





# Sheikh Moayad, companion await U.S. justice

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The U.S. Federal Court of Brooklyn had begun during the previous days the process for setting up a jury for trial of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Moayad, and his companion Mohammed Zayed, press sources in New York told Al-Sahwa.net.

Al-Sahwa.net reported in its last issue that the court in charge of the trial had conducted on January 10, 2005, a random selection from among 300 people in the local area, using election lists, before setting up the 12-member jury.

The sources said the court had prevented both the prosecution and the advocates of Al-Moayad and Zayed from attending the selection, but they will be allowed later to "participate in selecting the jury."

According to the sources, the selection is gradual: some 300 people designated randomly through voter lists will be asked questions by the prosecution and the advocates of Al-Moayad and Zayed. The number will suffer attrition as both prosecution and defense have the right to exclude ten persons without stating reasons and exclude others with reasons.

The sources added that the judge is the one to finally decide the selection of the 12 American nationals nominated as jury, and other six as reserve. The jury will have the right to charge or acquit the detainees, but it is the



Sheikh Mohammed Al-Moayad

judge who will decide the punishment. In this way, a convict will not be charged unless the jury unanimously agrees on that, but if a jury member believes he is innocent, then he will be acquitted.

The procedure may continue for over two weeks after which the trial will be set to motion. The court, currently surrounded by tightened security, will not mention the names of the jury members for safety reasons.

The jury consists of ordinary citizens residing in the state of New York, namely in Brooklyn, the district in which the court is situated. They will be chosen by a draw, and it is not conditional that any of them has legal

expertise but the judge will inform them of the case and let them deliberate.

The sources said it is unlikely that FBI informant Mohammed Al-Ansi would be produced as a witness after discredit brought about by his setting himself aflame at the White House's gate on November 15, 2004. It was his protest against the US authorities' non-fulfillment of their promise to give him a sum of money in return for false information about Sheikh Al-Moayad he had offered.

The sources expected that the defense would concentrate on the recordings particularly the conversations between Sheikh Al-Moayad and Zayed during their stay in Germany.

The court had earlier agreed to one of two lawyers designated by the families of the detainees while the second is awaiting approval. They are to be supported by a Palestinian-American female lawyer.

## NCSPI's 30th anniversary

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF  
TAIZ BUREAU

On the occasion of the annual workers meeting, a ceremony under the motto "Family, future work & hope" was held recently by the National Company for Sponge and Plastic Industry (NCSPI) at the Cultural Center in Taiz.

The event coincided with the 30th anniversary of the ICSP.

The ceremony was attended by Abdullah Abdu Sa'eed General Director of Hail Sa'eed, and Partners Group and Shawqi Ahmad Hail Deputy Director General of the Group, and Hisham Sa'eed General Director at the NCSPI as well as many other personal-

ities of distinction.

The ceremony started with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran. Then speeches were delivered by some of the above mentioned personalities.

Hisham Sa'eed said that the company is working hard in order to maintain its human resources as well as its high prestige in the local market.

The NCSPI has a long experience and has scored a series of successful achievements over the last three decades.

At the end of the ceremony, the prominent workers received in-kind and in-money prizes as well as recognition certificates for their invaluable efforts that contributed to the reputation of the company.

## Companies vie to get Yemen railways

By MOHAMMED BIN SALAM  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A number of international construction companies compete for getting licenses to execute the project of railway and highway in Yemen.

"US, Polish and European companies are at the present time working on the required technical studies in order to get these projects either by investment and ownership system, while the companies are to guarantee the required finance of these projects," 26th Sep. weekly said in its issue of 13 Jan.

The source mentioned that the General Investment Authority (GIA) teamed up with the Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Public Works and Roads to prepare the needed data and technical studies related to investment opportunities in the sector of roads and railways.

The government has previously discussed the projects of railways and highways in Yemen so as to attract the foreign

## UK Embassy re-opens

The British Embassy in Yemen reopened on Saturday after a 10-day closure over security concerns.

Embassy officials decided to resume normal functions after closure was prompted by reported terrorist plans targeting the embassy.

Security reports said that western interests, including the British Embassy, might be probable targets for

terrorists during the Christmas vacation.

Security authorities intensified precaution measures around embassies and diplomatic residences and hotels.

But there were no incidents reported up until now.

Foreign embassies had warned their nationals late last year not to frequent certain hotels and other popular places.

## Al-Houthi supporters tried, journalists barred

By HASSAN AL-ZAIDI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Sana'a Specialist Punitive Court held its third session on Jan. 10 looking into the case of supporters of Hussein Al-Houthi, the cleric who was killed during the Sa'ada insurgency against the government and organizer of the "Believing Youth".

Judge Najeeb Al-Qadri went back on his previous decision concerning the permission of journalists to attend the trial and demanded the privacy of the

sessions.

Sheikh Mohammad Miftah and Sheikh Al-Dailami appeared, having been detained by the security police following the events in Sa'ada over their alleged involvement in supporting Al-Houthi, appeared before the court.

The judiciary will look into the case files of 160 people suspected of standing by Al-Houthi and the violent acts against the government. The trials of Miftah and Al-Dailami are the first ones concerning Al-Houthi supporters.

## YPS warns of smuggled medicines

By YASSER AL-MAYYASI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a recent press conference, Dr. Fadhli Ali Saleh Chief of the Yemeni Pharmacists Syndicate (YPS) warned of an increasing spread of medicines entering Yemen illegally.

The syndicate works hard to upgrade the profession of pharmacology and educate its members in order to cope with the requirements of medical policy, creating job opportunities for pharmacists and strengthening the social and cultural ties between them.

Dr. Fadhli Saleh said that the future work of the syndicate will concentrate more on the fight of smuggled medicines as well as spreading awareness among people about the risks of smuggled medicines.

He also said that smuggled medicines are seen to be often sold in pharmacies and many marketers keep on merchandizing such medicines.

The newly explored diseases including cancer resulted from the use of smuggled medicines and no sanction are seen to be taken against smugglers.

## Oppressed man appeals

Ali Rashid Hareez appealed the Minister of Interior and the President to take action against the harassment practiced by Otomah Security Commander against him.

"He is a tyrant who doesn't obey Allah in his treatment with poor people. He exploits their weaknesses, imprisons some people and insults and blackmails many others. He often takes their money under the pretext of fines, soldiers' fares...etc. without any reason," the man mentioned in his letter.

"He doesn't settle any disputes between civilians unless they pay a large sum of money. Aided by a member of the local authority council, he insults and imprisons whoever stands

against his devilish motives," the letter added.

Ali requests the President as well as the Minister of Interior to have a quick intervention and purify Otomah from such a tyrant who punishes citizens and prevents injustice from prevailing in the area, where people suffer from poverty and diseases.

Such treatment is an example of those who lack all human values and rights.

Ali escaped from his area to Sana'a leaving bereaved children without anyone to protect them and provide them with livelihood.

Will Ali be protected or left for such tyrants?



Minister of Interior Dr. Rashad Al-Aleemi



إعلان مناقصة

### TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT The Community Based Primary Health Care Project in Hadramout

Ref: ONG-PVD/2003/061-295 - Equipment

Oxfam GB in Yemen intends to award a supply contract for the following equipment:

Description	Quantity	Origin
Photocopier	1	European
Printer - Laser	1	European
Camera - Digital	2	European
Camera - Video	1	European
Television	12	European
Video Player	12	European
Fax machines	2	European
Computers Pentium 4	2	European

The equipment is for the Community Based Primary Health Care Project in Hadramout with financial assistance from the European Communities. The tender dossier is available from the Oxfam GB Sana'a office (diplomatic area - just off Djibouti street - phone: 01 444 568/9 Fax: 01 445 650). The deadline for submission of tenders is 10th February 2005.

A leading International NGO in Yemen is looking for a Chief of Party for its



ongoing Yemen Adult Literacy & Life skills Education project (YALLE) in Amran Governorate. This is a \$2 Million USAID funded project running until July 2007, involving the set up and support of self financing women's literacy groups in Amran. The successful candidate must satisfy the following criteria ;

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Applications must be received by January 31<sup>st</sup> 2005. Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

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**Blames UNHCR for his suffering**

**Iraqi in Yemen feels abandoned**

BY MOHAMMAD BIN SALLAM  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

He escaped the regime in his country because he was targeted and his imprisoned sect in the south of Iraq felt that it was lying between the hammer of the former regime and the ever-lasting wars in that area. Members of this sect were forced to take part in the war.

In spite of the fact that the number of Christians in Iraq exceeds one million and that they occupy high social prestige but, like the Lebanese Christians, the great majority of them are immigrants living outside their country.

Their life is so miserable not because of the pressure practiced over them by the former regime but they are surrounded by Muslim population. They prefer to live in an area inhabited by people of the same religion and believe they will feel more secure and stable during their stay in other countries.

His misfortune led him to travel to Yemen five years ago. He believed to arrive in a country of dreams but the miserable conditions in Yemen made him lament his misfortune while being chained in his hands and feet. Nobody has ever given him advice to immigrate to another country neither did he die.

Who is to help this person who ever seeks a decent life?

I attempt to give our readers what is only true in order not to embarrass the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that is held responsible for a great part of his suffering.

Kifah Wade'e Habeeb, who was born in 1959 and a civilian of the south of Iraq affiliating to the Christianity, left a son and a daughter living in Baghdad without anybody to provide them with livelihood.

After his arrival in Yemen in April 2000, he spent all his savings on making beauty salons as he was skillful in this respect.

Kifah was subject to extortion by the Taxes Authority, the Municipality and



Kifah Wade'e Habeeb

many other parties that compelled him to quit his work. Due to the lack of adequate protection that could be provided by the concerned Yemeni parties and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, he stayed idle, suffering from chronic diseases. He used to keep in fasting throughout the year except for a few days when some of his friends paid him visits.

Although he was holding a refugee identity, he was protected from the severe treatment.

According to him, The UN High Commissioner for Refugees did not offer him any support or any guarantee to maintain his humanity. Neither residence, food, job opportunity, health insurance nor adequate protection were provided to him by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as it does in many other countries all over the

world. The UNHCR did not grant him the right to move to a third country.

Kifah said: "though I was subjected to a kidnapping attempt by agents of the former Iraqi regime, all this was not taken seriously by the UN to help me move to a safer country."

Concerning the reasons justifying anger of the former Iraqi regime at him, he said: "I used to write more and more against Saddam's regime and as well as his son Uday. I started my writing in Jordan and then in Yemen in an indirect way."

He added that the problem did not stem from his animosity against Saddam and his son although Saddam killed his younger brother in 2000 and that he bears no malice against those who took power after Saddam. The problem did stem from his thoughts as he, supported by millions of people,

calls for security and stability.

As Iraq lost security and stability and there is no hope for restoring stability during decades to come and as his health is going bad with the passage of days, he has to given the right to move to a third country.

"My real problem was forwarded to the UNHCR since I believed it is higher as named however it is not. I want to depart from Yemen and not to return home. I do not like to stay in any one of the Arab countries as they do not respect freedoms and human rights", Kifah mentioned. "Nobody at the UNHCR pays attention to me or listens to what I say; they keep me standing at the gate during the working hours without any answer to my requests. I entered Yemen with \$ 6750 in my pocket with the aim to establish a modest project expecting to get some benefits but "The wind goes against the will of ships". I could not achieve any thing."

Kifah: "said the environment in Yemen does not encourage foreigners to invest in any field and now I believe that I became a beggar. I became a beggar however I do not ask anybody for help. Here in Yemen, refugees resort to beg due hunger and their need for clothes or to be thrown in Kharaz Camp where nothing, even out of value, is available."

At the end of the meeting, Kifah had his last words, " first I went to forward my message to the Yemeni Government and then to the UN represented by Kofi Anan. In my message I shout that the UNHCR based in Yemen does not carry out its tasks well, as there is no adequate protection nor care for refugees is realized."

I suffer from some heart diseases including hypertension and diabetes and some of my blood vessels do not operate. I am in an urgent need for help to get treatment outside Yemen.

I am not a terrorist and do not have terrorist thoughts, rather I am a free man and like to remain free for the rest of my life. If I were forced to come back to Iraq or to stay here in Yemen, I would cry out to all the human organizations and the different media means worldwide that the UNHCR does not have clear conscience nor do its duties well."

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**Lecture held**

**The merits of breastfeeding**

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF  
TAIZ BUREAU

Al-Sa'eed Foundation for Science & Culture held on Jan.12 a lecture on "The Modern Approach to Breastfeeding".

Delivered by Dr. Abdulkareem Ras'e Rector of Aden University, the event was attended by Dr. Abdulwahab Al-Ghurbani Head of Yemeni Red Cross Association, Dr. Abdulmalik Al-Sayyani General Manager of Al-Jumhuri Hospital and Dr. Mohammad Al-Durrah Associate Professor at Taiz University as well as a number of physicians working for different health institutions.

Mr. Faisal Far'e General Director of Al-Sa'eed Foundation delivered a speech at the beginning of the lecture in which he welcomed all the attendants and gave brief information about the lecture and its importance.

While lecturing, Dr. Ras'e reviewed the new studies and approaches to breastfeeding and its benefits.

He pointed out that he along with his colleagues at the Faculty of Medicine- Aden University have already formed a work team including a number of physicians to conduct a broad study in the most densely populated governorates in Yemen.

They have the intention to compare the findings of the study with what is there in the European Nations and the USA where media campaigns are launched to spread awareness among people about the great benefits of breastfeeding.

But in Yemen, a great tendency among mothers to feed their infants with manufactured milk is increasing.

"Realizing such tendency going up, we feel compelled to explain to mothers the latest scientific discoveries associated with breastfeeding," Dr. Ras'e noted. "In our study we found

out that breastfed infants are less subjected to diseases like diarrhea and fever.

He added: "We came to a conclusion that breastfeeding mothers are less subject to cancer, digestion problems and psychological diseases. The researchers stressed that breastfed babies are often more intelligent than others."

The modern researches explored that mother's milk can be used for the treatment of adults and it is sold in many countries. So Dr. Ras'e called on judges and religious scholars to issue their fatwa concerning the purchase of mother's milk for the purpose of treating adults and how it can be possible for a patient to drink milk of anonymous source.

Concluding his lecture, Dr. Ras'e said the government should give mothers one year leave from work, with her salary, in order to care for her baby.

**"Roma in blanco e nero"**

**Italian exhibition opens**

BY FAHMIA AL-FOTIH  
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism along with the Italian Embassy opened "Roma in blanco e nero" Jan. 16 in Bait AL-Thakafa.

The exhibition will last to 20th January.

"Roma in blanco e nero" ("Rome in black and white") Exhibition shows various symbolic places of the City of Rome, showing prints from the 1600s and 1700s.

The exhibition also includes photographs taken by city documents,

active between the end of the 1800's and the beginning of the 1900's, and the film directors, from the 1900's, who had made the city itself the location of famous movies.

The exhibition suggests a method of understanding the lively urban context, using various visual languages.

