

Yemen arrests suspect in USS Cole bombing

SANAA, March 16 (Reuters) - Yemen has arrested a suspected militant wanted over the 2000 bomb attack that killed 17 sailors aboard the USS Cole in the port of Aden, an official Web site said on Tuesday.

Security forces arrested Ali Mohamed Omar Shorbajy in the mountainous Abyan region in south Yemen on Monday night, the Web site of the ruling General People's Congress said. A hunt is still on in the same area for three other wanted men. Last week eight men, including six suspects in the attack on the U.S. warship, surrendered to the authorities after a week-long siege of Islamic militants in Abyan.



Yemen has arrested a suspect in the bombing of the USS Cole (shown).

During the operation security forces arrested local al Qaeda leader Abdul Raouf Nassib, who Yemeni officials say masterminded a 2003 jail break by al Qaeda suspects in the bombing of the ship.

25 children received from Saudi

By: HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A security source said last Sunday that the Ministry of the Interior received from the Saudi Security Authorities 25 children. They were detained in Saudi Arabia at child care centers for illegally infiltrating Saudi territory via the child trafficking trade, which is active in Hajjah and Al-Mahweet Governorates.

These children, under the age of six-

teen, are exploited as beggars and other unsuitable forms of work, resulting in them encountering physical and psychological harm. The source said that the families of some of the children are still not known.

The Authority seeks to confront the phenomenon of smuggling poor Yemeni children and women, especially to Saudi. This phenomenon intensifies during the pilgrimage season. Poverty is one of the elements leading to children seeking work.

55 MPs demand questioning of interior minister on prisoners

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Fifty five members of the parliament have signed a petition asking for the questioning of the Minister of Interior Rashad Al-Aleemi by the parliament on the status of the prisoners still held without trial in the political security

prison upon their arrest for suspicion of their possible involvement in terrorist activities or groups.

In the petition, the parliamentarians, who represent the ruling party plus opposition bloc and independents, have called upon the parliament speaker to send for the interior minister to stand before the parliament next Monday, March 22 for interrogation.

Continued on page 3

Dr. Al-Zindani speaks out

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

"I am not worried because I know my brother, and he has done nothing wrong," said Dr. Mansour Al-Zindani, brother of Sheikh Abdul Majid Al-Zindani, who was accused last month by the US government of supporting terrorist activities.

Dr. Al-Zindani, who is a member of the Yemeni Parliament and a professor of political science at Sana'a University, told Yemen Times that without concrete evidence, the accusations must have been geared toward Sheikh Al-Zindani's opinions and not actions. Analysts in the West have viewed Sheikh Al-Zindani, Chairman of the Shura Council in the Islah (Reform) party, founder of Al-Imam University and once a part of the Presidential Council, as an outspoken anti-American religious leader.

"Everybody in Yemen and all over the Middle East has voiced an opinion about the United States supporting Israel and what it is doing to the Palestinians," said Dr. Al-Zindani. "Many people in Yemen, across the Middle East, in Europe, in Asia and even in America have been against the war in Iraq. If America has to accuse people of their opinions, they have to aim at 1.2 billion Muslims. If there is clear action and clear evidence, everybody will look at it. But these US accusations were aimed at Sheikh Al-Zindani's opinions."

Dr. Al-Zindani, who received his Masters in International Relations in the United States at Denver University in 1984 and got his PhD focusing on Yemen's relationship with superpowers at Cairo University in 1988, claims that the US accusations were a political move.

"This must be a political play based

on opinions," said Dr. Al-Zindani. "It is important to view him as a person, not on opinions, politics and so forth. This is how people in Yemen and the Middle East see him. Everybody is free and everybody has the right to voice his or her opinion in America. But it appears that the United States is not allowing my brother to have an opinion."

The US Treasury Department described Sheikh Al-Zindani as having worked with Al-Qaeda for a number of years, as having helped the organization recruit new members and as having been involved in purchasing weapons for Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The Department's decision also included freezing Sheikh Al-Zindani's assets in the United States, and he is prohibited from conducting financial transactions in the United States or doing business with American companies.

"When I asked my brother about freezing his assets, he laughed," said Dr. Al-Zindani. "He said, 'I don't have one penny in the United States. If I have money, let the United States take it, but I don't have any money there.'"

The US Treasury Department also described Sheikh Al-Zindani as a "loyalist" and a spiritual leader to Osama bin Laden. Sheikh Al-Zindani went to Afghanistan in the 1980s to fight Soviet troops. But Dr. Al-Zindani argues that his brother should be seen through what interests him the most.

"Sheikh Al-Zindani is a modern religious man. He uses scientific methods to prove and teach Islam," said Dr. Al-Zindani. "He uses a scientific approach on how to know Islam. He puts his energy into knowledge, thinks in terms of knowledge and sci-



Dr. Mansour Al-Zindani, member of the Yemeni Parliament and professor at Sana'a University (Yemen Times photo)

ence, and he has based his theories on facts. This is how we know him. This is how people in Yemen and in the Middle East know him as a religious leader. Maybe the United States doesn't know this side of Sheikh Al-Zindani."

Dr. Al-Zindani, also a member of Parliament's Committee of Foreign Relations, is concerned that the accusations may harm the United States' relationship with Yemen and the

Muslim world.

"I am concerned because I do not want the relationship between Yemen and the United States to be affected negatively in this way," said Dr. Al-Zindani. "Many think that the United States is starting to behave strongly against religious leaders and Muslims overall. The war in Iraq followed by the accusations against my brother could easily increase anger towards America."

Part of the Danish Wider Middle East Initiative 'Partnership for Progress and Reform' Danish mission to Yemen starts

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A Danish identification mission has arrived to Yemen on Monday, 15th of March, to start gathering information and analysis for the development of a program and dialogue as part of the Danish Wider Middle East Initiative entitled 'Partnership for Progress and Reform.'

The mission is headed by Mr. Mogens Blon, the Senior Technical Advisor to the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also includes Mr. Lars-Ilenrik Worsoe, Head of Section at the Middle East Department of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with the three external consultants: Mr. Peter Marinus Jensen, Ms. Marit Flop Jorgensen, and Mr. Jan

Kelen plus Mr. Renauld Detalle, the Human Rights Officer at the Office of the Higher Commission for Human Rights.

During its one week stay in Yemen, the mission will aim to:

- Provide an analysis of the present situation and present and potential reform initiatives, including a discussion of opportunities as well as constraints;
- Make recommendations on specific programs and projects that could be supported within the Yemen Program and identify potential for donor coordination;
- Identify areas for further dialogue and cooperation between Denmark and countries in the wider Middle East - including governments, government

institutions and civil society.

The project will allocate a total of at least DKK 1.5 billion (approx. USD 246 million) for the projected period of 15 to 20 years.

It is worth noting that through a considerable number of years, development cooperation has existed between Denmark in Yemen in the form of donations amounting to DKK 340 million during 1991 and 1994 and a total of DKK 57 million was granted during 1998-1998. The aid was in the form of project and program assistance. In addition, Denmark also provided human rights and democracy aid to Yemen

through various NGOs.

The projects to be implemented in Yemen during the upcoming years will include programs to support access to information; promotion of women's rights; establishment of ombudsman institutions and similar entities; strengthening of parliaments, access to justice and legal aid, other human rights activities; adult and civic education; youth; and strengthening of civil society. The activities are expected to include projects support to civil society organizations, twinning arrangements, plus direct government-to-government support.

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Celebrating the 20th anniversary in Yemen

SUZUKI YEMEN

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VITARA XL7 2004

SUZUKI YEMEN

Russian Ambassador to Sana'a: Mr. Putin's reelection is important for the international community

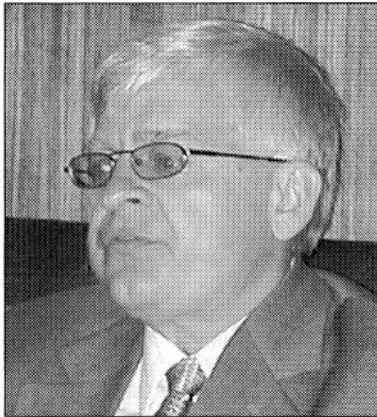
BY MOHAMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Russian Ambassador in Sana'a, H.E. Alexander Zasytkin, in the press meeting of 16 March 2004, pointed out that the electoral victory of President Vladimir Putin is very important not only for the people of Russia, but also for the international community in general.

Mr. Putin secured 71% of votes cast, on a turnout of 64%. The Ambassador commented that the result reflects the extent of public support for Mr. Putin as a strong reformist president and approval for the achievements of his time in

office. Eliminating corruption and black market economy among the officials, his endorsement of freedom of press, transparency in handling issues and his unlimited support for civil society organizations working towards strengthening democracy and public participation were among his greatest achievements.

Concerning bilateral relation between Yemen and Russia, Ambassador Zasytkin said that reelecting President Putin provides a strong push and an additional opportunity for the development of bilateral relations, especially since President Putin is very enthusiastic



H.E. Alexander Zasytkin, Russian ambassador

to establishing stronger and more distinguished relations between the two countries. The level of cooperation will increase in all fields, particularly in health, defense, trade and various economic projects. It is expected that broad dialogues will be held in the coming months among different ministries and chambers of commerce and industries of the two countries to determine the scopes and plans and the bases of bilateral cooperation.

The Russian Ambassador has chosen Yemen Times for a lengthy and exclusive interview concerning many important subjects to be published in the next issue.

Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry demands freeze of value added tax

Warnings of a possible economic crisis

BY MOHAMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

On Monday, 15 March, at the conclusion of the regular session, the general assembly of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry confirmed its rejection of the value added tax. It called for its cancellation and the amendment of investment law to enhance and attract local, Arab and foreign investments. The federation called for holding a national conference to discuss the economic challenges that would contribute to crystallizing a national vision regarding providing a suitable atmosphere for general growth.

The attendants called also for combating smuggling, which deprives the state's treasury of nearly 130 billion

Riyals.

The Federation warns of the burden of internal and foreign debt, which have reached rates not compatible with country's development needs and constitutes a burden on financing and investment services. The gathering drew the attention to the negative impact of a high inflation rate and higher prices and limited job opportunities on the values of the society. Instead, they called for serious and genuine work to reform and activate the judicial system, to improve the tax revenues and connecting tax revenue with national development needs through raising the qualification of its cadre and giving up threatening policies and unlawful activities.

The statement of the Federation distributed last Tuesday said that the

Federation discussed the economic policy of the Government, the stagnant situation of the economy, the inefficient structures and the weak performance of economic sectors due to unbalanced and irrational policies. The weak investment and saving rates, high poverty, unemployment and inflation rates, combined with desertion of national capital due complex administrative policies, weakness of security and disrespected judicial regulations, higher smuggling rates, administrative corruption and misuse of resources do not create conditions to assist development and economic stability.

On the other hand, Parliamentary sources confirmed that the Government presented to the Parliament last Sunday a package of economic measures consisting of cus-

tom and tax legislation, increases in the prices of oil derivatives, and a slight increase in wages and salaries.

Many economists and politicians are convinced that the Government's economic package and measures are catastrophes, and will lead to the deterioration of citizens' living conditions, since they touch upon all economic aspects related to the daily life of every Yemeni.

Parliament and the Al-Shoura Council began last Sunday a discussion of the government's decision to increase the prices of diesel and petrol in preparation for its endorsement prior to its implementation in mid 2004.

FAO donates PCs to Yemeni Institutions

BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

During the last 8 years the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has under taken a series of innovative steps to enhance its mandate. Dr. J. Diouf has initiated a number of activities such as food security, telefood etc. Most recently FAO has embarked on strengthening the capabilities of senior decision makers pertaining to agricultural information and data. To this end, it has distributed a large number of computers and CD ROMs containing relevant information on agriculture, fisheries, rural development, forestry and the environment.

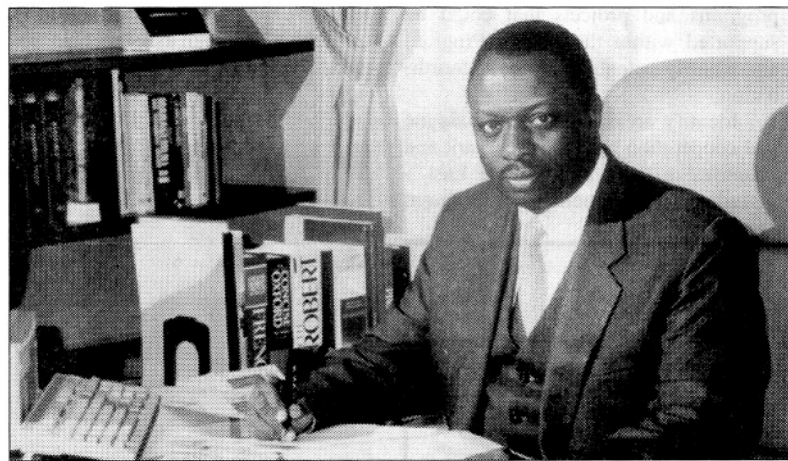
As part of this exercise FAO donated during the first week of March of this year, 6 PCs and related CD ROMs to the Ministries of Agriculture and Fish Wealth, the Chamber of Commerce (agricultural section), Faculty of Agriculture (Sana'a University), the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Resources and the UN Association of Yemen.

FAO has relatively substantial devel-

opment activities and has made quite a significant contribution to human capacity development in Yemen over the past 25 years.

The dissemination of information and the assistance of the number of countries in technology transfers pertinent to food and agriculture is part of the FAO's UN mandate. This role has increasing importance overtime, due to

various challenges encountered regarding the production, distribution and availability of food in the greater part of the world. FAO-UN not only provides technical support from its own resources but it plays an important catalytic role in securing development assistance from donor countries, in the formulation of bankable projects and programmes.



Dr. J. Diouf

An Agreement between Yemen and FAO

BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Government of the Republic of Yemen and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations signed an agreement on 10 March 2004 concerning a project to strengthen, restructure and decentralize the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI) of Yemen.

Project goal and purpose

The project's development objective is to contribute to sustainable, broad-based poverty alleviation and food security whilst contributing to environmental protection. The project is to contribute to better service delivery to farmers and other rural producers through a review of MAI's performance, the strengthening of its current

capacities at central level, a study on different restructuring options to be tested, and a project proposal to that end.

Target beneficiaries

The primary beneficiary of the project will be MAI, through the improvement of its capacity to operate at central level and to study different options to organize better service delivery in order to respond to rural producers' demands in the current context of decentralization. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project activities are the small-scale farmers and other rural producers, through the improvement of the quality of the response capacity of the MAI.

Project strategy

The project has a two-pronged strategy, i.e. to support the strengthening of

MAI's performance at central level regarding aspects of its work which will be necessary whatever the results of restructuring and to establish the foundations of the implementation of the restructuring process regarding agricultural service delivery through:

- a study on different "best bet" restructuring options for selected MAI entities, to be tested through subsequent initiatives;
- a fully budgeted proposal on the next steps regarding the restructuring process, based on the results of the above study.

The agreement was signed by Mr. Abdulmalik Al-Arashi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, for the Government of Yemen and by Hashim Al-Shami, for FAO of the UN.

Al-Saeed Foundation invites researchers to present proposals

YT TAIZ STAFF

Dr. Nasser Al-Olagy, Chairman of the Fund's Committee to Support Scientific Research, invited all specialized researchers and specialists to present their research proposals in various fields of the sciences on the occasion of the commencement of the Fund's activities.

In a statement to the press, General Director of the Al-Saeed Foundation for Sciences and Culture, pointed out that the Fund aims to support and promote genuine creative scientific research in the theoretical and applied sciences, which in turn will contribute in the development of Yemeni economy. The Fund will also participate in establishing limited joint scientific research projects among the various branches of sciences to meet the development demands of Yemen. The Fund represents a practical addition to the capabilities of Yemeni scientific researchers.

Readers' Voice

Yemen Times features "Readers' Voice" a popular way for our readers to interact with us. This is your opportunity to have a say on world and local affairs.

This edition's question:

Do you think that the recent Spanish elections signaled the beginning of the end for the pro-Iraq war alliance?

- Yes, it will be followed by similar results in other pro-war countries
- Yes, and the new US president will contribute to this end
- No, it is only an isolated case

last edition's question:

Who do you think was behind the Madrid bombings?

- The Al-Qaeda network are complete 45%
- Let's just wait until investigations are complete 31%
- The Basque separatist movement (ETA) 13%
- Another terrorist group / party 7%
- Another Islamic fundamentalist group 4%

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CORRECTION

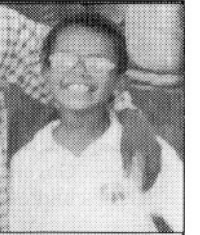
Upon the request Sudanese community, Yemen Times would like to correct a mistake in the article published on March 8. We would like to state that the name of the Sudanese boy, who was kidnapped recently, is Ali Azhary Mahmoud Sulaiman and his father, Chairman of the Sudanese community and Director of Sudanese School in Sana'a, had no connection to financial compensation sought by the kidnap-

pers.

The compensation was for money taken by another Sudanese teacher.

The boy was released by efforts by the governmental authorities and sheikhs of the region.

Yemen Times apologizes for any inconvenience caused by the mistake.



إعلان هام للمشاركين في مسابقة الملايين الكبرى

(مسابقة صنعاء الثقافية)

YEMEN TIMES

يسر الصحيفة الإعلان بأن السحب على الجوائز للمسابقة سيتم في مقر الصحيفة بصنعاء في يوم الأحد الموافق 21 مارس 2004. الساعة الرابعة عصراً.

كما تنوه أن آخر موعد لإستلام الكوبونات سيكون ظهر يوم الخميس الموافق 18 مارس 2004، وعلى المشاركين عبر البريد مراعاة الفارق الزمني لوصول الكوبونات.

لمزيد من الاستفسار، يمكنكم الاتصال بالصحيفة على

هاتف ٢٦٨٦٦١ (٠١) أو بالفاخ / نصري أبو بكر،

على هاتفه النقال (٧١٧٠٨٠١٤).

وسيتم الإعلان عن الفائزين وموعد استلام الجوائز في

العدد الصادر في يوم الخميس الموافق 25 مارس 2004م.

حظاً موفقاً للجميع

In Brief

Impersonating officials, forging signatures, illegal receipts and seals

Compelled by the economic crisis and the absence of religious and moral deterrents. For two years, Essam Qassem Ahmed, prior to his arrest in Al-Qahera province, Taiz City, had been able to collect all kinds of fees by impersonation of officials working for the Department of Duties and Taxes of Ministry of Finance. He carried out many frauds and impersonation operations and collected fees by issuing fake receipts with forged signatures of employees and fake seals of the Authority.

The Yemen Times has copies of some of the forged receipts.

Increase in price of Potatoes imposes burden

The market place currently witnesses higher increases in the prices of potatoes, one of the staple food products depended upon by many Yemenis.

The price of potatoes per kilo used to be 20 Riyals, but now it runs at around 150-180 Riyals per kilo. The reason for higher prices is due to the diversion of some farmers to growing qat. Another reason is the delay in the rain season.

Potato production has decreased to the point that the Ministry of Agriculture needs to intervene to ensure they are available in the markets at reasonable prices.

