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**Don't blame us, says World Bank**

## We're the ones helping

BY PETER WILLEMS  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemenis continue to be fearful that economic reforms are causing their financial ruin.

As one Sana'a vendor put it, "The World Bank is here to destroy our country and culture. Prices going up is just one part of the big scheme of the World Bank pulling us down to live like dogs."

But he, and others who share his fears, would be interested to know that recent price hikes may have very little to do with economic reform to be implemented by the Yemeni government, with the assistance of The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

And, according to Robert Hindle, Country Manager of The World Bank in Yemen, real economic reform is still to come.

"We at The World Bank very much look forward to the govern-

ment taking reform steps for the acceleration of economic growth. That is the goal," said Hindle.

"But up until now, the government of Yemen has not acted on the reform measures recommended by The World Bank in the last year-and-a-half to two years. They haven't been rejected, but the government hasn't acted on them either."

Prices of consumer goods jumped up considerably in 2003. The inflation rate is expected to be over 12.5% for last year, up from 4.3% in 2002. Yemen's Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose mostly because prices of food products jumped, which make up 44% of the CPI.

Hindle told The Yemen Times that one of the major causes of the accelerated inflation rate came from the government pumping more money into the economy, a move to help generate economic growth.

Continued on Page 3



A street vendor selling fruits to make a living amid harsh living conditions and rising prices. Most Yemenis believe that policies of the World Bank is the main cause behind worsening poverty and price hikes in Yemen. (Photo by Jamil Abdul Karim)



WB Resident Rep.  
Robert Hindle

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**Saudi barrier is a problem that's growing**

## Saleh to go to Saudi

BY MOHAMED AL-QADHI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

President Ali Abdullah Saleh is reported to plan a visit Saudi Arabia soon to hold talks with the Saudi leadership on the issue of erecting a barrier along its porous border with Yemen, a source close to the Yemeni presidency told The Yemen Times Saturday.

However, the official source said that preparations for the visit have started, adding that Saleh would hold intensive

talks with the Saudi leaders on the question of the wall which has enraged Yemenis, who compare it to the wall built by Israel.

Yemen Times has learned that recent emergency talks between the officials from the interior ministries in the two countries in Jeddah could not reach a solution to the problem.

The Saudis insist that they have the right to build the wall to stop the flow of arms from Yemen to their territories.

Since the terrorist bombings on May 12, Saudi border patrols have seized more than 90,000 rounds of ammunition, dozens of grenades, more than 2,000 sticks of dynamite, hundreds of bazookas and more than 1,200 other weapons.

It has been reported that both Egypt and the US have interfered to bring Yemen and Saudi authorities together, despite the statements made by the officials in both Yemen and Saudi Arabia that there is no problem between them and they have agreed to settle things through dialogue.

Continued on Page 3

## Satar denies terror link

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF  
AND ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - U.S. authorities believe a prominent Yemeni politician roamed the city in late 1999 to secretly raise money for terrorist operations, according to testimony in a U.S. federal case.

But Sheikh Abdullah Satar is already denying the allegations that were made public for the first time this week at the trial of Numan Maflahi, a Yemen-born convenience store owner charged with making false statements about the alleged fund-raising scheme.

During a four-day visit in late 1999, Satar was escorted by Maflahi, 31, as he collected donations - purportedly for an orphan charity - at mosques in Brooklyn and Manhattan, FBI agent Brian Murphy testified.

The charity, Murphy alleged, was a front for radical Muslim groups.

News accounts describe Satar, who has not been charged, as an outspoken opposition party leader in Yemen who has opposed the decision to allow U.S. forces to enter the country to train troops to combat terrorists after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

When the FBI confronted Maflahi about

Satar last year, the defendant said he knew the sheik was a famous figure in his homeland, "like Hillary Clinton," Murphy told jurors.

But he allegedly insisted he had only met Satar in passing and denied helping him raise money - the basis for the false-statement charge.

Maflahi's attorney, Hassen Ibn Abdellah, reminded jurors that his client was not charged with any terror-related counts. He accused prosecutors of repeatedly mentioning terrorism "to inflame you, to prejudice you, to make you feel unpatriotic."

If convicted, Maflahi could face up to five years in prison.

Sa'atar, a prominent leading member of the Islah party and former MP, described such reports as "false and baseless" and that they are "a business in the war on terrorism."

F.B.I. agent Murphy said in Brooklyn Federal Court that Sa'atar was under surveillance during a fund-raising swing through Brooklyn in early 2000.

Continued on page 3

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## Refusing extradition

By News Services

Yemeni authorities are refusing to send the alleged ringleader of the Lackawanna Six back to the US.

They're refusing to extradite Jaber Elbaneh because they're questioning him about his links to Al Qaeda and the terror cell that was busted here in 2002.

Elbaneh was captured a few weeks ago.

U.S. federal agents believe he led five other young men from Lackawanna to an Al Qaeda terrorist training camp in 2001.

## In Brief

### Taiz carpentry store burns

A carpentry store in Taiz was turned into ruins by fire last Tuesday.

According to the carpentry owner Al-Baadani, the fire may have resulted from an electricity short circuit, and spread quickly to smolder all the mostly wooden contents of the carpentry.

"Even the steel-made carpentry machines were tremendously damaged, and we could not control the fire until four hours after it started," he said.

Smoke could be seen in the neighborhood a day after the event, signaling the massiveness of the fire that charred the place.

The inappropriate handling of electricity wires, and the poor maintenance of such networks usually results in short-circuit, which most of the time do not cause fire, but in some cases do.

### ALESCO and al-Saeed sign deal

A cooperation agreement between ALESCO and al-Saeed Foundation for Science and Cultural was signed Feb. 12.

The agreement stated on mutual exchange of experience, research and studies which are related to culture and science.

It also includes conducting various activities, and events that would show the Islamic and Arabic civilizations between the two parties.

The events aim to support the dialogue between the Islamic culture and other cultures, and encourage and maintain the abilities of cultural and scientific researches and studies.

Manmji Bowsnia signed the agreement on behalf of ALESCO with Faisal Saeed Fari representing Al Saeed Foundation.

### Egyptian fishermen released

The immediate release of Egyptian fishermen arrested earlier this year has been ordered by President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The release was confirmed by major general Rashad al-Alimi minister of interior affairs.

The fishermen had been arrested by Yemeni security authorities for fishing illegally in Yemeni waters in the Red Sea.

The orders also said to freely open residence permits for the Egyptians in Yemen, to increase their job opportunities in Yemen.

In the same line, President Ali Abdullah Saleh and President Hussini Mubarak announced that the two countries agreed to resolve conflicts between them, which arise due to security issues, especially in the case of chasing what is called Egyptian al-Jihad violent elements, which Cairo claims to have escaped to Yemen in the past.

### Japan supports prawn project

The Sea Sciences Research Center of Aden city told Yemen Times that it will start soon implementing the prawn farms project, with financial support from the Japanese government, with a total cost of \$800,000.

Abdullah Al-Hammadi, the General Manager of the Center, said that the project will be implemented at the Marine Life Research Center at Al-Buraigah region in Aden.

The project, according to the center, will last for two years and will be carried out under the supervision of Japanese experts, and will include areas where prawns exist.

The exact location of the farms is to be confirmed later.

# EU delegation visits Yemen

Sana'a - A three-member delegation headed by Mario Mariani, Head of the Development Section at the European Commission Delegation in Amman, arrived in Sana'a on Sunday 15 Feb on a 10-day working visit to Yemen. They will hold talks with senior Yemeni officials on all aspects of the program of cooperation. The delegation will also discuss progress in the implementation of the EU funded projects in Sana'a and Aden governorates.

The visit will provide an opportunity

for the EU team to obtain first hand information on the various projects and to assess progress of work in each project, said Mario Mariani. The EU has allocated EURO 7 million to the project on strengthening priority areas of vocational training, which is nearing completion. The delegation will also visit another EU-funded irrigation project, being implemented in Tihama Barquqa at a total cost of EUR 7.3 million.

While in Aden, the delegation will

visit an EURO 6.6 million water infrastructure project to assess progress in that project, which will be completed by the year 2005. The European Union is one of Yemen's most important partners in development cooperation. Over the last two years, the overall commitment of confessional resources from EU Member States and the European Community has reached EUR 105 million.

The EU Commitments to Yemen over the four years ending December

2000 amounted to EUR 132.5 million, representing almost 60 per cent of the total commitments since 1977, a clear illustration of the EU's increasing support to Yemen's economic and social development.

The EU is currently financing some 40 ongoing projects and programs in various stages of implementation, covering such areas as economic cooperation, development interventions, food security support, support to NGOs, and humanitarian aid.

## International symposium held

# A call for cultures to dialogue

By Mohammed Binsallam  
Yemen Times Staff

Sana'a issued a call on Wednesday, at the International Symposium For Cultures Dialogue, for cultures to help spread peace and understanding.

It also called for the end of causes of disputes and conflicts, as well as enabling democratic concepts and practices in all societies.

The call urged the taking of necessary arrangements to achieve the best in education and the spread of dialogue, in the education curricula, based on religious and human ethical values.

It urged the creation of cultural exchanges in the Arab homeland and other countries.

The participants in the two-day symposium

approved to select Sana'a as a venue for coming activities related to dialogue among cultures in the Arab homeland.

Head of the Yemeni Center for Studies and Research, Abdulziz al-Maqaleh, organized the symposium in cooperation with the UNESCO.

He reviewed proceedings of the symposium and the scientific approach that had been dealt with in its sessions, and the results it reached.

Al-Maqaleh stressed the keenness of values of dialogue and not to allow rendering them to slogans and propaganda ideas.

In the session presided over by a member of George Washington University, the well-known media man Adeb Farha, a member of the Lebanese National Audio-Visual Media Center tackled the United

Nations definition of terror and the American double standard towards Palestine and other Arab and Islamic issues.

Farha confirmed that spreading awareness among local cultures is among the factors leading to enhancement of the spirit of dialogue and curb the spirit of extremism and terror. He clarified that the American idea on a new world must not be via future wars. That would not succeed in creating secure and stable world.

Dr. Caroline offered a special viewpoint on world events, resulting from the American fanaticism and fundamentalism.

She emphasized that present America does not launch a war for the sake of peace as much as a war for its interests and pointed out that the resistance must be based on discarding collisions among civ-

ilizations.

She said there should be enhancement of religions ideas in the minds of the people, especially that religions are a rich source for cultural diversity.

Dialogue also tackled the roots of terror and its sources in the world and the role the international policy played in singling out extremist groups and terrorist ideas and ideologies whose danger is aggravated under the circumstances of poverty and absence of social justice and democratic practices.

The former international advisor and assistant director general of the UNESCO explained the role that technology played in finding areas for dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

He stressed that time was not providing opportunities for initiative and action.

## Human rights

# Can UNESCO help more?

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Minister of Human Rights, Amatulaleem Al-Susuwa, has said that there is a great potential for a greater UNESCO role in supporting and promoting human rights in Yemen.

This was one conclusion in a meeting with Ahmed Al-Saidi, Assistant General Manager of International Relations and Cooperation of UNESCO along with Hameed Al-Awadhi, Yemen's permanent member at UNESCO and Mohamed Al-Qadasi, the General Secretary of the organization in Sana'a.

Al-Susuwa said that the ministry has been working hard to promote human rights in the country since she took charge of the ministry less than a year ago.

But she expressed hopes in that UNESCO could play a more influen-

tial role in the future through common programs and projects in this regard.

She focused on the ministry's projects for the coming months in enhancing conditions of prisons, raising awareness of constitutional and legal rights of citizens, activating the ministry's complaint receiving department, and helping in reviewing and changing the current laws and regulations to better conform to international regulations and agreements signed with Yemen.

On behalf of UNESCO, Al-Saidi expressed his willingness to support the project of establishing a hotline to receive complaints of citizens concerning human rights violations.

He said that technical support necessary in this field will be granted along with support in raising awareness of human rights through various tools including the media, along with supporting poverty reduction strategies.

## Lawyer says Hamden not al-Qaeda

# Yemeni was bin Laden's driver

WASHINGTON - A military defense lawyer assigned to defend one of the prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has said that his client was a driver for Osama bin Laden but was not a member of Al Qaeda or the Taliban - or guilty of any crime.

The lawyer, Lieutenant Commander Charles Swift, who represents Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a 34-year-old Yemeni who may be one of the first to be put on trial before a military commission, said on Wednesday that he had met with his client over the last two weeks in a special holding area at Guantanamo.

"He freely admits that he was employed by Osama bin Laden," Swift said. "His job was driving agricultural workers on bin Laden's farm and sometimes driving Osama himself."

But Swift said: "He is not a member of Al Qaeda and not a member of the

Taliban and is not a terrorist. He denies all of those things."

Swift said Hamdan had been in Afghanistan trying to get to Tajikistan to fight against the government on behalf of Muslims.

When he could not get there, Hamdan found a job on bin Laden's property near Kandahar in Afghanistan. After the turmoil following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he followed a car to take his pregnant wife and daughter to safety in Pakistan.

Upon his return, Swift said, he was arrested by Afghan forces allied with the United States.

Also on Wednesday, the Pentagon said it would allow Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who is being detained as an enemy combatant in a navy brig in Charleston, South Carolina, on suspicion of being a terrorist, access to his lawyers for the first time.

## Yemen's roads are death traps

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

According to a report released by the traffic general authority last week, 66 people were killed in 189 traffic accidents throughout the country in just two weeks, recently.

Sixty nine of those accidents involved pedestrians, killing 23 people, while 23 more people were killed in crashes between cars, lampposts, barricades, rollovers, etc.

The accidents also lead to the wounding of 382 persons, most of them suffering from severe injuries.

The governorate of Taiz topped the list among all other governorates in the num-

ber of killed persons as 15 people were killed and 66 others injured in 26 traffic accidents.

This was followed by Hodeidah, where 30 accidents led to the killing of 6 individuals and injury of 58. Six people were killed in Hadramout, 5 in each of Hajja and Ibb, and 4 in each of Sanaa and Dhamar.

It is worth noting that a significant number of victims are children below the age of 10 and elderly people.

Reasons behind such accidents are mainly speeding, reckless driving, ignoring traffic regulations, children playing in streets, bumpy roads with pits, and construction work with no proper signs.

## Better to develop Arab League

# Saleh says new Arab federation can wait

BY NEWS SERVICES

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced in Cairo that Yemen is ready to give up its project to establish an Arab federation as an alternative for the Arab League.

Saleh said following a meeting with the secretary general of the Arab League Amr Moussa that there are reservations by several Arab states to the project of the Arab federation in being unrealistic.

He indicated Yemen's readiness to adopt more realistic ideas to develop the Arab League and to give other serious

proposals apart from what he called prejudice.

Diplomatic sources in the Arab League stressed that the Yemeni project states to draw a new charter for the proposed organization similar to the project of developing the Arab League proposed by Libya.

The sources added that the AL chief prepared a project for development inspired, in particular from Egyptian and Saudi thoughts based on the need of preserving the AL and its charter, together with adding appendixes including mechanisms to develop joint Arab

action.

Moussa explained that Yemen made several observations on the mechanism of boosting the AL but simultaneously stressed accepting the current reality, stressing the importance of approval of next steps.

Moussa stressed that the Yemeni President expressed readiness to accept what will be agreed on "during the meetings of the ministerial council of the Arab League and also during the forthcoming summit due to be held during the second half of March under Tunisia's Presidency."

# Invitation for Bids

## Republic of Yemen

## Ministry of Public Health and Population Health Reform Support Project Credit 3625

## SUPPLY and TRANSPORTATION of VEHICLES

This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in United Nations Development Business (UNDB) issue no. (607) on 16th May 2003, Al-Thawra Newspaper issue no. (13944) on 28th May 2003, and Yemen Times issue no. (641) on 12th June 2003.

The Republic of Yemen has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of its Health Reform Support Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for procuring vehicles.

The Credit Administration Unit (CAU) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for procuring:

## VEHICLES (5 no.)

Bidding will be conducted through the national competitive bidding procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the guidelines.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Credit Administration Unit (CAU) and inspect the bidding documents at the address below from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

A complete set of bidding documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of USD \$50.00. The method of payment will be in cash. Documents will be submitted by hand.

Bids must be delivered to the address below by 11:00 a.m. on 8th March 2004. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of minimum 2.5% of the bid price. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 11:00 a.m. on 8th March 2004.

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## Readers' Voice

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

### This edition's question:

Who is most at fault for the poverty in Yemen?

1. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
2. The Yemeni government.
3. A combination of 1 and 2.
4. None of the above. The WB and IMF are helping Yemen.
5. The Yemeni people.
6. It's nobody's "fault" per se.

### last edition's question:

Do you believe that the idea to build a fence (or wall) on the Saudi side of the border will indeed help minimize smuggling and infiltrations?

- No, it will definitely fail 63%
- Yes, it definitely will 37%

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**Russian Ambassador to YT:****Cooperation between Yemen and Russia is unique and is moving in the right direction**INTERVIEW BY MOHAMED BIN SALLAM  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

In a recent interview with the Yemen Times last Wednesday, Alexander Zasyypkin, Russian Ambassador to Yemen, shed light on military cooperation between Yemen and Russia and said that cooperation in this field is unique and is moving in the right direction according to agreements signed between the two countries.

He said that such agreements help in modernizing Yemen's military capabilities according to present requirements.

As for Russian-Yemeni cooperation in trade, Zasyypkin said that discussions have taken place between Russia and Yemen. "The two countries signed a protocol that identifies the fields of cooperation that could result in having Russian investments in Yemen soon."

**Russian elections**

As for the upcoming Russian Presidential elections held on Saturday, he said they will have a substantial role in framing the future strategy of the Russian Federation in political, social, military, security, and economic

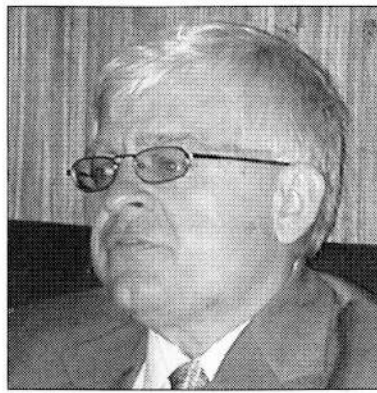
aspects.