In following the various images of the same sites of Rome, a new history is told. It could be said that anyone, Italian or foreigner, taking a walk in the City or living in it, can visit it again and again, comparing those historical places with his own recollection.

The Roman scenes shown in the

collections of the National Institute For Graphic Arts, the photographic glass negatives of the Studio Vasari (1890-1910) and the cinematic images if the Foundation Center for the Instruction of Cinematography Archives tell about the passage of time and the consequent transformation of the City of Rome through the eyes of painters, engravers, architects, photographer and film director.

The exhibition also offers the opportunity of renewing the dialogue on the preservation of the cultural and architectural heritage of the oldest cities of the world, among them Sana'a, for the benefit of present and future generations.

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**Oxfam** إعلان مناقصة  
**TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT**  
The Community Based Primary Health Care Project in Hadramout

Ref: ONG-PVD/2003/061-295

**Oxfam GB in Yemen intends to award a supply contract for 2 4WD vehicles – 8 seats (must be manufactured in a European country) for the Community Based Health Insurance project in Hadramout with financial assistance from the European Communities. The tender dossier is available from the Oxfam GB Sana'a office (diplomatic area – just off Djibouti street – phone: 01 444 568/9 Fax: 01 445 650). The deadline for submission of tenders is 25<sup>th</sup> January 2005.**



## New parliament in Damascus

## Arab reform coming

BY PETER WILLEMS  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Is Arab reform on the way? It is if you believe the intents expressed by members of the 22-nation Arab League, who held an extraordinary meeting last Thursday in Cairo to discuss just how to carry out reform.

"Today's meeting is just the beginning of all reforms in the Arab world, including restructuring the Arab League, upgrading joint Arab action and setting up a follow-up and decision-making mechanism," said Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi last Thursday in Cairo.

There were disagreements between countries before the meeting began, but one in gear, the ministers agreed to a plan for the creation of a transitional Arab parliament, made up of four representatives from each country and based in Damascus, which is to prepare the path for a permanent assembly.

"The foreign ministers have unanimously decided to establish an Arab parliament, which will consist of four deputies from each member country," said the Arab League's statement after the meeting.

The ministers also approved of a new committee to follow up the League's resolutions and changes in the voting system.

The ministers decided to postpone talks on the establishment of an Arab security council and Arab court, as one Arab diplomat said, "The discussions are delayed

indefinitely for further consultations among member countries."

Proposals cleared by the ministers are expected to be presented at the next Arab Summit scheduled to be held in Algeria on March 22.

The ministers delayed the meeting one day over a disagreement on reform between Algeria and Egypt, according to sources. Algeria had introduced an election of the Secretary General and rotating the post among countries in the Arab League, but dropped the proposal that helped bring the ministers together on Thursday.

Amr Musa, currently the Secretary General, said, "The dossier on the rotation of the post of secretary general is closed and will not be reopened."

Egypt has mostly filled the post since the Arab League was founded in 1945.

It is reported that Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates did not send foreign ministers to the meeting. Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, was also absent. It is said that he did not attend the meeting since Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs Abd Al-Rahman Shalgham would be present.

Libya's alleged plot to assassinate Saudi's Crown Prince Abd Allah bin Abd Al-Aziz surfaced recently and the Saudi government has recalled its ambassador to Libya.

A Yemeni analyst said that although some of the proposals gained support from the members of the League, more action

needs to be taken.

"The reform of the Arab League is essential, but it would be better if they would do it at a faster pace," said the analyst. "For many years the League has come up with decisions but with little action. It is time for it to reduce talk and increase action, both internally and to what develops in the Middle East."

Proposals concerning the reform of the League were presented from a number of countries, such as Yemen, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Sudan.

Last March the Tunisian government postponed the Arab Summit scheduled to be held in Tunis. The Tunisian government said that the delay was the result of disagreements between member states on how to address political and social reform in the Middle East.

Al-Qirbi said that the committee that focuses on the condition in Somalia met last Thursday and discussed the support the new Somali government will need in the near future.

Somalia's new president Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed took the oath of office in Nairobi, Kenya, last October and is expected to unite numerous clans that have been fighting for power since dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was ousted in 1991 and stabilize the war-torn country.

Two weeks after Yusuf was sworn in, the Yemeni government asked the Arab League to create an Arab fund that would assist Somalia rebuild the nation after a 13-year civil war.

## Continued from page 1

## Next up: verdicts

"The law says that imprisoning people for over 24 hours without interrogation is something illegal," he argued.

He demanded that his clients should be acquitted and compensated for the material, moral and psychological damage caused to them and that they should not be convicted "just to please the US."

He claimed the defendants were presented as "scapegoats."

He reiterated that his clients were subject to physical torture and psychological pressure.

"The preliminary court verdict was based on confessions made by the defendants under threat and pressure; they were even interrogated without any advocacy," he claimed.

He refuted the preliminary court verdicts which he claimed and were passed to "please the US."

On his part, the second prime suspect, Jamal al-Badwi, claimed that he and his fellow people will be acquitted if "the verdict is issued in accordance

with the law, but we will be convicted if the verdict is passed to satisfy the Americans."

The prosecutor reiterated that the appeal made by the defendants advocate should be rejected and that the defendant Fahd al-Qis'e should be sentenced to death as well as intensifying the jail sentence against Morad al-Sorori and Mamoon Amswah, while the death penalty sentence against al-Nashiri and al-Badwi should be endorsed.

Earlier, on Sept. 28, the court sentenced, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, held in US custody and Jamal al-Badawi, to death for orchestrating, plotting, preparing and involvement in the bombing of the US warship.

Earlier, Judge Najib al-Qaderi also sentenced Fahd al-Qis'e to 10 years in jail for filming the bombing. The court said that al-Qis'e had traveled to Afghanistan in 1997 to train at an al-Qaeda terrorist camp.

A fourth convicted person Mamoon

Amswah received an eight-year prison term for delivering money used in preparing and executing the attack and playing a close role in assisting al-Badawi.

Ali Mohamed Murakab and Morad al-Sorori were both sentenced to five years in prison for forging identification documents for Hasan al-Khameri under the name of Abdullah Ahmad Khaled al-Misawa, one of the suicide bombers.

The six men were all charged with belonging to al-Qaeda and playing various roles in the attack on the Cole, which was carried out by suicide bombers Ibrahim al-Thawr, Hasan al-Khamiri, and a third unnamed person who rammed an explosives-laden boat into the destroyer.

Al-Thawr and al-Khameri traveled to Bangkok and received \$36,000 from al-Nashiri for the terrorist operation.

The court judge said it was clear to him that the convicted six militants were found guilty, setting up an armed gang to carry out terrorist acts, including the attack on the USS Cole.

## Almotamer.net's attackers unknown

Al-Abbadi noted, "My first suspects are people from Al-Iman University because they threatened us a week ago on the Internet."

Al-Motamar reported that he believes armed students are preparing to create violence against the government due to its plans for economic reform.

"The occasion is economic reform, but they are really against the relationship between the US government and the Yemeni government. They called us unbelievers and threatened to attack us."

"We have special sources inside the Al-Iman University, so we got the information inside the university. It was confirmed that they are becoming armed and

preparing to act against the economic reforms. No one has claimed responsibility of the attack."

## About almotamer.net

Al-Abbadi said "Al-Motamar represents the GPC, but it is a new style of addressing issues to an audience, mostly outside of Yemen. Although it is a GPC site, we have the freedom to generate plans and do what we feel is right to write about. It is a unique step in Yemen, and it is to show the world what is happening in Yemen."

"We always write against terrorism, we call for democracy, the rights of women, human rights and against

extremists. It is important to communicate with other countries and cultures and build bridges.

"They [extremists] might see us as something the US wants Yemen to do, but we believe we are developing ideas in Yemen and trying to bring them to the public and the audience outside of Yemen. The values are not American but are set to benefit Yemen."

## Condemnation from all

All political parties in Yemen, including the opposition Islah and Yemeni Socialist Parties condemned the attack and called upon the authorities to bring those responsible to justice.

## Final Workshop on NCP wrapped up

BY ISMAIL AL-GHABRI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The final workshop on the National Chemical Profile for the Republic of Yemen was concluded on Wednesday Jan. 12. The workshop was organized by the General Authority for Environment Protection in cooperation with the United Nation's Institute for Training and Research (UNTAR).

As many as 50 participants from different governmental and non-govern-

mental parties attended the workshop and received useful lessons.

It is worth noting that the national profile is a document which was prepared by a group of specialists from various ministries and governmental institutions. These specialists are highly interested in chemicals either directly or indirectly.

The national profile was a preliminary document that was discussed in a public workshop to which many ministries and governmental institutions were invited.

The final draft covered the discussion of all the aspects and areas related to the final document.

The document is due to be written and published in its final form and the primary goal of the document is to facilitate the exchange of information on the one hand, and making it as a source of information about chemicals on the other.

Such activities aim to establish a proper administration of chemicals in Yemen.

Additionally, the document will facilitate the process of coordination and cooperation among several parties concerned with chemicals.

Nevertheless, Yemen is due to avoid a number of environmental risks which result from the chemical substances.

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## Is Yemen's democracy dead?

The court also banned the newspaper from publishing for a year.

The case against the two men stemmed from al-Qabati's October 13, 2004, article that was highly critical of Arab leaders, including Your Excellency Sabra and al-Qabati have not been jailed as yet, according to local journalists, but could be at any moment."

The CPJ went further. "These cases call into question Yemen's commitment to a free and open press. Regrettably, criminal convictions continue to be handed down despite Your Excellency's 2004 pledge to work toward the elimination of prison sentences for press offenses," the CPJ said.

The CPJ reminded of the other successive sentences imposed on journalists, who are all from non-governmental newspapers.

"The convictions of Sabra and al-Qabati came just three days after Yemeni courts handed down suspended prison terms to at least five journalists in cases relating to their published work."

Abdel Rahman Abdullah, editor of the opposition weekly Al-Tagammu (The Rally), was given a six-month suspended prison sentence after being found guilty of publishing false information.

The charge was based on an article about an alleged Libyan government plot to kill Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Prince Abdullah Al-Saud. Nabil Subai.

A reporter with Al-Tagammu, received a four-month suspended sentence when the same court found him guilty of harming relations with Saudi Arabia in an article in which he criticized the Saudi government's treatment of political dissidents and accused it of

not being serious about political reform.

Abdelwahid Hawash and Abdel Jabbar Saad—editor and reporter, respectively, for the small circulation pro-Baathist weekly Al-Ihya Al-Arabi (The Arab Revival)—both received six-month suspended prison sentences for allegedly harming relations between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, according to local journalists.

The charges stemmed from articles published last year that, among other things, criticized Saudi Arabia for its position on the U.S.-led war on Iraq, and its crackdown on militant groups operating in the Kingdom.

In a third case, Hamid Shahra, editor of Al-Nas (The People) weekly, was handed a three-month suspended prison sentence for allegedly defaming the minister of local administration after the newspaper published an article that accused the minister of hiring friends to government posts and using his office for financial gain, according to Jamal al-Jaabi, a lawyer for Shahra."

**Al-Khaiwani still in prison**  
The series of successive legal cases against journalists had all followed the sentence and consequent imprisonment of Abdul Karim Al-Khaiwani, the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Shoura opposition newspaper.

Al-Khaiwani was sentenced to one year in prison for incitement, insulting the president, publishing false news, and causing tribal and sectarian discrimination. The court also suspended Al-Shoura for six months.

"The charges against al-Khaiwani stemmed from nine opinion pieces published in the July 7 issue of the weekly, which was dedicated to discussing the Yemeni government's fight against rebel cleric Hussein Badreddin al-

Hawthi, who led a three-month uprising against authorities in the northern Yemeni region of Saada. Hundreds were reportedly killed during the uprising, and government forces killed al-Hawthi on September 10. He remains in prison," the CPJ recalled.

## What next?

These developments have resulted in tensions, anxiety, and fears among non-governmental newspapers, which are all waiting to hear about the next legal case against one of their journalists.

The Yemeni Journalists Syndicate seems to have been frustrated by the inability to get any response from the authorities to the dozens of press releases, appeals, and letters it has issued.

Hafidh Al-Bukari, the General Secretary of the YJS said that he along with his colleague at the syndicate have been exerting great effort in having their word heard locally and internationally.

He said that the only response they got was from the international community, while locally, the only positive response was from some NGOs and the local press, who have helped bring out the word about the difficult situation the press is encountering in Yemen.

This also comes after a number of Yemeni parliamentarians concerned with human rights and freedom of the press raised this issue and requested explanations from the Minister of Information, Hussein Al-Awadhi.

However, the questioning session held on Dec. 29 resulted in little, as the Minister insisted that "there have been no press freedom violations" and gave justification for the successive trials and sentences by saying that all those verdicts "have been taken in accordance with the law".

**تهانينا عادل**

**أجمل التهاني والتبريكات للشباب الخلق**

**عادل عبد الجليل محمد الهاللي**

**بمناسبة دخوله القفص الذهبي**

**فألك ذبوت**

**المهنتون**

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عبد القوي عبد الخالق ديوان - عبد الله سيف ديوان - عبد الله أحمد العقبيني  
وكافة آل الهاللي وآل ديوان وآل العقبيني  
وجميع الأصحاب



# Abbas takes office as Palestinian president

RAMALLAH, West Bank, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Mahmoud Abbas was sworn in as Palestinian president to succeed Yasser Arafat on Saturday and called for a ceasefire with Israel and talks on a final peace settlement.

But the ceremony at the battered West Bank compound was overshadowed by Israel's decision to cut all contacts with the Palestinians after militants killed six Israelis.

"We are seeking a mutual ceasefire to end this vicious cycle," Abbas said at a special session of the Palestinian parliament.

"Let us start discussing the permanent status issues so that we can end, once and for all, the historic conflict between us."

Abbas was elected by a landslide vote to succeed Arafat, icon of the fight for a Palestinian state, who died on Nov. 11.

Abbas wants an end to more than four years of Palestinian armed struggle so talks with the Jewish state can resume. His election has kindled new hopes for Middle East peace in the post-Arafat era.

But Israel cut off ties after militants defying Abbas's call for calm killed six Israelis in an attack on the Karni cargo



Mahmoud Abbas (C) takes his seat in the centre of the table after being sworn in as Palestinian president to succeed Yasser Arafat in the West Bank city of Ramallah Jan. 15. Abbas called for a cease-fire with Israel and talks on a final peace settlement, but the ceremony at the battered West Bank compound was overshadowed by Israel's decision to cut all contacts with the Palestinians after militants killed six Israelis. REUTERS

terminal between Israel and Gaza on Thursday.

"This is a wrong decision and shows that Israel is trying to find any excuse to disrupt any serious effort that leads to reviving the peace process and to achieving calm," Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie told Reuters.

Prospects for an end to bloodshed

appeared to brighten when Sharon called Abbas earlier this week to congratulate him on his victory in last Sunday's election.

It was the highest-level contact between the two sides in years.

Israel had shunned Arafat, accusing him of fomenting violence, an allegation he always denied.

