





Nutrition Facts

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Saleh calls for dialogue with opposition

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Feb. 22 - President Ali Abdullah Saleh called on the leadership of the General People's Congress (GPC) and the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) last week to conduct a dialogue about the parliamentary elections within the framework of the constitution and law.

According to the online website 26September.net which reported the news, the president's call to the GPC and JMP for this dialogue came from his position as "a president for all Yemenis." The call stressed the importance of "tackling all issues that concern the country through dialogue that achieves understanding and reconciliation as well as meets the supreme interest of the country.'

The contradictory stand of Saleh came after the director of the American Democratic Institute, who visited Yemen a few days ago, confirmed that elections will be held in due time. In addition, sources from the GPC stated that the ruling party will conduct the elections alone. The sources further said that the president's call resulted from the stand of donor countries which apologized to Yemen for not participating in the third consultancy conference scheduled to be



held this week. The head of the Coordination Unit for Foreign Aid in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Nabil Ali Shaiban, officially announced that the "agreement between the government and donors to adjourn the third consultancy conference came in appreciation for considerations relating to the coincidence of the conference timing with another international conference for donors to reconstruct Gaza." Shaiban noted that Ministers of Finances from the Gulf Countries will participate in this international conference.

In a release issued by their supreme council, the JMP held leaders of the ruling party responsible "for rendering the agreement that the JMP reached with the president during a meeting held last Friday a failure.'

The JMP said that they agreed with the president during the meeting "to form a joint committee from the two sides to discuss the national necessities for justifications of adjourning elections and to suggest a timetable for carrying out the agreed-upon issues, including constitutional amendments.



The JMP release considered that voting on amendments of the election laws without agreement between all concerned sides violates the agreement made with the president. The agreement related to the importance of political reforms and accrediting the proportional list electoral system as an integrated system.

The release revealed that the agreement with the president included that "every side offers visions about reforms and then the issues that need amendments, including the proportional list, will be agreed upon." The JMP suggestion regarding adjourning elections stipulated that "the period of adjourning is determined according to the need of discussing the issues and procedures that were agreed upon," stressing that it is necessary to finish discussing these issues so that the elections can be conducted based on a proportional list.

The release said that the GPC leaders refused the JMP suggestion in another meeting and insisted that elections should be conducted based on the effective law, whereas working through the proportional list "is adjourned to the next electoral course." The JMP refused this idea

The JMP additionally refused allegations made by the ruling party stating that the JMP demanded adjourning elections for two years, as related by head of the GPC parliamentary bloc. The JMP pointed out that "what the ruling party circulates in this regard is baseless." The JMP refused altogether "any lateral step by the

ruling party, including re-voting on the election law amendment draft known as 'August 18 amendments."

The JMP release considered that revoting on these amendments without a national consensus "is an illegal act that fixes the exclusiveness that aims to change the electoral process for which only the ruling party will be held responsible.

The JMP expressed their appreciation for the efforts that Less Campbell, National Democratic Institute's Middle East and North Africa programs director, and Heather Therrien NDI country director of the in Yemen, exerted to facilitate removing those obstacles that hinder reaching a solution.

For his part, Mansour Al-Zandani, a

member of parliament from the Islah Party, suggested in press statements that the JMP conduct elections only in the constituencies that are represented by the JMP and maintain the other constituencies represented by the GPC as they are currently instead of conducting elections in all constituencies of the republic.

Guess what's lurking

in your food

Newsyemen.net reported that Al-Zandani said that it is better for the GPC, which insists on conducting elections alone without the participation of partners in the political process, to conduct elections only in the constituencies that are currently represented by the JMP members. This would be in order to avoid spending money on elections from the public finance which currently suffers from a shortage of funds.

rights," said Rashida Al-Hamadani,

chairperson of the WNC. Tens of thank

you notes and appreciation letters were

sent to the Parliament as expressions of

gratitude for passing the law, which is

now standing on shaky ground. The

Women's National Committee, Yemeni

Women's Union, Child Parliament, and

several civil society organizations visited

or called Speaker of Parliament Yahya

Al-Raie to commend this positive step in

white roses to a committee of MPs head-

ed by deputy speaker of parliament

Mohammed Al-Shadadi during a meet-

ing with women's organizations outside

to compromise children's and women's

rights," said Hooria Mashour, deputy

chairperson of the WNC. She called on

international and donor organizations to

apply pressure on the Yemeni parliament

and the president not to allow such an

"We must not allow political agendas

the Parliament earlier this week.

achievement to be destroyed.

Members of the child parliament gave

women and child rights.

Parliament revokes minimum age for marriage law

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

SANA'A, Feb. 22 - The law for defining the minimum age for marriage, which was passed a few days ago defining the minimum age at 17, has been returned to the jurisprudence legislation for discussion. The committee is responsible for ensuring that any proposed laws are in compliance with Islamic jurisprudence which is the base of all laws according to the Yemeni constitution.

The government's Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood had proposed a marriage law defining 18 as the minimum age for marriage more than one and a half years ago. When the story of Nujood Al-Ahdal, the girl who was forced into marriage at nine years of age, was highlighted in the media in July last year, the Women's National Committee again pushed for defining a minimum age for marriage. However it was only last week when the parliament finally voted on the law, passing it at 17 years old.

The number 17 came as a compromise between the proposed law from the government and the jurisprudence committee's recommendations of 15 years old as the minimum age for marriage for boys and girls.

According to MP Fuad Dahaba of the Justice and Endowment Committee at the Parliament, the voting process was

tee or for the initial proposal of the government. Therefore, twenty Members of Parliament objected to the passing of the law at this age which contradicts the recommendations of the jurisprudence committee.

"What this committee recommends is the marriage law to be considered as a 'fatwa' [religious ruling] and not to be discussed unless under a religious basis. What the parliament did is ignore the recommendations of the concerned committee. This is procedurally incorrect, and therefore the call has been issued for re-opening the discussions," said MP Ghalib Al-Qurashi, head of the Justice Committee at the Parliament.

Currently the law has returned to the jurisprudence committee which will reissue its report and provide its input on which age or under what conditions a Yemeni boy or girl can be married. Mohammed Naser Al-Hazmi, a member of the media committee at the parliament and an outspoken conservative leader, commented that it should not be long before the committee returns it to the parliament for a second vote.

"This time the voting should be on 15 as a minimum age for marriage with conditions. This age was derived in connection to legislative references in the Islamic jurisprudence as it is seen as the agreed upon age for puberty. If the parliament again votes for 17, we will take involved in the campaign against defining the minimum age for marriage at 17 are not promoting early marriage. "We are not telling Yemenis to marry your daughters and sons at 15; we are saying that this is not religiously correct to tie marriage to a certain age. It should be tied to certain physiological and mental requirements."

On the other hand, Yemeni women and child rights movements called on local and international organizations to stand by the law at its previously passed statement. This law was advocated for by three government bodies: the Ministry of Health within the context of the Safe Motherhood law relating to health risks of early pregnancy, by the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood and the government body responsible for women's affairs, and the Women's National Committee.

"It would be a scandal if we go back from our achievement just a few days after it was made. We need everyone to work together for the sake of women's



confused. Many of the MPs did not know whether they were voting for the recommendations of the jurisprudence commit-

this up to the Constitutional Court," Al-Hazmi warned. He reiterated that he and the others





Around the Nation



315 death penalties legislated by four Yemeni laws **Al-Lewa faces execution after being pardoned for blood money**

By: Muadh Al-Maqtari For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, Feb. 22-Every day in the same place at the door of the Attorney General's office in Sana'a, Hisham Al-Lewa stages an individual sit-in with the hope that the Attorney-General may rescind a death sentence against his elder brother Mohammed.

27-year old Hisham cannot return to his home district of Kashar in the Hajja governorate, north of Sana'a. He and his family fled their home in Kashar fearing tribal revenge following the killing of a highway robber by his brother, Mohammed Al-Lewa. Mohammad was helping the security authorities arrest the robber six years ago.

Since then, Mohammed Al-Lewa, 35, has been jailed in a Hajja prison, leaving his wife and six children without a breadwinner. As a result, their farm has become a wasteland. Hisham narrated that the family abandoned their farm because they feared that relatives of the murdered robber may take revenge against them.

Journalists and human rights activists, most notably those affiliated with the Yemeni Coalition Against Execution (YCAE), showed high interest in Al-Lewa's case.

Last Saturday, as Hisham was holding a sit-in before the Attorney General's office, he was supported by many activists who view the execution of his brother Mohammed as a legal violation. The victim's relatives early last year pardoned Al-Lewa in exchange for blood money

According to a reconciliation document which Hisham and his aides use as evidence in repealing the death sentence, reconciliation efforts exerted by Secretary of Kashar First Instance Court Mutahar Al-Qadhi, Chief of the district's Security Department Robeid Al-Sharafi, Sheikh Hamoud Al-Bakri, and many other dignitaries helped convince the victim's relatives on Feb. 28, 2008 to accept blood money from Mohammed Al-Lewa in lieu of his execution.

Stamped by Kashar First Instance Court, the reconciliation document reads, "Two persons of both conflicting sides should estimate the price of a plot of agricultural land belonging to Al-Lewa, which then was priced at YR 7 million, as the blood money to be paid to the victim's relatives."

This kind of reconciliation, according to its document, helped suspend the execution of Al-Lewa After the reconciliation document was stamped, the victim's relatives insisted on receiving the blood money paid cash not in-kind (the land), a fact the Hajja-based Penal Prosecution saw as evidence that Al-Lewa must be executed. The Prosecution then urged Attorney General Abdullah Al-Ulefi, whose office is in Sana'a, to ratify the death sentence.

According to Sadeq Al-Sharafi, a civil activist who backed Al-Lewa's family since the very beginning, said the relevant prosecution committed a legal violation in Al-Lewa's case. "To claim blood money in cash after accepting it in-kind doesn't mean executing the death sentence. Rather, this means that Al-Lewa is in a state of a penniless inmate who cannot repay his debts. Al-Lewa may remain in jail until he pays the blood money," Al-Sharafi said.

When execution may be reversed

Al-Sharafi and Parliament Member Ahmad Saif Hashid, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Rights & Freedoms Committee, persuaded the Attorney General last year to revoke the death sentence against Al-Lewa for the second time.

"The Attorney General had no objection to the reconciliation document between Al-Lewa and the victim's relatives. However, he changed his mind earlier this year when the Hajja-based Penal Prosecution urged him to execute the death sentence," said Al-Sharafi. "Al-Ulefi justified upholding the execution with the fact that the death sentence was ratified by President of the Republic, which may only be reversed by a cash payment of blood money."

Those minutes of testimonies documented by the Hajja First Instance Court indicated that the victim, Hamid Al-Dawedi, was a fugitive when Mohammed Al-Lewa helped security authorities arrest him following directives from Sheikh Ali Avid Al-Mashriqi. Witnesses Mansour Avid and

Mohammed Qasim, both from the same local area, said that Al-Dawedi escaped from prison twice after a court verdict charged him with stealing a car belonging to people of the Bani Rassam Tribe. Three people were injured in clashes over the robbery.

According to the witnesses, what happened is that Al-Lewa attempted to stop Al-Dawedi as he was chased in a Hajja valley, but to no avail. Then Al-Lewa opened fire with the intent of forcing the escapee to stop but left him injured.

The witnesses continued that Al-Lewa bandaged Al-Dawedi's wound and took him to Hospital, but the latter died as a result of the injury and the former surrendered to security authorities.

Hisham Al-Lewa mentioned that the victim's relatives gave a positive assessment of the incident, which is why they stopped demanding the execution of the death sentence and accepted blood money instead.

