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Inside:  **5** Yemeni widows hammered by poverty and cultural norms

 **12** Sana'a trees need protection from exhaust smoke

 **14** Ancient Babylon: A Metaphor for the Dark Side of Civilization

Based on presidential directives to release political detainees, Parliament likely to approve Election Law amendments, choose SCER candidate

By: Aqeel Al-Halali
For The Yemen Times

SANA'A, Aug. 18 — The Yemeni Parliament is likely to approve today the Public Election Law amendment project that the Yemeni government presented for the second time late last month.

The government project includes a complete amendment of 23 items, in addition to eight clauses in another seven items in the Election Law, based on European Union recommendations following the most recent presidential election in September 2006 and a principle agreement Yemen's political parties signed in June 2006.

Yesterday, Parliament delayed voting

on the Election Law amendment until today, giving the Joint Meeting Parties a 24-hour respite to announce their candidates for the Supreme Commission for Election and Referendum.

The delay seeks to enable the JMP to choose a list of 15 candidates, nine of whom will be selected by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, to succeed past members of the commission, which was invalidated last November.

Concerning the reasons for Parliament's third suspension of the amendment project, Ali Abu Hilaiah, head of Parliament's Constitutional Committee, told the Yemen Times that members of Parliament agreed not to vote on the amendment project until all

political parties announce their candidates for SCER membership.

Noting that the JMP's parliamentary blocs did not announce their candidates yesterday, Al-Hilaiah commented, "This caused chaos in Parliament, which was about to cancel its session." In fact, the parliamentary bloc of the General People's Congress, which holds 229 of 301 seats in Parliament, had begun leaving the session, threatening to approve the previous Election Law.

Abu Hilaiah reported that the head of Islah Party's parliamentary bloc, Abdulrahman Ba Fadhl, undertook that the JMP announce their candidates for SCER membership today, further "denying any agreement between the GPC and

the JMP concerning SCER seats."

Abu Hilaiah explained that the Yemeni Parliament will approve 15 candidates selected from among all of the political parties, noting that "President Saleh has the utmost authority to choose whomever he wishes from the list."

Regarding presidential directives to release political detainees, Abu Hilaiah confirmed that President Saleh has given directives to release those political detainees not proven to be involved in any major or criminal crimes, as well as those whom judicial verdicts have found not guilty. However, he refused to give the names of those political detainees included in the presidential amnesty.

Continued on page 2



Sa'ada security situation relatively calm

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SA'ADA, Aug. 17 — The current security situation in Sa'ada is relatively calm, with the exception of occasional violations committed by individuals from time to time, a reliable source from the governorate said Sunday.

Requesting anonymity, the source noted that any security violations are

being addressed quickly, but mediation committees must be more patient and wise in order to realize progress on the ground.

Regarding achievements by the government committee mandated to assess damages in the war-torn governorate, the same source noted that the committee's teams working in Al-Talh area are optimistic about making progress on the ground.

Yemen's Local Administration Minister and head of the government committee, Abdulqader Ali Hilal, affirmed in a statement to local media outlets on Saturday that the Yemeni government cares about developing and reconstructing villages on Yemen's border with Saudi Arabia.

Hilal stressed the necessity of providing electricity and water services to border villages in Al-Dhahir district, particularly Marahidh village, and connecting them to paved roads. He confirmed that the government will give

the district top priority, providing its residents development and service projects in recognition of their support for the Yemeni army during its fight against Houthi rebels.

The committee recently released a report on both public and private property damaged during the four-year fighting between Houthis and Yemeni government troops. The report indicat-

ed indirect compensation for those citizens whose farmlands were damaged, as part of government efforts to focus on promoting agricultural products.

The committee further discussed consecutive measures taken by the Sa'ada Reconstruction Fund and the Investment Program, as well as the governorate's budget for the fiscal year 2008. It obliges the relevant govern-

ment agencies and the governorate's local authority to create reports on the entirety of the operations they undertook in Sa'ada.

Government and Houthis exchange prisoners

Regarding an exchange of prisoners detained in the conflict, tribal sources say Houthi field leader Abdulmalik Al-Houthi last week released 117 military and security soldiers whom his gunmen had been detaining for months.

On its side, the Yemeni government released 70 war prisoners seized from among Sa'ada residents, including former mediation committee member Sheikh Saleh Al-Wajman, who has been jailed at the Interior Ministry for two years. It also freed Sheikh Naji Bukhtan and dozens of other detained Houthi loyalists totaling 1,200 detainees.

"We're optimistic that other jailed

Houthi followers will be freed by presidential pardon before the advent of the holy month of Ramadan," a senior Houthi supporter stated on condition of anonymity.

In related news, religious cleric Mohammed Bin Mohammed Al-Mansour sent a letter to President Ali Abdullah Saleh urging him to free his friend, cleric Mohammed Miftah, chairman of Al-Haq Party's Shoura Council and a Houthi loyalist. Miftah has been in a coma since last Thursday evening after he began a hunger strike to protest his two-month detention for no apparent reason.

Additionally, several women whose male relatives have been detained for alleged connections to the Sa'ada fighting met with Interior Minister Mutaher Rashad Al-Masri last week following three consecutive sit-ins in front of the presidential palace.

Continued on page 2

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World Bank study: COCA should be independent

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For The Yemen Times

SANA'A, Aug. 17 — The World Bank recently stressed the necessity of the Central Organization for Control and Auditing, or COCA, and the Anti-Corruption Authority being fully and truly independent in their work, maintaining that their current supposed independence is merely ink on paper.

This came during a seminar regarding an "analytic review of the legal and legislative framework of anti-corruption in Yemen" organized by the Anti-Corruption Authority and conducted by the World Bank. Awren Aria, senior specialist in public sector management for the Middle East and North Africa, presented the WB study results.

Considered a form of technical assistance the World Bank offered to the Anti-Corruption Authority, the study involved basic studies of corruption affairs, a review and analysis of the legal and legislative frameworks concerned with combating corruption, as well as the institutional structure of anti-corruption authorities.

It seeks to put in place plans and mechanisms of the Anti-Corruption Authority, in addition to preparing a national strategy to combat corruption and build the capacity of the authority's personnel.

The study found that much Yemeni legislation related to combating corruption is inconsistent or is repeated in such a way causing overlapping of authorities on certain issues. Yemeni legislation widened the scope of the law to contain within its definition of a corrupt act other crimes with criminal characteristics.

Additionally, the WB study points out that COCA has no authority to take immediate legal action nor to report or

complain about any acts that violate Public Prosecution or Anti-Corruption Authority laws.

Prior to this, COCA first must submit a report to the incumbent authority and then wait 30 days before filing its complaints with Public Prosecution, stressing that the law should be amended so that the monitoring apparatus informs the Anti-Corruption Authority just as it does with the Public Prosecution.

The WB study also notes that the budgets of the Anti-Corruption Authority and the monitoring apparatus should be wholly independent from the Ministry of Finance. "Although the law stipulates that COCA's budget is independent, it complains of Finance Ministry practices that aren't indicative of such independence, even regarding finances."

The study further alleges that Yemen's finance minister deals with the apparatus as he deals with other authorities within the scope of executive bodies, rather than as independent bodies.

Further, based on the monitoring apparatus's own reports, it sees no reflections of its activities within the incumbent bodies, which take no action against those who commit violations and crimes.

Ahmed Al-Anisi, head of the Anti-Corruption Authority, says that the study prepared by two World Bank experts must be reviewed and examined thoroughly in order to come up with a better vision to activate the Anti-Corruption Authority's role and complement the other institutions involved in combating corruption in Yemen.

He notes that there's strong political will to combat corruption within the nation and eradicate its sources, pointing out that his authority realized many accomplishments during its first year of operation by promoting the authority's

institutional capacity and coordinating with other concerned institutions.

Al-Anisi maintains that the authority has disclosed numerous corruption issues, with such corruption crimes being transferred to the judiciary while the authority still is investigating others.

However, he stressed that the mechanism of the authority's work should be reviewed in order to improve its performance and enable it to realize its planned targets.

The WB study further criticized the current situation of the Public Prosecution, which, according to the 2006 legal amendment, is considered part of judicial authorities, revealing that in this case, the Public Prosecution both accuses and investigates on one hand, while judging on the other.

Furthermore, Public Prosecution cannot be prosecuted itself because it is a judicial entity. Thus, the WB study stressed that Yemen's Public Prosecution should be part of the Justice Ministry in order to ensure the judicial system's absolute independence.

The republic's Presidential Office director Ali Al-Anisi commented that the World Bank study contains numerous shortcomings such as neglecting the role of other institutions involved in fighting corruption, including the republic's presidency, the Central Bank, the Customs and Tax Authorities and Political and National Security apparatuses.

In this regard, he pointed out that National Security has disclosed numerous corruption practices and transferred them to the Public Finance Prosecution.

He further criticized the WB study because Yemeni experts did not participate in its preparation, noting that their participation is important because the study is considered a nucleus for the preparation of a national strategy to combat corruption.

Ministry issues warning on maize smut

SANA'A, Aug. 13 — (IRIN) The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) has warned farmers about a fungus known as "maize smut" and asked them to use seeds that do not contain the fungus.

The warning comes as the maize cultivation season gets under way.

Mansour al-Aqel, director-general of the MAI's agricultural information department, said maize smut appeared in Yemen many years ago due to farmers not selecting improved, clean seeds. The fungus only attacks maize.

"The spread of the disease depends on the farmers themselves. It is caused by selecting unclean spikes," he told IRIN on 12 August, adding "there are improved seeds that are treated in a way that can fight the fungus."

Al-Aqel said if farmers do not select improved and clean spikes, the losses caused by maize smut could be big. "Losses differ from one farmer to another. The lazy farmer would lose the most. On some farms, losses could run to 60 percent. If the fungus is left untreated, then it causes higher losses," he said.



Maize smut grows down the silks to the kernels and causes galls on the ears.

"Maize production has begun to increase. It is cultivated on 600,000 hectares and this year the area [of cultivation] has increased," al-Aqel said.

Yemen imports about 75 percent of its food needs, including 2.1 million

tonnes of cereals each year.

More about the disease

According to al-Aqel, when the maize crop is infected, black spores replace the kernels, making the plants useless.

Maize smut is a kind of fungus caused by the pathogenic plant fungus *Ustilago maydis*. It often enters plants through wounds made by cultivating equipment. The fungus grows down the silks to the kernels and causes galls on the ears.

According to a factsheet by Cornell University's Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, maize smut is now present in nearly all countries where maize is grown. "Any part of the plant above the ground can be invaded, although it is more common on the ears, the tassels and the nodes than it is on the leaves, the internodes and aerial roots. After the spores mature, the covering becomes dry and brittle, breaks open, and permits the black powdery contents to fall out," the factsheet says.

Maize grown on heavily manured soil often develops severe smut, especially in hot and humid conditions.

Sana'a Radio to produce Yemen's first digital radio magazine

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

SANA'A, Aug. 17 — Udo Prenzel, project manager of DW-AKADEMIE, a German-based international center dedicated to building the capacity of media around the world, recently announced that Radio Sana'a will produce a fully digital weekly radio magazine covering health issues.

"It will be the first time in Yemen that a program will be broadcast without tape, only via computer. Of course, it will have a different style, oriented to the needs of the audience, with practical information and hints on improving personal health," explained Prenzel, who recently conducted a weeklong training course at Sana'a Radio, Yemen's official radio station launched in 1947.

Attended by eight radio journalists, three of whom were women, and nine sound engineers, including two females, the training course, which concluded Aug. 4, was part of a long-term

project initiated two years ago to digitize Yemen's radio stations.

"During the past two years, we've focused on technicians and sound engineer, whereas this course was dedicated more to journalism aspects, content and presentation of radio programs," Prenzel noted.

Regarding media training and qualification in Yemen, Prenzel says one of the main obstacles is a lack of awareness that vocational training is necessary for both personal and societal development.

He noted, "It would be desirable that those who participate in training programs, e.g., English language courses or specific training on investigative journalism, would receive some benefit or gratification for their efforts."

He continued, "Unfortunately, too many people — in particular, too many superiors — still think vocational training is a waste of time. However, it's necessary in order to offer Yemenis the chance to improve and take part in global development, particularly in the field

of media, because Yemen is not isolated."

The long-term digitization project will continue to conduct several workshops and consulting projects in Yemen annually. "To create a framework for this cooperation, we'll sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Yemen's General Corporation for Radio and Television," Prenzel added.

"Our goal is to enable more Yemenis to become trainers and to hold workshops on journalism and technical issues. We desire to support radio and television in Yemen to become a modern broadcasting institution that is able to be a critical observer and mediator of political and societal developments," he concluded.

Yemen has eight radio stations: Sana'a Radio, Taiz Radio, Mukalla Radio, Aden Radio, Lahj Radio, Sayoun Radio, Hodeidah Radio and Abyan Radio, in addition to two television channels, all of which are under government authority.

Parliament has session on child survival and maternal health

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Aug. 15 — As part of its efforts to promote safe motherhood and AIDS combating legislation, the Yemeni Parliament invited UNICEF and UNFPA representatives to talk about the Millennium Development Goals and parliamentarians' role in accelerating Yemen's achievement of these goals, particularly numbers 4 and 5 relating to child survival and maternal health.

Kamal Bin Abdullah, chief of Young Child Survival and Development at UNICEF, explained to those parliamentarians attending the seminar Yemen's situation in relation to achieving the MDGs.

"Parliamentarians are the voice of the people and they have the responsibility to legislate laws that will help the nation's development. This is why it's crucial for MPs to understand the development situation in Yemen and how its achievement of these MDGs could be accelerated," Bin Abdullah said. He referred to an international meeting of MPs in Cape Town, South Africa last year wherein a large delegation of Yemeni MPs headed by Speaker of Parliament Yahya Al-Raie participated in the discussions and agreed on future

action plans to support Yemen's development.

