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President Saleh's son Ahmed calls reports on alleged attempt on his life...

"MERE LIES"

BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI AND HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Colonel Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh says recent reports of an assault on his life were based on lies and rumors.

During the graduation of a new batch of the special forces he heads, he said that rumors leaked from some Yemeni sides and reported in some media organs that there was an attempt to assassinate him by one of his officers were "mere lies."

He called those reports "allegations that aim at shaking the stability and security in Yemen and an attempt to ruin his personal image."

Those allegations have come at a time when his father, President Ali Abdullah Saleh is visiting a number of eastern and

southern governorates. Tribal sources revealed that during his visit to Mareb on Saturday, President Saleh signed a peace treaty with tribesmen of the area for one year.

Analysts said that the rumors may be intended to bring focus on the person of the president's son as the head of the forces currently cracks down on militant groups in various parts of the country, and to expose his role in this regard to the world.

Journalist arrested

Meanwhile, a Yemeni journalist who writes for a London-based newspaper has been arrested for reporting there was an attempt on the life of the eldest son of Yemen's president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Saeed Thabet, correspondent of the London-based Quds Press Agency, was snatched from the street after he left his house Friday noon for prayers at the mosque. His 3-year old son went home without his father.

The whereabouts of the journalist was only known at 10



Ahmed Ali Abdullah, Commander of Republican Guard and Commander of Anti-Terrorism Special Forces, in front of a batch of new graduates of Special Forces, declining the rumors about an attempt on his life. (Television grab)

o'clock in the evening when intelligence agents came to his house to take some clothes for him, telling his family that there "were orders that he must be summoned."

However, Thabet was able to tell his family that he was arrested by the Intelligence and that he was alright only at one o'clock in the morning. The arrest of Thabet came as

a result of the rumor that spread like wildfire on Thursday that the elder son of President Ali Abdullah Saleh was subject to an attempted assassination. *Continued on Page 3*



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Questions if U.S. has evidence

Sana'a stands by Al-Zindani

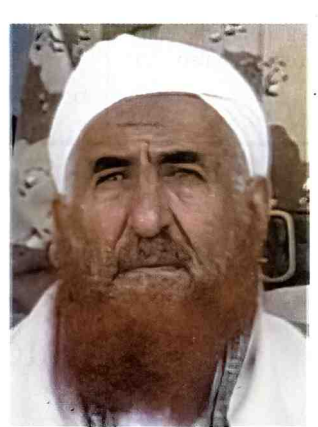
BY PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni government announced that it has stayed clear of becoming involved in the case in which the US government accused Sheikh Abdumajeed Al-Zindani of supporting terrorists.

Sultan Al-Barakani, Chairman of the GPC Caucus, told The Yemen Times that the US government has not sent any information to the Yemeni government, and he stressed that the local government has not seen any evidence against Al-Zindani.

"The government is dealing with Sheikh Zindani as a Yemeni citizen," said Al-Barakani.

"We have not received anything from the US government, and we don't have any evidence that Sheikh Zindani was involved with Al-Qaeda until now. Up to this time, it has not been a serious issue. The Yemeni government cares about the security of the Yemeni people, and he is one of



Sheikh Abdumajeed Al-Zindani

them."

Late last month, the US Treasury Department added Al-Zindani to its list of people suspected of supporting terrorist activities. The allegation claims that Al-Zindani worked with Osama bin Laden, was involved in recruiting operatives for Al-Qaeda and dealt with the purchase

of weapons for Al-Qaeda and other terrorists.

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, denied the allegations of being connected to supporting terrorists in a press statement released a little over a week ago.

Al-Barakani said that if evidence against Al-Zindani surfaces, the Yemeni government will step in.

"If there is clear evidence, the government and the legal system in Yemen will take care of it," said Al-Barakani. "He will be arrested and will be taken to court."

According to Abdul Wahab Al-Ansi, Deputy Chairman of Islah, the Islah party is holding a similar position.

"Does the United States have proof that supports the accusations? If it does have proof, it should give it to the Yemeni government," said Ansi. "The case

can then go to Yemeni court."

Al-Zindani is the third prominent member of the Islah party that has been accused by the US government of having links with terrorist organizations. Last year, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Mouyad was arrested in Germany and extradited to the United States after being accused of collecting over \$20 million for Al-Qaeda. Recently, Sheikh Abdullah Sa'atar was also accused by the US government of raising money for terrorist operations.

Al-Ansi said that the accusations against party members have not weakened Islah's political position in Yemen.

"If anyone is proven guilty, including Al-Zindani, it will not affect the strength of the Islah party," said Al-Ansi. "We have strong departments and Islah is a strong party. After Watergate in the United States, for example, the Republican party was not affected. After the Monica and Clinton case, the Democrats

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remained strong. If there are people guilty of working with Al-Qaeda, they don't belong to the Islah party."

Some worry that if Al-Zindani is extradited to the United States or taken to court in Yemen, there will be a strong, possibly violent, reaction in Yemen.

"If Al-Zindani is shipped off to the United States, there will be repercussions," said a political analyst. "He is a prominent spiritual leader and has a large following. There is also a chance that if someone in such a high position in Yemen is taken by the United States, the Yemeni people will have had enough. They may be thinking that this could be a way for the West to control their own country."

proof against Al-Zindani, social unrest in Yemen will be minimal. But if proof is not given, there could be negative consequences.

"Being sensitive of accusing a religious leader is not an issue in Islam," said Al-Ansi. "But accusing him without proof can generate more hate toward America. If he is guilty, it will make no difference if he goes to a Yemeni or a US court."

Some believe that accusations against Al-Zindani may be used for political maneuvering within the government.

According to one government official, "Sheikh Al-Zindani has power and might be considered an obstacle to the interests of some in both the ruling and the Islah party. It might not bother them if he is moved out of the political arena."

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Grenade also injures 33, during prayers

Five killed by extremist

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Five people were killed and 33 injured in a grenade attack on a group of people in Thamar after Friday prayers by an Islamic extremist who then killed himself.

Official sources said that Abdullah Ahmad Ghasan, about 30 years old, threw two grenades at a group of people at Ottoma after they finished Friday prayer, causing the death of five, including a woman, and injuring 33 others.

The killer fled to his house where he fired his gun, killing himself.

While the sources said he suffered from psychological disturbance and had family problems, Yemen Times learnt from reliable sources in Thamar that the murderer is former militant who fought in Afghanistan during the war against the former Soviet Union.

According to the official sources, police found a letter in his pocket saying that he operated the crime because he "wanted to clean up the village from corruption."

Authorities are investigating.

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Two top al-Qaeda members caught, but still . . . Hard time cracking down on Abyan militants

BY PETER WILLEMS AND
MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemeni security forces arrested two senior Al-Qaeda members last Wednesday during a hunt for Islamic militants in a mountainous area of the Abyan province, security officials said.

Abdul Rauf Nassib, a top Yemeni Al-Qaeda leader, and Egyptian Sayyed Imam Sharif, an influential member of the militant organization, were both captured in the same operation. However, elder son of Nassib denied that his brother is a member of al-Qaeda and he was not arrested but he himself surrendered to the security when he knew that he was wanted by security.

"The Yemeni government is very serious on the war on terror because national security in Yemen is very important," said Sultan Al-Barakani, Chairman of the GPC Caucus, to Yemen Times. "Security is our number one priority, and this operation provides more proof that when the Yemeni government says it

will do something, it follows through and delivers."

Nassib, also known as Abu Mihjim, is said to have worked closely with Al-Qaeda's leader Mohammed Al-Ahdel, who was arrested in Yemen last year. It is believed that Nassib survived the Nov. 2002 missile attack in the Marib province that was carried out by the CIA and one of its drones. The attack killed a top Al-Qaeda operative, Qaed Salim Sinan Al-Harethi.

Nassib was also wanted for allegedly planning the escape of 10 militants from an Aden prison in April 2003. The militants were detained as suspects in connection with the bombing of the US warship USS Cole in 2000, which killed 17 American sailors.

Sharif, also called Doctor Fadhel, was once a founder of Islamic Jihad in Egypt. It is reported that in the mid-nineties, he handed over leadership of the militant organization to Ayman Al-Zawahiri, currently Al-Qaeda's number two leader and Osama bin Laden's right hand man.

Islamic Jihad formed an alliance with

Al-Qaeda in 1998 and announced that they joined forces to strike US and Jewish interests.

On Wednesday, security forces, backed by tanks and armored vehicles, surrounded a hideout of a number of Islamic militants in the mountainous Jebel Thira region near the town of Lawdar, approximately 250 km (155 miles) south of Sana'a and 150 km (90 miles) northeast of Aden.

Officials said that the area was sealed off and security forces gave the militants a chance to surrender. However, other local sources said the two men were easily captured in the city and were among a dozen militants captured during the operation.

The operation came following reports of planned terrorist attacks in Yemen. Security has increased around embassies, foreign companies and government institutions in Sana'a.

According to officials, security forces have continued surrounding the area in an effort to allow more militants in hiding to give themselves up and avoid using military force. It is reported that mediators have been selected to help persuade the militants to surrender.

But, eyewitnesses told The Yemen Times that the government troops number was decreased and that some of the

set checkpoints were removed.

They said that the troops continued their intelligence work to locate the militants who fled to the rugged mountains difficult for the troops to reach which means that a military operation against them has become very difficult. Local sources said that the militants scattered in small groups in the mountains, making the task of the troops unlikely to happen.

Soon after it was announced that the two senior members of Al-Qaeda were arrested, it was reported that Sharif had already been detained by the Yemeni government and was extradited to Egypt along with five other Egyptians. The news came from Islamic Observation Center rights watchdog based in London. Security officials in Yemen have yet to confirm or deny this report.

The Yemeni government has been working closely with the United States since terrorist attacks in US cities on Sept. 11, 2001, believed to have been carried out by the militant group Al-Qaeda and led by Osama bin Laden whose ancestral homeland is Yemen.

Although vast rural areas of Yemen are mostly under tribal rule, the Yemeni government has been successful cracking down on Al-Qaeda suspects.

"In the war on terror, the Yemeni government has set an example on how to

fight terror," said one foreign diplomat based in Yemen.

According to Al-Barakani, even though there is close cooperation between Yemen and the United States to track down Islamic extremists, the capture of Nassib and Sharif was not done under US pressure.

"This is an important issue: The United States is not pressuring the Yemeni government but just helping," said Al-Barakani. "Terrorism is an important issue."

The Yemeni government cares about the security in Yemen. It cares about the security of the Yemeni people, foreigners in Yemen and the international reputation of our country's security. Therefore, we are always taking the first steps to crack down on militants. If we need any advice, we ask the United States."

Since the war on terror began, the Yemeni government has rounded up numerous suspects, has captured key Al-Qaeda operatives and has been able to stop the kidnapping of foreigners by tribesmen in over two years.

Along with US soldiers training Yemeni security forces, the US government delivered seven gunboats last month to help the Yemeni coastguard patrol the country's shorelines.

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 the alleged assassination attempt on Ahmed Saleh, the son of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, was real?

1. Yes
2. No
3. It's too soon to know.

last edition's question:

Do you have hope in that Yemen will join the GCC?

- I think it will happen but after a long period 36%
- I don't think it will happen at all 32%
- I believe that will happen in the coming few years 32%

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Free trade is among the plans Pakistan and Yemen ink deals

The concluding session of Pakistan - Yemen Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) meeting was held in Sana'a recently.

The JMC meeting that continued for two days, deliberated upon all areas of bilateral mutual cooperation with focus on economic and commercial relations. The Minister for Commerce Humayun Akhtar Khan and the Yemeni Minister for Industry and Trade Dr. Khalid Rajeh Sheikh, besides signing the agreed Minutes, inked three agreements on trade, health care co-operation and double taxation.

The two sides reiterated their commitment to enhance bilateral economic, trade, commercial, industrial, cultural, scientific and technological, agricultural and cooperation in the field of health.

Both countries underlined the importance of exchange of visits of experts and business and trade delegations.

They also agreed to establish linkages between educational institutions of the two countries.

Both sides considered declaring port cities of Aden and Karachi as twin cities as a mark of close and brotherly relations between Yemen and Pakistan.

Earlier, the Minister for Commerce called on Vice President, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, Prime Minister Abdulqadar Ba-Jamal and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and International Cooperation where the Minister for Industry and Trade was also present, it was agreed that in order to enhance trade relations between the two coun-

tries, as well as to expand trade in the region.

Pakistan and Yemen will start negotiations for signing a Preferential Tariff Agreement (PTA) leading to a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). In this connection Yemen will send a technical delegation to Pakistan within next three months and as soon as modalities are finalized the Yemeni Minister of Industry and Trade will visit Pakistan to sign such an agreement.

The Pakistani side also expressed willingness to send a technical delegation to Yemen in this regard, if so required. They also reviewed bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest.

They noted with satisfaction the progress made at the JMC meeting and emphasized that the excellent bilateral relations, which the two countries have been enjoying, should be reflected in their economic and commercial ties.

The Minister for Commerce conveyed good wishes to the Yemeni leadership from the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Commerce Minister accompanied by the business delegation addressed the Sana'a Chambers of Commerce & Industry and urged the Yemeni businessmen to explore possibilities of enhancing further trade between the two countries.

The two sides agreed to hold single country exhibitions in Pakistan and Yemen. A protocol on Economic Cooperation between Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry was also signed.

Fraud crackdown Iraqis now need visas to visit Yemen

BY MOHAMMED BINSALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemeni Immigration and Passports Authority have circulated Interior Ministry instructions to airports and other outlets that the Iraqis have to get entry visas before they can enter Yemen.

The new instructions also stipulate the granting, for Iraqi living in Yemen, exit and entry visas and work permits if they pay duties of 7,500 YR (about \$40) in addition to the visa duty of \$20, a measure similar to non-Arab nationals living in Yemen.

Iraqis before the fall of Saddam Hussein regime were exempted from residence duties and could enter Yemen without visa, similar to nationals from other Arab countries.

A source at the ministry clarified to the media that the measure taken recently by the Immigration and Passports Authority, to prevent the persons carrying Iraqi passports from entering Yemen without visa, was part of precautionary measures.

The source told the Yemeni Arab-language weekly 26 September, that published the news on Thursday, "the

motive behind that step was because of the noticeable spread of forged Iraqi passports lately after the fall of the former Iraqi regime, as it is thought that a large number of documents and passports had leaked outside."

He pointed out that as a result of that situation and for preventing the infiltration of suspect elements into Yemen by using Iraqi-forged passports, a decision was taken for regulating the entry and exit of Iraqi citizens and also their residency.

PMs confirm price hikes

BY MOHAMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Parliamentarian sources confirmed on March 4 that the government intends to increase prices of oil derivatives as of July, where the prices of diesel and petrol will be 35 and 50 YR, respectively.

The government presented a memo on week before last calling for the approval of the parliament to the price increase. The urgent request of the government for a joint meeting of the parliament and Al-Shoura Councils on Saturday before last aiming to discuss and approve the latest decision of the government to raise fuel prices generated resentments of a big number of parliament members.

It was a shock to many others since how could the people withstand the new prices and the majority of the public live beyond the line of poverty.

An economic expert warned from this increase and said that the increase in fuel prices would mean higher prices of all goods and services and consequently, the level of poverty would be higher in a way which may threaten social stability of the society.

The opposition parties represented in the parliament have announced they would fight the increase and would vote against it in the parliament.

Canadian team in cancer unit

The Canadian medical team, headed by Prof. Martin Robinson, paid a visit last week to the site of ultra sound x-ray equipment, used for the treatment of cancer.

The team has conducted 19 cancer-related operations and had examined 250 other cases. Breast and brain cancers are the most common cases of cancer in Yemen.

The statistics by Republican Hospital in Sana'a, indicate there were

2,952 cases registered during the period of six months.

Meanwhile, a fire took place in the hospital destroyed unused medical equipment valued at several million dollars.

The cause of the fire has not been disclosed yet, and no investigation with officials has been conducted in spite of a report by Yemen Times, which previously published with pictures of destroyed equipment.

The Embassy of the United States of America announces for a job opening within its organization.

"Maintenance Mechanic"

The position is located in the Facility Maintenance section, American Embassy, under the immediate supervision of the Facility Engineer and the Facility Maintenance Manager (FMM). Employee will be responsible for the preventive maintenance and repair of complex commercial plumbing system inclusive of such system as the chilled water system, waste/ water/ vent piping systems water purification equipment and systems, fire suppression systems and equipment, chemical and water treatment system, along with ancillary equipment such as fire and domestic water pumps, fuel dispensing equipment, swimming pool system and equipment. Additionally the mechanics will perform all necessary maintenance repairs on large commercial generators and associated equipment, such as fuel plumbing systems and air ventilation systems.