Death Sentence in Yemen:

"The insistence by authorities to execute Al-Lewa, even though the victim's relatives accepted blood money, is not in line with procedures followed by the Yemeni judiciary that gives priority to saving the human life," said judge Amin Hajar, a YCAE member.

Hajar said that executions in Yemen take place inside jails, which is why many prisoners face injuries or suffer psychological disorders. On the other hand, executions outside jails, however ugly they may look, create chances for reconciliation and humanitarian intervention that most often help save lives. Hajar told the Yemen Times that as many as 265 death sentences were endorsed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh between 2004 and 2005, pointing out that such scores multiplied over the following years.

Because Yemen ratified the optional protocol to annul the death penalty as part of its endorsement of the international human rights legislations, it doesn't attempt to make its local laws homogenize with international legislations, according to Secretary General of the Social Democratic Forum Nabeel Abdulhafeez Majed. "Yemeni laws are limited to those provisions on death penalties other than what is stipulated by the Islamic Sharia law," Majed went on to say.

"Cases of execution that contravene Islamic Sharia law number up to 315; these executions were committed under just four separate Yemeni laws," said lawyer Ahmad Al-Wadei. "120 of those execution cases are contained in the Penal Law of 1994, as many as 166 cases in the Military Penal Law, 33 cases in the Anti-Drug Law, and 90 cases in the Anti-Kidnapping and Highway Robbery Law."

Presenting a paper on "Death Sentence in Yemeni Legislation" at a symposium in Sana'a last year, Al-Wadei argued that Yemeni legislators deliberated to leave the 'death sentence part' in the Penal Law unlimited by using ambiguous and unspecific statements.

Al-Wadei maintained that Article 128 of the Penal Law stipulates passing the death sentence on any individual working for a foreign state hurts the political status of the Republic of Yemen. The law doesn't specify what type, form, or kind of work for a foreign state this would include. "Working for a foreign state is an unspecific statement with numerous interpretations, and its assessment is left to the relevant judge," the lawyer clarified.

Al-Wadei attributed the excessive repetition of the phrase "death sentence" in Yemeni laws to the fact that these laws are influenced by other Arab legislations, most notably those of Egypt and Jordan. Both Arab states enacted their laws while under a state of emergency due to their wars with Israel and before they signed peace deals with the bordering Zionist state.

Al-Wadei explained that Yemeni laws don't blindly imitate the legislations of other Arab states. It is the result of the Yemeni regime being similar to those of Egypt and Jordan, where respect for human rights remains low.

Over the past years, Yemen experienced dynamic active human rights groups opposing any death sentence contravening Islamic Sharia. Upon its declaration two years ago, YCAE released a statement saying the coalition was established as part of regional and international efforts to save human life.

Report evaluates corruption in governmental sector

By: Migdad Mojalli

SANA'A, Feb. 21-The rate of the corruption in the governmental sector has reached over forty percent, according to a study conducted by the National Institute of Administrational Sciences.

The study, which was conducted in seven governmental institutions, points to a direct relationship between a lack of ethics in the governmental sector and the recent rise in corruption. It highlighted to predominance of nepotism and scarcity of impartiality in governmental bodies.

Entitled "The influence of ethics in restricting corruption," the study evaluated ethics in the seven sample governmental bodies. Honesty was found to be present in 70.5 percent of governmental employees evaluated, while only 42.8 percent was rated as impartial.

The evaluation aimed to know the extent to which ethics are applied by governmental employees in their work, as well as their impact in restricting corruption. It revealed than in general

men were more corrupt and less ethical than women, and showed that the higher the academic qualifications and salary, the higher the ethical standards. The study also highlights the failure

of a number of procedures conducted by the government to combat corruption, and attributed this failure to the lack of implementation measures.

It called on the judiciary to set a complete strategy to combat corruption and stressed the importance of the parliament and judiciary in overseeing work in governmental bodies. It emphasized the need to activate the mechanisms of accountability, revise administration laws, and enabling for transparency

The study recommended promoting values like honesty, responsibility and offering help to others, as well as eliminating the widespread practices of mediation, favoritism, and extortion. Researchers highlighted the necessity of spreading awareness of ethical values through workshops.

The study covered 3,000 employees in the Ministries of Education, Public Impartiality 42.8

Health and Population, Civil Services, Finance, Local Administration, Endowment and Guidance, Higher Education and Electricity in addition to the General Corporation for Telecommunications and the General Organization for Controlling and Auditing.

Yemen dropped 10 places from last year and 30 places from 2006 in Transparency International's (TI) new Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) issued last month at the organization's headquarters in Berlin.

Corruption Rate (in percentage)

Mediation 56.3 Nepotism 51 Extortion 44.8 Commission 41.3 Embezzlement 40.5 Exhausting state revenues 40.3 Bribery 36.5 Forgery 29

Ethics Rate (in percentage) Honesty 70.5 Responsibility 67.3 Commitment to work 66.8 Offering service to others 62 Loyalty 61.8 Truthfulness 57.5 Keeping public properties 54.5 50.5 Justice

By: Ola Al-Shami SANA'A, Feb. 22 - Journalists in pub-

lic media started their second protesting phase by striking for one hour a day yesterday Feb. 22, 2009. This includes journalists working in Yemeni official media such as Al-Thawra Newspaper, 14 October, Al- Gomhoria, SABA news agency, and the TV and Radio Corporation.

Prime Minister Ali Mojawar confirmed fulfilling the journalists' demands for better pay on Saturday, Feb. 21. However, journalists expressed their dissatisfaction at the agreement, labeling it a 'scam.'

"The government is not taking us seriously," said Ibraheem Al-Wade'e, a journalist in Al-Thawra official newspa-

Mohammed Shubaita, member of the strike coordination committee, said journalists from all over the governorates went on a one hour strike between five and six until Thursday. He emphasized that the number of striking hours will increase gradually until their demands are met.

Protesting journalists are meeting every Thursday at the syndicate in order to discuss the follow-up of their demands. According to their last meet ing on Feb. 19, they rejected the government's proposal and agreed to continue the strike.



Moreover, the Saba News agency journalist strike on Sunday. suggested increase in

pay by the govern-

wages

Syndicate.

fulfilled.

ment did not match the expectations of the journalists.

This protest comes just a few weeks before the third phase of the salary and wages strategy is to be endorsed by the Ministry of Finance in coordination with the Ministry of Civil Services. These ministries are the two bodies responsible for defining and allocating the salaries of official media employees. "For years journalists have complained about their poor income, but only last year did we, as the syndicate, provide the government with a proposal for the classification of journalists based on administrative levels," said Saeed Thabet, General Secretary of the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate.

"However, after agreeing with the government the people responsible for implementing this proposal are stalling, so we decided to encourage journalists to protest."

Through this new system of classification, media personnel will be given

Al-Qarni accuses the government of using him as a means to impart political pressure

By: Emad Al-Saqqaf **Taiz Bureau**

SANA'A, Feb. 21- The Yemeni popular sarcastic singer Fahd Al-Qarni accused the government of using him as a piece of paper in order to impart political pressure in its game with the opposition.

In a statement to the Yemen Times, Al-Qarni said that the illegal prosecutions against him by the government are only political procedures as they aim to minimize his activities that express the concerns and aspirations of the people.

"The General Prosecution is ignoring the president's decision to release me and is currently resuming the trial under the same accusations charged against me during the previous trial. This confirms that either the government was not serious in dealing with the decision or the president himself wasn't serious about issuing the decision of releasing me," said Al-Qarni. "The previous decision came about due to popular pressure and pressure from international organizations."

Al-Qarni wondered why the government opened two trials against him at the same time, condemning the way through which the government aims to fabricate accusations against him while issuing verdicts in absentia. He said that he didn't receive any notification or order to attend to the court to hear the accusations against him, stating that he learned that he was tried in absentia as a fugitive only from the newspapers.

He stressed that all these procedures will never hamper him from continuing his national duty in expressing concerns of citizens through artistic activities. He pointed out that he is currently preparing to produce many art productions and carry out rallies in different governorates of the republic to address many national issues and popular concerns. He said that he intends to file a suit against the Ministry of Culture which refused to give him licenses for his art productions, demanding that this ministry be closed as it turned out to be a means to repress and hinder Yemeni cultural and artistic activities.

For his part, Abdul Rahman Barman, defender of Al-Qarni, said that the public prosecution had already prepared for bad will toward Al-Qarni. This was done even though his case was closed after Taiz Court sentenced him to one and a half years in prison and fined him YR 500 thousand. He said that following the court's verdict, President Saleh issued directives to release Al-Oarni and close his court case. However, the prosecution resumed the trial against him in Sana'a as a fugitive while simultaneously trying him in another court under the same charges as for the previous trials. Barman added that the charges included that Al-Qarni offended the president and the government in his art activities.

Barman confirmed that it is not fair to resume the trial for illegal accusations that were refuted in previous trials, pointing out that these prosecutions are considered a violation against freedom of expression ensured by the Yemeni constitution and law.

West Sana'a Primary Court has already adjourned the trial against Al-Qarni until Mar.10 and ordered the public prosecution to offer a copy of Al-Qarni's presidential pardon for the next hearing. It also ordered the prosecution to offer a memorandum of the defendant which stipulates that it is not legal to proceed with the trial as the pardon was issued from the person who was offended, i.e. the president.

The Prosecution of Press and Print Journalism tried Al-Qarni in Mar. 2007 in West Sana'a Court for charges of insulting the president of the republic and the government's authorities, depending its accusations on the cassettes attributed to Al-Qarni, particularly "Shab'een"(fed up) and "Rival of the People." The prosecution also said that these publications were not licensed by the Ministry of Culture.

Al-Qarni was tried in absentia as a fugitive in the West Sana'a Court, although the prosecution knew that he was being tried at the same time in Taiz Primary Court for the same charges. Human rights organizations, including the National Organization for Defending Rights and Freedoms (known as HOOD) and Article 19 Organization, an international organization concerned with human rights, issued a press release condemning the trial and demanding that the case be closed in Sana'a court.

"The government agreement was not

administrative degrees based on years of working, qualifications, and their position in an organization. This system will determine their new appropriate salaries and benefits.

President Saleh to visit Moscow

By: Ageel Al-Halali For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, Feb. 22 – President Ali Abdullah Saleh is to begin an official visit to Russia this Tuesday, to discuss economic and military cooperation between both countries, Russian investment in Yemen

The visit will be the fifth since the Yemeni president assumed power in July 1978. His last visit to Moscow was in April 2004.

Saleh and Russian officials are expected to discuss enhancing economic and military cooperation between the two countries as well as a Russian initiative to host an international conference on the Middle East mid 2009.

The Russian News Agency "Novosti" reported that Mohammed Al-Hilali, Yemeni ambassador to Russia, said that Saleh will discuss developing mutual relations, as well as economic and military cooperation with the Russian leadership. He pointed out that Saleh will meet with Dimitri Medvedev, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, the Prime Minister, Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Anatoly Serdyukov, Minister of Defense.

In addition to the economic and military cooperation, Al-Hilali said that Saleh will also discuss the possible investment of Russian oil and gas com-

panies in Yemen.

The Russian capital last week hosted talks between the Yemeni Minister of Finance Nu'man Al-Suhaibi and his Russian counterpart Aleksey Kudrin during which the two sides discussed drafts of mutual agreements in the economic and security fields. They further discussed the possibility of reducing the Russian debt to Yemen, according to governmental news agency Saba.