Saeed Thabi First Undersecretary Yemen Journalists Syndicate

Last Sunday, the elections for members in the Board Council of the Yemen Journalist Syndicate took place, during the Third General Conference chaired by Mahboub Ali, President of YJS. The following were elected through direct secret balloting:

- 1- Mr. Saeed Thabi Saeed, First Under-Secretary,
- 2- Ms. Thekra Abbas, Second Secretary
- 3- Mr. Hafedh Al-Bukari, Secretary General

It is expected that the board will hold a meeting next Saturday to discuss the general programs and plans of YJS. The election of Mr. Saeed Thabit, First Under-Secretary comes following his arrest by the Political Security Apparatus for leaking news about the injury of the President's son, Ahmed.

WEEA organized workshop on gender

The Women Economic Empowerment Association with collaboration with Embassy of the Netherlands held on Saturday 6 March a workshop about gender issues.

Around 12 trainees participated in the workshop under the supervision of WEEA's expert Ms. Roqia Saleh Mohammed, who explained the sensitive mechanisms of gender and research, how to use them in a project for a more prosperous economy and how to enlist them in the inputs of WEEA to support research and studies.

It is worth mentioning that this workshop will be held in Ibb on 8-11 March 2004 with the participation of 17 trainees, including the heads of saving groups and coordinators of WEEA in Lajj, Zabeed and Ibb.

Continued from page 1

55 MPs demand questioning of interior minister on prisoners

In the petition, the parliaments expressed resentment concerning the ongoing imprisonment of Yemeni citizens without any trial or even formal accusation. They demanded a list of all prisoners and the dates of their arrest along with description of the accusations against them and reasons why they were arrested and why they have not been tried yet.

This comes as the parliament will be looking within the coming days into the report prepared by the Liberties Committee of the parliament about the poor conditions of jails in a various governorates of the country following a comprehensive field survey.

Electricity development

By FAHMIA AL-FOTIH FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Under auspices of the Minister of Electricity, Mr. Abdulrahman Tarmom, the activities of the 3-day expanded meeting for the managers of control and inspection in the areas and power stations of the General Electricity Authority concluded on 10 March 2004.

The 3-day workshop discussed a number of working papers related to the required standards that should be provided to achieve effective control and the importance of computers in enhancing the role of the internal inspection in the institutions. It also discussed weakness points, shortages in the electricity institutions and how to solve them. They presented developments in the financial inspection regime, the situations in the inspection departments and their importance in the areas and power stations. Mr.

Ahmed Al-Ayaini, Deputy Electricity Minister, pointed out the importance of that official meeting in activating the role of the administration and financial inspection in the electricity general institutions and it came as a response to the President's orders, which stressed the necessity of administrative and financial control in all state sectors at all times.

Al-Ayaini also said that the Electricity Authority is one of the establishments that has been improving in all fields and that as a result needs to update the work of the control and inspection administrations in different areas and power stations.

He further called for more cooperation among all the areas and power stations belonging to the Electricity Authority in order to fulfill its goals.

On the other side, Mr. Abdulmoti Al-Juniad, the General-Manager of the General Electricity Authority, said that meeting came to support the govern-

ment in implementing the administrative and financial reforms.

He pointed out that the Electricity Authority seeks to update the means of control and inspection in all its sectors to enable it to so its job successfully.

He also stressed on the importance of that meeting through which they can raise the performance level and present the problems and the means of overcoming them.

Mr. Mohammed Al-Zuhairi, the General-Manager of the Financial and Administrative Department of the General Electricity Authority, welcomed the participants and delivered a speech in which he said "In this meeting we attempt to activate the role of administrative and financial control in all of its sectors in the provinces."

He added "Our priority is to implement the laws, regulations and bylaws. We work to correct and cure some mistakes and excesses"

Yemeni-German Geological Mapping Project

By FAHMIA AL-FOTIH FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The Ministry of Oil and Minerals organized on Monday 15 March a workshop that took place in Hadda Hotel, on the Yemeni-German geological mapping project.

The workshop aimed to display the first stage of the project of geological mapping for the Republic of Yemen and to discuss the achieved results.

Dr. Rasheed Saleh Baraba'a, Minister of Oil and Minerals, pointed out in his speech that this workshop came to conclude the first stage of the geological mapping of the republic of Yemen with a measure 1: 100,000 that been implemented with the cooperation of the German Institute BGR and the Ministry of Water and Environment. It has taken

3 and a half years, during which a number of great works have been fulfilled and a number of Yemeni cadre have been trained.

He finally expressed his thanks for the German friends on BGR institute for the intensive efforts they have exerted in training the local cadre. He thanks all the institutions that have participated in this project.

Geo. Richard Dallwig, General Advisor at BGR, also delivered a speech in which he said "For more than 30 years the Yemeni and German government have cooperated in many different fields. One of these is the geosciences where BGR and the Ministry of Oil and Minerals have conducted many projects such as the YGGMP. Today we are presenting the final results of our activities

during the last 4 years in the field of geological and thematic mapping."

He also thanked all the colleagues in the project, in the board and all supporters of the different organizations.

13 geological posters were displayed, such as geoenvironmental maps of the Sana'a basin, the geo-database, the basement of Yemen, cartographic work and sedimentary and volcanic rocks of Yemen.

Dr. Rasheed Saleh Baraba'a, Minister of Oil and Minerals, Mr. Mohammed Lutf Aryani, Minister of water and environment, Mr. Ahmed al-Kahlani, Minister of State and Capital Secretariat, along with a number of people from the Ministry of Oil and Minerals as well as representatives of German side attended the opening ceremony.

Consultation Seminar concerning Juveniles in Yemen

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Childhood and Motherhood Supreme Council, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, with the support of UNICEF, organized last Sunday a consultation seminar to study the reality and ambitions of the child protection program, "Juveniles in Yemen".

The speeches of representatives of the Prosecution, Information and

Social Affairs and Labor Ministries and the Regional Counselor of UNICEF for the Middle East and North Africa, all confirmed the importance of the participation of families, academics and social counselors in raising juveniles, in order to reduce the number of cases related to childhood and to contribute effectively to finding tangible solutions. 65 specialists participated in the seminar, representing all authorities involved in youth issues in Yemen

Fourth Workshop on Ozone held

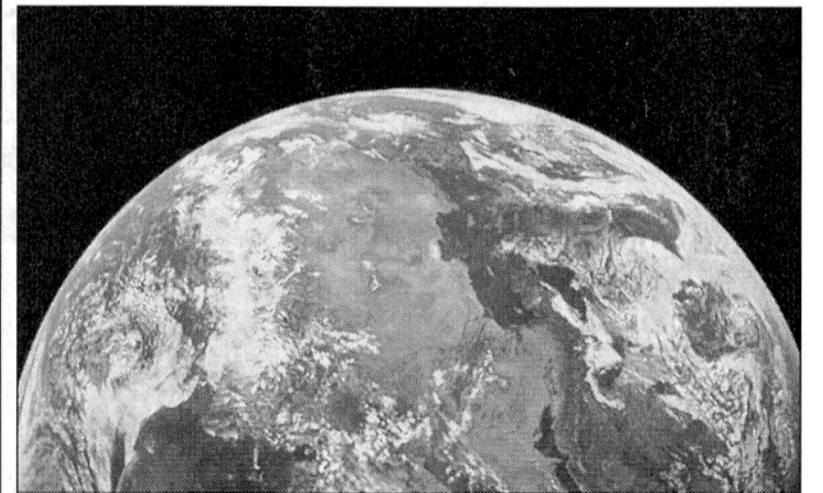
By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The General Authority for the Protection of the Environment organized the fourth workshop on 14 March 2004 in Al-Mukalla City regarding Ozone and Controlling Legislation for Importation and Handling of Ozone-depleting substances, in coordination with Hadramout Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The workshop, attended by academics and representatives of the Chamber and related competent authorities, discussed three working papers concerning the ozone layer and international agreements and protocols on the protection of the ozone layer and the extent of Yemeni obli-

gation towards them. The proposed legislation related to the control and monitoring of ozone-depleting substances.

The working papers dealt with definitions of ozone-depleting substances, usage and alternatives and methods to increase awareness of the importance of the layer and the danger of its destruction. The workshop also dealt with how to involve the governmental and private sectors in drawing up plans to guarantee control of the depleting substances in a balanced way, and how to balance the implementation of Yemeni obligations towards the agreements and protocols on one hand and maintaining the Yemeni economy on the other hand.



A course for teachers on human, child rights

The special training course for teachers working on human rights and the Child Rights Agreement, taking place at the family productive center in Sheik Othamn Province, Aden, will conclude today. The course is organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Human Rights Information and Training Center (HRITC), in cooperation with UNICEF.

Dr. Yahya Al-Shaibi, Governor of Aden, during the opening ceremony touched on the importance of holding such courses concerned with children's rights, which ought to be respected by all. He urged the participants to absorb knowledge and information, which will assist them and enable them to execute their duties in this field.

The course targets nearly 40 mixed teachers to gain important primary information on international conventions on human rights and the Child Rights Agreement, in addition to providing enlightening lectures on major

childhood issues.

This course is of great importance. Firstly, it is an extension of similar courses held in a number of governorates aiming at children, the makers of a bright future. Secondly, it reflects serious and distinguished cooperation between the official authorities, represented by the Ministries of Social Affairs and Labor and Education and civil society corporations represented by HRITC, said Mr. Abdulkaweh Salem of HRITC. This course is the second organized by HRITC and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in cooperation with UNICEF.

It is worth mentioning that the human rights and teachers program is an intensive program aimed at disseminating human rights principles among members of society and to give teachers expertise in handling children and teaching them about human rights principles. The program is operated by HRITC in cooperation with NED.

INVITATION TO BID

Invitation to Bid for the supply of fresh and dry food items for 936 field personnel for the Yemen Executive Mine Action Center's mine clearing personnel in Sana'a, Hadramawt and Aden.

Yemen Executive Mine Action Center (YEMAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites potential suppliers to request a copy of the bidding documents from the undersigned no later than **23 March 2004 at 12:00 P.M.:**

Mr. Marco Soested, Procurement consultant
United Nations Development Programme
Email: marco.soested@undp.org
Phone: 00 967 1 448605-8 ext: 258
Fax: 00 967 1 448600

The deadline for invited suppliers to submit their sealed bids to the UNDP Office in Sana'a is **Monday 31 March 2004 at 12:00 P.M.**

SUPPLY REQUIREMENTS:

Eggs, yogurt, various meat, seasonal fruits, lemon/lime/orange, seasonal vegetables, garlic fresh, chili fresh, white wheat flour, sugar, rice, jam, black pepper powder, sauces, mixed spices and vegetable oil.
Delivery Fresh food: weekly basis to Sana'a, Hadramawt and Aden.
Delivery Dry food: every 4 weeks Sana'a, Hadramawt and Aden.

Invitations to bid and any subsequent contracts will be issued in accordance with the rules and procedures of UNDP.



Sheraton has new Marketing Manager

The new Sales and Marketing Manager of Sheraton Sana'a Hotel, Mr. Ehab El Gammal, has recently arrived in Sanaa. Mr. El Gammal has been working for Sheraton Hotels for more than 17 years, and has made many contributions to the Sheraton Hotel chain in Egypt and the Gulf.

Mr. El Gammal has expressed to Yemen Times his commitment to work hard in his new post, and mentioned the new improvements and renovations that have been taking place for the last year. "I believe I have come in at the right time to expose our spectacular new looks and enhanced-quality services to our clients," he said.



Mr. Ehab El Gammal

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Jakarta Hilton International	Jakarta / Indonesia	\$695	\$930	Category *****

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First seminar on importance of census

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

On Saturday, 13 March 2004, at the Central Statistics Apparatus, the first seminar was held on the importance of the population and housing census to private sector. The seminar was to specify the importance of the census to businessmen and what the private sector would receive from the database, according to the priorities and demands imposed by nature of competition in the relevant market. Since the private sector would be involved in this database, it will act as the basis of success of productive and commercial activities.

The seminar dealt with a study prepared by Dr. Abdulkadous Al-Marwany. It pointed out three distinguished groups that play major roles in the success of the census and its benefit, translated in the form of a more precise and comprehensive database utilized for the prosperity of the all sectors of society, one of which is the private sector.

The participation of the private sector assists in knowing the feasibility of choices, supporting the decisions of the private sector to get involved in investment projects. The contribution of the



A view from the panel

private sector is crucial in census operation planning, administration, the financial support of field survey operations and in confirming the trust between the private sector and the government of the neutrality and impartiality of the census operations. It was confirmed that the census would be used for purposes intended to serve development.

The study confirmed the role of the private sector focuses on promoting, supporting and embracing a statistic consisting of urgent economic and social considerations. Some of the benefits of having skilled and qualified experts in this field can be summarized in the following:

- To increase the awareness of deci-

sion makers of the importance of the census in drawing up necessary frameworks to build a database of the various corporations society could depend on, including the private sector, in future planning.

• The financial and moral support and enhancement of transparency of phases of the census, with the benefits publicly marketed by the dispersed field survey implementers and raising additional funds to support census operations.

The study expects support from the private sectors in surmounting obstacles accompanying collecting economic data and financial contributions, which takes various forms serving the statistic operations.

What will next census show?

Yemen keeps growing ... and growing



BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Keeping population statistics in Yemen are still a recent phenomena, as they have come into existence only in 1990s.

Estimates prior to the statistics have indicated that the Yemeni population was around 4.3 million inhabitants in 1950, reached 5.2 million in 1960, 6.3 million in the 1980s, and 12.2 million in 1988.

With the census conducted in 1994 the number has reached 15.8 million inhabitants.

The number is estimated to have grown to 16.5 million by the end of 1997.

From these numbers it could be deduced that Yemen has seen a giant leap in the number of inhabitants in the last quarter of the 20th century, because while the growth percentage between 1965 and 1975 ranged between 1.6 per

cent and 2 per cent, in the period between 1988-1994 growth reached 3.7 per cent.

This increase is attributed to two facts, the first is the decrease in the mortality rate and the other is the increase in the fertility rate which reached 7.4 per cent recently.

And it is of no doubt that this demographic explosion would increase the pressure on economic resources especially that the food production increases at a small rate.

Following are the most significant demographic indicators since 1997:

Administration boundaries

Yemen is divided into 19 governorates in addition to the capital secretariat. Each governorate is subdivided again to a number of districts so that the total number of districts in the republic reaches 226 districts. There is also an inclination towards creating new districts totalling the number of districts in Yemen to 285.

Population distribution

Naturally the population distribution around the republic is not evenly and that is for economic and natural reasons. For example the most populated governorate in the republic is Taiz followed next by Sana'a then Ibb and Hudaida respectively.

These four governorates together include about half the population of the republic. Whereas governorate of al-Mahara, al-Jawf, Marib are considered of the least populated governorates in the country as their inhabitants form 3.9 per cent, 1.2 per cent and 1.2 per cent of the total population respectively.

As for the population in towns and villages it is characterised as small gatherings in different congregates. Perhaps this is because of the hard nature of the rural areas which comes against the settling of large masses in one area. An the same time statistics indicate that more than 70 per cent of the population lives in the rural area in towns of no more than

500 inhabitants in each.

Population density

The population density overall is of an average of 294 inhabitants per square kilometre. Yet this number varies from one governorate to another as it reaches 4385 inhabitants per sq. kilometre in the capital secretariat.

As for the governorate levels then it is Ibb that leads the line with 299 inhabitants / sq. km. Then comes Taiz of 196 inhabitants / sq. km, followed by al-Mahwait. It is known that these three governorates enjoy the highest rainfall average in Yemen.

Simultaneously Hadramout (176 / sq km), Marib (6 / sq. km), Shabwa (5 / sq. km), al-Jawf (4 / sq. km) and al-Mahara (2 / sq. km) are of the least populated in the republic.

Types of inhabitation

Three types of inhabitation could be found in Yemen

- Condensed inhabitation: where the population density is high in a small area such as in the mountain areas where 3/4th of the Yemeni population resides, and especially in the Southern region such as in Ibb, Taiz and this is attributed to the high rainfall rate and fertility of land.

- Scattered inhabitation, this is the kind in which small sized assemblies of people are found in remote distances from each other such as in the Eastern Plateau region and this is because of the low soil fertility and the high temperature as well and scarcity of rainfall. Exceptions of this is the valleys of al-Jawf, Hadramout, and Huraib which enjoy seasonal rainfalls.

- Line inhabitation, this is the one which is found along the sides of the main roads and valleys such as that in Tihama and some of the valleys in which fall into the Arabian Sea and along side the Red Sea such as the sea ports and fishermen villages.

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مضمونة النقاوة

Troops raid Gaza as Israel weighs bombing response

GAZA, March 16 (Reuters) - Israeli troops blew up what they called a gunpost for Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday hours before Israel's leaders were to weigh military retaliation for a double suicide bombing on a strategic port.

Vowing no quarter for militants after the attack that killed 10 on Sunday, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has ruled out peace talks with the Palestinians and pledged to pursue unilateral moves that would deny them land they want for a state.

The two Palestinian bombers blew themselves up at Israel's second-busiest port, Ashdod, just north of the Gaza Strip.

The Jewish state is still trying to work out how they evaded the Gaza Strip's defences for the first time in more than three years of conflict.

Israeli troops with tanks and bulldozers moved into a Palestinian-run area of the Gaza Strip before dawn to demolish a building the army said was used for a rocket attack on a convoy from the tiny Jewish settlement of Netzarim on Monday.

Medics and witnesses said two Palestinian policemen were wounded when Israeli troops opened fire. The two-storey building was left in rubble. Palestinians said it was a disused college.

Sharon and top ministers were to meet on Tuesday to weigh retaliation for the Ashdod bombing. Israeli helicopters hit suspected militant targets within hours of the attack. There were no dead.

An Israeli security source said Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz had recommended Israel's traditional retaliatory measures of army raids and the targeted killing of militant leaders in the Gaza Strip.

Spiral of violence

But Palestinian militants said any retaliation would bring its own counter-strike.

"They long believed the Gaza Strip was a prison. We have shown up from that prison to tell them no walls and no security measures will protect them," said Abu



Palestinian security men inspect the rubble of a destroyed education college in Gaza March 16. Israeli troops destroyed the education college during a brief army raid into Gaza near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim Palestinian witnesses said. REUTERS

Qusai of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, one of the groups behind the Ashdod attack.

"No strategic place will be immune," he said.

Violence has mushroomed in Gaza since Sharon announced plans to remove Jewish settlers as part of go-it-alone moves that would also mean the Palestinians lost swathes of land in the West Bank that they also want for a state. Palestinian militants want to make any

Israeli withdrawal from Gaza look like a victory, while the army is determined that it will not go under fire and do all it can to smash militant groups before any pullout.

Sharon reiterated before parliament on Monday that he saw no chance for peace talks with the Palestinians. He broke off contacts to arrange a summit with his Palestinian counterpart after the bombing on Sunday.

The Ashdod attack has amplified fears over the security of Israel's other strategic

installations and also raised questions over the value of the controversial barrier Israel is building inside the West Bank for keeping out attackers.

Nearly all the bombers who have killed hundreds of Israelis over the past three years came from the West Bank and Israel says its bulwark of concrete and wire should keep them out.

Palestinians say it will never work and call it an underhand bid to annex land they want for a state.

Three American Baptists gunned down in Iraq report

WASHINGTON, March 16 (Reuters) - Three Americans — in Iraq under the auspices of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board — were killed in Mosul on Monday, according to a report on the board's Web site.

Two others were wounded in the drive-by shooting, the report said.

"Killed were Larry T. Elliott, 60, and Jean Dover Elliott, 58, of Cary, North Carolina, and Karen Denise Watson, 38, of Bakersfield, California. The Elliotts had served with the International Mission Board in Honduras since 1978 and transferred to the Middle East in February 2004. Watson had been with the board since March 2003," an account on the Web site said.

