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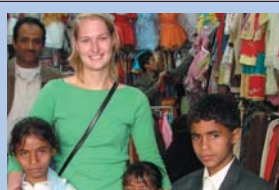
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Inside:



2

Psychological impact of Sa'ada war on children



5

Dutch couple saves Yemeni family from street life



8

Government encourages investment in the fishery sector

Legal experts review proposals for a Yemeni freedom of information act

By: Kawkab al-Thaibani
 For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, Nov. 26 — Two draft laws for a Yemeni freedom of information act were presented to participants at a two-day workshop held last Saturday by the international London-based organization Article 19 and the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms known as HOOD.

"Most Yemenis know that property means their cars, houses and bags, but they don't know that information can fall under the same category," said Daniel Simon, legal counsel for Greenpeace as way of introduction to the event.

"The main purpose is to get a draft law adopted and compiled to the inter-

national standards of human rights," added Dr. Sejal Parmer, senior legal officer in Article 19.

The workshop also aimed at raising awareness in regard to the concept of a freedom of information act, such as the one that exists in the U.S.

"A few years ago, high-level officials hadn't even heard about this law; now drafts are being presented to the parliament and many have demanded the right of information," said Simons, however adding that it would take several years before such a law be implemented.

Draft law by Parliament

During the workshop, parliamentarian Ali Ashal presented a draft law on the freedom of access to information prepared by the Yemeni Parliamentarians Against Corruption organization to which visiting international experts provided legal criticism.

The draft law stipulates that any Yemeni citizen has the right to ask for any public information and should receive the answer within 15 days. If denied the information, the citizen should be able to appeal to a commission.

It specifies that no official employee should be punished for disclosing gov-

ernmental information to a citizen who requested it, but that officials who refuse to provide requested information should be sentenced to three months in jail or made to pay a fine of YR 150,000.

The draft law defines the areas in which information should not be disclosed. These includes information that could potentially endanger the country's security such as military intelligence, defense alliances in foreign policy, and sensitive information exchanged between Yemen and foreign countries on criminal investigations.

Despite participants generally approving the law proposal, both Yemeni and international legal experts indicated that the draft contained several flaws.

Parmer explained that the position of legislative and judicial bodies, public corporations or private companies in public service were not suitably outlined by the draft, and said that exceptions to information disclosed by these bodies should be more specific. She further objected to the president appointing the Public Information Commissariat, and maintained that the parliament should appoint its members.

"The law contains good articles, but there are many flaws," said lawyer Khaled Al-Anesi, executive director of HOOD.

He objected to the use of the word "citizen" throughout the draft, pointing out that the person requesting information wouldn't necessarily be Yemeni, and stressed that its 15-day deadline for providing information would be too late in some cases, in particular for the members of the press and lawyers.

"The condition to make the request written is one of the possible barriers towards the smoothness of enforcing this law," he added.

Draft law by National Information Center raises questions

Although another freedom of information law has been drafted by the government-affiliated National Information Center (NIC), director general of information service at the



Journalists morning freedom of press in a mock funeral organized in front of the Cabinet at Freedom Square in August 2007, in protest against arrests and harassments of media people by the authority in 2007. The call for access to information law has been one of the main quests for journalists as a part of their struggle for a free press in Yemen.

center Sadiq Al-Hemyari refused to disclose a copy of it at the workshop, instead presenting a short summary of the draft to participants.

Angry that they were not granted access to the draft, the latter questioned the good intentions of those in government who had drafted it.

When asked about records to be withheld from the public according to the law proposal, Al-Hemyari said that information that could endanger national security or the national economy would not be disclosed.

"It is very obvious that some bodies tried to hide information and to cause more barriers to disclose information," said Asad Omar, from the Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights.

Al-Hemyari responded to the criticism. "Some comments are irrelevant and do not comment on the draft law," he said.

Parmer and the other legal experts

refrained from comment since they had not seen a copy of the draft law. "The description [of the NIC law] was vague," said Palmer, stressing that such a law should be drafted according to international standards.

"It is a big irony that a law of freedom to access to information be disclosed in secret," added Simons.

Both Parmer and Simons think that despite the first draft's flaws, it holds more promise than the NIC proposition.

Freedom of access to information to combat corruption

"Information can help society in combating corruption", said Izzaddeen Al-

Asbahi, the President of the Human Rights Information Training Center, "Sometimes the right timing of disclosure can help not only to hold corrupt individuals legally accountable, but can also form public opinion to exert stronger pressure [to resolve the issue]."

"The information blackout should end," recommended the participants at the end of the workshop, calling upon the government to release information immediately without a law governing the whole process.

"I believe that the Yemeni democracy will benefit from the law of the freedom of Information Access," said Simons.

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Psychological impact of Sa'ada war on children

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Nov. 25 — Post-traumatic stress disorders affect up to 45.5 percent of children in Sa'ada due to the devastating wars that they have experienced during the past four years, according to a study released by SEYAJ, the Organization for Childhood Protection, last Saturday.

Conducted from September to November this year, the study surveyed 1,018 children aged from seven to 15 years old, 61.8 percent of whom were boys and 38.2 percent girls. The number of girls was considerably less due to social restrictions.

The study revealed that 38.8 percent of children are living in constant fear, 12.6 percent live in anxiety and 13.5 percent have become anti-social. About 40 percent suffer from violent nightmares, and 60 percent have lost confidence in the future, do not believe in the importance of education and many consider leaving school.

Psychological effects children reportedly suffer from include depression, anxiety and bedwetting, as well as the fear of thunder and bullets being shot at traditional wedding ceremonies which can prompt them to lose consciousness.

The desire to commit violent acts was felt by 21.7 percent of those surveyed.

The study aimed to measure the psy-



A child from Sa'ada sitting on food supplies provided by WFP in response to the hunger caused by the war.

chological and behavioral indication of war on children, specifically in conflict areas and the present and future impact on children, their families, environment and education.

This study was only conducted in the directorate of Razeh, considered to be one of the least damaged areas in the province of Sa'ada.

In its conclusion, the study stressed the necessity to accelerate the implementation of psychological and social rehabilitation programs so as to reintegrate children into society in areas of

military confrontations.

It also recommended the speedy reconstruction of damaged schools, removing all marks of a war to provide an attractive learning environment for children.

The study warned of the danger of negligence after the war and said that war social and economical problems will continue to threaten the stability of local communities.

The study could not cover all directorates or refugee camps due to security reasons.

Youth document for combating corruption

By: Almgidaj Mojalli

SANA'A, Nov. 24 — Around thirty students from the universities of Sana'a, Taiz and Hodeidah released a youth document for combating corruption last week.

The Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC) selected youth from the three universities in tandem with its efforts to promote human rights. Ghazi Al-Samey, media unit officer in the center, said that the students represented Yemeni youth, the largest proportion of the country's population and the cornerstone of its future.

"We selected youth from the three universities for two reasons. First they represent the largest proportion of the country's population and we have a program called the Democracy and Human Rights Clubs in the Yemeni universities which aim to create active youth to be the future leaders," said Ghazi.

According to Ghazi, the program started in 2004 and has held many training sessions and workshops for university students. He added that the

program doesn't have political requirements and any student is eligible to join the program.

Ziyad Abdul Salam stated that he was selected as one of the thirty youth who wrote the document as he is a university student. "We benefited greatly from the training prior to issuing the document and learned about the types of corruption, as well as international laws and ways of combating corruption," he said.

The document aims to spread awareness of the negative short and long-term consequences of corruption, and to coordinate actions with other organizations and institutions involved in combating corruption.

Ghazi went on to say that youth will spread awareness among Yemenis through mass media, brochures, workshops, symposiums and other events to promote combating corruption.

The training center aims to form a new generation of enlightened youth who will spread awareness of the negative effects of corruption among society. "When we create such youth, they themselves will spread awareness among people in their districts and the

environments they live in," Ghazi explained.

Further, the document tends to create youth leagues and associations to name and pursue corrupt individuals. The document was produced after an intensive workshop in the field of combating corruption by a training team of Arab and Yemeni experts.

Ghazi pointed out that the document came as a result of a serious need of the society itself.

The document was released at the end of a three-day training course about the different types of corruption, local and international methods to combat corruption and the most effective ways to denounce the practice. It focused on political and social corruption, international agreements, and national laws to combat corruption.

According to the center's press release, the course is considered to be the first activity of a regional program to combat corruption directed by the HRITC in collaboration with human rights activists in Egypt. Ghazi noted that a similar workshop will be held in Aden next December to further discuss the document and how to develop it.

Promoting women's political participation

By Ghazi Assamiee and Yemen Times Staff

TAIZ, Nov 24 — In an attempt to promote women's participation in the political domain, two field studies were conducted by the Human Rights Information and Training Center funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative on the obstacles against Yemeni women's political participation. Both studies were conducted during the second half of this year, the first on the cultural and social obstacles and the second on the legal challenges to women's political participation.

In public events in Sana'a and Taiz, the center presented the studies calling for a radical change in the cultural and legal systems for the upcoming parliamentary elections in April 2009 to witness improvement in terms of women candidates.

The center's management also promised a national conference on women's participation in politics before of the end of this year during which the recommendations from both events would

be discussed and a plan to empower women will be devised. Particular attention will be given to helping willing women to run for seats in Parliament in April, advocating for a 30 percent quota and using the proportional list system as an alternative to allow minorities such as women more representation in Parliament and local councils.

The cultural and social obstacles study conducted by Dr. Intisar Al-Silvi recommended increasing society's awareness and acceptance of women as leaders in the public domain. It also studied several cases of female candidates in the past and the circumstances surrounding their electoral experiences. It concluded that independent candidates faced many obstacles including financial and political constraints, whereas candidates running under the banner of a strong political party found it easier to gain popular support.

The legal study stressed the need to change legislation in order to allow for more female participation in politics,

especially with regards to independent candidates who have to collect the signatures of at least ten percent of the voters in their electoral constituency to run in the elections. According to regulations, all their supporters must go to court to confirm their signatures, which creates a huge burden with regards to the logistics and financing of their campaign.

The study also recommended that related national legislation be reviewed to agree with all women rights conventions and treaties that Yemen has signed. It added that women should be given the same opportunities as men in elections through organizing sufficient media exposure, particularly during electoral campaigns. Foundations and government councils promoting women issues should be developed in order to obtain real authority to implement change.

The main factors discussed by the study include integrating the principle of equality between women and men in the Yemeni constitution and other national legislations.

Female photographer wins tourism photography contest

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Nov. 26 — "Unconditional Love" is the name of the black and white photograph by Amira Al-Sherif that won the first place in a national tourism photography competition organized by the Ministry of Tourism last week.

The photograph that captured the judging panel's attention portrays a Yemeni woman wearing the traditional sitara stroking her cat.