As a result of the Cape Town meeting, Parliament committed to obtaining results for children by scaling up low-cost interventions, strengthening evidence-based solutions for integrated community-based approaches, measuring results to improve accountability and tracking progress, building effective partnerships, leveraging resources and implementing effective program communication and advocacy strategies.

Bin Abdullah emphasized that much could be done through even very simple measures, such as breastfeeding infants exclusively for the first six months and washing hands before eating.

"The science of child survival has reached critical mass knowledge of many evidence-based and cost-effective interventions to address the major killers of children," he said.

The parliamentary session was quite timely as the Safe Motherhood Law and the Combating AIDS and Protecting AIDS Patients' Law will be forwarded to Parliament for discussion and approval.

"The two laws have been tentatively approved, having been presented to Parliament as a whole. They also have

been discussed in the health and jurisprudence committees, both of which have agreed on the need for such legislation. We'll be discussing them soon item-by-item before they are approved finally," explained MPA. Bari Dughhaish of Parliament's Public Health and Population Committee.

Parliament currently has suspended its operations for the annual vacation, but will commence its duties on Oct. 10. Dughhaish expressed his optimism that these two pieces of legislation will be approved because they aim at the overall good of the nation, adding that, "Everyone wants it; it was just a matter of conveying the right message and learning how to promote and advocate new ideas in the right way."

Earlier, three issues in the Safe Motherhood Law raised points of disagreement and heated debate within Parliament.

They were: defining the minimum marriage age, criminalizing female genital mutilation and requiring premarital testing.

However, positive advocacy and civil society organizations' campaigning have promoted these issues, so they'll likely garner a better response when discussed in October.

Continued from page 1

Parliament likely to approve Election Law amendments, choose SCER candidate

MP Sultan Al-Atwani, head of the JMP-affiliated Nasserite parliamentary bloc, stressed the necessity of executing the president's "earnest and honest" directives. He stated that no one could imagine holding elections next April "while detainees remain in detention locations," pointing out that the "atmosphere should be convenient to conduct free and credible elections."

In a press statement, Al-Atwani accused "those within the government and its ruling party who are attempting to hinder the execution of the president's directives."

According to JMP sources, the president's amnesty includes the release of journalist Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani and popular singer Fahd Al-Qarni, who were sentenced to six years and 18 months, respectively.

The presidential directive also

includes releasing detainees and those still being prosecuted in the courts on charges of instigating secession of the south from the rest of the country.

JMP parliamentary blocs agreed on the law's amendments following the president's directives to release political detainees during a recent meeting between the two sides in Sana'a.

However, the JMP stipulated that its approval of the Election Law amendments depends upon the release of political detainees.

Sa'ada security situation relatively calm

The women appealed to Al-Masri to free their relatives, who remain imprisoned even now that the Sa'ada war has ended. Further, they denounced the way their relatives were arrested on the streets of Sana'a and subsequently thrown into security jails. They also expressed concern about the deteriorating conditions of their relatives.

Soldiers practice highway robbery

As many as 191 armed services soldiers returning from Al-Abr area in Sa'ada have established numerous checkpoints and begun practicing highway robbery. All of the soldiers are from eastern Al-Jawf governorate.

"We are exercising highway robbery against the [Yemeni] government because it has abused our rights and refused to give us our salaries," the angry soldiers maintain. "We supported the government in its fight against Houthis, but it did not consider our demands."

Their spokesperson further added, "We've established numerous points for highway robbery in the early morning in Khab and Shaaf districts. We'll continue conducting these highway thefts and looting any property belonging to the government until it grants us all of our rights as ensured by the [Yemeni] Constitution."

International Scouts explore Yemen

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For The Yemen Times

SANA'A, Aug. 17 — For the first time in Yemen, activities of the 17th Forum for Arab Scouts and the 11th International Civilization Forum to exchange cultures and recognize civilizations were launched Saturday.

Some 350 participants represented 17 Arab countries in the Arab Scouts, while another 56 participants were in the International Civilization Forum, representing 48 countries, 16 of whom were from Arab countries while 32 were foreign countries. Activities will run for 10 days.

Tariq Al-Haimi, international commissioner for the Scouting Association and head of the 11th International Civilization Forum, noted that many activities will be held during the forum, including visits to historical sights in Sana'a, Ibb, Marib, Taiz and Aden governorates.

Participants also will attend Yemeni wedding ceremonies in order to learn about Yemeni traditions at such social events, as well as visit the Horsemanship and Camel Racing Club in Sana'a to learn about Yemeni folk sports and games.

Additionally, five dialogue sessions will be held, gathering participants to discuss various cultural issues, as well as listen to university professors lecture on Yemeni history and civilization.

Aatif Abdulmajid, general secretary of the Arab Scouting Organization, noted that the two forums Yemen is hosting represent a turning point for Yemeni Scouting, adding that both Arab and foreign participants will have the opportunity to witness and experience Yemen's culture and ancient civilization.

"Regarding the cultural dialogues, religious scholars such as Sheikh Abdulmajid Al-Zindani and Amer



The scouts during their visit to wadi Dhafer area in sana'a.

Khalid will be involved in order to enable the participants to conduct constructive dialogue with those scholars who have vast experience in youth issues," Abdulmajid said.

He continued, "Through such dialogue, we seek to show the real image of Arab youths and their outstanding characteristics, such as determination, generosity and magnanimity. We want the whole world to know the real image of Arab nations and to correct the misconceptions that Westerners have about them."

In cooperation with the Arab Scouting Association and Yemen's Female Scouts and Guides Association, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has established camps at Revelation Sports City in Sana'a. The camps are named for ancient Yemeni civilizations such as Saba, Ma'een and Marib.

Supervised by several Yemeni Scout leaders, the International Civilization Forum trained 100 scout leaders from various Yemeni governorates to run the activities and supervise the camps.

Samir Ali Abdullah, supervisor of the Marib scouting camp at Sports City,

believes Yemeni Scouts will benefit from dialogue and activities with Arab and foreign participants, noting that he expects that Yemeni Scouts will gain much experience and learn a lot about other cultures.

Both Arab and foreign participants expressed their impressions about the forums and the experiences they received from visiting Yemen. "It was a source of both pleasure and knowledge to witness and experience Yemeni civilization and history, which is valuable to all Arabs," said Fadi Al-Shami from Jordan, noting that this is his first visit to Yemen. Saif Al-Islam from Bangladesh commented that during his three days in Yemen, he's learned that it is "a country full of beauty and historical sights, as well as friendly people. When I go back home, I'll recount my visit to Yemen to my friends."

While launching the two forums on Saturday, Yemeni Prime Minister Ali Mujawar predicted that the scouting participants would come to know a lot about Yemen and its traditions, as well as its historical sites that point to the great Yemeni pioneers of the past.

In brief

TAIZ
Japanese girl education project in Taiz discussed

Taiz governor Hamoud al-Sofi held a meeting on Wednesday with the Japanese team of evaluating girl education project "Bridge". The project is funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the governorate since three years ago.

The project targeted 59 schools in six districts of the governorate.

The governor valued efforts of the Japanese side in enhancing education Yemen, highlighting achievements of the project.

He wished extension of the project to cover other districts in the governorate.

1st Yemeni-Egyptian Fair opened in Taiz

Deputy governor of Taiz Abdul Wahab al-Junaid opened on Sunday the 1st Yemeni-Egyptian Fair organized by Taiz Tourist Club.

Al-Junaid hailed the fair that would last a month, noting that it meets the customers' needs from cloths and furniture, calling to keep on organizing such events to encourage the trade exchange among Arab countries.

Worth mentioning, Taiz Tourist Club organizes a festival for tourism and shopping annually.

SANA'A
Yemeni, Jordanian university foundation approved

The final meeting of the higher foundation board for Yemeni-Jordanian private university approved a foundation contract and the basic rule for the university.

The meeting, which was held on Wednesday co-chaired by Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Mohammed Matahar and Secretary General of Jordanian Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministry Turki Ubaidat, recommended to quickly complete foundation procedures in the upcoming 14 September as the deadline.

The meeting also approved universities administration consisting of seven members for three years.

It also approved language study in the university by the two languages, Arabic and English, according to specialization and markets needs.

2nd Saudi medical mission launches its activities in Yemen

Second Saudi medical mission launched its surgical heart operations for children in Yemen.

The mission is organized by Saudi International Islamic Relief Organization in Yemen in cooperation with the health ministry.

The mission will last until end of August.

Deputy minister of public health Jamilah al-Rabi said that the mission comes within series of fruitful cooperation program between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Head of the mission, Dr. Jamil Abdul-Aziz said that the medical team would do 120 surgical heart operation in addition to 300 check ups.

UNFPA to support health sector in Saada

Ministry of Population and Public Health signed on Wednesday an agreement with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to support health sector in Saada governorate.

According to the agreement, the UNFPA will offer \$117 thousand to support health sector in the affected areas by the rebellion.

The agreement was signed by Health Minister Abdul-Karim Rase and UNFPA representative Hans Obeidjin.

Premier inaugurates the 6th Summer Technology Camp

Prime Minister Ali Mujawar inaugurated on Monday the Sixth Summer Technology Camp organized by Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology in Telecommunication and Information Technology City (TITC).

Mujawar inspected work mechanisms of the Center of Managing Ground and International Telecommunications, Yemen Mobile and Internet through which fast interference for solving any fault within fifteen minutes are conducted. The center aims at following up all details associated with managing and operating the national network for wire and wireless telecommunications and is considered one of the most important circles ensuring ideal integration in telecommunication system for it works on reducing operation costs.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister visited telecommunication and post

museum located in the TITC that is considered most important for it is the first historical documentary mean in field of telecommunication.

The museum includes samples showing telecommunication and post development stages since Ottoman, Imams and British occupation eras, in addition to locations of telecommunication in the South and the North of Yemen before unification.

The museum includes also many old sets, files, documentations, photos, rare maps and post stamps that show a part of telecommunication and post history in Yemen and in the world.

After the visit, Mujawar expressed happiness for what he has seen, highlighting efforts of telecommunication ministry and the Supreme Observation Committee for Summer Camps and Centers which organizes such camps.

ADEN
Yemen needs many facilities to host Gulf 20

Minister of Tourism Nabil al-Faqeeh disclosed that Lodging Committee in Gulf 20 Football Championship is demanded to provide more than 710 five-star rooms, 2000 rooms for media men and journalists and lodging 20,000 audience in the championship to be held here on 2010.

Al-Faqeeh, who also chairs the committee, argued owners and in charge of hotels and lodging facilities to practice their role for qualifying these facilities according conditions demanded for hosting the championship, adding that there are a number of new

investment projects, focusing on increasing bed capacity in the governorate, still under study.

During the inspection visit of al-Faqeeh and Minister of Youth and Sports Hamoud Obad and Aden Governor Adnan al-Jefry to a number of tourist and hotel and tourist facilities in Aden, the officials listened to ongoing works for qualifying Aden Hotel to expand its

bed capacity to reach 186 and inspected services in Mercury Hotel with bed capacity of 117.

Obad and al-Jefry then inspected the project of constructing Abyan Coast Complex Hotel that costs \$ 5 million. The hotel is composed of seven floors and contains 176 rooms. They argued concerned officials to speed up accomplishing the project to utilize it in housing

coming delegations to the championship.

SAMA first training aircraft arrives to Aden

The first training aircraft model SAMA (2020) operating by one engine arrived on Sunday at Aden International Airport.

Director General of the academy captain Ameen Ghanem said to Saba that this aircraft is one of four aircrafts to be sent to Aden after an agreement with Jordanian manufacturing plant Jordan Aerospace Industries (JAI).

Ghanem mentioned that in the upcoming days the air academy will be launched officially in Aden in the wake of completing all technical processes.

DHAMAR
SFD allocates \$1.1 mln to build, equip Dhamar education faculty

Dhamar University and the Social Fund for Development (SFD) signed on Sunday an agreement on the funding and implementing the project of building and equipping the faculty of education in Dhamar University at a cost estimated at \$1.1 million.

The agreement was signed by rector of Dhamar University Ahmed al-Hadrani and director general of Social Fund for Development Khaled Zaied.

Rector of Dhamr University praised the effort of SFD in the development process and support for the government policies in educational.

It is worth mentioning that Dhamar University is currently completing its infrastructure through the implementation of a number of projects, most importantly is the project the building the Faculty of Medicine at the cost YR600 million and the presidency of the university building.

MARIB
Tender of Marib power station 2nd stage to be announced

Ministry of Electricity and Energy is to announce on Monday the tender of the second stage of Marib power station with a capacity of 400 MW, 26sep.net reported on Sunday. Minister of Electricity and Energy Awadh al-Socarty said that the ministry also would announce during the coming two days another tender of electricity supply cables of 60 KM Safer area of Marib governorate and 110 KM Loudar line at Gea'ar area. On the other hand, al-Socarty presented at the parliament today, Sunday, the electricity law

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draft that aims to guarantee a legal and administrative environment would assist in developing the electricity sector.

HAJJAH
Fishery Ministry prepares national strategy for promoting fisheries

Minister of Fishery Wealth Mohammad Shamlan affirmed Sunday that his ministry is preparing inclusive national strategy for promoting fishery wealth based on basic aims associated with marine environment and investment.

In his meeting with Governor of Hajjah Farid Mujawar and officials of fishery sector, Shamlan directed speeding up setting a study for establishing main fish unloading center in Midi coasts includes all necessary services.

He called on fishery associations and local councils to cooperate and integrate with each other in field of observation and controlling fishing process and limiting random fishing using banned means that have bad effects on fishery wealth.

Earlier, Minister Shamlan had inspected the ongoing works in constructing Midi Fishing and Trade Port Project with the cost of YR 7 billion and 1688 meter long, in addition to an anchor constructed on area estimated at 100 square meter and five meter depth.