Listed as wounded were David McDonnell, 28, and Carrie Taylor McDonnell, 26, of Rowlett, Texas,

in service with the board since November of last year.

A Southern Baptist field representative has been dispatched to the McDonnells, who the board said are being treated at a U.S. military hospital.

The shootings were carried out against a background that included the death of board missionary Bill Hyde by a bomb in Davao City, Philippines, last year and the murder of three workers at the Baptist hospital in Jibla, Yemen, 14 months ago, the Web site reported.

The board is in Richmond, Virginia. As of 2000, it claimed 30,000 volunteers. According to the Web site, last year board workers and their Baptist partners overseas reported a record 395,773 baptisms and 5,775 new churches worldwide.



Iraqi police investigate the scene where an Iraqi woman translator working for the U.S. military was shot dead and her father badly wounded in an attack in the northern city of Mosul March 16. Three Americans — in Iraq under the auspices of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board — were killed in Mosul the previous night, according to a report on the board's Web site. REUTERS

Iran confirms U.N. nuke inspections can resume

TOKYO, March 16 (Reuters) - Iran's chief nuclear negotiator confirmed on Tuesday that Tehran had agreed to let U.N. nuclear inspectors back into the country on March 27 without any conditions, ending a freeze that Washington had said was an attempt to hide a covert nuclear weapons programme.

"March 27 has been decided as the date," Hassan Rohani, secretary-general of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told a news conference in Tokyo, where he is meeting Japanese officials. "There are no conditions."

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohamed ElBaradei said on Monday that Iran had informed him it would allow nuclear inspectors to return on March 27.

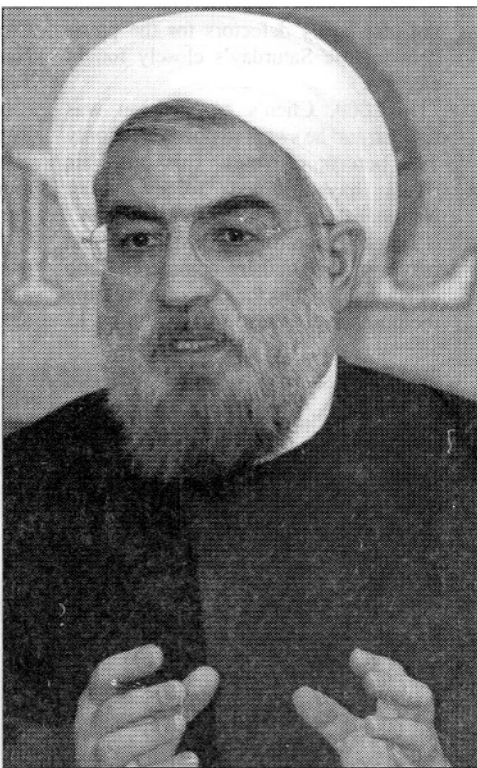
ElBaradei, speaking in Washington, said he regretted the interruption in the inspections but believed the date set for resumption was "still within our time schedule".

The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog condemned Iran on Saturday for suspending inspections.

Iran said it had taken the step on Friday to show its displeasure at the drafting of an IAEA resolution criticising it for failing to report sensitive research and development that, the agency argued, could have military use.

The IAEA also said it would decide in June how to respond to the omission, which diplomats said kept the door open for a possible report to the U.N. Security Council and economic sanctions.

Rohani said that, as a party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty



Hassan Rohani, secretary-general of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, speaks during a news conference at the Japan national press club in Tokyo March 16. REUTERS

(NPT), Iran had the right to seek a nuclear programme for peaceful purposes, but said it was not building nuclear weapons.

"We never had intentions to develop nuclear weapons, and we never will," Rohani said.

US allegations 'groundless'

Rohani also criticised Washington for making false allegations about Tehran's nuclear programme.

U.S. officials had said Iran's decision to suspend inspections was a possible attempt to buy time to hide undeclared activities.

"The United States is spreading a lot of groundless talk. With Iraq, they said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq but nobody has found them," Rohani said.

"If the United States is aware of something that we are hiding, then they should notify the IAEA and we would be glad to have the IAEA inspect us."

In addition to the NPT, Iran signed in December the IAEA's Additional Protocol, which grants the U.N. agency broader inspection powers and the right to much more information about a country's nuclear programme.

Tehran has not ratified the protocol, but Rohani said that it was acting as if the protocol was already in place.

Rohani, who is due to meet Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi later on Tuesday and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Wednesday, welcomed the recent "deepening" of both economic and political ties between the two nations.

Japan last month sealed a \$2 billion deal to develop Iran's Azadegan oil field despite pressure from the United States to back off because of concerns Tehran was developing nuclear weapons.

"Azadegan is a symbol of the economic cooperation between our two nations," Rohani said.

Japan, which relies on the Middle East for almost all its oil, had been caught between its desire to develop the Azadegan field and the pressure from the United States, its key security ally.

Eleven dead in Syrian Arab Kurdish clashes sources

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey, March 16 (Reuters) - Eleven people have been killed in fresh clashes between Arabs and Kurds in two towns in northeast Syria following weekend riots, local Syrian residents and Turkish security forces said on Tuesday.

They said Syrian security forces imposed a curfew in the town of Ras al-Ain, near the Turkish border town of Ceylanpinar, after five people were killed in fighting there on Monday.

Local Syrian sources contacted by telephone from Turkey said a senior member of a local tribe was among those killed. Thirty people were injured in the clashes.

In the town of Ammoda, Kurdish groups attacked a police station on Monday, killing a police chief, four police officers and a soldier, the sources added.

They said the Syrian military had sent additional forces to the region to calm the situation. Security measures were also increased on the Turkish side of the border.

The latest fighting followed a weekend of Kurdish rioting which killed at least 14 people further east in the Syrian town of Kameshli, where a railway station, schools and public offices were badly damaged.

The violence in Kameshli, an ethnically mixed town near the Turkish and Iraqi border, ended after Interior Minister Ali Haj Hammoud flew to the area to take control and the authorities threatened those responsible with the "severest punishments".

The violence was triggered by a brawl and stampede at a soccer match in Kameshli and spread to several towns nearby.

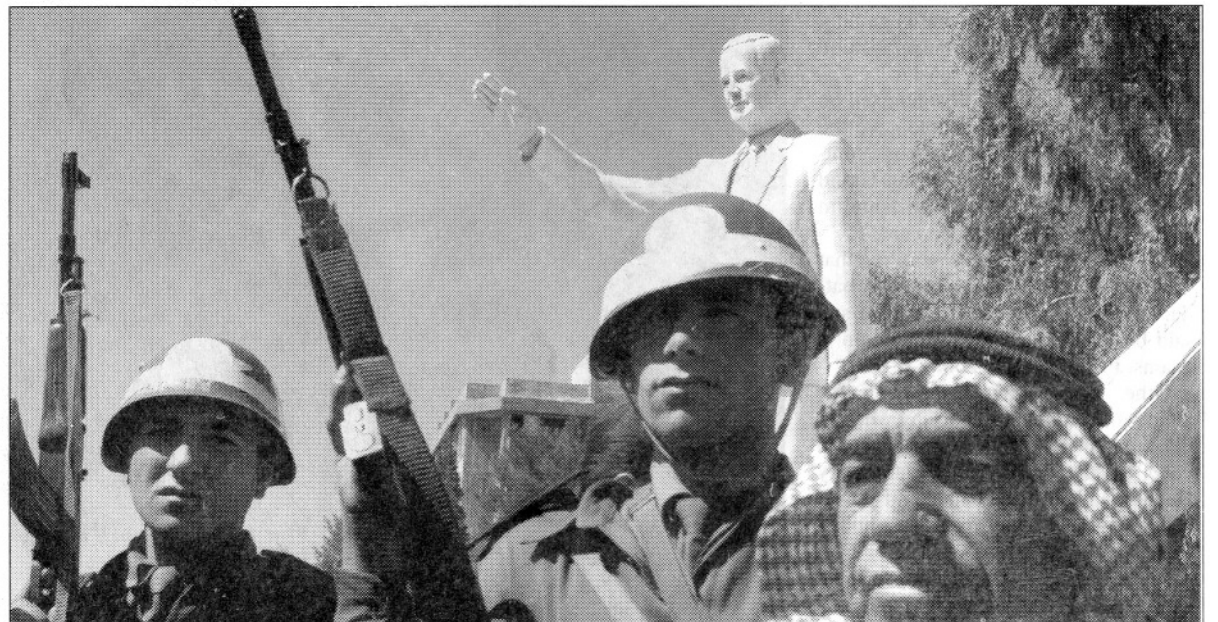
Sources close to government thinking said Kurdish politicians had tried to turn the soccer match riot into a political issue, a reference to the grievances of some 200,000 Kurds not recognised as citizens.

There are about two million Kurds in Syria's 17 million population, but Syrian officials avoid reference to Kurds as a distinct minority and stress the importance of national unity.

Kurds and other minorities have held senior government and army positions.

On Monday, around 20 Kurds entered the Syrian consulate in Geneva in a protest over the deaths at the weekend.

Several dozen Kurds also forced their way into the grounds of the Syrian embassy in Brussels on Saturday during a protest apparently sparked by the unrest in Syria.



Two Syrian military policemen stand next to a civilian in al-Hassaka city some 800km northwest of the capital of Damascus near the border with Iraq and Turkey March 15. REUTERS

Boundary changes seen favouring Malaysia ruling parties

PEKAN, Malaysia, March 16 (Reuters) - When Malaysia votes on Sunday, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak will bank on the support of extra voters gifted to his parliamentary seat by the country's Election Commission to defeat an Islamist rival.

Opposition parties complain the creation of new seats, and boundary changes made last year, favour parties in the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition — not just in Najib's Pekan constituency, but in other key races also.

Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS) came within a whisker of ousting Najib in 1999, when he scraped home with a majority of just 241 votes.

The result was galling for a United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) vice president and defence minister, who new Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi named as his deputy in January.

Najib has held Pekan since 1976. His late father, Malaysia's respected second prime minister Abdul Razak, held it before him.

"Here (in Pekan) we see that over the last four years many changes have



A Malaysian walks past posters of National Justice (Keadilan) party president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (L) and her husband, jailed former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, in Kuala Lumpur Mar. 16. Malaysia will hold a general election on March 21, with Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi hoping to win back Malay votes that went against former prime minister Mahathir in the 1999 elections, when less than half supported the government in what was regarded as a protest vote over the sacking and jailing of Anwar. REUTERS

happened in terms of development for the people," Najib said when asked to assess his chances after filing his nomination papers last weekend.

He omitted to mention a change in the electoral boundary of the constituency in the central state of Pahang to include a military base of some 5,000 servicemen in a constituency of 30,000 people.

But PAS supporters know they face a more difficult task trying to spoil the Abdullah-Najib ticket in Malaysia's first election since veteran leader Mahathir Mohamad retired last October after 22 years in power.

Fair or Foul?

The BN is sure of overall victory in the parliamentary and state elections, due to support from the country's large Chinese and Indian minorities.

But UMNO, which has headed every coalition since independence from Britain in 1957, is locked in battle with PAS, and its small ally Parti Keadilan, for the hearts of the Malay Muslims, who make up close to 60 percent of Malaysia's 25 million people.

"The reality is that every incumbent

government makes the system in their favour. This is also true in the U.S. and Canada," said Bridget Welsh, assistant professor at Johns Hopkins University, researching Southeast Asian elections.

"The new re-delineation works towards BN advantage. They created more (ethnically) mixed constituencies and the new seats have been primarily created in positions of strength, for example Johor," Welsh said, citing the southern state where UMNO rules.

In Pekan, the opposition contend that the army and air force base was included to help Najib's chances of winning. PAS, seeking some kind of symmetry, has fielded a retired brigadier to challenge the defence minister.

Election Commission guidelines say all military officers vote in the constituencies where they are registered as voters. But several servicemen spoken to by Reuters suspected their votes were counted in the constituencies where they were stationed.

"It's common knowledge that they moved the camp to Pekan because the government wanted the army's votes," said former soldier Salihfudin Samah, who now supports PAS.

Powell says Kashmir infiltrations dropping

NEW DELHI, March 16 (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Tuesday the number of Muslim separatists crossing into Indian Kashmir had dropped significantly and called for efforts to make the fall lasting.

Powell, on his first visit to South Asia since nuclear rivals India and Pakistan almost went to war over Kashmir two years ago, said he would raise Islamabad's pledge to dismantle Kashmiri rebel camps with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.

"One essential element... is that there should be an end of cross-border violence and I'm pleased that activity across the Line of Control (ceasefire line) has gone down significantly," he told reporters after talks with Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha in New Delhi.

"I am pleased that commit-



U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell (R) shakes hands with Sonia Gandhi, President of India's main opposition Congress party in New Delhi Mar. 16. REUTERS

ments have been made to go after these camps and I'll be talking to President Musharraf about this matter when I see him in the next leg of my trip.

"I think it's important that this kind of activity not only be something for the winter season, but it really has to be of a more permanent nature in order for us to see the kind of progress that we're hoping for."

Rebel infiltrations traditionally drop sharply during winter, when snows block the Himalayan passes dividing Indian and Pakistani Kashmir, and a continued fall after the spring thaw is considered important to further progress in a nascent peace process.

After a day of talks with Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Powell is due to visit Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Southern Taiwan ponders re-election of native son

TAINAN, Taiwan, March 16 (Reuters) - China is grabbing headlines in Taiwan's presidential elections, but for many "it's the economy, stupid". Especially in President Chen Shui-bian's southern heartland where recession and unemployment have bitten deep.

When former storekeeper Lee Chia-ching voted for Chen four years ago, he was sure the native son of southern Taiwan was the right man for the job.

Since his shop selling water purifiers went bankrupt in the island's worst-ever recession in 2001, he bitterly regrets his choice.

"All people want is a mouthful of rice," said the 50-year-old who now works for a car rental agency in the southern county of Tainan, Chen's birthplace.

"We don't care about independence or reunification. I won't vote for A-Bian again," he said, using Chen's nickname.

Lee is in a minority in Tainan, traditional stronghold of Chen's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) where he commands strong grassroots support from those who reject China's view that the island is a rebel province to be reunified, by force if necessary.

What troubles Chen is that it would not take many defectors for the president to lose Saturday's closely fought election.

In 2000, Chen's competition was divided and he swept to power with only 39.3 percent of votes. This time, his rivals have joined forces under Nationalist Party candidate Lien Chan.

Frank Hsieh, a DPP stalwart and mayor of the southern commercial hub of Kaohsiung, has the task of increasing the number of votes in the south by 15

percent.

"I'm confident of 10 percent," he told reporters in February. "So if we lose fewer votes in the north, we can relax."

The mayor estimated 50 to 55 percent of the south would back Chen. That may be an overestimate, analysts say. A crucial 20 percent of voters are expected to remain undecided until close to the end of the campaign.

The independence issue

After a four-year watch marred by the most painful recession in Taiwan history, record-high unemployment and a stock market fall to near nine-year lows, Chen's best strategy is to focus on one issue: independence from China, analysts say.

That's why he has timed a referendum to coincide with the election, they say.

Chen says the ballot, which asks if Taiwan should increase anti-missile defences against China, helps Taipei to stand up to Beijing. The subtext is that it could pave the way for a vote on independence — a move that China has warned would mean war.

"The referendum is a sign to DPP core voters that we are moving towards the Republic of Taiwan," said Peng Chien-wen, political scientist at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan.

The island still styles itself the Republic of China, the name of the Nationalist state defeated by the communists on the mainland in 1949, retaining the fig leaf of being part of China.

"This tells the hard core: your support has not gone to waste," Peng said. "We are making progress, so vote for us again."

S.Korea's shoe-lobbing minority party takes lead

SEOUL, March 16 (Reuters) - The minority party that lobbed shoes at the speaker of parliament in anger at last week's impeachment vote is pulling sharply ahead in opinion polls while the opposition parties lost ground, surveys showed on Tuesday.

The main opposition Grand National Party and Millennium Democratic Party unseated President Roh Moo-hyun in a vote that still requires Constitutional Court approval. Pro-Roh Uri Party deputies wept and threw missiles after Friday's shock ballot.

Yet it is the Uri Party that is gaining in opinion surveys and the opposition parties that are on the defensive.

An SBS television poll conducted on Monday among 1,000 people gave the Uri Party 53.8 percent support compared with 15.7 percent for the Grand National Party. The Millennium Democrats trailed on 4.4 percent.

"There is a distinct possibility that the election is becoming a two-way battle," political analyst Yu Chang-sun said by telephone. "The momentum is against the GNP at this point."

Other polls show similar results, although it is impossible to say whether the polarising polls will translate into votes at the April 15 parliamentary election and shift the balance of power in the chamber away from the opposition.

In the run-up to the 16-day official campaign, Uri Party leaders are already out meeting people though carefully avoiding discussion of the impeachment vote.



A South Korean protester holds a candle as police officers stand guard at a rally supporting impeached President Roh Moo-hyun in Seoul Mar. 15. REUTERS

Party chairman Chung Dong-young said on Monday he was urging members not to take part in the daily anti-impeachment rallies, lest the opposition accuse the party of electioneering.

Prime Minister Goh Kun is running the country until the court rules on whether the vote should stand. He told cabinet ministers on Tuesday to avoid politically sensitive remarks and stressed to foreign investors that the economic remained sound.

REELING

In a sign of deepening trouble, the Grand National Party deferred for a week a convention to choose a new leader to take it into the election.

The Millennium Democratic Party, meanwhile, is reeling from the departure of prominent local politicians in its traditional stronghold in the southwest, with more mulling their future. The regions play a powerful role in South Korean politics.

An aide to Jong Bum-goo, a Millennium Democrat parliamentarian, said a group of deputies who did not vote for the impeachment motion last week had backed off for now from an earlier demand that the party leadership resign to take responsibility for the slide in its ratings.

Local media reported that they were now mulling giving up their party membership as an alternative.

Yet while the party on whose ticket Roh ran in the 2002 presidential election weighs its future, the Uri Party that split from it last year is pulling ahead in the polls.



Opposition leader Lien Chan prays at a Buddhist temple in Hsinchu Mar. 16. REUTERS

Belgian PM says not candidate for top EU job

BRUSSELS, March 16 (Reuters) - Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said he was not seeking to succeed Romano Prodi as European Commission President later this year, in an interview with the Humo weekly published on Tuesday.

"I am not seeking a job in the Commission because I already have a job," Verhofstadt said.

After Prodi, a centre-left figure from Italy who steps down in November, EU tradition calls for a centre-right president from a smaller state.

Former Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene — an unsuccessful candidate for the job 10 years ago — and Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker have already appeared to rule themselves out.

Other names to surface as possible candidates are Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel, former Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen and Portugal's Antonio Vitorino, the European commissioner for justice and home affairs.

Finding a new head of the Brussels executive has traditionally involved much horse-trading between EU nations. The process will be complicated this time as from May 1 the 15-state EU expands to 25 nations.

Spain's Socialists may pull troops out of Iraq

MADRID, March 15 (Reuters) - Spain's incoming leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero indicated on Monday he would probably pull Madrid's troops out of Iraq in a major swing away from his predecessor's pro-American foreign policy.

Zapatero said his Socialists' surprise win in Sunday's general election — overshadowed by the Madrid train bombings that killed 200 people — was the first consequence of the unpopularity among Spaniards of the "disastrous" Iraq war.