The contest was part of the ministry's delayed celebration of world tourism day 2008, launched by a seminar on tourism responding to the challenge of climate change and followed by a three-day exhibition of the photos submitted to the competition.

Amira Al-Sharif, who is a freelance photographer with Yemen Times, and is the co-author of "Faces of Yemen", a photographic impression published by the Netherlands Embassy in Sana'a on the occasion of thirty years of development cooperation between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Yemen.

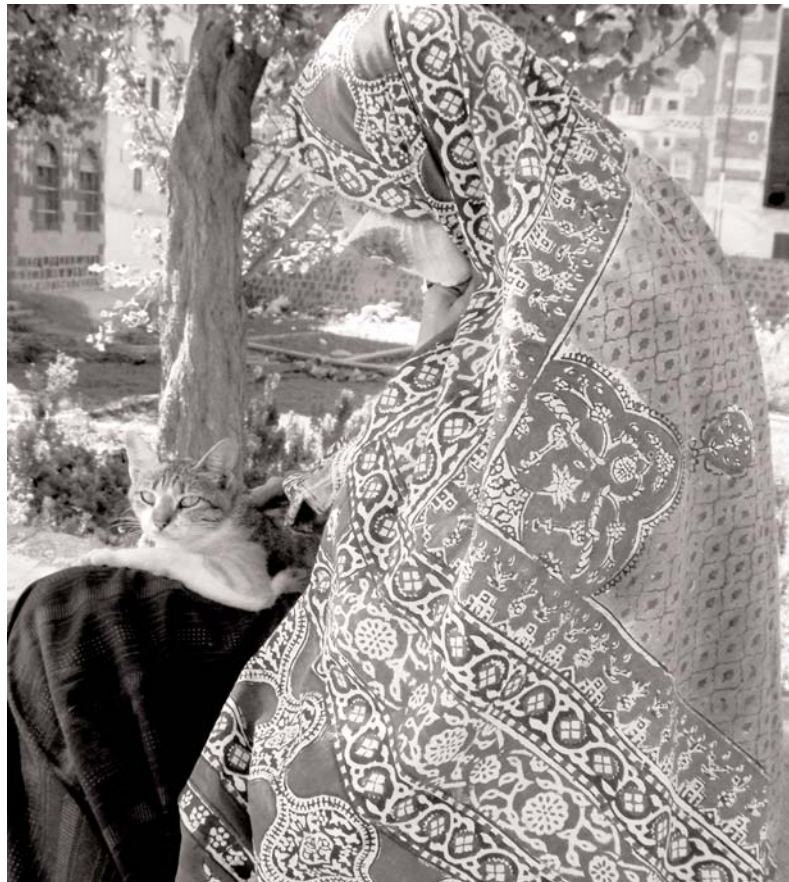
She learnt about the competition through a friend in her photography group of five, who had read a newspaper advertisement for it. All five participated.

In total fifteen professional Yemeni photographers participated with various photographs depicting scenes of Yemen. Many more had sent their contributions but were rejected because they were modified used computer graphics programs.

This is the first official contest with tourism as its theme and the second to be run by the Ministry of Tourism. Last year the ministry organized a photography competition on the subject of women, the central theme of the World Tourism Day 2007.

Mohammed Al-Hamadi, director of the exhibitions section at the projects department of the Ministry of Tourism, explained that tourism in Yemen had been affected by climate change, especially recently as historic sites in Hadramout such as Shibam and Tarim were severely hit by torrential rains and floods. Coastal areas, including the important tourist attraction of Socotra, were only temporarily affected by the storm.

This is why the ministry is trying to revive the image of Yemen as a tourist destination through art and photogra-



The winning photo: Unconditional Love by Amira Al-Sharif.

phy. The panel of judges for the competition was composed of three well-established Yemeni photographers and, although they did not know the identity of the photographers when selecting the photos, two of the three winners were females.

Head of the judging panel Abdulrahman Al-Ghabiri said that it was a pleasant surprise to discover the identity of the winners and that he believes in female photographers as he has trained some himself.

"[Photography] is an art, and I think female photographers can be as good, if not better, than their male counterparts in taking photos," he said.

All five photos Al-Sharif had submitted to the competition were taken on the spur of the moment before she knew about the contest. She said that she hesitated before choosing the photograph that won the first place because it was the only black and white entry in the whole exhibition and it was a little unconventional.

"I followed my intuition and it won me first place, despite my family encouraging me to choose another one," she said.

Al-Sharif described the photograph as having a part of her in it. She loves cats, which is why she was moved to capture the tender relationship between the woman and her cat in her photograph on camera.

She hopes to create a photography society for all professional photographers in Yemen, whether Yemenis or foreigners.

"I also want to thank Ibrahim Al-Hitwar who was the first person to introduce me to the world of digital photography years ago. He bought me my first digital camera and enrolled me in photography training. He used to tell me that I had shown him places he knows but through different light," she said.

She acknowledged her friends who helped her learn about photography and said that she owes her professional learning to Huda Al-Kibsi and Marcos Abbs who taught her the fundamentals of professional photography.

Al-Sharif said that sometimes one does not know their own talents until someone else points them out to them.

"I learnt about my talent through the eyes of other people," she said.

British Council workshop calls for more multimedia in schools

By: Ola Al-Shami

SANA'A, Nov. 24 — The necessity to equip public schools with multimedia was strongly emphasized by 25 members of academia and business participants at a workshop organized by the British Council at Sheba Hotel in Sana'a.

A number of useful websites for learning English online were suggested and the need to make use of teaching videos, computers and pod casts was stressed.

Presenting the 'Learn English' websites, British Council lecturer, Maggie Milne, expressed the importance of surfing the sites on a regular basis and encouraged teachers to improve the teaching by making use of the learning tips for their students.

Milne showed the participants a number of websites, including "Serious fun for learners" which consists of educational cartoon films tailor-made for younger students. The "Your Global Home" website provides busy teachers with everything from lesson plans to worksheets and teaching tips.

Zaid Mohammed Al-Shadibi, the Education Director in Education in Al-Wahda explained that English is taught in Yemen through direct translation and added that public school students have no access to internet. Al-Shadibi demanded the Ministry of Education to find means to develop the education sector.

In suggesting solutions for schools

which aren't equipped with technology, Julia Cave Smith, the Project Manager at the British Council, said that having no technology assistance was not an excuse at all. She suggested that teachers, instead of waiting from the government to provide the multimedia equipment they want, split the expense of a laptop for example, and share its use between them. She added that even non-English teachers would benefit from the programs of the British Council websites if they use them regularly.

"The necessity for equipping public schools with multimedia is very important, but employing professional teachers is more important," Omar Saif, the Education Director of Sana'a's old city said. He also said that teachers can't help in this equipment process because they can barely afford the cost of living. The workshop concluded with a vision that learning would be enhanced if multimedia was accessible to public schools in Yemen.

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In Brief

SANAA
Black list of violating contractors announced

The Capital Secretariat announced on Sunday a black list of the names of some private companies and contractors who do not adhere to the special provisions of projects they are responsible for.

The administrative body in the Capital Secretariat affirmed banning those companies and contractors to enter bids of new tenders, as they did not adhere to carrying out the projects entrusted to them on time.

Minister of State and mayor of Secretariat Capital Abdurrahman Al-Alkwaa called on taking necessary legal actions against the violating institutions, companies or contractors who do not adhere to the terms of contracts signed with them.

He that the Capital Secretariat and its administrative body will not tolerate any violations at all as the Capital Secretariat is Yemen's face and an important destination of visitors from all nationalities.

Democracy School concludes workshop on civil, political rights among youth

Democracy School concluded on Monday a workshop on the second phase of awareness raising project of civil and political rights among youth which targets 23 young trainees.

The workshop is aiming to increase trainee's view on the community participation, volunteers, civil responsibilities, right and ways of dealing with local leaders.

In a statement to Saba, chairman of Democracy School Jamal al-Shami said this workshop is the latest project to raise awareness of civil rights and politics among young people

ple which was implemented in each of Dhala'a, Dhamar and Hadramout and Capital Secretariat.

He pointed out that they already implemented seven workshops in the project targeting about 210 trainees and women.

Government approves updating civil statuses' strategy

The government approved in its cabinet meeting held on Tuesday Interior Ministry's strategy over updating civil statuses and registry for 2008-2015 in regulatory and institutional fields.

The strategy aims at completing data base of population by 2015 on governorate and district level depending on identification card, the national number and vital marks included in electronic slice.

The strategy covers a number of duties among of which regulating law of civil status and registry, its executive by-law and by-law of civil statuses and authority and preparing indexes and guiders.

Earlier, the cabinet has reviewed field survey's results of registering births and other records of civil statuses for 2006. The survey disclosed deteriorated awareness on importance of registering in the civil record for different purposes

U.S. to extradite Bin Laden's driver to Yemen soon

Sources said on Monday that U.S. authorities would extradite Salim Hamdan to Yemen in the coming few days, the State-run 26sep.net reported Monday.

He is one of Yemen's dozens detainees at the Guantanamo Bay, who were detained several years ago since 9/11.

Salim Ahmed Hamdan (born in

1970) is a Yemeni, captured in November 2001 during the invasion of Afghanistan, and imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay. He admits to being Osama bin Laden's personal driver and bodyguard.

He was charged with "conspiracy and providing material support for terrorism" but a judge declared the judicial system in place at the time unconstitutional and those charges were dropped on June 5, 2007. He was then held, without being charged, as an enemy combatant.

He was brought up on new charges on July 21, 2008, and found guilty of "providing material support" to al Qaeda, but was cleared of terrorism conspiracy charges. He was sentenced last August to five-and-a-half years of imprisonment by a military jury, being counted as having already served five years of the sentence at the time.

Arab-Indian Cooperation Forum to be set up

On the fringes of the First Arab Cultural Festival 2008, Arab states and India are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding for the setting up of the Arab-Indian Cooperation Forum.

The draft agreement for the forum was approved at the last Arab Foreign ministers meeting in Cairo.

Yemen's participation in the 1st Arab cultural festival 2008, which would be held early next month in India's capital, New Delhi, will include artistic and dancing shows of Yemeni folklore as well as holding plastic art, heritage and images of various Yemeni areas exhibitions.

At the festival, which will take place on 2-7 December under the patronage of the Arab League, and Yemeni cultural activities would be

held that will include displaying some Yemeni authors books.

Deputy Minister of Culture, who will lead the Yemeni delegation for the event, Ahmed Salem al Qadi said that Yemen's participation in the festival comes in response to the invitation of the Indian government represented by the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Indian Center for Cultural Relations and Chamber of Commerce.

Developing exports conference launched

Deputy Prime Minister for Interior Affairs Sadiq Abu-Ras affirmed government's keenness on studying means ensuring developing exports and varying income resources as national priority and economic necessity.