He added that "the Russian people want political stability and internal security. They want national reconciliation to bring good relations between its different fractions and minorities and hence present a suitable environment for economic growth and prosperity for all Russians."

The international community will certainly focus on the reelection. Zasyypkin said that Vladimir Putin proved to be among the most active international leaders in dealing with issues concerning the international community, he said.

"President Putin was able in the decade to accomplish greatly in enhancing lives of Russians, in solving social problems, in securing strong military and defense capabilities, and in strengthening political relations with the outside world," he added.

Zasyypkin added that "during the last four years, the economic, political, and defense conditions of the country have enhanced substantially. Statistics reveal that the annual income of the Russian citizen has witnessed a 30% increase, while the agricultural production of the country increased by 20%.



H.E. Alexander Zasyypkin, Russian ambassador

the labor workforce productivity by 30%, and national investments by an impressive 45%."

"This clearly demonstrates the substantial growth witnessed during the president's era and the economic development has indeed helped in solving many social problems," He concluded.

**Russia's international influence**

As for Russia's international political influence, the Russian ambassador said that the defensive and economic

development of Russia will allow the country to have greater international power among other strong nations and will make it capable of having a more influential voice on issues concerning global peace and security. He is hopeful that Russia's power will be strong enough to help imposing a multi-polar world and in resolving international conflicts peacefully without the use of force.

The ambassador concluded the interview by stressing that Russia is evidently and strongly present in the East, West, and in both the Christian and Muslim world. He said that Russia supports Arab development and will continue to support missions that bring greater cultural and political cooperation between nations of different religious and beliefs.

"Russia has a special theory and vision in that to become a partner with others, we need to cooperate with the international community and not act alone. This is needed to bring about solutions to international issues peacefully, and Russia has and will continue to bring about initiatives to secure a more secure and stable world," he concluded.

**Hardliners call some celebrations "indecent acts"****Mosque preachers don't like Western dancing**

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A significant number of preachers in Sana'a and other cities heavily criticized the ministry of culture and tourism for allowing what they called "indecent acts" in celebration of the title of Sana'a as the Arab Cultural Capital for 2004.

They have accused the ministry of allowing unethical practices in bringing foreign musical and dance groups from Europe and elsewhere to celebrate the capital in a time the "city needs to go back to the ethics of Islam

and Sharia and abandon any immoral Western behaviors."

The celebrations started last Wednesday in Sana'a to officially announce the proclamation of Sana'a as the Arab Cultural Capital 2004, amid expectations of various cultural and theatrical activities throughout 2004.

Some hardliner preachers claimed that such practices have no relation to Arab culture, but are "imported values from the West that do not conform to our realities and tradition."

Furthermore, many of the preachers reemphasized their usual accusations

against the USA and other countries for supporting the festivities, which they claim are a step to destroy the country's Islamic heritage and ideology.

"They have started by hinting to changing our curricula, now they have moved to culture," one of the preachers said.

It is noteworthy that mosque preachers have some significant influence on Yemeni citizens, especially as they consider them their guides who cannot go wrong, since they base their views on the Islamic Sharia.

Continued from page 1

**We're the ones helping**

"Those price increases are going on now as a result of the government loosening its fiscal policy, which is to ultimately put more money into the economy," Hindle said.

Ahmed Ghaleb, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Finance, also argues that economic reform is not behind Yemen's price hikes. He said that along with the government's monetary policy, price changes on the international market and currency fluctuations have made an impact on prices in the Yemeni market.

He also said that these factors should be considered as natural forces in an economy. "Commodity prices were liberalized in the late nineties, and we are operating in a free market," said Ghaleb. "Therefore, the government and The World Bank have no control on prices."

A number of key economic reform measures recommended by The World Bank have yet to be implemented by the government; the pace for reform has slowed down in the last two years. Important steps that need to be taken include the government privatizing state enterprises and reforming the salary structure of civil servants.

But there are other steps the government might take that can have an impact on prices: reducing subsidies on diesel fuel and implementing a sales tax.

Hindle believes that economic reform must get back on track and pick up the pace, including sales tax and reducing subsidies, because now is the best time. Yemen's income from oil and gas takes up 70% of domestic budget revenue and 85% of export earnings.

Oil is vulnerable to price fluctuations in the international market, and oil production in Yemen has been flat in the last three years and is expected to go down in the near future. "It's important that oil royalties will not only go down in the medium term but could drop significantly if oil prices go down," said Hindle.

"It means that the government does need to think of alternative sources of revenue. We have suggested a general sales tax to replace oil royalties."

According to Hindle, government subsidies for diesel fuel amount to

approximately \$600 million a year. "In our view, not only is this a significant distortion of the price of diesel, but given the demand on the Yemeni budget for schools, healthcare, roads, and so forth, we think the \$600 million can be spent more effectively to reduce poverty," he said.

"Therefore, we strongly recommend that the government reduces progressively the subsidies on diesel fuel."

Still, the question remains: How much impact will a sales tax and reducing diesel fuel subsidies have on Yemeni consumers? Some economic indicators suggest that more price increases could send shockwaves through the poorest country in the Middle East.

According to the latest economic report from The World Bank, over 42% of the Yemeni population is below the poverty line. The GDP growth rate dropped from 4.7% in 2001 to 3.6% in 2002 and is expected to fall to 3.3% in 2004.

But Hindle believes the impact of price increases coming from economic reform measures will be minimal, especially for the poor.

First, subsidies for natural gas and gasoline are minor compared to the subsidies for diesel, so the price of diesel will be the one affected the most.

Second, the government will most likely reduce the subsidies on diesel fuel and implement a sales tax in a reform package that should help offset price increases, such as diesel and other products - including food items - that will be affected by the rise in transportation costs.

Expected in the package is a salary increase for government employees, such as civil servants, policemen and soldiers, a reduction in custom duties for specific imported items, and money taken out of subsidies to be put back into the economy through education, healthcare and projects.

"There will be an immediate transition, but it should be quite manageable," said Hindle. "And the medium-term payoffs will be enormous. The money going into a subsidy will go into things that benefit the poor, especially through services."

The ones being hit the most will probably be those who make money

on smuggling diesel into neighboring countries. According to Hindle, subsidies keep the price of diesel in Yemen approximately 75% lower than in Saudi Arabia and Oman. "Subsidies don't support the poor," said Ghaleb. "They support the people who smuggle diesel, and they will suffer the most because they will lose their incentive to sell. The poor will not be affected very much because what will be included in the reform package will offset a small increase on general products from the increase in transportation and the increase of prices from a sales tax."

While Hindle believes that negative results on prices coming from a new sales tax and the reduction of subsidies will be minimal and can be easily absorbed by the Yemeni market, he is concerned about when the next big steps in economic reform will be implemented.

"Now is the best time," said Hindle. "The government has a wonderful opportunity to restart economic reform. Security in the country has improved significantly, political reform is going well and civil service reform has already begun. It has financial strength and flexibility derived from strong oil royalties, and it has improved its reputation in the international community that can generate additional resources from donor countries. If the government acts now, it will be able to improve the lives of the Yemeni people. But the longer it waits, the more difficult it will become."

**Saleh to go to Saudi Arabia**

On Saturday, Saleh received a written message from Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, according to official media in Yemen, about the "relationship between the two brotherly countries," as well as "the question of the Jeddah Border Treaty implementation" and the demarcation process" run by the German company Hansa Luftbild.

The message also referred to the "cooperation between the two countries, mainly in the field of security." Saleh stressed during his meeting with the Saudi Minister of State Musa'ed al-Ayban who conveyed the message that "security of the Saudi Arabia King-

dom concerns Yemen and vice versa."

**Satar denies terror link**

Murphy testified that after Sa'atar left the U.S., he flew to Milan to meet "the No. 1 operative for Al Qaeda in Italy," according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Kelly Moore.

Furthermore, sources have told The Yemen Times that a couple of months ago, Sa'atar received Saudi Rials 500,000 (approx YR 25 million) from the Mecca Welfare Association, which he represents in Yemen. He then distributed the amount to residents in districts in Mareb where Islah had won in the last parliamentary elections.

Sa'atar denied that he was in any means involved in raising or transferring money for terrorist operatives adding in his speech to al-Sahwanet that "it seems that charitable work would be victimized due to the exploitation of some terrorist groups for charitable work."

He added that he would continue mobilizing and raising money for charitable purposes and that nobody can stop him from doing that because "we trust our goals and means." He observed that there are many charitable associations in the US and that no one has accused them of having links to terrorism.

He said that the US bases its charges for him on his preaching in Italy where he criticized the US policy and the Jews.

"My criticism and opposition for the US support to the Zionist aggression in Palestine is a religion for me. I worship God in working against terrorism and injustice that the Palestinian people are going through, and I do not hide that at all."

In January of last year, sheikh Mohammed al-Mouyad, another leading member of the Islah party, was arrested in Germany for the same charge.

He was turned over late last year, along with his companion Mohammed Zayed, to the US authorities which accuse al-Mouyad of having supplied \$20-million, recruits and weapons to Osama bin Laden in the years leading up to the Sept. 11 attacks.

If convicted in the United States, Al-Mouyad would face up to 60 years in prison. Zayed, 29, would face 30 years

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**Vital Yemeni tourist site needs care**

In the area between Hadramot and Shabwa, the Bir Ali area, there is a natural tourist site resulting from a volcanic mountain, which has crater surrounded by green trees.

This has given the site a beautiful picture and tourist attraction for tourists to go and visit.

The ascending way to the mountain summit is very steep and rugged and that makes it difficult for tourists to reach.

The said site is in dire need of care by tourist authorities, such as building stone stairways to facilitate tourists.

We wonder, where are the efforts of the fund for supporting tourism for paying attention to this site and other similar ones?

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## Symposium on economic press in Yemen

By RIDHWAN AL-SAQQA  
ADEN BUREAU CHIEF

Minister of information Hussein Dhaif al-Awadhi and Aden governor Yahya al-Shuaibi on Saturday opened at Aden Hotel a symposium on the economic press in Yemen, organised by the Institute for Information Training and Qualification in cooperation with 14 October Establishment for Press, Printing and Publication.

Taking part in the symposium were 30 of economic, media and academic cadres.

The participants discussed seven working papers on topics related to the present situation of economic press, the

relationship of the private sector and economic press, the extent of economic press spread and effect and economic press in the Yemeni trade and economic capital.

The holding of this first such symposium comes within the frame of the country's activities on the occasion of declaring Sana'a capital of Arab culture 2004.

At the opening session the minister of information expressed his happiness for taking part in the symposium, stressing the importance of the event especially as it tackled the topic of economic activity.

He pointed to the development in information technology and its reflection

on development of economic press, indicating that information in Yemen has become free and that there was no objection against criticizing the government, provided it should be constructive and objective.

The minister said while he was in Aden he would meet Aden media men and acquaint himself with their problems and conditions.

Other speakers at the symposium were the governor deputy Abdulkareem al-Shaif and chairman of the board of directors of 14 October Establishment Ibrahim al-Kaaf who expressed the extent of importance of increasing the press activity in the economic field.

## SabaFon links up with Microsoft

FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

SabaFon GSM Company has recently signed an Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft, the world's largest software company, covering software and support for 600 desktops.

According to this agreement, Microsoft will provide the company with the latest, legal versions of Microsoft software, and entitles them to unlimited product support from Microsoft's Arabic-language service engineers.

Apart from that and under the terms of the Enterprise Agreement, SabaFon is automatically entitled to any upgrades to the software it has purchased that are released during the period of the agreement, as part of the Software Assurance scheme.

"We recognized that we needed a technology partner who would provide us with both the tools to do our job well, as well as supporting and developing those technologies we deployed as the industry moved forwards, which is why we chose to sign an Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft," said Tarik Al Haidary, CEO of SabaFon.

"Like the telecoms industry, technology is a fast paced journey, and we realized that we could harness Microsoft technology to not just help us in the present, but to be a partner for the future," Al Haidary added.

SabaFon will also be entitled to



Nidal M. Karyouti, CFO of SabaFon, Tarik Al-Haidary, CEO, Ahmad Waheed, Partner Account Manager, Microsoft South Gulf, Majdi Al Masri, General Manager, Al Salam Establishment, Hani Hassan Amer, IT Director, SabaFon.

have 20 days of full training for its staff on the applications side plus additional training to develop staff knowledge on the operating system.

"This Enterprise Agreement is a step forward for the software industry in Yemen," said Majdi Al-Masri, General Manager, Al-Salam Establishment - I.T. Division.

"We recognize that a strong partnership with Microsoft will assist us to keep the leadership in the IT field in Yemen, as we work with more customers to maximize the value of Enterprise Agreements. We intend to champion the benefits of agreements such as this to build a strong enterprise segment in the country."

The deal also includes a TechNet

subscription, targeted to the IT department to ensure that they have an outlet for sharing ideas and queries, as well as monitoring industry trends and accessing technical briefings.

"We're delighted to be working with SabaFon to support them in their quest to build a telecommunications company that will enable local development as well as delivering great value both in Yemen and potentially across the region," said Abdullatif Al Mulla, GM, Microsoft South Gulf.

"Using Microsoft applications will allow them to save time, costs and concern as they can have confidence in the Enterprise Agreement that covers a wide range of services on top of the software itself."

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# Iraq insurgents free prisoners in raid, 22 dead

FALLUJA, Iraq, Feb 14 (Reuters) - Dozens of anti-American insurgents stormed Iraqi security compounds in the volatile town of Falluja on Saturday in a bold attack that left at least 22 people dead and freed a number of prisoners.

Falluja police chief Aboud al-Dulaimi said about 70 guerrillas firing rockets, mortars and machineguns launched the closely coordinated attack on a police headquarters as well as on a compound for the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (ICDC) and the mayor's office.

Police and hospital officials said 14 policemen, four insurgents and four civilians were killed in the attack, the latest in a series of assaults on Iraqi security forces seen by the insurgents as supporting the U.S. occupation.

At least 35 others were wounded in the attack.

An Iraqi police officer said the guerrillas outgunned the policemen at the station. A government building situated several hundred metres (yards) away was assaulted at the same time.

"Unknown men fired mortars, explosives and light machineguns from four directions. Their weapons were more powerful than our Kalashnikovs," said police officer Farazan Abu Issa, who was outside the police station when it was attacked.

The attack signalled a growing boldness on the part of insurgents fighting U.S.-led forces and Iraqis they regard as supporting the occupiers.

On Thursday, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East, General John Abizaid, narrowly escaped an assault on his convoy at the attacked ICDC compound in Falluja, located some 50 km (32 miles) west of Baghdad in what is known as the "Sunni Triangle" centre of resistance to U.S. forces.

U.S. planes circled overhead and dropped heat balloons to divert heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles, witnesses said.

Guerrillas have killed more than 600 security and police forces since April in an attempt to undermine U.S. efforts to prepare Iraqis to take over security of the country.

bloody week



A wounded Iraqi policeman is helped by his son in the hospital in the town of Falluja, some 60 km east from the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Feb. 14. Dozens of American insurgents stormed Iraqi security compounds in the volatile town of Falluja on Saturday in a bold attack that left at least 22 people dead and freed a number of prisoners. REUTERS

The latest violence in Falluja came during one of the bloodiest weeks since U.S.-led forces toppled former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein on April 9.

Two suicide bombs have killed at least 100 Iraqis. Guerrilla ambushes have also claimed the lives of three U.S. soldiers.

Saddam loyalists and foreign fighters are trying to discourage Iraqis from

supporting occupation forces but many keep signing up for the police and new army to earn a living.

But U.S. troops remain a primary target in a guerrilla war that could have broad political implications for President George W. Bush as he faces presidential elections in November.

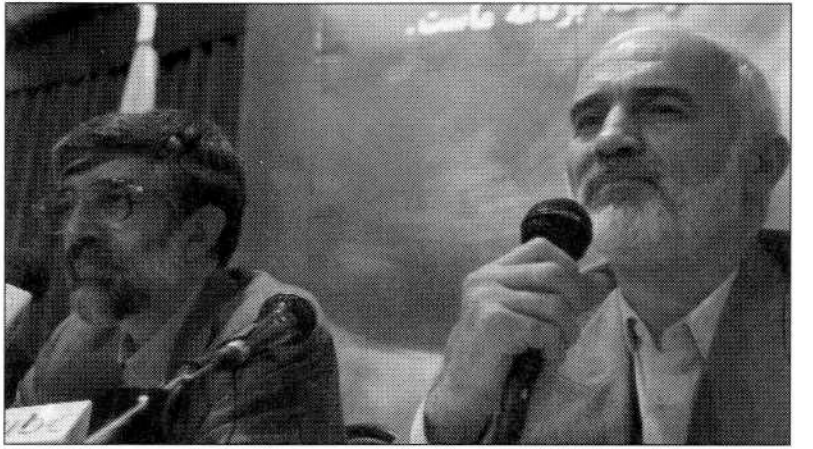
A U.S. military policeman was killed in a Baghdad suburb on Thursday

night, the 375th American soldier to die in combat since the United States and its allies invaded Iraq in March.

While the violence continues almost a year after U.S.-led invasion, diplomatic efforts are under way to forge a stable post-occupation political order.

The United States intends to hand over sovereignty to a transitional Iraqi administration by the beginning of July.

# Iranian conservatives say vote not rigged



Conservative Parliamentary candidates Ahmad Tavakoli (R) speaks at a press conference in Tehran Feb. 14. A conservative Iranian political group expected to fare well in next week's parliamentary election dismissed accusations that the vote has been rigged to force reformists out of the assembly. REUTERS

TEHRAN, Feb 14 (Reuters) - A conservative Iranian political group expected to fare well in next week's parliamentary election on Saturday dismissed accusations that the vote has been rigged to force reformists out of the assembly.

Several prominent reformist parties are boycotting the February 20 poll, arguing that it will be unfair due to the disqualification by an unelected hard-line watchdog of more than 2,500 mostly reformists candidates.