Required Qualifications:

Education: Graduate of secondary school and completion of a vocational training Program/ apprenticeship giving an equivalent of journeyman in either mechanic, plumbing and carpentry skills

Prior work Experience: A minimum of 5 years of journeyman level experience a long with a minimum of 2 years training on commercial/ industrial generator and plumbing systems equivalent to the Embassy systems.

Language Proficiency: Level III English ability along with a complete ability to read and interpret correcting blue prints, schematics, piping diagrams, O&M Manuals, etc.

Knowledge: Knowledge of US plumbing and mechanical codes with particular emphasis in large commercial/ industrial generator operations inclusive of safety requirements.

Abilities: Must be fully capable and have the capacity to perform in the redesign, operation and maintenance of all plumbing and mechanical systems along with all tools and appurtenances.

Grade/Salary: *EFM/ MOH/ Non Ordinarily Resident: FP-9 (to be confirmed by Washington) * Ordinary Resident: FSN -5 (at full level)

How to apply: All interested nationals should complete OF-612 or submit a current C.V (with awards, recommendation letters, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualification requirements of the position, as listed above, and send it to the Embassy personnel Office, American Embassy, Dhahr Himyar Street, P.O.Box 22347, Sana'a, Yemen, Tel: 303-155, no later than March 15, 2004.

Note: All ordinarily resident applicants must be residing in country and have the required work and residency permits to be eligible for the consideration.

Kidnapped Sudanese child Child hostage released

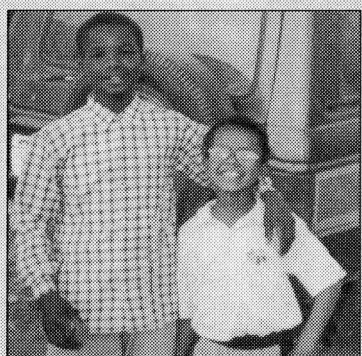
By Yemen Times Staff

Azhary Mahmoud Sulaiman, the 9-year old son of the Head of the Sudanese community in Yemen held hostage in Al-Jouf for two weeks, was released on Saturday 6th March following mediation efforts led by Sheikh Ameen Al-Ukaime.

The kidnapers were demanding 15 million YR ransom for the child. This money was claimed as compensation for of sums of money taken by the boy's father, acting as a representative of the Education Office in the Governorate, from nearly 300 local residents on the promise that he would secure jobs for them in the Ministry of Education. He has fled to the UAE.

The Sudanese community had rejected any possibility of ransom of compromise. In a letter received by Yemen Times, the Sudanese Community stated that:

- 1- It abides by and respects Yemeni laws and norms.
- 2- it demands the safe return of the child unconditionally.
- 3- It has the right of the father of the kidnapped to sue the kidnapers.
- 4- The aggression against an innocent child is a flagrant violation of



Sudanese boy Azhary Mahmoud Sulaiman, 9, (right) with an unidentified friend.

human rights.

5- The community refuses to inter negotiation with the kidnapers and thanks the efforts of the Yemeni authorities and Sheiks.

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry had been in contact with the Yemeni Embassy in Khartoum. The content of their discussions has not been disclosed.

Full details of the settlement are not yet available. Early reports suggest a sum of money less than 15 million YR was paid to the tribesmen.

Long-time defender of Ethiopians

Habebah appeals for the protection of Ethiopians

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Habebah Hussein Mohamed, an Ethiopian national residing in Yemen as a refugee for more than 26 years has been a long-time volunteer to defend other Ethiopians in need of someone to report their daily sufferings to the Yemeni authorities.

Because of that, she has encountered many problems and harassment, either from Ethiopians working for the new government or from Yemenis unsympathetic to Ethiopians. She says an encounter has resulted in losing one of her eyes.

With regards to the current situation of the Ethiopian refugees, Habebah said that she is dedicating her time to defending the 530 who remain; the rest having been either repatriated or moved to another country.

She said that the problem of refugees began in 1995 when the Yemeni Government halted the material support, shelter, food and water and kicked out from their camp in Taiz. They were technically homeless in Yemen, she says. The security authorities later on began to arrest them and several were imprisoned.

Only Habebah was writing complaints to Refugees Division of Ministry of Interior for their release. Their situation was deteriorating from bad to worse, she said.

The Yemeni Authority asked the High Commissioner for Refugee in Geneva to find solutions for the 530 Ethiopian former officers and files in which they received assistant from end of 1995 till 1999, represented temporary resident permit and protection as refugees. The Refugee Commission to Sana'a stopped issuing these permits as refugees on the



Habebah Hussein

pretend the instruction of the Yemeni authorities not to grant them this identity.

Habebah, through the various media means, is urging the Yemeni Authorities and High Commissioner for Refugees to deal with the Ethiopian in Yemen humanly and not to vow to pressure the Ethiopian Government to repatriate them against their wills.

She also calls on the international organization and the United Nations affiliated organizations on refugees and peaceful settlement of disputes to intervene to accept them as refugees in Yemen or find a third country for them as their lives are still in danger by the current regime in Addis Ababa.

Celebration at Taiz commercial court

Assistant Governor of Taiz, Ali Al-Magdashi, Judge Abdullah Ali Al-Jumrah, Chairman of Court of Appeal, Abdulmenam Salah, Director of Commercial Court of Appeal and Dean of Faculty of Law in Taiz University and Judges of Preliminary Courts in the city, all attended the honoring celebration held on 3 March to honor the distinguished individuals in the divisions of the Commercial Court in the governorate.

Speeches pointed out that the commercial judiciary is what the government is betting on to attract investors, to settle commercial dealings and to revive the national economy.



The reforms of the judicial system and the constant and rapid development of it through establishing financially and administratively independent commercial courts represent genuine interest of the political leadership to continue on the correct path to reform the judicial system.

Helicopter shooting suspect in custody

BY HASSAN AL-ZAYADI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen Times sources have learned that Salem Omran Saleh, 24, accused of firing bullets from a machine gun at a military helicopter on last Monday at Al-Hada region, Dhamar Governorate, has rendered himself to the security authority in Dhamar.

The sources pointed out that the

accused fired at the chopper's fuel tank which forced it an emergency landing.

A military spokesman stated last Monday that the crew, five members, in their route to Aden, survived the incident. Security Authorities in Dhamar had planned a military campaign to arrest the perpetrator, and the sheiks in Dhamar had promised to turn in the perpetrator.

Continued from page 1

Mere lies

Journalists gathered at the YJS premises to denounce the arrest and insisted that they would start a sit-in or march towards the intelligence prison to demand the release of their friend.

Some of the YJS leaders were not interested in issuing the statement denouncing the arrest and even left the YJS office after most of the members insisted that a statement should be released.

Some members, including the Chairman Mahbbob Ali, pledged to follow up the question with the Prime Minister and other high ranking officials in the ruling party and intelligence authority to secure the release of the journalist.

The alleged assassination attempt was the talk across Yemen.

In an attempt to refute the rumor, Colonel Ahmad appeared at the gradu-

ation ceremony for a new batch from the Republican Guards and Special Tasks Forces anti-terror specialists, held Saturday in Sana'a.

Journalists were invited for the first time to attend the ceremony, but some refused to attend the event until their friend is set free.

Ahmad told the media that he was there to celebrate such an important event and tell the people that the news was an unfounded rumor invented by people of ill-intention.

He said that he did not know about the arrest of Thabet and promised to intervene to set him free.

On its part, Ouds Press called on the Yemeni authorities to release Saeed Thabet immediately, describing him a highly professional journalist and that his arrest harms Yemen and its freedom of the press.

Other human rights NGOs denounced the arrest and demanded the release of Thabet immediately.

JICA arrives in Sana'a next week

A mission from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will visit Sana'a next week to discuss the resumption of the dispatch of the Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) to the Republic of Yemen.

The mission, headed by Mr. Susaki Takehiro, Secretariat of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, will meet with their counterparts in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Education, as well as other bilateral and multilateral development donor agencies.

As it becomes the first Visa Principal Member Bank in Yemen:

IBY introduces Visa Check Cards

Part of its efforts to modernize and enhance its services to the public in Yemen, the International Bank of Yemen (IBY) has yet again made a spectacular pioneer move in becoming the first Yemeni bank to be a Visa Principal Member, which in turn enables it to provide the renowned Visa check Cards service to its customers.

This new service provides clients the flexibility of using the different facilities offered by the check cards, which can be used at any location that accepts Visa.

Visa is the leading payment brand and the largest payment system in the world, with more volume than all other major payment cards combined.

This service offered by IBY adds another advantage to IBY clients as the bank strives to serve both the retail and corporate sectors in the best way, providing commercial and industrial finance to Yemeni businesses as well as foreign companies operating in the country. IBY enjoys excellent relations with many reputable foreign banks. This enables it to provide first-class international banking services.

In Brief

Chinese military attache in Yemen

The Chinese military attache to Sana'a, Teng Ho Nag, who has been working in Yemen for 10 years, held a farewell reception on the occasion of termination of his post to Sana'a.

The Brigadier, who speaks Arabic fluently, may depart Yemen to Iraq to assume same post in Iraq.

The Ministry of Defense in Yemen has honored the Chinese Brigadier with first-grade Merit of Honor for his contribution and his role in the development of military relations between China and Yemen.

Al-Jouf Governorate to get health projects

The Yemen Times has been told that US Ambassador Edmund Hull is currently making contacts with some prominent Sheiks Al-Jouf Governorate in an effort to obtain the approval of the related authorities in order to pay a visit to the governorate which he was denied earlier for security reasons.

Four health projects are to be built there.

The US had financed the renovation and furnishing of the President's Hospital in Marib at a cost of \$2 million.

The financing of these projects is part of the strategy to develop these regions and prevent them from becoming a refuge for terrorists.

Yemen-Korea media co-operation

Minister of Information and Telecommunication of the Republic of Korea arrived in Sana'a on March 5, in an official visit to meet with Yemeni government related officials for discussion of bilateral relations and the means to enhance them in particular in the field of information and telecommunication.

Emergency fund to Preserve Zabeed City

An emergency fund has been established to preserve and protect the architectural characteristic of Zabeed historic city.

The fund will renovate the historic homes through granting loans up to \$2,000 to each owner.

The fund comes as part of the plans of Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the General Authority for Antiquities and Museums to protect this historic city as one of the world's historic cities.

The historic gates of the city have been already renovated including Al-Gartub Gate.

Volvo company meets customers

Al-Aqel Company, the sole Agent of Volvo in Yemen, invited its customers last Monday to its shops in order to get acquainted with the latest Volvo construction products.

Tommy Eriksson, Product Marketing Manager, presented a visual representation of the graders manufactured by Volvo other equipment used in the field of construction.

Meanwhile, Haj Ali Nasser Al-Aqel, Director of the company, pointed out that his company is currently offering oil investment companies and companies working in the fields of building and construction its equipment at reasonable prices and easy payment installments, as one of the new facilities granted by the agent of Volvo company in Yemen.

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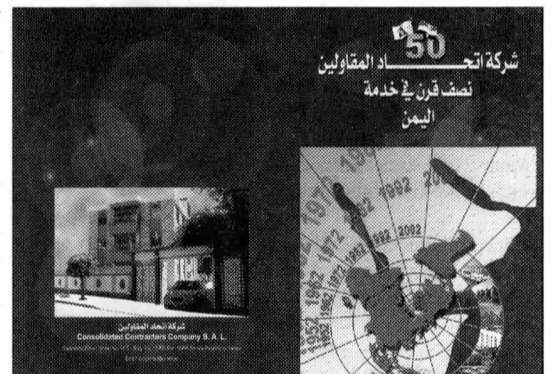


Consolidated Contractors Company published book

Lately, the book of "Consolidated Contractors Company, Half a Century in Serving Yemen", was published in an elegant form and distinguished printing.

The book depicts 50 years in serving the Yemeni economy starting with Aden refinery and still continues through tens of projects.

The book as it explains the progress and the development of the young company on the shoulders of three young ambitious Palestinians, Haseeb Sabagh, Kamel Abdulrahman and Saeed Khoury, also provides a summary of the economic and development progress in Yemen.



The book gives important information about the size of the infrastructure projects in the oil, refinery, electricity, education, water, and telecommunication sectors, which the Consolidated Contractors Company sincerely and effectively participated in.

First annual program on childhood

Ebhar Corporation for Childhood and Creativity launched its first annual program for children on March 7 at the Hall of Writers and Intellectuals Syndicate in Sana'a.

The program consists of 22 activities about narrative, poetic and songs lyrics nights and creative arts exhibitions presented by nearly 75 creative boys and girls as well as intellectual nights presented by specialists in children's

literature, and journalism and child's identity songs.

In the opening ceremony is the celebration on the child artist / Sameer Al-Karty, who presented his first personal exhibition.

The Zagzagat theatrical band will present a musical and dancing play, titled, "A visit to the Kingdom of Genes". The main sponsor of activities is Al-Hana Company.

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Director Mohamed Ali Mughem explains how Postal services are changing with the times

By ISMAEL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Post and Postal Savings Corp. has accomplished several through the improvement of its performance and the adaptation of modern electronic systems. The post offices are dispersed throughout the governorates of Yemen, in both urban and rural areas.

The General Director of the postal corporation, Mohamed Ali Mughem, shed some lights on a number of successes, investment plans and the new services. Following are his thoughts on these areas.



Mohamed Ali Mughem

Advanced services

The Post and Postal Savings Corp. provides several postal and financial services, electronic Riyals and others which meet the need and demands of various market place and members of the Yemeni society through postal offices covering all cities and rural areas in Yemen.

The Corporation has improved the quality of postal services provided through the development and improvement of these services, as well as introducing electronic services, expanding the transport fleet and the training and rehabilitating its staff using modern techniques and computer networks.

Computer networks now cover more than 70 post offices throughout Yemen.

Recently, the corporation has begun offering financial services, the payment of wages for some authorities such as the General Authority for Wages, Telecommunication and electricity Corporations and files of Armed and Security Forces and others.

Technology

Due to the importance of updating and developing the level of presenting quality services to citizens and the keenness to support the national economy, the corporation has recently accomplished the Electronic Riyal, which enables the citizens to pay their consumption bills through it. It is considered as a mediator between the citizens and the commercial service corporations.

The Electronic Riyal is an already paid card with different amounts consists of a secret number through which the consumer can pay the due bills through the Internet.

sumer can pay the due bills through the Internet.

The Posted letters

The postal service can contribute in strengthening the social ties through the posted letters and parcels sent among individuals and members of the society. This assists in building societies and understandings as the most wide communication means available for the majority of the public in a specific country. It also helps in strengthening cultural, social and civilization aspects among countries of the world through the transferring of human intelligence with ideas and opinions.

Accomplishment in 2003

The project of rehabilitation and postal reforms has been prepared which consists of development of administrative work, restructuring of administrative and services units in addition to reorganizing the postal saving service aiming for effective contribution to the national economy. Also, the reorganizing of regular and express mail and expanding the local system.

In addition to establishing the department of systems and information in order to benefit from the technology of electronic networks in administering its services and activities and the improvement of financial transfer services through issuing transfer quick transfer and receive cards.

The Post and Postal Saving Corp. is also keen to develop the hobby of collecting postal stamps at the local and international levels, since that increases the artistic, cultural and scientific awareness to the collectors.

The Yemeni stamps are distinguished at the International exhibitions and have received gold, bronze and silver medals. These stamps contribute also in depicting national events, historic, tourist sites, plans and marine life and rare birds in Yemen as well as keep records of international sport, health, environment and humanitarian events.



Will evaluate past, look to future National meeting on curbing violence against women

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Woman National Committee will organize as part of its activities the First National Conference for Combating Violence against Women.

It is in co-operation with the Yemeni Network for Combating Violence and Oxfam organization under the slogan, "Together to maintain the dignity of woman in a society free from violence."

The conference will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Bajamal and will continue for two days with 400 participants of both sexes representing ministries, civil society sectors and related authorities.

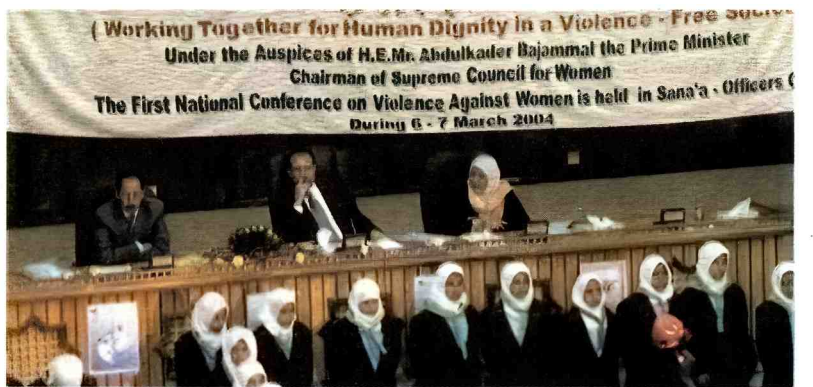
Rashedah AL-Hamdani, Chairwoman of Woman National Committee and chairwoman of the preparation committee, stated to the media that the conference aims at recognizing the size of the phenomenon of violence against women, its extents in the Yemeni society.