"The second will be that the Spanish troops will come back," he told a Spanish radio station. "Mr Blair and Mr Bush must do some reflection... you can't organise a war with lies."

While he sounded definitive in parts of his interview, at others Zapatero repeated a previous campaign pledge to pull out troops unless the United Nations takes charge in Iraq by mid-year.

Spain has 1,300 troops as part of a Polish-led international division in parts of south-central Iraq.

Zapatero's shock election victory was driven by anger over the Popular Party (PP) government's handling of the suspected al Qaeda attack on Madrid commuter trains that also wounded 1,500 people last Thursday.

"Spain punishes government"

The once pro-Aznar El Mundo newspaper slammed the outgoing government for entering the Iraq conflict and playing down evidence of al Qaeda's



Spain's Socialist Party leader and prime ministerial candidate Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero talks to the media after voting in Spain's general elections Mar. 14, at a polling station in Las Rozas, near Madrid. REUTERS

role in Thursday's bombings.

"Spain punishes the PP and places its confidence in Zapatero," the paper said on Monday's front page.

It was the first time in Spain's modern democratic history a party had lost power after holding an absolute majority, and the first defeat for a government that had backed the Iraq war.

The Socialists' surprise win sparked wild rejoicing among their supporters after eight years out of power.

"It's like a dream... Now things are going to change, and change for the better in every sense," said Carlos del

Puerto, a 24-year-old mechanic, during overnight celebrations.

With almost all votes counted, the Socialists had won 42.6 percent of the vote to the PP's 37.6 percent as voters turned out in large numbers to reaffirm their faith in democracy amid the upheaval over the bombings.

With 164 seats in the lower house of parliament, 12 short of those needed for an absolute majority, the Socialists will need to negotiate alliances with smaller regional parties or left-wing allies in order to govern.

But the PP will remain by far the

largest single party in the upper house or Senate, potentially making it difficult for a Socialist government to pass legislation.

On the streets of Madrid, the mood was cautious as Spain woke up to the prospect of a change of government.

"The PP lost simply because of what it has done in Iraq, otherwise it would have won," said Jose Pais, 63, a shoemaker. "Let's wait and see if this is good for Spain."

The Spanish stock market dropped sharply amid mounting suspicions of al Qaeda involvement and uncertainties over the Socialist party's economic agenda. By midday, some nine billion euros were wiped off the share values of the top 35 companies.

PRO-EUROPEAN

But in a reassuring sign to investors in Spain, Zapatero lined up a well-known free-marketeer as his chief economic advisor. Miguel Sebastian, who was until recently head of research at Spain's second largest bank, was expected to take charge of Europe's fifth largest economy.

Zapatero pledged his immediate priority would be "fighting terrorism", and also promised to be "pro-European".

"I want Europe to see us again as pro-European, my feeling is that the election result has caused surprise but a lot of satisfaction in Europe," he said. Aznar's closeness to U.S. and British leaders George W. Bush and Tony Blair was unpopular here.

New Croatia PM condemns WWII camp crimes

JASENOVAC, Croatia, March 16 (Reuters) - Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader on Tuesday condemned crimes committed by the Nazi-allied Ustashe regime in World War Two, in a landmark departure from his party's hardline nationalist past.

"No political aim can justify crime, that is the truth on which modern Europe is built. We therefore condemn every extremism, racial or ethnic intolerance," Sanader said on his first official visit to the Jasenovac concentration camp site.

The camp was known as "the Auschwitz of the Balkans" for its brutal treatment of inmates and mass executions of Jews, Serbs, Gypsies and anti-fascist Croats between 1941 and 1945.

"Croatia's history had only too much suffering and Jasenovac was one of the worst. We have to speak up so that the Ustashe crimes are not forgotten," Sanader said near the renovated flower-shaped stone monument commemorating the victims.

Independent historians estimate that about 80,000 people died in Jasenovac. The numbers are still fiercely debated and some Serbs argue the death toll was more than one million.

"Belittling or augmenting the crime is just as dangerous. We need the full truth, we owe it to the dead here," Sanader said.

Sanader's Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which won the November general election, was ostracized as extreme nationalist by the West during its 1990-2000 rule. It quickly moved to allay Western fears and show it has embraced true democratic values.

The new HDZ-led government has stressed respect for ethnic minorities and commitment to resolving atrocities from the 1991-95 war, as it wants to take Croatia into the European Union in this decade.

The HDZ was founded by the late President Franjo Tudjman, who publicly said he was happy his wife was "not Serb or Jewish". Tudjman, a retired historian, also disputed the number of victims who perished at Jasenovac.

His government was often accused of whitewashing Ustashe crimes and reinstalling some symbols of their rule, drawing anger from Jewish leaders worldwide.

Croatia and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1998, after Tudjman apologised for comments considered anti-Semitic.

Tudjman's successor, reformist President Stjepan Mesic, made a ground-breaking visit to Israel in 2001 and apologised for Ustashe atrocities.

Suspected Russia gas blast kills four, 70 missing

MOSCOW, March 16 (Reuters) - A night-time explosion, almost certainly caused by a gas leak, levelled part of a large apartment block in northern Russia on Tuesday, killing at least four people with 70 missing beneath rubble, officials said.

Russia's Emergencies Ministry said the blast occurred in the far northern White Sea port of Arkhangelsk at about 3 a.m., when most residents were asleep. Rescue teams had pulled 11 people alive from the entrance wrecked in the blast.

"According to preliminary data, about 70 people are still under the rubble," a ministry spokeswoman in Moscow said by telephone.

Russian news agencies said officials suspected the blast had been caused by a gas leak, common in Russia's decrepit, crumbling apartment blocks. Interfax said rescue teams at the site had also discovered a gas leak in a neighbouring block.

The agency also said the nine-story building hit by the explosion belonged to Russia's Interior Ministry and provided housing for police officers.



General view of the blast site in Arkhangelsk, Mar. 16. A night-time explosion, almost certainly caused by a gas leak, levelled part of a large apartment block in northern Russian on Tuesday, killing at least four people with 70 missing beneath rubble, officials said. REUTERS

A plane owned by the Emergencies Ministry, which tackles a wide variety of calamities besetting Russia, was on its way from Moscow to help in search-

and-rescue operations.

Gas explosions are common occurrences in Russia, with one blast last month in a Siberian cafe killing 18 peo-

ple. But any explosion was likely to rattle the nerves of Russians after the conclusion of a presidential election campaign in which Vladimir Putin won a

second term on Sunday.

Earlier reports from Arkhangelsk had suggested officials were not ruling out a terrorist act.

Georgia blockade hits breakaway region, chokes oil

BATUMI, Georgia, March 16 (Reuters) - A Georgian blockade to cut off its rebel Adzhara region started to hurt on Tuesday as the Black Sea port of Batumi said rail cargoes of oil had stopped reaching it and the region declared a night-time curfew.

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili, seeking to bring pro-Moscow Adzhara under central control ahead of March 28 parliamentary elections, said on Monday he would cut off cargo routes to Batumi, but stepped back from threats of force.

Soldiers loyal to Adzharan leader Aslan Abashidze turned back Saakashvili when he tried to enter the region over the weekend, prompting a crisis in which Georgia's leader put the military on a heightened level of alert.

Saakashvili's land, sea and air blockade of Adzhara, twinned with financial measures to block bank accounts held by Adzharan leaders, is his first major struggle since sweeping to power in a popular revolution last year that ousted Eduard Shevardnadze.

Batumi port declared force majeure on



Georgians pass by an armed guard as they cross a checkpoint between Georgia and Georgia's Black Sea Adzhara region near Poti, Mar. 15. Georgia's military was on alert after the country's president was blocked from entering its troublesome province of Adzhara. REUTERS

Tuesday, a port source said — a declaration that it was unable to fulfil contracts. The 200,000 barrel per day port stopped receiving oil cargoes by rail for shipment to the Mediterranean region.

The streets of the port town were near-

ly deserted on Tuesday with many shops closed and those that were open nearly emptied of food after panic buying over the weekend. An 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. curfew was in force and extra armed guards were on patrol.

"The people are victims of stupid decisions by politicians. I think that the president and the leader of Adzhara should sit and talk about their problems because nothing separates us from other Georgians," said Tengiz, the owner of a small hotel.

A 36-year-old nationalist backed by the United States, Saakashvili has sparked tensions with Moscow by demanding Russia withdraw its military bases from Georgia and accuses Abashidze, 65, of seeking to block a free and fair poll.

"No one likes to lose power, especially those from the old Soviet nomenklatura who have been around for too long," Saakashvili told reporters late on Monday.

"The whole idea of losing their position as a result of free polls and the will of the people makes them totally confused and they refuse to accept it."

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, an old ally of Abashidze's, flew into Batumi to show his support and said in televised comments that it was Georgia that was "stirring up passions".

Put Lindh killer away for life, prosecutor says

STOCKHOLM, March 16 (Reuters) - A Swedish public prosecutor demanded life in jail on Tuesday for the man who confessed to killing Sweden's Foreign Minister Anna Lindh but blames "voices" in his head and has tried in vain to plead he was insane.

The trial of 25-year-old Mijailo Mijailovic resumed on Tuesday after the court accepted psychiatrists' findings that he was not insane when he stabbed Lindh 10 times in September, meaning there was no impediment to jailing him if found guilty.

"When Mijailovic saw Anna Lindh he decided to attack her with his knife and kill her. The attack was violent, forceful and aggressive," prosecutor Agneta Bliedberg told the court.

"The crime was completely unprovoked. Mijailovic should be sentenced for murder to life in prison."

Mijailovic, the son of Serb immigrants and a high-school dropout, sat impassive as she detailed the frenzied attack in a Stockholm store. Bearded and fatter than when caught, he kept silent and shook his

head when asked if he wanted to speak.

The verdict will be pronounced on March 23.

Lindh, a 46-year-old mother, was Sweden's most popular politician and was tipped as the next prime minister. She had been campaigning to adopt the euro currency in a referendum later in the week she was killed.

Mijailovic was arrested two weeks after the attack and confessed in January, telling the court: "I was on my way out but I took a wrong turn. I saw Anna Lindh. Then the voices came and said I should attack her. I could not resist the voices."

Defence lawyer Peter Althin failed to persuade the court to send Mijailovic for a second set of psychiatric tests, alleging "major shortcomings" in an initial six-week evaluation ordered in January that found him fit to be tried for murder.

"Now we are deprived of the possibility to find out once and for all Mijailovic's mental state on September 10," said Althin. "Mijailovic should be acquitted and set free."

Words of Wisdom



Parents and family elders are not providing good role models, either. Many adults spend their time chewing qat and watching satellite TV programs that represent the lowest common denominator. The children's recreational needs are mostly neglected, leaving them to wander off into the streets and mix with bad company.

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

OUR
OPINION

A year after the war on Iraq:

Spaniards
teach a lesson

The Spanish people have taught us all a lesson in the last elections when they have chosen a new Prime Minister to take over the government and to change the way the country has been run, especially in foreign affairs.

Spaniards conveyed a message of anger and frustration towards the former government of Jose Maria Aznar for holding on to a very unpopular stance. According to polls in Spain, the public wanted to state a clear message that Spain was better off not in the war on Iraq because as they said, they believed Spain had no purpose to or benefit from being there except to satisfy the US government.

Some have criticized the election results by saying that it was a victory for al-Qaeda, which is increasingly being viewed as the perpetrator of the attack. Those critics have suggested that if the attack was never carried out, the results would have been totally different.

The USA is now in a tough situation, especially as other elections are also on the horizon in other European allies, who composed the majority of US support in the war, and fear is now mounting of the possibility of losing then one after another if elections take place in them.

The lesson that one should learn from all this is that governments should always think about their own people's opinion on international as well as local issues and should not sacrifice their people's choice for other narrow interests, or else they will be putting themselves in the position Aznar has put his government in.

The fact to admit here is that no matter what happens in Iraq one year after the war started; there can be no reasonable justification for it. People have come to realize that the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are closer to a myth than a reality, and many have come to believe that the USA had other agendas in the region besides ridding Saddam of his alleged WMDs.

What we need to do now is to learn from the Spanish experience and the results that have shocked the world, especially the governments that supported the US war and sent troops to Iraq. This could serve as a basis for a possible collapse of the US pro-war alliance, unless other substantial developments take place.

The Spanish people have proven that their will and determination can change the policy of their country, whose former government failed to meet their expectations, and hence failed to win their trust for another term.

This could be a turning point in the occupation of Iraq, and who knows, may be a beginning of a series of collapse for many other pro-war regimes.

The Editor



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Publisher & Editor-in-Chief:
Walid Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

Head office:
Telephone: +967 (1) 268-661
Fax: +967 (1) 268-276
P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a

Email: yementimes@yementimes.com
Website: http://www.yementimes.com

Branches:
Aden Bureau Chief:
Ridwan Alawi Ahmed
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596;
Fax: +967 (2) 347-056
Email: ytaden@y.net.ye

Taiz Bureau Chief:
Imad Ahmed Abdullah
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156
Telefax: +967 (4) 217-157
P.O. Box: 5086, Taiz
Email: yttaiz@y.net.ye

Hodeidah Bureau Chief:
Imad Ahmed Abdullah
Tel: +967 (3) 206-886

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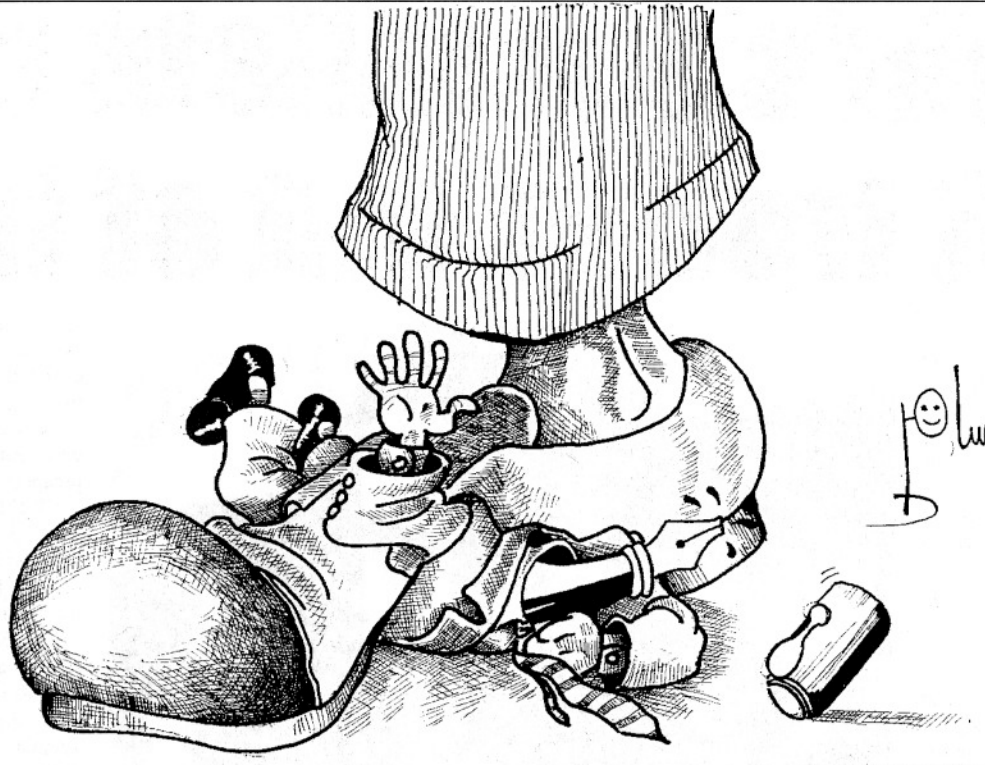
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SKETCHED
OPINION

BY SAMER AL-SHAMIRI

Cut From the Same Cloth:

Why it hardly matters if
it was ETA or al-Qaeda

BRIAN O'NEILL
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES
cairobrian@hotmail.com

Before the blood was even dry- and it will never be fully dry- before the scope was fully known, before the first families knew for certain that their life was torn apart, all honest speculation about the brutal attack on Spain was focused on ETA, a secessionist pocket of anachronistic terrorists. And this was done with good reason: all notable terrorist murders in Spain came at the hands of ETA, who speak for a minority in their bloody calls for a separate Basque state.

Later in the day, thoughts turned to al-Qaeda, as the British based Al-Quds al-Araby received a letter from the Abu Haf's al-Masri group, a self-proclaimed faction of al-Qaeda, an organization most experts believe is affiliated with al-Qaeda in declaration only and had previously claimed responsibility for North American blackouts. Shortly before the declaration, a stolen van was found carrying detonators and tapes of the Koran.

This raised many questions: if Abu Haf's wasn't responsible, why claim responsibility? If ETA was responsible, why not boast of it, as they had always done? If ETA wasn't behind it, why not release a statement? It is unlikely they failed to predict the scale of devastation; it is equally boggling to imagine them pulling off something so far beyond their previous scope and outside their usual modus operandi.

Another, more troubling prospect is that ETA, or rogue ETA operatives (and one has to be pretty loathsome to be considered rogue by ETA) coordinated the attack with Islamist militants. ETA target, Qaeda talent, ancillary Qaeda target in a coalition country- everyone wins. This has long been a possibility discussed by experts, notably Jessica Stern: homegrown terrorists teaming up with foreign experts to attack mutual targets. Even if it turns out this wasn't the case in Spain, it is a troubling and likely scenario in the future.

As of writing, little is known. But what is known is that, in a way, it doesn't matter if it was al-Qaeda, ETA, or some previously unknown group who had a bone to pick with commuters. It matters, of course, in terms of justice (which needs to be swift, harsh and accurate) and strategy. But it doesn't matter if it was done by people agitating for independence from a democratic state or as revenge for Spain's role in the war to oust Saddam Hussein. They are of the same mentality; in all reasonable dialogue they are the same group.

Their hallmarks are this: an obsession with the past, a blinding vision of justice, an infantile obsession with violence that is the hallmark of all revolutionaries and a need to recreate society in an image that they have decided is the best solution for everyone. And, it hardly needs to be said, the absolute lack of human empathy inherent in

anyone with this combination.

In their statement, Abu Haf's talked of striking back at Crusaders, a brutal group at times lead by Spanish kings. They also mentioned Spain's role in the war against Islam, a term used to describe geographically disparate battles in Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Crusades were obviously unjust and wicked, led by religious fanatics with a monopoly on the truth. The Israeli occupation of Palestine is a crime, and Kashmir is a weapons-filled playground for Indian and Pakistani chess games, with Kashmiris left to bear the casualties. All are important elements in history and politics, but it takes the warped mind of a fanatic to decide that workers in modern Spain are legitimate targets to avenge wounds inflicted centuries ago or thousands of miles away. It takes a diseased morality to warp time in that fashion, to take any historical wound and bring it to life. It takes, indeed, a Crusader mentality.

It absolutely does, and it's a mentality all the separate reactionary groups have. The Crusaders wanted to reclaim the Holy Land for the glory of Christ (and kings), dead 1200 years and probably in little need of temporal real estate. It was a cruel and idiot mindset, and it is far from dead. It is resurrected in the Islamic radicals, who are striving for the glory of an ancient and largely imagined Islamic paradise that is anyway divorced from today's realities. But reality has little sway over revolutionaries.