Sharon and Abbas had been widely expected to meet soon to discuss security coordination in the run-up to Israel's planned pullout from Gaza later this year and the possibility of resuming talks on peace and Palestinian statehood.

Commenting on the Karni attack and the cutting of ties, Israeli Vice-Premier Shimon Peres said: "we lose lives and this is a terrible thing, but the Palestinians are the ones who time and again lose the political and historic opportunity."

Israel shut all Gaza border crossings after the attack, suspending movement of Palestinians and goods in and out of the occupied territory.

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz ordered a series of military operations in Gaza, Israeli media reported.

The United States lined up behind Israel and Secretary of State Colin Powell told Radio America: "The new president ... (has) got to get these terrorists under control."

Israeli troops killed two Palestinians, one of them a policeman, in the central Gaza Strip, Palestinian witnesses said.

The army said two armed men had been hit after they tried to attack troops in Gaza during an army raid.

# Israeli troops kill two in Gaza: witnesses

GAZA, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Israeli troops killed two Palestinians, one of them a policeman, during a raid in the central Gaza Strip on Saturday, local witnesses and medics said.

The army said two armed men were killed after they tried to attack an Israeli force which moved into the Zeitoun neighbourhood, a militant stronghold, from the nearby Jewish settlement of Netzarim.

Israel has vowed to take action against militants following an attack on a crossing point from Gaza last week in which six civilians and three militants were killed.

Israel sealed off Gaza following the attack and cut ties with the Palestinian Authority before newly elected president Mahmoud Abbas was to be sworn into office on Saturday.



Palestinians carry a youth after he was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in Rafah refugee camp, south Gaza Strip Jan. 15. Israeli troops killed six Palestinians in two separate incidents in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, local witnesses and hospital staff said. REUTERS

# Iran Nobel laureate refuses court summons

TEHRAN, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Iran's 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi refused to appear in court on Saturday, saying the summons had failed to state the charge against her.

Iran's conservative judiciary has ordered Ebadi to appear before a branch of the feared Revolutionary Court, which deals with national security offences, or face arrest.

Ebadi, a lawyer who has riled religious hardliners in the Islamic state by defending high-profile political dissi-

dents, challenged the legality of the proceeding.

"Today I informed them in writing that I will not show up because this summons is illegal," she told Reuters.

"According to the law, the summoning letter must specify if I am accused or not and what for.

This one does not."

Other activists and journalists have previously received letters summoning them to court with no stated reason.

Ebadi's refusal to attend will test

that practice.

Set up after the 1979 Islamic revolution, the Revolutionary Court has jailed many political dissidents in the past.

President Mohammad Khatami, whose reform efforts the judiciary has helped to foil, said Ebadi had little to fear.

"As head of state, I personally guarantee her safety and her freedom to continue her activities," he told reporters in Dakar.

"It is just an ordinary case and it is going to be settled pretty soon," he added, without giving details.

Ebadi, 57, the first Muslim woman and first Iranian to win the Nobel peace prize, received it in recognition of her work promoting the rights of women and children in Iran.

Before and after winning the award Ebadi has received death threats from religious hardliners who view her as an agent of the West intent on undermining Iran's Islamic values.

# Two Turkish soldiers, five rebels killed in clash

TUNCELI, Turkey, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Two Turkish soldiers and five leftist rebels were killed in a clash overnight in a remote region of eastern Turkey, a military official said on Saturday.

The fighting flared on Friday night when soldiers engaged a group of militants from the Maoist Communist Workers Party (MKP), a small group formerly known by the name TIKKO (Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army).

Three soldiers were also injured in

the clash.

Turkish troops backed by helicopter gunships were continuing operations against the guerrillas in the Mazgirt region of mountainous Tunceli province where the clash occurred.

TIKKO rebels have in the past fought alongside the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a much larger separatist movement that has waged an armed campaign in the mainly Kurdish southeast since 1984 in which more than 30,000 people have died.

# Egypt slams Israeli boycott of Palestinian Abbas

CAIRO, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Egypt said on Saturday Israel's move to sever ties with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas would not help Middle East peace efforts and Abbas did not have a "magic wand" to halt Palestinian militant attacks.

Israel said on Friday Prime Minister Ariel Sharon would not meet Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, until he moved against militant groups behind an attack which killed six Israelis in Gaza.

"Seizing the current opportunity ...

to relaunch the peace process can never happen by taking decisions of boycotting Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority," presidential spokesman Soleiman Awad told reporters in Cairo.

"Rather, it (will happen) through continuing dialogue and coordination," said Awad, whose country has played a role in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking and is promoting dialogue between Palestinian factions.

Washington, a key player in driving Middle East peace efforts, said Abbas

had to bring the militants under control.

But Awad said the international community, including the United States, must "realise that Abu Mazen does not possess a magic wand with which he can stop the violence overnight".

"But he can exert all efforts with support from the international community, politically and economically."

Sharon and Abbas had widely been expected to meet soon to discuss security coordination in the run-up to a planned Israeli withdrawal from Gaza

and a possible revival of stalled peace talks.

Abbas, sworn in as president on Saturday, has condemned the Palestinian militant attack which killed the six Israelis at Israel's Karni border cargo terminal and deadly raids mounted by Israel.

Israel and the United States had regarded Abbas as someone they could talk to, having shunned the late President Yasser Arafat, whom they blamed for violence.

Arafat always denied the charge.

# Two Kuwaiti policemen hurt by gunmen

KUWAIT, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Kuwait security forces clashed with gunmen in southern Kuwait on Saturday and at least two policemen were wounded, Kuwaiti security sources said.

"There's been an exchange of fire between the security forces and gunmen in Umm al-Haiman in southern Kuwait.

At least two policemen are wounded," one source told Reuters. "The area has been cordoned off."

Umm al-Haiman is in Ahmadi governorate which houses Kuwait's largest refinery, the 460,000 barrels per day Mina al-Ahmadi coastal plant.

But the sources said there was no indication at all that any of the country's oil facilities had been targeted.

No further details were immediately available.

The incident follows last Monday's clash in a Kuwait city suburb between Islamist militants and state security in which two members of state security and one gunman were killed.

Kuwaiti authorities have been cracking down on Islamist extremists since Monday's fatal shootout and have so far rounded up at least 40 suspected militants for questioning.

# Cutting of Israeli ties overshadows Abbas inauguration

RAMALLAH, West Bank, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Israel's decision to cut ties with Mahmoud Abbas over a deadly militant attack cast a shadow over his planned inauguration as Palestinian president to succeed Yasser Arafat on Saturday.

"This is a wrong decision and shows that Israel is trying to find any excuse to disrupt any serious effort that leads to reviving the peace process and to achieving calm," Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie said.

Abbas wants an end to more than four years of Palestinian armed struggle so talks with the Jewish state can resume.

His election has kindled new hopes for Middle East peace in the post-Arafat era.

But Israeli Prime Minister Ariel

Sharon cut off ties after militants, defying Abbas's call for calm, killed six Israelis in an attack on the Karni cargo terminal between Israel and Gaza on Thursday.

"There are parties on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides who want to obstruct attempts to restart peace moves and achieve calm. So it is wrong to seize any opportunity to justify taking that path," said Qurie.

Abbas was due to be sworn in at 12 p.m. (1000 GMT) at a ceremony in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

He has condemned both the militants' assault, the deadliest in a month, and Israeli raids, saying that violence did not "benefit peace".

Israel is wary of his plan to co-opt militants and steer clear of using force to rein them in.

The United States, Israel's main ally and the key broker in an Middle East negotiations, lined up with Sharon.

"The new president ... (has) got to get these terrorists under control," U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told Radio America on Friday.

"And what Prime Minister Sharon did today by temporarily, I hope, keeping contacts from taking place is once again say to the Palestinians, 'I want to be a partner for peace. I want to move forward and I welcome the election of (Abbas) but you've got to get these terrorists under control'."

Prospects for an end to bloodshed appeared to brighten when Sharon called Abbas earlier this week to congratulate him on his victory in

last Sunday's election.

It was the highest-level contact between the two sides in years.

Israel had shunned Arafat, accusing him of fomenting violence, an allegation he always denied.

Sharon and Abbas had been widely expected to meet soon to discuss security coordination in the run-up to Israel's planned pullout from Gaza later this year and a possible resumption down the line of talks on peace and Palestinian statehood.

Commenting on the attack and the cutting of ties, Israeli Vice-Premier Shimon Peres said: "We lose lives and this is a terrible thing, but the Palestinians are the ones who time and again lose the political and historic opportunity."



A combination of Palestinian elected President Mahmoud Abbas (L) looking on while meeting reporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Jan. 14, and a file photo of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon speaking at an annual academic conference in Herzliya taken Dec. 16. REUTERS



# Taiwan, China clinch landmark deal on charter flights

MACAU, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Taiwan and China reached a landmark deal on Saturday to allow non-stop charter flights over the Chinese New Year holidays, a move which could ease tensions and improve ties between the bitter political rivals.

The one-off deal will allow the first direct flights between the foes since 1949, and could mark a step toward sending a decades-old ban on direct air links.

"In a very short time, in a cordial atmosphere, we have come to an agreement," Pu Zhaozhou, executive director of China's Civil Aviation Association, told a joint news conference after talks in the southern Chinese territory of Macau.

However, while the flights will be non-stop, they will still have to go through Hong Kong or Macau airspace.

"The flights have to go through Hong Kong but they don't have to land," said Mike Lo, chairman of the Taipei Airlines Association.

Forty-eight flights will be allowed under the agreement, beginning on Jan. 29 and ending on Feb. 20, Pu said. He did not specify whether the first would take off from China or Taiwan.

Taiwan has banned direct air and shipping links with the mainland since the Nationalists lost the Chinese civil war to the communists in 1949 and fled to the island.

Travellers between Taiwan and the mainland must now fly via a third destination, usually Hong Kong or Macau on China's southern coast, adding four

hours to what should be an hour-long flight.

China considers Taiwan a renegade province and has threatened to invade the self-governing, democratic island of 23 million people if it formally declares statehood.

Despite often highly charged political tensions, trade and investment across the narrow Taiwan Strait has boomed since the late 1980s, with about one million Taiwanese now living and working in China.

Taiwan businesspeople, who have poured up to \$100 billion into China, have long clamoured for direct flights. Millions of Chinese rush home for family reunions at the start of the Lunar New Year, which falls on Feb. 9 this year.

"This is a specific arrangement for New Year charter flights, but it is also a symbol of showing good will from both sides," said Andrew Yang, secretary-general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, a prominent private think tank in Taipei.

"It is a win-win situation for both sides as China very much wants to win the hearts and minds of the Taiwanese and appear to the general public that it is doing whatever it can to resolve differences or disputes peacefully," Yang said.

"Hopefully, it will be continued after the New Year if there has been some minimum trust established between the two sides."

Taiwan, under pressure from the United States to reconcile with China, has been eager for a resumption of



Pu Zhaozhou (R), executive director of China's Civil Aviation Association, smiles with Mike Lo, chairman of Taipei Airlines Association, during a news conference after their meeting in Macau, Jan. 15. REUTERS

quasi-official dialogue, which has been frozen since 1999.

During the 2003 Lunar New Year holidays, charter flights between Shanghai and Taipei were commissioned to Taiwan airlines only and they had to fly empty to Shanghai to pick up passengers.

China refused to allow similar flights last year, fearing it could help win re-election for Taiwan's pro-independence president, Chen Shui-bian.

The new agreement will allow flights from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou on the mainland and Taipei and Kaohsiung in Taiwan, with each side allowed to select six airlines for their routes.

From the mainland, airline executives

have listed Air China Ltd., China Southern Airlines Co. Ltd., Xiamen Airlines and China Eastern Air as possible candidates.

Taiwan airlines could include China Airlines Ltd., EVA Airways Corp., Trans Asia Airways, Far East Air Transport Corp., Mandarin Airlines and UNI Airways Corp.

The deal could dent business for Hong Kong airlines Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. and Dragonair, which is majority held by China National Aviation Corp.

The "golden route" between Taipei and Hong Kong is Asia's busiest and one of Cathay's most profitable as many of its travellers between Taiwan and China transit in Hong Kong.

# Estrada returns to Manila, vows to unite Filipinos

MANILA, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Deposed Philippine President Joseph Estrada flew back into the country on Saturday after undergoing knee-replacement surgery in Hong Kong, saying he had renewed strength to unite the Filipino people.

"I'm feeling good, I'm feeling fine, new knee, a new life," Estrada told reporters travelling with him before stepping out of the Philippine Airlines plane that flew him in from Hong Kong.

Estrada, who refused an offer to use a wheelchair and instead used a cane to support himself, did not make any arrival statement and was not allowed to see 500 of his supporters who protested outside the airport.

He was immediately whisked away to a nearby helicopter that took him to his villa east of Manila where he has been under house arrest while on trial for economic plunder charges, a crime punishable by death.

"By the grace of God, the operation on my knees was successful," Estrada said in a three-page statement handed out by his aides to the media at the airport.

"Where I once walked limping in pain, I now walk straight, and through my faith in God, discern that I was made to walk with straight and firm steps for a purpose the good Lord has set for me and our country: to heal the social divisiveness in our country; to unite the Filipino people, and set the path for them to see a new dawn," he said.

Estrada, 67, has promised to unite a fragmented opposition against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, whose popularity ratings have fallen in recent months after she won a fresh term in an election last May.

Estrada, who won the 1998



Deposed Philippine president Joseph Estrada surrounded by police security waves upon his arrival at the Manila International airport Jan. 15. Estrada arrived from Hong Kong on Saturday after a successful knee surgery and a break from his trial on charges he salted at least \$80 million as president of the Philippines. REUTERS

election by a landslide, remains a major opposition figure after he was replaced by Arroyo, his vice president, four years ago.

But some observers believe Estrada does not have enough support and energy to mount a serious challenge to Arroyo.

"His main agenda upon his return is to unite the opposition," said Philippine Star newspaper in its editorial. "Recent developments do not augur well for his efforts; the leader of one faction has dropped broad hints that he didn't even think Estrada was qualified for the task."

## Zimbabwe

# Mugabe approves new election laws

HARARE, Jan 15 (Reuters) - Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe has signed into law electoral reforms which the opposition says do not go far enough to guarantee a fair vote in March's parliamentary polls, official media said on Saturday.

The state-owned Herald newspaper quoted a government gazette saying Mugabe had signed the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Bill and Electoral Bill, which were passed by parliament last month.

The laws seek to set up an independent election commission, bring in

a single day of voting instead of two, ensure counting of ballots at polling centres and the establishment of an electoral court to deal with election disputes.

All these conditions have been demanded by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which is expected to participate in the March polls despite threatening a boycott.

But it also sets guidelines on the conduct of political parties and laws to curb and punish perpetrators of violence and intimidation it says has helped sway past elections in the ruling

ZANU-PF's favour.

And it has called for the electoral court to prosecute cases of political violence instead of only hearing disputes.

The date Mugabe signed the bills was not immediately clear, but they come into effect as soon as they are signed. The government gazette was not immediately available to Reuters on Saturday. The 80-year-old leader rejects charges he has manipulated previous elections and says the land seizures are not responsible for food shortages which have plagued the country since 2001.

