting..

COMMON SENSE

Great losses for Yemen and the Moslem Nation

The loss of Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar

The untimely death of His Excellency the Paramount Sheikh of the Hashid Tribal Confederation and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Yemen could not have come at a worst time. The 74 years old patriot and fighter for the freedom of his people will be mourned far beyond the normal three day official mourning accorded to him by the Government of Yemen or even the social mourning period of 40 days accorded by social practice. The observer is inclined to wonder if things could ever be the same in Yemen with the absence of the sagacious, patient and chivalrous character of the late Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar. One could not forget all the many episodes, events and tribulations that the people of Yemen have been subjected to over the years, where the Sheikh played a vital and instrumental role in softening the blow to the vast majority of the people of Yemen, as the various forces of internal and external intrigues sought to make life difficult for the people of Yemen. Yes, the Sheikh was always there to provide his wisdom and sense of compassion for his fellow Yemenis of all sects and tribal affiliations, for he was also related by marriage directly or through his children to members all the social and ethnic affiliations that Yemenis may be grouped into and he never displayed any difference in feelings towards any of the tribal affiliations that Yemenis emanate from (Hashemites, Hashidites, Balkilis and Madhhajis) and accordingly all those who emanate from any genealogical line could be assured of a just and peaceful resolution of their issues. With all the background information that the observer could recall of the great Sheikh (and no one in Yemen could not help but call him great and memorable), the observer merely delved on those matters that touched on the heart and soul of the Yemeni people throughout the Sheikh's life of sacrifice, struggle and merely being at the right place at the right time - i.e., just when he was most needed. May God bless his soul and compensate Yemen for this very tragic loss indeed.



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

The Loss of Benazir Bhutto

Of all the great leaders that this region occupied by this aptly called "Middle Nation of Islam" has known, none has so touched this observer in so many ways as the late Benazir Bhutto, the two-time (and sure to have been three times) former Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This observer could not hold back the tears in recalling the ugly fate that this remarkable woman of politics and public service was accorded by the hostile forces that have rendered everything beautiful and useful in this world ugly and horrendously cruel. What madness has this world come to, when this blossom of freedom and true defender of all the philanthropy and good governance that Islam truly stood, would be rewarded with vindictive slaughter - a glorious genuine martyrdom? Have people lost all sense of values to allow themselves to be used as pawns to eradicate all that the good of human conscience stood for?

Who was Benazir Bhutto? She was that formidable woman who told the world that Islam was far more modern than these backward morons of extreme dogmatism wished to believe. She told the world (with credit equally shared by the truly faithful people of Pakistan) that in Islam there is no gender problem, because like all women of the world, Moslem women can indeed reach for the zenith of intellect and power and come out with a clean public office record of great distinction and achievement. Throughout the period that she managed to hold the reins of power in Pakistan her performance outmatched any of the masculine PMs that preceded her and followed her. Just to give one example of her genuine good intents for her people, she managed to have 7000 schools a year built for the children of Pakistan, just so the children of Pakistan will not have to turn to those educational bastions of extremism, the Wahhabi Madrasas, that eventually were introduced in Pakistan, out of which came the Taliban and all the other contractors of death, of which the Moslem World craves to be relieved, by the will of the Lord Al-Mighty and the efforts of all decent peace loving people of the Moslem World. May God bless her, for she will always be a beacon of light and inspiration for all people of moderation and good sense.

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

Every citizen is a journalist

The journalist training program at the American University of Beirut organized a training session recently that focused on 'citizen/electronic journalism.' Menassat.com sums up the do's and don't's.

By: Kahldoun Zein al-Din

In early December, the journalist training program at the American University of Beirut organized a training session that focused on concepts of "citizen/electronic journalism." Fourteen trainees from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq participated in the session headed by the program's director Magda Abu Fadel with the assistance of U.S. writer and producer Jessica Deer and the Executive Manager of AUB's publications, Carina Rodriguez.

Held over five consecutive days, program discussions centered on blogs, their weaknesses and strengths as a media platform, and the limits and the capabilities of digital technology.

The seminar also tackled the details of how to produce a blog, outlining the ideas, the format, how to publish images and information, video and audio, in addition to methods of digital editing for photos on the internet and the editing of sound and video.