This is in an effort to unveil the cover on the various forms of violence and to call for its condemnation, and to punish the perpetrators legally.

The conference aims at reviving the genuine values of Islam in Yemeni society which are founded on the principles of forgiveness, condemnation of violence and confirmation of human dignity and protecting her rights.

The conference will also evaluate the program of combating violence against woman, 2001-2003, the successes and failures and the problems facing the next programs, and the lessons learned from the existing experiment and how to benefit from other experiments in the Arab world, in addition to expanding the cooperation among the related organizations working in the field of defending human rights in general and violence against woman in particular.

The conference will also touch upon the obstacles hindering the expanding of political participation of woman through political, economic and social



Conference participants talk about curbing violence against women.

discrimination and isolation.

The conference will conclude with a final communique with recommendations and suggestions hoping to find their way out.

Rashedah pointed out that one of the reasons for holding this conference is due to the continue of the phenomenon of domestic violence against woman and the negative impacts of it on family, society, development and the importance to point out all the forms of violence and condemnation.

Rashedah also pointed out that the Woman National Committee would hold other activities including the celebration of World Women's Day on March 8, and organizing meetings between a number of parliamentarians and members of the Supreme Council for woman in order to involve the parliament with woman related issues in order to find appropriate solutions to them.

الف مبروك
أجل التهاني والتبريكات لهدايا الأرحم
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Arab ministers did not discuss Geneva Mideast plan



A general view of an Arab League foreign ministers meeting in Cairo March 3. Arab foreign ministers have made some progress on plans to reform the Arab League, the league's chief said, after they discussed proposals to give the league a more united and effective international voice. **REUTERS**

CAIRO, March 4 (Reuters) - Arab foreign ministers meeting in Cairo did not discuss endorsing an informal peace initiative by Israeli and Palestinian activists, Moroccan foreign minister Mohamed Benaissa, who chaired the meeting, said on Thursday.

Diplomatic sources earlier this week said Saudi Arabia had proposed Arab governments endorse the initiatives despite opposition from Lebanon,

which fears it would have to absorb hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees already living in the country.

Asked if the Geneva Accord had been discussed during the Arab foreign ministers meeting, Benaissa said: "It was not proposed for discussion. It was not discussed."

The main informal initiative, known as the Geneva Accord, was agreed in Switzerland last year by Israeli dove Yossi Belin and former Palestinian

Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo.

It gives Israel the right to decide how many Palestinian refugees to take back but Lebanon says it is unacceptable because it does not include a solution for about 300,000 Palestinian refugees living there.

The ministers ended on Thursday four days of meetings, during which reform of the Arab League and a U.S. plan for spreading democracy in the Middle East were discussed.

Iraqis consult clerics to try to salvage constitution

NAJAF, Iraq, March 6 (Reuters) - A delegation from Iraq's Governing Council met representatives of the country's leading Shi'ite cleric on Saturday to try to salvage a deal on an interim constitution crucial to U.S. plans to hand power back to Iraqis.

Governing Council members said they hoped to belatedly sign the constitution on Monday, but needed the approval of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, a reclusive cleric who wields immense influence over the country's 60 percent Shi'ite majority.

Objections from the 73-year-old Sistani forced the last-minute cancellation of plans to sign the document on Friday, in a setback to the U.S.-led administration which wants to return sovereignty to an Iraqi government on June 30.

"I hope and I pray that we will be able to sign this historic document on Monday morning," Mowaffaq al-Rubaie, a leading Shi'ite member of the Governing Council, told reporters in the holy city of Najaf after a day of talks with clerics and Sistani's aides.

He said the Shi'ite delegation from the Governing Council would stay in Najaf on Sunday and possibly until Monday morning to try to reach agreement before returning to Baghdad. The Council is due to convene in Baghdad on Monday at 10 a.m. (0700 GMT) to try to resolve the dispute and sign the constitution.

"Of course we are trying to find a solution that will satisfy the Iraqi people," Rubaie said. "We are seeking a win-win solution, we are not in the mentality of winning and losing."

Mohammed Bahr al-Uloum, a Shi'ite who is the current head of the Council and also travelled to Najaf, said he was "sure that any objections can be resolved". He said he hoped the document would be signed on Monday but added he could give no guarantees," he said.

ELUSIVE AGREEMENT

The Governing Council missed a February 28 deadline to agree on the document due to divisions over the role of Islam, the representation of women and Kurdish demands for autonomy, but announced on Monday it had reached a deal.

The document was to have been signed on Wednesday but the ceremony was postponed after bomb attacks on Shi'ites the previous day killed at least 181 people and raised fears Iraq could be dragged into a sectarian civil war.

On Friday a high-profile signing ceremony was abandoned when Shi'ite members of the Council, responding to Sistani's objections, announced at the 11th hour they would not sign.

Sistani's interventions have repeatedly forced Washington to redraw its political roadmap for Iraq. To try to mollify the cleric, the United States has given the United Nations a key role in the political process and brought forward planned elections, which are now due to be held by the end of January next year.

The interim constitution is designed to guide Iraq until an elected assembly agrees on a permanent constitution and

a referendum approves it. But Sistani, who has been pressing for Shi'ites to be given political influence commensurate with their majority status in Iraq, has objected to parts of the document.

Council sources said the main point of contention was a clause in the document that could allow Kurds — who make up a fifth of Iraq's population — to veto a permanent constitution if they feel it does not address their demands for autonomy.

The clause says even if a majority of Iraqis approve the constitution, it can be vetoed if two-thirds of voters in three provinces reject it. The clause was inserted by the Kurds, who run three provinces in northern Iraq and want to be able to block any attempt to rein in their considerable autonomy.

Another problem concerns the make-up of a future presidential body. As it stands the agreement sees a president with two deputies, but Shi'ites want a five-member presidential council, with three Shi'ites, one Sunni and one Kurd.

U.S. officials in Iraq and at the White House played down the delay in signing the document as a technical glitch, and said Washington still planned to hand back sovereignty on June 30.

"You're seeing democracy in action," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said. "The important thing is that Iraqi leaders are able to freely discuss these issues with one another."

A spokesman for the U.S. administrator in Iraq said "98 percent" of the document had been agreed.

Yemen gives six suspects to Egypt

CAIRO, March 5 (Reuters) - Yemen has extradited to Egypt the former leader of a group linked to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network along with five other suspected Egyptian militants, a London-based Islamist said on Friday.

Sayed Imam al-Sherif, a former leader of the secretive Jihad group, and five other Egyptians were held in Yemen for more than two years before Sanaa handed them to Cairo in return for Yemeni opposition figures, Yasser al-Sirry said.

"The extraditions were made last month as part of a security settlement between the two countries," Sirry told Reuters by telephone from London, where he runs the Islamic Observation Centre rights watchdog.

He said he obtained his information from other Islamists and relatives of those extradited in Yemen and Egypt.

Sherif is a former leader of the Jihad group which bin Laden's right-hand man Ayman al-Zawahri once headed. Jihad, under Zawahri, joined ranks with bin Laden in 1998 in an alliance which they said would strike U.S. and Jewish interests.

A Yemeni official said on Friday that Sanaa had handed over to Egypt six Jihad members in the past two days.

But it was not clear if the six were the same mentioned by Sirry. Egyptian and Yemeni officials were not im-

mediately available for comment.

An official Yemeni Web site reported on Thursday that Yemen had captured a top Egyptian militant, believed to be Sherif, in a security sweep last week. But the Web site later quoted a security source as saying there were no foreigners among those detained in the sweep.

Egyptian Islamists said the group handed over to Egypt by Yemen also included Othman el-Semman, who was sentenced to death in absentia by an Egyptian military court for belonging to another radical group, al-Gama'a al-Islamiya (Islamic Group).

Sirry said the six Egyptians were arrested in Yemen shortly after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, blamed on bin Laden's al Qaeda.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said in Cairo last month that "the security file" between Yemen and Egypt had been settled. He did not elaborate.

Sherif, a surgeon in his early 50s, travelled to Afghanistan in the early 1980s to help Muslim fighters in the war against Soviet troops. A few years later, he joined the Kuwaiti Red Crescent in Peshawar, Pakistan.

He settled in Yemen after leaving Jihad in 1993 over his opposition to the group's confrontation with Egyptian authorities in the early 1990s.

Attack against soldiers Four Palestinians dead in botched attack

By Shahdi al-Kashif EREZ BORDER CROSSING, Gaza Strip, March 6 (Reuters) - At least four Palestinians were killed in Gaza on Saturday during an attack against soldiers by an apparent suicide bomber and gunmen driving vehicles disguised as Israeli jeeps.

A source in the militant group Hamas said it carried out the operation along with al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, part of President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, and Islamic Jihad.

Such rare cooperation among the three groups, which have ignored Palestinian Authority calls for a mutual ceasefire with Israel, is likely to fuel U.S. fears that Israel's threatened unilateral pullback in Gaza could fuel anarchy in the area.

An army spokeswoman said two militants in a jeep pulled up to an Israeli position at the heavily guarded Erez border crossing and one of them got out and opened fire. Troops killed both men and there were no Israeli casualties.

Another jeep and what a source in one militant group said was an explosives-laden bus driven by a suicide bomber blew up at a nearby Palestinian police post.

Witnesses said soldiers fired at the vehicles, but the army spokeswoman denied this.

Hospital officials said at least two Palestinians, both policemen, were killed and some 15 wounded. The official death toll could rise once doctors account for body parts that arrived from the scene.

NEW TACTIC

The army spokeswoman said both jeeps used by the militants were altered to resemble Israeli vehicles, a new tactic in a Palestinian uprising that began in September 2000.

Palestinian sources said the disguised jeeps were transported to the area hidden in a truck to avoid being attacked by Palestinians en route to Erez.



Palestinian security men inspect damage after blast at Erez crossing in Gaza Strip March 6, 2004. At least three Palestinians were killed on Saturday during what the Israeli army said was an attempt by militants to attack its positions at the Erez border crossing in the Gaza Strip. **REUTERS**

The violence at the flashpoint frontier erupted three days after an Israeli missile strike killed three Hamas militants in Gaza, which like the West Bank was sealed off by Israel on Thursday in a security alert for the Jewish holiday of Purim.

Coveted jobs

For thousands of Palestinian labourers, Erez, in the northern Gaza Strip, is a gateway to coveted jobs in Israel and in an Israeli-run industrial zone at the crossing.

"The Palestinians, in their zeal for attacking Israelis, are actually causing a major disruption to a vital economic inter-

est for thousands of Palestinian families," said David Baker, an official in Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office.

On February 27, two gunmen from al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades sneaked into Erez and killed a soldier before being shot dead by security personnel.

Earlier on Saturday, Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian in the West Bank city of Tulkarm, an Israeli military source and local residents said.

"An Israeli force on routine patrol spotted three figures approaching. One of them was in a camouflage uniform and armed

with a Kalashnikov (assault rifle). Soldiers fired at him and he was killed," the source said.

Residents said the dead man was an unarmed Palestinian policeman in uniform heading home at the end of a night shift and that troops had opened fire after being stoned by youngsters on their way to school.

(Additional reporting by Nidal al-Mughrabi in Gaza, Mu'een Shadid in Ramallah, Mohammed Assadi in Ramallah and Jeffrey Heller in Jerusalem)

US, Afghan forces kill nine militants, capture 14

KABUL, March 6 (Reuters) - American and Afghan troops killed nine suspected Islamic militants during a gun battle in the eastern province of Paktika, the U.S. military said on Saturday, in one of the heaviest clashes reported in recent months.

In separate operations, 14 suspected rebels were detained in a U.S. air assault in the east on Thursday and two senior Taliban commanders were captured by Afghan forces on Friday after an attack on a post near the Pakistan border killed seven government soldiers.

The clash involving U.S. forces on Friday began when they opened fire on a group of 30 to 40 armed men apparently trying to move to the side of their sniper position east of Orgun-E, 170 km (106 miles) south of Kabul, in order to launch an attack.

"They were armed, they were acting in a hostile manner, so we fired on them and then we pursued them with the Afghan National Army," U.S. military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Bryan Hilferty told a news briefing in Kabul.

"Nine of them were killed in that battle, and there were no coalition casualties."

At least 10 U.S. snipers from a special operations task force in Afghanistan were involved in the battle, supported by a nearby battalion of Afghan troops. The rest of the group of suspected guerrillas fled.

The clash was one of the largest reported in recent months between 13,000 U.S.-led troops in Afghanistan and their local allies and Islamic militants from groups including the ousted Taliban militia and al Qaeda.

Remnants of the Taliban have declared a "jihad", or holy war, on foreign forces and their Afghan allies and aid organisations which has seriously undermined security and stability,



An Afghan soldier stands guard at a highway checkpoint in Kabul February 6. The U.S.-funded reconstruction of the Kabul-Kandahar highway is vaunted by the government as a symbol of Afghanistan's recovery from 23 years of war. REUTERS

especially in the south and east.

MILITANTS HELD

In a separate incident on Thursday, 14 suspected militants were captured at a compound north of the eastern town of Khost.

Troops from the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment launched an air assault and found 100 mortar rounds, 100 rocket propelled grenades, rifles and other ammunition at the compound.

"We had intelligence that led us to a compound north of Khost," Hilferty said, declining to comment further on

the nature of the intelligence. The 14 suspects are being questioned.

In Spin Boldak, a town on the Afghan-Pakistan border in the southern province of Kandahar, commander General Fati Khan said two senior Taliban commanders had been caught by local forces.

Khan identified the commanders as Mullah Naeem and Mullah Abdul Rahim. They were arrested along with 40 other militant suspects in an operation to hunt down the assailants involved in Thursday's attack on a checkpoint in which seven soldiers died.

The U.S. military and its Afghan allies are hunting al Qaeda and Taliban fighters mainly in the south and east of Afghanistan.

American forces have shifted away from large-scale operations to deploying smaller outfits into rural areas where they spend several days in each location to build relations with locals and improve intelligence gathering.

The prime targets are al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri, Taliban supreme commander Mullah Mohammad Omar and renegade warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Nigeria's Obasanjo says crime hindering foreign investment

LAGOS, March 6 (Reuters) - Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said on Saturday rising crime was blocking much needed foreign investment in the world's eighth largest oil exporter.

Obasanjo said in his monthly radio address that he was particularly worried by the increasing cases of armed attacks on politicians and government officials because ordinary Nigerians now believed the state cannot protect them.

Crime, including politically motivated killings, has been on the rise in Africa's most populous nation of 130 million people since Obasanjo was first

elected in 1999, ending 15 years of military rule.

"I want the people of this country to know that I feel concerned, extremely concerned, that cases of armed robbery are becoming rampant again," Obasanjo said.

He said crime "affects investment into this country and once you don't have investment, we cannot make progress".

The Nigerian leader who was re-elected for a second term last April, said the country's police chief will unveil new crime fighting measures on Monday, but did not give details.

Malaysia holds six Indonesian Islamist militants

KUALA LUMPUR, March 6 (Reuters) - Malaysia is holding in detention six Indonesians caught returning from a Jemaah Islamiyah militant training camp in the southern Philippines, a senior security official told Reuters on Saturday.

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a Southeast Asian offshoot of al Qaeda, was behind the Bali bombings in late 2002 and the suicide bomb attack on the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta last year.

The security source said the six men were caught several weeks ago, but their arrest kept quiet.

"They were all Indonesians on their way home from the southern Philippines where they had been at a JI training camp," the source told Reuters.

They were discovered among a boat load of illegal immigrants arrested while trying to enter Malaysia's state of

Sabah near Sandakan, a port on the northeast coast of Borneo, just across the Sulu Sea from the islands of the southern Philippines.

It is a favoured route for militants.

There is large flow of illegal migrants through Borneo as the island is shared between Indonesia, Malaysia and the tiny sultanate of Brunei, and the coastline and interior are hard to patrol.

The source said one of the men known as "Denny" was a trainer at a camp hosted by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the restive southern Philippine island of Mindanao.

Philippines intelligence officials wish to question "Denny" and he may be sent back, though for now all six men were being held in Kamunting detention camp in northern Malaysia, the source said.

Malaysia is holding some 72 Jemaah Islamiyah suspects, and up to 18 members of a local group called Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM), under a security law allowing detention without trial.

Around 46 of the prisoners in Kamunting began a hunger strike last week to protest the conditions of their imprisonment.