ETA is another transubstantiation of dead idea into flesh. The Basque region has more autonomy than any ethnic enclave in Europe. They have a monopoly over tax revenue, the importance of which can hardly be overstated. But that is not enough for ETA, who are sure they are right and are willing to make others pay any price to see it their way. Spain is a democratic state that has dealt wonderfully with its chaotic legacy and has made peace with most Basques. But once, possibly, Basques were free and didn't have to deal with a state system- just like everyone else in Europe. But Europe moved to the state system, and is moving toward the supra-state system, with the Basques in tow. History, however, is meaningless to ETA, except the narrow slice of it they want to replicate.

Examples of that abound. In the Balkan Wars, the Serb nationalists went through books until they saw the time when Serbia was at its territorial height and- there!- history stopped being relevant. The Croats did the same thing. Romania and Hungary argue about land claimed hundreds of years ago. In America, the idea of Manifest Destiny led to history's most effective genocide.

These are loose connections, not direct ones, but they are important. There are those in the world that realize the world never stopped, and has in many ways (though shamefully not enough) progressed toward freedom. It has accepted the idea, at least in theory, that people should be able to live their lives the way they want to in

political and economic security, and should not be held hostage to ancient blood debts. Reconciliation with the past is the basis of civilization.

But there are those who think the past should be brought back in all its fabled glory- these are the disparate elements that the world must always fight. There are no words too strong to describe them. Their most awful trait is a carryover from what Robert Conquest called "a ravaged century:" the idea that anything goes. The fervor of misguided revolutionaries, so sure of their wisdom, so eager to impart it to the ignorant masses, so willing to destroy anyone who opposes them, or is perceived to impose them, or who may just be in the way, is what guides them. Along with this is always- but always- the glorification of violence. And that, sadly, is what makes them attractive to many: an unstoppable will, the ability to shake free the moral ties that bind the meek. They are romantic carnivores.

The French Revolution was carried out by fanatics with shouting slogans about liberty but carrying contempt for the common man, and thus, The Terror. The imposition of Marxism in Russia was impossible by slow means, and so a bunch of amoral violence-junkies used any means necessary to bring it to fruition (both Lenin and Trotsky, bored intellectuals, praised the use of terror as means to an end). This gave us Stalin. Hitler and Mussolini came to power by promising to bring back past glory- Mussolini reached all the way back to the Roman Empire. Hitler, of course, was the apex of this virus. He used perfectly the fetish for a Romantic past and the lust for violence to create a New Order, and in doing so nearly brought civilization to an end.

To tie this back to Spain, which, like the above examples is not a historical abstract but a living and dying place: commentators are wrong when they say Thursday's attacks were the worst terrorist strikes in Spanish history. They are, but only by our modern and shallow definition of history. The fascist bombing of Guernica and the Stalinist executions of legitimate socialists during the Civil War were also terrorist attacks. They used both targeted and indiscriminate killings to show their might and impose their vision upon a people who wanted only freedom. These are neither idle history lessons nor exaggerated comparisons. Great states are no longer the vehicle for blood-soaked ideologies. Their legacy is carried on by smaller groups with separate goals but common beliefs. ETA, though local, is no different from al-Qaeda, and it should not be treated differently because its claims (a free state, national pride) sound more modern and rational than do bin Laden's. Hussein, who had the same violent paranoia and megalomaniac power-lust as Stalin, should never be excused because the people he crushed were related to him by a border. Ends change, means don't, and the will to fight those means should not either.

COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

The forthcoming Arab Summit
Be ready to make
sacrifices or else
stay home

Much has been said about the importance of the forthcoming Arab Summit Conference in Tunis later this month. Yet it is difficult to find any real specific information on the agenda of the Conference and the issues to be discussed. While there are some who believe that Arab Summit meetings are important in order to deal with the common issues confronting the Arab Nation (the latter now conveys far less political significance than it did any time in the past, not to mention its weaker regional weight in a global setting), most observers are inclined to believe that very little outcome of significance is expected. In the almost sixty years' history of the Arab League, these Arab Summit conferences have become less momentous as time rolls on. They certainly have become less effective as a forum for collective action by the member states or the Arab League on the major issues confronting the Arab World or in coming even close to meeting the common aspirations and goals shared by the citizens of all the different Arab States. In fact, as time progresses, Arab leaders have taken the latter less and less seriously, although Summit resolutions abound with lip service mention of such goals and aspirations in clichés, which really have minimal policy implications and insignificant strategic impact.

On the other hand, the Arab World has actually never been further from the achievement of a unified Arab State or from any real semblance of political, economic and social cohesion than it is at the present time and nothing appears in the horizon to reduce the distance. Mind you, the idea has never dwindled in the minds and the hearts of every Arab citizen at the grass roots level and within the almost negligible permitted elements of civil society. Except for a few Arab states, even civil society is generally lacking in any real empowerment, functionally or politically, and is for all practical purposes incapable of being free from the awesome overpowering influence of most of the respective governments in the Arab World.

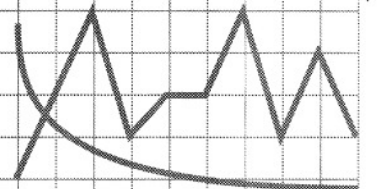
The obvious to most of the grass roots Arabs is inescapable: the present leadership throughout the Arab World is not really keen on truly working towards coming out with any concrete long range steps that will lead to the achievement of effective integration in any field, let alone political integration, nor in devising solutions to the major issues of common interest or feelings confronting the Arab World. Observers will often allude this static nature of the Arab World as a nation to the absence of serious intent on the part of the Arab leaders to find effective solutions and manifesting them on the ground. Many will also cite that even the autocratic regimes of the Arab World going back until the end of the 1973 War with Israel did attempt to arrive to sound decisions for collective coordinated actions, in order to at least diminish any previous setbacks or failures. Furthermore, they were not hesitant in sharing in with the required resources (including manpower, money and economic influence), each according to their available means.

What happened since then? There is no one single answer to define the causes for the greater fragmentation of the Arab World, but it is clear that even the embarrassing setbacks, faced by the Arabs, are no more a stimulus for meaningful collective efforts, than they are for giving rise to greater differences among the Arab leaders prompted by ego rather than any sense of nationalistic Arab consciousness.

What is more distressing is that the Arab masses in the street are no longer able to freely come out and voice their disapproval of the way their leaders are managing, even the most serious issues, locally or regionally, that lurk in the minds of the general populations, while these issues have not at all taken a back seat in the minds of these people. Only if the respective Arab governments seek to come forth with some spectacle of public action, of course wholly arranged and notoriously scaled down to ceremonial marches, embedded with heavy security implantments, will one notice any public expression of disappointments or even approvals of the developments in the regional or local scene. Of course, one seldom hears of public opinion polls or demonstrations of protest against Arab governments. This is not because all is fine and dandy in the way these governments are managing public affairs or allocating national resources, but because Arab governments, in general, have made repression and fierce reaction a rule in dealing with any form of collective public action of protest, which they simply translate as acts of treason. Having said that, Arab governments are under the false illusion that they are well in control of their populations and therefore are not accountable to their constituencies, who are unable to harness any form of collective action to show their displeasure with government performance. Arab governments have mastered the art of confining their populations to people forced to live under difficult conditions struggling to maintain sustenance levels of livelihood, thus eliminating any scope for political or social action by the masses. Opposition to government is highly risky, even if expressed in the most harmless of ways and all avenues for airing any discontent are all closed. Even those Arab states that claim to have adopted democratic rule are simply making a mockery of genuine democratic practice with staged surface renditions of democratic activities that just provide substantial sources of illicit wealth for those entrusted with managing these activities.

Thus for any summit conference to be meaningful, Arab leaders must declare themselves ready to sacrifice much of the power they have endowed themselves with over the various machineries and resources of the state, that are fully at their disposal, and start to realize that unless their citizens are truly free, there is absolutely no way they can gauge the extent they have become failures in truly living up to the expectations of their constituencies. In that context, save the money and stay home and carry on as usual. Either way there is no great loss.

YT Business



Goldsmithing: profession associated with cheating and smuggling

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The goldsmith profession in Yemen is among the crafts inherited generation by generation. Those working in this profession are required to be accurate and honest, in addition to possessing artistic sense. But the problem facing the goldsmithing industry is that the Yemeni market is not integrated into certain foreign markets for buying raw gold, that the expatriates form a major source of transactions in the local market, and that 50% of worked gold comes from smuggling operations.

In a tour of the showrooms and workshops of the Sana'a's markets specializing in goldsmithing we have found gold moldings and formations that look gorgeous, but some owners of trade shops believe that the gold industry is exposed to cheating in local workshops, despite all scales used for gold being regulated centrally in Sana'a and other cities.

A'mer Abdullah Ali, a professional goldsmith, says that the types of gold

spread in the local markets are Yemeni and Gulf, particularly that of Dubai, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. There are various standards of gold: 21,22, and 24 carats standards. Most known in Yemen are the 18 and 21 carat standards. The latter is a Gulf standard, the demand for which is increased due to the degree of purity, high quality and good workmanship. Mr A'mer adds that prices of gold in the market are influenced by world prices, supply and demand and the national exchange rate against the dollar, whereas external gold is subject to international criteria. Local gold is not subject to those criteria and that causes the decrease in the price of Yemeni gold because of its low purity and increased proportion of copper in it.

A gold workshop owner in Sana'a, Ahmed Musa'ad, says the cheated gold has a high percentage of copper but it is difficult to detect without the use of a touchstone and aqua regia, or without examining the diluted pieces at specialized laboratories. He clarifies that cheated gold is mostly found in earrings and gold-filled rings. He also sees that the profession of the gold-

smith is an inherited one and that honesty is an important trait demanded from those working in it at the gold workshops.

One problems facing those working in gold industry, Mr al-Ansy says, is the customers' lack of awareness. The consumer finds it difficult to distinguish between the good and the bad gold, in addition to the low quality of the local gold. A gold shop owner on Shaoub Street in the Capital spoke about the importance of ensuring quality accuracy and subjecting local gold to international standards, confirming that the role played by the State Authority for Specifications and Standardization is merely the supervision and monitoring of weights. Gold workshop owners they are not monitored.

Mr Nabil al-Raimi says the workers in silverware have started to prefer trading in gold and some of them are marketing gold in major cities. He says cheating in goldsmith work began to decrease because gold workshop owners are now obliged to hallmark their name and shop name on manufactured gold articles, and if it is discovered that he has cheated the articles would be returned to him to deter him from repeating the offence. On the smuggled gold Mr al-Raimi indicates that goldsmith workshops owners who buy broken gold articles from citizens discover that those articles were not subjected to customs duties, adding that there is difference in price between gold imported legally and the smuggled gold.

Prices of Gulf origin gold are different from local gold. The merchants say the cause of the high price of Saudi, Bahraini, Emirates and Indian gold is attributed to their higher wage level.

At the time the gold market is witnessing a recession in gold articles sales, a gold shop owner in Bab al-Yemen in old Sana'a, Najeb al-Shareef, says only those who know the rules and traditions of the gold industry



Showroom displaying gold jewels



Goldsmith shop owner

can succeed in it. Some shop owners have their own goldsmithing workshops and integrated factories for analyzing gold and determining the amount of gangues and also for changing the standard of gold from one to another in a scientific way, such as changing 24 carats into 21 or 18 by adding an internationally recognized portion of copper. Nevertheless, owners of trade shops find it difficult to deal with smuggled gold due to the high percentage of cheating, which would defame the reputations of those shops and gold industry in the local market.

Despite the negative effects of gold smuggling on the local market and there is a large proportion of the workforce working in the profession of goldsmithing, but sales flourish primarily during the seasons of religious festivals and weddings.

In a symposium held in Sana'a,

Private sector benefits from census and contributes to its success

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The general census, including houses, population and installations, that the government intends to hold this year acquires special importance for the private sector within context of the scientific concept of

the free market economy. It is supposed that the census will provide companies and businessmen with statements and information about the population, their density, places of their residence and the degree of their needs for development and services projects in all governorates of Yemen.

Participants in the first symposium held in Sana'a on the 'Importance of the Census for the Private Sector' stressed the significance of the partnership between the government and businessmen to join forces to promote statistical work in Yemen. The participants have diagnosed the form of cooperation between the government and the private sector and the research roles to be carried out by each side for the achievement of a statement system characterized by high quality and the optimal use of the system.

The private sector has frequently expressed complaints about the absence of a database to inform its work. Cooperation for founding that database through the census would make it easy for the private sector to access the data on various economic and social issues, whether regarding consumption or drawing up national and trade and investment calculations.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International

Cooperation, Ahmed Mohammed Soufan, has made it clear that statements and information the private sector demands to be made available by the census have been contained within the framework of questions and questionnaires fixed in the census form and that would open the opportunity for the private sector to expand its choices of trade and investment. Mr Soufan also has called on the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce and its branches in the governorates to take part in supporting the census and to motivate the commercial sector in Yemen to provide correct and accurate information about the existing installations.

This is why the private sector comprehends the significance of the census for economic, investment and trade activity. For this purpose the participants in the symposium have affirmed the importance of correct information and data for the private sector in taking its decisions soundly and accurately.

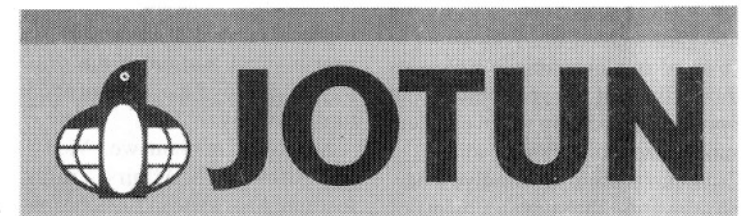
Chairman of the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce, Mohammed Abdeh Saed, promised that the Federation would activate the process of participation in the census by motivating the economic sectors to contribute to publicizing the importance of the census and to provide correct state-

ments. Resident Representative of the United Nations Fund for Population praised the dialogue between the government and the private sector that took place in the symposium and emphasised that it would contribute to the enhancement of the trust between users and producers of the data.

Information concluded from the census that is of significance and interest for the state is also interesting for the private sector, which seeks to know the formation of the population, its size and age, gender and geographical distribution: a matter that helps them plan production and other such activities.

The symposium stressed that the census creates a link of cooperation and integration in the field of planning statistical operations and their management and the technical and material support for their field operations.

In the free market economic environment, permitting producers to obtain accurate market information has been revealed as the primary motivation of the census. The symposium concluded by confirming the importance of the private sector's participation in the success of the census through its participation in the process of awareness-raising and providing accurate information.



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Aden

Phone 02 249360
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E-mail anwershakoora@yemen.net.ye

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial		
Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	184.3700	184.5600
Sterling Pound	333.8400	334.1800
Euro	226.4200	226.6600
Saudi Rial	49.1700	49.2200
Kuwaiti Dinar	625.4900	626.1400
UAE Dirhem	50.2000	50.2500
Egyptian Pound	29.7900	29.8200
Bahraini Dinar	489.0300	489.5400
Qatari Rial	50.6400	50.6900
Jordanian Dinar	260.2100	260.4800
Omani Rial	478.9000	479.4000
Swiss Franc	144.6700	144.8200
Swedish Crown	24.4800	24.5100
Japanese Yen	1.6631	1.6648

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

*Higher Institute of Health Sciences***Serves community and development**

PREPARED BY ISMAEL
AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The High Institute of Health Sciences, founded 33 years ago, is considered one of the outstanding professional health establishments in Yemen. In spite of the long time in the field of health and health education, it still needs more development in the fields of vocational and assisting medicine. In addition to emphasizing the importance of training and rehabilitation of the current educational health cadre there is the need to exert more efforts to cope with developments and modernization taking place in the field of rehabilitation of male and female students. So modernization process needs to cover all of the institute's branches throughout the Republic.

Yemen Times has prepared the following report about the Higher Institute of Health Science:

Mr. Abdulwahab Al-Kuhlani, the Dean of the institute, has said that continuous training and rehabilitation efforts and programs of vocational and specialized health cadres, which are taking place at all of the state's services and development apparatuses and public and private mixed sectors, through short and long-term training courses throughout the year, come to be part of implementing instructions and directives of the government and the political leadership to develop and to modernize the working cadres.

Continuous training will give a new push towards the development of human resources, which the government and the leadership consider as the spinal cord towards achieving sustainable development and expansion of various aspects of development.

Furthermore, it is important for the success of economic, financial, and administrative reforms in the health sector to have several workshops and training and rehabilitation courses of cadres working in health establishments in Yemen.

Dr. Abdul Aziz Najm Aldeen, in reply to a question about the extent of interest in training and rehabilitating teachers and cadres of health institutes in the governorates and the nature of their plans in that, explained they have a big plan of three approaches, the major rehabilitation in teaching methods, increase their skills and abilities through further studies, each in the field of specialty, and through continued education. This includes short training courses, getting informed on whatever is new through using the internet. All of these in the stream of training and rehabilitation of teachers.

The Higher Institute of Health's budget does not permit and is not sufficient to implement the above goals, said Mr. Mohamed Al-Ghashem, Vice Dean for Financial and Administrative Affairs. The expansion in governorates and the opening of new branches of HIHS taking place at the expense of the budget of the HIH. We have sought recently support of the public where each branch, in coordination with the governor and the local council of the governorate to bear a small portion of the students' fees to improve the level of the institute gradually.

Mr. Najy Al-Samawe, Vice Dean for Branches' Affairs, said the Institute had sixteen branches in various governorates. Furthermore, the Sana'a branch alone has ten departments, three nursing schools in Sana'a and one Suddha province, while Aden's Ameen Nasher Institute has

seven branches.

The Institute and its branches have for 33 years provided the health sectors with graduates in the various health and medical specialties. The start of the Higher Institute of Health Sciences began from scratch but now 80% of the staff is Yemeni trained at the hands of Yemeni cadre.

It has been able to achieve noticeable scientific development in spite of its limited capabilities and resources. It has become one of the successful health institutes in the Middle East Region, according to evaluation of experts of different organizations.

The foundation and development of the Institute of Health Sciences:

The Higher Institute of Health began in the form of nursing schools: a one-year nursing training course or a three-year diploma after primary education. In the mid of 1990s, HIHS began improving some of its branches in Taiz, Hodeidah and Ibb by admitting and enrolling only students graduated from High Schools, establishing various specialized departments and enhancing the practical and scientific capabilities. It continues to follow up and evaluate the scientific developments and curricula regularly in order to achieve its targeted goals.

The obstacles facing the HIHS and its branches:

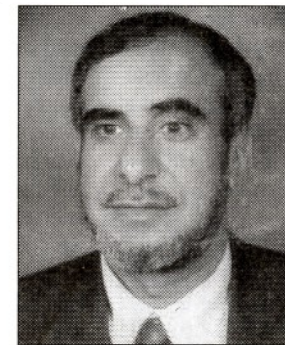
- 1- The lack of a health policy (a plan to acquire human resources in the different Governorates).
- 2- The low budget appropriated for HIHS and its branches.
- 3- The high demand on HIHS and its branches due to intensity of high school graduates.
- 4- The scarcity of training centers against the high increase of demand for trainees by public and private



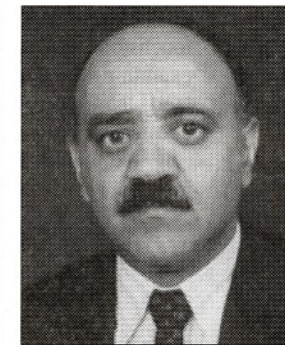
The new health institute building in Amran governorate



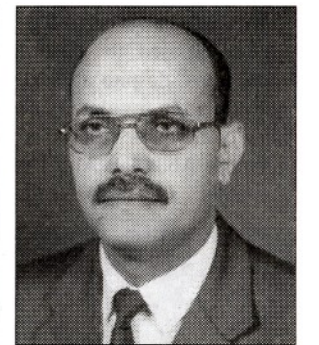
Mr. Abdulwahab Al-Kuhlani, the Dean of the institute



Dr. Abdul Aziz Najm Aldeen, Vice Dean for scientific affairs



Mr. Mohamed Al-Ghashem, Vice Dean for Financial and Administrative Affairs



Mr. Mohamed Al-Ghashem, Vice Dean for Financial and Administrative Affairs



Students during training in the laboratory

health educational corporations.