He directed forming ministerial committee from fishery wealth, transport and public works ministries for counting complementary works the project needs and accelerating announcing on tenders concerning these works.

Their News

President receives credentials of Arab, foreign ambassadors to Yemen

President Ali Abdullah Saleh received here on Wednesday credentials of newly appointed Arab and foreign ambassadors to Yemen.

President Saleh received the credentials of Hassan Fou'adi Abu Akr as Lebanese ambassador, Mahmoud Hasan Ali Zadah as Iranian ambassador, Nour Alawlia'a as Indonesian Ambassador and Mohammed Hasan Dwori ambassador of Somalia.

Moreover, the president received credentials of ambassadors of Singapore Helmi bin Ali bin Taleb, Zimbabwe Mark Grey Maroonjui, Nigeria Alhaj Abdullah Gharba, Vietnam Daw Thanh Shwnje, Brazil Sergio Luiz Kanays, Slovakia Betz Zsolds and Vorovi Wir Asemnan as an ambassador of Thailand.

Afterward, president Saleh met each of the ambassadors separately and voiced his warm welcome to them.

He accentuated commitment to provide all facilities and care for them to be able to do their tasks that would enhance the mutual ties and cooperation relations with each of their countries.

Yemeni Judges travel to Germany to meet with counterparts

A delegation of five Yemeni judges, lead by Supreme Court Judge Samyah Abdullah Mahdi, will visit Germany from August 10 to 20, 2008 to exchange views with their German counterparts in the fields of personal status and juvenile jurisdiction and also to find out similarities in the development of jurisdiction in both countries after achieving unity in 1990.

The visit will include attending trials, talks with German judges and general discussions in renowned German institutions. Moreover, the group will meet with members of the German Parliament and with government representatives.

This visit of Yemeni judges to Germany is not only to be considered as an important step in reinforcing intercultural dialogue and understanding between the two countries, but also pays tribute to the fact that globalisa-

tion leads to an increasing need for exchange in certain fields of jurisdiction to facilitate international cooperation.

The programme of the visit is coordinated by the Oriental Institute of the University of Leipzig in cooperation with the Yemeni Ministry of Justice, the German Federal Foreign Office and the Goethe-Institute, Germany's official cultural institute. It is planned to organize a follow-up meeting in Yemen to consolidate the findings of the visit and the established personal links.

Arab Media Award for Excellence in Child Rights and Young People's Participation in Development

Media's dedicated efforts to highlight the situation for children and young people will be honored by UNICEF with a Media Excellence Award for contributions in 2008.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) motivates all journalists, children and adolescents in the Arab World to participate in the Arab Media Humanitarian Forum. The award was announced by UNICEF Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa in conjunction with Dubai Press Club and United Arab Emirates' Al-Bayan Newspaper, in March 2008.

The Media Prize will be awarded for excellence in reporting in Arab media on the situation and issues of children in the Middle East and North Africa. Works submitted can tackle national or regional issues. For 2008, the Forum agreed on the topic to be on: adolescents (ages 10 to 19).

Nominee works must adhere to the highest standards of journalism, including clarity of expression, accuracy, fairness and strict observance of ethical guidelines in reporting on children's issues and respecting the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Entries will be assessed by an independent panel of judges comprising media representatives and UNICEF.

Prizes will be awarded for four different categories: TV, Radio, print and on-line (web based). The award is open to all materials limited only to Arabic language, published or broadcast between January 01, 2008 and September 30, 2008.

UNICEF Yemen Country Office in Sana'a is welcoming submissions from interested participants in the Arab Media Award. Submission forms are available from UNICEF Office.

All submissions must be delivered to UNICEF Yemen Country Office in Sana'a on or before 30 September, 2008.

Later, for the final award, submissions will be sent to UNICEF Amman Regional Office for Middle East & North Africa. The jury for the final award will be composed of UNICEF/ex-UNICEF officials, media partners and members of youth-led media initiatives.

The winners will be chosen by the designated jury, and publicized no later than 15 November 2008.

Media reports that faster greater public understanding of children and young people's issues will be acknowledged by UNICEF Middles East and North Africa Regional Office in conjunction with Dubai Press Club & UAE's Al-Bayan Newspaper, during the 2008 year.

Funding available for development of a documentary project

Documentary filmmakers from Africa, Asia or Latin America are encouraged to apply for the Alter-Ciné Foundation Grant that will assist in the production of a documentary project. The deadline to submit applications is August 15.

The Canadian-based Alter-Ciné Foundation, which supports documentaries that enrich understanding of the world, is giving CAD\$10,000 (US\$9,730) to complete a documentary project in the language of the filmmaker's choice.

Applicants must submit a five-page summary in French, English or Spanish describing content, characters, situation and theme; a DVD or VHS of a completed documentary work; a production budget and financing plan, and two letters of recommendation for the project.

For more information, go to <http://www.sextans.com/altercine/index2.html> or contact alter@mblink.net. To apply, visit http://www.sextans.com/altercine/formulaire_an.pdf.

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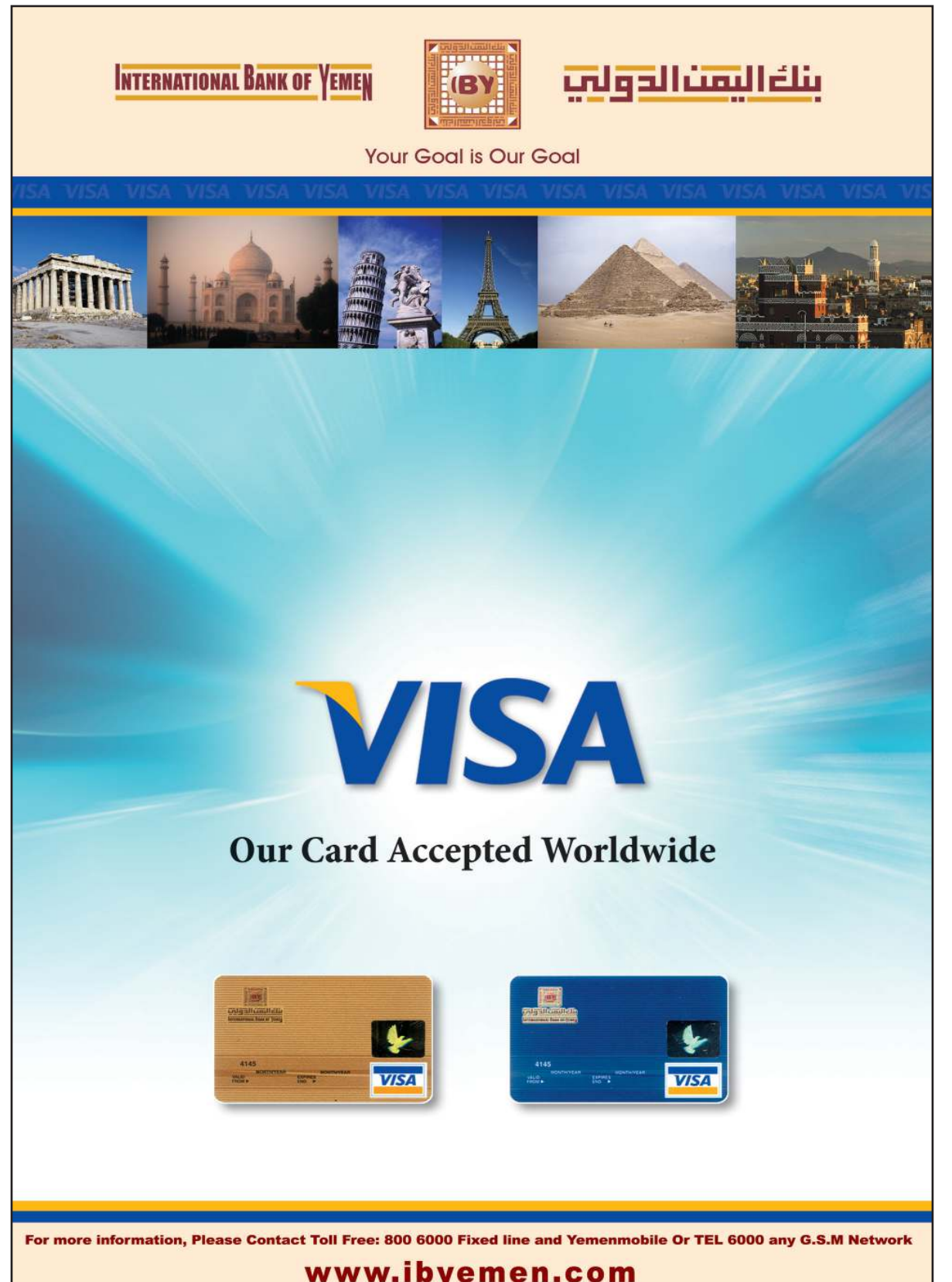
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Yemeni widows hammered by poverty and cultural norms

Poverty, illiteracy and lack of skills to earn a sustainable income, coupled with weak social and domestic relationships, all contribute to putting Yemeni widows in desperate need of help and attention.

By: Amel Al-Ariqi

Every day is a challenge for Jamila, a 45-year-old Yemeni widow who lives with her five children and her elderly sick parents in a very small room on Siteen Street in Sana'a.

Rarely eating three meals a day, the entire family lives in extremely poor sanitation conditions. Jamila has made one corner of the room a bathroom while the other serves as a makeshift kitchen with a small kerosene stove and a few plates.

The occasional aid (food or clothing) she receives from neighbors or local charity organizations is never enough.

Samira Al-Sabahi, director of a local organization to help widows, explains, "A widow always is considered a burden and subjected to more criticism and interference from others."

"For instance, a young widow may not remarry because she must preserve the 'dignity of her dead husband's family.' Moreover, those with children should never consider remarriage or they'll lose custody of their children," she adds.

Some Yemeni tribes also may impose a type of isolation upon widows by preventing them from leaving their house or participating in social activities.

Additionally, many conservative families prevent widows from doing

educated and who can depend on themselves and obtain office work.

"The second type are independent, but have no education or skills, so they work as house cleaners or babysitters. Finally, there are those with no education and no skills, so they depend on others and become beggars."

Al-Sabahi confirms that the majority of working widows in Yemen are the second and third types.

She continued, "We conducted a study in Mua'een area [of Sana'a governorate], where we found that 90 percent of 2,000 widows in that area are illiterate. Additionally, many women have no income generation skills, which makes it harder for them to make even a small income."

Al-Sabahi further points out that illiteracy and poverty cause many widows to force their children to drop out of school and work.

The Birth of Hope

Despite increasing poverty and unemployment, widows often insist on providing for their families by themselves, rather than asking others for help. It was for this reason that the Milaad Al-Amal (Birth of Hope) Organization for Humanitarian Services was established.

A widow herself, Al-Sabahi manages and runs the organization. Having married directly after she completed high school, her husband died two months after their marriage. She was lucky in that her father – unlike many other Yemeni fathers – allowed her to finish studying at university – at the college of law.

She recalls, "After I finished university, I started thinking about a project to help the neediest people, so I took a project management training course. During that time, I already was working with my friend to help poor families, providing them food and collecting donations. Through this volunteer work, I discovered that widows comprise the majority of poor families, so I decided to form this organization to help them."

Al-Sabahi says her organization's first step is to extract widows from their isolation and renew hope within their spirits.

"The overwhelming majority of widows are in despair. We can't do anything for them unless we instill hope in their minds and make them feel their importance as effective members of society," she explains.

Milaaad Al-Amal helps remove widows from their isolation and integrate them in order to become effective members of society by providing them alternative work opportunities to help them sustain their families financially.

The organization seeks to train, teach and qualify widows to work in handicrafts and professions suited to their abilities, their circumstances and the demands of the local market, such as sewing, making perfume and making sweets and desserts.

Al-Sabahi and her organization are attempting to reduce the unemployment rate in Yemen by creating job opportunities for widows, noting, "We're planning to make deals with restaurants and cosmetics stores to buy and market the widows' products."

The group also aims to increase literacy among widows through an Illiteracy Eradication Program. Milaad Al-Amal has launched an awareness campaign primarily through symposiums and lectures for widows to instruct them about their rights and other issues.

"Acquiring skills and obtaining work, even if it's hard, is better than asking others for money," maintains Dawla, a 40-year-old widow and mother of nine, adding that she's ready to learn any skill to ensure that her children will be able to complete their education and live decently.

She explains, "Two of my children left school last year because I couldn't cover their school expenses. However, if I learn and work, then I'll certainly let my children complete their studies because I know they can't get decent work unless they have a good education."



Many Yemeni widows choose to ignore the Yemeni conservative cultural norms, face societal criticism and work.

She forced her three children to leave school to work as shoemakers, while she works as house cleaner, using what little money they all make to buy food and pay their room rent.

Jamila is one of many Yemeni widows who find themselves struggling alone after losing their husbands and their household's breadwinners.

any type of work to make a sustainable income and become independence. "Many widows have disclosed that they feel embarrassed about constantly asking their relatives for help, preferring instead to make their own income," Al-Sabahi notes.

There's also a misconception regarding widows' right to receive a share of their husband's property. As



Majority of Yemeni Widows have no education and no skills, so they depend on others and sometimes become beggars.

Although there are no studies or figures on the number of widows in Yemen, Rashida Al-Nusari, director of the Social Affairs Ministry's women and children unit, affirms that widows and orphans comprise the majority of Yemen's poor and are its neediest class.

Such women are more likely to face threats to their economic security. "Even those widows who enjoy social insurance can't get it directly because all insurance documents must be in a man's name," she notes.

However, poverty or financial need isn't the only obstacle Yemeni widows must deal with; they also face misconceptions within their communities.

Al-Sabahi explains, "Many widows don't receive their share of the inheritance because their dead husband's family controls it and refuses to reveal the will, if it exists."

She adds that most Yemeni widows from poor families can't return to their parents because they know they'll be an extra burden upon them.