Zambia's Chiluba says he fears for his life

LUSAKA, March 6 (Reuters) - Former Zambian president Frederick Chiluba says his life is in danger after policemen stormed into his house claiming they had received a call saying he had been shot.

An aide to Chiluba said the former president, who faces corruption charges, believed the incident was part of a campaign to intimidate him and he feared for his life.

Emmanuel Mwamba told Reuters on Saturday six policemen woke Chiluba up just before midnight on Thursday, saying they had received a telephone call from someone claiming to be Chiluba's wife who said he had been shot.

"He (Chiluba) is suspicious and feels his life is in danger because these people did not verify the report with state police who guard him," Mwamba said.

"I wonder why I am getting all

these threats on my life... There is a deliberate act to psyche people to hate me. Someone is trying to create an evil game on me to instil fear and panic in my life," the privately-owned Post newspaper quoted Chiluba as saying.

Lusaka division police chief Chendela Musonda told Reuters police had gone to Chiluba's house after a hoax call they suspected was made by car robbers to divert their attention.

"We acted because we don't ignore telephone calls and Chiluba should not feel insecure," Musonda said.

Chiluba is out on bail after pleading not guilty to charges of theft involving \$40 million during his 10 years in power. He could face imprisonment. Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa has launched the country's largest anti-corruption campaign since its independence from Britain four decades ago.

Taiwan candidates spar on island's political status

By Tiffany Wu TAIPEI, March 6 (Reuters) - President Chen Shui-bian and opposition challenger Lien Chan locked horns over Taiwan's political status in televised policy speeches on Saturday, just two weeks before a presidential election.

The island's ambiguous political status that is a source of great concern to giant foe China has taken centre stage in the March 20 election, with the two candidates staking out sharply different stances.

The independence-leaning Chen made another aggressive assertion that Taiwan was a country independent of China. And, in a speech peppered with personal attacks on his opponent, Chen outlined a series of major policy goals bound to antagonise Beijing yet further.

Nationalist Party Chairman Lien also said he wanted to be elected the president of an independent country but, in keeping with his more conciliatory stance towards China, called that country by a name that indicated the island remained Chinese.

"The Republic of China is a sovereign independent country. That is our basic starting point. Relations between the two sides must proceed under the principle of protecting the status quo," said Lien, a former vice president.

The Republic of China is Taiwan's official name, a title the Nationalists brought to the island when they escaped in 1949 after losing a civil war on the mainland to the communists.

China views Taiwan as part of its territory and vows to invade if it declares independence. Beijing bars diplomatically isolated Taipei from joining global organisations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Chen has angered China by saying Taiwan is a separate country and calling for a referendum to coincide with the election.

The referendum will ask voters to back greater anti-missile defences against China, which sees the ballot as the first step towards a vote to declare Taiwan statehood.

Lien advocates setting aside politics to



More than 50,000 supporters of Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian attend an election campaign rally in Sanchung on the outskirts of Taipei March 6. Beijing is loath to see Taiwan's independence-leaning President Chen re-elected, but is also wary that any action it may take to try to influence the election outcome could backfire. REUTERS

focus on building trade ties, a view welcomed by Beijing as it uses the vast mainland market to lure Taiwan back into its fold and by the hundreds of thousands of Taiwan businessmen who have invested \$100 billion in the mainland.

"Taiwan is an Asia-Pacific centre, it is not an appendage to China," Chen said.

MUDSLINGING AGAINST PAS-SION

Chen scattered the odd humorous aside in a speech that was light on policy initiatives but heavy on mudslinging, while Lien shed more of his wooden image in a passionate address focused on his experience in government and on policy detail.

Chen unveiled six policy goals for his

second term, including a promise to uphold Taiwan sovereignty and economic independence, win a seat in the WHO within two years and write a new constitution — goals bound to provoke China.

He vowed to hold a referendum to approve a new constitution in 2006 and to implement the document in 2008.

Although Chen insisted this was not a timetable for independence, constitutional change is sensitive because it opens the door for Taiwan to change its name — a move that would further split the island from China.

In contrast, Lien's policy goals focused on domestic issues such as economic troubles, women's rights, and social welfare.

The multimillionaire scion of a prominent Taiwan family repeated a pledge to donate his presidential salary of T\$400,000 (US\$12,000) a month to charity if he was elected.

Both leaders plan to trim Taiwan's military from the present 385,000, saying it is time to move away from old-fashioned warfare to streamlined high-tech weaponry.

Chen wants an army of 270,000, while Lien suggested 250,000. The two disagreed over conscription, which Lien wants to reduce to three months from two years. Chen says three months is too short.

Russian liberal doggedly presses on with campaign

PERM, Russia, March 6 (Reuters) - Liberal Irina Khakamada, far back in the pack trailing incumbent Vladimir Putin in Russia's presidential election, is doggedly pursuing her campaign, telling voters change is possible — next time round.

Putin says he is not campaigning for the March 14 contest, but still dominates newscasts. In contrast, Khakamada engaged in a day of now rare tub-thumping in the snow-covered Ural city of Perm — where demoralised liberals hope she will score well.

Opinion polls give her two percent support three months after two liberal groups were routed in parliamentary elections. Putin stands at 80 percent and five challengers, led by Nikolai Kharitonov of the communists, have up to five percent each.

Khakamada said she wanted to help rally voters who, like her, believed Putin was building an authoritarian society.

"I know I cannot win. But I can show that those who voted for me disagree with what is happening. And it is very important to show that," Khakamada told university students on Friday.

"Imagine a cartoon in which people all carry bricks marked 'Vote for Putin'. Once they build a wall, Putin, with a rating of 80-90 percent no longer sees the people. What I am trying to say is that to be happy, don't put all your eggs in one basket."

Khakamada debated local politicians on television and addressed reporters in Perm, where her Union of Right-Wing Forces (SPS) party bucked the trend in December and captured an impressive 13 percent of the vote.

Little attention from voters

On the streets of the scruffy industrial city of one million, where entire factories were relocated as the Soviet army resisted Hitler's invasion, voters paid scant attention. Most had little doubt Putin would easily win a second term.

"I'll vote for Putin, but I can't say I'm happy," Zoya, a secretary, said

over lunch at a department store.

"I see no positive change. I've worked for 30 years in a state institution and take home little more than a pensioner."

The daughter of a Japanese Communist who came to the Soviet Union, Khakamada acknowledges that her sex and mixed ethnic background count against her in a society where political awareness is limited 12 years after the fall of communism.

She accuses Putin of using the campaign to crush Chechen rebels for political gain, of manipulating television and of turning the election into a farce by avoiding his challengers.

Khakamada said pro-market liberals, Russia's only openly pro-Western parties, alienated voters in December by sniping at each other and associating too closely with wealthy businessmen.

A new movement, Khakamada said, had to be built from grass roots to make liberal thought the motor of change it was during the "perestroika" reforms that preceded the end of Soviet rule.

"Peter the Great, Alexander II, Vladimir Lenin and Mikhail Gorbachev all engineered change from the top," she said, referring to major bids to conduct reforms in Russian history.

"Each time, reforms launched at a cost of great pain collapsed because the system failed to meet society's demands. I propose a model without Putin or some great leader offering ideas from above. Society itself should set the basis of power."

In the run-up to Russia's March 8 Women's Day holiday, when public figures extol traditional feminine values, she challenged students to imagine a woman president or defence minister.

Only a handful objected to the notion of a female president. But at least half refused to consider a woman defence minister.

"Whatever stupid things a male politician might say, he is somehow forgiven," she said. "No one forgives a woman. She must have it all...beauty, family, intelligence, honour and morals."



A Russian demonstrator of the Anarchist League stands with a poster reading "Boycott the March 14 polls!" in central St. Petersburg, March 6. Russian president Vladimir Putin is certain to win a March 14 presidential election by a landslide and secure a second term in office. REUTERS

Bush, Blair misled by intelligence on Iraq: Blix

LONDON, March 6 (Reuters) - George Bush and Tony Blair, perhaps fired by a religious conviction they were battling evil, were seduced by unproven intelligence reports of Iraq's illegal weapons, former chief U.N. arms inspector Hans Blix says.

In a book, excerpts of which Britain's Guardian newspaper published on Saturday, Blix says that in the run-up to war, the British prime minister and envoys of the U.S. president seemed convinced by the information from their intelligence agencies.

Blix, who said he came under intense U.S. pressure to accept such intelligence as fact and was vilified for refusing, said he personally believed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein still had hidden illegal weapons but had told Blair he needed proof.

"I added that it would prove paradoxical and absurd if 250,000 troops were to invade Iraq and find very little," he wrote about their meeting on February 20, 2003.

"Blair responded that the intelligence was clear that Saddam had reconstituted his weapons of mass destruction programme. Blair clearly relied on the intelligence and was convinced."

Blix wrote that Western intelligence claims shared with his inspectors about, for example, mobile laboratories to make biological agents had

proved embarrassing and added:

"I am not aware of any other intelligence 'shared' with us that has been substantiated by credible evidence."

"Perhaps Blair and Bush, both religious men, felt strengthened in their political determination by the feeling they were fighting evil, not only (arms) proliferation," he wrote.

In the new book "Disarming Iraq — The search for weapons of mass destruction", Blix said French intelligence services had also been convinced weapons of mass destruction remained in Iraq, but that President Jacques Chirac — as staunchly opposed to war as Bush and Blair were in favour — was more sceptical.

"The intelligence services sometimes 'intoxicate each other'," he said, citing Chirac.

Blix described an increasingly frantic round of diplomatic activity as the troop build-up in Kuwait gathered pace and the arms inspectors scouring Iraq came up empty-handed.

Nearly a year after the invasion and Saddam's overthrow U.S.-led forces have not found any illegal weapons.

Blair and Bush have both seen their popularity plummet over the unpopular war and its bloody aftermath.

On Friday Blair raised the prospect of a rethink of international law and the United Nations to legalise pre-emptive strikes by foreign forces against so-called rogue states.

Italian arrested for killing of anti-Mafia judge

PALERMO, Italy, March 6 (Reuters) - Italian police on Saturday arrested a fugitive convicted for his part in the car bomb killing of top anti-Mafia judge Paolo Borsellino and five of his escorts in Sicily in 1992, court officials said.

Police arrested Cosimo Vernengo, 40, in a residence in Monreale outside Palermo after following members of his family in an operation called "Game Over".

Vernengo had been on the run since March 2002 after he was sentenced to

life imprisonment for his part in the killing of Borsellino, court officials said.

About 10 people have been jailed over the killing of Borsellino by a massive car bomb outside his sister's home in Palermo in July 1992.

Borsellino died two months after the Mafia killed Giovanni Falcone, another leading judge, by detonating a bomb as he drove along the highway into Palermo. Falcone's wife and three bodyguards also died in that attack.

IMF chief quit for offer he 'couldn't refuse'

BERLIN, March 6 (Reuters) - Former IMF chief Horst Koehler said on Saturday he had been planning to stay at its helm until he got an offer he couldn't refuse — to be his party's candidate for German president.

Trying to explain why he gave up one of the world's top economic jobs as head of the International Monetary Fund in Washington to run for a largely ceremonial post, Koehler said in an interview with Germany's Der Spiegel news magazine it was an honour he felt he couldn't turn down.

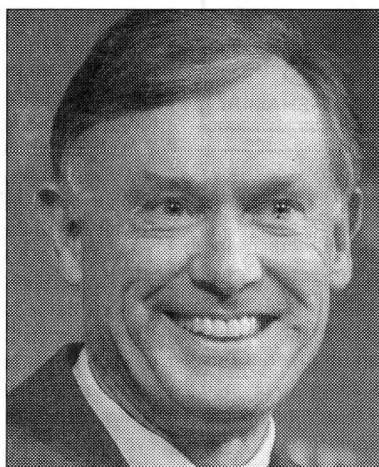
"I had been rather busy at the IMF," Koehler, 61, said, when asked why he knew so little about a messy political battle that had split Germany's conservative opposition in their bungled attempt to find a candidate to succeed President Johannes Rau.

"On top of that, I was involved with the extension of my contract at the IMF beyond May 2005. That's what my future plans looked like."

"But then I was asked if I'd be available for the presidential election. It's an honour and challenge that couldn't be turned down," he said in his first major interview since announcing his resignation from the IMF on Thursday.

Conservative party leader Angela Merkel, embarrassed after her first choice Wolfgang Schauble was vetoed by their small liberal Free Democrat allies, turned to Koehler early last week and reached him just as he returned from an IMF trip abroad.

Koehler, a former state secretary in the Finance Ministry under ex-Chancellor Helmut Kohl, said he knew Merkel from



International Monetary Fund Managing Director Horst Koehler. REUTERS

the time she was a minister in the same government. He later worked with her as head of the German association of savings banks.

"I knew her, she knew me. Apparently that led her to think that I could be one of the candidates for president," he said.

Koehler accepted her offer after Schauble was defeated for the office that holds little power.

Little known in Germany

Koehler, who is little known in Germany and will reportedly be taking a big pay cut, did not sound concerned about being the second choice of the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU).

"I don't see myself as an instrument for a change of power," he said. "The opposition parties evidently had great

trouble agreeing on a candidate. I'm not going to push for a change of power (in the chancellery). That's not my motivation."

Because the CDU and FDP hold a slim majority in a special assembly that elects the president in May, Koehler is favoured to beat Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's candidate Gesine Schwan.

Schroeder, whose Social Democrats trail the CDU in opinion polls, slammed the opposition for their clumsy bid to find a candidate.

"When I look at the terrible haggling those parties went through and think these are the same people who want to lead the country, it makes me ill to think about how they would make decisions on issues of war and peace," Schroeder said.

But Koehler said his international experience should prove valuable.

"I believe my international perspective can be good for Germany," he told Der Spiegel. "Germany has become rather introspective. I'm worried that it's losing a piece of its prosperity as well as its influence."

Koehler said he would spend the two and one half months until the May 23 election to get re-acquainted with Germany. Bild newspaper greeted his candidacy by writing a banner headline asking "Horst Who?"

"I want to listen to what people have to say and find out where the problems are," said Koehler, who as president would earn 240,000 euros per year — according to German media reports some 60,000 euros less than his salary at the IMF.

Kerry says Bush failing to fully equip U.S. troops

WASHINGTON, March 6 (Reuters) - Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry accused the Bush administration on Saturday of failing to adequately prepare and equip U.S. forces for the war in Iraq.

Kerry, giving the Democrats' weekly radio address, said U.S. President George W. Bush had misplaced priorities in Iraq, spending billions of dollars on contracts to Halliburton Co. but not providing troops enough body armor and other protective equipment.

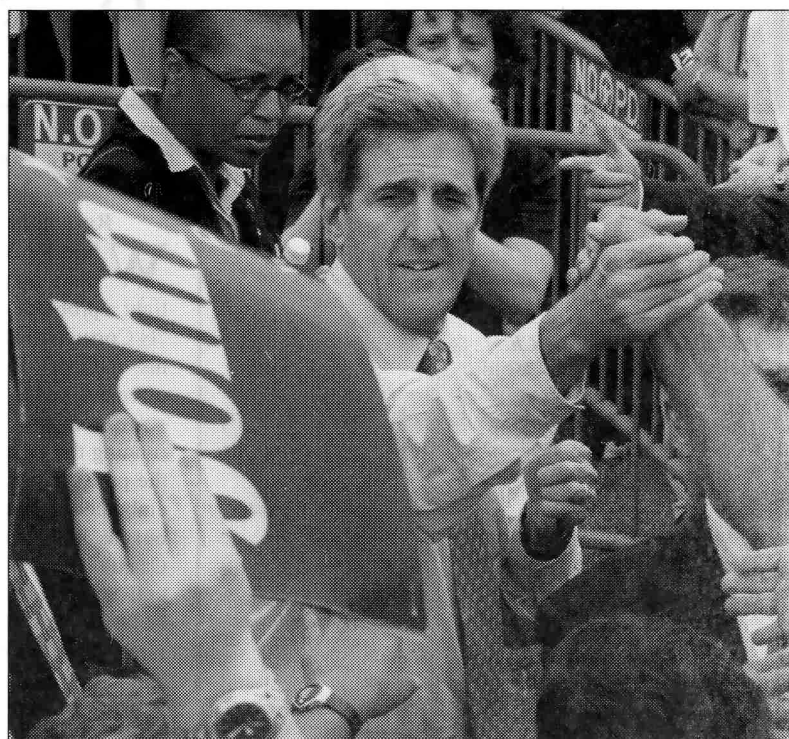
The Massachusetts senator said helicopters were flying dangerous missions without top-notch anti-missile systems, National Guard units were getting donated steel from local businesses to put homemade steel armor on their vehicles, and families were buying body armor for their sons and daughters.

"Families should be sending pictures and care packages to Iraq and the Department of Defense should be sending the body armor," Kerry said.