# UN says fewer tsunami orphans than feared

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia, Jan 15 (Reuters) - There were probably fewer orphans than originally thought in Asia's tsunami-hit areas, the head of the U.N. Children's Fund said, and efforts should be directed towards uniting children with family members.

Carol Bellamy, executive director of UNICEF, spoke after the U.N. agency said there were reports Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels were recruiting children displaced by the tsunami.

Indonesia found almost 4,000 more bodies, taking the global death toll from the disaster to more than 162,000, with searches completed in areas most damaged by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

But life was starting to return to normal in some towns and villages on battered Indian Ocean coasts with markets reopening and fishermen casting their nets again.

U.N. officials said the threat of disease to survivors had diminished but doctors reported children were dying from pneumonia. Health workers said they remained on guard.

Of those killed in the earthquake and tidal wave that swept through south Asia and northeast Africa, half were children, according to Jan Egeland, the U.N. emergency relief coordinator.

A very large number of child survivors were believed to have been orphaned, but Bellamy said in New York that new data suggested those initial estimates had been exaggerated.

As an example, she said preliminary data in Sri Lanka on 3,000 children showed that 836 had lost both parents but had an extended family, and 38 seemed to be totally unaccompanied.

"So the numbers are big, but the numbers seemingly with no one are going to be quite small," Bellamy told

a news conference.

But UNICEF's Sri Lanka representative spoke on Friday of reports the Tamil Tigers had recruited three children in Sri Lanka's east, where the rebels control large pockets of jungle.

"Recruitment ... was an issue before the tsunami. It's an issue that continues to be of concern," Ted Chaiban told Reuters.

"We said (to the rebels) ... you send out instructions that no child that has been displaced by the tsunami should in any way be affected or harassed by any person."

Two of the children had been reunited with their family but a 15-year-old girl was missing from a camp for the homeless, said Chaiban.

"We will be advocating strongly for her release," he said.

The rebels deny recruiting children, saying many youngsters lie about their age to join the group, which relied heavily on child soldiers during a two-decade war for autonomy, a conflict which has been in limbo for three years due to a ceasefire.

More than 30,000 were killed by the tsunami in Sri Lanka, over 15,000 in India and 5,300 in Thailand. But Indonesia was worst hit with at least 110,000 deaths. People were also killed in Malaysia, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Myanmar and East Africa.

U.N. staff said there was no sign of diseases breaking out.

"There are no alarm bells ringing, but we cannot slacken our efforts. The threat is still there," U.N. special coordinator Margareta Wahlstrom said in Jakarta after returning from Banda Aceh, capital of the hardest-hit area, Indonesia's Aceh province.

## RISK OF TETANUS

But aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said survivors in the province were at risk of dying from tetanus after handling corpses and scavenging in the rubble.

MSF, or Doctors Without Borders,



Acehnese victim floats in a river after he was killed by the tsunami in the city of Banda Aceh, on the Indonesian island of Sumatra Dec. 26. REUTERS

said it had counted 67 cases of tetanus so far and the number is rapidly increasing, with a high mortality rate of around 25 percent.

In Banda Aceh, several aftershocks shook houses and rattled windows through the night, sending many of the traumatised residents fleeing from their homes.

About 3,000 tsunami survivors are being hired for 30,000 rupiah (\$3.30) a day to help clean up rubble in Banda Aceh under a U.N.-funded programme, the Jakarta Post reported on Saturday.

The Post in an editorial on Saturday said early signs of trauma and depression have begun to surface in the province where almost all of Indonesia's 110,000 fatalities died.

"A complete panacea — for mind and body — should be the top priority for our government instead of fussing

about how long foreign aid workers should be allowed to remain in Aceh."

That referred to Indonesia's nervousness about a large foreign presence in the area. Jakarta has sought to restrict aid workers' movements and has asked foreign troops to leave soon.

In Bangkok, U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said on Saturday the United States would pull its military out of relief operations as soon as it is feasible and has no problems with Indonesia setting a deadline.

"Our job is to work our way out of a job," he told reporters as he began a tour of countries hit by the tsunami. "We would like to be out of this business as soon as we responsibly can."

Indonesia has set an end-of-March target for the withdrawal of foreign forces who rushed to help the survivors of devastated Aceh on the

northern tip of Sumatra.

The United States sent more than 15,000 Navy, Marine, Air Force and Coast Guard personnel to help the survivors in oil-rich Aceh, previously largely off limits to foreigners due to a long-running independence campaign.

Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla said Jakarta wanted a lasting truce with separatists in Aceh, as both sides expressed willingness for talks to end the 28-year rebellion.

The global response to the disaster has been unprecedented, with governments promising \$5.5 billion in aid, and individuals and corporations pledging at least \$2 billion more.

Setting up an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system will be a major topic at a U.N.-sponsored conference on reducing the toll from disasters to be held in the western Japanese city of Kobe next week.



Indian survivors search for belongings in the debris of their damaged house hit by last month's tsunami on Hut Bay beach, 120 km (75 miles) south of Port Blair, the capital of India's Andaman and Nicobar archipelago in this picture taken Jan. 14. Hut Bay, the main town of the Little Andaman Island in the remote archipelago, has been largely destroyed by the tsunami and some survivors say they have received little assistance from authorities. Officials say they are trying to reach supplies, but are handicapped by the fact the main jetty in the town was smashed by the killer waves. Picture taken Jan. 14. REUTERS



Words of Wisdom



Gentlemen, Yemen does not need more money! It needs a system. Yemen need accountable officials, and it needs people with some decency in the way they work. If the IMP, World Bank and other organizations pump loans into Yemen, where will it go? More importantly, how will it be paid?

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

OUR OPINION

Solidarity against attacks

What happened to almotamar.net's headquarters last week is a serious reminder that all newspapers and news providers in the country, regardless of political affiliation, should stand in solidarity with each other when any are attacked.

The fact that almotamar.net is a news source of the ruling party, the General People's Congress, shows that none of us is immune. We may all be subject to any kind of attack at any time. What is needed right now is to ensure that we have a common stance against all forms of violence and terrorism.

It was indeed a source of hope to see newspapers of all affiliations standing by almotamar.net in its plight, and expressing that condemnation and stance against violence crosses all boundaries and makes all united.

Furthermore, such incidents give the chance to show that whatever differences we may have in opinion or views, that should never reflect on our relations as colleagues who respect and stand for each other at all times.

Meanwhile, this attack has also reminded us of the security concerns in the country. It is common to hear news of grenade attacks and shooting in various parts of the country, but for such an event to happen in the heart of Sana'a and in an apartment of a building located in the diplomatic neighborhood should trigger an alarm.

Some would say that those elements are sick extremists who want to flex their muscles and take advantage of the availability of weapons and arms markets throughout the country. But what is frightening is that the attackers are still at large, and investigations could not lead to their names, affiliations, or even their motives.

So this raises a lot of questions of potential risk for other newspapers and news providers.

As Yemen Times, we lead independent newspapers in supporting almotamar.net as we know that it is our duty to do so. We also urge others to participate in standing strong against violence and aggression and forget all differences in views and opinions. We share the same profession, same ideals, and the same responsibility in acting as professionals this time, and every other.

The Editor



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by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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Sheer incompetence rules

Bush's crash-test economics

By J. Bradford DeLong

Fifteen years ago, the United States was in the midst of what you could call its "Age of Diminished Expectations." Productivity gains had stalled, energy prices were high, the backlog of potential technologies that originated in the Great Depression had been exhausted, and waning benefits from economies of scale led nearly every economist to project that economic growth would be slower in the future than it had been in the past. With productivity growth stagnating for almost two decades, it made sense back then to argue that the US government's social-insurance commitments (Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid) were excessive and so had to be scaled back.

That was then, this is now. The intervening years have seen an explosion of technological innovation that has carried America's general productivity growth back up to its pre-slowdown levels. Indeed, today the US economy is standing on the brink of biotechnological and, perhaps, nanotechnological revolutions of vast scale and scope. Yet the same calls to scale back America's social commitments are heard.

Social Security's actuaries may not have fully recognized the impact of today's technological revolutions, but they have markedly boosted the scale of the system that the US government can afford. Fifteen years ago, the consensus was that America's Social Security System was in huge trouble, that it needed the equivalent of an engine rebuild. Today its problems look, as the Brookings Institution economist Peter Orszag says, much more like the equivalent of a slow tire leak: you have to fix it eventually, but it isn't very hard to do

and repair it isn't terribly urgent.

So why is the Bush administration spending time and energy proposing radical changes to the Social Security System as its signature domestic policy initiative - indeed, as virtually its only policy initiative? Everyone who worries about America's weak fiscal position puts Social Security's relatively small funding imbalance far down the list of priorities. The highest priority problem is the overall budget's medium-run outlook, as the Bush tax cuts have opened Reagan-size deficits that threaten to cripple US economic growth.

The second highest priority problem is figuring out what to do in the long term with Medicare and Medicaid. America must decide the size of its public health programs and how to finance them. In reality, this is more of an opportunity than a problem: if we did not expect that doctors and nurses will be able to do marvelous things in a generation or two that they cannot do now, we would not be projecting serious fiscal deficits arising from the health programs.

The third most serious problem is to put the US government's General Fund budget on a sustainable basis, so that the non-Social Security government can finance itself and meet its commitments after the date - around 2020 - when it can no longer borrow from the Social Security Trust Fund.

The bottom line is that Social Security's long-term funding difficulty, while real, is projected to be much smaller and much further in the future than any of the nearer, larger, and more significant fiscal problems currently facing the US government. If Social Security is a slow tire leak, then the post-2020 General Fund is an urgent

brake job, Medicare and Medicaid are a melted transmission, and the budget deficit is the equivalent of having just crashed into a tree.

What kind of driver, owning a car that has just crashed into a tree, has a burned-out transmission, and needs a brake job, says, "The most important thing is to fix this slow leak in the right rear tire?" George W. Bush is that type of driver.

There are three theories as to why the Bush administration is focusing on Social Security. The first is simple incompetence: Bush and his inner circle simply do not understand the magnitude and importance of the federal government's other fiscal problems.

The second is ideology. For some reason Bush and his people think it is important to undermine the successes of the New Deal institutions established under Franklin Roosevelt.

The third reason is bureaucratic capture: just as the principal aim of Bush's Medicare Drug Benefit bill of 2003 was to boost pharmaceutical company profits, so the Bush administration's Social Security proposal will most likely be tailored to the interests of Wall Street.

I don't see any other, more pressing, reforms - such as raising income taxes to pay for national security - gaining any traction in the Bush regime. If I had to bet on a cause, I would put my money on sheer incompetence. After all, that seems to be the common denominator of every policy controlled by his White House.

J. Bradford DeLong is Professor of Economics at the University of California at Berkeley and was Assistant US Treasury Secretary during the Clinton Presidency.



COMMON SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

The White House: "Numbers don't matter"

In what is called a background briefing "a senior Administration official" said, "I would really encourage people not to focus on numbers, which in themselves don't have any meaning, but to look on the outcome and to look at the government that will be the product of these elections". What is clear from this is that the current Administration in the White House has no desire to be gauged by any parameters whatsoever and to simply be free from any accountability for any of its miscalculations, incorrect policies or the results of its "wrong way approach" in just about every action it has taken so far. Some may suggest that the White House may be beginning to feel the obvious that no one in his right mind can deny, which is that the adventure in Iraq is by all arithmetic turning out to be a flop. Yet, the Administration finds itself unable to consider the possibility that there are metrics that measure performance and these metrics cannot be ignored in assessing the soundness of decisions taken by leaders or actions they insisted were the only right and proper things to do, notwithstanding all the efforts of allies, prominent politicians at home and the international community to persuade Washington otherwise before the mess became a visible nightmare to all. In an election in a country that has not really seen one in a long time, where supposedly the White House insists that the Iraqi people are bound to show their fervent desire for democratic rule as soon fed by right wing idealists, numbers are indeed very important. Any poor turnout in the forthcoming election in Iraq in two weeks is definitely a reflection of the obvious failure of the Administration in assessing the occupation forces' ability to provide the safe and assuring atmosphere that will encourage the Iraqis to come out and choose their future rulers. Having said that, a poor showing would not only be prompted by a fear of insurgency attacks, since it is not very likely that insurgents would venture and attack well protected polling stations. The Iraqis have come to recognize that insurgency attacks are so random and spontaneous that they can just about expect them anywhere whether during elections or at other times on their way to work, if they are lucky to have jobs, or just to visit friends. But what the Iraqis have found difficult in recognizing is that the Americans have come to their country on a "do good mission" to relieve them of the agonies supposedly experienced under the rule of Saddam Hussein. The simple reason is because the Iraqis can see the numbers that tell a different story. How many Iraqis are under imprisonment for the least suspicion of being involved in the insurgency? How many Iraqis have been subjected to torture that even the Saddam regime would think twice about perpetrating, since they touch on important cultural mores and defile the honor and dignity of their victims? How many hours must Iraqis wait in gas lines to fill their car with fuel in a country that is considered as a leading petroleum producing country? How many innocent Iraqis because of combat errors and "collateral damage", which the occupation forces do not even consider worth keeping track of adding insult to injury accordingly? How many dark filled nights must Iraqis spend because their electricity services is far beyond operating at pre invasion capacity and very little effort or resources are directed to reinstating service? How many children and other Iraqi civilians must be exposed to dangerous sanitary conditions as afflictions to cholera and other ailments increase due to the poor sanitation and municipal services? For the Iraqis these are measurement scales they will undoubtedly take into account in assessing the great achievements of the American invasion and occupation of Iraq and if the White House isn't ready to look at numbers like these, then what yardsticks does it use to measure the outcomes of its demise in Iraq?

These are questions that are raised by the statement of an important Administration official, who apparently is continuing to show the observer that the Administration simply has no desire to consider what the Iraqis have to gain or loose from an American adventure that will continue to baffle historians for decades, since its objectives have never clearly rested on specific targets and its outcomes have never fully scrutinized, not to mention the poor planning that is apparent in the management of the aftermath of this misadventure.

On the other hand, judging from a management perspective, what form of government is expected to materialize after the election. Surely one does not expect the Administration to entertain the possibility of a government that will be quick to call for an end of the American occupation, since a properly elected government is bound to be receptive to the wishes of the Iraqi people, who see the American occupation as the root of all their present misery. There is talk that the Americans might have not considered the likelihood of a "Shiite" takeover of government, which means the Iranians will have greater influence in Iraq than the White House could ever hope to enjoy. Well, let us assume that the Shiites do gain a majority position in the government, but that would happen no matter what the insurgents do and what feelings Washington might have about Shiite control. That is the natural outcome of democratic rule dictated by demographic realities and if the Americans try to change those realities than the insurgency will encompass all the Iraqis, Shiites and Sunnis and the poor showing in numbers that the Iraqi quagmire is producing will be multiplied by leaps and bounds.