Different types of working Yemeni widows

Due to the dual pressures of poverty and extreme need, many widows choose to ignore such cultural norms, face societal criticism and find work. Al-Sabahi explains, "There are three types of working widows in Yemen, the first of which are those who are

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Head of School
Karen Al-Badi

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Words of Wisdom



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

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

Community participation in the educational process

By: Dr. Badr Saeed Al-Aghbari

Developing education in Yemen and helping it get rid of its current unsatisfactory situation reflects the availability of a strong desire on the part of the local community and its concern about education. As long as public opinions throughout Yemen agree that education means Yemen's national security, it is illogical for anyone to say or believe that the education ministry is the only authority responsible for education.

In order for the educational process to develop, the situation necessitates full engagement of the local community in the process. It also requires all Yemeni people to be collectively responsible for the process. Consequently, we feel a pressing need to define 'participation'.

The concepts of community participation vary, but most of them relate with planning and development, as well as the concentration on man considering him the vital tool of participation, which has turned to be key to good develop-

ment in all the political, economic and social areas.

Some experts define 'community participation' as citizens' voluntary contribution to all the actions of development, be it in the form of making constructive suggestions, offering help, funding or providing required consultation.

Other experts see 'community participation' as reflecting a positive, democratic popular will, based on encouraging communities to meet challenges and address pressing issues, which people face in their daily lives. These challenges or issues are, in one way or another, related with community affairs. According to the second group of experts, participation neither accepts individual dominance nor viewpoints or suggestions imposed by powerful groups.

Participation is a democratic process based on a free will. This free will is usually started by the community, and must be followed by thinking, planning, implementation and oversight in order to ensure successful participation.

With specific reference to community participation in the educational process, one can define it as

voluntary effective and positive contribution of citizens, individuals and groups, and non-profit organizations with the aim of developing the educational process, making it successful, correctly modifying its progress and achieving sought-after objectives in this regard. An effective contribution to the educational process also requires further community's engagement in efforts expended for reaching education-oriented objectives, building good knowledge realm within the community, and enriching education curricula in and outside school.

Significance of community's contribution to education:

Community contribution to the educational process is deemed as one of the basic human rights ensured by the relevant international conventions and legislations. This kind of contribution confirms that people have the right to take part in addressing issues of their community via expressing their opinions and offering help to others. This is why community's contribution to education is considered a democratic and humanitarian principle.

Another reason for seeing this kind of contribution as significant, if not indispensable, is that it helps develop patriotism and national loyalty, as well as eliminate all the negative phenomena. It also helps empower citizens to practice their right with regard to making decisions concerning their communities.

Participation is considered a scientific practice of a social responsibility by individuals or groups in favor of the community to which they belong. Members of the same community hold themselves responsible for anything going wrong in their community, and therefore exchange consultations with each other to address any pressing problems that may hamper their community's development.

Democracy in education:

Also, community participation turns to be an effective tool to encourage citizens to contribute to development of their own communities and support any governmental efforts in this regard. Community participation in the educational process becomes prerequisite for achieving democracy

in education, and this kind of democracy encourages the interest of beneficiary groups in education, and therefore convinces them to support by all means the educational process in their communities.

At this point, it is impossible for anyone to think about separating between community participation and the educational process. An educational process may not be effective unless the community feels that it needs it, and then contributes to making it successful.

Consequently, the significance of voluntary community contribution to education goes beyond the limit of specific political actions and practices as its essences focuses further on national education of community members. Via effective community contribution to the educational process, educational institutions build strategies and procedures for encouraging communication between their staff and other members in the community. And, the outcome will be good quality education that helps produce skilled outputs with a good sense of democracy.

Source: Al-Thawra State-run Daily

OUR
OPINIONBrining back
the faith

Huda is a young Yemeni women working in Sana'a. One day at around 4 PM while she was hailing a taxi to take her home, two men on a motorbike drove behind her and one who was not driving snatched her purse. She held tight to the purse strings while the muggers drove fast and almost dragged her a few meters on the street. She finally let go and was shouting for help from the people around her. She asked the taxi driver to follow them but he just shrugged and drove off. No one even bothered to assist or even comfort her.

"I was outraged at the theft but was more upset that no one seemed to care. It hurt me more than anything to realize that you could be hurt in daylight and no one would come to your rescue," she said.

Huda reported the theft to the local police station. The officer who was chewing Qat carelessly pointed her to someone who would help her in writing the theft report. She knew then that she would never get her possessions back, and she was right.

This is a regular scene in Hollywood movies or even international productions. As Yemenis, we often shook our heads at disapproval when watching such scenes and nodded at each other that this does not happen in Yemen. Well, guess what? Now it does.

Of course the rate of such violent crimes compared to the western world or the far east is negligible. You can still carry a huge plastic bag full with money on the street and ask a passerby to hold it for you while you search for your car keys. But still, there is an increasing number of violent crimes some driven by poverty but mostly by sheer despair.

The point here is that the community used to take care of its people. If you were hurt or attacked, everyone would come to your rescue. Today, they don't care much, especially if you seemed rich. There is a feeling of being wronged among many poor Yemenis to the extent that they would feel good if someone of the higher up classes was hurt in any way. This also leads to other problems such as organized crimes, terrorist acts and even suicide.

Today Huda always looks behind her shoulders as she walks the streets. She has learnt her lesson and tells others to be careful. She is probably over reacting about the safety issue in Sana'a, but is she to be blamed? After all when she asked for help no one gave it to her.

Yemen deserves better than getting its image stained by such carelessness. We need to come together as a collective act and show that we still care for each other and still have enough righteousness in our hearts to stand against injustice of any kind. To bring back the faith in society to Huda, and many others who had been in her place.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

How to manage our oil resources?

By: Saif Mohsen Al-Sharif

For tens of years, oil has played a primary role in the world economy, most notably in oil-exporting states. The lion's share was demonstrated by many Middle East states, which have more than half of the global reserves of oil and gas.

Despite Yemen's late entry into the club of oil-producing states, but with modest quantities of crude, oil turns to constitute the backbone for the country's national economy. However, excessive dependence of state's general revenues on the oil sector reflects how important this sector is since it greatly contributes to developing the Yemeni economy.

As all know that at least 70 percent of state's general revenues come

from oil, oil also accounts for 90 percent of Yemen's export. There is also excessive dependence on oil to provide fuel derivatives for local consumption.

As such a vital product has a crucial significance in driving forward wheels of national economic development amid absence of an economic alternative in the near future, and due to the great challenge represented by the continued decrease of oil quantities in Yemen's mature blocks, the government continues encouraging oil companies to explore in further areas.

Yemen faced threats that its mature blocks were about to deplete, particularly as the bell of risk started to ring in the official agencies, as well as among all those observers who care a lot about the future of Yemen's national econo-

my.

The competent authorities in the government are recommended to expend serious efforts in studying and setting up a comprehensive strategic plan for the oil operations in Yemen and this should include exploration, production and development in a way ensuring maximal economic returns for the country throughout a long time period.

A strong sense of responsibility needed:

At this point and based on a strong sense of responsibility that must be shouldered by each one, who is jealous of the future of Yemen's economy, as well as through my modest experience in the oil sector, I suggest to the kind readership some basic themes due to function as the foundation for a strategic vision that

may contribute to building an integrated strategic plan for oil operations in our country.

I also hope that all those concerned and the competent authorities in the government should pay close attention to the situation of such a vital sector in Yemen.

The kind readership also needs to know some of data about the situation of oil in our country, plus some facts accompanying these data. As is widely known, petroleum exploration operations in Yemen first began in the early 1960s. The first exploratory well was drilled in the Salif area in 1961 but of no avail. This was followed by a non-commercial oil exploration in the 15th Marine Block in Hadhramout governorate in 1982.

Successive petroleum exploration operations followed in vari-

ous southern and eastern parts of Yemen until Yemen's crude production reached 435 thousand bpd in 1991.

It is worth mentioning that productive oil blocks numbered up to 12 while exploration operations were still taking place in other 31 blocks. Up to 49 marine and land blocks are open for petroleum-related investment.

Of the basic themes that are key to the development of oil exploration and production operations is the establishment of national companies and recruitment of local staff to be in charge of such operations. Another theme is reflected in the way the government encourages investment opportunities of oil explorations in open blocks.

Source: Marebpress.net

Sa'ada fighting aftermath (1 of 2)

By: Moneer Al-Mawri

I and others were enraged to hear the announcement of the most recent military appointments and transfers within the armed forces, which was accompanied by leaked information that the main reason behind this is failure of veteran army commanders to end the Sa'ada war.

In the meantime, most of the commanders, included in the reshuffle and exclusion, were never involved in the pessimistic war, specifically Commander of the Central Military Flank Al-Dhahri Al-Shaddadi, of whom the decision to dismiss coincided with the 14th Anniversary of his injury. That was in the 1994 Civil War.

I still remember that the injured Al-Shaddadi was taken abroad to receive treatment prior to entry of the army into Aden. This is true if my memory doesn't deceive me. The decision to fire Al-Dhahri and others from their military posts also coincided with the authority's celebrations on various occasions commemorating its victories.

I think that Al-Shaddadi committed no sin, nor has he something to do with Sa'ada War with the exception of his good relation with Gen. Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar.

Having read the story of dismissing Al-Shaddadi from his military post, I remembered another story

related with the man. Despite the fact this story is not important, it deserves to be narrated. 'A few months ago, I received a telephone call from a close friend from Radaa, my home district, and that friend enjoys a good relation with the sacked military commander Al-Shaddadi.

My friend told me that Al-Shaddadi, who was at the time doing his job, reprimanded me since I quoted him in one of my articles as saying that he and Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar are loyal with President Saleh after being asked about this.

According to what I heard from this friend, named Tawfiq Al-Jahmi, Al-Shaddadi mentioned in a qat session that he didn't meet me, nor did he talk to me. In my turn, I clarified to my friend that when I quoted Al-Shaddadi's statement, I didn't allege that he spoke to me. I was clear enough to say that he uttered this statement to President Saleh while he was serving as Second Commander of the First Armored Division.

Saleh demanded that Al-Shaddadi should replace Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar, who was serving as commander of the division, but he refused to do so. I told Al-Jahmi, "I am not obliged to disclose my sources, but Al-Shaddadi already admitted that he didn't meet me, nor did he speak to me about anything.

Many attempts to fire Ali Mohsen:

During the talk, I told Al-Jahmi that I narrated the event to prove that the attempt to fire Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar is not a new one. Instead, this attempt first began since the dispute between him and Commander of the Republican Guards about various issues. Both military officials disputed over who is entitled to be

in charge of safeguarding the Radio and Satellite Television stations.

I indicated that I can easily deduct that Al-Dhahri Al-Shaddadi will be dismissed before Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar because he turned to be classified as one of Ali Mohsen's wings, as well as one of his arms. This contradicts the standing plan for bequeathal of power, particularly as the regime suspects that Gen. Ali

Mohsen Al-Ahmar and his supporters constitute a strong barrier that may hinder bequeathal of power.

The regime also believes that Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar and his supporters constitute a potential risk to a prospected bequeathal of power due to numerous reasons, most of which we did not know.

Source: Al-masdar.com



By: Samer

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Yemen Press Review



Al-Methaq.net, affiliated with General People Congress (Ruling Party)
Wednesday, August 13, 2008

Top Stories

- Taiz-based party branches and organizations call for confronting JMP violent actions
- Constitutional Committee Rapporteur: JMP Parliament members conditioned texts not specified by the agreement
- No differences over proposed election law amendments

A source for the joint committee formed from the constitutional and the freedoms committees in Parliament denied Sunday the presence of texts other than the agreed ones in the draft amendments to the General Election and Referendum Law, the ruling party's website reported in its lead story.

It went on to say that the same source told its reporters that the committee held a meeting on Saturday to study the very same amendments on which the parliamentary blocs of the General People's Congress (GPC) and the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), except the YSP bloc, agreed to refer to the committee last Tuesday.

The committee reminded all those participating in the event of the remarks of the Islah bloc deputy head, who highlighted the most notable differences over the amendments, described them as simple and agreed on referring them to the relevant committee.

The source commented on a declaration made by some JMP senior leaders to boycott the relevant committee's meetings, further adding that was considered as a notable setback from the agreement, to which both sides pledged to remain committed.

It continued that both sides' commitment to the agreement was announced to the Yemeni public opinion by the opposition blocs at Parliament sitting on the 5th of this month.



Al-Ahale Independent Political Weekly
Tuesday, August 12, 2008

Top Stories

- Oppositions leaders blame President Saleh for whatever happens in the nation, even car collisions, Parliament Speaker says
- Yemeni government scores victory over American Hunt Oil Company
- JMP leaders conduct serious dialogue on election-related issues

Senior leaders of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) are currently holding heated discussions to avoid progress toward upcoming parliamentary elections, based on formal amendments contained in some of the General Election Law's articles, the weekly

reported in one of its lead stories.

It went on to say that Chairman of JMP Higher Council Abdulwahab Al-Anisi showed an initial agreement to the proposed election law amendments, and at the same time conditioning that all the JMP staff, organizations and member parties must agree with such amendments, according to statements released by senior JMP leaders.

JMP parliamentary caucuses withdraw from a newly formed committee to study the General Election Law because of disputed provisions in the law, which were discussed in a meeting Sunday. The weekly quoted political analysts as saying that JMP withdrawal from the committee signify their unseemly intents to deal with the election file.

All the JMP leaders unanimously agree to stick to reviewing and modifying Yemen's current election system in order to ensure free and fair elections, releasing political detainees and normalizing the political life before an agreement to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Issues related with electoral domiciles, voter registers and formation of the Supreme Commission for Election and Referendum (SCER) remains as a source of semi-agreement between both JMP and ruling General People Congress.

According to legal experts, the subject of amending the General Election Law needs certain constitutional amendments and such may require that the upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for April 2009, be postponed.