President Saleh will announce during his visit his support to the idea of holding a conference for the Middle East in Moscow during the first half of this year, also said the Yemeni ambassador to Moscow. "The Yemeni stand on issues of the Middle East is in accordance with the stand of our Russian friends."

Russian intellectual professor Vitaly Naumkin believes this visit to be a new development in the political relations between Yemen and Russia. He considered that the two countries, who share historical relations in the field of military cooperation, will move forward to the next stage based on "trust and cooperation."

Naumkin who heads the Arab Islamic Dialogue Center in Russia said that the visit will result in strategic cooperation between Sana'a and Moscow to activate and develop the current world system. Saleh visited Russia for the first time in 1981 when he signed a deal for Soviet

weapons of over USD 1 billion. Yemen is considered the fourth in the world in terms of purchasing Russian weapons. Last September, Sana'a and Moscow signed a weapons deal worth USD 300 million.

Yemeni analysts say that Saleh's visit to Moscow comes within the framework of Yemeni efforts "to hinder a US-European plan to internationalize the Red Sea," particularly after relations between Yemen and US deteriorated last year. The Yemeni Foreign Affairs Ministry apologized last April for canceling an expected visit for Saleh to Washington.

Yemeni media outlets expected that Saleh will offer suggestions to the Russian leadership to play a "bigger Russian role to face the maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Arab Sea" to prevent any attempts of internationalizing the region of Horn of Africa and Bab Al-Mandab Strait, which witnessed last year 42 piracy acts and 69 attempted piracy carried out by Somali pirates.

Relations between Yemen and Russia date back to 1928, when the two countries signed their first commercial agreement. Diplomatic relations between both started officially in 1955. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Yemen announced officially that Russia was the legitimate inheritor of the union which consisted of 15 republics.

Interview

Ethiopian Ambassador Dr. Tawfik Abdullah to the Yemen Times "Ethiopia's relations with Yemen go back thousands of years"

he rich but under-explored history between Yemen and Ethiopia dates back to ancient times. Cultural relations between two countries can be traced back to the birth of the Aksum Kingdom in Ethiopia as an extension of the Sabaean and Himiarite Kingdoms in Yemen. Modern political relations date back to the 1930s when the first bilateral agreement was signed, paving the way for diplomatic ties between both countries.

YEMEN

Currently, about 20,000 Yemenis live and work in Ethiopia. Similarly, an estimated 275,000 Ethiopians are officially registered as living in Yemen, where they work as technicians, drivers, technical experts, businessmen in both the governmental and private sectors. Geographical proximity and exchange migration have led to social, cultural, and economic similarities between the two countries.

Recently, Addis Ababa hosted the 12th African Union Summit, which twenty-two states attended. Dr. Tawfik Abdullah, Ethiopian Ambassador to Yemen, spoke to Khaled Al-Hilaly about bilateral and regional issues.



To begin with, the relationship between Yemen and Ethiopia is deep rooted and goes beyond thousands and thousands of years. There was a very large Yemeni community living throughout Ethiopia engaged in different trade and business. Their children attended the Ethiopian schools as native citizens. Currently there are less numbers of Yemenis who engaged in different sectors of investment. The Yemenis enjoy living and working in Ethiopia. There is a Yemeni Community School that was established over fourty years ago and is still active. Recently the Ethiopian government allotted a big piece of land for the expansion of this school in Addis Ababa.

What about Ethiopians in Yemen? There are quite a large number of Ethiopians in Yemen and many are engaged in different sectors. There are also few number of students studying in different universities and colleges.

Why do many of the Ethiopians that come to Yemen have to be smuggled and not come via official means?

Many Ethiopians coming to Yemen are victims of "human trafficking" destined to the Gulf States in search of



Dr. Tawfik Abdullah

better economic benefits. Human trafficking is a lucrative business and the dealers convince and brainwash economically impoverished citizens and dwellers for gorgeous economic gains. They smuggle them through the sea, with catastrophic tragedies at times, and never reach their destination.

Many come to claim political asylum, saying that they are escaping insecurity or other political reasons. What do you say?

Ethiopia is a federal state with over eighty nations and nationalities enjoying a wide range of democracy and self-administration. However diversified Ethiopia is, with its various nation and nationalities, it is very much united as never before. There is no room for suppression and oppression in Ethiopia. It will not be astonishing or come a surprise if some of those claiming political asylum are using this as a pretext to gain privileges and special treatment; otherwise their claims and allegations cannot be substantiated.

What are examples of how the African Union is succesfully reducing conflicts in the African continent?

The African Union (AU) has regional organizations such as The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and The Southern African Development

Community (SADC) among others, with its own summits in which the organizations resolve conflicts and disputes. The AU covers issues relating to peace and the Security Council also engages in resolving disputes and conflicts. Thus all the approaches of the AU and other regional organizations engage in maintaining peaceful coexistence between and among African countries, and resolve disputes and conflicts should they occur.

Would you highlight the Somalia conflict? What are you expecting from Sheikh Ahmed, the new Somali President?

Somalia's transitional government was established in Kenya in 2004 under the auspices of the AU and the UN. There was commitment from the international community and other countries to support the weak transitional government in establishing and structuring itself. However, few countries lived up to their commitment and the transitional government was brought back to Somalia from Kenya after two years in exile there. Initially the Transitional Government was based in Juhar and later in Baidowa. Very few countries engaged in providing crucially needed assistance to the Transitional Government, which helped the War Lords and Islamic Courts Union (ICU) to gain the upper hand. The Transitional Government was at the

verge of collapse when they asked for assistance from the Ethiopian Government. The ICU had seized and controlled Mogadishu and repeatedly claimed war "Jihad" on Ethiopia and also engaged in terrorist activities in Ethiopia. The call for assistance from the Transitional Government of Somalia and the immediate threat of war on Ethiopia by the ICU was the reason for Ethiopia to get involved in Somalia. The Ethiopian forces swept away the ICU and brought temporary peace and security in Somalia while dealing a big blow to the ICU.

The Transitional Government should have built upon the temporary peace and security achieved by the Ethiopian force. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia were busy in a power struggle among themselves and were after individual benefits that let down the prevailing peace and security. It should be noted here that it is the Somalis themselves that could bring, maintain, and sustain peace and stability in Somalia. The AU, IGAD, etc. thus can only have a supporting role. Ethiopia has committed itself and its resources to achieve these goals; it has trained tens of thousands of police forces and civil servants. The international communities, the UN, the EU, Arab League and the AU, with the exception of a few countries, were very reluctant to help in bringing and maintaining peace in Somalia.

Somalia was abandoned and little attention was given. Ethiopia bears the burden mostly alone and it cannot and must not bear all the burdens by itself. That is why we pulled out of Somalia. We had achieved our objectives; the Somalia issue is not Ethiopia's issue only. The Djibouti agreement led to the formation of expanding the parliament and participation of opposition parties and groups, and even individuals. It laid the base for establishing a broadbased government of unity in the interest of building Somalia again. That is how President Sheikh Sherif was elected. It is upon all countries and especially organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Arab League and the AU to support the current broad based government to stand on its own two feet.

How has the global financial crisis specifically affected Africa, Ethiopia?

It is sure that the global financial crisis has a negative effect on developing countries, including Ethiopia. But what affects us the most is the global economic crisis. First, the price of many commodities, raw materials, and the agricultural products has fallen so there is less revenue from exports. Secondly, remittance income from natives in foreign countries has decreased as there are huge lay-offs of employees. And thirdly, financial aid and loans for developing countries has decreased. These are the main negative effects of the current global economical crisis affecting the developing countries.

Tell me about the Sana'a Forum summit that recently took place in Khartoum.

At the end of 2008 the Sana'a Forum for cooperation held its summit in Khartoum, Sudan. It should be recalled that the Forum was established in Yemen in 2002 and included countries of the South Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. The Forum has achieved tangible results in the political, economical, social, and cultural fields. The Summit in Khartoum appreciated the achievements and pledged for better achievements especially in the economic trade and investment sectors.

Recently, nine countries signed an agreement in Djibouti to cooperate in fighting piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. Do you expect that this agreement will help reduce piracy?

The previous Djibouti agreement and the late "Regional Maritime Security Conference" held in Sana'a will help in minimizing the piracy and will allow safer passage of ships through this very important see trade route. However, the root cause of the piracy in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden is the political, social, and economical problems in Somalia. The ultimate solution and remedy for the piracy is solving the problem in Somalia. The regional countries, the international community, the AU, the EU, the Arab League, and the UN should coordinate their efforts to bring a stable functional government in Somalia. The Somalis should sort out and solve their problems; they are the only ones who could bring peace and stability in Somalia. The others can only assist and extend help, but it is only the Somalis that can and should bring about this change. Having said this, I want to stress the fact that piracy should be dealt with and there should be free and safe passage for ships, but we should not be obsessed with this and drift into a corner; we have to be engaged in resolving the current chaos in Somalia.

Does the embassy support the Yemeni-Ethiopian friendship association?

The Yemeni-Ethiopian Friendship Association was established a long time ago. It includes members from Yemenis of Ethiopian origins and those Yemenis who studied or grew up in Ethiopia. The Association still exists and activating it will be one of our missions in the near future.

Is there anything you would like to add?

Given this opportunity, I would like to inform to all that Ethiopia has the largest livestock capabilities in Africa. Fishery and forestry resources are also significant. Considerable opportunities exist for new private investment in the production and processing of agricultural products. In addition, there are good prospects for producing cotton and investment opportunities are potentially attractive for modern commercial livestock breeding, the production and processing of meat, milk, and eggs. Investment opportunities of significant potential are also available in other areas as well.

With some 3.3 million beehives, Ethiopia is the leading honey and beeswax producing and exporting nation in Africa. This offers excellent prospects for private investment in apiculture.

Major manufacturing opportunities offering attractive potential benefits to prospective investors exist in the textile and garment, food and beverages, leather and electronic, building materials and non-metallic mineral, and metallic industrial sub-sectors as well.

Given its unique cultural heritage, magnificent scenery, pleasant climate, rich flora and fauna, important archaeological sites, friendly and hospitable people, and the recent growth in the inflow of tourists, Ethiopia's potential puts it among the leading tourist destination in Africa. There are, therefore, great opportunities for private investment in hotels, lodges and international restaurants.



Their News

British Council organizes higher education training

The British Council, in cooperation with the Evaluation & Development Department in Aden University, will organize training on Programme Specifications and Self-Evaluation for Higher Education Institutions.

The training will take place between 23 and 25 Feb. 2009 in Aden, and will be facilitated by Professor David Wilkinson, Ex-Head of Professional Development Cranfield University and a fellow of higher education, and Professor Abdullateef Al-Hakimi, a consultant in Education for Sana'a University and Ex-Dean of the Faculty of Education in the United Arab Emirates University. The event will be attended by 35 academics from all the colleges in Aden University and will be held at Mercure Hotel in Aden.

The workshop aims at equipping the participants with the principles and practices of self-evaluation processes and the mechanisms of creating programme specifications. Both Professors will focus on how to develop smart learning outcomes and aims for academic programmes, how to assess these learning outcomes and what are the pragmatic steps to start internal audits and external reviews to set up an effective self-evaluation system in higher education institu-



tions. Prof. Wilkinson will share practices from the UK and from his experience of other countries while Prof. Al-Hakimi will tailor this knowledge to the needs of the local universities enriching the event with his remarkable experience during leading the faculty of Education in the UAE University, the leading university in quality assurance in the Middle East.

Throughout the workshop, participants will be encouraged to consider the state of affairs in their own Colleges in the light of the topics discussed and to share their perceptions with the other members of the group. They will eventually be encouraged to draft action plans and to design systems for their own institutions.