In the opening ceremony of the First National Conference for Developing Yemeni Exports which kicked off its activities here on Monday, he asserted necessity of coordination and cooperation between the government and the private sector's institutions and concerned civil society organizations for creating inclusive prospect leading to realizing aims of non-oil exports for reducing dependence on oil.

He indicated that this conference coincides with alter international conditions and international financial crises included developed and underdeveloped countries and on their programs and plans seeking development and economic and living stability to their people.

The conference discusses in two days a number of work papers presented by a number of concerned bodies and experts covers Yemeni non-oil exporting capabilities in addition to realizing role of partners,

developing exports, improving services associated with export and exterior trade and its role in realizing Yemen's economic integration regionally and internationally.

The conference aims at enforcing partnership's relations between the government and the private sector for realizing competitive capability of Yemeni exports in foreign markets as well as enhancing role of partners of exports, backing services of export sector and assertion on importance of export's role in economic policy.

During the first day of the conference, two working sessions have been held. The first session discussed seven working papers on fishery exports, importance of tendency to fishery industry, improving quality of agricultural exports, current situation and future vision of mining industries in Yemen, effects of quality in increasing competitive capability to exports and current situation and future horizons of industrial exports.

While the second session discussed five work papers on privileges and facilitations granted by investment law to export projects, role of the free zone in developing exports, role of specifications and metrology in developing exports and role of airlines in managing air shipments.

HADRAMOUT
Pirates seize Yemeni ship off Socotra

Pirates in the Arabian Sea have captured a Yemeni cargo ship carrying 517 tons of steel destined for the island of Socotra.

The security forces in Hadramout said they had received a note that

Somali pirates hijacked a ship, Adena, en route to the island and that the pirates took the ship to the Somali coast.

The ship cargo was set to have arrived in the island on 20 November.

Some sailors in the area were quoted as saying that they saw pirates hijacking the ship.

Somali pirates seized last week a Saudi oil vessel and took it to a Somali seaport. Negotiations are ongoing to release the vessel carrying 2 million barrels of oil worth \$ 100 million.

The pirates have lowered their ransom demand to \$ 15 million.

Earlier they demanded \$ 25 million and that they would not accept long-term negotiations, threatening if their demand was not met, the vessel would be in danger.

Piracy has recently soared off Somalia's coast with about 39 ships hijacked this year.

ADEN**Tons of Yemeni marble exported to Venice**

About 755 tons of Yemeni marble stones were exported on Monday to Venice city of Italy.

According to officials the shipment was exported along with around 770 tons of local products including fish, perfumes, Henna, biscuits and soap to a number of foreign and Arab countries.

The fish shipment contains 400 tons exported to Egypt, France, Italy, Spain, Malaysia and China. The biscuits and soap shipment of 300 tons exported to Ethiopia.

The perfumes of 20 tons exported to Dubai while 50 tons of Henna exported to Oman.

Their News

Total announces new round of scholarships program

After a successful launch of Total's International Scholarship Programme early 2008, Total E&P Yemen is pleased to announce today its 2009 International Scholarships Programme. Yemeni nationals are invited to apply for undergraduate scholarships in order to pursue their Bachelor Degrees at the University of Leeds in Britain. Applications will be received from 24 November until 31 December 2008.

Mr. Martin Deffontaines, the General Manager of Total E&P Yemen, has stated that 'Total has committed to sponsoring an annual international scholarship programme based on the strong partnership and the well-founded trust it has with the Government and people of Yemen. Effective participation in the development of Yemen is a key element in our overall operations. I believe that it is through such programmes that we can help make a difference in the education development of Yemen.'

For more information, please visit www.total-ep-yemen.com.

Procurement training for tenders committee

Second training of trainers' workshop on procurement in Sana'a was held last week. The training was in

coordination with the USAID targeted 15 of the supreme committee for tender's staff and those working in the sector from Aden, Hadramout, Hudeidah, Taiz. Director of the committee for tenders and bids engineer Mohammed Ahmed Al-Junaid confirmed the government's support to fighting corruption and increasing transparency and performance in tenders. He emphasized on the importance of activating the role of those working in the field and implementing the tenders' law number 23 for year 2007 and the instructions manuals and standard documents.

Shakeeb Othaman USAID coordinator confirmed that this kind of training comes within the partnership support between Yemen and the agency. It is a part of a five month training program aiming at raising the quality of work and skills of the tender committee staff on the central and local levels and to enhance their legal and technical capacities. In total there are ten training sessions and will conclude in March 2009. Each training will be in different governorate according to a pre-designed training plan and the number of targeted trainees is 223 in total, including employees working in the tenders field from various ministries and government offices around the republic.

The training program has been carefully designed and the trainees have been selected according to a specific standard and criteria.

The training which is given by an international expert covers the aspects of purchase procedures, using manuals, stages and procurement documents, importing from international supplies, in addition to the international laws and practices on procurement.

Newspapers worldwide can compete for international award

Daily and weekly newspapers from around the world can be nominated

for the International Newspaper of the Year and receive the Abitibi Bowater Premier Award. Deadline: February 16.

The Award is part of the U.K.'s 2009 Newspaper Awards, the industry awards dedicated to news media production. The judges will select an international newspaper based on its consistent quality, design, use of color, and photography.

To participate, three newspaper issues printed between October 1, 2008 and February 13, 2009 must be submitted, along with the entry form, to: Gary Cullum, Editor, Production Journal, 8 Sovereign Park, Cleveland Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7DA, England.

The winner will be announced during the award ceremony on April 22, 2009 in London.

For more information, contact Helen Hargreaves at helen@newspaperawards.co.uk or visit <http://www.newspaperawards>.

New European online library set to debut

A new online encyclopedia branded 'Europeana' brings its visitors free, digitized resources from Europe's archives, museums, libraries and audio visual collections.

EU Commissioner for Information, Society and Media Viviane Reding has promised to have two million digitized objects including books, maps, paintings, photos and films available for viewing in English, German and French when the Web site debuts.

To visit the new site go to <http://dev.europeana.eu/>.

The annual World Press Photo contest

The annual World Press Photo contest is at the core of the organization's activities. It offers an overview of how press photographers tackle their work worldwide

and how the press gives us the news, bringing together pictures from all parts of the globe to reflect trends and developments in photojournalism.

How to Enter

The contest is open to all professional press photographers. There is no entry fee.

Not only photographers, but photo agencies, newspapers and magazines from anywhere in the world are invited to submit their best news-related pictures of the previous year. Both single images and photo stories are eligible. The results are published on this website. Entry forms for the contest come out in October. To enter the 2009 contest click here.

Judging & Results

Judging takes place at the beginning of February each year. The contest jury comprises thirteen picture editors, photographers and representatives of press agencies from different parts of the world, with widely divergent backgrounds.

This brings to the process a breadth of experience, a variety of perception, and a contrast in viewpoint that keeps judging dynamic and bolsters objectivity. The jury acts independently of World Press Photo, and the organization has no influence on its decisions.

Winners are announced at a press conference in the second week of February. Prizewinning photographers are invited to receive their awards at the annual Awards Days in Amsterdam at the end of April.

Awards

First, second and third prizes are awarded in ten categories - for picture stories as well as for single images - to encourage the submission of across-the-board as well as in-depth news photography.

Entries are judged for their news value and on the photographer's creative skills. In the case of stories and

portfolios, the edit of the material submitted is also taken into account.

The winner of the World Press Photo of the Year, together with winners of first prizes (both for stories and for single images) in each category, receive a cash prize and a return air fare with hotel accommodation for the awards ceremony in Amsterdam.

World Press Photo of the Year Award

The main overall prize, the World Press Photo of the Year, is awarded for the single photograph that is not only the photojournalistic encapsulation the year, but represents an issue, situation or event of great journalistic importance, and does so in a way that demonstrates an outstanding level of visual perception and creativity. It has come to be regarded as the most prestigious international award for photojournalism in the world.

The award carries a cash prize of EUR 10,000, as well as expenses to travel to Amsterdam for the Awards Days in April. The winner also receives one of Canon's latest professional digital cameras.

Enter the 2009 contest

World Press Photo invites professional photographers and photojournalists to enter the 2009 World Press Photo contest. All entries must be received by 15 January 2009. Please choose one of the two options below in order to submit your entry to the 2009 contest:

1. Enter the contest online by uploading your files (available from 1 December)
 - Available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.
 - Stable internet connection required.
 - A username and password are needed to log in - both can be requested here between 1 December 2008 and 9 January 2009. Previous usernames and passwords are not

valid for the 2009 contest.

- Entries must be submitted between 1 December 2008 and 15 January 2009.
- Easy to use.
- No costs involved.
- Reliable.
- Entry can be saved and edited before submission.
- Images are coded automatically.
- 2. Enter the contest by post/prepaid courier (available now)
 - Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.
 - Recommended when your internet connection is unreliable.
 - Entry must be sent by post or prepaid courier.
 - Entries must be received between 1 October 2008 and 15 January 2009.

Monthly contest invites stories from around the globe

Writers worldwide can submit their best stories to the Global Short Stories Competition, a contest held every month by Certys Limited, a media company, and supported by the Darlington Arts Centre in England. Deadline: end of each month.

The organizers are looking for untold stories from anywhere in the world. Each month a winning story receives a cash prize of UK£100 (about US\$150) and is published on the contest's Web site. At the end of 12 months, each winner will be considered for an annual cash prize of UK£250 (about US\$375).

Entries on any theme must be no more than 2,000 words and be written in English. There is a UK£5 (about US\$7.50) entry fee per story. Stories can be submitted online at <http://www.globalshortstories.net/upload.html>. For more information, visit

<http://www.globalshortstories.net/index.html>.