But members of the newly-formed Alliance for the Advancement of Islamic Iran (AAII), which is putting forward candidates for Tehran's 30 parliamentary seats, defended the candidate bans.

"The disqualifications were carried out within the framework of our law," said AAII candidate Gholamali Hadadadel.

"Therefore, we don't think this is an unfair election," Hadadadel, who is leader of the minority conservative faction in the outgoing parliament, told a news conference.

Analysts say conservatives, who in contrast with reformists reject any watering down of the Islamic political system imposed after the 1979 Islamic revolution, stand to benefit from the candidate bans and reformist election

boycotts.

Conservatives, who can count on a hardcore of loyal support, will also likely profit from the expected low turnout among Iran's 46 million eligible voters, many of whom have grown disillusioned with Khatami's inability to overcome stiff headline resistance to his reformist agenda.

## Conservative comeback

Turnout plunged to just 11 percent in Tehran in city council elections last February, allowing conservatives to sweep reformists out of the council altogether — a result which AAII members said was a model for next week's poll.

"The parliamentary vote is the second step after the city council elections that our society is taking," Hadadadel said.

The new Tehran city council has vowed to turn the Iranian capital into a "model Islamic city" and has converted several social and recreational centres into mosques.

Many analysts expect the conservatives' political comeback to continue when Khatami's second term ends in mid-2005. Conservatives already dominate powerful unelected bodies in Iran such as the judiciary, armed forces and Guardian Council.

# Iraq joins talks with neighbours

KUWAIT, Feb 14 (Reuters) - Iraq's Governing Council sent its foreign minister to talks with six neighbouring states for the first time on Saturday, overcoming differences which kept him away from similar discussions last year.

"This is an important meeting and there are many ways in which the neighbouring states can help us in establishing security and stability, and in reconstruction," Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari told Kuwaiti daily al-Qabas in an interview.

"We will certainly listen to their fears and worries."

Zebari failed to attend a similar meeting in Damascus in November after receiving only a last-minute invitation from Syria which was interpreted as a snub.

Syria strongly opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq and was slow to offer any recognition of the U.S.-backed Governing Council in postwar Iraq.

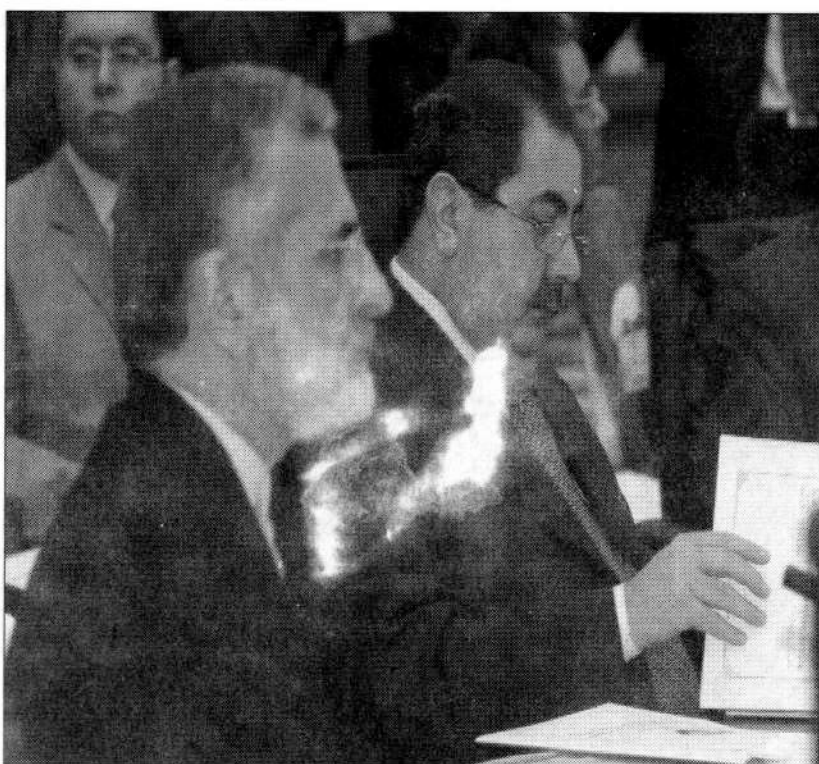
Also in Kuwait for the talks were the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, Turkey and Iran. The Jordanian foreign minister was due to join the meeting later on Saturday. Egypt and Bahrain, although not bordering Iraq, are also attending.

They will discuss Iraq's future political system and the timetable for the transfer of power from the U.S. occupation forces to the Iraqis.

One important issue is Iraq's fear of cross-border infiltration by foreign guerrillas to fight U.S.-led forces.

Iraq hopes its neighbours will take "decisive and serious measures to impose tight security on the borders with Iraq", Zebari told the meeting.

As the conference opened in Kuwait, dozens of guerrillas attacked security compounds in Falluja in Iraq, freeing prisoners. The attacks, in which 22 people died, signalled growing boldness on



Iraqi interim Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari (R) sits next to Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi during talks with six neighbouring of Iraq's neighbouring states in Kuwait on Feb. 13. REUTERS

the part of insurgents.

At the conference venue, the Sheraton hotel, Iraq's flag fluttered in the Kuwait sky on Saturday for the first time since its 1990 invasion of its tiny neighbour.

Zebari has said the Governing Council would be willing to sign formal guarantees of Kuwait's sovereignty and independence, recognising the border between the two states.

Also attending the talks is Lakhdar Brahimi, an adviser to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan who went to Iraq to judge the feasibility of holding elections. His aide has ruled out holding polls before U.S. authorities hand power to

Iraqis in June.

Iraq, Zebari said, hoped for the return of the United Nations, with all its agencies, to Iraq.

"We are willing to provide the suitable and favourable conditions for it to practise its work and activities in peace and security," he added in his speech.

Likely to be covered in the talks are fears of a break-up of Iraq, especially in its Kurdish north. Three of Iraq's neighbours, Syria, Turkey and Iran, have Kurdish minorities of their own. "Dividing Iraq is tantamount to sacrilege," said Issa Darwish, Syria's deputy foreign minister.

# Palestinian PM urges US to reject Sharon Gaza plan

RAMALLAH, West Bank, Feb 14 (Reuters) - Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei urged the United States on Saturday not to support a unilateral Israeli proposal to uproot most Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip.

"It will be regrettable if the American administration supports unilateral steps," Qurei told reporters in the West Bank city of Ramallah after a Palestinian cabinet session. He said he would be "worried and upset" by such a decision.

Opinion polls show that the surprise proposal by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to remove 17 of the 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip has overwhelming support among Israelis.

But Palestinian officials have said they fear Sharon is planning to remove settlements from Gaza only to strengthen other settlements in the West Bank. Palestinians want all Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West Bank to be dismantled.

Diplomats said on Friday that Washington would send envoys to Israel next week for talks before deciding whether to back Sharon's settlement proposal — part of a go-it-alone plan he has vowed to impose on the Palestinians if a U.S.-backed peace "road map" remains stalled.

Sharon, a godfather of settlement-building on land Israel occupied in the 1967 Middle East War, has made clear his unilateral plan would leave Palestinians with less territory than they are seeking for a state.

U.S. officials have commented favourably on the idea of uprooting settlements but have stopped short of embracing Sharon's unilateral approach for fear that it would bury the already battered "road map".

## WEST BANK BARRIER

The high-level U.S. delegation visiting Israel next week will seek Israel's commitment to the "road map", a series of steps towards a negotiated peace deal.

It is also expected to ask Sharon to change the route of a West Bank barrier Israel is building so that it annexes less of the land Palestinians want for a future state.

Israel says the line of metal fencing and concrete walls is meant to stop suicide bombers and has already thwarted dozens of attacks. Palestinians condemn the project as a land grab.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said on Friday that Washington wanted a negotiated final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.

"But some Israeli moves to disengage by removing settlements could reduce friction between Israelis and Palestinians, improve Palestinian freedom of movement and address some of Israel's responsibilities in moving ahead toward the vision described by the president in his June 24, 2002 speech,"



Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei talks during a news conference in the West Bank city of Ramallah Feb. 14. The United States will send envoys next week to push Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for changes in Israel's West Bank barrier and help decide whether to back his plan to uproot Gaza settlements, diplomats said on Friday. REUTERS

McClellan said.

Qurei, who took office three months ago, said Palestinian and Israeli officials would meet on Sunday to prepare for a long-awaited summit between Sharon and himself.

"That meeting will take place if Sunday's meeting produces positive results", he said.

Palestinians want Israel to dismantle all Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. The international community regards Jewish settlements as illegal, but Israel disputes that.



## Zimbabwe imposes tough new anti-graft regulations

HARARE, Feb 14 (Reuters) - Zimbabwe has imposed anti-graft regulations allowing police to hold people suspected of economic crimes for up to seven days, the state-run Herald newspaper reported on Saturday.

The regulations would "facilitate the investigation and prosecution of crimes affecting the economic interests of Zimbabwe", it said.

President Robert Mugabe's government recently launched an anti-corruption blitz pledging to get tough on fraud and graft.

The Herald said the new regulations, which took effect on Friday, allowed police to detain suspected economic criminals for up to seven days. No judge could overrule the detention "solely on the basis that there are no prima facie grounds for the charge", it said.

The law covers people charged from corruption and money laundering to illegal dealing in gold or precious stones and unauthorised trade in food products controlled by the state Grain Marketing Board.

Courts would have powers to permit a further 21 days of detention if they believed the charges were founded, the Herald said.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) said the new regulations violated Zimbabwe's constitution by removing the right to a fair hearing within a reasonable time.

"We view these regulations not only as a very serious breach of the Zimbabwean constitution, but also a cynical attempt to deceive the Zimbabwean electorate," said David Coltart, MDC secretary for legal and parliamentary affairs.

"Zimbabweans should not be fooled by any claims that this legislation is necessary to combat crime," he said in a statement.

Police have recently arrested a number of businessmen accused of corruption, including one senior member of ZANU-PF.

# South Korea, China take positions on North Korea

SEOUL, Feb 14 (Reuters) - South Korean and Chinese officials met on Saturday to coordinate their positions ahead of six-way talks aimed at breaking a nearly 18-month impasse over North Korea's nuclear programme, Seoul's foreign ministry said.

China, the largest provider of food and oil to North Korea, is hosting a second round of six-way talks in Beijing beginning on February 25 that also includes the two Koreas, Japan, Russia and the United States.

"Both sides exchanged opinions in depth on all possible issues that can be raised at the next talks and shared the same view on many issues," Cho Taeyong, director general of a task force on the North Korean nuclear issue, told reporters.

"The two sides also agreed to make efforts to make the next talks successful...and to closely cooperate and exchange views until the actual meeting was held," Cho said.



South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon (R) greets Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the former's office in Seoul Feb. 14. Wang Yi arrived in Seoul on Friday for a three-day visit for talks with senior South Korean officials on North Korean issues ahead of the six-way talks later this month. REUTERS

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Beijing's point man on North Korean affairs, will meet South Korean officials again on Sunday for further discussions.

A first round of talks in Beijing last August ended with little progress.

North Korea wants the United States to provide free oil shipments, end economic sanctions, provide security guarantees and remove Pyongyang from the U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism.

The United States wants North Korea first to commit to dismantling its nuclear programmes and has offered to show how it would guarantee not to attack the state President George W.

Bush called part of an "axis of evil" with Iran and pre-war Iraq.

The North Korean nuclear crisis began in October 2002 when the United States said Pyongyang had admitted to pursuing a covert nuclear weapons programme.

## South African pop star killed in crime shock

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 14 (Reuters) - A top South African pop star was shot and killed in a road-rage incident on Saturday, the latest shock for a country with one of the highest crime rates in the world.

Police said 32-year-old Tebogo Madingoane, a member of the chart-topping group Mafikizolo, was shot after an altercation with another driver in the township of Soweto outside Johannesburg.

A police spokesman said Madingoane was pronounced dead

on arrival in hospital and a suspect had been arrested.

Mafikizolo is one of South Africa's most popular groups specialising in "kwaito", a local brand of hip hop rooted in the country's sprawling black townships.

The trio won the best African pop and best group awards at the 2003 South African Music Association Awards and earned rave reviews in other African countries as well as the United States and Britain.

South Africa's high level of violent crime has been highlighted in the past week by several horrific murders, including one in which a farmworker was allegedly assaulted and fed to lions, possibly alive, and another in which four members of a family were kidnapped and brutally slain.

South Africa's murder rate has actually fallen over the past decade, partly because of a sharp decline in political violence, but is still about eight times the overall U.S. level.

## Africa to review governance of 16 nations by 2006

KIGALI, Feb 14 (Reuters) - African leaders trying to fight poverty by better governance plan "peer reviews" of 16 nations by March 2006 to boost the image of a continent known more for war and disease, documents obtained by Reuters on Saturday show.

Peer review is a crucial component of Africa's economic rescue plan, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and analysts say it is keenly watched by both Africans and international donors to gauge the continent's seriousness.

Described by its architects as a long-term project rather than a quick-fix, NEPAD promises improved political and economic management in return for increased foreign aid and trade for the world's poorest continent.

"The (peer review) panel is keen to ensure that all 16 participating countries are reviewed by March 2006," says a document circulated to delegates at a summit in Rwanda of nine African heads of state.

"The rationale of this strategy is that all participating countries should be reviewed in a limited period if the (peer review) is to be an effective learning process among participating countries."

The plan by African leaders to monitor each other's performance on human rights, corruption, and democracy is expected to have cost \$13.8 million by 2006, with most funding coming from African countries, the documents show.

Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya and Mauritius will be the first nations to be scrutinised, starting from April.

Next up, from 2005, are Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Ethiopia, Mali, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Cameroon, Gabon, and the Cote d'Ivoire.

Leaders at the summit, including South African President Thabo Mbeki, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and Senegal's Abdoulaye Wade urged member nations of the 53-member African Union to contribute funds for the peer review.

## Taiwan presidential candidates spar in TV debate

TAIPEI, Feb 14 (Reuters) - Taiwan's president accused his rival on Saturday of colluding with China as the two sparred in their first televised debate of an election campaign.

Lien Chan of the Nationalist Party challenged President Chen Shui-bian to provide proof for his accusations, but generally advocated a more moderate policy towards Beijing that focused on putting politics aside to foster booming trade ties.

China sees Taiwan as part of its territory and has threatened to attack if the island declares independence.

The political dispute has become a central focus of Taiwanese elections on March 20, with President Chen staking out an aggressive, anti-Beijing stance.

"It is very clear which candidate communist China prefers and which one it dislikes. It's not a secret," Chen said, wearing a dark suit and bright yellow polka dot tie for the debate, the first of its kind in Taiwan.

"The Chinese Communist Party and the Nationalist Party have held talks six times and the Nationalist Party did not win a single round," Chen said earlier in the 2-1/2 hour debate, referring to talks during the Nationalist administration.

"It's very clear that if the Communists want to pick a party to negotiate with, they will choose the Nationalists."

Beijing has refused to deal with

Chen or his pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) since he took office in 2000.

That has frustrated many businessmen hoping for closer ties, and pushed some voters towards Lien, who pledged to build stable ties across the Taiwan Strait if he is elected.

Most opinion polls give Lien a slim lead over Chen.

China has said it would not meddle in the election, although supporters of Lien had set up offices in the mainland to canvas votes from the one million Taiwan citizens who live there.

"We must build a peaceful cross-strait relationship. We should pursue the building of a framework that will ensure peace for at least 50 years," Lien said, in a dark suit and red tie.

A DRAW?

Analysts said the Nationalist candidate stood up fairly well in his first debate against the more seasoned Chen, a former lawyer. Chen was more provocative, while Lien was quite reserved — in keeping with their public personas.

But as neither announced new policies or clearly outwitted the other, their support ratings may be largely unaffected, they said. A second debate is slated for February 21.

"Lien Chan's strength is his administrative ability and the economy. The debate confirmed that general impression. What he conveyed today, we already knew," said Philip Yang, a



Nationalist Party Chairman Lien Chan gives a victory sign before Taiwan's first televised presidential debate on Feb. 14. The gesture also represents Lien's No. 2 draw number for the March 20 election. REUTERS

political science professor at National Taiwan University.

"Chen lacks confidence. He wants to give the impression that he's a commander because his track record is not that impressive."

Critics said Lien lost a chance to shed his wooden image, but some viewers praised him for being more dignified. A poll by TVBS cable station showed 41 percent of viewers thought Chen did better in the debate, and 38 percent saying Lien did better.

If the election were held today, the poll showed 43 percent would vote for Lien and 37 percent for Chen.

"(Chen's) performance was better," said Lee Chin-ye, a businessman watching in a noodle shop in Taipei. "The DPP has made many changes in Taiwan in the last four years."

Ahead of the debate, Chen and Lien came up with new campaign slogans using their candidate numbers. Chen, who drew No. 1 and whose name would appear atop the ballot, gave a thumbs up sign to reporters and said: "Taiwan first, reform first".

Lien held up two fingers in a sign of victory and said: "Second transfer of power, hopes for victory and reform".

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## Spanish judge hailed for Guantanamo extradition

MADRID, Feb 14 (Reuters) - A Spanish judge known for his tenacious prosecution of extremists received rare praise from a defence lawyer on Saturday for helping to free his client from the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo. High Court Judge Baltasar Garzon, an investigating magistrate sometimes accused of heavy-handed tactics by defence lawyers, helped bring Spanish-born Hamed Abderrahman Ahmed to Spain to face trial by seeking his extradition in December.

Abderrahman on Friday became the first Guantanamo prisoner handed over to a foreign country for prosecution, and Garzon is seeking the extradition of three others who are not Spanish. Garzon has charged Abderrahman along with Osama bin Laden and some 30 others with belonging to al Qaeda, the international network blamed for the September 11, 2001 hijacked plane attacks on the United States.

"In 32 years (as a lawyer) I never thought I would have to be pleased that a client of mine was accused with a serious offence," defence lawyer Javier Nart told a news conference.