The British Council has been extensively involved in developing quality assurance in higher education in the Gulf, Iraq and Yemen, and this workshop is considered the second one of a series of workshops and events planned to help developing quality assurance systems for different universities in different cities of Yemen.

MTN hands Toyota FJ car to winner



MTN congratulates Saleh Hassan Abdul Weli of Sana'a, winner of the last award, Toyota FJ model 2008, of recharge-and-win offer. The withdrawal process was carried out in presence of a supervisory committee constituted from many people. It includes a number of journalists representing a number of public and private mass media, lawyer of the company and representative of the company's internal monitoring. This is a tradition that MTN followed in the past draw processes to ensure transparency and assert its credibility. Walid Akkawi marketing director of MTN said the company will carry out a number of social, humanitarian services in health, sports and education

"2009 will witness larger coverage of the network's services and facilities in addition to the latest communication technology," he said.

The number of MTN subscribers has reached by end of 2009 one million and 900 thousand customers.

مرض التقديمي (Presentation) الخاص بحلول وخدمات شـركــة OFFTEC الأردن التحصصة على مستوى المنطقة منذ عام 1910 في القدس و عام 1946 في عمّان الالحاول والتقنيات الكتبية الحديثة والأثبتة المسرفية للمؤسبات المالية والمسرفية والخدمية والتي تمثلها رسميا في اليمن الشركة اليمنية إخدمات الدفع والبطاقات " SabaCard



Payments and Cards Yemen (SabaCard) organized a presentation for the solutions and services offered by OFFTEC Jordan in Sheba Tent-Taj Sheba Hotel-Sana'a from 9:30 until 12.00 noon in Saturday 22/2/2009. SabaCard is a sister company of Al-Rowaishan Group and was capable during the last three years to achieve pioneering accomplishments in the field of payments and cards in the Yemeni Market and with the goal of maintaining SabaCard's specialty and excellence, Yemen International Technology company was founded to be specialized in Information Technology within Al-Rowaishan Group. During this event, Yemen International Technology (YIT) Company was declared. YIT is a sister company of the Al-Rowaishan Group and it will be specialized in IT Solutions mainly systems, software, and Hardware for all business sectors in a comprehensive and integrated way, high professionalism, and efficiency. YIT represents a number of international and regional companies in Yemen, including OFFTEC. OFFTEC is known as pioneering company in the Middle East in the following fields of technology and integrated solutions:

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The General Manager of SabaCard and YIT, Mr. Hani Adris, said that our goal is to position YIT as a leader in IT for all business sectors in the local market.

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- Minimum English Level of 3/5 (fluently written and spoken with good technical English knowledge).

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Job Duties:

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Job Qualifications:

- High school graduate.
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Interview

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan to Yemen Times: **"Building confidence is key to a country's development"**

li Babacan was born in Ankara in 1967. He graduated first in the Class of 1985 from TED Ankara High School. In 1989, he received a Bachelor of Science Degree (BS) in Industrial Engineering from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, where he ranked first among the graduates of that year.

In 1990, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and attended the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where he received his Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Marketing, Organizational Behavior, and International Business in 1992.

From 1992 to 1994, he worked at a Chicago-based company providing financial consulting services to top executives of major banks in the United States.

Subsequently, he returned to Ankara to run his family business from 1994 until 2002.

In 2001, he became a Founding Member and Board Member of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

During the general elections held in November 2002, he was elected to Parliament and was appointed as the Minister of State in charge of Economy, a cabinet position he retained throughout the 58th and 59th Governments of the Republic of Turkey until August 2007.

In addition to his tenure as Minister of State in charge of Economy, on June 3, 2005, he was appointed as Chief Negotiator in Turkey's accession negotiations with the European Union. At the general elections held on July 22, 2007 he was re-elected to the Parliament. On August 29, 2007, he was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the 60th Government of the Republic of Turkey. He is married with two children.

Nadia Al-sakkaf interviewed Babacan on his visit to Yemen.

Turkey's economy has been growing rapidly, making it the sixth European economic power and predicted in 2009 to become the 15th largest globally. How did this happen? And how can Yemen learn from Turkey's economic success story?

I [Ali Babacan] was the minister of finance in the years between 2002 and 2007, and so I can tell you candidly that it was a difficult mission. In the early years of this millennium Turkey had large public debts and the banking sector was weak. We have very little oil and no gas, so we realized that we had to grow the industrial and service sectors.

First, we made large economic reforms in public finance, in the banking sector, and most importantly, we made Turkey an easy place to invest. We simplified the rules, but we applied them all. Gradually confidence started to build, and we doubled our foreign direct investments from one billion US dollars in 2002 to two billion in 2003. In 2005 the FDI grew to 10 billion; it grew to 20 billion in 2006, and 22 billion in 2007.

You can see that by making our investment environment friendly we

built long term confidence in the country's economic environment, and today companies from all around the world come to invest in Turkey. Building confidence is key to a country's development.

Yemen is an influential country in the region, and has a lot to offer the Arab world.

Second, we worked on developing the industrial sector. We focused on manufacturing and while in 2002 our exports value was 36 billion dollars, mostly raw materials and agricultural produce, in 2008 it reached 132 billion and included heavy machinery, vehicles, technical equipments, and the like.

Consequently, the GDP grew from 230 billion US dollars in 2002 to 750 billion in 2008.

If there is a straightforward formula on to how to build a strong economy, I would say there are three factors: political stability, a focus on macro economy, and the creation of an easy business environment for investors.



Ali Babacan

How has the global financial crises affected Turkey's economy?

Turkey and Spain were the only two countries in Europe that did not need to support its banking sector in order for it to survive. The large scale reforms we conducted between 2003 and 2005 in Turkey's banking sector years proved very useful and you could say they made our banking sector stronger and more capable of surviving the economic blows.

Our ambition is to make Turkey among the top ten world economic powers by 2023, and we have persistently created steps to reach this goal.

Relations with Yemen

We have excellent relations with Yemen and they are getting stronger. There is mutual respect and good feeling between the Turkish and Yemeni people, and this is a very important base upon which we can increase our political dialogue, trade exchange, cross investments, technical exchange, and other relations in other fields.

During my visit we discussed bilater-

al and regional issues, especially Gaza. We do realize the appreciation of many Arab and Islamic countries for our role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. And Erdogan's stance in Davos is understood because we believe that military might is no solution. Over 1300 people were killed in the Gaza crisis, yet nothing has changed. The only way to solve the issue is through political dialogue.

This is my first visit to Yemen, although many Yemeni and Turkish high level officials have exchanged visits in the last few years.

We should have more regular visits and have frequent consultations on regional and bilateral issues.

Yemen is an influential country in the region, and has a lot to offer the Arab world.

How do you see Yemen developing into an economic power?

Yemen has much potential that it should invest in. The location is very strategic and can be used to improve Yemen's economic conditions significantly. Additionally, Yemen has a huge base of human resources which should be invested in. I also think that Yemen should invest in its noble culture; there is an element of trust in the Yemeni people that is kind and hard to find.

It is very important to simplify rules, especially for investment. Not only that, but it is important to have written rules for the practice of investment. In other words, in order to create confidence in any country's system, what is written must be implemented and what is implemented must be written.

Turkey has recently been very active in the Islamic world and the Middle East, sometimes even overshadowing countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Iran. Is this the new direction for Turkey – leading the Islamic world rather than being part of the European Union?

Turkey is a part of NATO and is a country listed for European Union candidacy. It is also a Mediterranean country and our aim is to build closer relations with our neighboring countries. Turkey's foreign policy is to talk to all and to open communication channels for peace and mutual interest.

Our intention is not to overshadow any other country; in fact, we work with all. With regards to the Syrian-Israeli conflict, we have played a mediation role. We also hold talks with all the Palestinian groups.

If there is a straight forward formula on to how to build a strong economy, I would say there are three factors: political stability, a focus on macro economy, and the creation of an easy business environment for investors.

The ruling party of Turkey, a secular country, is one whose ideology is defined as through Islamism and economic liberalism. Is there a conflict here? How does an Islamic party, the AK party, lead a secular country?

The AK party has a conservative democratic ideology. It is sensitive about ethnicities and vocal about these concepts. Turkey's secular system means that the state is at equal distance from all religions and all sects. It allows for religious freedoms. We built a system that respects all faiths of the people. And as a political party we have our own fundamentals which are respected. Candidates are voted for by the people; we are a political party elected by the people and so we are in power because the majority of the Turkish people chose us.

What about the claims that although Turkey defines itself as a democratic country, it oppresses its Armenian and Kurdish minorities?

I cannot deny that we had problems five or six years ago as you mentioned, but we worked on these issues. We even changed the constitution to allow more freedom and more representations of all sects in Turkish society. Years ago it was forbidden to have songs or even CDs in the Kurdish language, but now there is a Kurdish TV channel. Today we have more than 400 TV stations and 1100 radio channels, so today you can see the extent of freedom of expression we developed.

Throughout the last few years we carried out huge reforms, not just in our economy but political reforms in developing democracy and implementing the law for all without discrimination.

The municipality elections are set for March 29. How does the AK Party reply to accusations of corruption by Deniz Baykal of the Republican People's Party (CH Party)?

Polls so far show good results for us, and if the elections were to take place today I could tell you that we will win, but the thing with politics is that you can never take anything for granted.

You must realize that this is a time of political campaigning so such accusations are expected. My response to this is that we have courts in Turkey and if anyone has evidence of any of those accusations they can easily file a case in court. In Turkey, even mayors do not have immunity from the law and courts are independent of any political influence.

But of course those who accuse the AK party of such misdeeds will not use the legal channels because their accusations are baseless. If there was any truth to this we would be the first people to take action, but then again my response is that the courts are there to put such accusations in perspective.





Turkish FM with his wife in a tourist visit to Dar AL-Hajar, Sana'a. Photos curtsy of Fatih Ugurlu

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Opinion



Words of Wisdom



TIMES

the country.

The problem is the helplessness people feel. Most people feel they have ost control, and even a sense of direction. They drift along with the current. They feel uncomfortable with the flow as they believe there is no one in charge.

This is because the Yemeni individual is used to an autocratic system in which things are predetermined and people are given exact roles to play.

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

OUR

OPINION

uring the Sa'ada war between

2004 and 2008, thousands of

lives were lost and more than

85,000 locals lost their homes.

These locals are now among

Our battered

soldiers

the 6,700 internally displaced persons residing

in camps, are living with relatives, or are try-

ing to create a new life in other cities around

Today many of the soldiers who engaged in

the war are either back to their earlier life or

are living in a state in-between peace and war.

This is especially true since there are current-

ly indications of failed mediation in Sa'ada

and signs of a possible eruption of another sort

During last week alone, I heard of three

cases concerning former soldiers who partici-

pated in the battle against the Houthis. The

first soldier's wife left him because she says

he is not the same anymore. Apparently he is

very moody, he snaps at the slightest problem,

and does not want to work or provide a living

The second soldier's family is still with him,

but his five children complain that he has

turned very violent and keeps on beating them

and shouting a lot, so much so that they hate to

be in the same room with him. And finally, the

last soldier's story was that he simply went

mad. His wife said that after his return from

the Sa'ada war he has been acting very aloof, wanting to be left alone, and eventually just

left home one day and vanished into the ether. There have been many reports on the material damage of the war and consequences for

the people in the conflict affected areas. There

have even been some studies done on the psy-

chological damage done to children in Sa'ada.