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Job Duties:

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- Train and mentor a National Contract Analyst to the skill level and standard of the Expatriate Contract Analyst;
- Delivery and maintenance of training programs and ongoing communication sessions to Proposees, Planning, Senior Management, Department Managers and all relevant staff. Such training will be in the following areas: The legal contracting, acquisition and approval processes; Role definition and work coordination;
- Understanding terms of the Production Sharing Agreement (PSA);
- Minimizing CNPE's and CNPY's exposure to risk (including defining the need for specific clauses in various contracts, bid packages, change orders, extensions and value increases;
- Compliance with CNPE and CNPY policies and management controls, including SOX;
- Develop a realistic timeline for approvals;
- Conduct due diligence and initiation of vendor pre-qualification;
- Respond to questions regarding the annual cost recovery audit; demonstrate and discuss audit compliance; Additional contracting procedures and processes;
- Contract strategy and technical writing for justification and recommendations (J&Rs), evaluation summaries and presentation;
- Strategic planning for corporate, partner, Yemen Bid Committee ("YBC"), Operating Committee ("OpCom") and Corporate Bid Committee ("CBC") approvals, approvals;
- Application of the foregoing to current logistics practices and modifying same where required;
- Compliance according to bid law;
- Coordinate with contract Proposees, Logistics, Planning and Department Managers to determine appropriate contracting and procurement strategy;
- Provide strategy, direction and assistance to Planning Managers and the OpCom;
- Content of contracts, change orders and documents sent on behalf of CNPE and CNPY;
- Manage and maintain corporate legal documents in the Lotus Notes Material & Services Tracking ("LYLA") system to track all pertinent information pertaining to the approval process;
- Coordinate and ensure that CNPY and CNPE maintain consistent procedures, practices and forms with respect to contracts and their approval;
- Ensure Corporate Approval, Due Diligence, Audit, Customs, Contracting, Expiry and Board of Director and other ad hoc reports are compiled on a frequent basis and consist of accurate information;
- Maintain timely delivery of high quality support services to the Legal Manager, facilitate maximum cost recovery under the PSA, minimize downtime in production and operations and establish and maintain proper and efficient legal filing system.

Minimum Requirements:

- University degree or Technical certificates in contracting, or a Legal Assistant diploma preferred;
- Excellent English communication skills;
- Well developed/proven computer skills/experience in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Lotus Notes
- 2 to 5 years of oil and gas experience, most of that should be associated with Contract preparation and contract administration.
- Previous experience working with and supervising junior staff if required.
- Ability to work with a multi-discipline team in a multicultural environment to achieve mutually beneficial result;
- Effectively manage multiple and conflicting priorities and a very large volume of work;
- Work in a team environment, able to train and educate Senior Management and numerous multicultural diverse groups and departments on complex legal, contracting and strategic matters;

- ❖ To Apply for this Job please apply to: recruiting_yemsana@nexeninc.com
- ❖ Applications should be submitted NO later than December 8th, 2008. Faxed applications will not be considered.
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Dutch couple saves Yemeni family from street life

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

It all started with a photo of a child beggar and his sister taken in 2006 and published in a recent issue of the Yemen Times. A few days after the paper came out, Niels Nieman, a Dutchman living in Yemen, called in to say that the children in the photo are no longer in the streets. He and his wife sponsored the two kids along with their three siblings and widowed mother, and they now go to school, live a decent life and are happier than ever.

One year ago Mustafa, Fawziah and Zahiah Hilal were out of school begging on Khawlan Street. On their way home in a taxi, Niels and his wife Wendy were accosted by Fawziah who asked them for money. They were captured by the innocence of the children, especially Fauzia who repeated to them the only English words she knew: "I love you". The Niemans felt sorry for the children and decided to do something for them.

"We started by giving them money every time they stopped by our car to beg," Mrs. Nieman explained, "One day we got out of the car to talk to the children, and asked them about their family and why there were in the streets. We decided to take them to Fun City along with their mother so that they could have a nice day for a change. And from that day on, we give them monthly allowances and monitored their progress in school under the condition that they don't beg any more."

"After my husband died, I started begging with my children," the children's mother said, "[the Niemans] have done us a great favor by helping us and protecting my children from violence on the street."

"Thank God, we left our miserable life on the street behind," said Mustafa, 13 "If we hadn't met the Niemans, we would still be there." When in street, he was always on the

lookout to protect his sisters, which is why the Niemans see him as the man of the family. With him acting as a bodyguard even to the Niemans in the street, nobody dared to steal from them or insult them.

"After two years out of school, [the Niemans] helped me go back again, I am lucky" Mustafa added.

Now Mustafa, his brother and sisters – ten year-old Yousif, nine year-old Zahiah, seven year-old Fawziah, and five year-old Khulood- and his mother are all supported by Niemans. The Dutch family, who has rented a house for them, buys them clothes, gives them weekly financial support and takes care of their health.

Every Friday, the children visit the Niemans in their home for lunch and play around in their garden.

"Niels and Fawziah, as well as I and Zahiah have a special connection," said Mrs. Nieman.

Fawziah likes to use Mr. Nieman's camera to take photos. Her eyes light up when she talks about the day the Niemans took her family to the shop to buy them clothes and the day they bought her brother Mustafa a bicycle as a gift for his success in school. She studies in first grade and she wants to become a doctor when she grows up to treat her mother who suffers from high blood pressure.

In addition to the financial support, the Niemans pay great attention to the children's behavior and teach them how to treat other people. "Sometimes the children come to us when they fight with each other, and we always ask them to talk to each other instead of being loud and aggressive. Even with their mother we made them say 'I am sorry'," said Mrs. Nieman, "There is a big difference in their behavior since last year."

The Niemans are learning Arabic from the children while they teach them English and Dutch. Because communication can be difficult, they sometimes ask a Yemeni friend to talk to children about important matters



The Niemans with the children from the supported family. In less than one year the five children's life transformed completely because of an act of kindness.

like hygiene and behavior.

The Niemans are planning to send Mustafa to a language institute to learn English in order to facilitate the communication. From their conversations with the Niemans, the children have learned some Dutch words, such as *geit* [goat] and *maf* [crazy], which they use among each other.

"Children are the future of Yemen, but street children are open to a lot of violence, that they will probably project into the future to their children or other children on the street," said Mr. Nieman, lamenting the future of street

children in Yemen.

"There should be recognition from the Yemeni government that there are street children and a group of them are really poor," he added, "There are a lot of NGOs but they all target the same small group of children. The problem is big and there must be more support by the government."

The Niemans encourage the children to be good Muslims. "Mustafa and his brother go to study Quran in the mosque. We support them to be good Muslims and we only want to help them live a better life," explained

Mr. Nieman, "We will keep supporting them financially, even after we leave Yemen, until Khulood is 18 years old. We hope that by then they will be educated Yemenis who can have a bright future."

The Niemans recalled how much they missed the children when they were in Netherlands on holiday.

"Once Niels went to Netherlands for a long time and I let the children talk to him on the telephone," Mrs. Niemans recalled, "It was strange for them."

"Mustafa and Fawziah came to the

airport to say goodbye when I had to go away for ten weeks. At one moment they had to leave me and I had to leave them because all of us started crying. Fawziah clung to Wendy's leg in tears," said Mr. Nieman.

In eighteen months, the Niemans will have to leave Yemen, "It will be a hard moment but we will come back regularly to see them and to see how they are progressing in life," said Mr. Nieman.

"I don't want to think of that moment," Mrs. Nieman said.

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The government has no place for honest people Hilal and his severance pay

By: Nayef Al-Muraishi

Politicians and media personnel were surprised last week by news of the resignation of Minister of Local Administration Abdulqader Ali Hilal. Even it's content implied that there is no place for honest people in a government ruled by illiterate and less experienced individuals on a tribal basis, the resignation notice rendered by Hilal is a positive step though late it came.

The resignation letter was supposed to be rendered earlier as soon as the minister learned that the 'old guards' is a redline, which is impossible to cross and that the tribal influence is what defines the scope of his official business. The notice should have been rendered immediately after the first lesson, uncovered by the Distour Newspaper that has good ties with senior government officials.

According to the media, Hilal's resignation is the result of presidential suspicions about the victim's allegiance with Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, who has been engaged in a four-year fighting with the army. Other reasons why Hilal resigned his post relate with the allegation that the official has been sympathizing with Islamist groups and secessionists.

Suspicious allegiance

Due to his prudence and diplomatic tactics in establishing good relations with the public, Hilal won a Parliament seat in Damt area as a General People's Congress (GPC) candidate in the first parliamentary elections in a constituency were the contest was exclusively limited to Islah Party and Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) candidates while GPC had no notable popularity in that constituency. That functioned as the first test for Hilal, which consequently qualified the man to hold

the post of Deputy Governor of Ibb. It was only a few months until Hilal was promoted to the post of governor.

Having continued his hard efforts with the ambition to build an institutional state of law and order, Hilal was shocked by both pillars of the current regime: the tribe and sheikhs. Most Yemenis still remember the dilemma the victim has undergone in his confrontations with tribal sheikhs, who have been bearing in mind that the law is what sheikhs say while citizens are merely creatures whose job to serve and obey sheikhs.

Hilal overcame this dilemma by disbanding some private jails owned by powerful sheikhs and releasing those detained in them over disobeying their sheikhs despite the fact that those tribal leaders receive support from high-ranking officials.

While serving as Ibb Governor, Hilal's activities were not limited to

affairs of his governorate only. Rather, he established effective coordination with international donors for the sake of supporting numerous education, health and infrastructure projects. His governorate actually got the biggest share of international support and he was highly appreciated by staff of international donor organizations. Therefore, he obtained international awards in Germany and the Netherlands.

Hilal's engagement in development doesn't hinder his political performance, particularly as he became responsible for a seemingly Islah Party-controlled governorate. The fact required that Hilal should step up his political efforts in favor of GPC in an attempt to achieve equal balance between both extremes of the equation in the governorate: the Islah Party and GPC.

He shocked Islah Party leaders by helping GPC candidates won 30 seats, compared to two for Islah

candidates in the second parliamentary elections in 1997. He continued to work on the same rhythm until the GPC turned out to enjoy notable popularity in Ibb, as well as in other governorates until he was promoted to the post of Local Administration Minister.

Intelligence agencies uncovered Bint As-Sahn not weapons

At this point, we are shocked at how the intelligence agencies in our country were more able and competent to disclose that Hilal sent Bint As-Sahn (a popular Yemeni meal) to Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, which is the main reason behind Hilal's suspicious allegiance with Houthis and his subsequent resignation, however, they failed to uncover many trucks filled with arms that reached Houthis from various destinations. This is a severance pay, which Hilal was rewarded by the end of his service with GPC.

Source: Marebpress.net

SILVER LINING

Vanity Mosque

The building is fabulous and astonishing, and has become one of the main features of Yemen. Last Friday, the Al-Saleh Mosque, the center of attention and focal point of discussion for several months, was officially opened with the participation of several Islamic personalities. The state-owned media busied itself singing the praise of the "marvelous" mosque and called it a new Islamic wonder.



By: Dr. Mohammed Al-Qadhi

Some people I talked to had different opinions. Some said it was a good project, particularly as it has an annex college for Islamic teachings which would offer moderate and tolerant Islam.

That is fine. But, do we need the whole building?

I am not against building mosques, but this mosque is really catastrophic. It shows complete indifference to the feelings of millions of poor in dire need for a bag of flour, some milk or medicine.

Thousands of people are dying of malaria, cancer, hepatitis and other sorts of similar diseases. Many university graduates are jobless, many schools are without basic teaching materials, and many students study under trees. We have severe water and power shortage. The USD 60 millions spent of such a vain project could have been channeled into one of these priority areas.