5- Health clinics and hospitals do not bear the responsibility of training centers.

6- The hiatus between health policy and the role of health institutes, since the health institutes are considered to play only a secondary role in spite of being the resource of health development in general.

7- The lack of capabilities to rehabilitate teachers in different higher specialties abroad.

8- The absence of an opportunity for HIHS to raise educational levels of its former graduates, especially to obtain supplementary bachelor's degrees. This leads to limiting educational efforts to general diplomas.

9- The absence of employment scale for the teaching board at HIHS in order to obtain their rights financially and functionally. The board is neither affiliated with teacher's law or with University law.

A plan to revise and amend curricula:

With regards to whether the curricula are unified or not, the Dean replied with 'Yes', the curricula at HIHS and its branches are unified in principles and established standards.

But what could apply in Sana'a or Hodeidah could not be applied in Ibb, for example. Each governorate has its health problems. However, we lay the main guidelines and leave administrations and teaching boards the freedom to handle the curriculum according to need and demand of each governorate.

HIHS has now a plan with World Health Organization to review the curricula, which would take nearly two years. The Social Fund for Development will finance the assistant doctor medical curriculum, said Dr. Abdul Aziz Najm Aldeen.

Last word

In spite of negative aspects of the training and rehabilitating process in the health field, there are positive aspects. You can imagine that the local health cadre almost did not exist prior to the foundation of the institute in 1997. The required health services at the few hospitals existed then, were met by primarily foreign cadres, coming into the country in the form of medical missions, with the exception of limited number of local personnel who were trained during the time of the missions, either in the hospitals or were dispatched abroad. The deteriorating

The High Institute for Health Sciences and its branches, during 33 years, have provided the health sectors with graduates in the various health and medical specialties.

rating health situations, in cities and rural areas, have motivated HIHS, since its foundation until now, to seriously seek the qualification of health and medical cadres and to develop their practical and scientific expertise through inauguration of a number of departments in various health and medical specialties. Those have contributed to development of the health aspect in cities and rural regions.

Cancer: A deadly disease in focus

By DR. ALI ABDULBARI HAZA
ALI_HAZA@YAHOO.CO.UK

During the period 1995-2003, I observed that the number of Yemeni patients who are suffering from cancer has drastically increased. According to my knowledge, the kind of diet and synthetic pesticides play an important role in causing and inducing cancer. Therefore Yemenis should know how to protect their bodies by using plant-based foods as weapons against cancer and heart attack diseases. And this can only happen if we study why and how cancer develops and this is what I will try to do here.

We have millions of oxygen molecules in our bodies, and they easily become unstable. When that happens, they become like sawyers, ready to take a bite out of the cells that make up your skin, blood vessels, internal organs, or any other part of your body. These sawyers, these unstable and dangerous oxygen molecules, are called free radicals. They can even attack your chromosomes. When oxygen free radicals damage chromosomes, cells can lose their ability to control their basic functions. They can begin to multiply out of control and that is the beginning of cancer.

Plants can be damaged by some of oxygen free radicals, too. So nature has given them the ability to produce natu-

ral compounds "antioxidants" that act like shields to defend against these wild oxygen molecules. You can see why these natural compounds are called "antioxidants" because they protect the plant from oxygen free radicals. And when you eat plants, their antioxidants enter your bloodstream and act to protect you, too. When all goes well, the free radicals (the unstable oxygen molecules) attack the antioxidants and leave your cells and chromosomes alone.

Phytochemicals are plant-based compounds that may have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, anticarcinogenic, and/or vasodilatory properties. These properties offer potential health benefits. Antioxidants may have

able in the prevention of heart disease and cancer.

Those present in plant-based foods include the carotenoids (e.g. beta-carotene, lycopene), the flavonoids (e.g. flavonols, flavanols), the antioxidant vitamins, vitamins C (ascorbic acid) and E (tocopherol), and micronutrients (e.g. selenium, sulfur compounds). The accumulation of phenolics which behave as antioxidants are found to be more in vegetables resistant to some diseases caused by fungi.

All grains contain tocotrienols, which are known to inhibit cancer, reduce cholesterol, and have positive effects on factors leading to heart disease. The bran of grains contains about 75 percent of all the phytonutrients. With the bran

layer and the germ go most of the nutrients, including the fiber.

One of the best-known antioxidants which provide vitamin A is available in orange-colored and dark green vegetables.

Green and black tea are excellent sources of polyphenols—plant chemicals (phytochemicals) with powerful antioxidant properties.

Vitamin E and the mineral selenium are also part of your antioxidant arsenal. Like beta-carotene and lycopene, they protect each cell's outer membrane from free radical attacks. Vitamin E is found in legumes (beans), whole grains, and plants rich in natural oils.

Vitamin C is a powerful and well-known antioxidant. What are the best

foods for vitamin C? Well, citrus fruits are famous for it, but you'll find surprisingly large amounts in many vegetables like guava, red bell pepper, orange juice, strawberries, etc. It is reported that the content of vitamin C estimated from infected tomato plant by fungus *Alternaria solani* was more in resistant tomato varieties compared to the susceptible ones.

Lycopene is a bright red pigment, providing the color for tomatoes, watermelon, and pink grapefruit.

A study at Harvard University showed that men who had just two servings of tomato sauce per week had 23 percent less chance of prostate cancer risk, compared to those who rarely ate tomato products.

Irena Knehtl to YT:

“The best thing in Yemen is its people.”

Ever since she became Yemen Times Person of the Year 2003, many of our readers wanted to know more about Irena Knehtl. They wanted to know of her motives and objectives, her ambitions and ideas, and most important of all, her mission in Yemen. Yemen Times requested the pleasure to talk to Irena and make an interview with her for our readers. Even though we know her quite closely, our readers deserve to know more about this gentle and hardworking person who dedicated a large portion of her life for Yemenis throughout the country.

Here are the excerpts of the interview

Q: Who is Irena Knehtl? Could you introduce yourself from your own perspective?

A: I come from an old merchant family from the town of Maribor, the second largest town in Slovenia and an university town. My father was a hero in Slovene national movement. The Russian literary giant Lev Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi of India were his models. I resemble him virtually, and hold the same values. Both of my parents passed away prior I came to Yemen. I studied economics at university of my home town, business administration at London School for Business Studies in London, international relations at University of Oslo in Norway, and history of Islam and Islamic peoples in Sana'a.

Since 1990 I have been researching the economic cooperation of Indian Ocean and Red sea countries as independent researcher from Yemeni perspective. And I managed to establish myself as a writer.

Q: What was the reason(s) that made you decide to come to Yemen?

A: I came to Yemen with my “Indian father” from Malta on a UNIDO (UN for industrial development) assignment for a feasibility study for steel in foundry industries for then the Yemen Arab Republic. My “Indian father” a noble man, once advisor to the PM Nehru of India for steel and foundry industries inspired, encouraged and stimulated me greatly. He gave me another perspective of issues, and I was willing to learn. After his passing away I am in touch with his daughter who is one of India's top scientists. We plan to meet this year.

Q: OK, but why did you decide to stay, despite the negative image portrayed in the West about it?

A: The situation in 1980 was quite different in the West and in Yemen, then still divided into North and South. The “bridges” still existed, the disappointment over development came much later. Y.A.R. was at the height of cooperative development movement, a grass root development movement, in international affairs non-alignment representing justice in international affairs was dominant.

Our task was to collect data and prepare the feasibility study for steel and foundry industries for then Yemen Arab Republic which would enable Y.A.R. to begin to develop an industrial base. During the same year Y.A.R. established three specialized banks i.e. industrial bank, agricultural and credit bank, and housing and credit bank to channel remittances sent by Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia into investment projects. The Industrial bank was keen to attract young people who would find it challenging to join. I was offered to join, my “Indian father” encouraged the move. At the bank I was responsible for international organizations, like World Bank, IMF, and Arab financial funds. We would design investment packages which the bank would co-finance. In addition, I supervised red brick projects. A challenging time, many times I learned more than I could ever give.

Q: We have heard that you are the first kidnapped foreigner in recent memory? Is it true? How did it happen? Do you still maintain links with the kidnapers?

A: This is true, I had been happened in 1982 in Sirwah. For many years I kept the matter to myself.

But then I wrote it up and published it in Yemen Times in order to clarify the issue of kidnappings in Yemen. Over 250 responses from all over Yemen came in, everybody believed that it goes for a classical issue of development. The main figure, the late Colonel Saleh Saleh Az-Zaydi and the way he handled this issue has become an inspiration. Several fathers offered their sons to be taken care for schooling.

Q: Unlike most foreigners in Yemen, you were able to penetrate into the lives of Yemenis and create sociable links with them. How was this possible?

A: I am being asked all over now more than ever what magic formula I hold to Yemenis in Yemen. I have to say I do not have any. And for me to speak about Yemenis and Yemen is like to speak about myself. I view Yemenis very much as my people I trust and rely upon. No, I am not disappointed. I cannot think differently. See, when I came, Sana'a numbered 120,000 inhabitants and we all knew one another. We went together through everything life so offers, earthquakes, unity, wars, joys, sorrows, etc. Their concerns are also my concerns. Particularly touching were Eid and Ramadhan festivals. My neighbors would go out of their way to make me feel not being left out in any way. Yemenis are exceptionally hospitable and thoughtful people. But Yemenis are also people with strong sense for justice.

Q: Why do you think foreigners in diplomatic and other missions in Yemen fear getting involved with Yemeni citizens?

A: The recent international situation has greatly distributed to distrust and fear. I am getting a lot of mails from everywhere, young Europeans, students, researchers or just ordinary people who are interested to experience Yemen in the same manner I do. Perhaps we should find a way together that all such initiatives find responses.

It is difficult to imagine living in Sana'a and not go for shopping to Bab Al-Yemen, or walk through the Old city of Sana'a. Or to Shaibani restaurant for fish, or a Friday ‘tafrita’ (evening visits). Or for example for a Friday afternoon to Wadi Dahr. During grape season to Beni Hushaish. Also attend some of the interesting lectures and events at Afif cultural foundation and meet Yemeni intellectuals. The Yemeni capital Sana'a is an exceptional interesting city. Even after so many years for me still holds attraction, as does Yemen in general. The best thing in Yemen is its people.

Q: What type of advice do you have for them to abolish this fear and hesitation?

A: I may sound to much a “Gandhian” that fear creates more fear, hate creates more hate, and eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Everybody should make effort.

The rewards will be enormous. We do not have but ourselves together, humans in one world.

Q: How did you find Yemeni civilians, especially those in rural areas you visited?

A: Over the years I have mixed with Yemenis from all walks of life. The dreams,

hopes and aspirations, concerns are the same. Let me tell you about the other day, I was on a bus to Tahrir Square. The bus driver asked an



Irena Knehtl

incoming traffic policeman for advice, that I may not know where I was going, and what he could do to help. The traffic policeman immediately clarified the matter saying that he remembered me when he was still going to school. That I know Sana'a very well; know perfectly well where I was going, and that there is really nothing to worry about.

My most memorable moments, however are from Yemeni rural areas. I went everywhere, even to far and distant places. Many times I spend my holidays in Hogerijah, or Hocha, Urj or Barat. My “relatives” are from all over Yemen. We constantly worry about one another, send greetings and wishes, seek advices. Of course, I have my favorites, places such as Barat and Wadi Kabb, the beautiful valley of tropical gardens in north-east. There I have my favorite “aunt” who is an excellent story teller, and a poetess in her own right. We admire each other very much. There certainly are social and other cultural differences. But we have something important in common that is humanity. To feel simply human...

Q: What are your ambitions and hopes for yourself and your career in Yemen?

A: It would be perhaps too ambitious to speak in terms of career, no I'm not at all thinking along those lines; a quieter life with sunny days and good rainy season. Over the past years I began to write. Some time last year I published my correspondence with the Maldivian Royal in search for his Yemeni roots. The response was overwhelming. After I received an invitation from the Maldivian writers and poets for a contribution. A group of young people who in wide Indian Ocean wish to make difference in terms of culture. Since then I regularly contribute as “Visiting poet”. After each contribution a big “thank you” mail arrives. View: www.maldiveshores.com. In all my writings professional or literary the main figure is man, human being, human being who hopes and fears, who loves and expects.

Q: Have you thought of returning to Slovenia, which is now considered a member of the European Union? When and why?

A: Life is a “journey” which purpose is some day to return “home” wherever that it.

All stages of “my journey” follow

gets a more proper credit for its constant efforts in all fields. If I can be to Yemen of any assistance in this respect it would be a privilege to do so. See, western and Islamic civilizations are not so different, they form one whole. Through the history their relationship has been all between good to brutal. The best it is when we try to learn from one another, the worst when we try to dominate one another. For example the situation we have now.

As far as Yemen is concerned one now can speak of “Yemeni model” for fighting terrorism. Judging from case to case, a mix of education, dialogue and tough measures. Mind you it is not perfect. Yemen has succeeded a great deal. Yemen deserves a better credit for it.

Further, Yemen has also successfully embarked on democratization. One of the essential features of democracy is that its citizens keep a watchful eye of their government. Take Yemen Times, for example. I can well imagine your sharp editorials not always come down well but it is of utmost importance to have this opportunity and to be able to say so. Yemen Times today is an important “safety valve”, a “democracy brigade” in its own right. Shortcomings and mistakes are only normal. To make mistakes is only human. Yemen is open and is conducting its affairs in front of the whole world. Everybody is immediately opposition, everything is immediately talked over. This is quite remarkable, I should say.

A return to justice in international affairs is the key to the future in the Middle East. The legitimate rights of Palestinians are on the top of any agenda.

The present “crisis: has opened the philosophical question in both ends, how much freedom to human being, in general. The other day I was listening to an interesting programme on Radio Sana'a. The question was “what is freedom” Do you mean the freedom like freedom of Sinbad the sailor, was asked further. No, came the reply, freedom needs to be responsible. Freedom like freedom of Sinbad the sailor is not enough.

Q: How do you assess the future of the country according to your long experience here?

A: All events in Yemen follow a well thought plan, starting with Yemen divided, Yemen united, Yemen exploring regional cooperation, like Indian Ocean dialogue. You will remember that Republic of Yemen is the founding member of this regional integration.

Further possible cooperation among Red sea countries. Internally building of infrastructure (roads, electricity etc.) and completion of business infrastructure, like the Aden Free Zone, and industrial productive zones. Further decentralization and already indicated release initiative and creativity, further diversification in economic field, to reduce dependence on oil exports.

Let's say in simple words the “Yemeni house”, the building is ready. But we have to see now, do we have enough “rooms” for all to live in this Yemeni house. Perhaps somebody would want to have red furniture, the other one a balcony, the third one more than one room—furnishings of “Yemen house”. And we have the World bank at the door telling us this and that. Our plan, if I may say so, involves a “time bomb”. Meaning the results should be the day before yesterday, but they will be only the day after tomorrow.

Over the Indian Ocean dialogue I had the privilege to cooperate with Mr. Ba Jammal, then Minister of the Development, the current Prime Minister of Yemen. Mr. Ba Jammal is not only very competent, but also very well informed about all events. He has, for example, widely credited the use of internet in Yemen among other things.

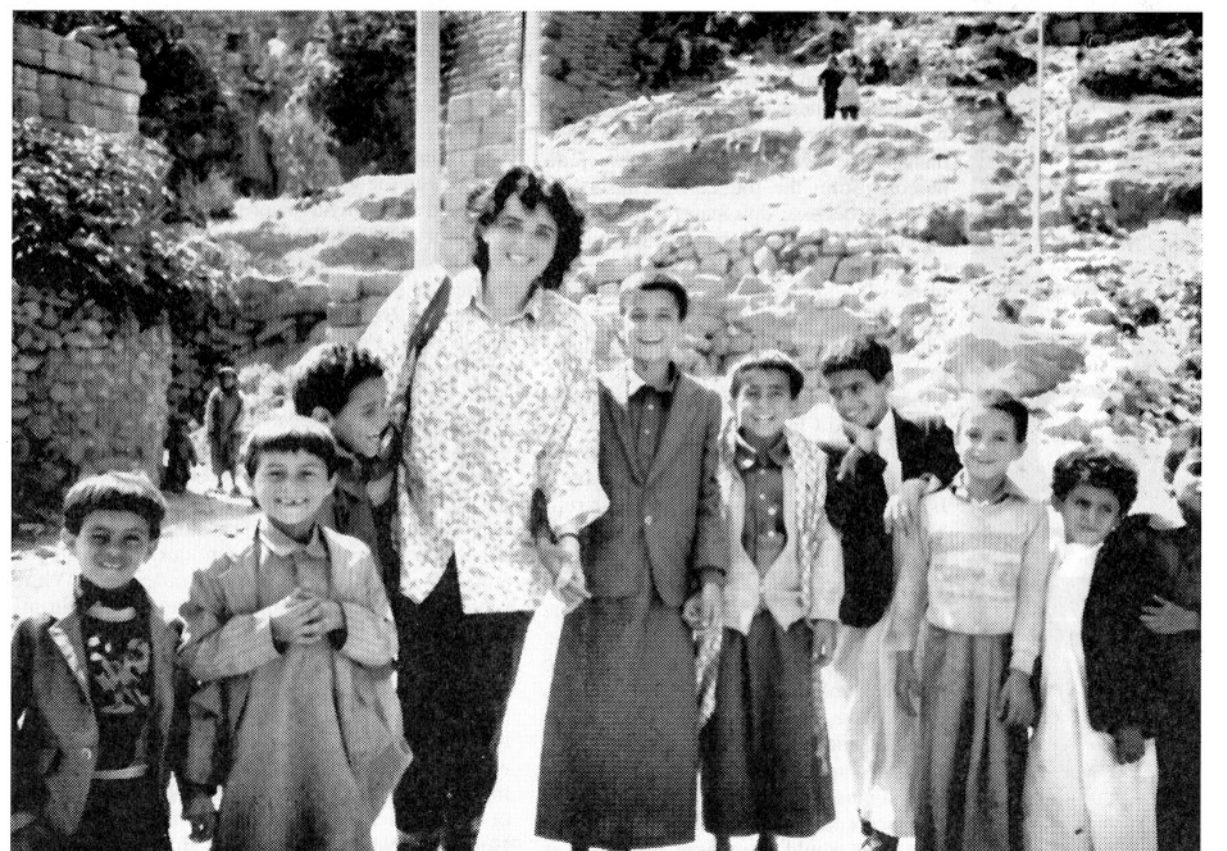
Having the situation like we have with the “time bomb” and an international scenario that has dramatically shifted priorities, perhaps it would be wise to consider a timely release of initiative and creativity, and to work out a “social safety net” for those most in need; a more careful monitoring of expenses in general. I would think that the Prime Minister needs some urgent emotional support to carefully choose the proper mix of “medicine” and timing.

As far as development models, i.e. our furnishings is concerned, there are quite a few interesting ideas on the table. The whole exercise of development is that in process one learns, succeeds or fails. The Chinese, for example, explain the word “crises” as crises and opportunity. An opportunity to think again. India, for example, has been advocating a “second agricultural revolution”, from cities to villages with electronic connexion. This is an exciting and challenging time.