But no one has taken time to evaluate what has

become of our battered soldiers. How are they

coping with life after the horrifying ordeal

they went through throughout the four stages

of the war? At times, the soldiers were being

attacked from every direction. They were even

of conflict in other governorates.

for her and his three children.

By: Kevin Stoda **Op Ed News.com**

> n many ways, the world has been changing so fast that most of the planet has forgotten that less than two decades ago there were no Yemenis in existence.

It was in 1990 when the Marxist People's Republic of South Yemen joined in union with the Yemen Arab Republic. The former state had been sponsored by the Soviet Union from the 1960s onward.

Similar to the aftermath of the Democratic German Republic and the Federal German Republic becoming united in the autumn of 1990, some people in Yemen have nostalgia for a bygone era. This is particularly true for those Yemenis who have made their living in the tourist trade. These people are predominately (but not exclusively) found in the Southwest corner of Yemen.

Alas, the younger generation now live in a post-unified Yemen world where either Al-Qaeda is active or where regionally disenfranchised citizens practice kidnappings of tourists in order to gain attention for their causes. This has hurt Yemen's chances of becoming a successful global tourist hotspot, like its neighbors Egypt and Jordan. Yemeni citizens are certain that they have as much to offer the world of tourism as does Jordan-and certainly much more to offer than the United Arab emirates, where Dubai is located.

Religious and cultural wars in yemen

Until this year, it has been primarily in either the northern or eastern half of the country of Yemen where many of the more extremist religious groups come from. On a positive note though, it is in these regions where most of the renegade movements have recently agreed to make peace in return for more governmental aid in the future, i.e. as part of what is seen as the Sa'ada peace process.

Making the modern Yemeni identity even more complicated though is the fact that Yemen has both an Arab identity and an identity of itself which predates Islam by several millennia. For example, it is claimed that Yemen was founded by Noah's son Sham, and even earlier, Adam-of Adam and Eve fame-gave his name to one of the country's major cities and former capital of South Yemen: Adan.

As well, the Queen of Sheba is thought to have arrived in Israel from the Sabaean Kingdom of Yemen. Recall, Queen was actually one of Solomon's biblical contemporaries-and visiting house guests.

cant faction of Jews lived in Yemen. Sa'ada is one of the few regions where the handful of remaining Jews are found today.

Meanwhile, Al-Qaeda has become active with a so-called Yemeni Jihad group attacking the US Embassy in Sa'ana this month. According to Ginny Hill, writing in the YEMEN OBSERVER, "Cash-strapped Yemen lacks the financial resources to tackle terrorism in the same robust manner as the Saudis; its per capita gross domestic product of \$2,300 is dwarfed by the \$23,200 seen across the northern border."- The article is entitled "Yemen Faces New Jihad Generation."

Of all the countries not currently at war, Yemen has been the victim of the greatest brunt of attacks in 2008-with five in the last three months. This situation is not likely to improve soon unless the government of Yemen can put more money and training behind anti-terrorist and anti-terrorist recruitment campaigns.

The attack two-weeks ago on the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a, the capital of modern Yemen, left 17 locals-including one Arab-American-dead. The U.S. Embassy immediately sent non-essential personnel and families home. It also told all Americans to stay away from Yemen.

In the wake of the sa'ada agreement

Years of tribal infighting, numerous kidnappings of foreign tourists, attacks on others, have left the Yemen economy far more underdeveloped than it should be. It is in this context that the Yemeni government under long-term President Ali Saleh made a peace agreement this past year.

The treaty is known as the Sa'ada peace treaty-named after the region where most of the recent fighting amongst the government and tribal forces had taken place over the prior five years. The Yemeni government has agreed to give an amnesty to all involved fighters, but not to fighters aligned with Al-Qaeda

It is in the absence of any place at the negotiating table in Yemen, where disenfranchised Islamic Jihadist groups in Yemen seem to have decided to accept aid and inspiration from Al-Qaeda, i.e. ratcheting up the level of Yemeni hostilities in recent months.

Yemen has not received much aid to fight terrorism from neighboring Saudi Arabia and it has had an on-again off-again relationship with the U.S. since the bombing of U.S.S. Cole 8 years ago.

Sadly, it is not only foreigners who are under threat.

Yemenis are also most often under attack. For this reason, until 1948 a very signifi- For example, there have been 8 bombings or attacks on mosques in the past year alone. In short, 18 years after unification, modernist and religious forces in Yemen are still having it out with one another-just as had occurred much more aggressively in the 1960s and 1970s.

Meanwhile, tribal and modernist factions are both continuing to seek to dominate the political landscape in the years before the long-term presidential strongman Saleh retires in two years, as he has announced he will do.

All is not lost

Yemen as tourist site: Yemen as site of culture wars

Meanwhile, as Hill notes in a more upbeat tone, "In recent years, the Yemeni government has pioneered a dialogue program and poetry recitals to influence violent Jihadis and tribesman. The most recent initiative is a two-hour feature film intended to educate the public about extremism."

Hill explains, "The film, called THE LOS-ING BET, follows two Yemeni Jihadis who return home after being radicalized abroad. They [the characters in the film] are directed by an al-Qaeda mastermind to recruit new members and carry out a '-martyrdom operation.' News footage from the aftermath of a real suicide bombing is edited into scenes of this creative new drama and produced by a famous Yemeni director."

In the years since the infamous bombing of the U.S.S. Cole off the coast of Adan, American foreign policy has shown a lovehate relationship with the Yemeni government and its peoples. On the one hand, the U.S. appears to have been high-tailing its way out of Yemen at every bombingwhether it be the bombing of the Cole or the bombing at the embassy.

On the other hand, the U.S.A. and many European countries have on-and-off invested a lot of money and human resources at times in a great variety of projects-not just in the area of tourism but in the area of public works.

For example, the very first day I arrived in Sana'a this past week, my taxi driver pointed out that both the canal and road system had recently by restored through moneys of U.S. government agencies and funds.

In Zabid, I observed German contractors working on projects to restore different ancient canals on the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Likewise, in the small town of Makanah in the Hajar mountains, Japan was active in construction projects for the city.. Elsewhere French and Italian water projects were observed and appreciated.

The U.S. has also recently helped Yemen with long-term refugee problems-building housing for African refugees, some of whom have been living here for generations.

Everywhere I traveled in Yemen, local peoples appeared to be happy in acknowledging positive manifestations of tourism, achievements of foreign government projects, and NGO assistance which might be offered to these wonderful and hospitable Yemeni citizens.

World banking crises affects development

In conclusion, from what I could tell from my tour of Sana'a and Southwest Yemen this Eid Holiday, Yemen has a lot to offer the world-and especially those Yemenis in this mostly-formerly Marxist region-who seem to openly welcome more western-Arab interaction.

Yemen is not a closed land like Saudi Arabia. It is very open to people-to-people cooperation and exchange.

I think it is time to rethink our developmental and military policies in the Middle East in such a way that tourism and other infrastructural investment can be implemented in those neglected regions which have recently signed onto the Sa'ada peace treaty.

The U.S. should not be seen now-even in the wake of a recession-as abandoning any peaceful country or region to Al-Qaeda, especially in regions of Southwest Yemen, where citizens are continuously reaching out to the West to make investment. The West and neighboring Arab countries, like the oilrich Gulf states, need to help them regain their footing on the way to modernization (at a tempo appropriate to the needs and efforts of the Yemenis on the ground these days).

In short, high unemployment is likely the biggest obstacle to combating radicalism in Yemen. This means public works projects will be quite beneficial in the short and intermediate term. Empowering women can become part of the project if the West is creative in implementing such large scale training and construction efforts.

Nonetheless, with the expensive banking debacles in the West this decade, most of the developing world and Ban Ki Moon at the UN are all extremely nervous that the U.S. and European governments, NGOs, and private investors will not try to do more to (1) fight Al-Qaeda by (2) targeting development moneys along with (3) providing some military training to those under-trained regimes, who are overwhelmed by Al-Qaeda.

Yemen is the place to start to really win hearts and minds. Both Gulf state oil money and (NGO or) foreign government cooperation with Yemen is a very important project to focus on in 2009 and 2010, i.e. before new elections in Yemen take place and change the political landscape.

When power is exploited to plunder others' property

By: Abdullah Ibrahim Al-Wazeer

egretfully, the authority in our country behaves as a spectator without any positive reaction to plundering of citizens' lands and other property. We may find an officer, a deputy governor or an official, who dares to take control of another's plot of land using his power as a government official, and sees no body attempting to pre-

take control of others' property. No further injustice or aggressions is needed while the government needn't remain helpless and indifferent toward what happens to its citizens.

The type of authority that doesn't perform its duty to the fullest, side with the right or defend its laws and constitution is no longer eligible to mange the country and protect citizens. This authority doesn't seem to be available, nor does it have all the compowhat they do wrongly, those influential individuals receive rewards and get millions of Riyals from the government via intermediaries.

Land grab, abuse of others' rights and tourists' kidnapping are massive crimes. Therefore, the government needs to impose tough sanctions against those wrongdoers, who break the state's laws and hurt the country's reputation.

Those wrongdoers scorn the state, ridicule

institutions. It is a big shame on the state to fear those influential individuals, who get escorted by dozens of their followers in order to plunder others' lands or kidnap foreigners.

The government seems to be considering tribal affiliations and doesn't want to engage in confrontations with tribesmen. This may not work well. The government needs to treat citizens equally and not let a gap for the tribe to break public laws and regulations.

bombarded from the air by their own side; some of the government's air raids targeted the battle fields, indiscriminately killing both government soldiers and Houthis.

If our soldiers are to defend the country with their lives, they should feel that they are being appreciated and taken care of. Otherwise their loyalty will be a matter of negotiation to whoever provides more. The families of our soldiers must be taken care of and comforted when losing their bread winner, both emotionally and financially. Psychological counseling centers should be established to provide rehabilitation for the traumatized soldiers, to reintegrate them into the social fabric, and to make them productive members of the community. Otherwise we are going to face an escalating social problem as a consequence of the war, and many people could turn against their own country. We already have enough problems; let's not turn the ones on our side against us by being ignorant, careless, and unappreciative of their sacrifice for our country.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

vent him from doing so.

When the victim (the person whose land or property is plundered) attempts to protect his own property against the plunderer through the judiciary, the plunderer shamelessly dares to claim ownership of the plundered land or property before the competent court, depending on his power and influence.

The authority in Yemen often behaves as a spectator and never think about punishing the wrongdoer if he is a government official. Sometimes, this authority sides with the wrongdoer, or is found to be itself responsible for the wrongdoing.

The Yemeni authority hasn't understood that stability and protection of others' rights is what makes citizens thank it and praise its efforts to establish justice. It hasn't understood that growing petitions raised by those whose property is plundered and its being indifferent toward what happens to those victims is the main reason why citizens turn to hate their government. Citizens turn to uncover all the wrongdoings practiced by the authority, and therefore back any calls for change.

The authority need to protect citizens' rights and punish all the wrongdoers, who nents of the right state.

Any authority that doesn't care about establishing justice and equality among its citizens or protecting rights of its citizens seems to have not read history, nor has it examined why former regimes were overthrown.

The repeated praises of the authority we usually hear in Oman or Jordan for instance, arises from both governments' being firm to reinforce rule of law over their citizens equally, be they inside or outside their homeland territory. In both states, no single individual may dare plunder others' property or plots of lands though a senior official or a prestigious sheikh he is. In both Arab states, all the citizens are under the law, practice equal rights, and have equal duties to do for their governments. Nobody is over the law.