"If I am president, I will be prepared to use military force to protect our security, our people and our vital interests," he said. "But I will never send our troops into harm's way without enough firepower and support."

Kerry called on Bush to support a bill in Congress to reimburse families who "had to buy the body armor this administration failed to provide."

He said he will introduce legislation later this month called the Military Family Bill of Rights "to prevent anything like this from ever happening



U.S. Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry greets supporters during a campaign stop near the Mississippi River in downtown New Orleans, Louisiana, March 5. REUTERS

again."

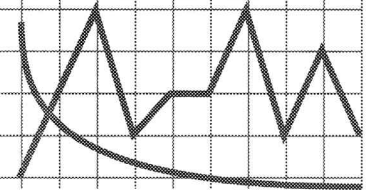
And to ease the strain on the reserves from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kerry said active duty forces should temporarily be expanded by 40,000 troops.

The Pentagon has said it will expand active duty forces by up to

30,000 over four years, but has resisted calls by many in Congress for a permanent increase.

"We cannot let the strongest armed forces in the world be weakened," Kerry said. "We must resolve that America's leaders will never let them down."

YT Business



Government just as fearful as public

Perception shapes economic reform . . . or lack of

BY PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a world of perceptions, the fear of economic reform in Yemen has turned the term into a taboo.

Many have lashed out at the government and The World Bank for its plans to spur economic growth.

Shots were taken at economic reform when inflation went on a tear last year, and fear is now looming that further steps, might bring further hardship rather than prosperity.

Ironically, the Yemeni government might be just as nervous as the Yemeni people, which could explain why economic reform has stalled.

"Fear of the public feeds into the fear of decision makers," said Yahya Al-Mutawakel, Advisor to the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation. "It's a cycle. The decision makers have to take into consideration repercussions following economic reform measures."

And according to Ahmed Ghaleb, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Finance, economic reform being looked at unfavorably has come from the plan being misunderstood.

"The public does not understand economic reform completely," said Ghaleb. "The media has sometimes passed on wrong information and those with vested interests may have been

able to mobilize the public against reform."

The government has been successful implementing the initial steps geared towards stabilizing the economy. It has been able to reduce its debt and stabilize its currency. In 2003, foreign reserves surpassed \$5 billion for the first time, and last January Capital Intelligence, an international emerging markets rating agency, raised Yemen's long-term foreign currency rating.

"The government has achieved a lot of things since economic reform started in 1995," said Ahmed Ghaleb. "It has stabilized the economy, which means that the foundation of economic growth has been put in place."

But now economic conditions are far from pretty. Economic growth is not keeping up with the rise in population. The population growth rate is estimated to be as high as 3.6% annually, while the GDP growth rate probably fell below 3.6% last year and may not exceed 3.3% in 2004.

Even though there are different figures on unemployment, some have calculated that between 25% and 30% of the Yemeni population is out of work. According to a recent Arab League survey, Yemen remains the poorest country in the Middle East as the average annual income per capita stands at \$508.

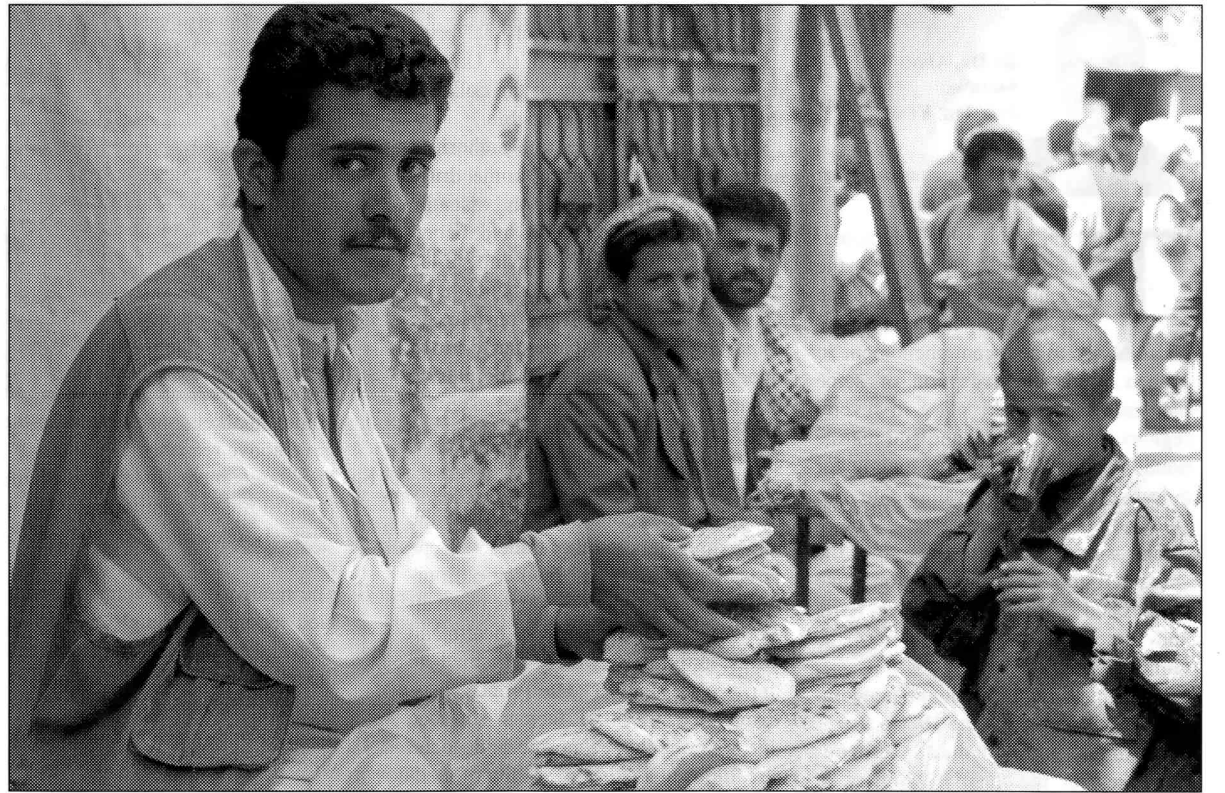
Economic growth is key, and important decisions made by the government are needed to take the economy forward.

"We are recommending that the government comes back on the reform path across the board," said Robert Hindle, Country Manager of The World Bank based in Yemen. "We are urging the government strongly to get back on track for economic reform. It's the only way to be able to improve the lives of people in Yemen."

The economic reform plan touches on every sector of the Yemeni economy, but in the big picture, privatization, reducing subsidies on diesel fuel, civil service reform and upgrading the judicial system are priorities.

One explanation for the government balking to push reform through is that it has had to focus most of its energy on security.

"All the plans are in place, but after the attack on USS Cole and Limburg,



A vendor in Old Sana'a selling bread. (Yemen Times photo by Peter Willems)

the government has had to direct its attention toward security," said one government official. "What's the point of trying to build an economy when security is at risk?"

Even though The World Bank argues that the strength of oil revenue coming from high oil prices should encourage the government to implement key reform, others say that the luxury of better oil royalties has given the government more time to reevaluate the situation before taking action.

"World oil prices and oil revenue in Yemen have been favorable," noted Al-Mutawakel. "This could be used in two ways: Speed up economic reform or use more time to take steps more wisely."

Another argument as to why the government has hesitated is that major changes would affect those with vested interests.

"Political groups and influential people try to satisfy their vested interests," said Ali Abdul Rahman Al-Bahr, former Minister of Oil and Chairman of Housing Credit Bank in Yemen.

"They are trying to impose their own interests and are putting down their own conditions before anything happens."

According to Al-Mutawakel, reducing subsidies on diesel fuel is a good example of those with vested interests being affected. The plan is to redirect \$600 million a year in subsidies into more useful purposes, like education and healthcare.

But while the general public is afraid of price increases on consumer goods after the price of diesel shoots up, those making money smuggling fuel to neighboring countries will probably get hurt the most.

"Lifting the subsidies on diesel fuel is a major element for reform because it has been a misuse of funds," said Al-Mutawakel. "The reaction against price increases is not just among the people; it is also those with vested interests who will get hurt when subsidies are reduced."

But to represent the people, politicians may take a second look at making changes the public views negative-

ly. There is also concern that if reform is unpopular, only partial steps might be taken which could leave the economy struggling. Part of the plan, for example, is to let the government pass more responsibility on to the private sector.

More local and foreign investment would help boost economic growth and generate more jobs. According to Al-Mutawakel, the government has been successful in improving the business environment in Yemen by increasing security, but what is needed is improving financial security by making adequate changes in the judicial system. Progress has been made in judicial reform, but there is more to be done.

"Without an independent judicial system running properly, we may never see the investments needed to create a thriving economy," said one chairman of a local bank.

But the first obstacle that needs to be overcome might be fear of reform that appears to be shared by both the public and the government.



A vendor in Old Sana'a selling nuts. (Yemen Times photo by Peter Willems)

World Bank to present it in China conference

Social Fund for Development has its critics

BY MAHYOUB
AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The World Bank (WB) has chosen the Social Fund for Development (SFD) in Yemen as a first example in the Arab region for presenting its experiment in developing local societies, at a conference to be scheduled to be convened in Shanghai in China next May.

The question is whether the fund, since its establishment in 1997, has scored a pioneering success in the process of fighting poverty in Yemen.

Marketing the SFD program at the world level stems from the WB assessment and the official report on its accomplishments in economic reform and supporting long-range development opportunities.

According to the Yemeni government version of assessment, the min-

ister of Social Affairs and Labour Abdulkareem al-Arhabi says the Fund has developed and implemented 3,500 projects, some of which are still under construction.

He says the total cost of those projects amounts to \$260 million. They serve around seven million people, 40% of whom are women, and provide about nine million working days and 8,000 permanent jobs.

The projects are categorized on three aspects, concentrated on development of the society, development of small enterprises and building capacities.

Development of society

The SFD is implementing projects aimed at enabling individuals of the local society to gain basic social and economic services.

The services included in the goals of these projects are in the fields of basic education, health, those of special needs, building of rural roads, implementation of water projects and environment activities.

Nevertheless the population of countryside villages sees that the fund's services do not cover the remote areas, and the elementary schools in the cities and countryside are still suffering from over-crowdedness, reaching in some cases to 120 pupils in one classroom in remote crowded schools.

Health services are still lagging behind and are not yet free of charge. Sons of the poor social segments still do not find necessary medication whereas there are many villages still living separated in long distance from each other because of shortage of road networks, of which the Fund says it finances.

As for introducing modern technology for supplying water, it is still limited and there are efforts still at the beginning aimed at preserving the soil, waters and fighting desertification and floods.

Small enterprises

The SFD says it seeks developing local capabilities and small and smaller installations to create job opportuni-

ties and reduce intensity of poverty, but figures indicate that:

- the number of unemployed are 469,001 males and 398, 635 females out of apparent unemployment in Yemen which is 11.5%.

- the rate of unemployment, according to the social understanding, reaches 30% of the work force.

- results of field surveys indicate that the number of the unemployed among the illiterate and those who know how to read and write is 285,903 persons, forming 61% of the unemployed.

Special needs

No doubt the SFD supports groups of those of special needs that are the handicapped children suffering from difficult circumstances, the women and those socially marginalized.

But the public believe that the criteria of benefiting from the Fund's services to those segments are limited and subject to nepotism and does not reach the targeted groups.

The people affirm that the fund's

targeting of the poorest and most deprived groups is interfered with local factors, where notables interfere to receive assistance for those close to them and establishment of projects in areas that are not poor.

And here there is not encouragement to the principle of innovation and modernization and conveyance of support to those deserving it.

Local sources mention there are interferences in some areas by middlemen in activities of the social fund for development at funding the smaller projects regarding the granting of pieces of land producing income for the poor which are offered to those not deserving them.

This experiment is engulfed with some negatives and needs reappraisal and reassessment in order to be a pioneering experiment actually to be followed internationally.

It is especially so that the remarks come from the people who know better than the World Bank about what goes on in their areas. But nevertheless and despite of all those things its

blamed for, the SFD plays an influential role in creating partnership between the state and the local society for implementing projects in the local societies.

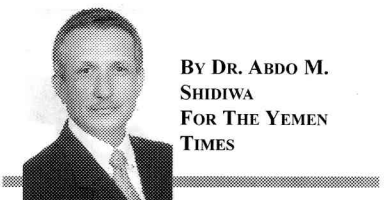
Exchange rate for Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	184.3500	184.6000
Sterling Pound	338.3100	338.7700
Euro	224.8400	225.1500
Saudi Rial	49.1700	49.2400
Kuwaiti Dinar	625.2400	626.0900
UAE Dirhem	50.1900	50.2600
Egyptian Pound	29.9000	29.9400
Bahraini Dinar	488.9900	489.6600
Qatari Rial	50.6400	50.7000
Jordanian Dinar	260.1800	260.5300
Omani Rial	478.8700	479.5200
Swiss Franc	142.1200	142.3200
Swedish Crown	24.3300	24.3700
Japanese Yen	1.6728	1.6751

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

Tremendous health risks involved

Medicine smuggling needs attention



By DR. ABDO M. SHIDIWA FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The smuggling phenomenon in general and the smuggling of medicine, in particular, are considered to be recent phenomena in Yemen. With the exception of some incidents used to take place in several regions situated on the land and marine boundaries of the countries mainly for consumer goods not available in one side and not in the other.

The smuggling activities and the smuggled goods concentrated on some clothes and shoes from Egypt and Syria and some gold and watches from the Gulf countries.

The smuggling of medicine phenomenon began in mid of the 1980s. It was first limited to individual's activities (suitcases' of merchants). Ministry of Health and the Drugs Authority allowed the importation of medicine through authorized agents with sales prices printed on each brand of medicine.

The high financial losses risk associated with medicine, if not properly packed, transported or stored and the validity period for safe use of medicine on humans, taking into consideration that drugs consist of mostly chemical substances which could be transformed from a specific cure to the cause of dangerous illnesses when the predefined conditions and requirement are not fully met, discouraged the smugglers from smuggling medicine and thus had limited their activities to the smuggling of other stuff, in the 1970s and first half of the 1980s.

drugs, but rather stood still and instead continued to impose the official price lists with unrealistic rate of the US dollar when the actual rate of the dollar in the market was nearly a double.

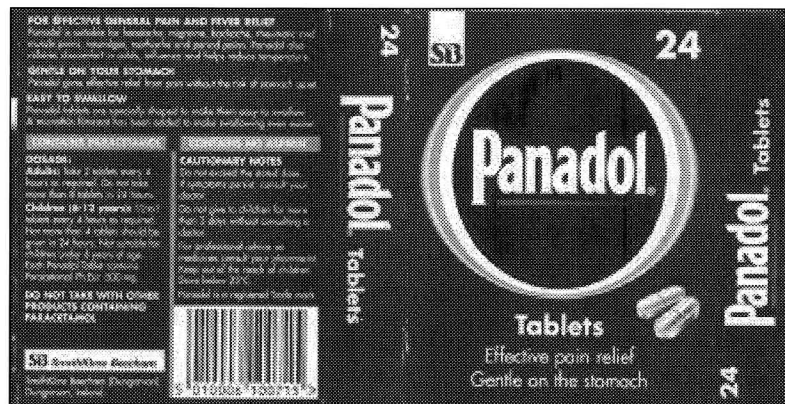
This situation forced the authorized agents to drop importing some drugs including some life saving and essential for the cancer, heart patients and diabetics. The smuggling of medicine started to be of interest and profitable to those previously involved in the business of importing medicine, particularly to the opportunists who had been monitoring the market to determine what essential drugs, in great need and demand but not available in the market place.

The smuggling of medicine became feasible to newcomers and to even the other smugglers in other trades.

The smuggling of medicine flourished and reached new extents motivated by the passive reaction of health and drugs authorities which remained to impose the out of date price lists. Crippled with other factors surfaced due to political, economic and social conditions made the smuggling of medicine easy and profitable and instant making profits business.

The followings are some of the reasons, which have led to the continuation of the phenomenon of smuggling until today:

- 1- The low value of the local currency before major foreign currencies.
- 2- Inadequate interest and reaction of the health and drugs authorities and the failure to sense the danger and to have considered medicine to be just as important as food commodities which needed to be also subsidized during that period.
- 3- The pertinacity of Ministry of Health and the Drugs Authorities to continue to impose price lists using official unrealistic rate of the US dollar



of local market consumption for the same above reason.

- 6- The state's mentality that medicine was just not very important issue to seriously take into enough consideration.
- 7- The relatively easy entry of smuggled medicine through customs at land and marine border points and the slight punishment for possession of smuggled medicine.
- 8- The sharp shortages of vital medicines available in the market place.
- 9- The absence of coordination between the health authorities and Customs.
- 10- Easy and quick profits from the smuggling of medicine, which was not available but was in great need and demand.
- 11- The neglected role of the health authorities in order to find out what was going on in the market place.
- 12- The absent role of the media in dealing with the phenomenon of smuggling of medicine.