Some might argue that building mosques is one of the best philanthropic practices and, as long as the president wants to do it from his own pocket, that is fine. Let us accept such an argument. However, I understand it is not the only way to seek God's blessings and I think that building schools or hospitals is not an act that would upset God.

I once heard the president criticizing government officials in Ibb for over-spending on things such as marriages and building mosques. He fell into the same trap of spending through his nose on a project that is absolutely luxurious and unnecessary.

Heads of Islamic authoritarian regimes tend to immortalize themselves through building such monuments, usually paid for by public money and given their names just to appease their ego and vanity.

We appeal for donors and other countries to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for this or that project, while those in charge spend a huge amount of money - regardless of its provenance - on such a mosque to glorify individual vanity. It is not this *haram*, guys?

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

An urgent notification to Transparency International

By: Najeeb Al-Ghubrani

Transparency International has decided to give honest staff in Yemen valuable and precious prizes, which are apparently deserved by 'clean-hand' people, who care a lot about preserving public funds. This prize resembles that of Noble.

I and others felt very happy as many honest servants in various ministries and government offices were selected for the prizes. Here, I will specify the selection process in Ibb governorate. The international organization selected, but we don't know on which criterion its selection was based, and numerous remarks need to be highlighted in this context. This is its specialization, and we have nothing to do in this regard.

However, I found that Transparency International's staff in Ibb governorate are forced and not

free to select. In this governorate, the organization selected one of the Public Health and Population Office's staff members while the process is conducted via a questionnaire surveying people about who is the honest manager in the governorate.

The process was conducted in an invisible way without notifying the various social groups or giving instructions to the study population on how to fill in the questionnaire form. Additionally, the international organization's representatives were prevented to make statements to the media while the questionnaire form contained the name of single person nominated for integrity without any rival.

There are plenty of positives and negatives, particularly those relating with preservation of public funds, the nominee's character and how he/she treats workers and people. Such data are extremely important to the questionnaire form.

People should also understand how to deal with this form easily.

In light of the questionnaire form, the organization made up a team (a boy and a girl), who represent it in the governorate. This is what concerns staff of public health and population as a sample to select those who are honest, as well as how the selection criterion was applied on the ground.

The process was undertaken wrongly

Remarkably, the population sample selected to fill in the questionnaire form had been determined in advance by an organization other than Transparency International. As many as 170 staff members of a certain hospital, whose manager is the sole candidate for the prize, were selected as a sample to fill in the questionnaire form that targeted health officials, and other forms were distributed to targeted male and female teachers to do the same

thing.

As the questionnaire forms are limited, they were given to specific social groups. Having asked many of the hospital staff members about safety of the process and how the questionnaire form was filled in, most of them confirmed that they ticked with their pens only on the positive aspects of their hospital manager (the candidate). Why did they do so? It is because they filled in the questionnaire form in the presence of their boss's monitors.

The questionnaire form also included certain spaces for signatures of the informants, which means that employees might have realized that, amid notable carelessness of the international organization's staff and lack of criteria to clarify how the form must be filled in; the manager may have access to their signatures, particularly as he knows about their signatures. He would have then known who opposes and who backs him.

Therefore, the questionnaire forms were passed to the targeted group (the hospital staff) in a manner lacking transparency. The Transparency International's staff committed a huge mistake.

I would like to confirm that I am not against the selection of a certain manager for the prize, however, inexcusable mistakes were committed against the organization and its bylaws. The organization knows well how such procedures must be taken. What took place on the ground is nothing more than a comic play, most notably as the candidate is truly honest and represents Yemen in the filed of international integrity. All the procedures taken in this regard should have been transparent and honest too. Through this article, I intend to notify the esteemed international organization to review what happens on the ground and examine how its staff abides by its bylaws.

Source: Al-Tagheer.com

Media and its role in promoting human rights

By: Rashad Ali Al-Shara'abi

Functions and roles of the various traditional and modern media means are no longer limited to the same media functions and roles experienced more than a decade ago. The media have seen an unprecedented expansion and development as a result of technological and technical development, rapid breakout of information and communication means and globalization.

Media outlets are no longer performing their traditional job (inform people of what happens) and the other added roles and functions related with awareness, knowledge, propaganda, promotion and entertainment with the purpose of providing citizens with accurate and reliable information they need in order to help them play their roles in a free community.

Media outlets have got a new job to work as a guard or protector, thereby observing the various activities undertaken by authorities, organizations, groups and individuals in the various countries. They were also assigned specific roles to ensure survival of successful democracies in states that took good steps in this regard. They give voices to

those who have no voices and ensure that ruling majorities don't oppress minorities or abuse their rights.

In addition, media outlets have got involved in uncovering cases of financial, administrative and political corruption, shedding light on human rights abuses and restrictions of public freedoms, standing by victims and identifying perpetrators, be they states, groups or individuals.

In short, such a new role is reflected in how significant media have become in making changes, defending rights and freedoms and fighting the various forms of corruption. The media also provide substantial advice to both the rulers and ruled on how to deal with everyday problems and issues.

It is not strange to say that there is a strong relation between media and human rights, as well as the primary role the media outlets should play in order to enhance human rights and increase people's awareness about them. They also should introduce human rights to citizens and integrate them into their daily behaviors.

The media must not forget to uncover human rights abuses and speak to the local and international public opinion in order to defend these rights, confront any violations committed in this regard

and determine methods followed in this regard.

As far as I am concerned, there are three key factors behind the weak role of media in Yemen. First, human rights, as a term and concept in its modern image, has been pondered upon as an instrument employed by the western invasion of Arab and Muslim nations to achieve certain interests.

Three factors behind poor performance of Yemen's media

From this perspective, human rights has remained as an odd cultural means used by western invaders to hurt independence and sovereignty of Arab and Muslim nations, and harm their social values and traditions.

This error, which had contributed to backwardness of Arabs and Muslims, was exploited by the Arab and Muslim rulers to establish their oppression and oppress their peoples. In the meantime, educated people and human rights activists committed inexcusable error as they gave the chance to oppression of the ruling elites to spread across the various Arab and Muslim nations.

Factor Two is represented by Yemen's backwardness, an issues that can be generalized at the Arab and Islamic levels with relative differences.

While operating on the ground, Yemen's media highly consider interests and desires of the government and businessmen. Consequently, they couldn't play an instrumental role in enhancing and protecting human rights

and public freedoms, and increasing awareness about them.

Factor Three is reflected in Yemen's human rights movement that hardly existed in the everyday life over the past ten years. This movement devoted

the majority of its efforts and activities to political rights and some of the citizenship rights at the expense of economic, social and cultural rights.

Source: Al-Tagheer.com



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The price is nuts

From Nutella to the finest Swiss confectioneries, the hazelnut is a staple of the chocolate industry, and three quarters of the world's supply comes from one country: Turkey.

Now, the Turkish government sets the hazelnuts' price too high, according to some, who fear that Turkey is starting to lose business to cheaper competitors.

By: Jasper Mortimer
The Media Line Ltd

From Nutella to the finest Swiss confectioneries, the hazelnut is a staple of the chocolate industry, and three quarters of the world's supply comes from one country: Turkey.

But some Turks say their enviable position is being undermined by a policy of setting the price too high to be sustained. They fear Turkey is starting to lose business to cheaper competitors.

Hazelnuts grow on bushes on the steep hillsides of north-eastern Anatolia, where the mountains force the rain clouds of the Black Sea to discharge. They are a major source of income for some 395,000 families, whose members harvest them by hand – throwing the nuts into baskets slung from the shoulder – and occasionally they take to the streets if they think the guaranteed price is too low.

When the government declared the guaranteed price in July, the Black Sea press welcomed it. “A wonderful price,” said the banner headline on the front-page of Gunebakis, the leading paper of Trabzon, the port that ships 45 percent of Turkey's hazelnut exports. The price of 5.15 New Turkish Lira per kilo of hazelnut in-shell was the equivalent of \$4. It had been higher only once before when frost struck the crop.

But others were not impressed. Mehmet Cirav, the head of the Trabzon chamber of commerce, says the price was a piece of election economics – it was announced days before the July 22 polls – that would bring joy in the short term but harm in the longer term.

“Producers want to make money, but this is not the right way,” Cirav says.

Others in the hazelnut business have endorsed Cirav's view. The head of the Istanbul Hazelnut Exporters Union, Ufuk Ozogun, says the price was clearly “political,” as never before had the state declared the price in mid-July rather than in August-September, but his bigger concern was the message that the high price sent to farmers.

“The problem in Turkey is overproduction,” says Ozogun, whose Pro-Gida company is one of Turkey's biggest exporters of hazelnuts.

From the excess of past years, Turkey already has a stockpile of 250,000 tons of hazelnuts in-shell, he

says. This is the equivalent of 42% of the world's annual consumption.

This year's crop, now being harvested, is expected to bring Turkey another 500,000 to 600,000 tons in-shell. If the harvest reaches the top of that range, it will equal the world's consumption.

“The price is not sustainable because of the huge stocks and crop sizes,” Ozogun says.

At a time when the Turkish Grain Board (TMO) should be seeking to cut production and draw down the stockpile, it is encouraging farmers to produce more hazelnuts by offering the highest-ever price for normal conditions.

But one day the grain board will have to face the logic of economics and declare a much lower price.

Cirav refuses to predict when this will happen, but he warns that farmers will get burned.

Critics accuse the Turkish government of failing to plan for the hazelnut industry, saying it prefers to appease farmers by raising the price and storing vast quantities of unsold nuts, which will eventually have to be pressed into edible oil and sold at a substantial loss to the tax-payer.

They say the state should draw up long-term plans for this valuable crop, invest heavily in marketing hazelnuts abroad and cut the over-production by shutting down the thousands of illegal plantations on the flat terrain of the western Black Sea.

The government is reluctant to respond to these charges. The hazelnut manager at TMO, Mustafa Cil, and an executive at Fiskobirlik, the state-guided union of hazelnut cooperatives, Mustafa Ozturk, did not reply to written questions from this correspondent despite repeated reminders.

On the other side of the price equation is the market, mainly Europe, where hazelnuts are consumed in chocolates and spreads – such as Nutella – as well as being sold as snacks in packets.

“This (price) is far higher than what the European and world consumers are expecting,” says Tahsin Tokgoz, the manager of Futim Gida, an Istanbul-based exporter.

Turkey enjoys tremendous advantages over other hazelnut-producing countries. The fat content of the Black Sea nut is higher, its taste is superior and its shape tends to be more regular, according to Tokgoz.



In the short to medium term, these advantages will enable Turkey to maintain its position in the market, where it provides on average 75% of the world's supply. The next largest suppliers are Italy, Spain and the United States. According to Fiskobirlik figures, Turkey produced 79.6% of the world's 734,000 tons of hazelnuts in-shell in 2005; Italy produced 9.4%, Spain 2.9% and the United States 1.3%. But developing countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia and China now realize that money is to be made from hazelnuts.