The government rewards wrongdoers

When it comes to Yemen, there are some tribal sheikhs and senior officials, who exploit their influence and weaknesses of the government to do whatever they want. Those influential individuals attack citizens, plunder their lands, practice highway robbery and kidnap tourists. Instead of being punished for

it and see themselves over the law. They show no respect for the government and its Source: Al-Balagh.net



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Press / Op-Ed





Al-Motamar.net, affiliated with the General People's Congress (ruling party) Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009

Top Stories

- President Saleh's platform reaches glorious achievements in fighting corruption
- GPC: Democratic dynamics toward upcoming parliamentary elections

The ruling General People Congress (GPC) has only a few steps ahead of the prospective democratic event, the upcoming parliamentary elections, which are scheduled to take place on April 27, 2009, the website reported, adding that the ruling party institutions and funs experience unprecedented political dynamics as the elections draw nearer and nearer.

Describing what it called "GPC transparency" the website reported that GPC leaders and members discuss during their daily meetings those top priority issues related with development and service projects that are currently underway in the various districts.

They recommended that the responsible agencies in the government accelerate implementing these vital projects following a detailed discussion of why their implementation was delayed.

According to the website, GPC meetings gained their significance from the fact that they are taking place just a few months ahead of the fourth parliamentary elections in Yemen history, scheduled for next April.

It went on to say that the democratic event is facing an irresponsible attack by JMP member parties that are working hard to destroy Yemen's democratic experience.

The ruling party alleged that JMP member parties are only interested to make illegal achievements in a way contradicting people's will and selection, which is why GPC and other responsible political parties and civil society organizations found themselves responsible for protecting Yemen's democratic development and holding free, fair and transparent elections on due time.

GPC said it found itself obliged to work with other democratic partners, amid JMP boycott of the elections, in order to make the upcoming electoral process a success.

The GPC permanent committees and branches nationwide strongly denounced the miserable attempts by JMP to abort the democratic process and replace it by suspicious deals, as its member parties have strong faith that they are going to suffer unprecedented defeat in the upcoming elections.

The ruling party committees and branches praised keenness by President Ali Abdullah Saleh to hold the upcoming elections on time, as well as its repeated calls for other political parties to come to dialogue and suggest workable solutions to any pressing issues in the nation.

On a side note, the website reported that a delegation, representing Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER), is due to participate in the International Conference on Elections Management, scheduled to take place in Kuwait on Sunday. The delegation, which left for Kuwait on Saturday, includes SCER member Dr Mohammed Al-Siyani, who is Head of Technical Affairs and Planning Sector at the commission, Head of Legal Affairs Sector and Director General for Training

Dr Al-Siyani said the two-day conference, organized by the Government of Kuwait in cooperation with the US State Department's Middle East Partnership Centre, would discuss a number of issues related to management of the electoral process in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf.

Yemen news agency quoted Dr al-Siyani as saying the conference is a good opportunity for sharing expertise among the participant countries in those aspects relating with election management.

On the other hand, Head of SCER's Information Sector Abdu Mohammed Al-Janadi valued all forms of consultative and technical support offered by the International Foundation for Election Systems IFES to the commission, confirming keenness of the SCER to enhance partnership and cooperation with the international organization.



Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the **Islah Party** Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009

Top Stories

Politicians: Presence of international forces in Aden Gulf threatens Yemen sovereignty

Paper: GPC always nominate powerful unqualified sheikhs and businessmen for Parliament seats

A recent paper on the common measures of Parliament formation in Yemen confirmed that GPC always nominates incompetent sheikhs and businessmen as its candidates for Parliament seats, pointing out that most of its parliament's members do not even hold secondary school certificates, the website reported.

The paper, presented by Dr. Hamoud Al-Qudami at a seminar arranged last week by the recently-founded Future Trend showed that the main opposition party, Islah, ranked first as regards nominating well-qualified candidates for Parliament seats.

According to the paper, the ruling party choose inefficient candidates to avoid any pressures or real opposition inside Parliament, most notably when debating budgets, government performance and inflation.

Al-Qudami affirmed that GPC always seek to win the support of tribal sheiks, who constitute the majority of its parliamentary bloc, emphasizing that Parliament has became a source for recruiting sheiks receiving support

from the government.

"The modern state of Yemen failed to emerge due to the ruling party's appeasing policy that obviously weakened the government's abilities to impose the rule of law, thus resulting in the birth of new tribal powers and growing roles of businessmen," he argued.

Al-Qudami concluded in his paper that the ruling party has the lion's share of military commanders in parliament, signaling that the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), a JMP member, avoided appointment of military figures to civil institutions when it was once the ruling party of former People Democratic Republic of Yemen, as currently does Islah, which has no military MPs.

On a side note, the website reported that JMP member parties reaffirmed their strong rejection of the preparations the ruling General People's

Congress (GPC) is lonely undertaking to hold the upcoming parliamentary elections, labeling such procedures as illegal and unconstitutional.

1520TH

جوتي ينفى علاقته بالجل

During a press conference held last Thursday, JMP said that the ruling party is intending to kill the Yemen's fledging democracy and multiparty system, pointing out that it backed out on all the pledges it made for the opposition as well as the recommendations offered by the EU election observation mission in 2006.

"The authority reneged its commitments in an attempt to go to the vote alone. It is not serous about holding free and fair elections," said JMP. "The state-run media are practicing campaigns of defamation and incitement against the opposition parties, and therefore promote the culture of hostility"

"GPC practices all kinds of repres-

sive acts against the opposition; freezing party funds, closing down headquarters and newspapers and dismissing JMP loyalists from government posts," the opposition alliance stated.

JMP stressed that free and fair elections are key to resolving all the political and economic troubles in Yemen. JMP Chairman Sultan Al-Atwani vehemently denied authenticity of media reports alleging that his coalition reached a deal with the ruling party, warning the government against exploiting terror as a pressure card against the opposition.

The political impasse in Yemen remains unresolved as the ruling and opposition parties have not made compromises to allow the vote to proceed. While GPC is pushing to hold the election next April, JMP demands to make a set of amendments to the election law

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Delft University of Technology (TUDelft) of The Netherlands, in partnership with Taiz University, is in the process of establishing a Centre for two Master Programmes in Engineering Management (E&M) and IT & Management (IT&M). TUDelft is therefore seeking an energized, well-qualified candidate that can become the Project Coordinator. The successful candidate is expected to coordinate project activities in Yemen in order to support the successful establishment and running of the Centre, and will become the Head of the Project Management Unit (PMU) for the duration of the project period (three years), during of which he/she is expected to reside in the city of Taiz.

rostitution is virtually the only part of the personal services industry in the

Netherlands that works.

By: Heleen Mees

prostitute works voluntarily.

Appalled by their daily routine, police officers from the Amsterdam vice squad have asked to be transferred to other departments. Only this year, the city administration has started to close

Does Legalizing Prostitution Work?

exposure. For example, 79% said that they would be deterred if there was a chance that their families would be notified. And a whopping 87% said that they would be deterred by the threat that the police might publish their photographs or names

One can't get a manicure in Amsterdam without booking an appointment two weeks in advance, but men can buy sex anytime - and at an attractive price. The legalization of prostitution in October 2000 merely codified a long-standing Dutch tradition of tolerance towards buying and selling sex. But is legalization the right approach?

Even in the Netherlands, women and girls who sell their bodies are routinely threatened, beaten, raped, and terrorized by pimps and customers. In a recent criminal trial, two German-Turkish brothers stood accused of forcing more than 100 women to work in Amsterdam's redlight district (De Wallen).

According to the attorney who represented one of the victims, most of these women come from families marred by incest, alcohol abuse, and parental suicide. Or they come from countries in Eastern Europe or Southeast Asia and have fallen victim to human trafficking, lured by decent job offers or simply sold by their parents.

These women are Amsterdam's leading tourist attraction (followed by the coffee shops that sell marijuana). But an estimated 50-90% of them are actually sex slaves, raped on a daily basis with police idly standing by. It is incomprehensible that their clients are not prosecuted for rape, but Dutch politicians argue that it cannot be established whether or not a

down some brothels because of their ties to criminal organizations.

According to a study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, the average age of death of prostitutes is 34. In the United States, the rate at which prostitutes are killed in the workplace is 51 times that of the next most dangerous occupation for women, working in a liquor store. Other studies show that nine out of ten prostitutes urgently want to escape the job. Almost half have attempted suicide at least once.

In 1999, the Swedish government decriminalized the sale of sex, but made it an offense to pimp or to buy sex. Under Sweden's so-called "Sex Purchase Law," paying for sex is punishable by fines or up to six months in prison, plus the humiliation of public exposure. According to the Swedish authorities, the number of prostitutes in Sweden has dropped 40% as a result. Human trafficking rings tend to avoid Sweden, because business has gone sour.

Norway, a country that has a reputation to lose when it comes to women's rights, carefully compared the Swedish and Dutch models and concluded that Sweden's was the one to follow. It has now changed its legislation accordingly.

The success of the Swedish approach is not so surprising. According to a study in California, most men who bought sex would be deterred by the risk of public in the local newspaper.

Most of these men showed pathological behavior towards women. One in five admitted to having raped a woman, while four out of five said that going to prostitutes was an addiction.

Prostitution is often dubbed "the oldest profession." But this is merely a way of justifying the exploitation of mostly vulnerable women (there is also a much smaller number of male prostitutes in the Netherlands, but they are not pimped out like female prostitutes). It takes leadership and a vision of true gender equality to put an end to prostitution.

The Swedish practice of naming and shaming is quite un-Dutch. But, for some men, part of the pleasure of buying sex may be the humiliation conferred on the woman involved. For others, like former New York Governor Eliot Spitzer, the promise of discretion and anonymity may be the most appealing aspect of buying sex. In any case, pillorying the clients is both a just punishment and an effective deterrent.

Heleen Mees is a Dutch economist and lawyer. Her most recent book. Weg met het deeltijdfeminisme!, examines third generation feminism. She is also the author of a book on European Union law and founder of the women's action committee Women on Top.

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The Project Coordinator shall have the following qualifications:

- He/she should have a Master Degree;
- He/she should have proven experience in management during the last three years, preferably in international settings;
- He/she should be fluent in the English and Arabic languages;
- He/she should have proven excellent communication and computer skills.

The Project Coordinator will have the following Responsibilities:

- He/she will be in charge of the day to day management of project activities in close cooperation with the Dean of the College of Engineering and Heads of the E&M and IT&M programmes on behalf of TUDelft Consortium members;
- He/she will assist the Head of the Academic Programme in non-academic issues and in the preparations and follow-up of the Centre Board meetings;
- He/she will report to the TUDelft Project Director;
- He/she should give guidance to the Heads of the E&M and IT&M programmes where necessary;
- He/she will be in charge of the overall monitoring and control of project activities in Yemen;
- He/she will be responsible for the financial management of local funds available through the project and adhere to all financial guidelines set forth by TUDelft.
- He/she will be responsible for coordinating proposed missions by project members, as well as take care of visa arrangements, accommodation, workshops, seminars and other activities approved by TUDelft.
- He/she should give support to the overall institutional development of the Centre.

Interested candidates are requested to submit their application to: Loay Ahmed Al-Kibsi, TUDelft representative in Yemen. P.O. Box 15643

The deadline for receiving the applications is Saturday 28 February 2009

Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Health

Guess what's lurking in your food

By: Salma Ismail

trolling down the chaotic aisles of her local grocery store in Sana'a, Nabila is busy removing items that her three children have discreetly sneaked in to her shopping cart. "We're not buying junk food," she tells them, returning them one by one to the shelves.