Q: Any wishes that you want to convey to the Yemeni government or society?

Any final comments you may have?


A: A country that has so many well-wishers as Yemen has to succeed no matter what.



Irena joins kids to have a memorable group photo in a remote Yemeni village

Local Press

Prepared by Mohammed Khidhr

 **26 September weekly, organ of Yemen Armed Forces 11 March 2004.**


Main headlines

- FM: Pledge document to be discussed at the summit in harmony with Yemen's initiative with regard to amending the Arab League charter
- Yemen and Saudi Arabia to swap the wanted next week
- An agreement to link oil installations of Shabwa and Mareb for the development of exports
- Yemen-Ethiopia investment activity in the next stage
- Defence minister discusses joint cooperation with Chinese military attach.
- Kanaan association inaugurated the one-million signatures campaign

The newspaper's political editor wrote saying the sons of our Arab nation are looking forward to the summit of their leaders to be held at the end of this month in Tunisia with the hope to be different that the former summits in its results and the level of challenges and dangers the Arabs are fraught with.

All this demands the Arab leaders to consider the issues on table of the summit with high sense of responsibility and seriousness the present difficult and delicate circumstances dictate at this stage of the tempest of what has happened in Iraq and Palestine and the waving of the policy of big stick by American plan of the project of the great Middle East. The American project discloses the extent of decline of the events and situations of the Arab region towards a dangerous precipice. The scheduled Arab summit must come out with practical resolutions responding to dictates of the present historic stage where the Arabs are at a crossroads. This means taking resolutions ending the state of disintegration and division and leading to a true solidarity enabling them to face the challenges and dangers.

The initiative for Arab reform in which Yemen has a tangible contribution gives the Arab action its effectiveness embodying the principles of solidarity for uniting the Arab rank.


 **Al-Shumou weekly 13 March, 2004.**

Main headlines

- While the Parliament and the Shoura vote on the increase in prices, they discuss a proposal of putting into effect a new price dose
- Citizens of Lahj demand return of plundered government properties, send the corrupt to court

- While the GPC's youth demands a new leadership,
- West Secretariat court retains the case of the union activist in preparation for spelling the verdict

The newspaper editorial mentions that it is no doubt that there are certain situations impose on the government to take a series of economic and political measures in a way enabling it to surpass the more serious barriers that compose a challenge to the government and the people. Concerning what we hear of about the government intention of raising the prices of oil products as a measure that has become necessary, from the government point of view, we think that the issue needs and deserves some patience and to think profoundly before putting the decision into force, especially that the decision has impoverishing results. There are also some facts forcing themselves on the political life, namely, the plans against Yemen by the Zionist American alliance. At one time there is kidnapping of Yemeni citizens outside Yemen and sometimes by leaking false rumours and others by fomenting seditions between Yemen and its sisterly countries. The series of such challenges continues to the extent of open demand from the Yemeni government and the people for handing over Yemeni citizens they claim to be involved in supporting terror. This is what we mean to find a sort of incapability of the Yemeni society to bear two concerns at the one time; the new dose and the war on terror. Our appeal to think before implementing the decision springs from our knowledge of dangerous impact on the Yemeni society coinciding with Yemeni and Arab resentment over the so-called alliance with Washington in its war on terror. Neither the World Bank nor Washington is more expensive and dearer than 20 million Yemeni citizens.

 **Al-Nahar weekly, 11 March 2004.**

Main headlines:


- Taiz in need of governor, disarmament inn Yemen in need of a law
- Al-Zindani denies involvement in September events, assassinations and explosions
- Journalists fail to settle accounts of the finance committee

The writer Faris Ghanim says in his article the opinions and political stands in Yemen regarding the American initiative on the Middle East and what it contains of projects concentrating on the political, economic, social and cultural reform through expansion of the area of democracy, are at variance. Though many Arab regimes have refused it, the

Main headlines

- Mareb tribes discard vengeance
- Surrender of six accused of Cole blast returns al-Zindani to the original accusation,
- American diplomat: Washington demand still valid
- Killing price dose approaching, polluted medicines on markets
- FBI investigates into Zindani's millions
- Engineers in confrontation with hegemony of security bodies
- Differences about posts still existing at the journalists syndicate council
- Committee in defence of Ubeid holds Egypt responsible for his disappearance
- Al-Ahmar admits: Hardliners in Yemen came from Saudi Arabia
- Al-Qaeda organisation renews threats of terrorist operations in Yemen.
- Dangerous terrorist escapes from Sana'a airport security
- Islah calls for joining forces against the price dose
- Parliament and the Shoura to approve the killing price dose
- Journalists step up their demand for canceling imprisonment
- Rumours fever: Increasing assassinations, state of anxiety doubled
- Martyr Jarralla Omer re-assassinated judicially
- Demand for trying kidnapers of journalist Saeed Thabit
- More than 400 arrestees for condemning the American policies
- A demand for public property prosecution to investigate into budget of the general conference of journalists syndicate
- The trial of Saeed Thabit changes into trial of the performance of political security and prosecution
- Parliament discusses increase of fuel and diesel prices
- FBI: Hull launches slow clandestine war in Yemen, but of studied targets and guaranteed results
- In a telephone call following a road accident, the president ensures about health of sheikh al-Ahmar and instructs for flying him to a hospital in France
- The largest American intelligence operation is now going on in the Horn of Africa and Aden Gulf
- In response to the president's call, Mareb tribes sign general reconciliation to end vengeance,
- Committees set up for tackling problems of vengeance radically
- Saudi foreign minister to visit Sana'a on March 20
- Reinforcement of security protection on Yemeni coasts and regional waters

republic of Egypt took the lead and said it would lead to arousing chaos in the oriental countries. The Yemeni official attitude has also rejected the American initiative in person of the foreign minister Abubakr al-Qirbi under the pretext that any partnership the United States and Europe want with countries of the Middle East would not succeed unless here is acceptance by those countries before talking about democracy projects and human rights; whatever is imposed is refused. The prime minister renewed that also by condemning America's attempt to devour a pie bigger than Iraq and wanting a status for Israel.


 **Al-Shoura weekly, organ of the union of people's forces of Yemen, 10 March 2004.**

Main headlines

- Lahj intellectuals complain culture office director
- University students case retained for consideration on 23 March
- Youth gangsters flourish in Taiz, one young man killed, other four injured
- Journalists syndicate refuses the trial of Saeed Thabit

Columnist Abdulkareem al-Khaiwani writes saying during the past two weeks the question of disappearance of Ahmed Salem Ubeid remained looking for an answer. Press reports mentioned that Ubeid was a victim of Arab security deals concluded by Arab security bodies. According to the deal Ubeid is supposed to have been handed over to Yemeni authorities that in turn would hand over some of the wanted to Egypt. Ahmed Salem Ubeid is an opposition politician owning opposition opinion and attitude living in Egypt. He is not an escape from justice or wanted for issues pertaining to terror or others.

Official kidnapping is an Arab official culture and definitely no one is known to have this concession; the regimes or the gangs. The question is how do the Arab regimes find time to practice the hobby of kidnapping at a time there is in the world great fuss about projects for reforming these regimes and peoples talk about their mistakes and they are demanded to refuse reform projects coming from outside to the regimes the chance to reform their situations from inside. If all this is really happening one can say that those regimes are living on the periphery of history and events.

 **Al-Sahwa weekly, 11 March 2004.**


Main headlines

- Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt sub-

- mit a plan for reform
- National Democratic Institute worried about democracy
- Head of Islah political office says our battle is not with security

Columnist Zaid al-Shami says in his article nowadays there is much talk about a new price dose the government intends to issue as a gift to the people after the elections. The state television has also begun to prepare the people to take the poison dose as it has screened series on the economic situation and how the previous doses contributed to come out of the economic crisis. And because the people represent the weaker link the government tends to pressurize them. The government has appropriated more than eight billion rials in 2003 budget for reinforcement of security efforts to ensure suppression of any counter-response to its dose measures.

There is no reasonable justification for these doses except the further harming of the citizen and humiliating him and rendering him a beggar for his living.

 **Al-Tagamou weekly organ of the Yemeni Unionist Assemblage Party, 15 March 2004.**

Main headlines

- Journalists demand activation of the ethics charter
- America investigates into \$40 million allotted for killing them under his supervision,
- Al-Zindani renews confirmation that the Socialists were infidels
- Federal investigations into embezzlement of one million dollars from HUNT Company
- Large-scale resentment against imposing the price dose

Columnist Fathi Abu-Alnassr says in an article the government is getting ready to officially announce the new price dose within part of its program for economic reform it had begun in 1995 under patronage of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, despite indications of wide-scale popular resentment. The parliament stance towards the next price increase has not yet been clear. The increase proposal demands the parliament approval at a time the GPC MPs bloc is getting ready to endorse it via their parliamentary majority.

The new dose, described by popular circles as backbreaking, includes high taxation and customs legislation accompanied by high rise in prices of oil products against slight rising of salaries. This would lead to increase in poverty rates among the citizens. Imposing this dose will cause raging of popular resentment against it as prices of services and goods would get higher.

Reflections

"The Matchbox of the World"

Many observers and thinkers have termed Religion as the matchbox of the world. This to them is quite true, because each religion contradicts the others. The followers of each religion believe that their religion is the right one and thus try to preach and spread it. The followers of each religion are subdivided into different sects and hence form different factions within the concerned religion. The most dangerous of which are those who claim heredity from the founder, because they aspire to become dominant, starting with the desire to seize power and then turned it into religious belief. This is true about medieval Europe, India, and Yugoslavia etc. Thus, Jews do not believe in Christianity, true Christians do not believe in Judaism and Muslims do not believe in either (Muslims believe that the original Judaism and Christianity were correct but later were tampered with). The followers of these three religions i.e. Christianity, Islam and Judaism, claim that their religions disapprove other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

Now, imagine if the countries of the world deal with each other based on the true teachings of their respective religions.

Europe developed as it is today because it ceased looking at things from a religious perspective and countries like France always endeavor to keep religion at bay. The same applies to the Japanese, Chinese and Indians, who are not ruling their countries according to their religions. If they had, they would have been backward as they were for centuries prior to their modern renaissance.

Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Bangladesh are beginning to embrace the same ideals despite many difficulties they are facing.

Now come to the Arab World, which was ruled through the Caliphate System for hundreds of years and later occupied by the West. Religions in the Middle East still have a powerful impact and the Islamic sects of different kinds try to seize power. Islam is mainly divided into two major sects, the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Sunnis form the largest portion of the Muslims in the world, almost 90%, whilst the Shiites are only a majority in countries like Iran and Iraq. In the case of Yemen the majority are Sunni Muslims, whilst the Shiites are subdivided into four sub-sects: *Zaidists, Ismailists, Hadaoists and Twelthists*. Prior to the foundation of present-day Israel a significant portion of Yemenis were embracing Judaism but were later transported to Palestine in an operation termed by the Jewish Agency as "the Magic Carpet". Yemen still has a few hundred Jews whose number is falling due to the worsening economic situation of the country and the encouragements used to attract them to leave Yemen in order to settle in Occupied Palestine. Now each of the two major Islamic sects is subdivided into different sub-sects each of which is contradicting the other. The Sunnis have four main sects and are further subdivided into eight whilst the Shiites are subdivided into eleven sects, and many more melt into the remaining eleven (vide the book of Nashwan Al-Himyari one of the last Himyarite Nobles, titled "Al-Hoor Al-Aeen").

What Sunnis think about the Shiites?

Sunni Muslims believe that they themselves embrace True Islam and declare that prominent disciples of Prophet Mohammed such as Omar, Abubakr and Osman are Sunnis. They do believe in the Alshoura system with regard to governance (*Alhakimia Lilah*) i.e. prominent clerics meet and cast their votes and the one getting the majority of votes becomes a Caliph (i.e. successor of Prophet Mohammed). To them, Shiites are mere heretics and apostates. That they are after worldly gains and have ambitious to seize power. Thus, Sunnis do not believe in the Shiite interpretation of Islam nor do they believe in their many books. In fact one of the most prominent Sunni Savants named "Abuhanifalnoman" declared as follows:

"That who becomes a Shiite has chosen for himself to become an infidel". (Although Sunni and Shiite leaders in Iraq deny any disputes, several incidents have been taking place since toppling Saddam and serious efforts should be exerted in order to contain them before it becomes too late)

What the Shiites think about the Sunnis?

The Shiites believe that the leadership of the Muslims should be inherited. As Prophet Mohammed did not have any male children, the children of his daughter, Fatimah, are holy and must be the Muslim Leaders until doomsday and accuse the Sunnis of deviation from the right path. Shiites do not see eye to eye with each other regarding the succession to power and each Shiite sect has its own opinion. The Shiites in Iran, Saudi Arabia,

Iraq and Lebanon distinguish themselves with black turbans and black apparel, whilst in Yemen they wear colorful turbans, baggy blue or white dresses and sideways silver adorned daggers. At the time of Shiites' theological rule of Yemen prior to the 1962 revolution, normal Yemenis were ordered to kiss their knees and the back of their hands and were in certain cases kicked or shoved away in return. The distinguished ones call themselves "Masters" in Arabic 'Sayyids', and normal Yemenis were ordered to dismount their horses, donkeys or camels if they ever came across them.

The Judges at this time wore similar apparel and hence were mistaken for Sayyids, so one of these judges who is now 90 years old recounted to me a story. A normal peasant approached him and bowed to kiss his knees in veneration, thinking that he was one of the Sayyids. During the kissing process, the peasant felt unsure whether this man was a genuine Sayyid or not and hence asked him whether he belonged to the class. The judge hastily answered him, "hey man! First complete your duties".

On the other hand, Yemeni Jews had to dismount their horses, donkeys or camels if they ever went past any Muslim and were forbidden to build buildings more than three stories high. The Shiite Imams of Yemen did possess women slaves and eunuchs and exchanged slaves with some Arab monarchs until they were overthrown in 1962 in a revolution led by an army officer named Ali Abdul Moghni, whose name has been given to the main street central Sana'a (their era is chronicled in a novel written by the late promi-

nent Yemeni Novelist Zaid Motea Dammaj whose work has become part of International Cultural Heritage and is considered as one of the most important 100 Arab novels of the 20th century). The Novel is titled "the hostage" and has been translated into many international languages. It is worth mentioning that the current President of Yemen was 16 years old at the time of the revolution and participated as one of the rank and file. He still remembers the degradation of the Imamic rule and had to go through the same suffering as normal Yemenis in those days. In fact, this is why the man in the street would like him to make a difference.

Now, while Sunnis amongst themselves do not agree with each other on many issues and they belong to the same stream, the eleven Shiite sects do not agree either and when given chance oppressed each other.

Modern military rulers in the Arab countries have been juggling with the different Islamic groups. In certain cases violence was used to crush attempts by the Islamists to ascend to power, in countries like Egypt, Syria, Algeria and others.

With the American occupation of Iraq the sectarian giant has emerged. In my opinion the Americans should avoid striking a deal with any sect. They should learn the lesson of their alliance with the Sunnis in Afghanistan.

On the whole, if the Americans do succeed in establishing a workable democratic system in Iraq, I believe that shall be vital for what will become of the Arab World in the years to come.



By Yahya Al-Olfi
alolfi@hotmail.com

Rankings boost possible for Rusedski

BY OSSIAN SHINE

LONDON (Reuters) - British number two Greg Rusedski could receive a rankings boost as consolation after he was cleared of being a drugs cheat, his lawyer says.

Ranked 100th in the world, Rusedski faces having to qualify for the major tournaments, including Wimbledon, unless he can strike a deal with the ATP — the sport's governing body blamed for his positive nandrolone test.

"Greg is discussing with the ATP how he returns to tennis. They (the talks) are at an early stage," Mark Gay told reporters at London's Queen's Club on Tuesday.

Asked whether an improved ranking was on the agenda, Gay added: "That is one factor... there are many others." Neither Rusedski nor his lawyer would reveal details of the talks being held with the ATP.

"Right now we are trying to come to an agreement which hasn't happened yet," Rusedski said.

"Once we know the agreement we will figure it out and go from there but they have to be able to do something satisfactory to get my career back."

"I hope that this is resolved in the next two days to a week because I need to get back to my tennis."

Rusedski tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone at a tournament in Indianapolis last July.

Turmoil
His life has been in turmoil since he was notified of the positive test at a Davis Cup match against Morocco last September.

He suffered six months of anguish before an ATP-appointed independent tribunal cleared him of any wrongdoing earlier this month.

"When I was told I had tested positive, I could hardly speak," the 30-year-old told a news conference. "I knew I was innocent from day one. I knew I had done nothing wrong."

"Every single player from Andre Agassi to Lleyton Hewitt takes supplements. It is very difficult as a player to get



Supplements supplied by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) were the source of tennis player Greg Rusedski's positive dope test, his lawyer says. Rusedski is pictured during the news conference at the Queen's Club in London. REUTERS/David Bebbler

through day to day and you need supplements because of all the travel and the rigid lifestyle.

"You can't survive on bread and water and when you take into consideration that you might be playing in 100 degree heat you need something to replace the fluids you are losing."

Rusedski's lawyer said it was those supplements, supplied by the ATP to the players, which had caused his positive test.

Gay cited a unique "fingerprint" that linked Rusedski's positive result with that of other male players who have tested positive for nandrolone.

"Really there is nothing else that could possibly have achieved this result that is so prevalent throughout the world of men's tennis," he said.

Rusedski has not played since his first round defeat to Albert Costa at the Australian Open in January, but retains his dream of winning Wimbledon.

"I would love to have at least two more shots at Wimbledon," he said. "That's my dream."

"I love going out there on Centre Court and having the British public behind me."

First up, though, is a Davis Cup clash in Luxembourg next month, if selected.

"I will be available if selected," he said. "Whatever role is okay with me...even if it is as a practice partner and cheerleader in the stands."

Bryant lifts lakers to overtime win

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Kobe Bryant shook off a shoulder injury to score 38 points, 24 of them in the fourth quarter, as the Los Angeles Lakers staged a dramatic rally to beat the Orlando Magic 113-110 in overtime Monday.

Shaquille O'Neal had 27 points and 22 rebounds for the Lakers, but it was Bryant's second half heroics that led Los Angeles to victory.

The Magic stormed into a 61-50 halftime advantage and led by as many as 19 points in the third quarter, but the home side staged a furious fourth quarter fightback to force overtime.

Bryant had just one point in the first half and was clearly laboring with the injury as Tracy McGrady out-scored him 21-1.

But Los Angeles blitzed Orlando 29-14 in the final frame as Bryant tied a franchise record for points in a quarter to force the five minute overtime.

Orlando nearly won the game on a desperation last second shot by McGrady that went in as time expired in regulation but officials ruled he did

not get the shot off before the buzzer.

The teams traded baskets for most of the extra period before Gary Payton's three-pointer with 1:44 left put the Lakers ahead 113-110 and it turned out to be the game's final basket.

Payton added 12 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers (44-23).