The price of \$4 per kilo is “very attractive” to countries where farm workers earn much less than Turkey's, Cirav points out.

The high prices have already provoked Azerbaijan and Georgia to plant more hazelnut bushes and expand their production, says Cirav and a hazelnut exporter in Trabzon, Sebahattin Aslanturk.

“They have started producing higher quality hazelnuts,” Aslanturk says. “It is obvious that they will steal some of our customers.”

Tokgoz agrees, saying that Azerbaijan and Georgia has been stealing customers from Turkey for “the last 10 years.” Manufacturers of hazelnut spread and flour are buying from Azerbaijan and Georgia because, for their products, the shape of hazelnut is irrelevant and additives can make up

for the inferior taste, Tokgoz says.

“Maybe, for the next five years, we will see that Turkey will continue to be the world's largest supplier, but later on we will see that these competitors are going to come on to the market at lower prices,” Tokgoz warns.

Ozogun acknowledges that Turkey faces a future threat, but he gives it more time.

“Quality and quantity wise, Turkey has more or less no competition for the next 10 to 20 years, but we have to draw up a program for hazelnuts,” he says.

When critics call for a program, they make a priority of the government's putting a stop to the spread of hazelnut farming to the flat lands of the western Black Sea.

For centuries hazelnuts have come from the hills of the eastern Black Sea provinces of Ordu, Giresun and Trabzon, where thousands of smallholders live a hand-to-mouth existence. They supplement their hazelnut revenue by growing vegetables, keeping bees and getting remittances from their sons working elsewhere.

But in recent decades some hazelnut farmers have migrated west and planted bushes in Black Sea areas such as Samsun and Akcakoca, little more than 100 miles from Istanbul. There the ground is flat, irrigated and suitable for growing rice and tobacco. Hazelnuts have thrived in these more fertile soils

and Akcakoca has become one of the biggest producers in Turkey.

But experts condemn this trend. The lush land of the western Black Sea should not be wasted on hazelnuts, but reserved for rice, tobacco, maize and vegetables, say Murat Sayili, Kemal Esengun and Meral Uzunoz, three agro-economists of Gaziosmanpasa University in Tokat.

Sayili, who hails from a hazelnut-growing family, says he fears for the farmers eking out a living on the slopes of Ordu, Giresun and Trabzon, for when the over-production crunch comes, and the price collapses, “the western farmers will uproot their hazelnut bushes and start growing rice or tobacco, but the eastern farmers will have to stick with hazelnuts – they have no alternative – and they will earn very little,” Sayili says.

The government knows the academics are right.

In 1989 it prohibited hazelnut cultivation on terrain of slopes less than 12 degrees. But it has been so lax in enforcing this regulation that flat plantations have boomed. In 1995 it enacted another regulation that offered money to the western farmers to help them switch to other crops. But this has not been a success.

The agro-economists studied the incomes of hazelnut farmers relative to other farmers during the years 1984-2004. They found that hazelnut farmers

made losses for 14 of the 20 years, whereas farmers of other crops lost money for only five years.

Despite this poor performance, farmers continued to plant hazelnut bushes and production has increased.

Sayili says the reason was that hazelnuts had several advantages over other crops: they are easier to cultivate, needing only about 10% of the attention required by other crops. As exporter Aslanturk puts it harshly, hazelnuts are for “lazy” farmers.

Moreover, the price of hazelnuts does not fluctuate during a season. Thanks to the TMO, they are less vulnerable to bad weather than other crops, and unsold hazelnuts can be stored for up to four years.

The academics say that to make hazelnuts more profitable the state has to restrict their cultivation. They recommend that the government close plantations on flat land and compensate their owners. Asked by what percentage the plantations should be reduced, the agro-economists refuse to give a figure, saying it would require detailed research.

Tokgoz, who is also deputy chairman of the Istanbul Hazelnut Exporters Union, says Turkey has a choice: it must either find a way of increasing the world's consumption – such as by making hazelnut bread fashionable – or it must reduce production.

“There is no other way,” he says.

You want Arab cash?

By: Aijaz Zaka Syed

At the height of the Asian financial crisis and the meltdown of Russia in the 1990s, a pundit said that Boris Yeltsin went to bed drunk and Brazil woke up with a hangover. The Asian crisis was little more than a patch of rough weather compared to the current financial catastrophe. This may be the biggest financial crisis the world has ever seen, even bigger than the 1929 crash.

The Great Depression was confined to America; the world was not as globalised as it is today. Now, for once, one finds oneself agreeing with Tom Friedman. The world is indeed flat. Which is why from the Asian tigers to India and China, and from the old Europe to Latin America, no one has emerged unscathed from the current Wall Street carnage.

Closer to home, although the Gulf states have taken some drubbing, the region has largely managed to insulate itself from the collapse the US, EU and other economies have experienced. Of

course, this is not thanks to some clever thinking on the part of Arabs. It's because of the simple fact that the region isn't yet fully integrated into the global financial system. Nonetheless, the Arabs are patting themselves on the back for managing to hold onto their assets and investments.

The value of Arab investments in the US and Europe may have shrunk after the crisis but they will survive. The Arabs have been saved by investments in their own countries and elsewhere and of course the recent windfall of oil revenues.

In all, it's rather gratifying to see British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other movers and shakers queuing up for Arab money. Many a pundit, including this writer, has been prophesying for some time about the shift of wealth and economic clout from the West to the East. No one anticipated that the change would come so early and so swiftly, however.

Brown's visit to Saudi Arabia and some Gulf emirates is particularly sobering considering the fact the empire on which the sun never set until

recently ruled the world and practically controlled the region. What an amazing reversal of fortunes!

To be sure, I don't have anything against Brown. In fact, one should thank him for ridding us all of the misery of watching his predecessor's antics. He may not have the gift of the gab of Tony Blair. But look how efficiently he has responded to the Wall Street crisis. Compare this to the bumbling disaster across the Atlantic and you realise what real leadership is all about.

Now Brown wants Arab states to rescue Europe and the world economy with their money and direct contribution to the IMF. What should the Arabs do? They should do all they can to help, of course. But all financial aid comes with conditions. Ask the Bretton Woods twins, the World Bank and IMF. Arab aid should be extended with strings attached too.

The Arabs need to tell the West they will part with their money only if it puts an end to continuing injustice and exploitation in the region. If you want Arab money, then act to end the suffer-

ing of the Palestinians and persuade Israel to return what belongs to them. For far too long, the West has protected and “palled around” with Israel – as Sarah Palin would put it -- while it has made a proud and independent people prisoners in their own land.

Revisit UN history and see how many resolutions urging mercy for the Palestinians have been trashed by Israel over the past six decades. Also, note how many times the US has vetoed UN resolutions censuring Israel for its crimes against a helpless, defenceless people. Israel's friends in high places haven't even allowed a perfunctory UN warning asking the Zionists to behave.

It was cold fury and helplessness in the face of Israeli aggression and the contemptuous indifference of Western powers that forced the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates, and other Arab states to resort to the oil embargo during the 1973 Arab-Israel war. While the Americans pretended to be friends with the Arabs and enjoyed their oil at dirt-cheap prices, they provided military

and logistical support to Israel against the Arabs in the 1973 War. The oil embargo brought the US and the Western powers to their knees, illuminating the awesome power nature has put at Arab disposal. If necessary, the Arabs could use that option again with unimaginable consequences for the world economy. But they do not have to do that. There are other ways of making their voice heard today, and not just on the Palestine question.

This financial crisis offers the Arabs a rare opportunity to take charge of their destiny; an opportunity that comes once in centuries. Economics has never been my thing. But even a layman like me can see that what we are witnessing is an exponential change. And the Arabs are uniquely placed to be part of this amazing revolution, if not lead it. They must make use of their resources, investing them judiciously and strategically, getting them real power and a role on the world stage. Their time has come.

Speaking in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, Brown held out the carrot of seats for Arab states at the high table of the IMF

for their contribution. Why only the IMF? What about the World Bank? What about the UN and other hallowed bodies that have been sitting in judgement on the fate of Arabs and Muslims? As any good banker would tell you, there are no free lunches in this world.

So why should the Arabs offer their money without being assured of substantial returns? Especially when until recently our American friends were not prepared to touch Arab cash with a barge pole. Remember the DP World fiasco and all the fuss they made about “terrorists” taking over their ports? Suddenly, the “terrorists” money is perfectly acceptable when it suits them.

The Arabs have to take advantage of this great opportunity. For far too long they have been at the receiving end -- pawns in the hands of big powers. It's time to end this dispossession and that of the rest of the world. History will not forgive the Arabs if they fail to do so.

The writer is opinion editor at Khaleej Times

Government encourages investment in the fishery sector



By: Mahmoud Assamiee

With a long coastline of up to 2,200 kilometers on both the Red Sea and Indian Ocean and over 130 islands to its name, Yemen's fishery sector is one of the country's wealthiest resources.

The Yemeni government has devised a package of economic, financial and legislative reforms to encourage Arab and foreign investment, enhance accountability and good governance in the fishery sector.

Moreover, the cabinet had recently approved a national strategy to develop the fishery sector and to protect this national wealth through modern marketing and exporting techniques.

"Our ministry is providing facilitation and incentives to attract investments in this field," said Minister of Fishery

Wealth Mohammad Shamlan.

According to the General Investment Authority (GIA), revenues from this sector contributed to 1.7 percent of the total revenues in 2007. Fishery exports last year reached 81,021 tons and brought USD 1,976 million into the country. Up to 182 fishery projects, equivalent to the investment of YR 41 billion, have been set up in Yemen between 1992 and September 2008, providing over 6,000 jobs for Yemenis, according to government figures.

Revenues from Arab investments in the sector over the past 15 years have only reached USD 36 billion. Salah Al-Attar, director of the GIA, described this as low compared to the potentials and investments in other sectors.

The Yemeni government last week concluded a two-day conference for Arab businessmen interested in this field. During the conference, experts dis-

cussed a number of studies on developing the fishery sector in the Arab world and the role of fisheries in Arab food security, as well as presented investment opportunities in Yemen to potential investors.

Participants agreed on the need to coordinate efforts to support scientific research to promote the wealth of the fishery sector following a sustainable development strategy, and considered the issue of quality control to maintain international standards in the production, packaging, storage, distribution, marketing and exporting processes of local products.

The conference was organized by the Arab Union for Fish Producers and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investments and Development in cooperation with the Yemeni Ministry of Fishery Wealth and General Investment Authority.