There is no doubt that it is very obvious that issue of smuggling in general and the smuggling of medicine in particular should be considered national issues, which require finding suitable means and solutions to confront it.

The harm of smuggled medicine

A. In the health side
Since most of if not all of the smuggled medicines are not properly manufactured in terms of attention, quality and suitable conditions, they are susceptible to be transformed into harmful drugs.

The lack of appropriate means for packing, storing and transporting associated with the operation of smuggling of medicines, the users of these medicines could encounter serious illness instead of the cure they were hoping to get from them.

B. In the social and economic side

Expansion the scope of smuggling of medicine will usually be on the count of those legally involved in the trade of medicines. It will lead to increase of unemployment and creating a portion of society depending on illegal means as sources of income which will become very difficult to treat once this problem is widespread in the society. The great losses of foreign currency when many smuggled spoiled and expired drugs are confiscated from the market and destroyed. The loss of revenues, which could have been collected as customs tariffs. The reduction of level of expertise among the national cadre due to the expansion of smuggling circle.

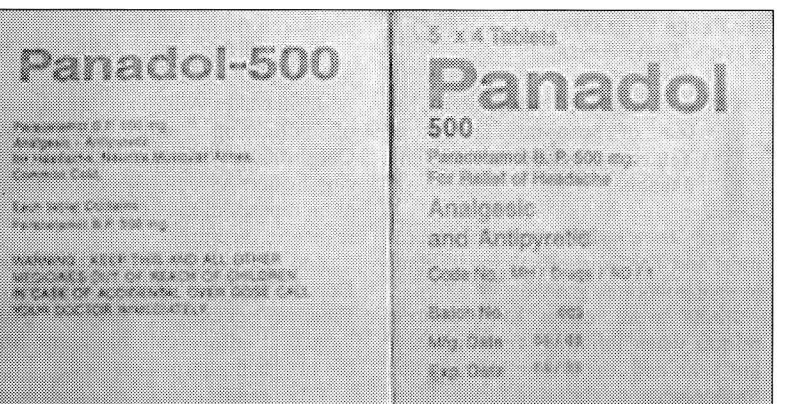
Smuggling of Medicine - Reasons- Effects and Solutions

How to curtail smuggling

- 1- Provide all drugs through official means, including vital medicines from viable sources with reasonable and various prices according to resources.
- 2- Grant more facilities related the followed procedures to register drugs

at the Drugs Authority and Ministry of Health and to focus on the technical specifications to ensure quality and not on the increase of registration fees which only adds more burden on the consumer.

- 3- Encourage local authorized importers to import essential drugs and to make studies on the feasibility to manufactured these drugs locally.
- 4- Activate the monitoring authorities in both in the market place and in the manufacturing of drugs companies.
- 5- Involve the media in the awareness campaign on the dangers involved with the use of smuggled medicines. And to show examples of side effects resulted from use of smuggled drugs.
- 6- Hold regular lectures and seminars and hosting those interested in the field of health at the local, regional and international level.
- 7- Lay down plans suitable for the treatment of the current solution and to find practical solutions for those depending solely on occupation of smuggling.
- 8- Enact legislative laws and regulations, which are logical and practical and can be implemented in real situations.
- 9- Form a council from the related



authorities (Health, Customs, Interior and Taxes Authorities) to draw suitable plans to totally eliminate the smuggling phenomenon with the coordination of related authorities of the neighboring countries where exchanged information

and expertise to can adopted to achieve the goal.
10- Activate the role of the drugs authorities especially in the field of monitoring and following up on the quality of imported medicines and the locally manufactured ones.

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150 mg tablets
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Dose : As directed by the physician.
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(enteric coated granules)
Approved colours used in empty capsule
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Dosage: As directed by the physician

OMEPRAZOLE CAP 20 MG
LOMAC-20
Cipla

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Moreover, the reasonable stability of the local currency depreciation before the foreign currencies, accompanied by the low prices of drugs imposed by the drugs authority in comparison to neighboring countries, the smuggling of medicine did not look like a lucrative business.

Then the value of the local currency began plummeting before the foreign currencies. The drugs authorities did not react to the increase in prices of

in comparison with actual US dollar rate in the market, instead of seeking practical solutions.

- 4- The drop of some vital drugs by the authorized agents due to disputes erupted between the local agents and the manufacturing companies on who would bear the gap between the official rate of the dollar and its higher value in the market.
- 5- The dwindling role of the drugs company which used to cover 60%

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Rapid Indigestion Relief Tablets
Rapid triple-action formula
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Heartburn
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Ozone layer among things hurt

Cut a tree, wound our ecological soul

By ISMAIL AL-GHABRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Taking care of trees is a civilized act and behavior, which reflects the level of attitude and awareness a general public has. The trees develop the civilized human behavior.

There is no doubt the participation of citizens, from all walks of life, in planting and taking care of trees and in expanding the arable lands, will eventually lead to the developing of environmental awareness among members of the society. There is no doubt also the formation of skills, directions and values, in order to understand and to appreciate the rooted relation between man and the surroundings he lives in, require the necessity to preserve the resources of environment and most importantly to utilize these resources while maintaining them clean and pure.

Trees do not only provide shades and feelings of peace and tranquility,

but also bring a sense of delight and joy and food for human beings and animals alike. There are many benefits to having trees, which can help us sustain healthy lives.

Trees purify the air we breathe in, absorb the harmful gases and smells, regulate the degree of humidity in the atmosphere, enhance the look of our cities and homes and add beauty and good taste to the surrounding cement buildings and construction sites.

There are countless benefits to having and growing more and more trees. Thus, cutting down trees unnecessarily will definitely disturb the equilibrium of the environment in several aspects and incidents.

The phenomena being reported by the various media means and from time to time the holding of international summits and regular conferences and seminars by either the decision makers or by the specialists and scientists, for discussions and consultations in efforts to treat or to find solutions, are examples of alarming phenomena.

The changes in weather and climate, the rapid increase in the temperature degree in the atmosphere and the hole in the ozone layer which allows more penetration of ultraviolet light which in turn endangers mankind to develop some sort of skin cancer diseases (May God protects us all).

All of these problems force us to begin and to plant more and more trees and to expand the arable lands, starting with planting and taking good care of trees in our streets islands and home backyards and public gardens. These problems require of us also to confirm the importance of public awareness towards trees among fathers to children generations.

The spread of awareness on the importance of planting trees and paying attention to them through the future generations will enable us, if God is willing, to achieve the goal to preserve trees and to never cut them down.

Good luck.

It's more than just the houses

Old Sana'a has overwhelming charm

BY ISMAEL AL-GHABIRI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The legend, the mystery that comes from the fragrances of the past, there it stands the old city of Sana'a with its proud, historic buildings and smiling people.

Ancient, yet forever new in the hearts of its people and visitors describing long pages of history, battles, suffering and triumph in just one look, with its garden isles and the embracing of nature architecture and intriguing light colours.

This is no place for narrating the beauty of this old city or the history of its land. It is however, a unique description of the gates, streets, Turkish baths, markets and even lanes in an attempt to capture some of its details in a narrative style.

For no matter how much one could remember and write still remains much more unspoken and this is left for the reader to visit and eye witness the names and places mentioned here-with.

Sana'a gateways and streets

What is a better start than the doors themselves? Old Sana'a had originally four gates - or as in Arabic "Bab" - which finally concluded into seven as follows: "Bab Shoob" and "Bab al-Shaqadeef" to the North, "Bab al-Yaman", "Bab al-Balaqa", and "Bab Khuzaima" South, "Bab al-Qaser" or "Bab Sitran" East, and "Bab al-Room" in the North West.

Four streets penetrate through the whole city from the west to the east in an interesting design. If a map would be drawn it would narrate the following names: "al-Saila" leading to "al-Alimi", "al-Filhi" to "al-Zumoor" then "Sarhat al-Wadi" to "al-Tawashi" which takes you to the main road to "Bab Shoob" and "Ghamdan" Palace.

However if you take a turn at "al-Zomor" to "Aqeel" then "Sarhat Zabarrah" to "al-Maidan" you will find your self again in the Palace of "Ghamdan" area.

The third route comes through "al-Kharaz" - "Talha" - "Sooq al-Baqar" the cow market then interesting the second route in "Aqeel" and merging with it.

Following "Broom," "al-Abhar" you will find yourself in "Bab al-Yaman" which could take you to "al-

Kharija", "Sukara", "al-Basha" then eventually "Ghamdan" Palace.

If you want to head from north to south then you have two options, one that goes from "Bab Shoob", "al-Zumoor" then "Sooq al-Madar" the Pottery Market, "Sooq al-Hatab" the wood market, "Sooq al-Sarajeen" the lighters market, "Sooq al-Inab" the grapes market then the Great Mosque "al-Jami" al-Kabeer" and finally emerging at "Bab al-Yaman."

But if you take it from "al-Zumoor" in the north to "Aqeel" you will take a shorter route to "Bab al-Yaman" through "al-Mubsata" from "Aqeel" then to "Sooq al-Qisher" the Coffee market to "Sooq al-Nohas" the copper market.

Markets

Here is the one of the best assets of the whole city, the endless markets and the legendary gatherings that take you centuries back. Daily, bi-weekly, weekly and occasional markets, it's all there, buy what you want and watching is for free.

Name it and it is there, a market for cows and the other for donkeys, one for Qat and another for water pipes. If you buy your wood from the wood market then you can pass by the carpentry market to get it made into specially designed furniture the Yemeni style. And for women is the gold and cloths market and many many others.

Mosques "al-Masajid"

Not only for prayer, mosques had been used traditionally for lectures and preaching, for serious gatherings and also a typical information centre. There are around forty mosques in the old city of Sana'a. And these vary in size and design although they all have a common architectural feature of the beautifully designed domes and high minarets and Islamic carvings on the ceilings and the walls.

The Great Mosque "al-Jami" al-Kabeer" as the name indicates is the largest of them all. There are several other important mosques such as "Masjid al-Haimi", "Masjid al-Abhar", "Masjid Mosa", "Masjid al-Qala'a", "Masjid al-Zumoor", "Masjid al-Shahideen", "Masjid Dawood", "Masjid Aqeel"...etc.

It is interesting to know that many of the mosques in the old city have a water well attached to them and gardens that reflect the beauty of the



Bab alyemen, Sana'a old city

place.

Turkish baths, and more

And of course not to forget the Turkish style baths or what is called in Arabic "al-Hammam" which are distinguished with a large white dome and stone sinks as well as the underground room which feeds steam to the whole of the bath through an amazing ventilation system that allows the outside air to go out of the bath and not in. Of those baths are "Hammam al-Maidan", "Hammam Saba", "Hammam al-Tawashi", "Hammam Shukor" and many others. The way these baths are designed helps in curing many illnesses relating to back pain, muscle aching and cold.

Now the houses. They range from two to five stories high on top of which is what is called "Mandhara" or "al-Mafraj" which is a large room

with huge glass windows allowing to viewer to be enchanted with the beautiful sites while taking the evening rest or siesta.

The walls of the houses are usually made of mud bricks and painted with white Gypsum giving it the elegant white colour.

People of old Sana'a take great care of the appearance of their homes, they decorate all their homes above the windows with coloured glass called "Qamariya" and the beautiful carvings within the house in the ceilings and in the corners testify to this merit of their too. They also love keeping plants in

their window lintels as well as having well taken care of gardens around the houses.

There is so much more that could be said, however let this be just an inviting introduction welcoming a visit to this exciting city to get a closer look.

Children are our future

Juvenile rights put under microscope

BY FAHMIA AL-FOTIH
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The ministry of Human Rights and Save The Children Sweden (SCS) held a workshop on March 3 to discuss the situation of juveniles in Yemen.

Taking place in the headquarters of the Ministry of Human Rights, the meeting had Ms. Amat Al-Aleem al-Soswaa, Minister of Human Rights, head the workshop.

Al-Soswaa said, "It is not exaggerated to say that children are half of the nation at the present and children are all of our future which we dream about. Family, state, school and media are all responsible institutions to care, educate, protect children. So protecting children is a national duty and human and religious responsibility. Official and international organizations are also responsible to take care of this weak sector, and they have to positively direct them to the right way to benefit and invest them as productive power to build the society."

She also said "It becomes remarkable that juveniles delinquents becomes

a phenomenon and considerably increases in our country that may be convert to serious problem in future."

The Yemeni minister said that the country has to seek to implement the Child Rights Conventions (CRC) that Yemen has signed and ratified as well as the law of juveniles.

"We also have to take part in rehabilitation the juvenile to keep the solidity of the family and give them a hand to take the right way. Finally, I call for establishing information unit to provide the concerned bodies with reality of this phenomenon and its negatives."

Radda Barnen, the SCS representative, said "It is my pleasure to be here with you to discuss and share our experiences and concerns about children situation in general and the situation of children conflict with the law in particular from human rights perspectives."

She further said "Awareness of child protection as human rights issue paved the road for several achievements to take place in legislations and implementations sides. However, there are some important steps to go further need to be taken. In addition, several steps should be taken to ensure that implementation of the law do not violate

child rights for protection."

She also said "I am glad that establishment of juvenile centers have taken place in some of the governorates and we hope that will be extended to cover all Yemen. Children in prisons is still one of the challenges that needs to be taken into the agenda of the government and civil society organizations because of its impact on the innocent children who become victims of violations"

She concluded, "Improvement would not happen by itself, collaboration and coordination of the efforts between all actors can maximize the impact on those children lives. And this gathering is the proof that we could work together to promote those children rights on prevention, protection, and rehabilitation."

Lana AL-Sharabi, the a manager in the human rights ministry, displayed the general report that resulted from field visits for a number of juveniles' centers in various governorates (Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Hodeida and Ibb).

Consequently, the door of discussion was opened to participants to comment on and enrich the report with their suggestions.

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 بالأخ / 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

Local Press

Prepared by Mohammed Khidhr

Al-Sahwa weekly, 4 March 2004.

Main headlines

- Islah demands stopping of coming price doses
- Lawyers expect acquitting the students
- Judiciary police fail to arrest Ali al-Kuhlani
- Farjani: American project a partnership without partner
- In a discussion seminar on directions of Yemeni politics towards regional groupings,
- Politicians and researchers criticize confusion of foreign policy and setting aside opposition
- Mediation for the release of son of the Sudanese community, failed

Columnist Zaid al-Shami says in an article the cold war between the capitalist and the socialist camps came to an end. And since the United States have unilaterally led the world it has begun searching for a new enemy and the Zionists managed to push it to direct its war against the Islamic world.

American has emerged nowadays adopting principles novel to the values which humanity has agreed upon. America is now siding with aggression and violation of human rights. It has for instance refused to sign an agreement on halting arms race, refused to sign on land mines nonproliferation, refused to sign on the international criminal court that means the trial of offender whatever his nationality is but it insists no one has the right to subject the American soldier accountability even if he was an aggressor and allowed itself to bring to military court those who act against its will, as is the case with Afghanistan detainees in Guantanamo. America does not hesitate to condemn the Palestinian resistance operations and turns a blind eye on the Zionists crimes in Palestine. The Jewish terror is legitimate and resisting it is a crime the Palestinians have to stop it.

It is quite enough to see how clear is the mistaken policy of America in the aggression on Iraq and occupying it under pretext of searching for weapons of mass destruction which it could not find any trace of them and it has been evident that the information of the American intelligence was wrong and inaccurate. But what is the use of such admittance after what happened and who dares to question it?

Regrettably the leader of the new world has become searching for ene-

Main headlines

- Minister of oil and minerals: We encourage investment and economic integration with Ethiopia
- The president: Weakness and degradation the nation experience would not continue
- Yemen condemns explosions in Kerbala and Baghdad
- Entry visas for Iraqis to Yemen
- Arab Fund, major partner in development in Yemen
- Under occupation, Iraqi women pay high price
- Red Cross Committee rapporteur discloses some details Saddam Hussein's message to his wife and daughters
- American praise of human rights record in Yemen
- Yemeni -Saudi mechanism to determine positions of control towers on the borders
- End of April, Sana'a to host meeting of Arab and African Shoura and Senate councils
- Joint Arab document to Tunis summit
- Oil talks between Yemen and Ethiopia
- Three cooperation agreement between Yemen and Pakistan
- Shiites killed in Ashoura, Hasssan Nassrallah warns from disturbance
- Arab disregard of the president's initiative, divisions on Tunis summit
- Before finding alternatives ensuring security, Saudi would not disman- the separation barrier
- Ubeid's son: Disclosure of my father's destiny, the government's responsibility
- Bush nominates Tunisia for leading the Arabs
- Coalition forces prevent Yemeni from fishing
- Zindani: America should resent its evidence to Yemeni judiciary,
- Islah: State responsible for protection of its citizens
- European Court postpones al-Mouayad case
- U.S. State Department report on Yemen:
- Government performance far from legislation, army men low salaries, an inlet for corruption

mies and sowing hatred against it. It is the tyranny that would not last long.