Using available digital methods, the participants were also shown how to function as a digital news agency by using blogs and RSS feeds to keep Internet users up to date with the latest news postings.

All of these points of discussion fell under the larger umbrella of "the ethics of electronic journalism." According to Abu Fadel, this type of journalism, even in a free media environment, is still subjected to moral conditions and structures such as sourcing information before publishing.

Abu Fadel and her team explained how creating such things as hyperlinks is a simple way of making the research available to the end users - if for nothing else to promote transparency.

Indeed, for electronic journalists, one of the main problems discussed during the course of the program was how to

reach the largest number of readers while adhering to high standards of journalistic ethics - especially given the sheer amount of misinformation and unsourced material floating around on the Internet.

Both Deer and Rodriguez said success in the blogosphere begins by setting up a functional blog that utilizes template designs so as to not burden the writer with learning computer code. Some examples given by the lecturers included www.wordpress.com, www.blogspot.com, or www.livejournal.com.

Deer stressed a unique function inherent to blogs - interaction with the audience; giving blog visitors a chance to express their opinions about any cause or issue posted on the website. She said, "The blogger can divide his work into clear categories when there is interaction. He might enlist some materials under a special category covered by the journalist, while other materials fall under the category of opinion and view points."

Deer and Rodriguez also talked about utilizing the image on the internet. Specifically, they showed how to use a digital camera efficiently in a way that expresses reality. The same thing goes for recording voices on digital recorders or cell phone cameras. As was explained, utilizing multi-media elements is a means of backing up the material appearing on the blog.

As for writing, both lecturers said it was better to use strong words and exciting writing styles using active verbs in order to grab people's attention (without exaggerating the events).

Rodriguez gave a set of guidelines for attracting readers to a blog:

- Publish entries regularly, at least a few times each week;
- Use the tags which link the readers to your blog or website;
- Add the blog to a weblog such as



Lebanon, Beirut, car bomb.

www.technorati.com, www.itoot.net (in Arabic) in order to register the blog among these various blog listing sites;

- Make it clear that you tackle many issues and not just one topic;
- Add the maximum amount of information to back up what you say and to convince the reader that you are a trustworthy source.

Rodriguez also advised potential bloggers to ask, "Is the job complete, fair, clear, and exciting? What should I do to move the topic to another level?"

Jessica Deer discussed methods of protecting those who choose to blog in places where they may be at risk physically.

"If you have a reason to think that your work on the Internet will subject you to danger, there are secret ways to use the Internet. It is not an easy thing, but it might be possible if you put some effort into it," she said.

"This can be done by regularly moving the places where you use the

((وبشر الصابرين الذين اذا اصابتهم مصيبة
قالوا انا لله و انا اليه راجعون))

صرق الله العظيم

بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله وقدره تلقينا نبأ وفاة المغفور له بإذن
الله تعالى

الشيخ / عبد الله بن حسين الأحمر

رئيس مجلس النواب

وبهذا المصاب الجلل نتقدم بأحر التعازي وأصدق المواساة
إلى فخامة الأخ / علي عبد الله صالح - رئيس الجمهوريه
وإلى الشيخ / صادق عبد الله بن حسين الأحمر
وإلى الشيخ / حميد عبد الله بن حسين الأحمر
وإلى كافة أبناء الفقيد وجميع آل الأحمر

سائلين الله العلي القدير أن يتغمد الفقيد بواسع رحمته وأن يسكنه
فسيح جناته وأن يلهم أهله وذويه الصبر والسلوان ..
ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم



مجموعة شركات الرويشان
عنها الشيخ / محمد بن يحي الرويشان
رئيس مجلس الإدارة

((يا أيتها النفس المطمئنة، ارجعي إلى ربك راضية مرضية فادخلي في عبادي وادخلي جنتي)) صدق الله العظيم

With deepest sorrow and sadness
we learnt about the death of

Sheikh
Abdullah Bin Hussein Al-Ahmar

Speaker of the Parliament

Who passed away on Saturday,
December 29, 2007.

May Allah have mercy upon him
and bestow his family, relatives
and all the Yemeni people with
patience and fortitude.