An administration that believes that it should not be assessed by quantitative indicators of performance is simply saying, "No matter what the numbers tell, we are still right whether anybody likes or not." That is the guiding philosophy that the regimes of Saddam Hussein and other autocratic rulers always followed.

Letters to the Editor

Protect Socotra Island

There are at least two good reasons as to why it is necessary to protect the rare eco-system of the Socotra Island. One is to protect the health of inhabitants and tourists by treating the underground water used as a source for their day-to-day water supply, and the second one is to preserve the unique ecosystem by protecting the aboveground water that flows into wadi or into the sea.

Following is a list of priorities for this region that officials may want to consider, according to varied aspects of different localities and according to a requested level of water treatment:

- treating and recycling of wastewater considered for irrigation purposes
- treating of industrial wastewater (fish company, etc.)
- treating of domestic wastewater from greater agglomerations with high concentration of inhabitants
- treating of wastewater from low density agglomerations with small concentration of inhabitants
- treating of wastewater from individual houses

The wastewater treatment on the Socotra Island is a matter of urgency that is only reinforced by previous experiences, for example from Thailand, where the influx of tourists brought about irreparable damage to plankton and invertebrates (coral), or from the Adria coast, where the damage of the eco-system is so big that it causes the outflow of tourists.

Karel Ploteny

About religious tolerance

I read your column of this week in the YT. I was personally in a situation where I was praying in a Mosque when the "Imam" started asking God to destroy the "Jews and Christians" and to make their children orphans and their wives widows! The first thing I did is cutting off my prayers and leaving the mosque immediately. There was no point to continue when the prayers turned to be a space for fueling hatred rather than a space to connect people.

It is really very sad that

those clerks and Mullahs are claiming to represent Islam and what is more sad is that they are influencing a large segment of the society.

I think that the mosque, being a very important societal institution, should be reformed. Enough is enough. Politicians and Mullahs have kept us lagging behind many nations in terms of development and civilization.

We have been paying the price of Mullah's radical interpretations which, if not produced terrorists, produced generations who think that they are victims of the West and that all they could do is to pray that the conspirers' plots turn against them!!

We urgently need an up to date interpretation of the Qur'an that teach Muslims the value of love and hard work and, most importantly, the value of using their minds instead of being passive receivers to whatever the Mullahs or elites say. These values are there in the Qur'an and the Prophet's saying but unfortunately clerks don't see them or, probably, don't want to see them for their own ends!!

Nadwa Al-Dawsari  
nadwa75@yahoo.com

Thanks for publishing my letter

I would like to thank you for publishing an earlier letter by me condemning the war on Iraq.

As an American opposed to the War in Iraq and as a person who it often frustrated with his own country's ignorance and prejudice, it was good to hear the voice of a compassionate man making his own unprejudiced observations.

Matt Durham  
mattdurham@yahoo.com

Thanks for a good editorial

Many thanks to you Walid for "Misrepresenting Islam, Again" article and all you have contributed. I do share the same view and in fact I have sent this article to hundreds of my friends and clients to show them that there are people who share these views and live and work in Yemen. I am so proud and I can relate to your views and for sure someday we will see

the change.

Ali Al-Yamani  
Hong Kong  
ali.al-yamani@db.com

About gold prospecting in Yemen

Your January 3rd 2005 news article entitled "Gold Prospecting Resumed" should be encouraging for the residents of Saadah Governorate and for those who live in other parts of Yemen with outcropping Precambrian rock.

I am also hopeful the Geological Survey Authority is not ignoring the prospects for gold in the Waragah and Umah districts, as well as in the Ad Dhala and Waziyah-Nabiah-Mawza regions. These latter areas offer some potential for larger disseminated and vein gold deposits in Tertiary volcanic rocks.

Donald G. Strachan  
dgstrachan@nanosecond.com

Shame on the Arab regimes

Once again the western countries come to the aid of Moslems, as they did in the Serbian conflict, while the Arab countries sit on their hands and their considerable wealth.

Mike Philo  
michael.philo@clear.net.nz

Islam and other religions

I absolutely agree with your comments in your editorial on 'representing Islam'. God made it very clear and convenient to one another. But man made it as a mesh that American, Yemeni, Indian, Islam, Buddhism, etc.

Judgment is in God's hand not in man's hand. Man has to concentrate on his work. Asia also good people are living and bad people are living. In Indian also good persons are living bad, America also good/bad and Yemen also the same. One more thing as a religious leader/people should not differentiate American, Yemeni, Indian etc. Because if he truly believes in his theology (Islam) God created Adam and Eve, as human, not American, Yemeni, India, etc.. So because of this kind of misleading a lot and lot of good people and civilians are suffering.

This is happening not only

in Yemen almost every parts of the world. Who are all doing this they are forced to get double punishment from God? If they believe or not I believe 100% and it will happen and it will happen those are hearing this kind of message and did not oppose or keeping silence also.

Christopher A.  
chris31c@yahoo.co.in

Al-Haifi: Don't get me wrong!

I want to ask Hassan Al-Haifi to please not take my remarks the wrong way.

The conclusion of the opinion piece that wealthy Moslem nations are being niggardly with their help to the tsunamis victims is silly. First off, what you give out of your pocket in terms of aid is your business not mine. Just as God judges us by our actions and motives, there are those nations that give generously just to improve their image. Charity given to improve your image is not charity, but a manipulation. God judges our heart and our motives. One person could secretly give a penny with the victims in mind, while another person could give one million dollars with fanfare. Charity is measured by personal motive known to the person and to his God. The social do-gooders, who try to manipulate the conscience of others, unfortunately, tend to be the foremost hypocrites, not because they are bad, but because they don't understand personal responsibility. Your business is what you can do. No one can judge another accurately.

Chirs Molling  
cpnolling@yahoo.com

Al-Rowaishan: an outstanding selection

Outstanding on your selection for person of the year Khaled Al-Rowaishan. Yemen Times has always been admired by many Yemenis and foreigners in and out of Yemen. Keep up the good work that Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf started for Yemen, only I wish he was still here with us because to me he was one man that I looked up to. Again thanks for job well done.

Mohamed Saleh El-Haj  
mmohamed@tts.bwauto.com



# Consensus across the region

# Sana'a truly is Arabia's Cultural Capital



سنة عاصمة للثقافة العربية  
Sana'a 2004 the arab cultural capital

## About Sana'a 2004 as the Arab Cultural Capital

**Arab Capitals' bride**  
Named the 2004 Cultural Capital of the Arab World, Sana'a was able to be the bride of all past cultural capitals. I don't know whether another capital will ever compete with it in the future.

I doubt it, because the biggest Arab Capitals that are known for being cities of culture and enlightenment were not able to achieve some of what Sana'a has done in its year. I visited four Arab Capitals, other than Kuwait, which held this name, but I didn't touch what I touched in Sana'a during my four visits to Sana'a this year.

Each time, I got the newest feeding of the soul and the mind. This is not my personal point of view, but many guests, Arab or foreigners, whom I visited Sana'a also express their admiration and surprise.

Sana'a has broken the norms being seen in other capitals. Which raises the question: Why is Sana'a so distinguished? Why was it the real bride?

With all respect towards intellectuals, old or young, who actively participated during this year, this success wouldn't be achieved without the minister who preferred his country's culture to be his own affairs. He was so sincere in sacrificing his rest to let the bride appear in a wonderful dress with enchanting colours. If there were even five Arab culture ministers to be like Khalid al-Rowaishan, our culture would be on the safe side.

Layla Al-Othman,  
Kuwaiti writer,  
Al-Qabas Newspaper, Kuwait

**Beyond other capitals' achievements**  
What Yemen has achieved in the frame

**82 Arab and foreign events were held; theaters and art houses were established.**

of Sana'a 2004, the Arab Cultural Capital, was beyond what was previously done by the other Arab capitals that have more wealth and human resources.

Part of that was organizing the Arab Cultural Weeks that helped deepen the cultural and intellectual interaction among Arabs and establish the open theater of which the old Yemeni houses formed a unique background.

The provinces' cultures were also reinforced; Yemeni creative people were awarded; and several books of a number of writers were published.

Shawqi Bzi'e,  
Lebanese writer and poet,  
Al-Hayah Newspaper, London

### Great success

By all measures, it was a very nice year. It is true that it was too hard and tiresome for who were organizers of events and directors of execution and reception, it was extremely tiring for the minister who have stayed up keeping his heart and eyes throughout the 365 days without excluding a holiday or a festival, but all that was behind the great success that made some suggest that Sana'a deserves the prize of distinction because of what distinguished its cultural year comparing to the other Cultural Capitals before it.

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Maqalili,  
Al-Thawra Newspaper  
28/ 12/ 2004

### Sana'a transcends

All of us know that the Arab official publications are poor in the sense that they are not well technically-designed. They lack the covers and papers that writings and writers deserve. If we exclude, we will mention some, like that of Moroccan Ministry of Culture, publications of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Culture and here comes the Yemeni publications to compete and transcends at Al-Rowaishan's reign.

I know Al-Rowaishan and believe in his abilities, responses, and his eagerness in performing what he planned and dreamt of. He reminds me of Tharwat Okashah the most famous Arab Minister of Culture who achieved an entire cultural renaissance that Egypt has been living on till now.

The 90s poets conference was not but a daring step that will be mentioned in the Arabic Culture history; I haven't ever seen a poetic or literary conference like it.

Ahmed Al-Sahawi  
Nisf Edunia Magazine

### Rebirth of Arab Culture

Activities was extended throughout the year: theater shows, songs celebration, poetic sessions, conferences and symposiums. The Minister of Culture to transport from an exhibition to symposium to a conference on a day to open this and discuss that and deliver a speech in the third.

Yet Yemen's creative intellectuals have come to Sana'a from every village and zone. This is the way Sana'a has produced several activities returning the grandeur of the deep-rooted Arab culture. Sana'a confirmed that deserves the nation and its dreams...the Yemeni book, if printed and distributed, was deprived from going out of the hut of the bad form and worse printing.

The number of magnificent and well published books that were published in Al-Rowaishan's ministry was much more than what was published in the 15 past years as a Yemeni young intellect confirmed to me.

Nasser Eraq,  
Al-Sada Magazine, UAE,  
10/ 10/ 2004

### Arab poetry's "quake" in Sana'a

I am not hesitant to say that Sana'a has witnessed a quake of the Arab poetry. Though I attended many poetry conferences and meetings in the Arab world, I haven't attended any other like this I attended in Sana'a; the majority was of two parts, main and margin.

The main was for the greatest Arab poets of the glittering names in the sky of the Arab poetry, yet the margin was that which included a limited number of the new generation of poets that didn't exceed two or three.

Sana'a quake, Sana'a First Forum for Young Arab Poets, to terminate this convention bringing the measures upside down to set young poets in general and 90s poets in particular occupying the main and margin.

The forum platform was only for a number of young poets from all Arab countries.

Dr. Mohammed Abdulmuttalib,  
Akhtar Al-Adab, Cairo,  
2/ 5/ 2004

### New poetry capital

The significance of Sana'a First Forum for Young Arab Poets lies in its being the first chance for a number of 'poets of the margin' to ascend the platform offering



**A great number of literary and artistic talents from all provinces appeared.**

Sana'a, the Arab Cultural Capital for 2004, has won what it is bet on, and its reply to all questions and fears has instilled calm in hearts and made its land a big cultural, artistic, and creative garden with all kinds and colours of culture, heritage, art and creativity as large as Yemen representing the diversity of the Yemeni geography and human.

Mohammed Mattar  
Nisf Edunia Magazine  
19/ 12/ 2004

### Sana'a awarded me

Sana'a presented me suitably and awarded me, but I awarded it with engraving its name on my memory without losing any scene. I don't know whether I somehow presented something to it. I liked and enjoyed presenting my poems in it.

Eman Al-Ebrahim,  
Elaf Website, Syria

### Beginning contact

O, dear kind friend, you presented an honoring smiling face for your beloved home. You joined us throughout our seven-day journey as a friend, brother and writer. You weren't satisfied once to be a minister; you with your brothers in the work team were step by step near our looks and breaths.

Your insistence on widening the dress of Kuwaiti cultural week to include the whole Yemen was realized by all.

But, brother, time has its own cycle and judgments as emotions have their sayings that was derived out of nothing but the heart's beatings.

Dear Khalid, I hope that the Kuwaiti Cultural Week is just a beginning of a long journey of contact with beloved brothers, a journey of thought, art and culture. Have a greeting from our hearts and have all kindness from Arab's Kuwait with all perfumed regards.

Taleb Al-Rejai'e,  
Al-Fonoon Magazine, Kuwait

### Sana'a bet, and won

**More than 789 activities and 394 books throughout the year**

degree of quality including complete poetic collections of: Saleh Al-Hamed, Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Zubairi, Lutfi Ja'afar Aman, Mohammed Saeed Jaradah, Ibrahim Sadiq, Edees Hanbalah and a number of cultural, historical, critical and literary works of some writers from different generations.

Encouraging the creativity of Yemeni thinkers and writers and some of the Arab creative people, Ministry of Culture has awarded about 480 artistic, literary and cultural personalities in special celebrations in which Khaled Al-Rowaishan awarded them on behalf of H.E. president Ali Abdullah Saleh offering them Sana'a plaque besides the sum of money determined for that.

The historians Ismail bin Ali Al-Akwa' and Mohammed Hussein Al-Fareh, the scientist Khaled Nashwan, the writer Mohammed Al-Massah were of the awarded people.

Of the singers whom Sana'a has awarded were: Mohammed Murshid Naji, Abu Bakr Salem, the former Ahmed bin Ahmed Qasim, Abdullah Hadi Subait, Faisal Alawi, Abdu Abdulkarim Ali Abdali, Awaqdh Ahmed, Mohammed Ali Maisari, Mohammed Muhsen Atroosh, Mona Ali, Abdulbasat Absi, Adem Saif, Yahya Al-Sanhani, Abdullah Shaker, Rasheed Al-Hurairi, Karamah Mersal, Ahmed Ali Al-Matari, Fuad Al-Futaih, Hashem Ali, the former Mohammed Jun'a Khan, and Ahmed Fathi.

Hadramout, Sana'a, Al-Dhale'e, Hodeida, Mareb, Al-Baydha'a, Raymah, Hajjah, Al-Jawf, Amran and Aden.

Every province presented during some days of the Arab's Capital a number of activities like the folkloric and paints exhibitions, some music parties, theater shows, and literary sessions. The most prominent people in each province were honored during these days.

There were many other activities: 48 Arab cultural and 34 foreign cultural events took place.

Of the significant Arab and foreign activities in Sana'a were the Arab-German Novel Forum in which international writer Gontra Gras as well as great Arab novelists participated; the symposium and exhibition of Arab and Islamic Culture in Sicily; the international symposium of dialogue between civilizations; Sana'a First Meeting for Young Poets; "Yemen in Egyptian Eyes Exhibition", concerts of artists Mohammed Abdu (in Sana'a, Aden and Hadramout), Abdullah Al-Rwaishid, and Hayam Yonus.