INTERNAL / EXTERNAL VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Title of Post: Protection Clerk
Post Number: (Temporary Assistance)
Category / Level: GL 4
Location: Saada

Entry on Duty: 1st January 2009
Duration: Up to 31 Dec. 2009
Closing Date: 15 December 2008

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Under the direct supervision of the Protection Officer in the Field Unit in Saada, the incumbent is expected to perform the following duties, guided by the humanitarian principles and values of the United Nations, and adhering to the UN Code of Conduct:

Terms of reference (Duties)

- ¥ To conduct basic interviews with IDPs and returnees to understand the situation;
- ¥ To provide basic interview notes to supervisor on IDP and returnee cases;
- ¥ Drafts and types routine correspondence relating to individual IDP and returnee cases;
- ¥ To liaise with Information Counselling Centre for review of cases related to IDPs and returnees and recommend implementation of the necessary actions;
- ¥ To monitor the return process to ensure safe and dignified return of IDPs according to international guidelines;
- ¥ To compile and maintain all protection statistical records related to IDPs and returnees;
- ¥ To liaise with Saada Charitable Women's Association (SCWA) to ensure implementation of activities is done timely; &
- ¥ Perform any other duties as may be required.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Education: Completion of Secondary Education. Possession of a Certificate in International Law, Political Science or related field will be an added advantage.
Experience: At least **two** years of previous job experience relevant to the function.
Others: Possession of good computer and communication skills is essential.
Languages: Very good knowledge of Arabic and English.

For internal UNHCR candidates:

Staff may apply to vacant posts at their own level at any time. Under the reduced seniority requirement, staff who have completed at least half of the required seniority in grade will be considered. Candidates whose grade is two levels below that of the post may also be considered. Candidates who do not meet the criteria as internal candidates can be considered as external candidates.

For external candidates:

While priority will be given to Internal Candidates as per UNHCR guidelines, suitable External Candidates will be considered.

IMPORTANT:

Applications received after the above mentioned closing date will not be considered. All applications should be sent to:

The Administration Officer,
UNHCR BO Sanaa
P.O. Box 12093
Sanaa.
Tel. Contact: +967-1-469771/2
Fax: +967-1-469 770

Yemen LNG launches largest gas export project ever in Yemen

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

Conservative estimates suggest that government revenues over the next 20 years for the largest natural gas project in Yemen so far, a Yemen Liquefied Natural Gas Company (Yemen LNG) initiative, will reach USD 30 to 50 billion.

The project, which is 40 times greater than the average Yemeni large-scale investment, is expected to be one

of the top contributors to the macro-economic growth and industrial development of Yemen over the coming years.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh last week inaugurated the first phase of the giant economic project for exporting liquefied natural gas from Balhaf in Shabwa.

The first phase of the project will involve the construction of a 322 kilometer-long pipeline from the gas fields in Safer, Mareb, to Balhaf Port on the

coast of the Arabian Sea.

Project director Patrick Logo promised the first shipment of exported Yemeni natural gas from this project by June 2009, if operations proceed as planned.

He explained that the project included two laboratories for liquefying natural gas and two reservoirs for storage, as well as a number of other facilities such as an airport, full accommodation for workers, workshops and administration offices.

Twelve thousand employees will work in the project, 60 percent of them Yemenis. The project also has provided working opportunities to thousands of laborers who have worked in constructing the pipeline.

The president welcomed French investments in Yemen in the fields of energy and industry and affirmed that these investments would get all the support and encouragement needed for realizing joint interests.

Oil and gas production started in

Yemen in 1986 with production levels exceeding 380,000 barrels per day in 2006. The country is likely to continue to rely on its natural resources to provide for its population of over 20 million inhabitants.

The LNG project is the country's largest-ever industrial investment with a budget of USD 3.7 billion, and the decision to launch it in August 2005 was an important milestone for both the Yemeni government and Yemen LNG shareholders.

The location of Yemen is strategically advantageous as it allows access to all liquefied natural gas markets, both in the Asia Pacific basin as well as to expanding markets on either side of the Atlantic. Proven gas reserves are sufficient to produce and export 6.7 million metric tons of liquefied natural gas per annum for at least the next 20 years to its long-term customers in the North American and South Korean markets, and potentially also to new customers in the future.

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ابن طه ثابت السقاف

بمناسبة الخطوبة وقرب الزفاف
قال ألف مبروك

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أحمد محمد الجنيدي

بمناسبة دخولة القفص الذهبي
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عادل أحمد حامد القحطاني

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الجديد والذي اسماه
محمد

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One more struggle

By: **Nashwan Ahmed Al Khawlani**
nashwan336@yahoo.com

“Go with hope, come back with despair” that is the unbearable tragic situation of students who join universities in Yemen for a better future but Alas at the end they got nothing they come back home with empty hands. At present, thousands of students are graduating yearly whether legally or illegally, with hard working, and sleepless nights or with mediation and power-using.

After their graduation from secondary school, they have a dream of a very nice prosper future. As soon as universities open its arms for admission and registration period to receive newcomers for booking chairs in their most wanted department, definitely, most of the secondary graduated students go to the universities, well motivated and stimulated to study hard for years for the sake of getting a prosper future.

According to their attitudes, they book a chair in a particular department which at the end rewards them with a nice job for living the luxury life as they have dreamt before joining the universities.

Undeniably, students join a

department according to the percentage which they have got in the secondary school; they believe it promotes them to a high position in the future though they cannot be qualified hereafter, because they got a high percentage illegally.

For the official side of the government in universities policy, they should take into account such issues such as receiving a large number of students to a particular department causes a problem in the future when they apply for a job. At universities, they should make a tough exam for the admission to the rolled students with a limited number not only for effective education environment but also for opportunities of employment hereafter.

On the other hand, students with intensive desire and motivation join universities, wishing that their living circumstances will be improved and developed in the soon future with the same desire; their parents spend openhandedly all what they have to see their son graduate from a university to be something, increasing their life expenses to a high level.

Diligently, they start embarking in their journey of education at universities for years. Years are passing as a decades those whose income is limited but it successfully passes.

As soon as they make the final touches in their universities contemplatively, in their graduation ceremony with mixed feeling and scattered thoughts, leaving those whom they have lived with for long years but unfortunately the naked reality unfolds thoughtfully, four years of working hard, sleepless nights with an empty stomach hardly have finished as a consequence, they get lost in the dark of the dark future that cover their minds to see.

As they stand to contemplate of the dark future thoughtful questions cross their minds between now and then. Where they go! To uncertain places since they find no way to go as many unknown places diverge for them to choose.

They are lost in this material world thus they come back to their village, home with despair with the tragic reality. Unquestionably, many post-graduated students are psychologically disappointed though they are qualified for such jobs which are designed only for particular persons.

In addition, the most tragic situation is when things are changed and fall apart, well informed students are invisible and the worst are seen as the stars though they can not be a candle. All that gives entirely a heartbreaking unbearable sign to the next generation of the situation which change their minds, consequently,

some of them deviate from the way of education; others complete and pursue their education only just with a little glimmer of hope.

Having finished the years of study at universities, students attentively start appreciating the past comparing with the present. Noticing that the past was glorious they highly evaluated the past that motivated them to study hard even though they came back despairingly with broken heart, and tearful eyes, as they totally disappointed the great expectations of their parents.

But going home back does not solve the problems of employment but it becomes so complicated.

Post graduated students should not lose the hope which they study for. They should acquire experiences to make their opportunities of employment more appropriate and sufficient. Starting with a simple job is a progress in itself for bearing the burden of life as a step is a beginning of journey.

They have to study courses in computer and also in other fields to add it to their C.V for gaining qualified skills for such a job therefore, institutions and establishments will open its arms for such people like you. So everything will be changed even the proverb "go with a hope, come back with prosperity."

Through The Mind's Eye

By: **Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy**
maged_thabet@hotmail.com



Systems and laws: Gone with the wind?

A lot of rumors have been circulated about the breeching of systems and laws in the governmental institutions. It was somehow difficult to believe such rumors about a university. There were also a lot of rumors about Ibb University being dominated by other ways rather than systems and laws. I used to reject such sayings, convincing myself that we must not believe whatever is said by others. Sadly, I was wrong and a tough lesson was to be learnt in my treatment with Ibb University.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh has announced that Yemen is a country of institutions aiming to overcome many old systems that have been negatively affecting the process of development. The President has done his duty for which he must receive a lot of thanks. Such great efforts, however, are welcomed with deaf ears in some institutions like Ibb University.

A university like Ibb is expected to be dominated by academic procedures under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. These procedures are already there in the campus of the university, but other hidden ways play great roles in running many things inside the university.

Three weeks ago, I read an advertisement in one of the official newspapers about academic vacancies in Ibb University. One of the conditions was not clear enough- "the applicant must have very good grade in the first university degree".

I wondered what they mean by "the first university degree". Is it the Master degree, or the Bachelor degree? I thought it is better to contact the academic department where the applicants submit their files. They told me: "the first university degree is the Bachelor degree".

I also asked them why they want this grade in the Bachelor degree since the first condition is to have a very good grade in the Master degree.

Actually, their answers were well-prepared, as if they had been given training on how to reply to such enquiries in a convincing way with reference to laws. In their answer, they said, "these are the standards of the Ministry of Higher Education and it is the law that nobody can break." I was not sad or angry, but happy because the law is now respected in governmental institutions.

As a matter of negotiation, I asked them about any possibility of making exceptions about the condition of the very good grade in the Bachelor degree since my grade needs only one mark to be very good.

Again, the law was the best means to bid me goodbye, and they convinced me that these are basic standards from the Ministry of Higher Education, and the university cannot give any exceptional cases. It was really good to be bid farewell in the name of law. I tried to accept the matter, feeling happy because laws and systems are respected.

My friends advised me to find a way like mediation to officially submit my file. But I was ashamed to try to violate the systems and laws. As a means of convincing myself, I contacted the academic department a second and third time.

Again the laws and systems were there to make me respect them by force. After the application deadline was over, I was really shocked by the news that some applicants, whose grades in the Bachelor degree are "Good" like mine, had been accepted in the competition for these academic vacancies.

At the beginning, I thought it was only a rumor like the other rumors about Ibb University. When I further looked in to the matter, it was proved that some of the applicants only have averagely good grades, the same as mine which impeded me from applying and my file being accepted.

I tried to find out more about what had happened. Some friends said that there might not be enough applicants and that they might have had to accept exceptional cases. If there were no enough applicants, the law says there must be another announcement in which they can omit any standard so that all those who want to apply know about the changes.

To accept applicants secretly is really unfair. And I am not the only victim, as many others showed respect to the laws and systems which have finally "gone with the wind".

I am happy that I have learned something and I would like to say thank you to Ibb University for such respect of laws and systems. Finally, I am very sorry to write about this and hope that you forgive me as I am only expressing my views, as supported by the president in his "freedom of expression" project.