For all employees, workers and
partners of
Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen
, Masila Block 14, and
Canadian Nexen Petroleum East Al-
Hajr Ltd – Block 51

Ali Sohaiki
Executive Director

Gregor Mawhinney
President and General Manager

بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله وقدره تلقينا نبأ وفاة
المغفور له بإذن الله تعالى

فقيد اليمن الشيخ /
عبد الله بن حسين الأحمر

رئيس مجلس النواب
الذي وافته المنية يوم السبت الموافق
٢٩ ديسمبر ٢٠٠٧

تغمد الله الفقيد بواسع رحمته وألهم أهله وذويه
وجميع أبناء الشعب اليمني الصبر والسلوان
وإنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

الأسيفون / كافة عمال وموظفي شركة كنديان
نكسن بترولיום يمن وشركاؤها في قطاع المسيلة
(١٤) وشركة كنديان نكسن بترولיום شرق
الحجر المحدودة في قطاع (٥١) .

عنهم :

جريجور ماويني
الرئيس والمدير العام

علي السحيقي
المدير التنفيذي

كنديان نكسن بترولיום يمن وشركاؤها في
قطاع المسيلة " ١٤ "
Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen
Masila Block (14)

CANADIAN
nexen

كنديان نكسن بترولיום شرق الحجر المحدودة
قطاع شرق الحجر " ٥١ "
Canadian Nexen Petroleum East Al Hajr Ltd.
Block (51)

Mistaken diagnoses are possible

By: Yemen Times Staff

Dr. Abdulqawi Al-Shamairi, secretary-general of the Modern Private Hospital, admits that it's possible for physicians to make mistakes during diagnosis, the key reason being that patients aren't given enough time for treatment. Diagnostic devices aren't as important as physicians themselves because if they allow sufficient time to diagnose patients, the process is more accurate.

He goes on to note that the availability of necessary diagnostic devices is a secondary factor. If these are unavailable, mistakes will be made during diagnosis; however, most of these devices are in the hands of Yemeni health facilities.

Regardless, Yemeni patients are always in a hurry, wanting everything done as quickly as possible in order to end their suffering; yet, if done correctly, some diagnostic measures last for days.

Al-Shamairi asserts that physicians making mistakes concerning simple or straightforward diseases doesn't cause major problems; however, serious or crit-

ical diseases must be diagnosed before treatment, as medication isn't to be administered simply by guesswork.

Additionally, he notes the difficulty of diagnosing often more than 50 patients amid the continual congestion at hospitals and clinics, as doctors can't examine this many patients within their limited four-hour time span. Nevertheless, examinations are performed this way, leading to mistaken diagnoses due to the pressure.

Further complicating matters are those poor Yemeni patients experiencing financial difficulties, which is a daily occurrence. Patients are unable to pay the cost of diagnosis, as the often tedious process is quite costly. As a result, doctors sometimes resort to making easy diagnoses that either are incomplete or purely wrong, Al-Shamairi admits.

Due to a lack within their culture, Yemeni patients sometimes don't return to their same physician, instead seeing different doctors. Regardless, doctors should explain everything clearly and completely to patients regarding their case. This is especially important concerning initiating medication and its appropriate response time.

Al-Shamairi maintains that the more



Doctor takes the child weight

time physicians allow for the diagnostic process and for patients to follow up their case, the more the process will be carried out correctly.

If the following four conditions are observed, patient diagnosis will be correct and accurate: doctors must be sufficiently qualified, patients should be granted enough time by their physician for their examination, they should be ready to follow up their cases and diagnostic devices should be available and operational.

Additionally, it's vital to take care of laboratories because most of the time, mistakes are made there due to the fact that many chemicals being used in some labs are expired. Also occurring at private hospitals outside of Sana'a, its cause is attributed to lack of international monitoring. Such chemicals may turn patients' cases upside down.

Emergency physician Maher Al-Shami proposes that there are several reasons for differing diagnoses between doctors, potentially involving the physician, the patient or the disease itself. For example, the disease may be rarely diagnosed or unknown; such diseases require numerous tests following diagnosis.

While doctors still may make mistakes concerning rare diseases that are difficult to diagnose, they shouldn't make mistakes regarding common diseases.

Additionally, Al-Shami stresses the importance of patients' psychological state, which plays a vital role in helping them accept medication, so he looks for psychological ease in his patients. He also believes that it's important that a physician treat his or her patients well. For example, how a disease is presented to a patient helps him or her to accept the required medication.