There were also the concerts of Algerian Al-Wodadi band, Yemen-Indonesian Al-Hareth Band, French Musical bands (Dawd, Mazrya, and Badylla), Italian Nakaira band, German Urba Falharmony Orchestra band, and Cor Clensheh Pore band. Moreover, Sana'a witnessed the staging of Nour Al-Sharif's play "Al-Quds will not Fall".



**Under the president's directives, 480 artists and writers were awarded.**



President Ali Abdullah Saleh

**You encouraged and directed us, we offer you this achievement thus.**

**Khaled Al-Rowaishan  
Minister of Culture and Tourism**



provincial cultural days such as theatrical shows from Aden, Dhamar, Taiz, and Ibb as well as plastic and caricature galleries.

Within the "Yemeni Song Figures" Program, which focused on the works of late Yemeni singers and artists, symposiums were conducted on figures such as Ali Al-Anisi, Mohammed Sa'ad Abdullah, Al-Mihdar, Al-Simah, Al-

Museum was completely rehabilitated, in addition to the construction of the Old Sana'a Open Air Theatre, two open theatres at Al-Thawra and Al-Sabaen parks, child theatre at the Cultural Center, two plastic arts houses in Ibb and Dhamar within the program of provincial arts houses, and finalization of Hashim Ali Hall at the Cultural Centre.

Concerning external participations, Yemen artistic bands from Hadramout participated in a festival in Oman, Lahj Artistic Band participated in a festival in Doha, Qatar, and the National Theatre Band participated in Oman Theatrical Festival, as well as other participations in Tunisia, Germany, and Canada.



## Municipal elections in KSA

# Baby steps for Saudi Arabia's democracy

BY SAAD EDDIN IBRAHIM

This month's elections in Iraq and for the presidency of the Palestinian Authority may be claiming all the world's headlines, but another potentially far-reaching ballot is also underway, albeit far less acclaimed: the registration process for the municipal elections in Saudi Arabia in mid-February. As the heartland of some of the strongest Islamist forces anywhere, this Saudi effort – if successful and a harbinger of other needed changes – may have an even more profound impact than the elections in Iraq and Palestine.

Roughly 40,000 Saudis are expected to compete for 1,700 seats in 178 municipal councils. The enthusiasm is obvious, and the campaign is already under way and highly spirited. Members of the Saudi royal family are not entering the race, as they already enjoy ultimate political power. But, sensing the public's excitement, they have made sure to be photographed by local and international media while registering to get their electoral ID card.

By the standards of Western, and even emerging Third World democracies, the Saudi municipal elections are an extremely modest affair. But in the Saudi context they are a real breakthrough.

For Saudi Arabia is a country in which both rulers and ruled are equally arch-conservative, adhering, for the last two centuries, to the puritanical Wahhabi doctrine of Islam. During the last fifty years, repeated attempts by reform-oriented elements to open up Saudi Arabia's society and polity had failed. But recent democratic trends worldwide have now reached the shores of this medieval desert kingdom and can no longer be ignored.

To begin with, members of the small but steadily growing Saudi middle

class have increasingly expressed their discontent publicly. Despite legal prohibition, Saudi women have defiantly driven their cars in the streets of Riyadh, while prominent intellectuals have published open letters to King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah demanding social and political reform.

This pressure for change has been building for years. The first Gulf War (1990-91), brought nearly one million foreign fighters from 35 countries to the Arabian Peninsula, along with their modern weapons systems, communications gear, and different lifestyles. Such a massive foreign influx into so hermetic a country could not but have a significant domestic impact.

Nearly all countries neighboring Saudi Arabia already practice one form of electoral participation or another, although most of these nods toward democracy are defective in some way. For years, ordinary Saudis watched with envy parliamentary debates on Arab satellite channels, in countries richer than theirs, such as Kuwait, as well as in poorer ones, such as Yemen and Jordan.

Even the tiny state of Qatar has the rabble-rouser Al-Jazeera television channel, which is watched by more viewers in Saudi Arabia than in any other Arab country. Messages by their dissident compatriot Osama Bin Laden are periodically beamed from that channel, inciting Saudis against the royal family.

Bin Laden's constantly highlights the House of Saud's corruption and repugnant connections with the United States. While democracy is not part of his agenda, his messages, as well as his followers' periodic armed attacks inside the country, have no doubt contributed to the erosion of the regime's legitimacy.

But it was the terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001 that brought a sea change in the thinking, if not yet the practice, of at least part of the Saudi

regime. The fact that most of the perpetrators of the attacks were identified as Saudis highlighted the country's backward realities and provoked mounting international pressures for change.

No doubt some of these pressures were motivated by sincere concerns, but others were driven by the desire of anti-Saudi groups in the US to settle old scores. The call for democratizing the Middle East has become a battle cry for the Bush administration, especially after the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Despite its reluctance to change, the Saudi royal family is obviously yielding to these multiple pressures from within, from neighbors, and from the wider world, although the extent of change is still nominal and obviously leaves much to be desired. Thus, for example, Saudi women, but not convicts, are barred from participating in the forthcoming municipal elections. Moreover, tens of human rights activists are currently in prison or on trial.

To be sure, the Saudi system is still worlds away from being a Westminster-style democracy; indeed, it will probably never become one. All the same, this municipal election should be looked upon as a giant first step in the arduous journey toward Saudi democracy. Despite many misgivings regarding its conduct in other areas, the Saudi regime should be commended for this initiative.

*Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Professor of Political Sociology at the American University in Cairo and Chairman of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, gained global attention after he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment at a trial that Amnesty International described as politically motivated to punish him for his human rights activism. His conviction was overturned in 2003.*

## Sudan gets solid start to 2005

BY JAN PRONK

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on 9 January in Nairobi was a milestone event for the country.

It brings real hope of the possible definitive end of a lengthy and brutal conflict in southern Sudan that has killed more than two million people, uprooted four million more, and forced some 600,000 to flee to neighboring countries for more than two decades.

The parties are to be commended for living up to the commitment they made at the conclusion of the historical United Nations Security Council meeting held in Nairobi on Nov. 19.

The agreement is premised on the vision of promoting stability, rehabilitation and development in all regions of Sudan, through power-sharing and the equitable distribution of the country's wealth.

Beyond addressing the conflict in the south, the agreement and the preceding Naivasha Protocols provide a blue print for addressing conflicts in other strife-torn areas in Sudan such as Darfur in the west, where the situation remains horrific.

Peace in Sudan is indivisible; the parties in the Darfur conflict should seek inspiration from the Agreement on the south and pursue a wide-ranging political solution to their own conflict as soon as possible.

The year 2004 passed by and a new year started and yet there is still no light at the end of the tunnel for the people in Darfur. The parties have habitually violated all the agreements they committed themselves to at the peace talks in Abuja and seem to be having difficulties gaining momentum for an actual move towards a negotiated political settlement to the Darfur conflict. And the suffering of the people continues unabated.

The gains of Naivasha must be preserved and consolidated. One should make no mistake about it, for these gains are yet too fragile to be taken for granted. It will take more than mere signatures for peace to prevail. There are still many challenges ahead to make peace irreversible.

One could foresee at least seven priority tasks for the forthcoming days and months. First, in the South there will have to be talks with the other movements that did not participate in Naivasha, to make sure they adhere to the peace agreement.

Second, the Darfur conflict will have to be resolved expeditiously, otherwise the Naivasha gains would be in serious jeopardy.

Third, conflicts in Eastern Sudan and in the North will also have to be addressed. Priority should be given to holding a national conference to be organized by the new government, a conference in which all Sudanese parties participate on equal footing.

Fourth, the 6 million IDPs and refugees, a huge number, will have to return to their areas of origin and be resettled.

Fifth, scores of fighters will have to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated into society. They will have to be helped to adapt again to civilian life and for that they will need jobs. Experience proves that disarmament and reintegration programmes fail and former combatants go back to the way of the gun if they are not offered the means to make a living.

Sixth, when a war stops, the civilian population continues to suffer because of the wide-spread presence of mines throughout what used to be battle fields. Sudan is no exception. The country is loaded with mines that will threaten many other lives if the ordnance is not cleared before populations start moving en masse throughout the country.

Lastly, the prospects for peace bring high expectations for development. These expectations will have to be met.

Donors will have to sustain development assistance to the Sudan. But more importantly, the riches of the country and its resources should be invested in putting in place sustainable development programmes that would tackle a major root cause of conflicts: poverty and under-development.

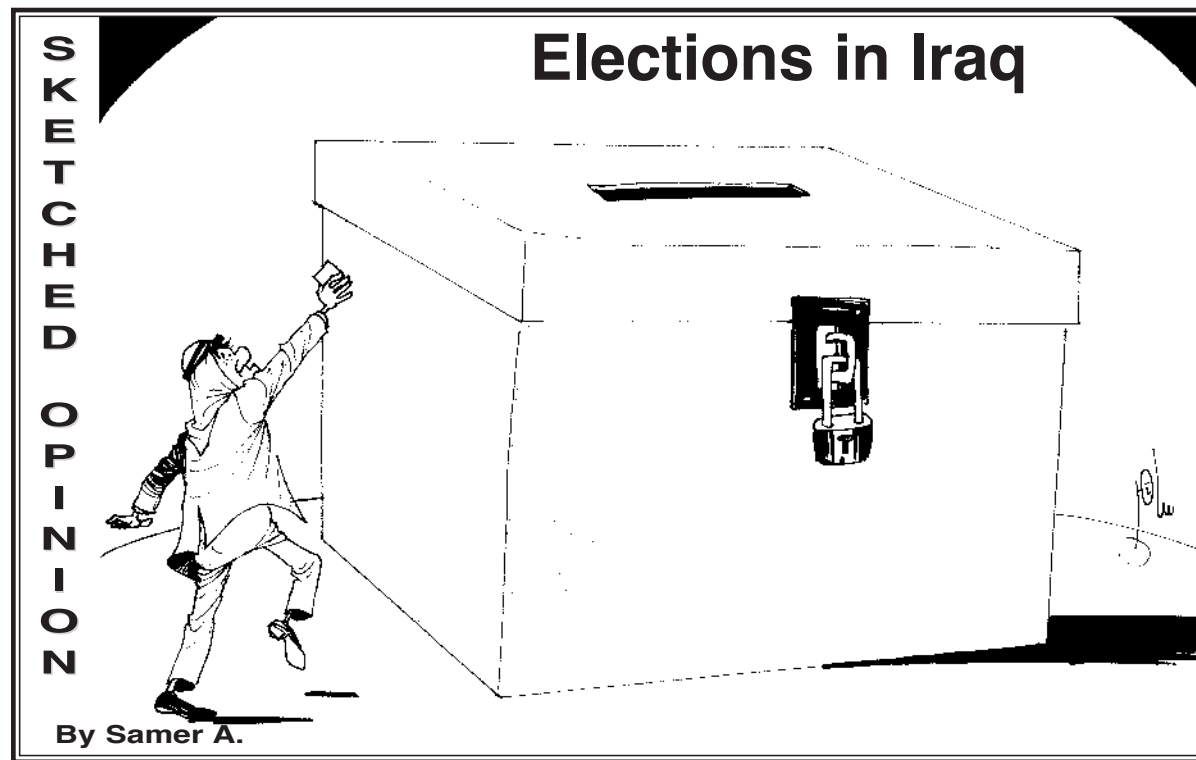
The United Nations is getting ready to act swiftly now that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement has been signed and will soon deploy a peace support mission. The task is enormous. Every effort should be exerted to ensure the success of the mission in helping the Sudanese in their search for peace in a country torn by ravaging wars since its independence.

The UN Security Council will have to review its approach to the overall situation in the Sudan. A comprehensive and integrated strategy is required to address the complex and multi-faceted situation in the Sudan to put the country on a sound footing and help it set on the path to lasting peace and sustainable development.

The Sudanese leaders – all leaders – will have to rise to the challenge. They have the primary responsibility to meet the expectations of their people for a peaceful and prosperous future. They will have to show that they can win the fight for peace. They have to realize that there still a long road ahead before they can claim victory.

With the signing of the Peace Agreement behind us, the Sudan is about to witness a turning point in its history. All Sudanese owe it to themselves, to all those people who lost their lives during the war, to the millions of people who lost all means to lead a decent life, to the millions of displaced persons and refugees scattered throughout the country, to end the suffering and set the nation on a steady course towards peace, stability and prosperity.

*Jan Pronk is the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Sudan.*



## Abbas needs to stay moderate

# Palestine's new direction

BY DAOU KUTTAB

The victory of Mahmoud Abbas in the Palestinian presidential election poses a huge challenge to the Palestinian leadership. By being voted chairman of the PLO's executive committee hours after the death of Yasser Arafat, Abbas clinched the support of the organization that represents all Palestinians, including those in the diaspora. Popular election as President of the Palestinian National Authority gives Abbas the grassroots legitimacy to carry out his political program.

That program, while similar to Arafat's, differs in key ways. Abbas (also known as Abu Mazen) has been publicly and consistently critical of what he calls the "militarization of the intifada." Even before Arafat's death, Abbas argued that the use of force by militants weakens the Palestinian negotiating position. He stuck to this position throughout his electoral campaign, refusing the demands of hard-line Palestinian factions that he apologize for his previous statements.

Abbas conducts himself in a business-like manner, and he strongly believes in the rule of law and in the need for real civilian governance to assume preeminence in Palestinian politics. In this he also differs from Arafat, who believed that the revolutionary mindset must continue so as long as Palestinians lived under an illegal foreign occupation. Until liberation, there could be no business as usual.

By winning election on a clear anti-violence and pro-rule of law platform, Abbas has the mandate and the responsibility to carry out this policy. He

needs to make it clear to every armed Palestinian that there will be no tolerance for any unofficial group carrying arms or conducting military attacks from Palestinian territory.

In order to preserve national unity, Abbas will obviously need to use all his persuasive skills to convince radical groups (some in his own Fatah movement) to respect that approach. As chairman of the PLO, he will be under extreme pressure not to delegitimize the internationally sanctioned acts of resistance against Israeli military targets. In order to counter that pressure, he will have to show that a cessation of violence is in the higher interest of Palestinians.

Abbas will find it equally challenging to apply rule-of-law principles to a traumatized community that is reeling after nearly five years of violence, oppression, and draconian travel restrictions imposed by the Israelis. As in the issue of the militarization of the intifada, this is not a simple matter, as it concerns forces outside the control of Abbas and his government.

Nevertheless, internal policies will be of grave importance. The day-to-day lives – and livelihoods – of Palestinians need immediate improvement. The Israeli-built wall to the west of the West Bank means that Palestinian unemployment will continue to rise and living standards will continue to drop.

To counter this, Abbas will have to seek external Arab and international support. The real need is to encourage investment, primarily from Palestinians and Arabs. But this is unlikely without major legal and administrative reforms, and, more generally, good governance and ironclad application of the rule of law.

The key to establishing civil order is peace. No matter how persuasive Abbas is in convincing radical groups to put down their arms, a unilateral ceasefire will not last long if it is not mutual. The role of the Israeli occupation forces will thus be crucial in determining the success of Abbas's daunting mission. Indeed, the task that Abbas faces will become impossible if the Israeli policy of "targeted killings" is allowed to continue while Palestinian leaders are working seriously to put an end to acts of violence against Israelis.