"In addition to being accused of a serious offence he also has been converted into a human being again," Nart said.

Abderrahman was arrested by the Pakistani army in November 2001 and handed over to the U.S. military in Afghanistan before being sent to Guantanamo, where he was held as an "enemy combatant" without charges or access to a lawyer.

The suspect's sister, Nashiha Abderrahman, also thanked Garzon "because he allowed us to hug (my brother)".

But she added: "We'll be happier when Guantanamo no longer exists. The nightmare of my brother and my family is over but hundreds of people



**Nashisha Abderrahman (foreground) and Sodai Ali Hossain Kahalon (R), sister and mother of the Spanish prisoner Hamed Abderrahman Ahmed, the only Spaniard held by the United States in Guantanamo Bay, attend a news conference in Madrid Feb. 14, the day after Abderrahman was repatriated to Spain. Spanish High Court Judge Baltasar Garzon helped bring Spanish-born Hamed Abderrahman Ahmed to Spain to face trial by seeking his extradition in Dec. Abderrahman was arrested by the Pakistan army in Nov. 2001 and handed over to the U.S. military in Afghanistan before being sent to Guantanamo, where he was held as an "enemy combatant" without charges or access to a defence lawyer. Garzon has charged Abderrahman along with Osama bin Laden and some 30 others with belonging to al Qaeda, the international network blamed for the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.**

REUTERS

are still there."

Nart called Guantanamo a "gulag" where his client was held "like a caged animal". Guantanamo prisoners are held indefinitely and denied the rights afforded prisoners of war.

The defence lawyer also praised Garzon for ordering Abderrahman to undergo medical and psychological exams before being subjected to questioning in Spain. While in the hospital

he saw his family for the first time since his arrest.

On Friday, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld defended the indefinite detention of 650 foreigners at Guantanamo as a "security necessity". "They're enemy combatants and terrorists who are being detained for acts of war against our country. And that is why different rules have to apply."

## Joy, doubts greet breakthrough in Cyprus talks

NICOSIA, Feb 14 (Reuters) - Residents of Europe's last divided capital reacted with a mixture of relief and scepticism on Saturday to news that Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders had agreed ground rules for relaunching a drive to reunite Cyprus.

After days of haggling in New York, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced on Friday the resumption of peace talks aimed at ending the decades-old division of the Mediterranean island before it joins the European Union on May 1.

Annan said the talks, the latest in a long line of failed initiatives, would reopen in Nicosia on February 19. Both sides are under heavy international pressure to accept a U.N. plan which envisages a loose federation of the two ethnic zones.

Reaction in the far wealthier, internationally recognised Greek Cypriot south was more cautious than the Turkish Cypriot north, which hopes for an end to its international isolation.

"Neither side has eased up on the positions they built up for years, so I'm not sure how easy an agreement will be. But we decided to enter the boxing ring and this will be the knockout match," said Andreas Kataras, 50, a Greek Cypriot photographer. Annan has persuaded the two sides to allow him to fill in gaps where they fail to agree. The final plan will be put to the two peoples in a simultaneous referendum on April

21.

Greek Cypriot economics teacher Nicos Anastassiou, who helps to promote bicomunal contacts, said it would be more difficult to persuade his side of the island to back the Annan plan.

"I sense the referendum could pass quite easily among Turkish Cypriots. In the Greek Cypriot community there is more numbness, more comfort on all levels, and this may be perceived as a dramatic change in their lifestyle...but I do think that eventually a yes will come from both sides," he said.

### Closer contacts

He noted that the two sides had come into closer contact since the lifting of restrictions last year on movement across the U.N.-patrolled Green Line which snakes across the island.

The Greek Cypriots will join the EU in May whatever the outcome of the talks.

But failure to reach a deal could trigger more emigration from the Turkish Cypriot statelet, which is recognised only by Ankara and is under an international economic embargo, and also dash Turkey's own hopes of starting entry talks with the EU. "Everybody wants to join the EU. It is good negotiations have started," Ayhan Eken, a jeweller in Kyrenia, northern Cyprus, said. "We wanted a separate state but we have to accept the realities... This

is the price of peace."

Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper said the two sides, along with Annan, deserved to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

But Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos warned of some very difficult bargaining ahead.

Veteran Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş, widely blamed for the collapse of peace talks last year, is expected to insist on a maximum amount of autonomy for his community and on strict limits to the number of Greek Cypriots returning north.

The island has been split into Turkish and Greek zones since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded in response to a coup by militant Greek Cypriots seeking union with Greece.

Both supporters and opponents of the latest Annan proposals drew comfort from the fact that the communities would finally decide on the island's future, through the referendum.

"A final say on a settlement has been taken out of the hands of the politicians, who have contributed more than anyone else to the intractability of the problem, and given to the people," said the Cyprus Mail, a liberal Greek Cypriot daily. (Writing by Gareth Jones, editing by Ralph Boulton; Reuters Messaging: gareth.jones.reuters.com@reuters.net; Ankara newsroom, +90 312 459 9012)

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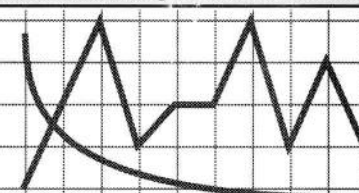
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## YT Business



*Will help create stock market*

# \$50 million worth of banking capital to merge



BY MAHYOUB  
AL-KAMALI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

**T**he Yemeni cabinet has recently approved the merging of four government and mixed sector banks into one bank.

It is expected that the volume of the government shares in the new bank, in addition to the share of partner from the private sector, will amount to \$50 million, along with shares to be sold through general contribution.

The new bank will support the national economy and meet efforts of economic and social development, as well serve the middle class.

The merged banks are the National Bank, the Reconstruction Bank, Agricultural Bank and Housing Bank.

The cabinet discussed a report on the importance of restructuring the commercial banks in the direction of increasing their capitals.

The cabinet gave recommendations to the Central Bank of Yemen for setting up necessary measures for the merger.

A report presented by the governor of the central bank was sent to the council of ministers, notifying that unified budgets of banks at the end of 2003 reached about YR 540 billion, compared to YR 442 billion at the end of 2002.

The Yemeni government intends to activate role of commercial banks in

order to expand their activities and encourage their merging, and also to surmount the debts they have.

The government also wants from those measures to enter into an all-out

dialogue with businessmen in the commercial banks sector to reach a common vision between the government, and the private sector for the achievement of development goals.

Tackling banking situations would also help the government speed the process of establishing a stock exchange market, to prevent stagnation of investment operations.



Central Bank of Yemen building

*Protecting ourselves, from ourselves*

## Yemen needs waste management plan

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

**A** 10-year waste management program costing an estimated \$200 million is what Yemen may need to clean up the country.

In the meantime, authorities are drawing up a national strategy for handling the country's dangerous waste, by building a database and information system, as the amount of waste is esti-

mated to be about 400,000 tons a year.

The strategy that international expert Nafeesa Abu al-Saud contributed, includes finding a national expertise in the fields of assessing and managing the waste, proceeding from decentralized administration, and enhancing the private sector, role as well as private societies, civil organizations and various companies.

It also includes the use of a technology to lessen the waste's danger and amount.

Among the essential components for the implementation of the strategy is raising the level of awareness and improving ways of dealing with waste.

Nafeesa points out that the strategy has four stages over ten years, at a cost of about \$200 million.

The first stage includes the implementation of basic activities of the system and the second contains evaluation of the present systems and carrying out experimental projects.

In the third stage the technical, eco-

nomical, institutional and social structures would be completed to include governorates where the quantities of dangerous waste reach 75%.

The fourth stage for implementing the plan in the rest of the governorates takes four years.

Yemen's waste includes industrial waste of 257,080 tons a year, health care waste of 47,987 tons, expired vehicle batteries, 284,473 batteries and expired insecticides estimated at 300 tons a year.



Kamaran natural preservation.

*Interview with Ahmed Thabet,  
GM of the International Bank of Yemen*

## Banking on a future with stable money in Yemen

**Q.** How do you evaluate the international Bank of Yemen's experience in the last duration? And can you tell us about the new services provided by the bank and its future in the country?

**A.** We have been doing quite well in the last decade. The International Bank of Yemen has recently implemented the Phone Banking, Automated Teller Machine services and we are going to provide systems for SMS services soon.

In February, we will launch the selling points system and in March we will start applying the internet banking system. These are services that the bank has implemented in order to be in line with the latest of the monetary markets.

All these services are created by the bank in order to make the electronic payments system and monetary operations a reality in this country, which in turn a fulfillment of the project initiated by Central Bank and being under study currently.

**Q.** How so you evaluate the Yemeni employee's performance and what are the most important training programs provided by your institution in order to enhance your employee's capacities?

**A.** We are proud to say that the management of the IBY is 100% local cadre and that 99.9% of the employees are Yemeni nationals also. We do care and take interest in creating good knowledgeable Yemeni cadres which are effective and productive, and for doing so we invested good capital through training and qualifying programs internally and externally through training courses abroad in the Arab, European and American institutions as well.

The Yemeni employee has proven his / her worth and excellence abilities in the training on all the modern electronic products and his / her capabilities and skills are clear and appreciated by us.

**Q.** Do you have any collateral for bad loans in the credit policies that you follow in the bank?

**A.** There are risks in every market and the credit policies in Yemen carry

their own risks like any other monetary market. But there are promising legal actions and good stability which would relatively facilitate the lending process in banks, and today the situation is much better than the past.

And we have defined our strategy in this aspect through giving loans to people with public and government jobs in return for their assigning their salaries and a guarantee of a colleague of theirs and this on our opinion is the best guarantee for getting our money back.

**Q.** How do you evaluate the Central Bank's policy dealing with other banks, the financial policies and the central bank's monetary role?

**A.** The Central Bank performs a leading role and is a pioneer in this field. It is considered the best in the Middle East, and could surely reach the level of the giant central banks in the capitals countries.

**Q.** What is your vision of the monetary development process?

**A.** As mentioned in the first question we have included many new modern and facilitating banking services and this is how we contribute in the automation process of the monetary system in Yemen. We are aiming at creating a modern, highly automated banking system in all our branches and by this we will be the most automated bank in the country and hope that our level and expertise will be able the most compete with any European or American bank.

**Q.** How do you view the investment process in Yemen, and are there any obstacles against it?

**A.** Investment in Yemen is quiet good. Yemen is a raw country in which there are great potentials and a good market. We are hoping for a bright future for Aden especially with the Free Zone project and we hope that this would bring back the glorious days of the economic capital of Yemen. And there are no real obstacles against the investment process in Yemen.

*UN contributes \$450,000*

## Labour information system to be created

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

**T**he United Nations is supporting Yemen in the second phase of a project called "Labour Market Information System," aimed at creating job opportunities.

An agreement was signed in Sana'a between the Yemeni government and the UNDP stipulating the implementation of the second phase.

The UNDP contribution is \$450,000 while the Yemeni government would contribute \$200,000.

The agreement mainly aims at developing strategies and certain goals for the creation of work opportunities and offering support in technical and vocational training based on the results achieved in the first stage of the project.

The agreement was signed by the Yemeni side by the minister of planning and international cooperation, and for the UN by James Rawley the UNDP representative in Sana'a.

Specialized sources expected that the project would contribute to support the government's efforts for reducing the proportion of poverty to 34.9% by the year 2005, by improving Yemen's

performance level in realizing sustainable human development.

The project's aims also establish a labour market information system and development a strategy of human development, that official plans undertake for curbing the negative impact resulting from price reforms.

### Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

as of February 14

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	184.2800	184.5100
Sterling Pound	344.3500	344.7800
Euro	233.6600	233.9500
Saudi Rial	49.1400	49.2000
Kuwaiti Dinar	625.2100	625.9900
UAE Dirhem	50.1700	50.2300
Egyptian Pound	29.9200	29.9500
Bahraini Dinar	488.7900	489.4000
Qatari Rial	0.6100	50.6700
Jordanian Dinar	259.9200	260.2400
Omani Rial	478.6800	479.2800
Swiss Franc	148.8000	148.9800
Swedish Crown	25.6300	25.6700
Japanese Yen	1.7475	1.7497

Source: Central Bank of Yemen



## Words of Wisdom



Many foreigners keep asking about the degree of freedom enjoyed by the press. They are confused because of different allegations. On the one hand, the authorities claim that the press is fully free. They point to the aggressive and critical reporting prevalent in the few independent and opposition newspapers.

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



## OUR OPINION

## Dialogue is needed

The recent symposium on dialogue between cultures and civilizations held in Sana'a is a clear indication that we are now aware of the priorities we need to tackle in order to resolve disputes and conflicts.

More than two and half years after the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington DC, the American administration was seen by many in the symposium to still lack the vision to start a dialogue: not with the terrorists who committed the act, but with regular Arabs who want to convey a message of protest and anger to the USA for its unprecedented support to Israel, occupying Palestine.

There is need to open up to each other and come to the same level where each would respect the opinion of the other.

The event held in Sana'a is a reminder that with peaceful talks and dialogue, everything can be achieved. This is not and should not contradict with the on-going war on terror. But dialogue and the war on terror need to go on simultaneously to achieve the best results.

The mighty US power is now on the verge of elections whose results are unpredictable. The world is mostly upset and disappointed with the way the George W. Bush's administration has dealt with the war on Iraq, and other decisions taken by the USA on a unilateral basis.

This is particularly what the rivals and competitors of Bush on the Democratic Party's side are saying: "We cannot stay isolated."

I recall a statement by John Kerry, the current front-runner in the presidential nomination for the Democrats. Kerry said that George W Bush had "the most inept, reckless, arrogant, ideological foreign policy in modern history."

The current US administration seemed to lack the commitment and initiative to start this dialogue with the Islamic world to try and understand why "they hate us?" as many Americans are still asking today.

There were much better alternatives for the Bush administration to save it from collapse in the upcoming elections, which so far seem to be heading Kerry's way.

The US administration can still seize the opportunity to extend a listening ear to the Arab world's plight, and why they have been disapproving of US policies for the last few years.

Germans, French, Europeans, Asians, Africans, and citizens of most countries of the world have come over to participate in this dialogue with their Arab counterparts.

Isn't it about time for the USA administration to feel that it is about time to do so too?

The Bush administration can take a courageous step in allowing this to happen.

It may still not be too late for Bush to convince his people that he is sincere in solving issues using peaceful means rather than war.

It may not be too late for him to survive next elections by this maneuver.

Or is it?

The Editor



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## U.S. committed to what's right

## Zarqawi vs democracy

BY JANE NOVAK  
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Terrorism has struck in Riyadh, Bali, New York, Kabul, Jakarta, and in Istanbul.

In the nine months since the toppling of Saddam's statue, al-Qaeda has been slaughtering Iraqis to protect Sunni Muslims from the scourge of democracy.

Al-Qaeda now faces an authentic coalition of the willing: 150,000 Iraqi security forces, 120,000 coalition soldiers, an Iraqi population that demands self-determination, and an American population that stands firm if bloody, in the face of scorn.

Iraqi officials and civilians have been executed by a series of searing suicide bombings. A letter from Musab al-Zarqawi, Bin Laden's close associate, was intercepted en route to Afghanistan. Zarqawi gives an update on al-Qaeda's status in Iraq. He reports: "We were involved in all the martyrdom operations."

Presumably these murders included that of Sergio Vieira de Mello and other UN workers, the 83 people shredded at the Ali mosque in Najaf, and many, many other innocent souls. Targeting the public is an acceptable tactic according to Zarqawi because "For those who are good, we will speed their trip to paradise, and the others, we will get rid of them." The Iraqis reject these tactics, the goals of al-Qaeda, and this

interpretation of Islam.

According to a recent Gallup poll, less than one half of one percent (0.3) of Iraqis prefer a conservative Islamic theocracy as under the former Taliban in Afghanistan. Twenty-nine percent prefer a system based on Sharia with consultation and public consensus. Thirty-nine percent prefer a multiparty parliamentary system.

Iraqis are fighting to protect Iraq and Islam from al-Qaeda. Iraqis work in the security services to protect their country, their religion and their neighbors. Zarqawi says this is because "army and police (are) connected by lineage, blood and appearance to the people of the region."

"Family ties, it seems, discourage indiscriminate shattering of the local population. Zarqawi is determined nonetheless that "Souls will perish and blood will be spilled."

Zarqawi laments that he and his group have not been successful provoking a wide jihad in Iraq: "Our field of movement is shrinking and the grip around the throat of the Mujahidin has begun to tighten." Our future is becoming frightening.

There is no popular support and the Iraqi people he says "will not let you make their homes a base for operations. People who will 'are very rare, rarer than red sulfur.'"

This rejection of jihad and terrorism, the "splitting the regular Sunni from the Mujahidin," Zarqawi blames on the Governing Council and the Americans, and not on the inherent humanity of the

Sunnis. Even under occupation, Iraqis reject al-Qaeda.

Zarqawi observes that numerous deaths have not shaken the will of the US military, the US president, or the majority of the American people: "America" has no intention of leaving, no matter how wounded or bloody it becomes. "He calls for a new strategy beyond attacking coalition soldiers, civil leaders and the public: civil war."

The murder of Muslims is deemed necessary: "Targeting (the Shi'a) will make them show their rage against the Sunnis. 'A rare compliment, Zarqawi believes 'the Shi'a are a greater danger' than the Americans. The Kurds, 'a pain and a thorn' will come last."

This civil war must come before "the sons of this land will be the authority. This is democracy, we will have no pretext."

When, after all this death and destruction, democracy prevails, Zarqawi plans to leave Iraq and try again in another country: "If, god forbid, the government is successful and takes control of the country, we will just have to pack up and go somewhere else again."

And the whole world is at risk of a new neighbor. Much despised, America remains resolved on al-Qaeda's destruction and in defense of Iraq, humanity and Islam.

Jane Novak has published articles in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Iraq, and the United States.

## Law of jungle prevalent

## Don't forget Somalia

BY DR. TALIB ALI YUSOF  
FOR YEMEN TIMES

Somalia, historically one of the biggest countries of West Africa, saw many merchants and traders from India and the Arabian Peninsula.