The ruling party earlier provided Parliament with the proposed amend-

ments to the election law while such proposal was viewed by JMP leaders as not meeting even their minimum demands, which they announced a few days ago and referred to the constitutional committee.



26September.net, affiliated with Yemeni Army Thursday, August 14, 2008

Top Stories

- Shabwa security authorities release kidnapped Algerian expert
- Saleh briefs Emir Sultan on terrorist plot targeting Yemen and Saudi Arabia
- President Saleh receives Shoura Council Report on Constitutional Amendments

President Ali Abdullah Saleh received on Tuesday a report from the Shoura Council (SC) on the outcomes of the discussions on the draft constitutional amendments, which Saleh has referred to the SC for more consultations, the website reported.

During his meeting with the chairman and members of the SC, Saleh lauded the council's efforts in enriching the amendments with several views, affirming that the main goal of this participation is to deepen the democratic and political experience in the country, it added.

It continued that Chairman of SC

Abdul Aziz AbdulGhani briefed the President on the report's results, pointing out that the council has held several meetings with local council's members and high-profile persons from several domains.

The report includes the key observations and constructive conclusions on the amendments and their importance to improve the state institutions, enroot the democratic values and widen the base of the political participation.

The reports emphasized the importance of using the new bicameral system of two chambers (Shoura Council and Parliament) and identified the relations between the two councils, as well as the procedures that will enhance local governance.



Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party Thursday, August 14, 2008

Top Stories

- Undersecretary of Legal Affairs Ministry criticizes legal amendments with regard to women's involvement in politics
- Kidnapped expert in Shabwa: I enjoy good health, hope the government free me
- Opposition Parliament members quit sittings in protest against proposed election law amendments

The parliamentary bloc of Yemen's opposition coalition, also known as

Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), withdrew on Tuesday from the Parliament's sitting, protesting against an attempt by the ruling party to offer a draft of election law amendment to parliament before being agreed upon with the opposition, the website reported.

"We were forced to withdraw from parliament since several points of the draft were not agreed on by both political sides," the website quoted Abdul-Rahman Ba Fadhil, head of Islah's parliamentary bloc as saying.

On the other hand, Speaker of Parliament, Yahya Al-Raie threatened to pass a previous draft rather than the current one if the opposition doesn't come back to Parliament and attend its sittings.

In another story, the website reports that Yemeni Socialist Party declared boycotting sessions of discussing a draft of constitutional amendments presented by the ruling General People's Congress to Parliament.

"YSP bloc is to boycott the parliament sessions which will discuss constitutional amendments because the proposal does not contain the basic reforms and many political prisoners are still behind the bars," the party said in a statement.

Deputy Head of the Islah Party's parliamentary bloc Zaid Al-Shami noted that YSP's declaration to boycott Parliament's sittings reflect unified stance of JMP toward militarizing political life and not releasing political prisoners in various security jails. He indicated that there are presidential promises to free them, adding "if those promises are not fulfilled, JMP will escalate peaceful protests."

A New Tang Dynasty?

By: Vishakha N Desai

On August 8, 2008, the world watched with awe the amazing spectacle of the Olympics opening ceremony in Beijing. We saw the electronic unrolling of Chinese scrolls replete with great historic symbols and were mesmerized by dancers creating "harmony," using their bodies as ink brushes. 2008 martial arts students performed millennia-old moves with mechanical precision, while the flying celestials and the galloping torchbearer created a sense of heavenly abode on earth.

There was another time when China dazzled the world at its doorstep: the Tang dynasty (618-907), often thought of as China's golden age, when it was truly the "middle kingdom" at the center of the universe. Its capital, Chang An (modern day Xi'an) was a world-class city; visitors came from all over the world and were dazzled by its wealth,

beauty, and power. Its emperors used silver from Persia, glass from Europe, precious stones from Central Asia, and gold implements from India. Open, confident, and cosmopolitan, China connected with the world with ease, adopting new ideas, and projecting its own indigenous creations. It's no wonder that Chinese scholars sometimes refer to today's China era as the new Tang Dynasty.

Indeed, when China was awarded the Olympic Games in 2001, the country's official news agency, Xinhua called it a "milestone in China's rising international status and a historical event in the great renaissance of the Chinese nation." For seven years, Chinese officials and artists worked tirelessly to make this dream of a "renaissance" a glittering reality, and they exceeded all expectations. But how should we understand the broader implications of the opening ceremony, both for China and the outside world?

First, the good news. In keeping with

China's recent efforts to project its "soft" side, the opening ceremony produced the idea of a historic, but dynamic culture at its best. Other than the presence of a few People's Liberation Army soldiers, you would have been hard pressed to find any visible evidence of the reigning communist regime or its founder, Mao Zedong.

Equally significant was the projection of China as a nascent leader of the new international cultural order. The "Bird's Nest" stadium was the creation of the multinational design team of Herzog & de Meuron, with suggestions from the visual artist Ai Weiwei. Many artists involved in the creation of the spectacle, including the fireworks specialist Cai Guo Qiang, the dance star Shen Wei, and the composer Tan Dun, earned their fame primarily in the West. Even Zhang Yimou, the lead impresario for the event, gained fame in the West through his early films chronicling the hard life of a young modern China.

Chinese officials had clearly decided

that these diaspora darlings of the international art scene should be now claimed as China's own. These artists' ability to the bridge traditions of East and West and to create a new space for creativity that can transcend the cultural specificities of the past in favor of a new blended future could be squarely associated with China's own global aspirations. Like the artists and their art, the country could elevate itself from the dichotomies of old-new, past-present, and traditional-modern to project an image appropriate to our globalizing age.

Not surprisingly, Chinese leadership was keen to avoid any reference to the last two centuries of struggle and humiliation, or to its problematic political agendas and thorny trade issues. At the same time, it could be argued that the spectacle of the opening ceremony was intended to overcome China's historic humiliation by the West and signal a new chapter. The "sleeping dragon," as Napoleon described China in the early nineteenth century, was now

fully awake, ready to charge into the new world. As in the Tang Dynasty, arts and culture were at center stage, reflecting the country's economic prowess and political might.

But the extravaganza also left lingering doubts. Why such a drive to prove to the world that these had to be the very best Olympics ever? (Chinese authorities even pressed the International Olympic Committee to make such a declaration at the conclusion of the games.) Some have suggested that the effort suggests a hint of insecurity.

It should also be noted that while Mao was conspicuously absent in the Olympics, his communist legacy was present in subtle ways. The relentless emphasis on the "harmonious" presence of large groups of performers left no room for individual voices (even the young singer Lin Miaoke, as we now know, didn't have her own voice). Ironically, while younger Chinese (products of China's one-child policy) are obsessed with personal stylistic

statements, the drama of the opening ceremony consisted in collective expression at the service of the state.

Chinese intellectuals have always been cognizant of this tension between individual creativity and collective will. How will the new China balance these two conflicting needs?

As we contemplate the potential arrival of the new Tang Dynasty in China, we should remember the message of the old Tang Dynasty poet, Po Chi-i (772-846 AD):

*Sent as a present from Annam,
 A red cockatoo.
 Colored like the peach-tree blossom,
 Speaking with the speech of men.
 And they did to it what is always done
 To the learned and eloquent.
 They took a cage with stout bars
 And shut it up inside.*

Vishakha N. Desai is President of the Asia Society.
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It's a damn shame

By: Dr. James J. Zogby

The 1980s were a difficult time for Arab Americans. Politicians returned our contributions, rejected our endorsements, and many effectively hung "No Arab Americans allowed" signs on their campaign doors. Back then, we wrote about this situation, calling it "the politics of exclusion."

We fought back. We organized, worked hard, and we emerged victorious - or, should I say, somewhat victorious? I now feel a bit tentative about our progress because what happened to Mazen Asbahi has set off alarm bells, causing me to wonder whether or not "the politics of exclusion" might not once again be rearing its ugly head.

For those who don't know, here's what happened:

On July 25th the Barack Obama campaign announced the appointment of Mazen Asbahi to further their outreach efforts to Arab Americans and American Muslims. As a young and accomplished corporate attorney, Mazen was largely unknown to many in both communities. He quickly acclimated himself to his post, contacting leaders and activists

nationwide both to introduce himself and to develop ways to include them in the Obama campaign.

I was delighted to meet him. He is the father of three, and I found him to be passionate about both his family and his new assignment. He had been successful in his short career as an attorney, but he told me that he felt that this new position provided him with an important opportunity to give something back to his country and his community. In the brief time he held his position, we spoke almost daily. He learned so much and did so much to make Arab Americans and American Muslims feel included in the campaign.

Then it happened.

A shady website, "Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report", which monitors Muslim activism and organizations revealed that eight years ago Mazen had been on the board of the Allied Assets Advisors Fund. Also on the board was Jamal Said, described as "a controversial imam in a fundamentalist Illinois mosque." In fact, Mazen was on this board for only two weeks before his discomfort with some of the things being said about the group led him to resign.

This brief association appears to be

the main "allegation" against Mazen. The other charge is that he, like thousands of other Muslim American students, was a student body leader of the Muslim Students Association - an established and respected religious/social group found on most U.S. campuses. But because an anti-Muslim blogger with a marked penchant for exaggeration and error has called the Muslim Students Association a "wahhabist front" - this charge against Mazen was thrown into the mix.

In the days that followed, the charges became fodder extremist right wing bloggers, who began to write about Mazen, describing him as a person that neither he nor those of us who had come to know him could recognize.

As has become standard practice these days, the major media (in this case, the Wall Street Journal) picked up the non-story and began to prepare an "expose". Concerned that this would escalate, Mazen and the campaign agreed to terminate his position. Mazen issued a statement, saying, "I am stepping down from the volunteer role I recently agreed to take on with the Obama campaign as Arab-American and Muslim American coordinator in order to avoid distracting from Barack Obama's message of change."

The entire affair has left many in the Obama campaign, and in both the Arab American and American Muslim communities, feeling saddened and troubled.

Several observations can be made and questions must be raised about this situation in which we now find ourselves operating.

The combination of bigoted websites, their echo-chamber bloggers, irresponsible mainstream media outlets, and fear and ignorance about all things Arab and Muslim have produced an oppressive environment detrimental to the full political participation and empowerment of the Arab American and American Muslim communities.

Who is behind the shadowy "Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report" website that "revealed" the story? And what is their agenda? And why are the likes of Debbie Schlusel, Michelle Malkin, Steven Schwartz, Daniel Pipes, Frank Gaffney, and David Horowitz not been held accountable for the misinformation they spread, and the intolerance they promote?

Malkin, it should be remembered, threw a fit over Rachel Ray wearing a Kaffiyeh in a Dunkin Donuts ad. Schlusel attempted to Muslim-bait former Secretary of Energy, Spencer

Abraham. Gaffney drove a decent young Muslim American out of the Bush White House because of an unfounded allegation about his father, and Pipes has made a career out of harassing outstanding scholars like Georgetown University's John Esposito. If we allow the likes of these to define Arab Americans and American Muslims, and to determine their fitness to serve - then we are heading back to "the politics of exclusion."

The failure of these obsessively anti-Arab, anti-Muslim characters to discern between genuine "bad guys" and just regular guys like Mazen does a grave disservice to all Americans. Instead of being viewed as legitimate sources, they should be held accountable for their intolerance. It is a shame that they do what they do, and a bigger shame that no one in the mainstream media has wisdom or the courage to see them for what they are - or question their credibility.

Back to Mazen and the Obama campaign.

To his credit, Mazen has been as graceful and thoughtful in adversity as he was upon assuming his post. He remains committed to Barack Obama's election, and to empowering his

community.

And because he didn't want to become the issue, he stepped aside and will find other ways to serve. Despite this regrettable setback, the Obama campaign will continue its outreach efforts. But, we must ask, what about the fate of the next Arab American or American Muslim to seek such a position of service?

If we are to advance as a nation in the important work of including all of our citizens in the political process, we must not allow a return to "the bad old days." And if we are to take advantage of the incredible resources provided by the Arab American and American Muslim communities, then we must include them - not only because it is the right thing to do, but because our inclusion of them and their involvement in all aspects of our society and politics is so critically important in our efforts to engage the world in which we live.

Dr. James J. Zogby is the president of the Arab American Institute based in Washington DC. www.aaiusa.org



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Is there Hope for the Conflict-Ridden Middle East?

Anthony H. Cordesman holds the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. He has authored a wide-range of reports on U.S. Security Policy; served as national security assistant to Senator John McCain; and has held numerous diplomatic assignments throughout the Middle East. In an interview with The Media Line News Agency, this leading analyst shares his views on some of the recent developments in the Middle East and offers an assessment of America's handling of these issues.

By: The Media Line Staff

TML: If I say the words Mideast conflict, what do you think of?

Anthony Cordesman: First, which conflict, because we're dealing not even with one Arab-Israeli conflict? We're dealing with a series of tensions and some are Arab-on-Arab conflicts, particularly in Lebanon. You're talking about Iraq; you're talking about tensions with Iran and you're talking about problems in terms of terrorism. The fact is you can't prioritize.

TML: The European Union's head of foreign policy Javier Solana is on his way to Iran for another round of talks. Do you think the Europeans latest proposals could bring about a rapprochement between the West and Iran?

AC: The most you can hope for, even if you got an agreement next week, would be to then go from this broad agreement to specifics, and that would

be a matter of months. We've seen that with North Korea and other countries. I think the key is there's no reason to give up on the diplomatic option at this point. There's every reason to pursue diplomacy. Is there hope? Yes. Is there any certainty? Of course not. What is the level of confidence? We still don't know.

TML: Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki has for the first time begun talking about the need to set a date for an American troop withdrawal from Iraq. What's your view?