Neurological and spinal consultant Dr. Abdulrahman H. Al-Malki asserts that many cases are mistakenly diagnosed by fellow medical colleagues, with most such cases being handled by non-specialized physicians, such as those practicing general medicine or recently graduated physicians with limited experience.

However, he points out that there is some cooperation between these physicians and the others, with such relations and procedures coming under professional etiquette.

Source: Fourth National Conference for Population Policy

Updated environment protection law forthcoming

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

Mahmoud Shudaiwah, Chairman of Environment Protection Authority (EPA), has declared that the authority will draw up a new environment protection law in keeping with new developments occurring on the national level, as the environment is important both nationally and politically.

The director went on to say that the new law contains both new articles, as well as those covered in the previous law. To ensure sustainable development, the new law seeks to achieve the following:

1- Protecting and preserving environmental safety and balance, as well as maintaining Yemen's environment-related natural systems.

2- Fighting all forms of pollution and avoiding any potentially direct or indirect impacts caused by implementing economic, agricultural, industrial or construction development programs, among other programs, seeking to improve living standards and increase affluence.

3- Protecting and developing natural resources, as well as preserving Yemen's native flora and fauna and properly utilizing them to benefit current and future generations.

4- Protecting the lives of humans, flora and fauna in Yemen against environmentally harmful activities and those

actions that hinder the rightful usage of natural things.

5- Preventing environmentally detrimental impacts generated by activities conducted outside Yemeni boundaries and waters.

6- Implementing Yemeni-ratified international commitments to protect the environment, fight contamination and preserve natural resources, the ozone layer and the safety of life via a well-organized mechanism.

7- Contributing via provisions stipulated in the new law's rules and regulations to protect international environmental aspects, such as the climate and the ozone layer.

Shudaiwah further stated that the Ministry of Water and Environment and the General Authority for Environment

Protection seek to protect Yemen's environment from contamination and desertification.

This can be achieved by adopting and activating relevant legislation and awareness programs, in addition to encouraging the participation of local communities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and women to reform environmental conditions, thus leading to further contributions to enhancing sustainable development and improving public health.

The two governmental bodies are undertaking such actions with a view toward preserving environmental safety, balance and variety of life, as well as maintaining the Yemeni environment's natural systems and their development without harming the rights of future generations, he noted.

erations, he noted.

The director added that a safety-related bylaw has been formulated to regulate the formation of a national committee to be responsible for such safety. The bylaw specifies the committee's tasks and specializations, as well as measures regarding importing, exporting and monitoring genetically modified organisms. It further contains regulations stipulated in the Yemen-ratified Cartagena Protocol pertaining to such biosafety.

The new law also contains a new article entitled the Environment Protection Development Program, the purpose of which is to support and encourage the Yemeni environment's protection and preservation-related activities and projects by reducing pollution emissions and influencing consumption patterns.



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Beit Al-Faqih: History covered with trash

Although it is one of Yemen's historical cities, Beit Al-Faqih has become a trash dump, causing its 24,208 residents to face numerous diseases as a result. Its students even study in old buildings surrounded with trash. *Hamed Thabet* visited the city and talked with locals.



Beit Al-Faqih Fort is a 10-meter high archeological fort dating back to the Ottoman period and built by Turkish governor Mustafa Basha (1538-1630); however, it's now surrounded with trash.

For those who study the history of Yemen's ancient cities, Beit Al-Faqih, located in the western governorate of Hodeidah, would seem to be a central attraction, a historical place to visit and above all, one of Yemen's landmarks. Having assured its place in Yemeni history during the Islamic period, Beit Al-Faqih no longer holds such prominence today.

Had the Ministry of Tourism attended to it, the city could have become one of Yemen's most attractive tourist sites for both locals and foreigners.

Beit Al-Faqih is a city with many asphalt roads, but unfortunately, they are covered in trash. Tour guide Abdulwareth laments, "Whenever I bring tourists here, I must explain to them about the city because it's my job. They ask only two questions: 'Why did you bring us here?!' and 'Why didn't you tell us before about all this trash?'"

Twenty years ago, ancient cities like Beit Al-Faqih were sites for trash. Because there were only a few of them, residents didn't throw their garbage in the dumps, instead believing it the rain's responsibility to wash it away.