Al-Shoura weekly, organ of the People's Forces Union of Yemen 3 March 2004.

Main headlines

- Sheikh Ukaimi dies in fighting with kidnappers in al-Jawf
- Ethiopian refugees demand to be settled in Yemen

- Tribal clashes renewed because of a woman killing in Hajjah
- 33 researchers compete for Hayel Saeed prize
- Malaria kills three children in Madariba district
- Committee on defending university students:
- Political security responsible for arresting activists
- Iddi al-Maneefi says in an article security forces did not wait long for the conclusion of the third conference

of the journalists syndicate of Yemen that they affirmed that they do not stand the opinion of any journalist and the freedom of expression. They have also affirmed that the democratic margin we hear about in our media is narrowing day by day and Yemen's readiness to export it democracy to Arab countries and the third world.

Najeeb al-Yabli has written an opinion o the journalists third general conference thinking his opinion is within the permitted democratic margin, the margin seem no longer there, it has suddenly disappeared before the Yabli. That message the security has addressed to the journalists and their syndicate's leadership, putting hem n the picture and on the touchstone. It is the first true test for the journalists. So are they capable of facing such a test?

It is not demanded from the syndicate leadership to respond to such a query as much as its interest in putting an end to such violations happening against the journalists. The one following up the official rhetoric speeches thinks that the journalist is a person living a happy live full of security and stability away from threats, beating and arrest and all types of violations, the contrary the correct. As a result the journalists and their new leadership should not stand hand folded regarding the defense for all journalists and to begin with Najeeb Yabli as first step.

26 September weekly, organ of the Yemen Armed Forces 4 March 2004.

Main headlines

- Sana'a Grouping economic committee meets in Sana'a this month
- A regional forum in Sana'a on migration between Gulf States and the Arab peninsula
- Yemeni-Saudi security committees begin meetings for enhancement of security cooperation across borders
- French cultural center's activities continue
- Columnist Iskandar AL-Asbahi

devotes his column this week to talking about squandering in various walks of life in general. He says the images of wasting are numerous in administrative practices in general. The administrative and structural beeping up enshrouding the state's apparatus is on aspect of squandering potentials. The overlapping and repetition many administrative units are characterized by, undoubtedly, constitute a squander of resources and hamper accomplishment. An example of material wasting is what the state establishment of electricity announced about the lost value of electric power last year that amounted to YR 6 billion and that includes the wasting in both technical and non-technical. And of course this affects the establishment's revenues. Added to that is the corruption in diplomatic missions that cost the state more than 6 billion rials a year and constitute a financial and economic squander, especially that most of those accredited can be qualified at the Yemeni universities and with very much less cost.

When the Social Fund of Development and the programs of public works adopt the same projects in the same local societies it would be an economic squander appears to us in more than one site and establishment.

Against the diagnosis of squander in various aspects of our life, we have to "waste" a little of time and effort for facing any economic squander or loss.

Al-Wahda weekly, 3 March 2004.

Main headlines

- UNHCR representative: Yemen is committed to refugees agreement without discrimination
- Environment committee at the Shoura Council recommends reconsideration of electricity and water cost
- Culture undersecretary: Beginning of implementation of a number of big tourist projects
- Secretary-general of Jawf local

This son looks back on dad's loss

Carl Leubsdorf* For CyberInk LP

popular anti-Bush couplet among Democrats goes like this: "Like father, like son, one term, and he's done." George W. Bush has spent more than three years seeking to ensure he won't meet his father's fate. But in crafting election strategy, the son is a lot more like his father than he sometimes seems.

Bush and top aides say this is a "big-picture" election pitting sharply different views of how to meet major national challenges. At the same time, he is seeking to compensate for shortcomings in his record by matching his father's use of "wedge" issues.

In 1988, the elder Bush assailed Democrat Michael Dukakis for opposing a bill requiring Massachusetts students to say the Pledge of Allegiance. Bush wrapped himself in the flag, made a much publicized visit to a flag-making factory and criticized Dukakis' stance as unpatriotic.

An even more emotional appeal made the point that Dukakis was soft on crime by citing a black prisoner named Willie Horton who murdered a Maryland couple during a state-sanctioned weekend leave.

An ad run by a pro-Bush group without formal ties to his campaign made

Horton look especially menacing, but Bush and campaign surrogates, including son George, also used the issue.

The two subjects, while reflecting legitimate differences between the candidates, hardly were the main ones facing the country. A similar thing is happening this year in the wake of a Massachusetts court decision legalizing gay marriages in the Bay State.

Bush has endorsed a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman in an effort to firm up support among conservatives upset at his fiscal record and concerned he hasn't done enough to win confirmation of conservative judicial nominees.

Congress seems unlikely to muster the two-thirds' vote needed in each house to pass a constitutional amendment on to the states. But the White House high command recognizes it creates discomfort for the Democrats, and it provides a useful distraction from the economy and foreign policy.

The Republicans say they welcome a debate on those issues. But claims of economic gains are undercut by the loss of 3 million jobs and the re-emergence of deficits. And Bush's contention that he has made progress in the war on terrorism is undercut by a failure to find Osama bin Laden and the public's increasing doubts over the Iraq war.

Beyond the use of wedge issues,

there's a parallel between the way this president and his father approached the "big issue" of taxes.

The elder Bush used his acceptance speech at the 1988 Republican convention to vow "no new taxes," even though some aides believed that pledge was unsustainable due to the deficits incurred under Ronald Reagan. As a result, Bush suffered politically when he accepted some tax increases as part of a deficit reduction package.

This president still is pushing tax cuts as the best spur to economic growth. And, like his father, Bush refuses to admit that tax increases eventually might be necessary, something recently acknowledged by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.

To be sure, Bush plans to assail Kerry for votes to cut defense spending and for an overall record rated as the Senate's most liberal by the nonpartisan National Journal.

But increasingly, it looks as if this president may want to stress the kinds of side issues his father did. It worked for the elder Bush, in part because Dukakis was inept at defending himself. But Kerry is determined not to make that mistake, which is why many Democrats think the outcome may be different this time.

* Carl Leubsdorf, is the Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. (cleubsdorf@dallasnews.com).

REFLECTIONS

Qat and pollution are Yemen's WMD

One day on my way to office I met an Italian lady who works as a physician in one of the private medical centers, I remembered having had a chat with her in one of the Yemeni Popular Restaurants.

I recall that she then felt sorry for the Yemenis' incessant consumption of qat (catha edulis) a stimulant plant which is contaminated due to the indiscriminate use of chemicals in its plantation until fewer days prior to its harvest.

Spraying qat and other vegetables with chemicals of various brands, has led to grave consequences and irremediable illnesses, the worst of which is cancer, and as most such cases are referred for medication, in Germany. Doctors there have expressed their surprise to notice a higher rate of cancer cases in Yemen compared to other countries in the region.

Most countries of the world prohibit qat and consider it as a downright narcotic, except in Britain where its trade is thriving.

Anyway, I remember that the Italian lady was advising the restaurant manager who complained to her about his illnesses, that he should immediately cease chewing qat and smoking cigarettes.

But, this time I came past her noticing that she was wearing a mask. It is not that I was surprised to see her wearing the mask, because I know very well that Sana'a has become a polluted city, but this is what prompted me to write this article, for her being a doctor made her discern the extent of contamination Sana'a was

undergoing and consequently chose to wear a mask.

During the past months we have been hearing that the government had set a deadline for the prevention of diesel run cars and that the cars with kaput carburetors would be removed from the streets but it seems the government has retreated from its determination, while diesel run vehicles are still coughing out their fumes day and night and adding insult to injury, it has been permitting the import of second-hand outdated cars, motorcycles and diesel-run vehicles.

The strangest in all of this, is that in solidarity with the government's policy on the pollution issue, the capital mayoralty has ordered the hacking and eradication of trees from the streets around the capital. I have heard people say derisively, that this measure was meant in order to add to the effect of pollution produced by the polluting cars, the diesel run vehicles and the other related pollutants.

Furthermore, the mayoralty has been neglecting gardens such as "Althawra garden" in Aljiraf, which is considered the one and only fully-grown garden in Sana'a and was the place where our leaders used to hold their eid prayers together with the Muslim and Arab Diplomatic Corps.

Some people say, it is so, because some influential people are coveting the land greedily, and that they do intend to usurp it gradually, beginning with its deliberate negligence.

While others claim, that the garden was founded by a predecessor president and that this

fact has made it a hated landmark which should be wiped out from view.

Personally, I do not know whose opinion is right! The people at the mayoralty should bear in mind that the Sana'a Water Basin is to be depleted within 10-13 years (if no solution is to be found Sana'a will be rendered inhabitable), and that the trees being hacked are 30 years old now.

During my few visits abroad I saw that hacking trees is discouraged and people are punished for it, although they have plenty of water and it rains sometimes each half an hour. Other pollution aspects are represented in tire burnings, stone-cutting workshops, chemical stores and plastic factories whose location should be away from residential areas.

Accordingly, I would like to tell our dear responsible people that the bad effects of pollution do not discriminate between the rich and the poor, that they too are subject to such contaminants and it behooves them to find a solution sooner rather than later, before calls for foreign intervention to eradicate this type of Yemeni WMD, heat up and foreigners in the country like the Italian woman start considering wearing masks as a must.

Nevertheless, I am still entertaining the hope that the government will take an immediate measure to get rid of the pollution problem which has led some foreigners to wear masks, and that the mayor will cease taking down trees, stop encroachments on gardens and the usurp of public property.

By Yahya Al-Olfi
alolfi@hotmail.com

Parker spurs San Antonio to victory

Sat Mar 6, 2004 08:05 AM ET
NEW YORK March 5 (Reuters) - Tony Parker was in rampant form as he spurred San Antonio to a 113-100 victory over the Dallas Mavericks Friday.

The absence of two-time MVP Tim Duncan, who was sidelined for a fourth straight game with a knee injury, barely troubled the Spurs.

Although Dallas trailed 59-33 midway through the game, a late fightback made the score more respectable.

Belgian-born Parker picked up the slack for the defending NBA champion, pouring in 27 points on 9-of-17 shooting.

Hedo Turkoglu added 21 points, with Malik Rose notching 18 while grabbing 10 rebounds.

The Mavericks were paced by 21 points from Dirk Nowitzki, who made seven of his nine fourth-quarter shots.

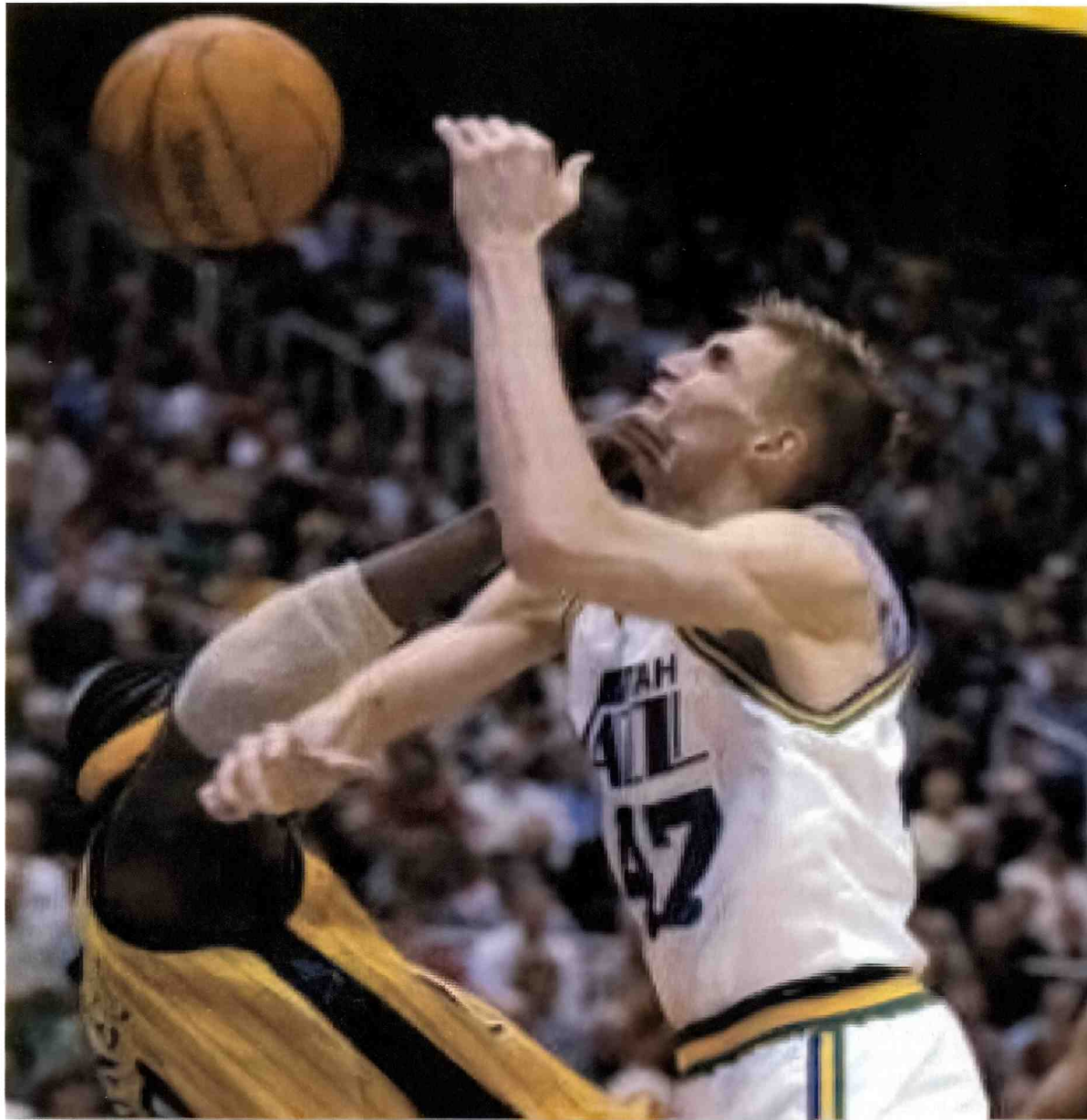
Michael Finley added 19 points before being tossed for a flagrant foul and Steve Nash recovered from a stomach virus to score 13.

The Mavs, who beat San Antonio twice earlier in the season, were attempting to sweep the cross-state Spurs for the first time in the 24-year history of their rivalry.

In other games

Paul Pierce scored 24 points and pulled down 10 rebounds as the Boston Celtics won their fourth straight game, outlasting the Washington Wizards 94-90.

NBA scoring leader Tracy McGrady notched 28 points to help the Orlando Magic dump the visiting Atlanta Hawks 101-96.



Utah Jazz forward Andrei Kirilenko(R) loses control of the ball as he draws a foul on Indiana Pacers forward Jermaine O'Neal during the first quarter of NBA action in Salt Lake City, Utah, March 5. Photo by Steve Wilson/Reuters

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Stephon Marbury poured in 35 points in the New York Knicks' 109-103 victory over hosts Raptors.

Super rookie LeBron James notched 19 points and Carlos Boozer added 18 to guide the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 88-85 victory over the New Orleans Hornets.

Yao Ming had 27 points and Steve Francis counted 25 more as the Houston Rockets surprised the Minnesota Timberwolves 112-109.

Kobe Bryant left the game after less than a minute with an injured

shoulder. His departure failed to derail the Los Angeles Lakers, who edged the Seattle SuperSonics 99-91 behind Shaquille O'Neal's 32 points.

Jermaine O'Neal collected 30 points and grabbed 10 rebounds as the Indiana Pacers blew a big early lead before rallying to defeat host Utah Jazz 96-88.

Richard Jefferson's 23 points helped carry the resurgent New Jersey Nets to a 78-74 win over the Golden State Warriors, who suffered their fourth straight loss.

Lightning stun Devils with late rally

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Dave Andreychuk notched his 15th goal of the season with 2:43 left in overtime to lead Tampa Bay Lightning to a 3-2 win over defending Stanley Cup champion New Jersey Devils Friday.

It was Tampa's seventh consecutive victory, improving the team's record to 22-2-1-4.

Vincent Lecavalier forced overtime when he scored with just nine seconds remaining and then slammed his stick against the protective glass to show his delight.

Lesser-known Pavel Kubina assisted on both the game-tying and winning goals.

John Madden and Jeff Friesen got second-period goals for the Devils after Dmitry Afanasev had given Tampa a 1-0 lead.

Lightning's Martin St. Louis, the

NHL's leading scorer with 78 points, failed to pick up a point for the first time in 14 games.