AC: There's no clash here in terms of basic goals. When we come to the details, that's when it gets to be very important. One of the key tests may be the Status of Forces Agreement, and to move that forward Prime Minister Al-Maliki has to be able to get it through the Iraqi legislature. He has to have popular support to some extent for any new agreement with the U.S. I think

he's laying out the markers for sovereignty and for the end of U.S. occupation, but that doesn't necessarily mean the end of the U.S. aid.

TML: If we look at the Middle East and North Africa today, we see wars in Sudan and Somalia; terrorism and radicalism all the way from Mauritania in the west to Pakistan in the east; the problems with Iran, with Iraq; the failure to have found a peace deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians. And yet, on the other hand, we have seen moves towards democracy and greater freedom for women in the Middle East during the Bush term in office. How do you think Bush will be remembered in terms of his Middle East policy?

AC: I think that's going to be an interesting issue, because if you look back on the Iraq invasion, which may be the seminal event, there's no question that that was badly planned and badly executed. In terms of the [Israeli/Palestinian] peace process, I think the Bush administration needs real credit for bringing this back. The goals set may be optimistic and I suspect they are. [but] I think it's created a climate where the next president, regardless of who is elected, is going to go on with this peace process and is going to see it as an important policy goal. If you look at some of the other issues, we've made progress on the war on terrorism.



I don't think you've seen a major increase in terrorist activity. The countries you named have been in trouble almost for my entire lifetime. Is a lot more needed? Yes. Do we need to, among other things, win more support from the Arab peoples in the war against terrorism? That's clear, and that will be a real challenge for the new administration.

TML: For the sake of full disclosure for the next question, we have to say you did work closely with Senator John McCain. In terms of McCain vs. Barack Obama, who do you believe will be better in Middle East policy?

AC: I'm not going to take sides in something where, as a member of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, I've spent some 10 years try-

ing to be as objective as possible.

TML: But objectively, what are the differences between senators McCain and Obama?

AC: I think that in broad terms many of the approaches are very similar. The most obvious debate or difference, and both candidates have qualified their position, is over how soon the U.S. should withdraw from Iraq, and in what way. For anyone to talk about

these positions as if, as president, either of two very skilled and pragmatic men would in 2009 take the same positions that they do today, I think frankly denies the reality of American politics. We react to reality with pragmatism. When we don't, we get into deep trouble. These are both candidates who are both competent and pragmatic.

TML: Anthony Cordesman, thank you for your time.

About CSIS

At a time of new global opportunities and challenges, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) provides strategic insights and policy solutions to decisionmakers in government, international institutions, the private sector, and civil society. A bipartisan, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC, CSIS conducts research and analysis and develops policy initiatives that look into the future and anticipate change. Founded in 1962 by David M. Abshire and Admiral Arleigh Burke, at the height of the Cold War, CSIS was dedicated to finding ways for America to sustain its prominence and prosperity as a force for good in the world. Since 1962, CSIS has grown to become one of the world's preeminent international policy institutions, with more than 220 full-time staff and a large network of affiliated scholars focused on defense and security, regional stability, and transnational challenges ranging from energy and climate to global development and economic integration. Former U.S. senator Sam Nunn became chairman of the CSIS Board of Trustees in 1999, and John J. Hamre has led CSIS as its president and chief executive officer since April 2000.

Does the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Still Matter?

By: Summer Marion Taqir Washington

“Does the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Still Matter?”

Shibley Telhami, a nonresident senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, posed this question before the packed room of Washington policymakers and aca-

demics at the Brookings Institution the morning of Tuesday, July 1. The crowd assembled for a joint presentation of Shibley's paper by the same title, which was published that day, and survey findings on the subject by Steven Kull, director of WorldPublicOpinion.org's Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA).

The Panelists

Dr. Telhami, born in Israel to an Arab

family, is the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development in the department of political science at the University of Maryland, College Park. He formerly served as an advisor to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and the Iraq Study Group. He is the author of several books and op-ed pieces, and is frequently featured by prominent news outlets including C-Span and NPR. His new paper is a time-series analysis of public opinion in six Arab countries with regard to the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict, conducted both in the 1990s and over the past six years.

Kull is a faculty member at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy as well as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Association of Public Opinion Research and is the principle investigator in a major study of social support of anti-American terrorist groups in Islamic countries. He has authored several books in addition to publishing articles in multiple academic journals and regularly provides analysis of public opinion for both U.S. and international media outlets. He presented findings from a recent poll of 18 countries gauging international opinions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The presentation was introduced and moderated by Martin Indyk, Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy and Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution. Indyk served as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, prior to which he was principle adviser to the president and the National Security Adviser under the Clinton administration. Preceding his government service, Ambassador Indyk founded and directed the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and taught both at Johns Hopkins University school of Advanced International Studies and at Columbia University's Middle East Institute as well as Tel Aviv University and Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia.

Why does Palestine matter?

Dr. Telhami began by introducing his paper and outlining the set of questions it addressed regarding Arab public perceptions. Survey respondents were comprised of population samples from six Arab countries – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, and Jordan – totaling approximately 4,000 people per year polled. Respondents first ranked the Palestine issue among their personal priorities, with results recorded as percentages of respondents placing the issue either “most important” or “top three.” Formulated based on the theory that an issue's ranking is a strong indicator of behavioral consequences, the question yielded relatively consistent responses across countries each year, with demographics appearing to have little influence on response, with the exception of a slight negative correlation between income level and prioritization, indicating that wealthy individuals hold values more in line with their government's political agendas. Overwhelmingly, the trends over time corresponded with the issue's prominence in the news at the time the question was posed. For example, prioritization in the 2008 polls, which were taken in March, rose across the board, which Telhami attributes to the

survey's proximity to the Israeli incursion into Gaza.

The second question the survey posed gauged Arab public opinion on the Hamas-Fatah divide and this finding's role in evaluating the Palestine question. The dominant trend showed higher support for Hamas in all countries, especially among men and lower income respondents, as well as strong preference for a Palestinian Unity government in all countries polled. Increasing support for opposition was another apparent trend, demonstrated by stronger backing for Hezbollah in Lebanon, as moderates have not delivered in terms of public services and security, and are often perceived as pawns of the Bush administration.

Third, the survey asked respondents what step taken by Washington would most improve their perceptions of the U.S. The number one response in all countries polled was brokerage of the peace process based on the 1967 borders, followed by troop U.S. withdrawal from the region. Over 75 percent of respondents said their judgment of America was based more on U.S. policies than on their perceptions of American values.

The following question examined Arab public opinion toward Israel. Only posed twice, in 2006 and 2008, the results indicate a drop in the number of Arabs who perceive Israel as on its way to defeat. This explains why many Arabs and Israelis both see a two-state solution as preferable, but most do not expect that such an arrangement would be acceptable to the other side, predicting protracted violence to be the outcome of the situation.

Telhami's next question addressed the prism through which Arabs view the U.S. Surprisingly, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict exerts the most dominant influence on this perception, as Arabs view the U.S. and Israel as the two countries posing the greatest threats, despite Iran's close geographic proximity. Arabs still viewed Iran as a threat, but their responses to this question are telling in terms of the way they prioritize issues. Dr. Telhami referenced this prism as a “prism of pain,” in which the Palestinian-Israeli conflict “trumps all else.”

The final question measured the popularity of leaders in the Arab world, again indicating a trend toward opposition, as the most popular leaders among the Arab public were those with the most aggressive public images. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, topped the list.

Concluding Dr. Telhami's presentation, his descriptions of these prisms spearheaded his explanation of why public opinion matters for government behavior. For each of the six countries surveyed, as well as the Gulf states, he asserted, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict holds critical importance as a basic security concern and is integrally tied

to more complex domestic and foreign relations matters.

Is Israel here to stay?

Kull then presented the findings from his 2008 WorldPublicOpinion.org survey of 18 countries, including most of the world's largest countries, and representing 59 percent of the world's population. A segment of the respondents, he noted, were Palestinians, however, though they are typically included, no Israelis participated in the survey this year. His results indicated low levels of confidence in all leaders involved in resolving the conflict – Israeli, Palestinian, American, and Arab, alike. International perception is that no one is doing enough. When asked if the U.N. should assume a more active role, the response was an overwhelming yes. Sixteen of the 17 countries polled for this question demonstrated at least plurality support, with the average percentage of positive responses among countries at 67 percent. Ironically, other polls suggest that these populations hold relatively negative views of the U.N., suggesting that the reasoning behind this dislike is a belief that the organization is not active enough. Kull stated his overall findings indicate that most people worldwide attach strong importance to the issue and would prefer that their governments take an even-handed approach rather than favoring one side.

Indyk led off the question and answer period that followed, asking, “Is there a trend here in Arab public opinion that is questioning the permanence of Israel?” Telhami described the so-called prisoner's dilemma situation that is driving both states toward militancy even while preferring a two-state resolution: “diplomacy has to create possibilities...to change their assessment of prospects,” he asserted.

According to Telhami, however, Israel's permanence is no longer in question; most believe the collapse of the two-state agreement will lead to protracted conflict, not to the disappearance of the country.

Kull described it as a psychological bargaining game – “it's a question of whose side time is on.” Israel used the settlement issue to demonstrate that time was on its side, predicated on the fact that Arabs accepted the two-state solution. Remove the two-state arrangement and time becomes demographic again, the panelists concluded.

Wrapping up a morning of analysis, Kull addressed the underlying question, “Why does world public opinion matter?”

A “force of legitimacy,” he described public opinion as a mold for establishing order between states. “Public opinion changes costs... (It) is ultimately a rational, emotional reaction,” a determining factor for state behavior and an indicator of things to come in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله وقدره نتقدم بأحر التعازي وأصدق المواساة إلى

الأستاذ/ حسين ضيف الله العواضي
سفير بلادنا في تونس

لوفاة المغفور لها بإذن الله تعالى
شقيقته

سائلين المولى عز وجل أن يتغمد الفقيدة بواسع رحمته وأن يسكنها فسيح جناته وأن يلهم أهلها وذويها الصبر والسلوان..

إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

الأسيفون:

الأستاذة/ نادية عبد العزيز السقاف /م خير الدين النسور
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وجميع موظفي مؤسسة يمن تايمز

Sana'a trees need protection from exhaust smoke

By: Tareq Al-Adil
For The Yemen Times

Yemeni environmental experts warn that widespread air pollution in the capital of Sana'a is threatening the city's plant life and roadside trees, in addition to posing negative health effects to Sana'a residents.

Ali Al-Harsh, streets and gardens observation and evaluation manager at Sana'a's General Management of Parks and Gardens, says roadside trees are greatly affected by exhaust pollution, particularly that emitted from diesel engines.

"Roadside trees in Sana'a are exposed to exhaust pollution as a result of the increasing number of vehicles. Some trees die while others are exposed to disease. Trees can only tolerate such contaminants to a certain degree and then they die," Al-Harsh pointed out, adding, "A layer of such contaminants is visible on the tree leaves, particularly on high-traffic roads like Siteen, Yasser Arafat, Khawlan, Berlin, Hadda and Jumhuri Streets."

Abdu Al-Qadhi, director of Al-Thawra Garden, confirms that such a layer of contaminants exists on leaves, which blocks their pores and reduces the exudation process, resulting in an imbalance in their ability to take in carbon and produce oxygen. This kills trees and makes tree growth very slow.

"Trees absorb approximately three kilograms of toxic gases from vehicle exhausts every day," Mohammed Al-Shami, Saba'een regional manager notes, adding, "You can see that flowers also are flecked and their growth also is very slow."

According to scientific studies, plants and trees are known to be friends to the environment, as they participate in cleaning and keeping the environment free of pollution.

Through the exudation process, trees humidify the surrounding air, which balances out the temperature around the tree. They also remove poisonous and toxic gases from the air by using air currents, as well as decrease the sun's heat in the surrounding area.

Plants absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen daily, working like air filters and producers to balance the environment.

Diesel engines affect and damage trees the most. Moreover, sunlight in the presence of such exhaust promotes the formation of ozone gas that injures plants. Symptoms of ozone damage to plants range from slow growth to severe leaf browning, followed by premature leaf drop.

Deciduous trees that lose their leaves in the fall exhibit a stippling or flecked pattern on the upper leaf surface. These flecks can be white, tan or black, depending on the plant species.

Studies have found that some trees are resistant to exhaust pollution while others aren't. Researchers have discovered that *Dalbergia sissoo* and *Calotropis procera* are the ideal plant species to monitor lead and carbon in the air, as lead and carbon mostly come from vehicle exhaust pollution.

In an attempt to fight air pollution in the capital city, the General Management of Parks and Gardens in Sana'a intends to expand green areas on the streets. According to Al-Shami, the percentage that street trees are damaged by exhaust pollution is an important indicator in determining what type of trees should be planted on

such streets.

"For instance, trees have been found to have 5 percent of this pollution, whereas flowers have from 10 percent to 15 percent. Fortunately, most plants, even those sensitive to damage, are believed to tolerate air pollution damage during their dormancy."

Al-Shami notes that *Duranta* trees are particularly weak in tolerating exhaust pollution, as they die very quickly. "We noticed this when we began planting this type of tree on Taiz Street," he said, "On the other hand, *Ficus* trees are very tolerant and resistant to this type of pollution, so we're now planting *Ficus* trees on all streets."

The General Management of Environmental Preservation last year conducted research entitled, "Exhaust pollution and its physical and mental effects upon humans," based on the results of medical testing on human blood samples obtained from numerous Sana'a residents.

The study focused on the percentage of lead in the blood, as that is the most dangerous element of exhaust pollution. The accumulation of this element in the blood makes a person nervous and depressed. The percentage was high in taxi drivers' blood, averaging 5.5 percent, followed by traffic police at 4.7 percent.

The study further noted that Yemen lacks scientific studies clarifying the diseases to which its trees may be exposed due to such pollution.