Maged Thabet Al-Kholidy is a contributing opinions writer form Taiz. He holds a Masters Degree from the English department at Taiz University and is the former editor of Taiz University's English-language magazine.

Smuggling antiques is plundering civilization

By: **Mojeeb H. Shubaa**
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Because of Yemen's strategic location and wonderful climate, Yemen has a great history and ancient civilization which makes the country a coveted destination for stealing invaluable ancient artifacts.

Tourism has suffered from the silly behavior of uneducated individuals, such as those who try to kidnapping foreign tourists and turn them into their guests by force for reasons that are neither convincing nor legal. They act recklessly for personal

benefits and ignore that their actions make Yemen lose much. Carelessness in activating tourism in most archeological areas is also an obstacle, especially as these sites often lack public utilities.

It hurts us when we hear nowadays about failed attempts to steal and smuggle old artifacts because of the lack of protection of these sites, which allows individuals to disturb archeological sites by digging haphazardly in them without the knowledge of either the ministry of tourism or concerned archeologists.

Those who steal ancient relics and manuscripts to smuggle them outside the country in exchange for money

aren't aware of the crime they are committing. They ignore that, by stealing, they are demolishing an ancient civilization and effacing its identity.

Those who try and sell their booty at high prices to tourists don't realize that all the money they receive cannot equal the moral value of these ancient objects. They are selling the history and tradition of their own country, source of their honor and glory of the past and future.

Only the fact that many attempts to steal these antiquities fail is a consolation, because there are still honest people to take care of our heritage and preserve it. Society's

perception of the importance of preserving these antiques from thieves and smugglers confirm the degree of knowledge of people in the country. It gives us a general idea about how much more society wishes to protect our homeland's treasures from plundering or demolishing by silly people with no regard for our heritage.

All of us must be stricter with those who commit these crimes because they hurt their own country's civilization and history. We must help the government to curtail any attempts to steal antiques because it is our collective responsibility to do so.

The mobile phone: a double-edged sword

By: **Nasser Abdullah Nasser Salah**

The mobile or cell phone is a particularly light piece of equipment that came into existence for the service of the human being. Used as an immediate means of communication everywhere, it has become indispensable to man as it functions well both outdoors and indoors.

The mobile phone comes in all shapes and sizes. Its appearance and features are constantly changing and new models are forever appearing on the market, much to the delight of those obsessed with owning the latest

brand. Whether worn on the hip in a small leather case, dangled round the neck in a pouch or simply carried around in a handbag, the mobile phone is invaluable in its services and has become a dependable friend for many around the world.

But the cell phone is a double-edged weapon, with advantages as well as disadvantages. It is important to put such equipment into action carefully, as making good use of the technology is a virtue, whereas doing otherwise –inconveniencing or troubling others- is a vice. When using a mobile phone, it is advisable to treat others with respect and address them as you would like them to address you.

The cell phone is no doubt a great technological advancement of inestimable value to the human being, but it has regrettably enabled some to bother others in a more intrusive manner than previously possible. Some nasty individuals randomly dial numbers to disturb people at home or at work. More awful, others bombard strangers with offensive pictures and rude messages. These actions are both immoral and impertinent.

Although mosques are supposed to be highly respected places for the worship of God, all too often one hears mobile ring tones shamelessly upsetting prayers and visiting worshippers. Last Ramadan, I was

praying in Assaid old mosque when a cell phone rang behind me. Its owner anxiously checked his screen to see who the caller was. And it is not unusual to hear someone actually answer a call while sitting inside a mosque. It would, of course, be better if people switched off their mobiles when visiting a mosque in order to try as far as possible not to upset the prayers' atmosphere.

When reasonably used, we highly appreciate the value of the mobile phone. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in a Hadith that the Muslim is he who keeps his fellow Muslims safe from both his mouth and his hand.

Polygamy: an essential practice in rural areas

By: **Dr A. Rasheed Yassin Ebrahim**
Senior horticulturist and consultant

Polygamy has created much misunderstanding among both Muslims and non-Muslims due to limited awareness of its religious and social objectives. I totally agree with Hanan Al-Wadee whose last article appeared in Yemen Times' issue 1202, in which she stated, "The one who seeks the truth will attain the perception of polygamy in its elevated image, as was provided by Islam."

I had the opportunity to participate

in a joint Yemeni-Canadian-Syrian mountain terrace development project a few years ago in several areas of Ibb and Lahj. With the community's active participation, we conducted in-depth studies of the chosen micro-watersheds and, during the course of our work, obtained astonishing information about polygamy from community leaders in all of these ecologically and geographically very different areas.

The latter mentioned polygamy as an important means of solving the problem of labor shortage in remote areas. They explained that, unlike in urban areas, family labor is an

indispensable asset in the remote mountainous terrain, for the following purposes:

- Mountain terraces depend on rainfall which is irregular from year to year and hence rain-fed crop cultivation depends basically on family labor -boys, girls, women and men- for sowing and all that is needed to be done before harvest.

- There are traditional post-harvest handling and storage practices for grains, cereals and fodder crops, skills that are handed down from generation to the next and still practiced by all family members despite efforts of different institutions and projects to

interject new technologies and interventions.

- It is an undeniable fact that in rural areas, women are the preservers and care-takers of national livestock. The mucking-out of traditional animal houses for cows, goats, sheep, donkeys and poultry, milking, feeding, breeding, health care and rearing are all activities that women and girls are in charge of.

- Shortage of drinking water is an acute problem in the rural areas, and girls and women spend several hours a day fetching water for the household. If the source of water is very far away, boys and young men will accompany

them.

- The collection of fire-wood and fodder are laborious tasks which are usually carried out by women.

- Women are important participants in social affairs. Family members assemble together for qat sessions and marriage ceremonies, and neighbors gather together for social activities, and visit their each other on a regular basis.

Adultery is a big sin in Islam, and therefore polygamy is an essential social and cultural practice in remote areas where sometimes not all girls can find their match. Young village girls are usually reluctant to marry

outside the social circle in which they were brought-up, except when cousins or known grooms to the families living in cities or abroad propose for marriages.

Another important aspect which the village leaders explained was that marriage within the same tribe or extended family was essential to keep the ancestral land holdings and properties within the families or tribes to which they belong.

Rural community members and leaders explained that polygamy, permitted in Islam, should be justified and feasible for the sake of social, cultural and religious preservation.

باسم محمد عبده الشيباني
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وزارة المواصلا ٢٣٥١١١/١/٢/٣، السياحه ٢٥٤٠٣٢،
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البنوك

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للتواصل: ٧٧١٦٤٨٤٧٢

• مختار - بكالوريوس حاسب آلي - خبرة في تقنية المعلومات - حاصل على الشهادة العالمية في مجال الشبكات CCNA - حاصل على الرخصة الدولية لقيادة الحاسب ICDL - حاصل على عدة دورات في اللغة الإنجليزية - يرغب في العمل في مجال تخصصه
للتواصل: ٧١١٠١١٦٨

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للتواصل: ٧٣٤٧٨٠٥٠٨

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للتواصل: ٧٣٣٠٧٩٨٨٢

• ياسر محمد - بكالوريوس صيدلة - الهند - يجيد اللغة العربية والإنجليزية والهندية - يريد العمل كمندوب شركة أدوية - يفضل العمل في محافظة في محافظة الحديدة
للتواصل: ٧٣٥٦٠٢٥٢٢

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للتواصل: ٧١٢٥٠٠٥١٢

• مدرس لغة إنجليزية يعمل في مدرسة أهلية - يرغب في العمل كمدرس خصوصي من الساعة الواحدة ظهراً وحتى الثالثة عصراً أو بعد المغرب
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Senator Hilary Clinton presenting Nujood with a gift in recognition for her bravery.



At Khalil Gibran International Academy where she participated in two class sessions.

Nujood in New York

By: Yemen Times Staff

Nujood was like a butterfly fluttering from one place to another, and on the night of the celebration night she was a star. Everyone who met took photos with her, kissed her or asked her for an autograph, said lawyer Shadha Nasser describing Nujood Ali, the first child bride in Yemen to ask for a divorce, on their trip to New York this month to jointly receive the Women of the Year Award 2008 from Glamour Magazine.

With the exception of her moving to Hajja, a three hours drive north of Sana'a, for her unfortunate marriage to a man three times her senior earlier this year, it was Nujood's first time outside of Sana'a. In New York, she was awarded for her bravery in finding a way out from an unjust marriage, and her lawyer Nasser was awarded for her courageous support to both Nujood and other child victims.

Glamour Magazine, who sponsored the visit, has dedicated money raised through its Women of the Year Fund this year to the Girl's World Communication Center to help child brides and girls at risk for early marriage complete their education and have a brighter future, in tribute to Nujood and Nasser.

During Nujood and Nasser's visit to New York, they visited their sponsors at Glamour Magazine as well as women rights activists and organizations. In receiving the Woman of the Year award, both were honored along with such eminent female figures as Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, Nicole Kidman, Jane Goodall and Tyra Banks.

Shadha Nasser says Nujood has changed positively since her return from New York. She believes that the world celebrating Nujood's personal victory and distinguished

people encouraging her has made her aspire to become something big in the future.

"I want to complete my education and work in the United States in the future. I want to study law and help children," Nujood said.

Staying in the USA for ten days has transformed Nujood and made her aware of the potential her future holds. It has also made her realize that she has a low standard of living



At American Arab Center for Social Studies.

and that, in order to get out of the depressing environment she was born in, she needs to work very hard and develop herself. Although she missed her mother and sisters, she was worried about returning back to the country that had compromised her childhood.

"I realize that I have a very long way to go, and that I have to change the mentality of my family and those surrounding me in order for me to be able to be something else," she said.

"I wonder why Nujood wasn't rewarded by her own government. Only the Yemen Times, an independent newspaper, has held two celebrations for her and the other two victims of child marriage Arwa and Reem. Nobody from the government has offered any support for Nujood. They don't even know how she is surviving and whether she is studying or not," added Nasser. "We received promises for financial support for her from many philanthropists from around the world."

Both Nasser and Nujood expressed their



Nujood receiving the Year Award 2008 from Glamour Magazine.

gratitude for the support and kindness they received from the people they met during their visit, especially to Glamour Magazine for selecting them as honorees of the women of the year 2008 fund.

"I like America and the Glamour Magazine people are very cool," Nujood said.

Women of the Year Fund

For the past 19 years, Glamour has saluted inspiring, high-achieving women through their Women of the Year Awards. This annual event has had an astonishing impact on politics and society, sometimes even saving lives.

Glamour readers have responded to past Women of the Year honorees by donating to the causes they support, helping in the counseling of former child soldiers in Uganda, a shelter for women in Pakistan and the rehabilitation of former sex slaves in Cambodia.

Through combined efforts and donations, Glamour Magazine hopes change can be made for women everywhere.

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