But little does she know that many of the items she chooses to keep in the cart are actually "junk food" too. With some brands not writing all ingredients of their food labels and limited consumer awareness, her choices are limited to her motherly intuition.

High fructose corn syrup, also called isoglucose, is a thick liquid that lurks in all sorts of items at your local grocery store's shelves and many fast food menus. You can find it in yoghurts, ketchup, cereals, pancake syrup, icecream, soft drinks, cookies, canned soup and fruit juices, among many other items.

How high fructose corn syrup is made

High fructose corn syrup is made from corn kernels. But that's just the beginning of the process. Actual syrup production necessitates a whole string of industrial processes including highvelocity spinning and the introduction of three different enzymes to incite molecular rearrangements.

The enzymes turn most of the glucose molecules in corn into fructose, which makes the substance sweeter. This 90 percent fructose syrup mixture is then combined with regular 100 percent glucose corn syrup, to get the desired balance of glucose and fructose, somewhere between equal quantities of both to a ratio of 80 to 20 percent. The final product is a clear thick liquid that is sweeter than sugar.

Why high fructose corn syrup is good

It's good because it makes everything



Some food labels list high fructose corn syrup in their ingredients. Other do not.

taste good, but all this may come at the price of your health. Not only is high fructose corn syrup sweeter and easier to blend into beverages than table sugar, but it's also a great preservative so it can be used in processed foods to extend their shelf life.

High fructose corn syrup is easier to transport and more economical in countries where the price of sugar are twice the global price, such as the United States and Canada. The syrup can be 20 to 70 percent cheaper than sugar.

In 1983, a beverage analyst estimated that by switching to high-fructose corn syrup, Coca-Cola gained a cost advantage of USD 70 million a year over Pepsi and its bottlers. A year later, Pepsi followed in Coke's footsteps and also began using the artificial sweetener

Why high fructose corn syrup is bad

First of all, high fructose corn syrup does not exist in nature. A product of the complex process described above, it is genetically modified.

In 1982, when the artificial sweetener was introduced into the American food supply, children for the first time began getting type II diabetes and obesity rates soared. In at least one study,

the syrup has been linked to both. The syrup also has been shown to interfere with people's metabolism so that a person feels hungrier than they really are. This is because high fructose corn syrup also limits the secretion of leptin into the body's system. Leptin is a hormone that signals to the brain when you are full and, without it, the amount of food you consume is not controlled. In parallel to this, the manufactured sweetener also encourages the production of ghrelin, a hormone responsible for controlling appetite, sending your appetite into over-drive.

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 2004 published a study noting that the rise in high fructose corn syrup consumption paralleled the rise in obesity rates in the U.S. and hypothesized that the way fructose is metabolized could be uniquely fattening. The authors later said that their study was meant to inspire further study, not to be a definitive declaration.

Because there are no enzymes to digest high fructose corn syrup, it is metabolized by the liver. The pancreas to release insulin the way it normally does for sugar, so fructose converts to fat more readily than any other sugar. An overworked liver produces signifi-

cantly more uric acid, multiplying the risk for heart disease.

Although a number of associations have claimed that high fructose corn syrup isn't unhealthy when consumed in moderation, it is hard to gauge just how much one consumes because, just like sugar, it is contained in so many foods one doesn't know about.

High fructose corn syrup: genetically modified

According to a food technology expert, two of the enzymes used to make the syrup -alpha-amylase and glucose-isomerase- are genetically modified to make them more stable.

Enzymes are very large proteins made up of a chain of amino-acids. Through genetic modification, specific amino-acids are changed or replaced so the enzyme's "backbone" won't break down or unfold. This allows the industry to use the enzymes at higher temperatures without them becoming unstable.

Consumers trying to avoid genetically modified foods should therefore avoid HFCS. It is almost certainly made from genetically modified corn and processed with genetically modified enzymes. But there's another reason to avoid high fructose corn syrup. Consumers may think that fructose is healthier than sugar because they associate it with fruit, but a team of investigators at the United States Department of Agriculture discovered this to be untrue. A study they conducted proved a fructose diet to lead to many more health problems than a glucose diet.

Mercury in high fructose corn syrup Researchers have discovered low levels of the toxic element mercury in high fructose corn syrup, according to the Environmental Health journal. The research was based on a limited test of only 20 samples of corn syrup, but mercury was found in nine of them.

How did the metal get in there? In making high fructose corn syrup, caustic soda is one of the ingredients used to separate corn starch from the corn kernel. According to one theory, caustic soda produced in industrial chlorine plants can be contaminated with mercury, then passed on to the high fructose corn syrup and those who eat it.

Mercury is toxic in all its forms. Given how much high-fructose corn syrup is consumed by children on ice cream and pancakes, it could be a significant source of mercury never before considered.

Back to basics

Until further research can prove or disprove that high fructose corn syrup is the devil's candy, going back to basics and embracing all natural organic foods is a must. Consumers should read food labels as if they were health warnings. Artificial sweeteners are not used in

locally manufactured products, but high fructose corn syrup is present in imported goods sold in the local markets.

"Artificial sweeteners are not healthy for the human diet as they cause cancerous build-ups," said Saleh Al-Ghaylan, nutritionist at the Consumers Protection Association of Yemen.

4U

Concerned consumers should read the ingredients on food labels. For any enquiries related to food health, you can call Yemen's Consumers Protection Association

on 1- 500 711.

Recipes

How to make homemade chocolate syrup

Ingredients

- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups cold water 1 tablespoon vanilla

Steps

Whisk together cocoa, sugar, salt and cold water. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking to combine, until thickened. Let cool. Add vanilla. Store in the refrigerator.

How to make homemade ketchup

Ingredients

- 1 can tomato paste 1/4 cup water 1/4 cup brown sugar 1/2 teaspoon salt 1/4 teaspoon cumin 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon cloves
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar

Steps

In a large bowl, combine the ingredients together and stir the mixture until it is of uniform consistency.

Sana a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation Project Management Unit (PMU)

Sana a Sanitation Networks Project Invitation for the Pre-Qualification of Bidders For the Construction of Sana a Sanitation Networks Project





Phase IV

- ¥ The Sana a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation (SWSLC), Project Management Unit (PMU), has received a loan from the Arab Fund to finance the implementation the remaining of Sana a Sanitation Networks Project. Therefore, SWSLC-PMU invites interested bidders experienced in the construction of sewerage networks, to apply for pre-qualification, which is open to local and international firms and voluntarily formed joint ventures between two firms of more.
- ¥ The project includes supply and construct uPVC and GRP sewerage networks pipes with diameters ranging from 160mm to 1500mm. The total length of the Sanitation networks is expected to the about 800km.
- ¥ Eligible contractors of first class grade according to top classification in their countries with sound experience in sewerage networks construction may obtain the pre-qualification documents from SWSLC-PMU, Republic of Yemen Sana a, at the address noted below, starting from the date of publishing this notice at newspapers. The documents will be available for non-refundable fees of fifty US Dollars (US\$50).
- ¥ The application must be submitted in sealed envelopes, and clearly stated on the envelop Application for Pre-Qualification for the Construction of Sana a Sanitation Networks project-Phase IV, also the name of company and address including Tel. and Fax No. Should be stated clears. The application will not be accepted under any circumstances latter than date 30/3/2009 12.00 noon local time

Sana a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation Project Management Unit Eng. Abdullah Al-Muta a Project Director Al-Itha a Street-near Ministry of Health Tel. + 967 1 250162 Fax. + 967 1 250174



Advertisement

23 February, 2009 9





Culture

Art as business of the business of art

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

hen you come to Mohammed Al-Yamani's studio, Che Guevara greets you almost in every corner; he is there on his cell phone screen saver, in his computer, and definitely in his heart.

As rebellious as his icon, Mohammed Al-Yamani bubbles with excitement. resentment, aspiration, and talent. All of these emotions and more are wrapped together inside a thin body embossed with a shawl and his signature black hat: the permanent mark of eccentric artists around the world.



Hunger by Mohammed Al-Yemeni.

He shows you around his studio which he called Fantasia, commenting on his various art works as if they were someone else's.

"Art is history, politics, emotions, talent, and a case to defend," he says with sparkling eyes. He believes that those who paint for the sake of beauty only and those who recreate what is already there are not artists. "They are just talented copiers; they don't strive to use their art for change.

Since 1998 he has taught Yemeni men and women about art, literature, culture, politics, and life. Every year a new batch of artists graduates after completing twelve one-month courses. Students start from the very beginning and pass through all sorts of training in painting and sculpture until they receive their creative arts diploma ratified by the Ministry of Culture and the Technical and Vocational Institute.

Maha Ahmed Rashed from Taiz is a 1997 political science graduate from Sana'a University. Although she is a wife and a mother of two, she wanted to do something outside the home to enrich her life.

"I have always wanted to practice my drawing skills. I used to paint on glass through an organization called IMPACT for empowering women. A colleague there told me about this course and I jumped at the opportunity," she said.

She has been studying for three months and hopes to complete the course in order to polish her talent and become a famous artist. Her husband at first was not convinced that she can do it, but when he saw her paintings he supported her. Maha has already completed four paintings which she will be entering in the students' general exhibition at the end of the year. Al-Yamani believes that women are

many times more sensitive to art and

hence are better at expressing themselves. Since 1998, 500 female students and 200 male students have received their diploma through Fantasia.

The students are segregated; three days a week girls study in the evenings from four to six while boys come after seven on different days. Education was mixed in the first two years since establishing the studio until Al-Yamani realized that it is easier and more socially acceptable to separate men from women.

"I believe in co-education. I know that boys and girls should come to know each other and learn to deal with the other gender. This would eliminate many negative perceptions: men wouldn't turn in a phobia for women while women would cease to mystify men," he admitted.

Afaf Dhaifallah from Rada'a is in her first course as she has been coming to the studio for two weeks now. She agrees that the atmosphere is "liberating."

"When we are here, we don't feel chained within the mostly self-inflicted general social barriers. I enjoy studying and satisfy my inner need for emotional connection. Art has given me confidence and the ability to express myself in my own way," she says.

Through studying art, Afaf realizes it is not just about talent: there are rules and procedures that should be taken very seriously. She feels good perfecting her work and pours the emotions and sufferings of her 22 year-old self into paintings and sketches.

Al-Yamani does not accept just any student. In order to apply to the course, one must have at least finished high school. He has an admission form in which the applicant defines why they want to learn art.

There are six options: to get a job, to improve my career, as an educational requirement, related to my work, just a hobby, or haven't decided yet. If the applicant chooses either of the

last two options, he is likely to get rejected because Al-Yamani says "art is not something you do to waste time." He bets on art as a change agent of

individuals. Art in his opinion will not change societies, especially a society like Yemen where the dominant color is grey. "The buildings are the same, the clothes are the same, and the daily routine lacks creativity. Even music is listened to passively. Yemenis, unfortunately, do not have a taste for culture or art," he complained. "Tell me how many average Yemeni families hang a painting on their walls? Even those who hang portraits of family members hang them only for documentation and not as art."

Amal Al-Jabal from Sana'a, a student for three months, admitted that after joining the course her life has become 'more colorful."

"I sit with my children and paint. When they see how seriously I take painting, they also become more creative and work harder to impress with their art work," she said.

Amal bought her children their own art supplies so that they feel free to paint while not messing with her supplies. She did not finish college because she did not find herself available for full-time education. When her sister-in-law told her about the diploma offered at Fantasia studio, she finally found herself.