"Trees of the same species growing in identical locations may vary in their susceptibility to damage. For example, one tree may show no sign of the problem, while the tree next to it will drop brown leaves and die. Older leaves are most likely to show symptoms because they've been exposed to exhaust pollu-



Roadside trees in Sana'a are exposed to exhaust pollution as a result of the increasing number of vehicles.

tion for longer periods," the study noted.

Lack of awareness among farmers also may exaggerate the problem. As one Hadda Street farmer, Jihad Al-Yadie, says, "We sometimes see trees decline and become pale, but we don't know the reasons. I see engineers put chemical fertilizer on them."

Although air pollution does pose many risks, experts believe there are

workable and acceptable solutions, however, some require research, application and time.

Sharaf Al-Hamzi, manager of the Environmental Guidance Center in Sana'a, suggests, "We must prevent the importation of diesel engines, as well as find some type of device that can be placed on vehicle exhausts to reduce this type of pollution."

Ba-Quhaizel, the Environmental

Observation and Evaluation General Manager in the General Management of the Environment Preservation, concludes, "Expanding green areas is an important solution. We must use the media and schools to teach people and students about the importance of increasing the planting of trees. Additionally, we must choose those types of trees that tolerate difficult environmental circumstances."

Alarm bells over water

Water availability in Yemen has been worsening by the year and the government has no clear strategy on how to deal with the problem, experts have said.

They say water shortages, which affect about 80 percent of the country's 21 million people, are exacerbated by the high fertility rate, rapid urbanisation, the cultivation of 'qat' (a mild narcotic), a lack of public awareness, and the arbitrary digging of wells.

The experts made the remarks at a symposium on 12 August in Sana'a city organised by the Sheba Centre for Strategic Studies (SCSS), a local think-tank. Entitled Water Security in Yemen: Challenges and Solutions, the symposium brought together dozens of local officials and experts on water.

Khalil al-Maqtari, an official at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation

and an expert of topography, said the water situation was worsening as there was no effective strategy to manage its use.

Shortfall

"The total amount of water used annually is 3.5 billion cubic metres (cu.m.), of which 93 percent is used in agriculture, 6 percent in households and 1 percent by industry. The renewed fresh water is 2.5 billion cu.m. per year. The gap between used water and renewed fresh water is 1 billion cu.m. a year," he said, adding that 4.6 billion cu.m. would be required in 2025 as by that time Yemen's population will have doubled.

Al-Maqtari said per capita use was 125 cu.m. per year and that by 2025 this would drop to 62.5 cu.m. a year. Globally, average per capita water consumption was 1,500 cu.m. per year, he said.

"About 92 percent of Yemen's land is

arid, semi-arid and desert," he said.

Deep wells to blame?

Nasser al-Awlaqi, a professor of economy and a former minister of water, said the water crisis in Yemen was largely due to agriculture, which depended on ground water from deep wells.

He said farmers used to make do with surface water and rain, not ground water, but with the introduction of appropriate technology, they began to dig wells. "Before 1970, there were no wells 800 metres deep. They were manually dug and their depth was only 20-40 metres," he said.

Al-Awlaqi said the expansion of agriculture began in the 1990s after the government benefited from foreign loans and Yemeni expatriate fund transfers.

Exacerbating the problem was the additional demand caused by an influx of some two million Yemenis who had worked in the Gulf States but returned to Yemen after the 1991 Gulf war, he said.

Arbitrary digging of wells meant water could be found at depths of 800-1,000 metres, he said. "Influential figures are digging wells in Sana'a city, with the Ministry of Water unable to do anything to stop them. The Water Law is not being implemented," he said.

The law forbids arbitrary digging and requires prior permission from the ministry.

"In 1974, the area irrigated by ground water was 30,000-35,000 hectares. But now over 400,000 hectares is irrigated by ground water. At that time, Yemen produced 1.2 million tonnes of cereals but now production has dropped sharply as agriculture is not fed by rain," he said.

According to Al-Maqtari there are over 60,000 wells and over 350 water drillers nationwide, and the rate of



Urban sprawl in the Yemeni capital Sana'a. The city is growing at a rate of between 7 and 8 percent a year

water level-diminution in these wells was 6.3 percent per year.

Al-Awlaqi said most farmers still used a traditional irrigation method known as "flooding"; only 8 percent of cultivated land was irrigated by modern means. "And this further depletes ground water," he said.

Ineffective dams

Participants said farmers are not able to make use of the large quantity of rainwater - 68 billion cu.m. a year - due to the ineffectiveness of dams. Al-Awlaqi said dams were built arbitrarily and were not practical. "Very few were built

adequately. Dams are not looked after and most of them have been filled with filth. US\$22 billion was spent on dams. But their capacity is only 80 million cubic metres (mcm). Yemen is a poor country but its resources are wasted," he said.

He went on to say that there are dozens of studies on water that cost millions of dollars but they have gathered dust on shelves. "Some are too old to be used. These studies were also not accessible to researchers," he said.

"We must create public awareness on the problem of water, which everybody should understand".

Urban growth

According to the experts at the symposium, another factor that further aggravates water shortages is urbanisation. Most people in Yemen are concentrated in the highlands in the northern part of the country.

Al-Awlaqi said the Sana'a basin could dry up in 15 years due to the constant migration to it. "In the Sana'a basin, 250 mcm of water is used per year, but it is fed by 60 mcm a year. So there is a shortage as well as acute diminution of Sana'a basin's water. In a few years people will be using only the renewed water [rainwater] - 60 mcm," he said.

He said desalination in Sana'a was impossible as Yemen's resources were limited and even talk about this alternative was not logical. "How do we want

to benefit from desalinating sea water when it will immediately be used to irrigate 'qat'?", he said.

Mohammed al-Dubaei, a professor of geology, said there was a need to reduce Sana'a city's two million population by half, or to 800,000, in order to confront the water crisis in this city. "Sana'a city cannot stand rapid urbanisation," he said.

Participants suggested that the cost of living in Sana'a should be made higher in order to stop internal migration to it.

'Qat'

Ali Saif Hassan, head of the SCSS, said the government should lift the subsidies on oil derivatives, including diesel which is used by farmers. "The government pays US\$3 billion a year for such subsidies. Diesel represents 80 percent of 'qat' cultivation costs. If the subsidies were lifted, then no farmer would be able to cultivate qat," he said.

Participants also suggested that increased Yemeni imports of 'qat' from African countries over the next five years could reduce the area used for 'qat' cultivation, and hence water consumption. They said two leading bottled water companies based in Sana'a were depleting ground water resources. They not only supplied Yemen with bottled water, but also some neighbouring countries, the participants said.

Source: IRIN

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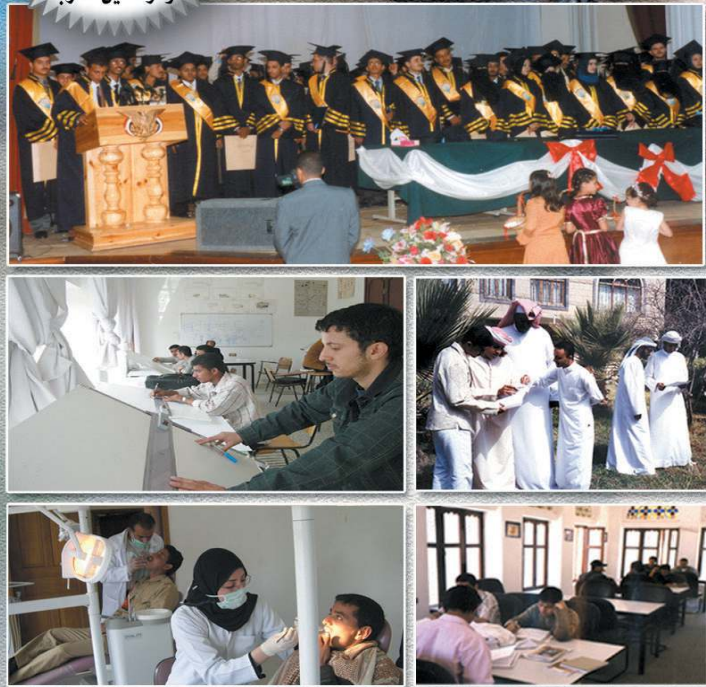


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Ancient Babylon A Metaphor for the Dark Side of Civilization

Was the city state of Babylon in ancient Mesopotamia really a den of iniquity or was it in fact the world's first city of learning? Berlin is currently showing a comprehensive exhibition that dispels the myths about Babel and tells the truth about the ancient city of Babylon. Ariana Mirza reports

Visiting the "Babylon – Myth and Truth" exhibition is a bit like being part of the march into "Babylonian Exile". Crowded together, exhibition visitors slowly wind their way past the blue-tiled walls of the Processional Way. They are inching their way towards the monumental city gate that was built approximately 2,600 years ago in honor of Ishtar, the divine mother of Babylon. German architects brought the remains of the structure to Berlin in the early twentieth century. Since 1930, the reconstructed Ishtar Gate has been the highlight of every visit to the Museum of the Ancient Near East in Berlin's Pergamonmuseum.

In 1980, less than 100 kilometers

south of Baghdad, where the fragments of the Ishtar Gate were once dug out of the desert sands, the Baath Party celebrated a festival with the theme: "Yesterday Nebuchadnezzar, today Saddam Hussein". The Iraqi dictator wanted to revive the memory of his country's ancient past – a past that the West looked down on and the Orient had long forgotten. Until then, the interest of the Arab world in pre-Islamic societies had been marginal.

For his part, Saddam Hussein was certainly less interested in any historical facts than in legitimizing his secular power by creating arbitrary links between his regime and the rule of the pre-Islamic dynasties.

A universal heritage



The exhibition is organized by the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Musée du Louvre and the Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, and the British Museum



Beyond the myth? Reconstruction of the ziqqurat of Babylon – the "true Tower" of Babel; model after Hansjörg Schmid

And so Babylon, which is dogged by a poor reputation in the West, was used by the Iraqi dictator to add weight to his regime. But what was Babylon really like? In conjunction with the Louvre in Paris and the British Museum in London, approximately 900 artefacts were brought together for the Berlin exhibition, which provides information about everyday life in a highly developed civilization.

Cuneiform scripts, jewelry, grave-goods, documents, and architectural models conjure up the image of a society that achieved much in the fields of philosophy, technology, and art. Visitors are reminded that the culture of Mesopotamia is closely linked to the emergence of sciences like astronomy and law.

The exhibition also emphasizes the fact that the ancient Oriental tradition of knowledge in Babylon influenced not only the history of Greek culture, but also that of Jewish and Islamic culture. Very few people today are aware of this universal heritage.

Human civilization is skeptical about itself

Following the exhibition of some of these artefacts in Paris and London, the exhibition was extended for Berlin. This additional section focuses on the origins and propagation of the myth of the "Whore of Babylon". Works by contemporary artists as well as pop culture products show that Babylon remains a negative symbol to this day.

Curator Moritz Wullen explains why this distorted image of "Babel" is so much more prevalent than the memory of an early society built on knowledge: "Human civilization is skeptical about itself. All of these negative images, which are born out of fear, have remained pretty much the same down through the millennia."

The Bible was largely responsible for the prevailing image of a depraved society that was doomed to decline. Babylonian achievements in architecture and the largely peaceful co-existence of various ethnicities in a single society were viewed by Christianity as human arrogance and declared a failure. This gives cause for reflection because much of what the Babylonians succeeded in doing over the centuries is now considered by secular societies to be an ideal worth striving for.

The organizers of the exhibition in Berlin also emphasize that Iraq can certainly be proud of its archaeological and ideological heritage: "Iraq is a country with a huge cultural tradition." In 2003 it became clear that this tradition still needs to be protected. In that year, serious damage was caused when American forces set up a temporary military camp in the middle of the Babylon excavation site. Ironically, the troops were originally stationed there in order to protect the site from attackers and looters.

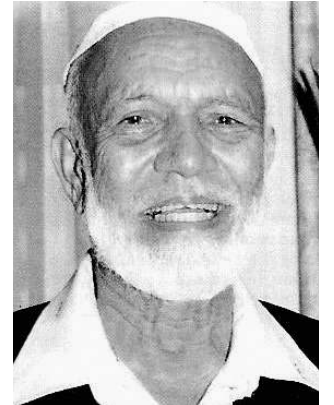
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Deedat, AHMAD HUSSEIN (A Muslim Herald Who Vanquished Missionaries and Evangelists)

• Prepared by: Eyad N. Al-Samman
eyadnalsamman@yahoo.com



Deedat, Ahmed Hussein (1918-2005), a Muslim scholar of comparative religion, an author, lecturer, and a herald. He was born on July 1, 1918, in Surat, city and port in western India. His parents were Muslim Indians working in farming. At the age of 9, Deedat's father moved with his family to South Africa and settled in Durban, city in KwaZulu-Natal province. Although Deedat had not previously been exposed to the English language, he learnt it in 6 months, excelled at school and finished top of his class. Deedat then joined Durban's Islamic Center and studied the Holy Qur'an and other religious sciences. In 1934, Deedat could not finish his high school and decided to work and help his father in selling salt. Afterwards, Deedat worked in a furniture factory for 12 years. At the same time, he enrolled in the Sultanik Artistic College and studied business administration. He also studied different versions of the Holy Bible and made a comparative study for these versions. In 1949, Deedat moved to Pakistan to work in a textile factory for 3 years and then returned to Durban and became the manager of the same furniture factory he was working in. In 1956 and with the help of a South African Muslim friend, Deedat established "Al-Dawa Office" in a small and modest apartment in Durban and started his missionary activity in South Africa. Consequently, Deedat together with two of his Muslim friends founded in 1957 the Islamic Propagation Center International (IPCI) in Durban and published a variety of books and offered classes to new Muslims. Deedat remained the president of the IPCI up until 1996.