However, since then, the trash has increased due to lack of rainfall.

According to Farouq Al-Khazzan, an area consultant who advises Beit Al-Faqih residents, "Whenever anyone wants to build a house or plant a tree, he faces meters of trash buried in the ground because people long ago used to throw their trash everywhere, on top of which dirt and dust continually accumulated."

Materials shortage

Only four small garbage collectors employing 20 workers operate in Beit Al-Faqih, which is insufficient. Also, trash around the garbage container is normal because there are only a few garbage dumps in Beit Al-Faqih.

Local sheikh Mohammed Al-A'izzi points out, "We need more materials to accomplish this operation, but residents also don't care about keeping their city clean. We've had numerous awareness campaigns to make them understand not to throw trash in front of their houses, but rather to put it in the garbage container, but only a few were attracted to this idea and then they stopped."

Instead, residents simply blame the government and their local council for

not doing anything about the problem. In fact, Al-A'izzi affirms that it's the government's and the local council's responsibility to provide the means and necessary awareness education, but residents also must show some interest on their side to keep their city and environment clean.

While there were previous cleanup efforts, they stopped before they even started due to no cooperation or interest by residents.

The sheikh further notes that the local council and other authorities previously planned to provide more garbage collectors and workers, but until now, nothing has materialized, the main reason being "lack of funds."

The city's residents constantly complain of diseases such as asthma and malaria, as well as increased insects and malaria-carrying Anopheles mosquitoes everywhere, which they wish to see eradicated.

According to Yahya Abu Al-Ghaith, secretary-general of Islah, Yemen's largest opposition party, and secretary-general of Beit Al-Faqih's Social Cooperative Association, "Humans aren't human unless they understand the meaning and importance of cleanliness. Cleanliness is next to godliness, so people must understand this."

He adds, "Instead of complaining about insects and diseases, they should realize that they brought these problems upon their city themselves due to their carelessness and heedlessness in throwing their trash everywhere."

Problems

Lack of public awareness is the main reason for such problems, as Al-Ghaith explains, "We tried, doing our best to enlighten residents, even using mosque speakers and giving many admonitions and advice at qat gatherings, in addition to simple awareness programs." However, he admits, "While all of these activities produced good results, they were only temporary and then citizens returned to their previous bad habits."

Standing in front of one of the city's schools, Al-A'izzi pointed to it and asked in a very loud voice, "Do you know what this building is for?!" to which he immediately responded, "This is where our children are educated! Have you ever seen a school surrounded by trash? Throughout the world, schools and their environment are the cleanest, but in Beit Al-Faqih, they are the dirtiest."

He continued, "How can a historical place like Beit Al-Faqih exist among all this trash? Our city, which claims its fame from the post-Islamic period, is considered one of Yemen's most

historic locations. Moreover, its historic fortress and mosques from the Ottoman and Sufi periods are in great need of repair. Because our valuable heritage is receiving no attention from anyone, it has become a garbage dump instead of being a place for tourism."

Nevertheless, Al-A'izzi points out, government offices also have the same trash problem.

Proposed solutions

Beit Al-Faqih residents pay YR 300 tax on their electric bills, which is specifically for cleaning. However, Al-Ghaith muses, "I want to know where this YR 300, as well as the other 5 percent in taxes we pay in other fields, goes? If officials collected these sums and used them in the right way, which is to clean the city, the problem essentially would be solved."

He adds, "The local council always promises city residents that they will create a perfect plan to clean up the city; however, every time, they tell us, 'Due to budget shortages, these plans will be suspended.'"

Paving the city and its roads would help keep it clean, as Abdulwareth explains, "Many times, we've asked the local council to pave lanes and roads, but regrettably, no one listens to us, as if we're from another planet."

Al-Ghaith proposes, "I wish heavy penalties would be imposed upon whoever throws trash out carelessly and doesn't show respect for the city. I think punishing the careless and disrespectful would make residents reconsider before doing such a thing. We've tried to educate them and tell them the disadvantages that can be brought about, but no one listens to us. They simply are waiting for others and the authorities to do something for them."