For many years the Somalis fought against colonialism, and on July 1, 1960 Somalia became an independent state. For 30 years Somalia was progressive in agriculture, livestock fishery, industry and building, and the capital Mogadishu became a new crown.

But in 1990 a heavy civil war began in Somalia. It became one of the failed nations of the 21st century, when Somalia turned into a lawless land, with outside clan militias traumatizing the one of most fertile economically self-sufficient regions of the country.

The civil war coupled with land expansion policy of tribes from the central region has caused the death of over

100,000 innocent people.

In the last 12 years, the country has experienced one of the worst terrors of human kind. The law of the jungle has become part of normal daily life.

The massacre, looting, raping and enslaving become practically routine in the ordinary life of the people. The world has abandoned Somalia after so-called Operation Restore Hope led by the United States.

In October 1993, the United States decided to pull out of Somalia after 18 of its Rangers were killed. Their plan was to restore the peaceful flow of humanitarian relief to those areas of Somalia most affected.

The United States, along with the international community and private organizations, were to deliver humanitarian relief to those areas of Somalia severely hampered by the lack of governmental authority, in particular by armed bandits who made it a habit to steal relief and commodities for their

own benefits.

As a struggling nation, Somalia has the potential to be the center of international terror. With the longest unguarded coast lines in Africa the country will remain a suitable operative center of the local and international Mafia.

Regardless of whether those is the presence of terror organization in Somalia or not, the United States and the international community should intervene in Somalia to help relief the country of its present misery.

The majority of Somalis still retain the memories of the 1992 mission that ended without achieving peace and stability in the country. It is therefore important that the international community should help the Somali people.

The world should be aware that there is no group that can claim leadership of the country, and thus all the factions and militia groups should be forced to lay down their arms, so a broad-based national government be formed.

## Letters to the Editor

## A lost people

At the beginning of 1990, there appeared press releases in the well-known newspapers of the world declaring "Fabled Lost Arabian city found", "Arabian city of legend found", "The Atlantis of the Sands, Ubar".

What rendered this archaeological find more intriguing was the fact that this city was also referred to in the Qur'an. Many people who, since then, thought that 'Ad recounted in the Qur'an were a legend or that their location could never be found, could not conceal their astonishment at this discovery.

The discovery of this city, which was only mentioned in oral stories of Bedouins, awoke great interest and curiosity. Well, what was it that proved this city to be the city of the people of 'Ad mentioned in the Qur'an?

Right from the moment remains started to be unearthed, it was understood that this ruined city belonged to 'Ad and of Iram's pillars mentioned in the Qur'an, because among the structures unearthed were the towers particularly referred to in the Qur'an.

A member of the research team leading the excavation,

Dr. Zarins, said that since the towers were alleged to be the distinctive feature of Ubar, and since Iram was mentioned as having towers or pillars, this then was the strongest proof so far that the site they had unearthed was Iram, the city of 'Ad described in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an mentions Iram as follows: Seest thou not how they Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people).- Of the (city of) Iram, with lofty pillars, the like of which were not produced in (all) the land? (The Holy Qur'an: Surat al-Fajr, 6-8) 1. Ubar could only be seen from space before excavations were made. 2. A city 12 meters below the sands was uncovered by excavations.

For additional information, note The People of 'Ad and Ubar Lost City of Arabia (PBS).

Abdulaslam Hidarh  
kbcc@yahoo.com  
sanaalyemen@aol.com

## I was shocked

As I was reading your recent headline, I was shocked what the Saudi prince had to say.

We really don't need the gulf cooperation. We have everything in Yemen, except that we Yemenis are very lazy. We like to build other coun-

tries and not Yemen, because we are not united.

Yemen has the best location, land, sea, and natural resources.

We need to a club to be called the (Yemen improvement club) for the people who want to improve Yemen and to see it shine like bright star and rise to the world top.

I want to see the 2 gardens back and the best tourist location and where history start and where the first skyscraper was built from dust.

Visit this location for more information:

http://www.islamiccity.com/science/ubar

We have long history but we are not working hard to improve it and lack of education.

Abdulaslam Hidarh  
sanaalyemen@aol.com

## It's the Prince's problem

What Prince Naif believes in is his problem. It is up to others who are of higher status in the Gulf States who have the final word.

Naif is only a sanctioner and not a decision maker. He can keep blowing in a hole balloon. Yemen does need to join the Council equally as much as the Gulf States them-

selves need Yemen to be a partner.

It is mutual need and not one-sided at all. We should better leave it at that since the Gulf States themselves are not united or least to say cooperating with each other. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to express our views.

Hussain Aghbari  
ceny95@hotmail.com

## About Megan's thoughts on Nadia

Dear Megan, Where is your head?

Have you even read "Sold" and "Without Mercy"? How can you believe that Nadia is happy with her life and her husband?

She was sold by her father at such a young age. She was raped and had children as a result.

She is owned by a man that has no respect for either her or her family. Would you like to have your babies on a cold stone floor, with no family or the necessary medical intervention?

Wake up and join the real world. Nadia is a British citizen, and as such, should be free to return to England in her own right.

Lorraine McNeil Email  
rya@iprimus.com.au

## COMMON SENSE



By Hassan Al-Haifi

## The real anti-thesis of Islam

One is bound to be awestruck by the craving for blood shown by those who have taken it upon themselves to supposedly take up the banner of vigilant advocacy for Islamic causes. From an academic standpoint, most of these misguided insurgents and even their leaders are neither scholastically qualified to render any meaningful interpretation of Islam, nor culturally in tune with the real fundamental principles of civilized Islamic practice, behavior and Jihad. To date, it is regrettable that their activities, on top of being excessively bloody, reckless and simply unacceptable from an Islamic perspective have actually been counterproductive in advancing the cause of Islam or in serving the aspirations of Moslems, let alone upholding the rights of any of the Moslem constituencies, in which they operate. Nevertheless, not one day passes nowadays without having to learn of a new gory bomb attack unleashed by "Islamic" militants, randomly carried out almost for the simple reason of spilling blood, in a senseless manner that defies logical comprehension. It is really pathetic to see so many young men being goaded to such frantic and practically fruitless massacres, after having been reared in special "Moslem Institutes", "Madrasas", from their very early ages to prepare themselves to unquestionably abide by their mentors' orders to sacrifice their lives by the wanton shedding of blood of mostly innocent folk, most of whom are now turning out to be members of Moslem communities within which they unleash their mentors' sadistic cravings.

The almost daily carnages we are now bearing witness to in Iraq have turned a legitimate right of resistance to an inexcusable invasion and continuing occupation by the world superpower, under a frantic Administration and reclusive Zionists and American right wing establishment into an appalling bloodbath. The ironies of all this mayhem are, one, it was this illegitimate conquest that created the venue for all this sad bloodletting and two, the perpetrators of the latter are actually turning the Iraqi population into the pool of the victims of this alleged insurgency, which in no way serves any resistance effort. On the contrary, it only imposes a venue of terror among the poor Iraqi people, as if they haven't had enough terror, first under the Saddam regime, then under the bombardment of all the modern machinery of warfare that America can produce and now under this bloody mess by elements that wish to convince the world that this is for the good of the Iraqis, not to mention the several incidents of "mistakes" or getting carried away by the occupying forces, which have taken the lives of so many innocent people as well. This crazy bloody madness is no resistance. This is also not Islam, no matter how one looks at it, and the perpetrators shall be accountable to God Al-Mighty for every drop of innocent blood they spill. What a waste of young enthusiastic Moslems, who have been scientifically nurtured to even accept the bloodletting of their own brethren as sanctified and a magic passage to paradise. How naive can any leaders be to actually think that they can get away with such monstrous displays of wanton disregard for the sanctity of the lives of innocent human life, especially that of their own brethren? This is sheer madness and a phenomenon of sadistic inclinations of moronic proportions, which Islam is completely innocent of and regards as an absolute violation of all the civility and humane principles embodied in the eternal message of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace of Allah be upon him).

On another note, these dubious "Islamic" activists have also unleashed their wanton hate and lust for blood against even the most genuine and effective Islamic leaders, whose faith and adherence is much more refined than whatever claim these mad bloody vigilantes have any right to ever claim. The recent murder of President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev of Chechnya is a clear case in point of the obvious disservice these militant vagabonds have served to perpetuate upon themselves. This former gentle and well versed Moslem scholar, contrary to the image the Russians and their puppets wish to disseminate, is a valiant member of the classical civilized resistance movement led by the late President Dudayev, which eventually resulted in a short lived independence of the Republic of Chechnya. Elements of this band of international seekers of blood for blood's sake, who wish to have us believe that they are faithful servants of Allah, when we know that God Al-Mighty has not failed in providing the proper standards for true faithful believers in waging Jihad, were actually the ones who intimidated the Russians to reoccupy Chechnya and wage their ongoing cruel war against the proud and dignified Chechen people. Elements of the same international gang also murdered Ahmed Shah Massoud, who once truly showed how effective and fruitful adherence to a civilized Jihad can be. These same elements have also admitted to having awakened the hate unleashed against Moslems by America and her allies, by unleashing a series of maniacal attacks against thousands of mostly innocent civilians in New York City and Washington, in an attack, we are sure that God Al-Mighty will never forgive, not only for the criminally mad nature of the attack, but because of the repercussions the attacks had on the rest of the Moslem World. It is time for the Moslems of the world to unite to render these kinds of clandestine and dubious non-Moslem movements as terminated, for all the maladies and divisiveness they have conjured up throughout the Moslem World. They are really no more than a "Fifth Column" that is serving the interests of the enemies of Islam in more ways than the latter could ever conjure up.



# WMD or not, what is the difference?

BY ADEL SAFTY  
FOR THE GULF NEWS

**U**nder the law, a freely made admission of the facts is the highest level of evidence. The Bush administration, the chief proponent of the war against Iraq, has admitted that its principal argument for the war might not be substantiated. Bush suggested that this did not matter. But, in fact, it does.

On January 23, David Kay, who led the American search for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, WMDs, resigned after nine months of a fruitless hunt. When asked about Iraqi WMDs, he said: "I don't think they existed."

A day later, he said Iraq had abandoned, in the 1990s, its production of WMDs in response to the UN inspection system. On January 24, US Secretary of State Colin Powell admitted that there may not be WMDs in Iraq. On January 26, the White House backed away from its assertions about Iraq's WMDs. This largely disposes of the emphatic allegations presented as facts about the Iraqi WMDs.

Other allegations are too self-evidently untrue to warrant any refutation. On July 14, 2003, Bush made the following incredible claim: "We gave

him (Saddam Hussain) a chance to allow the inspectors in, and he wouldn't let them in."

We know not only that Iraq let the inspectors in, but also that UN inspectors found no WMDs and that Baghdad tried until the very last minute, through backdoor channels, to avoid war by offering Washington oil concessions, military co-operation and even accommodation on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But to no avail.

Perhaps the most remarkable admission of the irrelevance of the WMDs claims came in the television interview Bush gave to ABC's Diane Sawyer on December 16, 2003. Before millions of viewers, Sawyer listed the numerous allegations presented as facts about Iraq's WMDs.

She said people were asking questions about allegations "stated as a hard fact, that there were weapons of mass destruction, as opposed to the possibility that he (Saddam) could move to acquire those weapons still."

Bush said: "So what's the difference?" The difference is that a legally weak argument for the war has now become indefensible. Bush's principal argument for the war was that Saddam possessed large quantities of WMDs and this posed a threat to international peace and security. The US and the

UK claimed the right to defend themselves, with or without the UN, against this threat to international peace.

The UN Charter recognises in Article 51 the inherent right of self-defence, but only "if an armed attack occurs" against a UN member state, and only until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Clearly, the war against Iraq could not be justified by reference to Article 51.

In customary law, it was an American Secretary of State (Daniel Webster) who made the classic and accepted formulation of the right to self-defence in the 19th century Caroline case, adopted by the Nuremberg Trials after World War II.

"There must be a necessity of self-defence," he said, "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation." Clearly this does not apply to whatever threat Iraq allegedly posed. In fact, Bush and Blair attempted nothing less than the unilateral creation of a new norm of international law: the Bush doctrine of preventive war.

But the international community, including the US government itself, rejected the doctrine of preventive war as a recipe for lawlessness and anar-

SKETCHED OPINION



Getting ready for the coming Arab summit

BY SAMER A.

## Reflections

By Yahya Al-Olf



What will become of it?

## On Iraq

**I** have been looking for a title for my column and found none better than "Reflections" as it shall for sure hold all the ideas and issues I might have in mind.

Nowadays, I have been thinking, how will the US pull itself from the Iraqi quagmire? It has promised the entire world that it shall establish democracy in Iraq and set Iraq as a role model for the rest in the Arab world.

Regardless of the American interests in bringing Iraq under its hegemony, how can it establish democracy in such a multi-ethnic and multi-doctrinal society, whose different denominations still divide even the elite?

You have the Shiite majority, who have never ceased complaining from Saddam's oppression, the small but strong Iraqi Sunnis who had to get by with Saddam and have always been the rulers, the Semitic Arab Christians who are in turn belonging to two branches the Caldanites and Assyrians and who do give Iraq its historical flair and a large part of them have fled abroad, the Arab Scripts Believers termed as Sabia'ah (Believing in a prophet named Saleh), the Turkish Community and a significant part of the Kurdish people, and last but not least the Marsh Arabs.

In my humble opinion, the rights of the above denominations should be protected in the constitution, while unfortunately, genuine democracy cannot for the time being be established because of the above and because Iraqis have not reached the level where they can accept stark democracy.

So in my opinion I think that America would do good if it gives the Shiites the right to choose their political leader every four years, and the same applies on the Sunnis and Kurds.

The three chosen leaders of the three major denominations are to be chosen every four years, and Iraq's presidency revolves periodically amongst the said triangle i.e. Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds.

The government shall be formed by the chosen president who shall each time appoint a different prime minister from amongst all the other denominations respectively.

I think that such a compromise solution shall be workable, because it is impossible to make the above-mentioned Iraqi multiplicity embrace western-like democracy all of a sudden. But, when the time is ripe, the Iraqis for themselves shall decide where to go from.

I know of many Iraqi intellectuals who have opted for a solution like this but who knows whether the US shall follow this path or revert to its old style of installing juntas.

On the whole, I wish that within a few years, the Americans shall succeed in fulfillment of their moral promises by establishing an exemplary Iraq that can be looked at with admiration by its neighbors, so that terrorists in the region shall lose fervor when they see a prosperous Iraq. And as a logical consequence, the Americans would enjoy peace and admiration of everybody, including the so-called terrorists.

# The real man

BY PAUL KRUGMAN

**T**o understand why questions about George Bush's time in the National Guard are legitimate, all you have to do is look at the federal budget published last week. No, not the lies, damned lies and statistics — the pictures.

By my count, this year's budget contains 27 glossy photos of Mr. Bush. We see the president in front of a giant American flag, in front of the Washington Monument, comforting an elderly woman in a wheelchair, helping a small child with his reading assignment, building a trail through the wilderness and, of course, eating turkey with the troops in Iraq. Somehow the art director neglected to include a photo of the president swimming across the Yangtze River.

It was not ever thus. Bill Clinton's budgets were illustrated with tables and charts, not with worshipful photos of the president being presidential.

The issue here goes beyond using the Government Printing Office to publish campaign brochures. In this budget, as in almost everything it does, the Bush administration tries to blur the line between reverence for the office of president and reverence for the person who currently holds that office.

Operation Flight Suit was only slightly more over the top than other Bush photo-ops, like the carefully staged picture that placed Mr. Bush's head in line with the stone faces on Mount Rushmore. The goal is to suggest that it's unpatriotic to criticize the president, and to use his heroic image to block any substantive discussion of his policies.

In fact, those 27 photos grace one of the four most dishonest budgets in the nation's history — the other three are the budgets released in 2001, 2002 and 2003. Just to give you a taste: remember how last year's budget contained no money for postwar Iraq — and how administration officials waited until after the tax cut had been passed to mention the small matter of \$87 billion in extra costs? Well, they've done it again: earlier this week the Army's chief of staff testified that the Iraq funds in the budget would cover expenses only through September.

But when administration officials are challenged about the blatant deceptions in their budgets — or, for that matter, about the use of prewar intelligence — their response, almost always, is to fall back on the president's character. How dare you question Mr. Bush's honesty, they ask, when he is a man of such unimpeachable integrity? And that leaves critics with no choice: they must point out that the man inside the flight suit bears little resemblance to the official image.

There is, as far as I can tell, no positive evidence that Mr. Bush is a man of exceptional uprightness. When has he even accepted responsibility for something that went wrong? On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that he is willing to cut corners when it's to his personal advantage. His business career was full of questionable deals, and whatever the full truth about his National Guard service, it was certainly not glorious.

Old history, you may say, and irrelevant to the present. And perhaps that would be true if Mr. Bush was prepared to come clean about his past. Instead, he remains evasive. On "Meet the Press" he promised to release all his records — and promptly broke that promise.

I don't know what he's hiding. But I do think he has forfeited any right to cite his character to turn away charges that his administration is lying about its policies. And that is the point: Mr. Bush may not be a particularly bad man, but he isn't the paragon his handlers portray.

Some of his critics hope that the AWOL issue will demolish the Bush myth, all at once. They're probably too optimistic — if it were that easy, the tale of Harken Energy would have already done the trick. The sad truth is that people who have been taken in by a cult of personality — a group that in this case includes a good fraction of the American people, and a considerably higher fraction of the punditocracy — are very reluctant to give up their illusions. If nothing else, that would mean admitting that they had been played for fools.

Still, we may be on our way to an election in which Mr. Bush is judged on his record, not his legend. And that, of course, is what the White House fears.

# Palestine: Sliding towards hell?

BY AHMED BOUZID  
FOR JORDAN TIMES

**I** imagine if someone had submitted to the Los Angeles Times a well-crafted op-ed that rationally and calmly argued the following: "If only the Arabs of 1948 had united more tightly, had planned more carefully, and had done a better job enrolling strategic and powerful allies to their cause, Israel as a Jewish state would never have seen the light of day, and we would have never had to endure one of the most thorny and tragic problems in modern history — the Arab-Israeli conflict."