Starting from the late 1950s and up to the mid-1990s, Deedat quitted his job and devoted himself entirely for missionary work by making debates with famous Christian missionaries and also continued holding his lectures and seminars for public. Deedat wrote more than 20 books on Islam, prophet of Islam (pbuh), and other religious issues. He printed million copies of Islamic booklets to be distributed at no cost. He also published and distributed some of his lectures and debates in more than 15 languages. Deedat's first lecture, entitled "Muhammad: Messenger of Peace," was delivered in 1942 at a Durban movie theater to an audience of 15 people. With the increased success of his lectures among people, Deedat engaged into broader range of activities. He started to conduct classes on the Holy Bible studies and on dawa (inviting peacefully and wisely people towards Islam). The dawa became the dominant factor of Deedat's life with audiences at his lectures reaching more than forty thousand.

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Deedat was known for his courage and boldness in refuting suspicions and uncertainties raised against Islam and its prophet (pbuh). As a result of that, many non-Muslims from all over the world embraced Islam and some of them became later renowned Muslim heralds. As a lecturer and debater, Deedat visited many countries including the United Kingdom and the United States on lecturing and debating tours. In the United States, he became famous for a debate with the American Reverend Jimmy Swaggart, witnessed by 8,000 people on the topic "Is the Bible the Word of God?" in 1986 held in Louisiana University in Baton Rouge. Deedat also was dubbed "The Evangelists' Vanquisher" and "The Man with a Mission."

Among his important debates and lectures: "Islam and Christianity", a debate with Gary Miller, Cape Town, South Africa, 1985; "Was Christ Crucified?", a debate with Floyd Clark, London, United Kingdom, 1989; "Is the Bible God's Word?", a debate with priest Stanley Sjöberg, Stockholm, Sweden, 1991; and "Is Jesus God?", a debate with priest Eric Bock, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1991. Deedat was awarded King Faisal's International Award for Servicing Islam in 1986 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for his great efforts as an international herald.

In April 1996, Deedat suffered a stroke which left him paralyzed from the neck down, and also meant that he could no longer speak or swallow. He spent the last nine years of his life in a bed in his home encouraging people to engage in dawa. Deedat passed away on August 8, 2005, in Verulam in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Deedat expressed his most important wish by saying that: "If I will have enough resources, I will fill the world with Islamic books, and especially the ones holding the English meanings of the Holy Qur'an."

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A Sacred Institution to Facilitate the Poor "Sadaqah" Part I

By: Qazi Dr. Shaikh Abbas Borhany

Today, the Muslim society is a victim of many social evils, due to a lack of awareness of religious education. Narrow mindedness is the result of this attitude, because education of Islam opens many windows. Educated upper class considers Shariah as an out-dated code of life. Ignorance of the Science of Islam is the core reason for the mutilation of the faith. This situation allows people to accept the influence of their surroundings, which later on become part of their faith. Today Muslims follow customs and rituals more punctually and strictly while forgetting the original teachings of Shariah. Due to this negative attitude, no discrimination between right and wrong exists for them, and the benedictions of the institution of Sadaqah seem to have lost their importance. This divine gift, which was conferred through the institution of Wahi, for the elevation of the less-fortunate class of the society, has become a forgotten chapter. In Southeast Asia, Muslims practiced Sadaqah in the same manner as the Hindu ritual of "D'an & Darakshna". The Hindus believed that something should be donated to the priest-class and in return hoped that ones misfortune or difficulty will be removed. Unfortunately, our people at large treat charitable institutions of Islam in the same manner, as it is explained in the "Hindu Mythology". Plunderers of the faith—the so-called clergy, are largely responsible for undermining the real spirit of this institution. They exploit the masses and lead them to serve their own interests. It is a pity that the people have forgotten this institution of their own welfare, and are being exploited by the clerics in the name of religion. These clerics try their best to snatch valuables in the name of Allah. "It is worth-mentioning what people do to 'drive away their misfortunes':

- To avoid misfortunes and troubles, people would put the head of a goat, on the corner of a street.
- To cure an illness and other needs, people feed pieces of meat to kites and crows.
- To fulfill hopes and good wishes, a lemon punctured with a clove inside

is thrown on the street.

- To protect a baby from evil-eye, an egg is waved around the head and thrown outside.
- 'Ulama al Su', to satisfy their selfish desires ask for different costly items, such as gold, silver, Musk, Aud-Aloes wood, Saffron, and other valuables, other than money, according to the status of the needy person in the name of Sadaqah & Khair'aat".

Causes:

It is necessary to examine the root causes of misinterpretation of the term "Sadaqah" by our people. People influenced by their surroundings donate Sadaqah just to remove their problems. It becomes a habit, which has turned into their faith. On the other side, the clergy pursue a luxurious life style. They indulge in money-minting and non-constructive activities. Instead of a scientific research, in the studies of Qur'an and Islam and welfare of the community, they love to spend time in profligacy.

Today, people treat the item donated in the name of Sadaqah with a social stigma as something meant for the poorest of the poor. No one would like to even touch it, as people think that the Af'at of the person attached to it on whose name it is donated may come upon them. The cultured class is also unaware about the spirit of Sadaqah. One giving the Sadaqah tries to give it away as early as possible, as it is believed that it is not good to carry the same, and is considered a bad omen. The innocent people are amazed when advised them to carry Sadaqah till any deserving person available. They fear if they carry it with them perhaps face any kind of trouble. The reason for such superstitious beliefs is only due to lack of correct information from the right source. There is no reference in the Fiqah-literature that the receiver of Sadaqah will face any harm or problem, as is wrongly believed. Such beliefs are the result of the ignorance of the people about the divine philosophy. The charlatans and the perfidious clergy have misled the masses away from the truth. People have forgotten the original Talim and remain busy in absurd customs and rituals taught by the clerics. Traditions and rituals have no concern with the religion, but unfortu-

nately they are treated as part of religion.

Definitions:

Those who divide Islam, politics and economics in three different categories, can not find the solutions of the financial crises of the Ummah. The short-sighted clergy can not help in building a welfare society, which Islam has ordained. Social and economic crises of the Ummah can be solved if people practice according to the advice of Qur'an. Presently, it is only a neglected lesson, which exists without its original spirit. Raghīb Isfahani wrote in his famous book: "Mufarradat al Qur'an" as follows:

"The meaning of the word Sadaqah in the language of Shariah is to grant or donate with free-will to others".

Meaning of Sadaqah is explained in "Qamus al Fiqahi" as follow:

"Sadaqah is that which is donated to others only to please Allah and to get His nearness".

The word Sadaqah is from the word Sidq, which means truth and sincerity, the truth and sincerity, which are expressed to others with true intention to help a needy deserving class. Any kind of help which you give to others in cash or in any form is an act of Sadaqah. This act demands sincerity, because it is Allah alone who in return removes or lessens the problems which a person faces. Sadaqah is a very wide term and is used in the Qur'an to cover all kinds of charity. Ahadith literature provides us following Talim in this regard:

- "Your smile for your brother is Sadaqah".
- "Enjoining what is right & forbidding what is wrong is Sadaqah"
- Giving a smile or a glass of water to a thirsty person or even a word of kindness and so on.
- Planting something from which a person, bird or animal afterwards takes benefit also counts Sadaqah
- Your removal of stones, thorns or bones from the paths of people is Sadaqah
- Guiding a person who is lost is also Sadaqah."
- Helping someone to establish himself in professional life, assisting someone acquire good learning; monetary assistance for the treatment of the sick; looking after the

orphans and the destitute; giving scholarships to students, all such charitable works, come under Sadaqah-Jariyah—that is why so many traditions are available which explain the reward of this practice and attracts the community to promote it. "The reward for giving Sadaqah in secret is seventy times superior to that of giving it publicly".

The highest degree of Sadaqah is that which should be given secretly so that the other hand may not know of it. It is however not restricted to pay Sadaqah openly, but according to the Talim of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and guidance of Ahl al Bait and Ash'ab it is preferable that Sadaqah be given secretly, that is superior in practice. According to Abi Abdillah Imam Jafar Assadiq, except "Bani Hashim", Sadaqah can be given to any needy Mumin.

Qur'an describes pious as follows: "And in their wealth there was the right of the 'Sa'el'-needy person and the 'Mahrum'-poor who does not approach others".

Good conduct is frequently termed Sadaqah in the Hadith. In this extended sense, acts of loving, kindness, even greeting one another with a cheerful face, is regarded as Sadaqah. In brief, every good deed is Sadaqah. This should start at home, as per Hadith:

"When one of you is poor, he starts with himself. If anything is left, he spends it on his dependents. If anything is (still) left then on his relatives, and then, if more is left, he spends it here and there."

Qazi Dr. Shaikh Abbas Borhany is attorney at Law & Religious Scholar PhD (USA), NDI, Shahadat al A'alamiyah (Najaf, Iraq), M.A., LLM (Shariah), Member, Ulama Council of Pakista. Email: qazishkborhany@hotmail.com. This paper was prepared on the request of the Chairperson, "Council of Islamic Ideology Pakistan" (Constitutional Institution of Pakistan) a few years ago to answer the question: "How can an individual or an institution contribute to upgrade the quality of life of the less fortunate ones? With this discussion on the 'Institution of Sadaqah', an attempt has been made to re-establish an institution, to facilitate the poor class of the Ummah and improve their quality of life.

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Electricity problems 177, Emergency Police 199, Fire Brigade 191, Water Problems 171, Telephone enquires 118, Accident (Traffic) 194, Foreign Affairs, 2025447, Interior Affairs 2527017, Immigration 250761/3, Inter-City Bus Co. 262111/3, Ministry of Communication 325110/1/2/3, Radio Station 282061, Tourism 254032, TV Station 332001/2, Red Crescent 203131/3, Tel-Yemen 7522202, Y.net 7522227

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Leather handcrafts in Shabwa: a dying art

By: Nasser Abdullah Nasser Saleh
For the Yemen Times

Generally, everyone has his or her own hobbies or particular business, having an affection for and doing credit to himself or herself. Whoever takes pride in the task, not just to enjoy himself, but also having the courage of his convictions and being convinced that what he's doing comes before all else, is for the best interests of the community as a whole.

For this reason, handcrafts are not shameful or worthy of less status, as thought and alleged. However, some businesses, particularly handcrafters, who are regarded as historical inheritors, are looked upon contemptuously from a narrow perspective, rather than being a matter of taste and choice, selection and

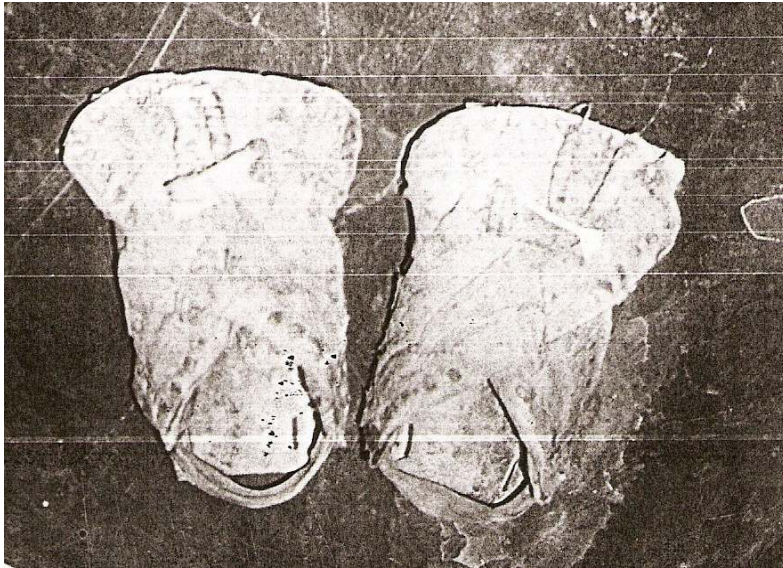
decision.

Such professions help one earn a living while at the same time providing pleasure to society; thus, it's all grist for the mill.

Yemen enjoys a variety of customs, traditions and distinguished handcrafts that bear witness to the great culture and heritage it was rich in long ago.

Like other Yemeni regions, Shabwa possesses various types of marvelous and admirable handcrafts that speak for themselves, just one of which are leather crafts. Accordingly, like any part of Shabwa, Wadi Yashbum has witnessed some who have created such handcrafts, which involves nothing but mere animal skins.

In ancient times, the residents of Wadi Yashbum made good use of cattle skins, tanning and converting them into leather, from which numerous useful articles were created to meet the various require-



A pair of slippers.

ments of that time.

One such leather item was a gareb, an article serving as a good and safe container for fetching, storing and cooling water for a time – or the equivalent of a refrigerator. Another leather item was a shakwah, which served as a churn to convert sour milk into butter.

Other useful objects were made, but in different shapes, such as nahi, garreh, budha and kara'eah, all of which were used for both sesame oil and nomadic ghee.

Harvest time was represented by other leather articles, for example, mashwa'a, qamah, afrah and masab, items largely used to gather grains, but also useful for other purposes.

Additionally, there was a leather receptacle called a mazab, which was a cradle for babies hung on three sticks.

Moreover, a beautiful leather case known as a wasadeh, which was a pillow decorated with black-colored ornaments and stuffed with mildly fragrant flowers, previously was used especially at weddings.

There also were leather shoes, known

as hadhi or rumash, made and designed in a nomadic fashion to enable walking on rough, rocky or thorny terrain and even slippery surfaces.

Additionally, schoolteachers once used an "educational aid" called a sawd, which was a stick with three leather braids ending in knots and used to beat pupils.

Other leather items satisfying past needs included the kas (vessel), which was a bottle covered with leather straps and decorated with shells for a touch of beauty.

Filled with perfumed sesame oil, it was brought out at various wedding occasions to oil the hair of visitors coming to congratulate the newlyweds.

Leather handcrafts are just one of many traditional Shabwa handcrafts in which its people took pride, but one regrets to see that most are threatened with extinction due to negligence, carelessness by today's generation or possibly because many other alternatives have managed to win the competition and consequently, score the winning goal to become lord of the current age.



This leather used to keep milk.

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