"If the local council and officials keep saying they don't have money or they will have it next year, and if they continue avoiding these challenges and shirking their responsibility toward this problem, it would be better if they empowered us to do it our way. Maybe if we, as residents of Beit Al-Faqih, had the power, we would do it better."

However, Al-Ghaith regrets, "I doubt this because the sad fact we are living with is that although we want things to change for the better, in the end, Beit Al-Faqih will remain as it is because talking is easier than action."

"Finally, Beit Al-Faqih residents dream of having a clean place to live. They should've shown some interest a long time ago, but now when the problem has increased, residents can't bear the responsibility alone. The government and the local council must unite and cooperate to accomplish this," Al-A'izzi concludes.

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Pa Chin: A literary and revolutionary Chinese anarchist

Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman

Li Yaotang, whose courtesy name was Li Feigan, was a Chinese novelist, short story writer, essayist, translator and intellectual who wrote under the pseudonym Pa Chin (also Ba Jin) taken from the Chinese transliterations of the first syllable of Mikhail A. Bakunin and the last of Peter A. Kropotkin, both Russian anarchists he admired.

Pa Chin was born in 1904 into a wealthy family in Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Szechuan province. After his parents died when he was 12, family authority passed to his despotic grandfather, who forbade him from entering a modern school.

Family feuding broke out in 1917 when Pa Chin's grandfather died and authority transferred to an elder uncle.

Known as the May Fourth Movement, the 1915-1922 New Culture Movement reached Chengdu and the new literature came into Pa Chin's hands at age 15. Affected by the popular anarchic publications of Kropotkin and Emma Goldman, as well as seeking an escape from his patriarchal and feudalistic family home, he joined local anarchist group, the Equality Society.

In 1920, Pa Chin enrolled in the Chengdu Foreign Language Specialist School to study English and engaged in organizing the Crescent literary journal.

Pa Chin left Chengdu in 1923 to study, moving to Nanjing and Shanghai, where he entered a prep school affiliated with Southeast China University, after which he attended Dongnan University, mastering Esperanto and vehemently continuing his anarchist activism.

In January 1927, Pa Chin left China for further studies in France, where he joined a group of young Chinese anarchists and other exiles of various nationalities. He spent the next 22 months in Paris in the small town of Château-Thierry on the Marne River.

Except for studying French language, Pa Chin didn't pursue much formal education, but he read widely on philosophy and social problems, as well as Western fiction.

Upon returning to Shanghai in 1928, Pa Chin continued writing and working on translations and found himself an acclaimed writer.

He spent the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) in China, moving to a succession of wartime capitals before finally returning to Chengdu. Actively involved in propaganda against the Japanese invasion, he worked on the publication, Nahan (Outcries), and was one of the leaders of the All-China Association of Artists and Writers for Resistance.

Pa Chin served as editor-in-chief of Shanghai's Cultural Life and Pingming publishing houses in 1944. Choosing to remain in China following the 1949 Communist takeover, he also was chief editor of the Shanghai-based Literary and Art Monthly, as well as Harvest



and Shanghai Literature.

Additionally, Pa Chin was a foreign correspondent in Korea for seven months in 1952 before being elected vice chairman of the China Writers' Association in 1953. As a correspondent, he also visited Japan in 1961 and was elected chairman of the Shanghai Federation of Literary and Arts Circles in 1962.

Branded a counterrevolutionary during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution, Pa Chin therefore was purged and didn't reappear until 1977, after he had been rehabilitated considerably. Consequently, he was elected a deputy to the 1978 National People's Congress, followed by chairman of the China Writers Association in 1983.

Pa Chin's literary works have been translated into and published in numerous foreign languages. He also has received prizes and medals from Italy and the former Soviet Union for his contributions in translating and introducing foreign literary works to the Chinese people.

In the two decades before the late 1950s, Pa Chin wrote nearly 20 novels and translated just as many foreign works, as well as more than 70 short stories. While studying in France in 1927, he began writing his first novel, "Mieh-wang" (Destruction), about the life of a young Shanghai revolutionary anarchist.

Pa Chin is most acclaimed for his autobiographical "Turbulent Stream" trilogy, including his masterpiece, "Chia" (Family, 1931), and the trilogy's other two novels, "Spring" (1938) and "Autumn" (1940). Describing the struggle between young intellectuals and their family traditions, the trilogy became a classic in modern Chinese literature.