If such an op-ed were being submitted to the opinion editors at the Los Angeles Times, do you think the newspaper would have published it? And if by some freak accident it would have been published, how long do you think the opinion editor who made the decision to publish this op-ed would have survived in his or her job?

And yet, on Jan. 26, 2004, the Los Angeles Times published an op-ed that argues rationally and calmly that Israel should have exerted itself more energetically in 1948, should have expelled all the indigenous Palestinian civilians, and that had Israel done that, today there would be no conflict and both Arabs and Jews would be living in peace.

"I find myself as convinced as ever that the Israelis played a major role in ridding the country of tens of thousands of Arabs during the 1948 war, but I also believe their actions were inevitable and made sense.... Israel's decision was not unprecedented, nor was it necessarily immoral."

Make no mistake about what happened on Jan. 26, 2004. On that day, one of America's most prestigious mainstream newspapers gave space to

an opinion piece that considers ethnic cleansing an acceptable and not "necessarily immoral solution".

To be sure, it is indeed a good thing that we are now finally seeing the logic of Zionism unfold right in front of our eyes. It is a good thing to have its spokespersons explain and illustrate calmly and rationally just in what way supporting Zionism will lead one to support ethnic cleansing. And there is no doubt that people have the right to know where its author, Israeli historian Benny Morris, and others like him in Israel, stand on ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

But all of that is beside the point. The readers of the Los Angeles Times could have been amply informed of the opinions of Benny Morris and others sharing his ideas with factual news articles. The point is that the Los Angeles Times has given credibility and rendered speakable what should remain unspeakable. Talk about justifying ethnic cleansing is beyond the pale of acceptable discourse!

There is no doubt that the Los Angeles Times will react to criticism of their decision to publish the op-ed by holding up the "freedom-of-speech" card. But would they hold up such a card in defence of a decision to publish a piece that argued that wife-beating, child molestation, slavery or racism are not necessarily immoral? Would the Los Angeles Times or any other paper even dream of publishing such op-ed pieces and then defending their action by invoking the freedom of speech argument? No, they would not. There are certain opinions that simply should not be dignified with op-ed space. And arguing that ethnic cleansing is an option that is not "necessarily immoral" is such an opinion.

On the day before Morris' op-ed was published, the Los Angeles Times

published an op-ed by a Palestinian, George Bisharat, arguing that the only moral solution remaining to solve the problem between the Palestinians and the Israelis is the one-state solution. It is clear now why the Los Angeles Times dared publish that op-ed: it was part of a one-two package deal, where the editors and the Los Angeles Times obviously hoped to play the two sides of the divide against one-another.

But such fancy manoeuvres should fool no one. Bisharat's op-ed piece is rooted in basic human rights principles and never calls for violating the human rights of anyone. It is an insult to people's intelligence to expect that readers will view — as the Los Angeles Times clearly hopes people will — Bisharat's op-ed as being one side of the coin and Morris' as the other side of that same coin. There is simply no moral equivalency between the two pieces.

What is also clear is that by publishing the two pieces one after the other, the Los Angeles Times is hoping to spark a "debate" about the "extreme" potential options among the two sides.

But let us not fall into this deadly trap. There is nothing to debate over Morris' op-ed. The only morally acceptable reaction to his fascist writing is to express disgust and indignation over the Los Angeles Times' decision to publish it. What he said is beyond the pale, and we should make as much noise as possible against anyone who does anything to make it something that is within the pale. And any "debate" over the merits of his "option" would play precisely into the hands of Morris and the ethnic cleansers. It would make it just another option that we can talk about, get used to, and, when the "right circumstances emerge", begin to accept as unfortunately unavoidable.



# Yemen's silversmiths long for shiny past

BY NEWS SERVICES

Long before money made the world go round, Yemeni silver reigned supreme as a sign of wealth and power in ancient times.

Today, Yemen's few silversmiths are trying desperately to eke out a living in this poor Arab state, which is suffering from a shortage of foreign tourists because of its reputation as a hotbed for al Qaeda militants.

"Silver is one of Yemen's most renowned treasures," said Mohammed Saygal, who hails from one of Sanaa's oldest silversmith families. "For centuries, we were the leading source of silver handicrafts and jewellery to the Middle East and Asia, but today, silver making is a dying art."

When Europe was struggling through the Iron Age nearly 2,000 years ago, Yemen, with its prime location on the ancient Silk Route, was exporting silver, frankincense and precious stones to the world.

In modern Yemen, only 20 families

still work in silver and Sanaa's ancient quarter has only a handful of stores offering silver-coated daggers, chunky necklaces and inlaid trunks to a trickle of buyers.

Most Yemenis are too poor to buy luxuries such as jewellery, so tourists are the prime market for the silversmiths.

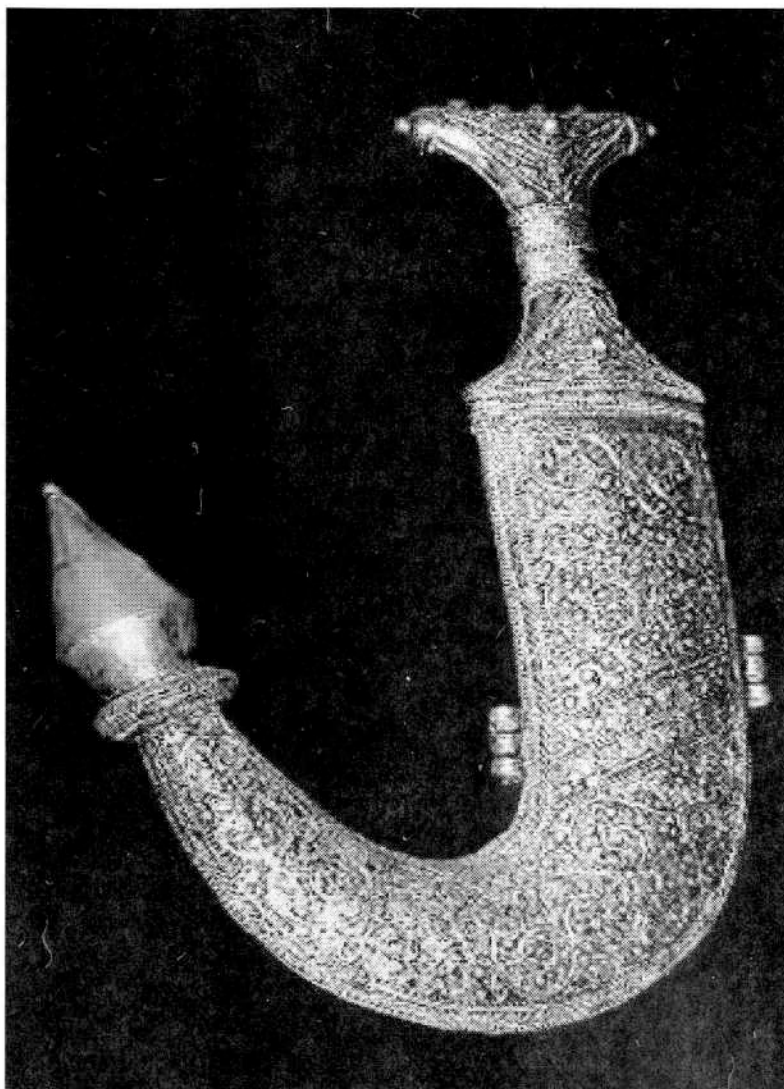
But Yemen's tourism industry has taken a beating in recent years.

In 1998, four Western tourists were killed after being taken hostage by a group linked to al Qaeda. In 2000, the US Navy destroyer USS Cole was attacked by al Qaeda affiliates in the Yemeni port of Aden, killing 17.

The US State Department currently advises its citizens to avoid nonessential travel to Yemen.

The country's crackdown on Islamic militants after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States has done little to ally foreigners' fears.

Assyrian texts from the seventh century BC extol the virtues of Yemeni silver, while Roman descriptions of the country



Silver and metal made traditional Yemeni dagger, one of the landmarks of the country's traditions and culture. YT photo

mention an abundance of the metal.

Each region in this diverse land had its own silver-making tradition, ranging from the box-like, jewel-inlaid necklaces of the southeastern province of Hadramout to the more delicate, flirtatious designs of the capital.

Silver was traditionally a source of power for Yemenis, especially women who regarded it as insurance against calamity.

In a society where women have always dressed modestly, silver jewellery was a way to attract male attention. Men gave their wives silver dowries and a woman's worth was indicated by the amount of silver she possessed.

The decline of Yemen's silver market began in the last century with the exodus of the country's Jewish artisans who accounted for 80 per cent of the silversmiths. About 3,000 Jews left to settle in Israel in the 1950s, depriving Yemen of one of its most renowned traditions.

Modern silversmiths such as Ahmed Lotf, who works at Sanaa's famous Ghamdan Palace, bemoan their depart-

ure, saying their fine filigree work was far superior to their modern Muslim counterparts.

"The Jews were the best and their work fetches a lot of money. Today's artisans are not as interested as they hardly get enough money for their work," he said.

Most of the wares now on display in Sanaa's market come from tribesmen who sell the family silver to make ends meet. Others are modern replicas lacking the finesse of ancient handicrafts.

"Many silversmiths have moved into clothing retail because it makes more money. If only we had more buyers, then the industry would boom again," said Ibrahim Aslaan, who runs the family store in Sanaa.

Yemen's top tourism official agrees. "All of Yemen's artisans are suffering due to the slump in tourism," said Mutahar Taqi, chairman of the General Authority for Tourism Development. "We can only hope that things start to look up so we can keep our heritage and culture alive." Reuters

# Presitigious award to Al-Maqaleh

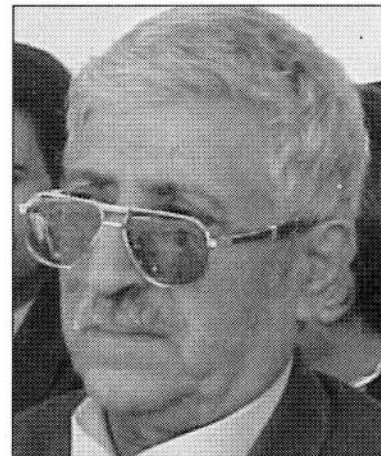
BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh, the chairman of the Yemeni Center for Research and Studies, and cultural advisor of President Saleh, has received the Golden Medal Award in Arab culture for the year 2003.

The award was submitted by Al-Manji Bosnina, General Manager of the Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science, and marked Al-Maqaleh as its first Arab scholar to be awarded this medal for his distinctive role in supporting Arab culture and literature.

Bosnina emphasized that the award was given to Al-Maqaleh for his role in supporting Arab literature and arts, and signals him as the first Arab to receive the award.

In his statement, Al-Maqaleh expressed gratitude and appreciation to the organization and judges who agreed unanimously to award it to him



and confirmed his commitment to continue supporting all efforts to expose Arab culture and arts and enhance them further in every way.

"I believe it is our duty to represent our Arab identity in a positive way that reflects our significant historical role in influencing culture on a global scale," he said.

# Women and their rights in Islam

More than 30 women working as Islamic scholars and activists gathered to receive training for six days starting last Thursday in the issue of "Women's Rights in Islam."

The workshop is organized by the Women's Forum for Research and Training and deals with women's rights according to Islamic Sharia and regulations and how to raise awareness that Islam supports women's rights.

The workshop, which is organized with the cooperation of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), provides training for representatives coming from Sanaa, Aden, Taiz, Hadramout, Hajja, and Ibb.

Suad Al-Qadasi, general manager of the forum, emphasized the importance of the event, which extends for a year, and will enable trainees to carry out

their duties more effectively and play an influential role in explaining the link between Islam and human rights.

In the opening ceremony, Misk Al-Junaied expressed her appreciation for carrying out the workshop and stressed on its role in differentiating between Islamic teachings and outdated irresponsible traditional practices that violate human rights of Yemeni women.

DZeyneb Ridwan, the dean of Dar Al-Uloom Social Science Faculty in Cairo and member of the Egyptian parliament presenting the training guide for the workshop, in which she explained the important elements of Islam's support to women's rights.

The workshop was attended by German Ambassador to Yemen Frank M. Mann, along with a number of prominent and concerned individuals.

# Vital tourist site needs care

In the area between Hadramout and Shabwa, the Bir Ali area, there is a natural tourist site resulting from a volcanic mountain, which has crater surrounded by green trees.

This has given the site a beautiful picture and tourist attraction for tourists to go and visit.

The ascending way to the mountain summit is very steep and rugged and

that makes it difficult for tourists to reach.

The said site is in dire need for care by tourist authorities, such as building stone stairways to facilitate tourists.

We wonder, where are the efforts of the fund for supporting tourism for paying attention to this site and other similar ones?

# Sharaab amidst charming nature

BY ABDUL WAHAB ABDUL QAWI AL SOFI  
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES  
HODEDAH-AASOFI@HOTMAIL.COM

The colour of green is not only beautiful when in one's eyes, but also when it's on the golden earth and the beautiful smooth rocks. I am unable to describe how one's eyes are always opened to such beauty. Tongues can't articulate the description of this fascinating nature.

It is Allah's paradise I refer to, in the Al Rawnah area in Shara'ab province, two hours by car west of Taiz city.

It is something not imaginable. Mountains, ravines, streams are every-

where decorated by beautiful houses. It's so foggy that you think mountains climb into the sky.

Branches of thick trees wave to welcome visitors. Clouds usually embrace its high green mountains, so that trees leaves are always full of dewdrops. These dewdrops are transformed to pearls during sun shining particularly in the morning.

Beside that, wind plays music and trees dance, bringing birds from their nests to sing. The hanging nests on the branches looking over passersby make it all the prettier.

Rocks, which are covered by excessive trees, are as soft as veiled cheeks of a young girl. Moreover, streams flow with murmuring sounds.

This sound with twittering of various birds is harmonized to enrapture visitors. In addition to that, Quince's trees everywhere emanate good order especially when you touch them, as if they grant you a premium.

Palms trees at the bottom of the valley are hanging dates as if they are beautiful girls wearing golden jewelry in their necks.

This valley at the bottom coddling the area is completely covered with green plants, except yellow flowers in the middle. It's a beautiful picture painted by Allah in His land.

It's stuck in the mind forever as soon as you arrive there. It's never forgettable. It is actually a tourist wealth for its visitors.



# CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2003 NGO Food Security Programme

The European Commission is seeking proposals for projects to implement operations in support of women empowerment for better food security in line with the national food security strategy. The operation is financed by the Commission's 2003 NGO Food Security Programme, which funds food-security activities by non-governmental organisations.

The full Guidelines for Applicants are available for consultation on the following Internet site:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>

The deadline for submission of proposals is 6 May 2004 at 16:00 hrs Brussels time.

A presentation meeting will be held at the Taj Sheba Hotel on Saturday February 28<sup>th</sup> from 10 to 12 am. Representatives of NGOs interested in submitting a proposal are invited. Please confirm your attendance by calling the EC-FSMU-TA (01 239 679).



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# Local Press

Prepared by Mohammed Khidhr



**Al-Tahawri weekly, organ of the YSP, 12 February 2004.**

## Main headlines

- Extremist activity accuses the YSP and poet al-Maqaleh of blasphemy
- President of Social Securities Establishment seeks help of audition apparatus to justify corruption operations
- For two successive times, Head of YSP woman sector returned from Sana'a airport
- The economic establishment refuses prosecution orders to release al-A'nisi
- World movement for democracy stresses on implementation of democracy

All the Arab countries are required to liquidate and end their interest in nuclear sciences and chemical weapons. And the Arab authorities that accepted the request have not aroused a fuss as that which the French decision on preventing the scarf has aroused in them as if the girl students scarf would repel all machinations and conspiracies intended against the Arab and Islamic nations.

All this happens at a time Iraq is not able to refuse allowing UN weapons inspectors to enter the presidential palaces after it has become under the American multi-national occupation and because the Arabs have savored seeking help of the foreigner against each other.

In Yemen the authority is talking about a political crisis with the neighbour because of erecting new barriers costing billions of dollars in order to keep Yemen away from its Arab regional surrounding. The Yemeni authority was talking about Yemeni chopped land in the region of Aseer that includes Jizan and Najran. And nowadays we see it talking about the barriers after the signing of the Jeddah border treaty in 2000 and now it is complaining of those barriers in the 20-kilometer area instead of demanding of its territories and its historical right.



**Al-Balagh weekly, 10 February 2004.**

## Main headlines

- Israeli education curricula brainwash the young and mobilize them to hate the Arabs

- PM Bajammal in an interview to Egyptian Al-Musawar magazine:
- We cannot say we managed to destroy terror completely
- Justice Minister: Dispute between Sana'a teaching staff and Sheikh al-Ruaishan, has been settled

The political editor of the newspaper says the American Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld has admitted that the war of aggression his country waged against Iraq has stabbed the United States image and how the world looks at it.

Confessions of the American defence secretary he had stated before participants in the international conference for security held in Germany do not represent all the bitter fact the Americans are gulping since their feet sunk in the Iraqi quagmire. The Americans are now certain that the Bush administration got entangled and with it the American people with all their destinies and it has sacrificed their security and stability. It is no longer hidden that the American entanglement lies in Bush's administration that made Iraq a field for settling international accounts the bigger loser in them are the American army and economy because the mistaken calculations of Bush and his administration have provided the chance for those states having revenges against America's policies to benefit from the chaos of the war in Iraq to finance and prepare military operations against the American army at the hands of elements of Iraq resistance and others that are leading a confrontation war against America. This situation the American politicians in the White House cannot hide. The regimes in the region have found in this situation an opportunity to catch their breath from extremist groups.