Ultimately, the main agenda for the new Palestinian president in negotiations with Israel will be to push the Israelis to make good on their repeated international assurances that a viable contiguous Palestinian state is a realistic goal in the near future. But if left to Israelis and Palestinians alone, the goal of Palestinian independence within the 1967 borders of Palestine will most likely remain out of reach. The international community, led by the United States, must invest effort and political capital to realize this goal.

The new Palestinian president faces a challenging agenda and high popular expectations. Much will depend on how Abbas handles himself and how he governs.

But the ultimate question is what Israel and the international community will do if Abbas fulfills his pledge to end anti-Israeli violence and apply the rule of law in a functioning democracy. Palestinians have chosen; now the world must do so as well.

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## 2004: A year to forget

BY ABDULWAHAB AL SOFI  
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FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Farewell to the year 2004. In this strange world, some people devote all their efforts to making other people weak. Today, the losers are those who have forgotten their religion, traditions and principles.

The Islamic religion is being conspired against by the biggest power in the world. No power in the world can defeat it. Islamic people may be defeated, because some of them neglect their main weapon, Islam. The

USA felt endangered and started fighting Muslims. They dominate the Arab world using their underlings, some of whom are unfortunately Arab rulers.

America is fighting the Islamic people claiming that they are extremists, despite the fact that Islam calls for freedom and brotherhood. Many military bases are distributed in the Arab and Islamic world to put Muslims under siege. American policy calls for peace, human rights, and democracy while it invades the Arab world constantly. In the last year, we saw the worst bloodshed and moral deteriorations caused by America.

There is also an economic war against Muslims; however, the U.S.A.

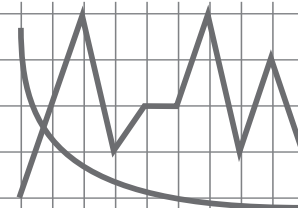
has not achieved their plans yet because all Muslims invoke Allah daily to defeat our enemies. We all have to learn a lesson from the Tsunami disaster, which was capable of destroying a complete continent.

The year 2004 will be remembered as one in which hundreds of thousands of people died together. It will be also remembered as one in which our lands were assaulted.

We have to pray Allah to unite the hearts and the souls of the Muslims and guide them to live in peace and happiness in the next year. Islam is the religion of tolerance and a true Muslim refuses terrorism disguised behind the name of religion.



# YT Business



## Car duties under 5 per cent?

# Custom duties to fall

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF  
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The Customs Administration has drawn up a law for the new tariff on goods and their industrial inputs which includes reduction of customs duties.

The administration expects the new law will help reduce prices of food by reducing goods tariffs and their industrial inputs and to curb the process of smuggling, and increase in financial

revenues going to the state treasury. Sources at the Customs Administration say the drawing up of the new tariff is based on a scientific study of important and vital goods, especially commodities that are smuggled into local markets.

The new law would be introduced and put into force after its approval by the cabinet and the parliament.

Lowering of the duties would vary from one commodity to another. Sources say that car customs would be reduced from 25 per cent to less than 5 per cent. As for goods exempted from customs, they are related to technology, such as computers and gold.

Customs on books, magazines and electronic commodities would drop 50 per cent, in addition to fully canceling of tariff on raw materials that are used in local food industry and others.

The customs establishment expects the reductions would also lead to an increase in production level and increase in profits of projects and improvement in the individual income as well as creation of new jobs.

Adoption of the new law comes as part of the Yemeni government plans of designing clear economic and customs policies to protect local products and realization of the government program of comprehensive economic reforms.

## Fighting corruption

# German experience to help Yemen

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen will get help from German experiences for fighting corruption. It comes after a German delegation conducted discussions with the Yemeni side in the Higher Committee for Combating Corruption COCC.

The talks focused on supporting the coordinative capabilities of the COCC. Ali Mohammed al-A'nsi, director of the residency office, the deputy chairman of the COCC and protection of public property, said corruption is a "development-killing octopus and an enemy having no features. It changes its colour and forms and places as well as it has a world identity and has no specific homeland."

On their part, the minister of civil service and securities Hamoud Khalid al-Soufi Mr Abdulmalik al-Ma'lami,

minister of communications and information technology and Dr Abdullah al-Sanafi, head of the central apparatus of monitoring and auditing, affirmed the necessity of developing institutional mechanisms to monitor and fight corruption.

The consultative meeting was chaired by al-A'nsi and included a number of ministers, parliament members and officials.

Prime minister Abdulqder Bajammal noted, "We have to go further. The topic of decentralization is an essential and a major one and it goes directly in the direction of destroying corruption as a direct task. Those who stick to a big group of authorities in the center would have an evil intention."

The government policy of restructuring some ministries aims at encircling of corruption on administrative and financial machinery.

## Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	186.4200	186.7000
Sterling Pound	348.7700	349.3000
Euro	244.0700	244.4400
Saudi Rial	49.7100	49.7800
Kuwaiti Dinar	638.4000	639.3600
UAE Dirhem	50.7600	50.8400
Egyptian Pound	31.5700	31.6200
Bahraini Dinar	494.4600	495.2100
Qatari Rial	51.2200	51.3000
Jordanian Dinar	262.9100	263.3000
Omani Rial	484.2500	484.9700
Swiss Franc	157.5800	157.8200
Swedish Crown	26.9800	27.0200
Japanese Yen	1.8033	1.8060

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

There is also a plan and intention to by the Yemeni government to merge some ministries and establishments and to cancel function of some establishments or adding them to other establishments.

The Yemeni government also believes that economic reforms are directed against corruption.

An example of that is wheat. It has become diversified and there are no less than 11 types of wheat available in the market and importation of rice in Hadramout has dropped by around 30-40%, although Hadramout is a major consumer of rice.

That is because others have been prevented from smuggling this commodity to external markets.

# UN told of weaknesses in US handling of Iraqi oil

BY IRWIN ARIEFF

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 14 (Reuters) - U.S. handling of Iraq's oil money after the defeat of Saddam Hussein was marked by weaknesses including problems tracking oil production and cash, a watchdog told the U.N. Security Council on Friday, diplomats said.

The criticisms follow accusations by U.S. policymakers that the United Nations mismanaged a separate oil-for-food program for Iraq under Saddam. "These shortcomings (in the U.S. management) have to be kept in mind when we judge the management of other programs such as oil-for-food," said one council diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

U.N. Controller Jean-Pierre Halbwachs, who heads the International Advisory and Monitoring Board set up to oversee U.S. management of Iraqi oil, briefed the Security Council on the issue in a closed-door meeting.

He discussed problems tracking how much oil was produced and how the proceeds were spent, and how noncompetitive contracts were awarded to Halliburton Co., formerly led by Vice

President Dick Cheney, the envoys said. Several said he repeatedly used the term "weaknesses" to characterize problems with the U.S. management.

Republican U.S. lawmakers have accused the United Nations of mismanaging the now-defunct oil-for-food program, which allowed Iraq under Saddam to sell oil and buy civilian goods to ease the impact on ordinary Iraqis of sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

U.N. officials have acknowledged problems with the oil-for-food program and Secretary-General Kofi Annan has commissioned an independent investigation into the matter.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said this week Annan "will have to be held accountable for those management problems."

The board led by Halbwachs was created by the Security Council to watch over the stewardship of Iraq's natural resources during the U.S. civil administration of Iraq, which began in April 2003 and ended last June.

The board has previously accused the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority of sloppily managing billions of dollars of Iraqi oil money and mov-

ing at a glacial pace to guard against corruption.

The watchdog last month ordered a special audit of all sole-source Halliburton work, to be completed in early 2005.

Cheney headed the Texas oil services company between 1995 and 2000, and its cost overruns on Iraq contracts became an issue in the U.S. presidential campaign.

Halbwachs told the council that Iraqi officials were taking steps, with international help, to correct the problems identified by the board, council members said.

They were improving accounting procedures and planned to install metering equipment to measure oil production as a safeguard against smuggling, he was quoted as saying.

"This was welcomed by members. It's a huge problem, but also complex and difficult to manage," said French Ambassador Jean-Marc de la Sabliere, who requested the briefing.

"We will be asking for more information — not that we feel there is anything wrong, necessarily," Brazilian Ambassador Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg told reporters.

## Will pay \$22 million

# IFAD's project on Dhammar development

BY MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is to finance \$22 million for a project for the rural development in the governorate of Thamar, to begin implementation in the districts in this year 2005 and continues for seven years.

The project aims at conveying agricultural services to rural communities in the governorate of Thamar and development of infrastructure for the upgrading technical and organizational aspects of agricultural sector institutions.

The program also aims at communicating IFAD assistance to all districts of Thamar and local communities as well

as protection of natural resources in it along with environment and its protection.

IFAD aims from funding the project of development of agricultural areas and helping the population at facing unemployment by increasing agricultural production and working at cultivation of the land and reclamation agricultural areas, especially in the governorate of Thamar, which entertains a fertile land.

The project is to be implemented at phases. According to organized plans including the achievement of gains by farmers in the governorate and helping them for stability in their areas.

It is scheduled that the governorate of Thamar would this year witness the implementation of services and developmental projects financed by the

Yemeni government, more important of which are the building of water dams barriers, building and paving roads and building electric, waters, culture and sport.

While the governorate is seeking development of post services, last year there were 330 developmental and services projects at a cost exceeding YR 7 billion. Among those projects there are 152 educational projects, 54 health, 23 agricultural and 33 in the field of public works and roads. There are other projects of electricity, waters, environment and communications.

The governorate of Thamar is well-known for its potatoes agriculture and some fruits and vegetables. Nowadays a number of the governorate's provincial capital streets are being paved at a cost of YR 2.5 billion.

# Companies compete for Aden Terminal

ADEN BUREAU

More than 9 international companies compete for the concession of managing and operating Aden Container Terminal including Chinese and Filipino companies.

It is anticipated that the Chinese companies will be awarded the contract. The supervising governmental panel responsible for selecting a new international operator for Aden Container Terminal held a meeting with

specialized international and regional company experts on Wednesday January 12, 2005, to examine applications to manage the Terminal during the second half of the current year.

Representatives of the companies have conducted a ten-day field survey to the Terminal, and studied the data and researches pertaining to the port and its key establishments.

The supervisory panel along with the companies representatives have listened to queries and questions connected to the financial and technical aspects.

Proposals submitted by the companies are to be analyzed by the panel during the following months. Then the name of the successful application(s) will be announced. The successful company will start its duty in July. Deadline for receiving applications is February 16.

It is reported that the government has assigned a Dutch company to draft a strategic plan for upgrading Aden Port's marketing activities so as to enable it to grow into a regional center for receiving and re-shipping the containers to different countries worldwide.

# Petroleum SINOPEC in Yemen

BY YASSER AL-MAYYASI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Ministry of Petroleum & Minerals and the International specialized Petroleum Chinese SINOPEC have signed last Wednesday Jan. 12 2005 two new contracts of partnership in producing the petroleum in both the blocks, (69) in Shabwah and (71) in Hadramout Governorates. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stages of each block will cost US\$ 36,000,000.

Chinese SINOPEC is one of the International largest companies having wide experience in petroleum field. It has carried out a lot of successful vital projects in number of countries. It has won these two blocks after competing

other twenty-eight international companies.

Both the contracts came following the promotional campaign of petroleum companies conducted by the Ministry

of Petroleum in a number of countries. Other new contracts will be signed in the few coming days with the Southern Korean (K.No.C) Company, and the Austrian (OMV) Company.



The picture shows Minister of Oil and Minerals Dr. Rashid Ba Rabaa (middle) and Dr. Tawfiq Noa'man (right) and Mr. Zhang Yaocang (left), Vice President of SINOPEC signing contracts



## تنبيه

نحيط عملاءنا الكرام بأن الموظفين المعتمدين لدينا رسمياً في كل من قسم التسويق وقسم التحصيل هم كما يلي:

- ١- رشيد السقاف - مدير الإعلانات - التسويق
- ٢- أحمد الهاللي - قسم التسويق
- ٣- مروان العريقي - قسم التسويق
- ٤- أيمن المسني - مدير التحصيل
- ٥- نعمان الخضمي - قسم التحصيل
- ٦- بكيل الداعري - قسم التحصيل

ويرجى عدم التعامل مع اي شخص غير المذكورين اعلاه

وشكراً ....

إدارة صحيفة يمن تايمز



*Eid al-Adha is coming*

# Celebrating the Festival of Sacrifice



By ADEL AL-KHAWLANI  
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YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Festival of the Sacrifice (Eid al-Adha) is one of two major Islamic celebrations and takes place on the tenth day of the Islamic month Dhul-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar.

Millions of Muslims from around the world make an annual pilgrimage to Mecca in order to worship Allah.

The Festival of Sacrifice, Eid-al-Adha, immediately follows the Day of Arafat. Although only the pilgrims in Mecca can participate in the Hajj fully, all the other Muslims in the world join with them by celebrating Eid Al-Adha, or "Celebration of Sacrifice."

On this day, Muslims around the world celebrate this feast of commitment, obedience and self sacrifice to Allah. This festival is celebrated throughout the Muslim world as a commemoration of Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice everything for God, including the life of his son Ishmael.

Because God spared Ishmael, substituting a sheep in his stead, Muslims commemorate this occasion by slaughtering an animal and distributing its meat among family, friends and the needy as a special act of charity for the occasion. Because of this, many poor Muslims are able to enjoy the unusual luxury of eating meat during the four days of the festival.

They wear their nicest clothes and attend Salat-ul-Eid (Eid Prayer) in the morning. This is followed by a short sermon, after which everyone socializes. Next, people visit each other's homes and partake in festive meals with special dishes,

beverages, and desserts. Children receive gifts and sweets on this happy occasion.

In addition, like the pilgrims in Makkah, the Muslims, who can afford to do so, offer domestic animals, usually sheep, as a symbol of Ibrahim's sacrifice. The meat is distributed for consumption to family, friends, and to the poor and needy.

While performing the duty of hajj (pilgrimage), pilgrims keep on uttering this verse from the Holy Quran: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds." Qur'an 6:162

During the annual pilgrimage (Hajj) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, Muslims remember and commemorate the trials and triumphs of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). The Qur'an describes Abraham as follows:

"Surely Abraham was an example, obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the polytheists. He was grateful for Our bounties. We chose him and guided him unto a right path. We gave him good in this world, and in the next he will most surely be among the righteous." (Qur'an 16:120-121)

And "We made him (Abraham) pure in this world and in the hereafter; he is most surely among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, 'Submit,' he said, 'I submit myself to the Lord of the Worlds.'" (Qur'an 2:130-131)

One of Abraham's main trials was to face the command of Allah to kill his only son. Upon hearing this command, he prepared to submit to Allah's will. When he was all prepared to do it, Allah revealed to him that his "sacrifice" had already been fulfilled. He had shown that his love for his Lord superceded all others, that he would lay down his own life or the lives of those dear to him in order

to submit to Allah.