In 1934, Pa Chin completed his Love trilogy, consisting of the novels "Fog" (1931), "Rain" (1933) and "Lightning" (1935), in addition to a novelette, "Thunder." His Love trilogy describes the life of revolutionary intellectuals and other vital problems as the purpose of human life, friendship and love.

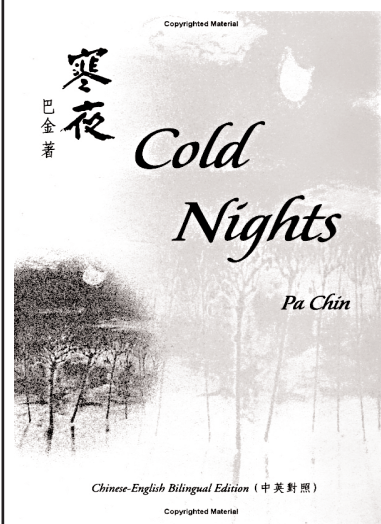
Beginning with the battle for Shanghai, Pa Chin's three-volume novel, "Fires" (1941-1945), tells the story of this new, often heroic, generation. Among his other works from the postwar period are the short novels, "A Garden of Repose" (1944) and "Ward No. 4" (1946), while another of Pa Chin's masterpieces, "Han-yeh" (Cold Nights, 1947), tells the story of a couple whose dreams are shattered by the war and the tragic loss of their idealism.

Between 1978 and 1986, Pa Chin penned a series of 150 essays entitled, "Suixiang Lu" (Random Thoughts), largely dealing with China's Cultural Revolution. He also translated literary works by Russian and French writers, winning him the 1982 Dante International Prize and being nominated for the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature.

In his later years, Pa Chin was stricken with a form of Parkinson's disease in 1983 before dying at the ripe old age of 101 in Shanghai on Oct. 17, 2005. His death marked the end of an era in Chinese literature, as he was the last major writer alive during the May Fourth Movement.



Beit Al-Faqih is a central attraction, a historical place and one of Yemen's landmarks.



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Opportunities for investment in vocational training

By: YemenTimes Staff

One of the underlying fundamentals of economic development is that the source of one's wealth is one's work, was it the process of value addition through physical work, was it the intellectual efforts excreted into a piece of art or in designing a process, or the ability to take advantage of current resources at hand, including human resources and skills. This is where vocational training comes to mind.

Minister of Vocational Training and Technical Education Dr. Ibrahim Hajri has reiterated that Vocational Training and Technical Education is of extreme relevance to Economic development, as on the micro level, technical education provides the skills and abilities which are required by the job market, thereby giving graduates a direct employability, while on the macro level technical education supplies the labor market with the human resources required by industry, especially given the fact that there are many investments and new corporations to be formed in the country.

The minister also indicated that 65 vocational training institutions were overwhelmed by the demand for education and training, stating that several institutions received far too many enrollment applications, sometimes double the absorption capacity of the institutions, attributing this demand to the



Vocational training provides employment opportunities for Yemeni workforce and skilled workforce for industry.

increased awareness of the importance of vocational training for the economy, and the rewarding returns for investing in this type of education.

The total number of enrolled students in vocational training institutions for Academic year 2007/2008 reached 24,126, which is

around 361 students per institution. Sources at the ministry of vocational training stated that due to the increased demand to enrollment, the ministry has developed a screening process in order to select the most promising students for enrollment, this resulted in the high successful completion rate of 98.7 percent.

The ministry has also devised plans to work in collaboration with the private sector in order to provide qualified human resources, suiting the needs of industry and business, allowing business to feed into the national five-year strategic plan.

The strategic plan aims at increasing the enrollment of high school graduates to vocational training centers, from the current 5 percent to 7 percent in 2010.

This increase will require the establishment of another 80 vocational training institutes in the country.


The plan also aims at synergizing its components with the industrial development plan, which aims at setting up several specialized industrial zones in coastal areas, in order to provide qualified labor force in close proximity to employability locations.

Yemen has also requested technical cooperation and assistance from neighboring countries in order to help

support the vocational training strategic plan, including setting quotas for vocational Yemeni laborers in the job market of Gulf Cooperative Council countries, in order to help Yemen build on its most important and available asset, people.

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