Although Al-Yamani realizes how liberating art is and how useful the opportunity he created for men and women can be, he emphasizes that social therapy is not his job. "I am not a politician, I am not a preacher, I am not a reformist, I am not a therapist. Through Fantasia I help elevate the sense of beauty in my students."

Forty years ago he says, Yemen had a problem with ignorance, diseases, and poverty. Today, many branches have emerged from this evil trio, including a numbness towards art and beauty. The people responsible for running the country believe that a bakery is 100 times more important than an art shop.

"We are still stuck in the primitive understanding of Man and Man's needs. But Man shall not live by bread alone," he said.

Al-Yamani commented on the lack of arts in the educational system. Even in schools the subject of art has been eliminated, and now students spend all their time in school reiterating what the books say without any space for

personal creativity. He believes that this sort of culture makes Yemenis sad and blue. "Even when we laugh, you find us saying allahum ijaluh khair [God forbid bad consequences], fearing that their laughter would eventually end in tears."

Al-Yamani also teaches the subjects of graphic design and descriptive geometry in three private universities.

He tries to instill creativity and curiosity in his students. He encourages them to question everything so that they eventually realize the truth in beauty.

Despite all the signs, he bets on the future. He says it cannot get any worse and so the only way is up according to the cycles of life.

Nadia Bu Ghanim from Arhab finds hope in art and conveys it to the members of Al-Ola Association which she co-



Mohammed Al-Yemeni: "Art in Yemeni society has yet to gain its position in today's life."

established to eradicate poverty and illiteracy. She has been at Fantasia for four months now, and is convinced that with art life can be made better.

"Through art I can convey the sufferings of women and children and make the public understand. I want to change reality through art, to defy the norms, and prove that a woman can," she

Her husband at first did not agree on wasting money on learning art. When he realized how much happier it has made his wife and how much more cheerful their marriage has become, he supported her studies 100 percent.

Nadia believes in the power of art and wants to advocate for women's rights through her work. She hopes a time will come in Yemen when people are serious about art and understand that it is a part of the social development, not just a luxury.

"I have seen many people come to the door of the studio, peek in and not dare to enter, as if it is a forbidden world," she observed.

Art in Yemeni society has yet to gain its position in today's life. According to Al-Yamani, these generations have forgotten what it is like to be creative, even the ones who are well known artists and are all over the news.

"I am a researcher practicing art," he says "I keep studying and learning about my subjects, and then allow the knowledge to merge with the feelings and take control of my hands to create art."

Al-Yamani has created many controversial pieces and continues to break taboos. His work discusses gender discrimination, religious stereotyping, and even some taken-for-granted facts in history. He makes fun of idolized concepts and politics to the extent that he was told off by "authority figures" on more than one occasion.

But he is not afraid, he says. "They don't take me seriously, they don't think that my teachings can cause dramatic social change, and they are right. I can only influence individuals and wait for evolution to take place."



Since 1998 Al-Yamani has taught Yemeni men and women about art, literature, Yemeni woman's pride by Mohammed Al-Yemeni. culture, politics, and life.





Yemeni.

A historical overview of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the rise of Islamic Hamas Movement (Part 2)

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been going on for almost a century. Throughout this period of time, the conflict witnessed a lot of political tensions, military confrontation and open hostilities. This conflicts started with the establishment of the Zionist movement and the sequence of creating Israel in a territory that belongs to Palestinians. The seeds of this conflict were conceptualized earlier in the 19th century when the Zionist Rabbi Yehuda Alcalay published the first book in 1840 in which he revealed the intentions of the Jews to create a cultural and a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Alcalay's views were embraced by Chief political Zionist, Theodor Herzl who re-conceptualized them further in a book Judenstat, published in 1896. This Zionist project was followed by the formation of the World Zionist Organization and convening the First Zionist Congress in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, in which the Zionist project was launched.

By: Dr. Murad Alazzany UPM University, Malaysia

he disastrous defeat by the Israeli army of the Arabs in the 1967 ended the legacy of Pan-Arabnisim approach advocated by Nasser and contributed to the rise of Islamic movements or Political Islam in the area. However, these Islamic movements did not get a chance to lead the Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, they won a wide circle of followers after the October War of 1973. This is when Egypt and Syria launched another war against Israel, after the Israeli government headed by Golda Meir rejected Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's offer to negotiate a settlement.

Egypt and Syria caught Israel by surprise in more ways than one. Egyptians poured huge numbers of troops across the canal unopposed and began setting up a beachhead. The war ended by the death of 2,700 Israeli soldiers and 8,500 Arabs. It resulted in partial Israeli withdrawals from the Sinai Peninsula, under much less favorable terms than could have been obtained before the war.

The war inspired a hope of victory for many Arabs and offered another chance for them to gather and unite against Israel. This is particularly when Arab states led by Saudi Arabia declared an oil embargo, targeting the United States and the Netherlands in particular for their support for Israel. The embargo heightened the perception that Arab countries could exercise political influence by controlling the oil supply. However, the hopes of Arabs in a real victory evaporated again as Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979. That treaty was seen by many Arabs as betrayal for the Palestinian issue.

Egypt was criticized heavily by Arabs and was boycotted by Arab states for its diplomatic relations with Israel. Consequently, the treaty left a big impact on the Arab street. One of its impacts is that it caused a conflict among Arabs themselves. On the other hand, it allowed the soul of defeatism to

reach the persona of Arabs after they had been considering Israel as a tiny country that can be erased and vanquished easily at any time.

Many Arabs after that treaty began to believe that it would be impossible to erase Israel, or chase it out of the area. They acknowledged the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East and started to negotiate with it. However, the Islamic movements that operate within Islamic agenda never acknowledged Israel's existence or identified it as a superior country

Instead, they kept confidently declaring that they would keep fighting Israel without any respite and till they defeated her. Thus, after this treaty, the Islamic movements participated in the political atmosphere strongly.

They accused the Sadat of betraying the Palestinian issue and even to get strayed from the path of Islam. Sadat was assassinated by Islamists while he was delivering his speech on the stage in 1982. As a result, Islamic movements were prevented to participate in any

political atmosphere or to perform any political activities.

Their voices disappeared and their activities became passive except in Palestine where they were active to a certain extent. However, these movements never played a central role in the Israel and Arab conflict. The PLO movement was always the only representative for Palestinians.

However, the PLO movement achieved nothing worth in its confrontation with Israeli more than the Intifadeh (Revolt) which involved mostly lowlevel violence such as rock throwing, winning sympathy for the struggle of the Palestinians against the Israeli occupiers.

By 1991 the Intifadeh had all but ended, but massive Israeli repression in this period laid the seeds for future violence. Worse even, the PLO movement went to Oslo in 1993 for negotiation with Israel. Her negotiation with Israel ended with Oslo agreement which was another failure for Arabs and a shame too.

As this agreement was a failure, majority of Palestinians and Arabs kept on yearning for alternative leadership which they can rally around to fight Israel and to get back their pride. Getting inspired by their great history, which was replete with pride and victories, they became aware that a victory against Israel would be achieved only when they get back to their Islamic roots.

A common belief was constituted among Arabs that the failure to defeat Israel and to liberate Palestine was the fault of those who kept Islam away from the battlefront with the Jews. It was the fault of those who fought under misguided, and low or feeble human ideologies like the pan-arabanism and nationalism.

As these ideologies failed to liberate Palestine, People become sure that the liberation of Palestine can only be accomplished from a religious Islamic point of departure, since Islam is the only ideology that can mobilize the full potentials of the people, and only Islam will break the Jews.

This is true as the Jews themselves, upon arriving in Palestine, launched their struggle in the name of religion. Their belief in the 'Promised Land' had preoccupied their mentalities for hundreds of years before Zionism achieved what they had yearned for, and it had motivated them in their war against the Muslims.

The rise of Islamic movements made the Jews really worried as it never happened that they had any battle with Arabs being fought under the flag of Islam. Besides, the Jews consider Islamists to be more threatening than the nationalists, the Pan-arbanists and the socialists.

They are aware that if Islamists get the chance to lead, they would easily gather people around their belief and goal and hence they would represent a mortal threat for their existence. For that reason the Jews express their worries of the rise of Hamas' ideology in more than an occasion.

Hamas was founded as the underground wing of the Muslim Brethren movement in the Gaza Strip at the beginning of the first Intifada in December 1987. Its foundation came as an accumulative result of the efforts of many Islamic leaders. This Islamic effort drew the bulk of its ideology from the teaching of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brethren movement.

However, the centrality of Hamas ideology was cherished by Izz al Din El Qassam, a Syrian preacher who had immigrated to Palestine and was agitating against the British and the Jews in 1963. This ideology was also inspired by many leaders like Ahmad Yassin, and Abd al-Aziz Rantisi who were assassinated by Israel in 2004.

The center of Hams ideology focused on the Palestinians' conflict with Israel and the unresolved question of Palestinian nation formation. Consequently, it has drawn practical conclusions going beyond those reached by earlier Islamist thinkers. This is to say that it formulated its ideology in rivalry with the secular national Palestinian forces within the PLO, and in order to refute Zionist-Israeli claims to the land

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Al-Mihdhar remembered

Compiled by: Ismail Al-Ghabri

ussein Abu Bakr Al-Mihdhar was a well-known lyrical poet, composer and parliamentarian. Born in 1931 in Ash Shihr in Hadramout, he was raised in a high-ranking Sufi family. His grandfathers were renowned public poets at a time when Hadrami poetry was famous all over the Gulf.

Al-Mihdhar expressed the sentiments of ordinary Yemeni people, tackling different aspects of their life. He wrote of love, wisdom and love of his nation and, although his poetry followed the local Hadrami style, he won the admiration of Yemenis throughout the country. His

choice of words, literary images, structure and style were all unique, and he greatly enriched the country's literary production with an exquisite collection of poems and songs

Al-Mihdhar, who is considered the father of the Hadrami arts, dedicated many of his poetry and songs to various towns in Yemen, including Al-Shihr, Al-Taweela, Al-Mukalla, Tarim, Al-Safra, Al-Qatn, and Du'an. By including all these towns in songs, he ensured that the whole country remained united to the tune of traditional Hadrami music. Famous singer Abu Bakr Salem Balfaqih sang his lyrics which remain popular to this day.

Al-Mihdhar traveled between the different towns of Hadramout, notably to participate in "daan" sessions, a uniquely

Hadrami tradition in which a poet improvises verses then sung back to him, sometimes in a poetry duel with another poet.

He preserved the ancient traditions of Hadramout in his music. For example, the Hadrami people are famous for the visits they pay to the tombs of saints on several occasions during which they socialize and sing in processions. These and others were included in his songs.

His verses are permeated with wisdom. His song couplets often end with good advice. "Adhere firmly to honesty," he would write, or "Abandon and do not water the one that has no sense of honor."

His poetry is symbolic and politically involved to varying degrees. A voice for the people, he spoke of a desire for a unified Yemen before unification in May





1990. Both in his poetry and life's work, Al-Mihdhar tackled a number of issues dear to all.

One night in Al-Taweela One night in Al-Taweela,

More romantic than those of the Arabian nights To the truck driver: "please, slow down" Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home

No resemblance of the joy I had that

night She is too precious to give up for all

pearls Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home

The top sights of the city have arisen Women are spreading the word, revealing the secret And fear's gone Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home Stop and relax your heart Before, you get too old to enjoy the scenery of the sweeties

Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home Had your eye seen what mine saw of her beauty You would be tempted to seduction

Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home

Puzzling when she speaks Her height shapes perfect Her eyes are arrows which, if casted Never miss the target Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home

They have proved successful in romance talks Chuckling one's balance Allowing love to go all over the body Al-Qarn, it is that I wish to have home



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