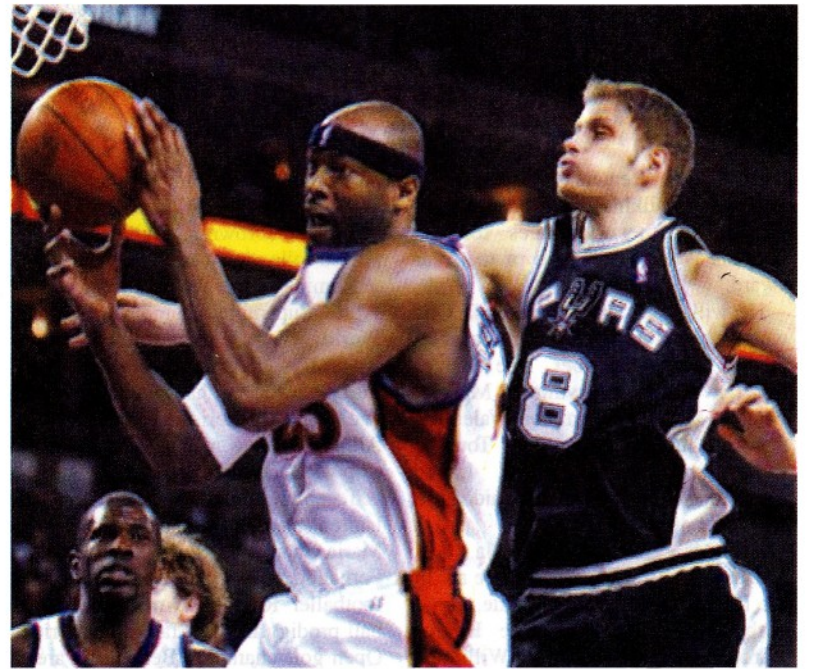
McGrady led Orlando with 37 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds. Juwan Howard added 29 points and nine rebounds for the Magic.

In other games, Joe Johnson hit the winning basket with 1.4 seconds left in overtime and Shawn Marion scored 29 points as the Phoenix Suns beat the Houston Rockets 99-97.

Yao Ming had 29 points and 19 rebounds for the Rockets, who had a five-game winning streak snapped.

Jason Richardson scored 22 points as the Golden State Warriors ended a season-high nine-game losing streak by stunning the San Antonio Spurs 97-80.

Tony Parker had 29 points for the Spurs, who were once again without the injured Tim Duncan.



Golden State Warriors center Erik Dampier takes a rebound away from San Antonio Spurs center Rodoslav Nesterovic (8) in the first quarter of their NBA game in Oakland, California, March 15. Photo by Lou Dematteis/Reuters

Kaberle's OT strike completes win for Leafs

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Tomas Kaberle scored on a deflection at 3:45 of overtime to give the Toronto Maple Leafs a come-from-behind 6-5 win over the Buffalo Sabres in National Hockey League play in Buffalo on Monday.

Kaberle deflected a pass from Alexander Mogilny over the shoulder of goalie Martin Biron to complete a stirring Toronto comeback as the Maple Leafs trailed 5-2 after two periods.

Toronto's veterans took over in the third period, out-shooting the Sabres 13-6 and getting a pair of goals from Owen Nolan and the game-tying goal from Gary Roberts with just 38 seconds left in regulation.

"We didn't quit when we were down by a couple of goals and that's certainly a good sign," Toronto coach Pat Quinn said.

Mats Sundin scored the other two Maple Leaf goals, both in the first period, while Brian Leetch and Mogilny added three assists each.



Toronto Maple Leafs center Mats Sundin (13) grimaces as he is sandwiched between Buffalo Sabres defensemen Jay McKee (L) and Brad Brown during second period action in Buffalo, New York on March 15. The Leafs won 6-5 in overtime. Photo by Gary Wiepert/Reuters

Jochen Hecht had two goals and two assists for the Sabres, who grabbed a 2-0 lead in the first period and scored three unanswered goals in the second

period to take a three-goal lead.

Miroslav Satan added a goal and three assists for the Sabres, who lost a valuable point as they try and catch

the New York Islanders for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

J.P. Dumont had a goal and two assists for the Sabres, while Daniel Briere scored the other goal and added an assist.

Biron made 28 saves for the Sabres, who were badly out-played in the third period and failed to score on a power-play in the overtime.

Trevor Kidd made 23 saves for the Maple Leafs as Ed Belfour was given the night off to rest his ailing back.

In other games, Patrik Elias scored the game-winner and Martin Brodeur made 17 saves as the New Jersey Devils downed the New York Rangers 3-1.

The Devils have not lost in regulation at Madison Square Garden in 19 games (8-0-10-1), since January 12, 1997.

Dany Heatley scored at 1:43 of overtime and Pasi Nurminen made 31 saves as the Atlanta Thrashers edged the Carolina Hurricanes 1-0.

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- غرفة نوم بسرير وحمام .
 - غرفة نوم بسريرين وحمام .
 - غرفة نوم بسرير زوجي وحمام .
- الأجنحة**
غرفة نوم سرير زوجي .
صالة جلوس .
حمام .
الشقق

يتوفر نوعين من الشقق:

النوع الأول:
(غرفتي نوم غرفة بسرير زوجي والأخرى بسريرين) النوع الثاني : غرفة نوم واحدة ، النوعين من الشقق يوجد بهما صالة جلوس رئيسية ، طاولة طعام مطبخ مع عدة طبخ و ثلاجة وحمام جميع الغرف والأجنحة والشقق مزودة بمكيف هواء ، مروحة ، ثلاجة ، تلفزيون مبرمج بقنوات فضائية عالمية ومترعة، جهاز تلفون للإتصال المباشر محلي ودولي وثالث فاخر، ورفي نوع دي لوكن وستاندرد .

خدمات الغرف 24 ساعة :
خدمة متواصله وعلى مدار الساعة لتقديم كافة أنواع الوجبات والمشروبات ونظافة الغرف .

مطعم رويال كونكورد :
لتقديم الوجبات الشهية أطباق يمنية ، عربية ، عالمية ، يوفيه مفتوح ، وجبات خفيفة ، الطلب من خلال قائمة الطعام (المينو) وتلبية الطلبات الخارجية .

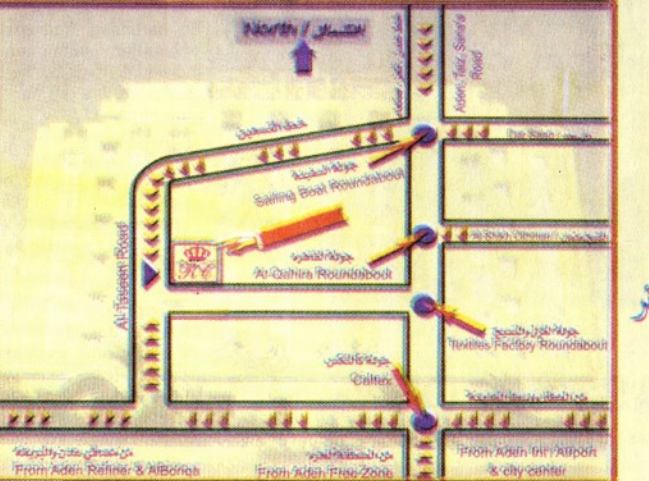
كوفي شوب رويال كونكورد :
يقدم جميع أصناف المشروبات الساخنة والباردة الطازجة والمعلية، بالإضافة إلى الوجبات الخفيفة.

مغسلة رويال كونكورد :
مغسلة مزودة بأحدث مكائن الغسيل الجاف والمادي والكي (غسيل بدل رجالية، الكرات ، فساتين أعراس و سترات ، جميع أنواع الفساتين النسائية والبنائية والملابس الرجالية والولادية والستائر والبطانيات والشرشف والحقائب الخاصة بالمنازل والفنادق والمستشفيات) .

خطوط رويال كونكورد :
جميع أنواع الحلويات المحلية والغربية بالإضافة إلى المعجنات .

صالة رويال كونكورد :
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Wilkinson in line for "sporting Oscars"

LONDON (Reuters) - England fly-half Jonny Wilkinson has been named with five other nominees for the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year award.

He will be up against Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher, men's tennis number one Roger Federer, American swimmer Michael Phelps, MotoGP champion Valentino Rossi of Italy and five-times Tour de France cycling champion Lance Armstrong, the organisers said in a statement on Tuesday.

Athletes Maria Mutola of Mozambique and Paula Radcliffe are in the frame for the women's title, along with tennis players Justine Henin-Hardenne and Serena Williams, Swedish golfer Annika Sorenstam and Dutch swimmer Inge de Bruijn.

Mutola became last year the first athlete to clinch the \$1 million (550,000 pounds) jackpot outright after staying unbeaten over 800 metres on the Golden League circuit. Radcliffe broke the world marathon record in London.

Henin-Hardenne won the 2003 French and U.S. Open titles and the

Australian Open in January while Williams successfully defended her Wimbledon crown last July, but has not played following a knee operation.

Nominees for the team award are World Cup rugby champions England, World Cup cricket champions Australia, Formula One's Ferrari, European soccer champions AC Milan, yachting's America's Cup holders Alinghi and women's football World Cup winners Germany.

Teenage golfer Michelle Wie of the United States, Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova, Formula One driver Fernando Alonso of Spain, Brazilian footballer Robinho, American basketball prodigy LeBron James and British Open golf champion Ben Curtis are in competition for the newcomer's award.

Forty one sports personalities, including Miguel Indurain, John McEnroe and Ed Moses, will also choose the best alternative and comeback sports people of the year from a shortlist drawn up by 400 journalists from 73 countries.

The winners will be announced on May 10 in Estoril, Portugal.



England fly-half Jonny Wilkinson has been named with five other nominees for the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year award, which will be announced on May 10 in Estoril, Portugal. Wilkinson is shown with the Webb Ellis Rugby World Cup at Kingston Park Stadium, Newcastle, in this November 2003 file photo. REUTERS/Christopher Furlong

FA to introduce immediate bans

BY TREVOR HUGGINS

LONDON (Reuters) - Immediate bans and a speeding up of the disciplinary system will follow a crackdown by the Football Association (FA) next season.

Details of a pilot scheme were released on Tuesday after a review ordered last year by FA chief executive Mark Palios and led by former player and top union official Brendon Batson.

Delays in some high-profile cases, including Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand's eventual ban for a missed drugs test and a near-eight month delay in disciplining Chelsea midfielder Joe Cole, had led to criticism of FA procedures.

The new rules, which were rubber-stamped by the FA Council on Monday, will target three disciplinary areas.

For incidents seen and dealt with by the referee, the suspension will be immediate. Appeals will only be allowed for claims of mistaken identity and will be dealt within four working days of the fixture.

Under current rules, suspensions come into effect two weeks after a match.

Fewer appeals

For incidents missed by the referee but caught on video, cases will be heard by the end of the week.

Suspensions will again be immediate and appeals can be made only against bans of more than three matches.

With events seen by the referee but out of his jurisdiction, such as incidents after the final whistle or in the players' tunnel, the FA expect cases to be closed within 28 days.

Bans for an accumulation of yellow cards will come into force within seven days, rather than the current 14.

Palios, who said a separate review into the handling of drugs cases would be completed by the end of the month, admitted shortcomings in the current system.

"Players were almost saying they had forgotten what they were getting banned for because of the delay," he told reporters at the FA's headquarters.

By the end of next season, Palios said: "I would like the perception to be that we have speeded the whole process up."

But he warned: "The players and the clubs have to play their part...spurious appeals where people have sought to gain an advantage have tarnished the perception of the procedures."

"People would delay suspensions to fit in with their fixture schedule and the important games. If we find people abusing that we'll see how effective we can be in stopping it."

The new measures, which will cover all professional levels of the game, will be reviewed after the 2004-05 season.

Contest No. (5) مسابقة رقم

إعداد معهد الفاروق للغات والكمبيوتر

Prepared by Al-Farouk Institute of Languages & Computer

الممثل الوحيد لكليات سانت جيلز ومركز أكسفورد في كل من بريطانيا وأمريكا

The Sole Representative of Oxford L.C & St. Giles Colleges UK & USA

1. No _____ without fire.
2. Eye specialst.
3. Talk.
4. Fix, repair.
5. A warning to walk up.
6. not fresh.
7. whistler at a football game.
8. From 13 to 19 years.

Ans. Cont. 4

1 B

2 E

3 C

4 A

Winner

Fares Soltan

جائزة هذه المسابقة دبلوم كمبيوتر مقدم من معهد الفاروق للغات والكمبيوتر

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7-Day Weather Forecast															
Sana'a	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Aden	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
Hi	26	26	26	26	27	27	27	Hi	33	34	34	35	35	36	36
Lo	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	Lo	22	22	21	21	20	19	19

THE LAST WORD IN

ASTROLOGY BY Eugenia

<p>Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)</p> <p>Your impatience may get the better of you today. Make sure that you have plenty to keep you busy. Challenge yourself physically to ease your tension.</p>	<p>Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)</p> <p>If there is something you are questioning, delve in and find the answer. Travel will result in an interesting turn of events. Follow the path that suits you best.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)</p> <p>Social events will result in a whole lot of fun and probably a little romance. Talking to active people who are in pursuit of their goals will spark some of your own ideas for future projects.</p>
<p>Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)</p> <p>Keep a lid on any secrets you might be harboring. You may have an encounter with an unlikely individual. Abide by the rules of the road if you are driving.</p>	<p>Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)</p> <p>Consider an investment that you have been looking at but, if you have to borrow to make it happen, invest less or take a pass. Money can be made only if you are in a position to take on the initial burden.</p>	<p>Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)</p> <p>Do something special for someone you are close to if you have been neglecting this person due to a heavy workload. Someone you can usually count on may try to stop you from doing something. Consider his or her motives.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)</p> <p>Inactivity will be the enemy. Get involved in an organization that will bring you in contact with people who have something to offer. Promote yourself.</p>	<p>Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)</p> <p>Someone you know may be a little uptight today. Take precautions by keeping things light and easygoing. Don't let anyone bully you.</p>	<p>Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)</p> <p>Talk to someone you trust about an idea you've been contemplating. You may be able to muster up some help getting it off the ground. Forming a good alliance with this person will be the turning point to future prospects.</p>
<p>Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)</p> <p>Be careful how you handle a family situation. Taking sides will only lead to trouble. Listen and observe; consider how your decisions will affect others.</p>	<p>Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)</p> <p>Your mind should be on taking better care of yourself. You've been pushing yourself too hard and it's time to do something that will help you relax.</p>	<p>Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20)</p> <p>Your past experience and intuition should give you the answers you require today without letting others in on your situation. Confiding in someone may lead to another setback.</p>

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2) International Islamic University Malaysia
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عن
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البنك العربي
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ش القمري
ش عن الملا
ش ٦٦ من الملا
ش ٦٦ من الملا
ش مجمع نزع
ش في ابيس الشارع الرئيسي الملا

تأجير سيارات
صنعاء: ٠١-٤٤٢٠٩
عدن: ٠١-٤٤٦٢٢
صنعاء: ٠١-٤٤٦٢٢
ابو رواض لتأجير السيارات
صنعاء: ٠١-٤٤٦٢٢

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البريد السريع
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وجميع الأصدقاء



Poor Yemenis seek nirvana with narcotic leaf

By Ghaida Ghantous

SANAA, March 14 (Reuters) - A group of young Yemenis throng outside a small market around midday to buy bushels of the mild narcotic qat for an afternoon of mastication and relaxation.

Mohamed Awadi, 20, spends nearly half his monthly salary to indulge in the long chewing sessions, a centuries-old tradition practiced by both ordinary people and top government officials in the poor Arab state.

"Qat is relaxing. It takes me out into space," said Awadi who spends at least 15,000 rials (\$83) each month on the branches of bitter green and reddish-brown leaves.

Qat lovers seek what they call "kaif", a state of heightened perception and emotion achieved after hours of chewing.

ing.

After taking the plastic-wrapped branches from the market sellers, dressed in the traditional shirt and lungi with the jambiya dagger tied at their waists, the men head out for a hearty lunch to bolster themselves for the chewing sessions.

They take place in a small room or diwan, scented with incense and kept warm to enhance the effect of the drug. Often a hookah pipe is placed in the middle for those who want to smoke tobacco too.

Lounging on low mattresses with the bags of qat next to them, the men pluck the softest leaves and push them into one cheek, where they are ground into a growing wad the juices from which are absorbed into the bloodstream.

Bottles of water are placed on small

tables to combat the dehydrating effects of qat, which contains chemicals similar in effect to amphetamines, which raise blood pressure and body temperature as well as releasing adrenaline.

Despite the bulging cheeks, conversation is lively as jokes are swapped and the pile of discarded leaves and twigs grows and adrenaline builds in the first few hours.

But when "kaif" arrives, the mood becomes introspective and this is the time to play soft, romantic music.

"You ponder life and plan your future and when you wake all you are left with is empty talk," said 21-year-old Fouad, who is studying computer science at an American institute.

He chews qat daily and spends 20,000 riyals a month or two-thirds of his allowance on the habit. "It helps me study," he said, as other students at the market nodded in agreement.

The gatherings, at which politics and business are discussed and contacts made, are growing in popularity among young people and women despite official efforts to reduce its consumption.

Lucrative trade

Qat is an expensive habit in a country where, according to a World Bank official, per capital income is \$500, the poor account for 42 percent of the 18.5 million population, unemployment is around 11 percent and under-employ-



from selling qat. The price ranges between 200 and 1,000 rials a bundle in markets in Sanaa, depending on the quality of the leaves and on rainfall.

Shawqi, a taxi driver, manages to bring in only 30,000 rials each month by working 12 hours a day.

The stimulant, which is also prized in the Horn of Africa, is also smuggled across the border into Saudi Arabia, where it is illegal.

"Qat is a major problem," said Nadir Mohammed, senior economist at the World Bank office in Sanaa. "It is a water-intensive plant which is

depleting water resources and national productivity."

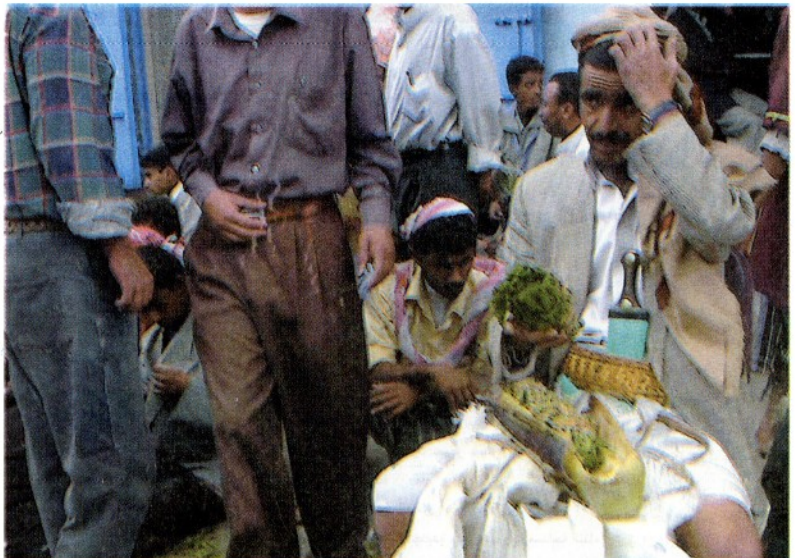
"They dig 700 metres (2,300 feet) for wells. They are not prepared to do that for any other crop, but qat pays money," he added.

Yemen has only 130 cubic metres of water per person per year. According to government statistics, qat uses up as nearly 80 percent of the water supply in some parts of the country.

Experts say the problem requires a major reduction campaign offering farmers an alternative.

Officials are also concerned about the effect of qat on health, especially that of children in the absence of laws regulating the drug. Pesticides are used in cultivation and the side-effects include lack of appetite and insomnia.

Mohamed Hatta, like many, ignores the critics. "It brings you kaif," he said.



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