Now after the Bush's administration has provided an area for confrontation in Iraq it is normal that the operations change from targeting the interests of America to direct confrontation and a war of attrition that would last as long as the forced stay of the American troops goes on in Iraq. In Iraq Bush is paying the price of his political recklessness and inside the United States the Americans are searching for a convincing answer to the advantage of what they are in now of economic and security deterioration at all levels, though the beginning was the scandal of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

## Main headlines

- Leader of Hutat group denies links to Al-Qaeda organisation
- Yemeni delegation arrives at borders to contain situation with Saudi Arabia
- Closed-door talks between presidents Saleh and Mubarak
- 8 U.S-made gunboats arrive at Aden Port
- Yemen: Building security barrier violates borders treaty
- Interior minister scheduled visit to Germany
- New Saudi ban on Yemeni agricultural products
- Yemeni-Egyptian 'reconciliation' summit in Cairo, failure of Yemeni-Gulf rapprochement
- Under security threats, transport trade union closes its offices in Aden
- Number of Guantanamo detainees to be released soon
- Sana'a declared capital of Arab culture
- Yemen-Egypt security file closed
- FM al-Qirbi values Yemeni-Egyptian summit
- American acceptance to improve circumstances of sheikh al-Mouayad's detention
- French parliament bans wearing Islamic scarf
- Cabinet approves merge of government and mixed banks
- Arab union, security issues of the region on Yemeni-Egyptian summit table
- Well-known businessman Tawfiq Abdulraheem attacked in Taiz
- Al-Qaeda source discloses appointment of Khalid Tawfiq Attash and Abuturab al-Najdi for the command of Aden-Abyan army
- Saudi halts building "apartheid fence" on our borders
- Powell defines date for announcement of the plan for change in the Middle East
- Iraq neighbouring countries meet in Kuwait
- Differences postpone deciding the strongest candidates for journalists syndicate council
- Development Bank instead of four banks
- Russian ambassador: We cooperate for modernizing Yemen armament, not accepting what happens in Iraq
- Journalists: attempts for passing the rejected draft law



**Al-Nahar weekly, 12 February 2004.**

## Main headlines

- Saudi Arabia stalls in returning Yemeni territories and refuses to dismantle the security barrier
- America retains a lawyer for a Yemeni detained in Guantanamo
- Islamic liberation party: Sana'a capital for evil and corruption

The newspaper's political editor says it is scheduled that the Yemeni parliament would in the coming days endorse the basic regulations of the International Criminal Court known as Rome Document after it has received assurances from the government in which it confirmed that the regulations articles do not contradict texts of the constitution regarding impingement of sovereignty or stripping officials and citizens of their immunity. Yemen's fears were about the article 89 of the court that obliges trial of those accused of wars and genocide crimes and crimes against humanity in their countries otherwise they would be internationally wanted to be tried in any country they arrive in. But the European pressure on Sana'a culminated in its hosting of democracy conference last December and the internal pressure practiced by political parties and organisations concerned with human rights resulted in changing the government attitude from reservation to support. While the parliamentary blocs have announced their support for joining the International Criminal Court the government found itself facing two challenges, the first represented by amending local legislature in the way compatible with system of the international criminal court to be qualified to study the issues that could be raised against its citizens and the second one is the American stand towards Yemen that is opposing the court especially that there are American military experts in Yemen that would make them exposed to accountability if judicial lawsuits were raised against them.

A western diplomat in Sana'a says that the Yemeni orientation towards Europe would increase America's worry and puts before two options. It would either try to conclude a bilateral agreement with Yemen according to which the American military men are exempt from any legal pursuits or replacing the American experts by others from countries allied to its policy

towards what is known as terror.



**Al-Sahwa weekly, 12 February 2004.**

## Main headlines

- The Americans have not presented new evidence against al-Mouayad
- Centralization and absence of authorities behind failure of local councils
- Representative of the UNESCO: Making the citizen realize and feel his human status and rights, an introduction for dialogue with the other
- Qadhi al-A'nsi appeals for the release of his son

Columnist Zaid al-Shami says in his article the human fears have increased ever since he has known the weapons of mass destruction because they kill both the human and the animal and destroy life and environment. Therefore the big powers that possess those lethal weapons are keen to prevent other countries, among them the Islamic countries, from acquiring them under the pretext that those countries and their leaders do not take into consideration the consequences and may be used them in an inhuman way.

When look back to the past we find the United States was and is still using the weapons of mass destruction. It had hit Japan with nuclear bombs in the World War II and it is still developing those weapons to cause mass destruction in limited areas as what happened in Afghanistan and Iraq and before that in Vietnam. All the war fields America has entered were fields for testing its destruction machine. America thinks it has to use whatever it sees suitable and these weapons are for guaranteeing its victory. Before the war on Iraq the Pentagon confirmed that all options were open including the use nuclear and chemical weapon. /the technology of developing the nuclear weapon transferred from one country to another, including Israel that is considered the seminary of tension and aggression in the world and the Israeli nuclear program is under the patronage of America, nevertheless it has not aroused and fuss about it but in the case of Pakistan it has made great fuss and the engineer of the Pakistani nuclear bomb has been changed from a national leader to a guilty person begging for kindness and mercy.

# World Press

Major news items in leading international newspapers *Provided by Xinhua*

## Egypt

### Al Ahram

The United Nations has announced that it is impossible to hold elections in Iraq before the US-led coalition hands over the authority to Iraqis by June 30 due to the difficulty of arranging them. UN envoy to Iraq Lakhar Brahimi said that elections should be held in the best possible condition so that they may be fruitful, indicating that it was not necessary to abide by a deadline for them.

### Al Akhbar

US Under-Secretary for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs Alan Larson is to arrive in Cairo late February to boost trade and economic

relations between the United States and Egypt, US embassy sources said.

### Al Gomhuria

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will hold talks Saturday with visiting Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong to discuss the latest regional and international developments, particularly the Iraqi and Palestinian issues.

### Egyptian Mail

Former Chechen President Salim Khan Yandrapayev died Friday from injuries he sustained when his car was hit by a blast in the Gulf Arab state of Qatar, police said.

## Britain

### The Times

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has abandoned attempts to deter East European workers from entering Britain after a week of turmoil, confusion and Cabinet splits over immigration policy.

### The Daily Telegraph

British National Gallery has saved Raphael's tiny masterpiece, Madonna of the Pinks, for the nation, paying 35 million pounds or 64.75 million US dollars to the Duke of Northumberland and ending one of the most hotly

fought heritage battles of the last decade.

### Financial Times

British companies are winning a reasonable share of the multi-billion dollar contracts for Iraq reconstruction being distributed by the US, officials insisted Friday.

### The Independent

Bright schoolchildren will start studying for university degrees at 16, as a result of the biggest shake-up to exams for more than 50 years in Britain.

## Philippines

### The Nation

Pakistan and India are all set to resume composite dialogue process on Monday on the basis of "foreign secretary level talks 1997 model" that collapsed due to India's refusal to address the Kashmir issue despite having agreed in a joint statement.

### The News

After an encounter in the Khyber Agency, the North West Frontier province bordering Afghanistan, the Pakistani law enforcement agencies Friday arrested a wounded suspected al-Qaeda man along with two Afghan nationals.

## Japan

### Asahi, Yomiuri, Mainichi, Nihon Keizai

Negotiators of Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) agreed Friday in Pyongyang to continue talks on the abduction issue.

### Asahi

A new judicial system will be

introduced in 2009 at the earliest, which allows ordinary citizens to participate in trials concerning serious crimes.

### Yomiuri

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has asked the Cabinet Secretariat to draft bills on privatization of postal services. The bills are expected to be submitted to the parliament next year.

## Nigeria

### Weekend Vanguard

The Nigeria Labor Congress has vowed to continue using strike as a weapon to fight against government policies amid a long-running standoff over a decision to hike fuel prices.

### This Day

The Obasanjo administration "is performing below expectation," a statement issued on Friday by the Yoruba Council of Elders said, adding

that the immediate members of the president's constituency should be held responsible.

### The Guardian

Minister of Aviation Mallam Isa Yuguda has assured Nigerians that the new national carrier, the Eagle Airline, will begin operation by the second quarter of this year, adding that it would fly all routes when it eventually takes off.

## India

### Hindustan Times

India is scheduled to hold a one-day emergency meeting of senior officials of health, agriculture and livestock ministries of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries on Feb. 16, in New Delhi.

### Times of India

France made a strong case Friday for the inclusion of India in the United

Nation's Security Council (UNSC), arguing that its status as the largest democracy warranted its a seat as a permanent member.

### The Statesman

India's car sales loomed 31 percent in the first month of 2004 with major manufacturers like Maruti, Hyundai and Tata all reporting a whopping rise in sales. 71,875 cars sold in January.

## Pakistan

### The Nation

Pakistan and India are all set to resume composite dialogue process on Monday on the basis of "foreign secretary level talks 1997 model" that collapsed due to India's refusal to address the Kashmir issue despite having agreed in a joint statement.

### Dawn

The Pakistani Air Force is likely soon to get new radar systems and

other related items from the United States, which cost a total of around 365 million US dollars, to boost up its air defence capabilities.

### The News

After an encounter in the Khyber Agency, the North West Frontier province bordering Afghanistan, the Pakistani law enforcement agencies Friday arrested a wounded suspected al-Qaeda man along with two Afghan nationals.

## Kenya

### Kenya Times

The new constitution of Kenya is expected to be out by March 19. This assurance has been given by Chairman of the Constitution of Kenyan Review Commission Yash Pal Ghai.

### Daily Nation

A Kenyan peacekeeping soldier has been killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo when serving in a UN mission in the central African country.



# Improve Your English



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# 223

## I. What to Say

Situations and expressions (62):  
Birthday wishes (III)

**B**irthday wishes have a powerful resuscitating effect. They serve to rejuvenate a person and add color and meaning to life. They remind us that we have miles to go and give us the verve, vitality and energy to confront life's challenges confidently.

- Warm and special congratulations. This comes to wish you all the joy this special day can bring because you deserve a future filled with bright and happy things.
- May Allah, the most Gracious, shower on you every joy and happiness. This comes with love and beautiful thoughts on your special day. May life bring for you happiness, success and great prosperity.
- Wishing you blue skies and a lot of sun, wispy clouds of dream for you to float on. A day that's beautiful right from the start, and lasting memories, to forever warm your heart. Have a memorable Birthday.
- To wish you a wonderful Birthday, one you'll enjoy from the start, and to tell you, you are also wished joy and happiness, to fill your heart, each and every day.
- This comes to hope your Birthday brings all the best of everything – joy and laughter, warmth and cheer – enough to last throughout the year.
- Happy Birthday, darling wife and thanks for the warmth of your love. You give so much joy and strength to our marriage. You bring so much love to the life we share together. You really are everything I ever wanted in a wife.
- Warm wishes for joy to come your way, especially on your Birthday. A Birthday is a time for celebrations galore, when friends and family share the happiness and make it grow manifold, while it becomes special when ever moment of it is lived to the full.
- Hoping you have a wonderful day, one that takes you further along the paths of all your dreams and hoping those paths are the happiest ones for you.
- A Birthday wish that you find kindness returned along your way, and may you find the joy you give to others be yours throughout the day.
- A heartfelt Birthday wish to a sensible and understanding person like you. You are the one who understands me. When I cannot find the right words, hope you'll practice the same again and discover my feelings.
- Faith will bring the sunshine of better days in view. You're a marvelous person, someone truly special. You're an embodiment of so many wonderful qualities, and you truly deserve life's best throughout the year. That's why you're wished, with lots of love, special joys from heaven above. Happy Birthday.

## II. How to Say it Correctly

Correct errors, if any, in the following sentences

1. Please open your books on page forty two.
2. The Accountant has signed on the salary bill.
3. It is hoped the Dean may heed our complaints.
4. According to my opinion, Yemen is steadily progressing.
5. I invited Amin, Ahmed etc. to my birthday party.

## Suggested answers to last week's questions

1. You must work **hard** because your exam is round the corner.
2. He seems to be **rich enough** to buy a car.
3. My tooth has been **aching** for the past five days.
4. Afrah secured **hundred percent** marks and topped the list.
5. It is 8 O'clock **by my watch**.

## III. Increase Your Word Power

(A) How to express it in one word

1. Account of facts relating to formation and meaning of a word.

2. Science of production of healthy offsprings.
3. A personal peculiarity of temperament, an unusual trait.
4. Behavior of a person who wants to be looked at and admired.
5. The doctrine that shares a deep concern for the individual and shows a distrust of philosophical idealism.

## Suggested answers to last week's questions

1. A hackneyed and trite literary phrase or saying: **cliché** (n)
2. A disease that spreads through actual contact: **contagious** (adj)
3. Someone who is a sneering critic of everything: **cynic** (n)
4. An expert who understands the value of art: **connoisseur** (n)
5. Inability of a person to do without alcoholic drinks: **dipsomania** (n)

## (B) Foreign words and expressions

Give sources of origin and meanings of the following:

1. cacophony
2. calendar
3. carol
4. causerie
5. chorus

## Suggested answers to last week's questions

1. **ultra vires** (Lat.): beyond one's powers.
2. **via media** (Lat.): a middle course.
3. **vice versa** (Lat.): the terms being exchanged.
4. **visa-a-vis** (Fr.): opposite, face to face.
5. **viva voce** (Lat.): a spoken examination.

## (C) Words commonly confused

Bring out differences in meaning of the following pairs of words

1. personal, personnel
2. content, contents
3. medium, media
4. heat, temperature
5. rip, rib

## Suggested answers to last week's questions

1. **horrible** (adj.) (causing horror): There was a horrible road accident with heavy casualties.  
**horrific** (adj.) (able to or meant to horrify; horrifying): The book gives must horrific account of the battle.
2. **manner** (n) (way in which a thing is done or happens): He spoke in such a manner that everyone burst laughing.  
**mannerism** (n) (a peculiar way of behaving, speaking, etc.): She is known for her mannerisms.  
**mannerly** (adj) (of good social manners): Everybody likes her for her mannerly disposition.
3. **tasteful** (adj) (showing good taste): I appreciate the tasteful décor of your drawing room.  
**tasty** (adj) (having a pleasant flavor): Indian cuisine is very tasty.
4. **diplomat** (a person engaged in diplomacy for his country): Senior diplomats are appointed ambassadors.  
**politician** (n) (a person who follows politics as a career): Most politicians these days sacrifice principles to capture power.
5. **celebration** (n) (the act of or an occasion for celebrating): The Unification Day celebration was marked with patriotic fervor.  
**cerebration** (n) (working of the brain): The mysteries of cerebration are not yet unravelled.

## (D) Idioms and phrases

Bring out the meanings of the following in sentences

1. not worth his salt.
2. to play with edged tools.
3. to put a spoke in one's wheel.
4. to set Thames on fire.
5. To take people by storm.

## Suggested answers to last week's questions

1. to read between the lines (to try to understand the hidden meaning): If you read between the

lines, this letter is really a mild threat.

2. to turn over a new leaf (to change for the better): The peace initiative of both the Prime ministers promises to turn over a new leaf in the Indo-Pak relations.
3. to take the bull by the horns (to face difficulty boldly): Bold and brave as he is, he is determined to take the bull by the horns.
4. to win laurels (distinguish oneself): Prince Nassim has won many laurels for Yemen.
5. a storm in a teacup (a great fuss about a trifle): A heated exchange over a meaningless matter is indeed a storm in a teacup.

## IV. Grammar and Composition

(A) Grammar

Choose one of the words below in its correct form to complete the sentences

fault, error, mistake, offence

1. 'I think you're ——. I'm not Fuad, I'm his brother!'
2. Don't blame me for what happened. It wasn't my ——.
3. The telephone bill was sent to you in ——.
4. The number of traffic —— committed in the city increases each year.
5. You've made the same —— six times in this homework.
6. Did you know that it is a(n) —— park your car in the 'No Parking Zone'?
7. He made a(n) —— of judgement when he decided to leave his present job.
8. He's not perfect, but I love him in spite of his ——.

## Suggested answers to last week's questions

For thousands of years, smallpox was a terrifying disease which threatened people in every continent, and there were **epidemics** which killed millions of people. It is believed that the disease began in China and then **spread** slowly to the other continents. The first known **victim** was Rameses V, the pharaoh of Egypt, who showed all the main **symptoms** of the disease including the terrible rash, and who **died** of it in 1157 BC.

## (B) Composition

Expand the idea contained in the maxim

54. CHARACTER IS DESTINY

## Last week's topic

## 53. COWARDS DIE MANY TIMES BEFORE THEIR DEATH

Death is an inescapable reality of life. It takes everyone into its fold and makes no distinction between prince or pauper. Yet one shouldn't timidly live in constant fear of death. A coward is utterly incapable of facing danger, pain, or hardship because he lacks courage and fortitude. He is essentially an escapist who runs away from danger and shows fear in a shameful way. Unable to face the challenges he inflicts on himself more agony and pain by imaginary causes of fear. He lacks the power of endurance or the ability to sustain himself before challenging circumstances. Every moment he hears echoes of danger and develops a paranoid personality. As such, he lives in a perpetual state of unreasonable fear psychosis and dies every moment, depriving himself of the joy of life.

## IV. Pearls from the Holy Quran

“... Allah  
Doth purify  
Who He pleaseth.”  
S4:A49

## VI. Words of Wisdom

“All happy families resemble one another: every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”

—Tolstoy

## A letter to the teachers of English: 43

# Use newspapers in the English classes (2)



Dr. M.N.K. Bose  
(BOSE@y.net.ye)  
Associate Professor of  
English,  
Faculty of Arts, Ibb.

Dear Fellow teachers,

**I**n the last letter I have given a few suggestions as to how you can use a good newspaper for teaching English. In this letter, I would like to say something about how you can use the advertisements in the newspapers for the benefit of your learners of English.

In the Hodeidah Conference, one of the presenters dealt with at length the use of advertisements that appear in the Yemen Times; his attention was to show how the visuals in them take the prime place over the verbal to enable the Yemeni readers of English as a foreign language to communicate with them. However, he did not ignore the importance of the verbal aspect of the advertisements, which helps the readers in the process of understanding.