During this celebration, Muslims commemorate and remember this incident, by themselves slaughtering an animal such as a sheep, camel, or goat. This action is very often misunderstood by those outside the faith.

Allah has given us power over animals and allowed us to eat meat, but only if we pronounce His name at the solemn act of taking life. Muslims slaughter animals in the same way throughout the year. By saying the name of Allah at the time of slaughter, we are reminded that life is sacred.

The meat from the sacrifice of 'Eid al-Adha is mostly given away to others. One-third is eaten by immediate family and relatives, one-third is given away to friends, and one-third is donated to the poor and needy. The act symbolizes our willingness to give up things that are of benefit to us or close to our hearts, in order to follow Allah's commands.

It also symbolizes our willingness to give up some of our own bounties, in order to strengthen ties of friendship and help those who are in need. We recognize that all blessings come from Allah, and we should open our hearts and share with others.

It is very important to understand that the sacrifice itself, as practiced by Muslims, has nothing to do with atoning for our sins or using the blood to wash ourselves from sin. This is a misunderstanding by those of previous generations: "It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah; it is your piety that reaches Him." (Surah Al-Hajj 22:37)

The symbolism is in the attitude - a willingness to make sacrifices in our lives in order to stay on the Straight Path. Each of us makes small sacrifices, giving up things that are fun or important to us. A true Muslim, one who submits his or



Sheep, typical Eid sacrifices, fill the Yemeni Market as Eid al-Adha draws nearer.

herself completely to the Lord, is willing to follow Allah's commands completely and obediently. It is this strength of heart, purity in faith, and willing obedience that our Lord desires from us.

The traditions practiced in India seem to be similar to what is practiced in almost all the Muslim nations in terms of paying visits to friends and performing prayers and other rituals.

India is home to approximately 150 million Muslims who celebrate the Eid in the same way as their non-Indian brothers and sisters in faith. It is a very happy time which is marked by special prayers, visits to family and friends, gifts to children and, of course by food.

For many families, it may be one of the few times during the year that they have the opportunity to enjoy meat, and only the best dishes are served.

#### Some rules associated with the sacrifice

It is recommended by the Sunnah for the one who wants to offer a sacrifice, once the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah appears, not to remove anything from his hair, nails or skin, until he has offered the sacrifice, because of the report narrated by the group except Al-Bukhari, from Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "When you see the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him leave his hair and nails alone."

A version narrated by Abu Dawud and Muslim says: "Whoever has an animal to slaughter, when the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah appears, let him not remove anything from his hair or nails until he has offered the sacrifice." This applies whether he is going to slaughter the sacrifice himself or he has appointed someone else to do it; but with regard to those on whose behalf the sacrifice is being offered [i.e., his family etc], that is not recommended for them because there is no report to that effect."

For the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered, there is no blame on him if he removes anything from his hair or nails. The evidence for that is as follows:

1. This is the apparent meaning of the hadith, which indicates that the restriction applies only to the one who is going to offer the sacrifice. Based on this, the restriction applies only to the head of the household, not to the members of his family, because the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) connected the ruling to the one who is going to offer the sacrifice, so what is understood is that this ruling does not apply to those on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered.

2. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to offer the sacrifice on behalf of his household and it is not nar-

rated that he said to them, "Do not remove anything from your hair or nails or skin." If that had been forbidden for them, the Prophet would have told them not to do it. This view is the more correct opinion.

#### Eid and unity are interrelated

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, "You are supposed to fast with people, and celebrate the 'Eid with them, and perform sacrifice with the people." In other words, even if you have sighted the moon, and the imam or the leader did not take into account your testimony, and decided on other evidences that he deemed fit, you must go by his decisions, even though he may be mistaken.

Imams of Islamic schools have unanimously stated that we must follow the Arafat day declared by the leader of the hajj even if the basis of his decision were to be proven wrong. And our hajj would be valid only if we were to abide by the decision instead of acting individually.

Moreover, it is important for us to understand that the unity and solidarity of the Ummah can be demonstrated through these rituals of Islam, such as 'Eid celebration, Ramadan, and Hajj, etc. are far more important than avoiding mistakes in such a matter.

#### Is the 'Ud-hiyah compulsory?

This question was forwarded by a person from Denmark named Adil to Sheikh Ahmad Kutty a Senior Lecturer and an Islamic Scholar at the Islamic Institute of Toronto, Ontario Canada.

For this question, Sheikh Kutty gave the following answer:

"Ud-hiyah is strongly recommended according to the vast majority of scholars. Only a minority of scholars consider it as obligatory or wajib. However, this does not mean that we should neglect; it is a great Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and it has been handed down as a tradition by Prophet Ibrahim.

Most of the rituals of hajj and 'Eid-ul-Adha revolve around the faith and sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim and Isma'il; therefore, every leader of the family who can afford to sacrifice should do so."

#### What is the best time for sacrifice?

With regard to this question, Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, former president of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and member of the Fiqh Council of North America, answers:

"Offering Udhiyah (sacrifice) during 'Eid Al-Adha is regarded as Wajib (mandatory) according to Imam Abu Hanifah and a Sunnah Mu'akkadah (stressed Sunnah) according to other jurists.

All those people who have the Nisab (payable amount) of Zakah should offer a

sacrifice. The time for offering a sacrifice begins after the 'Eid Al-Adha prayer. According to a Hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said that whosoever offered a sacrifice before the 'Eid prayer, he or she just slaughtered an animal for meat, but whosoever made sacrifice after the 'Eid Al-Adha prayer, he or she has offered a sacrifice. (Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 902)

Udhiyah (sacrifice) is an act of worship ('ibadah). As we have the times of prayers so we also have time for making a sacrifice during 'Eid Al-Adha. The time of sacrifice remains until sunset on the 12th day Dhul Hijjah. It is not required for the head of the household to offer a separate Qurbani (sacrifice) for every member of the house, rather one sacrifice would be sufficient for the whole family. However, if other members of family own the Nisab of Zakah, then they must offer their own sacrifice. One goat, lamb or sheep is on behalf of one person, but seven people can share in offering one cow or camel.

The Udhiyah is the Sunnah of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Ismail and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all) It has a meaning and significance. It reminds us of the great act of sacrifice that Prophet Ibrahim and Ismail were willing to do for the sake of Almighty Allah. Allah spared the life of Prophet Ismail, but He told us that "And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice." (As-Saffat 37:107).

The "momentous sacrifice (dhibhin 'athim) is the sacrifice of the billions of people who have been remembering this tradition for the last four thousand years. Other people who claim to follow Prophet Ibrahim have forgotten this tradition, but we Muslims have kept it alive without any interruption. We must keep this Sunnah and should not forget it.

There is no substitute for Udhiyah. However, if one wants to offer a Nafl (non-obligatory) sacrifice on behalf of oneself or one's deceased parents or some other relatives, one has a choice either to make Udhiyah or give the price of the animal in charity.

The meat of the Udhiyah should be divided in three equal portions: one for oneself and the family, one for friends, and one for the poor and needy. If there are more poor people, then it is good to give all of it in charity to the poor and needy. In some countries around the world, people may not need the meat that much, but in others great numbers of people do not get meat.

In some cases it is, perhaps, better to give the money to some dependable relief organizations in order to make Udhiyah on one's behalf; and to distribute the meat among the poor and needy in poor countries and in countries where people are suffering due to wars, economic sanctions or natural disasters."

## Talented Yemeni singer makes news abroad

# Taha is part of entrepreneurial spirit in UK

By NEW SERVICES

Entrepreneurs can thrive in Burngreave and Pitsmoor. That's the message behind the district's first enterprise event, bringing all Sheffield's business support organisations together to encourage residents.

There are already more than 500 businesses in a part of the city that outsiders might consider to be a no-go area and commercial backwater.

Saghir Ahmed is business champion with the Burngreave Business Forum, organisers of the Business & Enterprise Event, supported by Business Link South Yorkshire.

He said ethnic, cultural and economic diversity made Burngreave an exciting and vibrant place to do business.

"It's an amazing place when you scratch the surface, and the level of economic activity is all the more remarkable when you consider it has been virtually ignored by advisers and financiers in the past.

"Now we have all the agencies coming together under one roof for the first time to offer support to budding entrepreneurs, business and anyone with questions on starting up or running their firm."

Three Burngreave and Pitsmoor schools will send students to talk to support organisations and to entrepreneurs

who made a success.

"While the event is about raising the standard, it is also about raising the profile for Burngreave. It is about lifting self-esteem to help regenerate an area that is all too often overlooked," he said.

The first Burngreave Business Awards are sponsored by Business in the Community, HSBC, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Parker Communications.

One of the people short-listed is Adam Taha.

He arrived in Sheffield from the Yemen at 13, and didn't speak a word of English. He went to school, didn't understand anything anyone said, and left. With no qualifications he was virtually unemployable.

"I had two choices. I could have moaned and resigned myself to a life of Giros and inactivity or work for myself. As Yemeni people are hands-on and hard working, I set about learning the skills I need."

Largely self-taught, he now runs his own graphic design company, producing computer artwork for posters, flyers, magazines and websites.

With funding from Creative Burngreave, he is producing a comic for the ethnic community, encouraging young people to study and be entrepreneurs.

He is a musician and singer, stage name One Dark Angel, and produced a



DVD, Soul Train, vowing to give 40 per cent of profits to support Yemeni street kids.

He helps Burngreave youngsters with their English, song writing and music making.

"My goal is to develop a business which employs people from the community. People might not have the qualifications and skills some firms require, but if they are willing to learn and have a hunger to succeed, then that is enough.

"Burngreave is buzzing with entrepreneurial spirit. Now, at last, it looks as if the more traditional agencies are realising the potential and we are getting a lot of help.

"We want this event to spark more sponsorship so that young people here understand that they don't have to do it all on their own."

This article was originally written in Sheffield Today.



# Rooney strike downs Liverpool

LONDON (Reuters) - Wayne Rooney has struck the winner as 10-man Manchester United beat Liverpool 1-0 - with the help of a blundering hand from keeper Jerzy Dudek.

Dudek got down to the England striker's speculative low shot from nearly 25 metres, but still let the ball skim beneath the Pole's outstretched gloves in the 21st minute at Anfield.

The goal was all the more galling for Liverpool fans because it came from a Merseyside teenager who until last August played for their bitter city rivals Everton.

The victory kept third-placed United firmly on the coat-tails of champions Arsenal and league leaders Chelsea. Defeat for Liverpool meant Everton remain in pole position for fourth place and a Champions League qualifying slot next season.

Liverpool, hoping to whittle away at the six points separating the two city rivals, gave a debut up front to their new Spanish signing Fernando Morientes, who showed some promising touches.

United came into the game after six clean sheets, but without scoring in their last three games in the continued absence of injured Dutch striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy.

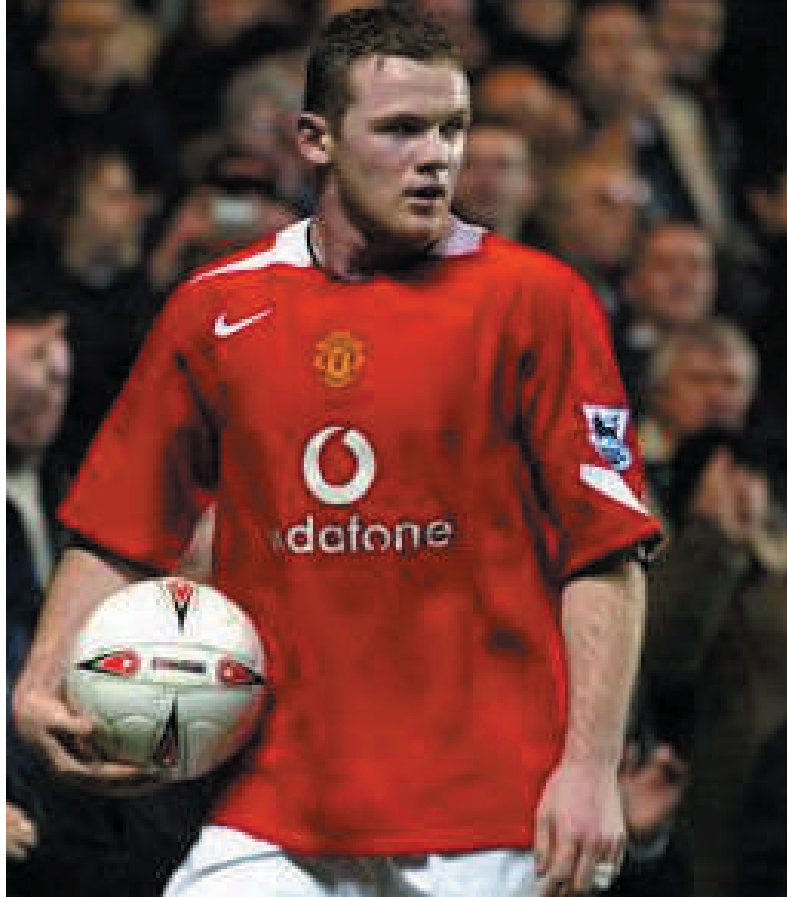
Liverpool made the better start to a free-flowing game but found United's defence well able to cope with the early pressure and were unable to deliver a killer final ball.

They finally posed a threat from a Morientes downward header, only for United to take the lead just two minutes later when Rooney unleashed his shot from distance.

United's Argentine defender Gabriel Heinze sent a header just over the bar two minutes later and the visitors were unlucky not to be 2-0 up when skipper Roy Keane cracked a dipping shot on the bounce onto the crossbar.

### Morientes chance

Liverpool's only real half-chance of the opening 45 minutes fell to Morientes just before the break, when the Spaniard skied a bouncing ball from the edge of the area.



The end-to-end action continued in the second half but Liverpool failed to carve out any clear-cut chances and United looked fluid going forward and dangerous on the break.

Things swung Liverpool's way after 65 minutes when Brown got his marching orders for a second bookable offence, a bad challenge on wingback John Arne Riise.

The red card prompted a tactical switch by both sides, with United winger Cristiano Ronaldo making way for defender John O'Shea and Riise swapped for French striker Florent Sinama-Pongolle.

Liverpool kept up the pressure but the closest they came was a side-foot shot from the edge of the area by defender Jamie Carragher in stoppage time which flew straight at keeper Roy Carroll.

The save sealed a seventh consecutive clean sheet for United, despite the

recent absence of injured central defender Rio Ferdinand, who has made an impressive return from an eight-month ban since last September.

Asked about their defensive displays, United boss Alex Ferguson told Sky Sports News: "Excellent, absolutely magnificent. Since Rio Ferdinand came back he's brought that composure and we've carried on from there - even though he hasn't been playing the last two or three games."

Unable to resist a dig at his title rivals, Ferguson added: "Arsenal and Chelsea have been here, but I think our performance has been the best of the three."

Chelsea were somewhat fortunate 1-0 winners at Anfield, while Arsenal went down 2-1.

As for Dudek, Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez said: "He caught two or three balls but if a keeper makes a mistake it's a big problem for us."



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