Tampa Bay now have an Eastern Conference-best 88 points and trail only Detroit in the overall standings.

The Red Wings increased their tally to 89 after defeating Vancouver 3-1.



Vancouver Canucks' leftwing Daniel Sedin (22) trips next to Detroit Red Wings' defenseman Chris Chelios (24) in the third period of the March 5 game at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, Michigan. Detroit defeated Vancouver, 3-1. Photo by Rebecca Cook/Reuters

Chess tourney held

By FAHMIA AL-FOTIH
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Under the patronage of Abdualrahman Al-Akwaa, Minister of Youth and Sport, Yemen's chess championships have been held from March 1 to 9.

The Chess General Union organized the chess championship for the first-rate clubs. It's been held at the Scouts Camp.

Ahmed al-Qardie, the financial officer at the union, said "The Union has been holding this second republic championship for the first-rate clubs.

Actually, this championship comes within the union's plans for 2004.

Through this championship clubs will be categorized into first and second rate. We want to establish strong and honest competition between the participants."

About the female participation he said, "The participation of females is limited, however, it is a good as a beginning. I think the chess is so suit-

able for women's nature, especially with our society traditions and customs"

Al-Qardie added, "There are 12 teams from various governorates that hve come to participate. It is a step to prepare for the 5th Arab Chess Championship that our country, Yemen, will host it and take place in Taiz City on 12 May, and last until 22 May and that will coincident with our celebration the 14th anniversary of unity."

He further said "It is worthy mentioning that we are among few Arab countries that we have hosted several championships one of which the Asia Championship.. We have successfully organized them and they have achieved their goals. So we have been thanked



Chess Championship Panel

and honored by the Arab Chess Union. Yemen is considered a typical and model for hosting successful championships. Yemen has harvested 64 medals between gold, silver and bronze in Arab, Asian and international participation"

He concluded, "We think that sport is the appropriate policy through which we can promote Yemen tourism and reputation."

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I. What to Say

Situations and expressions (63): Good wishes on the engagement

Engagement or betrothal is a happy occasion when two young, expectant hearts commit themselves to be partners on the highway of life.

- Engagement greetings. May love and contentment and dreams coming true, fill along, happy life time with joy for you two!

- The tendency to grow downwards: geotropism (n.) The scientific study of old age and its diseases: gerontology (n.)

(B) Foreign words and expressions Give sources of origins and meaning of the following

Suggested answers to last week's questions

- 1. diatribe (Gk 'rubbing through'): A violent attack on a person or work, couched in vitriolic language. 2. dictionary (Lat. 'dictionarius'):

(C) Bring out differences in meaning of the following pairs of words

- 1. air, wind 2. discreet, discrete 3. corporal, corporeal 4. affect, effect 5. miner, minor

Suggested answers to last week's questions

- 1. temper (n.) (state or condition of the mind): The boss is in a bad temper since this morning. temperament (n.) (person's disposition or nature): She is a girl with nervous temperament.

(D) Idioms and phrases

Bring out the meaning of the following in sentences

- 1. black ox. 2. to be at the zenith of. 3. all and sundry. 4. at death's door. 5. donkey's years.

Suggested answers to last week's questions

- 1. pen and ink (in writing): He gave his statement in pen and ink. 2. without fear or favour (impartially): Go on performing your duty without fear or favour.

IV. Grammar and Composition

(A) Grammar Complete the sentences below with an appropriate form of the word in brackets

form of the word in brackets

- 1. Learning to speak a language is often much (easy) than learning to write it. 2. This hotel must be (expensive) than the small one next door.

Suggested answers to last week's questions

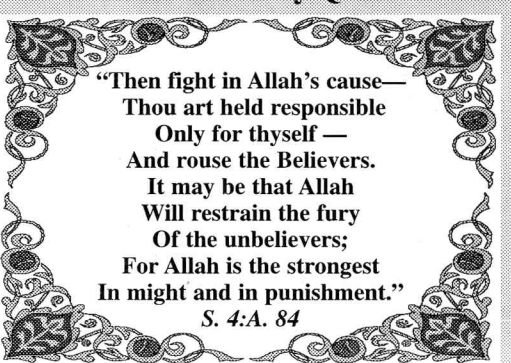
- 1. Managers have to decide how best to allocate the human, physical and capital resources available to them. 2. Managers have to make sure that the jobs and tasks given to their subordinates are manageable.

(B) Composition: Paragraph writing Expand the idea contained in the proverb

57. EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY

Last week's topic 56. DISTANCE LENDS ENCHANTMENT TO VIEW When an object or a person is seen from a distance, it looks more charming than it really is.

V. Pearls from the holy Quran



VI. Words of wisdom 'There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.'

A letter to the teachers of English: 46

How to use a dictionary (2)



DR..M.N.K.BOSE (BOSE@y.net.ve) Associate Professor of English, Faculty of Arts, Ibb.

Dear fellow teachers,

Dictionary skills are very useful to a learner and a teacher. What are they? They include being aware of the alphabetic order of the letters, referring to a dictionary in a reasonable time, understanding the abbreviations and other signs used in a dictionary, understanding the grammatical explanations given in the dictionary, reading the phonetic symbols used in order to pronounce the words correctly, and understanding the idiomatic uses of the words given in the dictionary.

Do you think that referring to a dictionary quickly is easy? Many people find it difficult. Through the words are arranged in an alphabetic order, it is not as easy as we think to refer to a dictionary quickly; this needs practice. You can frame exercises for your learners as the following: Choose about 20 words with different spellings and ask them to arrange them alphabetically.

40-odd word cards and gave one to each student in her class, she gave them one minute to read the word, and then she asked them to form a line with their words in the alphabetic order. It was a real fun to watch the students struggling to find the right places in the line.

Another exercise to help your learners to use a dictionary well is to make them use guiding words. Guiding words are those printed at the top of each page in a dictionary; the one on the left is the first word on the page and the one on the right is the last word at the bottom of that page.

Have you got the idea of the exercise? You can also make it a group work, giving a sheet of paper with the words to each group and setting a time limit for the work. This activity will enable them to refer to a dictionary quickly with ease.

It is important that school libraries have good and new dictionaries. Here is a tip for how you can get dictionaries for your libraries. You can ask the teacher trainees who come to your school for teaching practice to donate collectively one or two dictionaries to your library; this is what my trainees do every time they go to a school for teaching practice.

Yours fraternally, Dr.M.N.K.Bose.

Examinations as means, not goals



BY HASAN SAEED BA-UDAN hsaab80@hotmail.com FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SEYOUN

It's not denying the fact that examinations are very significant since they provide feedback about students' level of comprehension, as well as their weaknesses and strengths in the learning process. In addition, grades can serve as motivation pushing students forward to make further progress.

be willing to expand their knowledge by reading other books beyond the course material. Moreover, their revision very often takes place one or two nights before the exam leading to a very shallow grasp of the content.

In order to ensure real and meaningful learning, students should study for seeking knowledge, rather than for passing the exams. The most effective way for achieving this is that each student should be conscious of the ultimate goal of their study. This goal can be implemented by different means, within the matrix of which exams really play an insignificant, minor role. In this case students' study will make a difference as their main concern will be focused on obtaining knowledge to achieve that larger goal and be qualified for successfully facing the challenges of life.

But, unfortunately, nowadays most students are perceived to set grades as their only ambition. Consequently their aim is restricted to passing the exams and nothing else. In other words, studying for getting knowledge and useful information is not of value to them.

AS a result of this, students usually forget all the exam-related information shortly after the exam is over. Even some students may not be able to answer questions about what have been given to them in the previous years, that is because most of what they memorized in the previous years is entirely washed away from their minds. As an obvious evidence of this phenomenon is the common experience that some students finish their secondary schooling, but are unable to write even one correct sentence in English.

Another matter of serious concern is the fact that students' attention is mainly concentrated to memorize the content of the course material prescribed. But rarely are they found to

Teachers can play a crucial role in spreading an awareness among students that exams are not the be-all and end-all for them. They should not only depend upon exams in evaluating students' efforts because students' true abilities and knowledge are not always reflected in the exam grades awarded. A clear example of this fact is the oft-observed phenomenon that a good student ends up getting a low mark while a bad one may secure an unexpectedly high score.

In this context, we, the teachers and parents, have a significant role to play in putting exam in correct perspective and in infusing a healthy and positive attitude in the students about the role and relevance of exams in the scheme of things.

WONDERWORD by DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: First read the list of words, then look at the puzzle. The words are in all directions — vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backward. Circle each letter of a word found and strike it off the list. The letters are often used more than once, so do not cross them out. It is best to find the big words first. When you find all the words listed in the clues, you'll have a number of letters left over that spell the Wonderword.

CLUES

- Accountant Craft Lawyers Rely Successful Advisor Diploma Licensed Roofer Talent Animator Doctor Manage Rules Talk Editor Masseur School Teacher Athlete Educator Master Seller Team Attire Engineer Miner Serious Tests Attorney Expensive Niche Skills Thinker Barbers Experience Peerless Speaker Tools Brakeman Fees Performer Special Trained Breeder Finest Plumber Spies Tutor Builder General Police Sport University Computers Hands Problems Stage Vendor Consultant Hire Pros Standards Worker Contractor Idol Ranking Star Writer Cops Jobs Rating Student

ANSWER NEXT WEEK

Last Week's Answer: Lace

PROFESSIONALS

Grid containing letters for the word puzzle, arranged in 10 rows and 14 columns.

Solution: 9 letters

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9/11 families disgusted by Bush ads

NEW YORK (Reuters, 4 March) - Families who lost relatives in the September 11, 2001, attacks have voiced outrage at President George W. Bush's first ads of his re-election campaign that use images of the devastated World Trade Centre.

The clips are used to portray him as the right leader for tumultuous times.

"Families are enraged," said Bill Doyle, 57, of New York, who is active in several September 11 family groups. "What I think is distasteful is that the president is trying to use 9/11 as a springboard for his re-election."

"It's entirely wrong. He's had 3,500 deaths on his watch, including Iraq," said Doyle, whose 25-year-old son Joseph died at the trade Centre.

Long time Bush adviser Karen Hughes defended the four commercials — which began running on Thursday in at least 16 important battleground states — as "tastefully done."

"September 11 is not some distant event in the past," Hughes told ABC's "Good Morning America." "All of us feel deeply that tragedy but it's also important to recognise the impact it had on our national public policy."

Two ads refer to the hijacked airliner attacks that killed about 3,000 as the Bush campaign seeks to present him as a leader who rose to the challenge. One ad shows World Trade Centre ruins behind an American flag. Another shows firefighters removing the flag-draped remains of a victim.

Ron Willett of Walnut Shade, Missouri, said he was disgusted when he saw the ads. Willett, who lost his

29-year-old son, John Charles, when planes hit the trade Centre, said he is now so upset, "I would vote for Saddam Hussein before I would vote for Bush."

"I think it is an atrocity," his wife, Lucy, added. "He should not be allowed to use those images at all."

Stay away from ground zero

With Republicans holding their political convention in New York in late August, victims said they hope Bush does not make it worse by speaking at the site now known as Ground Zero, which many view as sacred.

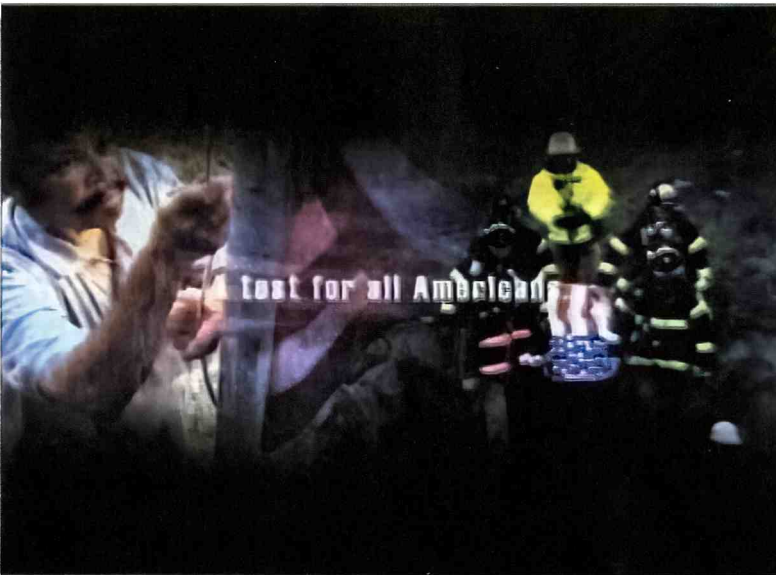
"If he does, there will be a protest and it could get ugly," said Doyle.

Several family members said their annoyance stemmed in part from Bush's refusal to testify publicly before the federal commission investigating the September 11, 2001, attacks.

"The Bush administration will not cooperate fully with the 9/11 commission and at the same time they are trying to invoke and own 9/11 and use it for his re-election," said Stephen Push from the Washington office of "Families September 11th." His wife died on the plane that crashed into the Pentagon that day.

The International Association of Fire Fighters, which has endorsed and campaigned for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, denounced the spots as "hypocrisy at its worst."

"I'm disappointed but not surprised that the president would try to trade on the heroism of those fire fighters," the union's general president, Harold Schaitberger, said.



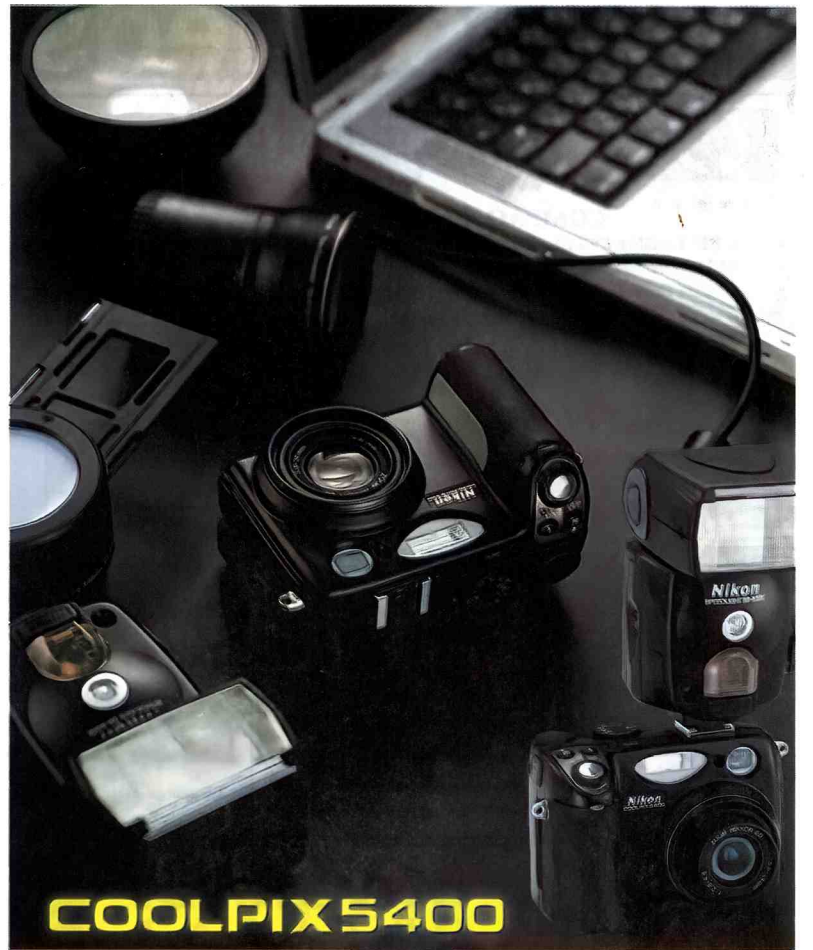
Television frame grab shows aftermath scenes from the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks being used in a campaign advertisement by U.S. President George W. Bush. Families who lost relatives in the attacks voiced outrage on Mar. 4, at President Bush's first ads of his re-election campaign that use images of the devastated World Trade Center to portray him as the right leader for tumultuous times. "Families are enraged," said Bill Doyle, 57, of New York, who is active in several Sept. 11 family groups. "What I think is distasteful is that the president is trying to use 9/11 as a springboard for his re-election." **REUTERS**

U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg, a New Jersey Democrat, said the use of the images "demeans and dishonours those who died."

"I urge you to direct your campaign to immediately withdraw these advertisements," Lautenberg wrote in a letter to Bush, adding that elected officials "must maintain standards of dignity and respect that prevent us from exploiting national tragedies for political purposes."

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg said he had no objections. And not all relatives of victims were upset by the ads.

"I don't have a problem with his pointing to his leadership at that time. He helped us weather it. To me it was a tasteful ad," said Patricia Reilly, who sister Lorraine Lee died in the New York attacks.



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