My attention in this letter will be on the verbal part of the advertisements and how the understanding of it enriches the English of the learners of English in our classes. The language of the advertisements is special in the sense that it has many exceptions: it is in fragments, may be a phrase or a word, (for example, *Safety with comfort, Your first choice*); it may not be grammatical, (for example, *Buy the most...for 18months warranty*); it is cryptic (for example *All your needs under one roof*); it is deviant using words in new ways (for example, *The tyre that never tires*). The non-normal use of the language in the advertisements makes it beautiful and 'poetic'; there is a lot of creativity in it.

How do we use it in our English classes? Good and interesting ads can be chosen by the teacher and read to the class aloud for the learners to listen to and find the products advertised from the verbal parts. The choice should be carefully done keeping the learners' language level in mind and the interesting use of the language in the ads. The cryptic phrases can be expanded by the learners into normal sentences, thereby practicing transformation. In addition, they can practise the reverse of it: making normal sentences cryptic for imaginary ads. They can be asked to find out the special meanings attached to the words used in the ads. For example, *The tyre with the muscle* is the verbal part of an advertisement; the learners can be asked to find out the use of *muscle* here. (By asking questions such as Who has muscles? Does a tyre have muscles? Why is muscle used here? etc). The sound effect of the words used in the ads can be explored by the learners, for example, in *The tyre that never tires*, the word *tire* has been chosen to rhyme with *tyre*.

All these techniques in the making of the ads, if learnt well by the students through good exposure and practice, can be used for creating sample ads as a part of writing activity in the class. Instead of the dull and run-of-the mill writing activities we assign to the learners in the English classes such as 'write an essay on how you will feel while walking in the rain' or 'write a letter to a pen-friend inviting him/her to spend the holidays with you' (I don't know when we are going to put an end to these monotonous and uninteresting writing exercises!), we can ask them to create interesting advertisements for some imaginary or real products. This might help them to participate in the competitions some agencies organize for creating innovative advertisements for their products. One of your students can create this slogan for advertising the small Suzuki Alto cars: *A car you can drive to your bedroom*. I don't think anyone has thought of this as a part of the advertisement. Your students can think of better ones, I am sure. Give them opportunities to sharpen their intelligence by such activities. Goodluck!

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

## Poetry Corner

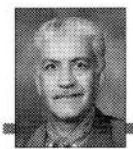
# Stop and tell me

By MISS A. M. AL-MA'AMARI,  
FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES,  
HODEIDAH UNIVERSITY

How do you want me to be happy?  
As you are the one who hurts my soul.  
How do you want me to be merry?  
When my sadness is always your goal.  
My feeling is a breeze  
Which I can not control.  
Stop and tell me:  
Have you got a heart or a wall?  
Or with love ... do you have a rule?  
Love is great and isn't a doll,  
My life is a frozen winter, which is too

cool.  
But you have me a coat, though with many a hole.  
The agony is painful and dreadful  
It makes me a picture of grief  
Your silence and pride must fall  
It may be today or tomorrow, who knows?  
But I am proud of my grief  
Which sheds in the form of jewels  
You may pick them and store them  
In case ever you need.  
How do you want me to be happy?  
When you are the one who hurts my soul!

# Iraq: the cradle of civilization



By DR. BASHIR  
GHAZI ASKAR  
basharaskar90@  
hotmail.com

**I**raq is regarded as one of the ancient centers of the human civilization. Archaeological researchers and historians point to a flourishing culture in Iraq known as Mesopotamia that dates back to more than 6000 years ago. Deeply-rooted in the history, the ancient man lived in the caves of northern Iraq. Remains of the Shanidar caves reveal the significant development achieved by the ancient people of Iraq in contrast with their European, Asian and African contemporaries. Such qualitative development was reflected in their leaving the caves and settling near the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, practicing agriculture, rearing domestic animals, and making pottery.

This turning from the caves, collecting food to producing it marked a change in the mainstream of the ancient Iraqi population. The epoch also culminated in the emergence of the first agricultural communities known at that time which developed significantly through a limited period of time known as the Modern Stone age.

This development of the ancient Iraq is attributed to two main factors: environment and man. Thus location, climate, terrain and water resources played a vital role in directing man's cultural activities.

The fact is that Iraq was distinguished for its rich natural resources and its strategic location as a land bridge linking all parts of the old world. The effects of its geographical location was also evident in its climate for it had got the mountainous, desert, plateau, and plains watered by its two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, all of which provided it with a geopolitical advantage so as to be a pivotal center of the world.

The importance of the two rivers and their tributaries and branches were evident in the historical shift from the primitive period to the early modern civilization. For this reason, the early agricultural settlements emerged on the banks of the two great rivers. It is these two great rivers that had an invaluable role in the field of irrigation and transport and in shaping the civilization in those days. Inhabitants of the northern as well as the southern regions contributed to the growth of the civilization with their unrivaled inventions. It is believed that the ancient Iraqis were the ones who invented writing and led humanity to the early historical age around 4000 year BC.

These settlements grew into small cities that witnessed the first forms of authority known in those days as ruling dynasties. This marked the age of the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians and led to the growth of the cities such as Kish, Uruk, and Ur, Lagash. All these factors contributed to substantial human activity in Mesopotamia thousands of years ago.

# WONDERWORD®

by DAVID OUELLET

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

## CLUES

Action	Device	Link	Radio	Spin
Analog	Digital	Load	Recharge	Swim
Area	Draw	Lose	Remote	Talking
Audio	Effects	Machine	Robot	Tape
Balls	Fleet	Mail	Room	Tech
Bats	Found	Manual	Rules	Television
Boxes	Graphics	Model	Save	Time
Buttons	Grip	Musical	Score	Toss
Cables	Help	Nets	Screen	Turn
Camera	Hours	Operate	Select	Transformer
Case	Insert	Pace	Sing	Video
Channel	Keyboard	Paint	Skill	Virtual
Code	Kids	Pass	Small	Visual
Colors	Laptop	Plastic	Software	Voice
Commands	Laser	Plug	Sold	Volt
Computer	Lend	Portable	Song	Wires
Connect	Lens	Power	Sonic	Workshops
Console	Levels	Projector	Sounds	
Controls	Lights	Races	Speed	

ANSWER NEXT WEEK

Last Week's Answer: Construction

## TOP-NOTCH TOYS

Solution: 7 letters

S	O	F	T	W	A	R	E	R	E	M	R	O	F	S	N	A	R	T	A
E	D	S	E	C	I	V	E	D	L	L	I	K	S	D	E	H	B	E	S
C	O	N	T	R	O	L	S	R	A	C	E	S	P	N	O	E	R	O	E
A	N	I	A	H	E	N	O	U	S	D	T	L	I	U	T	A	L	I	L
P	O	D	L	M	G	W	S	S	A	T	E	H	R	O	I	D	N	G	B
N	I	L	K	R	M	I	O	O	E	H	C	S	M	S	M	S	S	U	A
O	S	W	I	M	V	O	L	P	L	A	H	E	F	L	E	E	T	L	C
I	I	P	N	N	A	R	C	A	M	E	R	A	F	R	A	T	A	P	E
D	V	K	G	W	K	V	U	T	N	R	O	T	T	F	O	U	B	A	L
U	E	D	I	G	I	T	A	L	E	O	B	S	S	N	E	T	N	N	L
A	L	R	C	D	R	A	W	C	E	C	O	L	S	R	P	C	E	A	A
E	E	S	E	I	S	A	H	S	R	S	T	E	T	P	O	E	P	L	M
S	T	O	V	I	N	A	P	E	C	I	O	V	U	L	R	L	R	O	S
A	O	N	N	C	R	O	R	H	S	O	P	E	R	A	T	E	O	G	M
C	S	G	O	G	H	L	S	P	I	N	N	L	N	S	A	S	J	C	U
L	S	D	E	S	B	A	L	L	S	C	A	N	A	T	B	P	E	F	S
I	E	N	K	V	Y	P	N	P	A	S	S	V	E	I	L	E	C	O	I
A	X	R	E	O	S	T	E	N	E	L	E	N	D	C	E	E	T	U	C
M	O	D	E	L	M	O	O	R	E	P	A	I	N	T	T	D	O	N	A
W	B	R	E	T	U	P	M	O	C	L	K	E	Y	B	O	A	R	D	L



## Keane warns young guns

By PETE OLIVER

MANCHESTER (Reuters) - Manchester United captain Roy Keane has warned the club's young players not to take things for granted at Old Trafford.

"We have worked extremely hard to get to the top but it is a lot harder to stay there," the 32-year-old midfielder said on Friday.

"We have one or two young players who have done very little in the game. They need to remember that and not slacken off."

"They need to remember just how lucky we all are to play for Manchester United and show that out on the pitch."

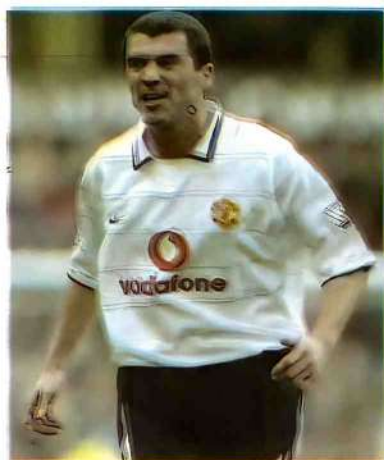
Manager Alex Ferguson has made signing young players a priority this season as he looks to maintain United's domestic dominance.

But the premier league champions have stuttered in recent weeks to fall five points behind Arsenal in the title race.

Keane will return to lead United in Saturday's FA Cup derby with Manchester City after being rested for their mid-week 3-2 home league defeat by Middlesbrough.

The former Republic of Ireland international is a three times winner of the Cup with United and is determined to get past visiting City and into the quarter-finals.

"The fact there will be 9,000 City fans there should ensure a brilliant atmosphere," Keane added.



Wales coach Steve Hansen, pictured in a file photo, said on Thursday expectations for his team were justifiably high this year. REUTERS/Kieran Doherty

"Results-wise, they aren't having a good time of it but I know one or two City fans and they say the performances haven't been that bad."

"There is a fine line between playing well and winning football matches and I'm sure City will be confident, especially when they look at the goals we have been conceding."

"But we are determined as well. The disappointments we have had in the FA Cup in the past few years make the competition more important to us than ever this season."

## Scots travel in hope to Wales

By MITCH PHILLIPS

LONDON (Reuters) - In recent seasons Wales against Scotland has produced some of the direst rugby ever seen in the Six Nations, but Saturday's Cardiff fixture sees the fans of both countries almost drooling with anticipation.

Welsh supporters, who saw their team plumb the depths last year when they finished winless and last in the Six Nations, have been rejuvenated by the performances against New Zealand and England in the World Cup and by their regional teams in the European Cup.

Followers of Scotland, also fed a meagre diet over the last few years, have pinned their hopes of a revival on new Australian coach Matt Williams, who has already shown signs that he plans to give youth its chance.

"Expectations are high this year and justifiably so," said Wales coach Steve Hansen, who steps down to return to New Zealand after the tournament.

"We can justify them by looking at the World Cup. We were beaten by two of the top teams in the world when our performances would have been good enough to have beaten most other sides."

Hansen insisted that he was not surprised by Wales's unleashing of a high-speed running game in their final group game against the All Blacks and in the quarter-final against England.



The 2004 Six Nations championship gets underway this weekend with European rugby on a high after last year's World Cup in Australia. A file photo shows (L-R) Lawrence Dallaglio, Will Greenwood, Jason Robinson and Jonny Wilkinson celebrating winning the Rugby World Cup final against Australia on November 22, 2003. REUTERS/Kieran Doherty

But he has also warned that the hard work needs to be done up front against the Scots before the likes of Gareth Thomas and Shane Williams cut loose.

In that regard he will have been disappointed to have lost hooker Robin McBryde and lock Robert Sidoli through injury.

Sidoli's absence opens the door for Gareth Llewellyn to win his 84th cap, three short of Neil Jenkins's Wales record.

Not far behind is Gareth Thomas, who will stay at fullback for a 73rd cap following his sparkling displays after being switched there as an emergency in the World Cup.

While Wales departed from the tournament at the quarter-final stage with heads held high after their 28-17 defeat by England, Scotland had very few good moments to look back on.

They lumbered their way through the group stage and though they resisted well for a half, were eventually swept aside 33-16 by Australia in the quarters.

Coach Williams, given the difficult job of succeeding Ian McGeechan, has already stamped his authority on the team by naming three uncapped players for Cardiff with another two on the bench.

Twenty-one-year-old Scrumhalf Chris Cusiter, surprisingly preferred

to Mike Blair to replace retired captain Bryan Redpath, centre Tom Philip and openside flanker Ally Hogg all win their first caps with Australia-born flyhalf Dan Parks and Edinburgh flanker Simon Cross hoping to join them as replacements.

Williams, however, has pleaded with the Scotland fans to give him, and the new team, time to gel.

"Don't expect miracles," he said, adding that he expected it to take up to 18 months for everything to be running smoothly.

In the short term he said he had no concerns about throwing the youngsters in, especially 20-year-old Philip for what should be a bruising midfield battle with Wales's Sonny Parker.

Philip will be helped by having Edinburgh club mates, flyhalf Chris Paterson, the new captain, and inside centre Brendan Laney, alongside him.

"There is an extra edge of anticipation this year," says number eight Simon Taylor, one of the Scots' few world-class players.

"We hope that after a few average years we can turn things round under the new regime."

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Hi	25	25	25	25	27	26	26
Lo	5	6	4	4	6	5	5

Aden

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Hi	32	31	31	31	32	33	33
Lo	19	20	19	19	19	18	18



### THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

BY Eugenia



**Aries**  
(Mar 21 - Apr 19)  
You will be inclined to take things the wrong way today. Your work ethics may suffer if you are upset. Take a professional stance.



**Taurus**  
(Apr 20 - May 20)  
The more you talk with others and the more you indulge yourself in subjects that interest you, the better. Your practical approach will bring you popularity and friendships.



**Gemini**  
(May 21 - Jun 20)  
Take care of personal paperwork. Look over contracts, but refrain from making a final decision just yet. Money worries are likely to surface.



**Cancer**  
(Jun 21 - Jul 22)  
Shake off any bad feelings you might have. Problems at home will escalate if you don't stay calm. Search for the truth and reevaluate your own position.



**Leo**  
(Jul 23 - Aug 22)  
This can turn into a very industrious day for you if you stick to business until you complete the task at hand. Pursue your dreams, but first do your research.



**Virgo**  
(Aug 23 - Sep 22)  
Participating in games of strategy and mental skill will be easy for you, so don't back away. You will be respected for your knowledge and performance.



**Libra**  
(Sept 23 - Oct 22)  
You may feel that someone is cornering you about the way you feel today. Arguments will only leave you upset, so refuse to get worked up. Concentrate on your positive projects.



**Scorpio**  
(Oct 23 - Nov 21)  
A friend or relative will take an interest in what you are trying to accomplish. Introductions can be made if you socialize with a relatively new group of friends or neighbors.



**Sagittarius**  
(Nov 22 - Dec 21)  
Don't leave anything to chance. Problems may arise pertaining to skin, bones or teeth or a chronic health problem. Changes to your home will be beneficial.



**Capricorn**  
(Dec 22 - Jan 19)  
If you are too busy doing your own thing, you may neglect the very person who has supported you along the way. Be more attentive and you will avoid conflicts with the ones you love.



**Aquarius**  
(Jan 20 - Feb 18)  
Ask yourself what your motives truly are before you make a commitment you might not want to keep. Don't be too eager to share your intentions.



**Pisces**  
(Feb 19-Mar 20)  
Don't be afraid to share your thoughts and feelings with a person you may meet at a convention or gathering. You will be on the same wavelength and a promising future will begin.



# YEMEN TIMES

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الفائز الثالث 250,000  
الفائز الرابع 150,000  
الفائز الخامس 100,000

بالإضافة الى العديد من الجوائز العينية

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#### كوبون أسئلة (١٥)

الإسم : ..... السن : ..... الجنسية : ..... رقم البطاقة لشخصية / الجواز : .....  
التلفون : ..... العنوان : ..... المدينة / المحافظة : .....

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- يوصى بمزج مشروب الطاقة باورهورس مع الماء بنسبة ١:١ ليتم : ٣
- متخصصه أسرع في الدم أم لإنتاج أكبر كمية من التورين أم لتعويض السوائل المفقودة ؟ ٤
- مشروب الطاقة باورهورس لا يحتوي على مواد ادمانية لذلك فهو ضمن العقاقير الممنوعة التداول أم ليس ضمن العقاقير الممنوعة التداول ؟ ٥
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للتواصل ٧١١٨٧٧١



# Muslims urged to shun Valentine's Day



Iranian women look for Valentine's day gifts in Tehran Feb. 14. Iranian youth are becoming increasingly attracted to Valentine's day celebrations to the dismay of Iran's conservative leadership. REUTERS

RIYADH (Reuters) - Saudi Arabia's religious authorities have ordered Muslims to shun the "pagan" holiday of Valentine's Day so as not to incur God's wrath, the local al-Riyadh newspaper says.

"It is a pagan Christian holiday and Muslims who believe in God and Judgment Day should not celebrate or acknowledge it or congratulate (people on it).

It is a duty to shun it to avoid God's anger and punishment," said an edict issued by Saudi Arabia's fatwa committee published in the Arabic-language daily on Friday.

"There are only two holidays in Islam -- Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha -- and any other holidays, whether to celebrate an individual, group or event, are inventions which Muslims are banned from," said the committee, headed by Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh.

Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are Muslim feasts that follow the annual fasting month of Ramadan and the haj pilgrimage.

The kingdom, which implements a strict version of Islamic law, bans non-Muslim holidays and its morality police usually conduct raids to ensure shops do not sell gifts or ornaments on New Year, Christmas or Valentine's Day, which is named after a Christian saint.

About seven million foreigners live in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam. Many of them are from Asian countries where Valentine's Day is celebrated.

Most Gulf Arab states, such as the United Arab Emirates, celebrate Valentine's Day. Stores fill with cards, red roses and gifts, and hotels and restaurants have special activities.

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A pair of black swans are seen at a zoo in Wuhan, Hubei province, Valentine's Day. REUTERS

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