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New law proposal for audio and visual media

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, April 5 — The Yemeni Cabinet has referred a law project for audio, visual and electronic media proposed by the Ministry of Information, to a ministerial committee headed by the Vice Prime Minister for Security and Defense Affairs.

The committee members are ministers of local administration, information, legal affairs, justice, culture and state. They have been asked to review the law and present their findings to the cabinet for discussion and approval.

Yemen currently has an implemented law called The Press Law. It was issued in 1990 but it does not regulate audio or visual media.

In a memo by the Minister of Information, Hassan Alawzi, to the cabinet, it justified the need for a separate law to regulate audio, visual and electronic media because the press law has neglected these.

It also stated that the legislature in the press law did not present any article for audio and visual media. It was under the impression that this kind of media is only for the state and private individuals have no rights to possess it.

The ministerial memo justified the law by saying that audio and visual media is

more powerful than the press and should be controlled to avoid risks in harming Yemen's unity.

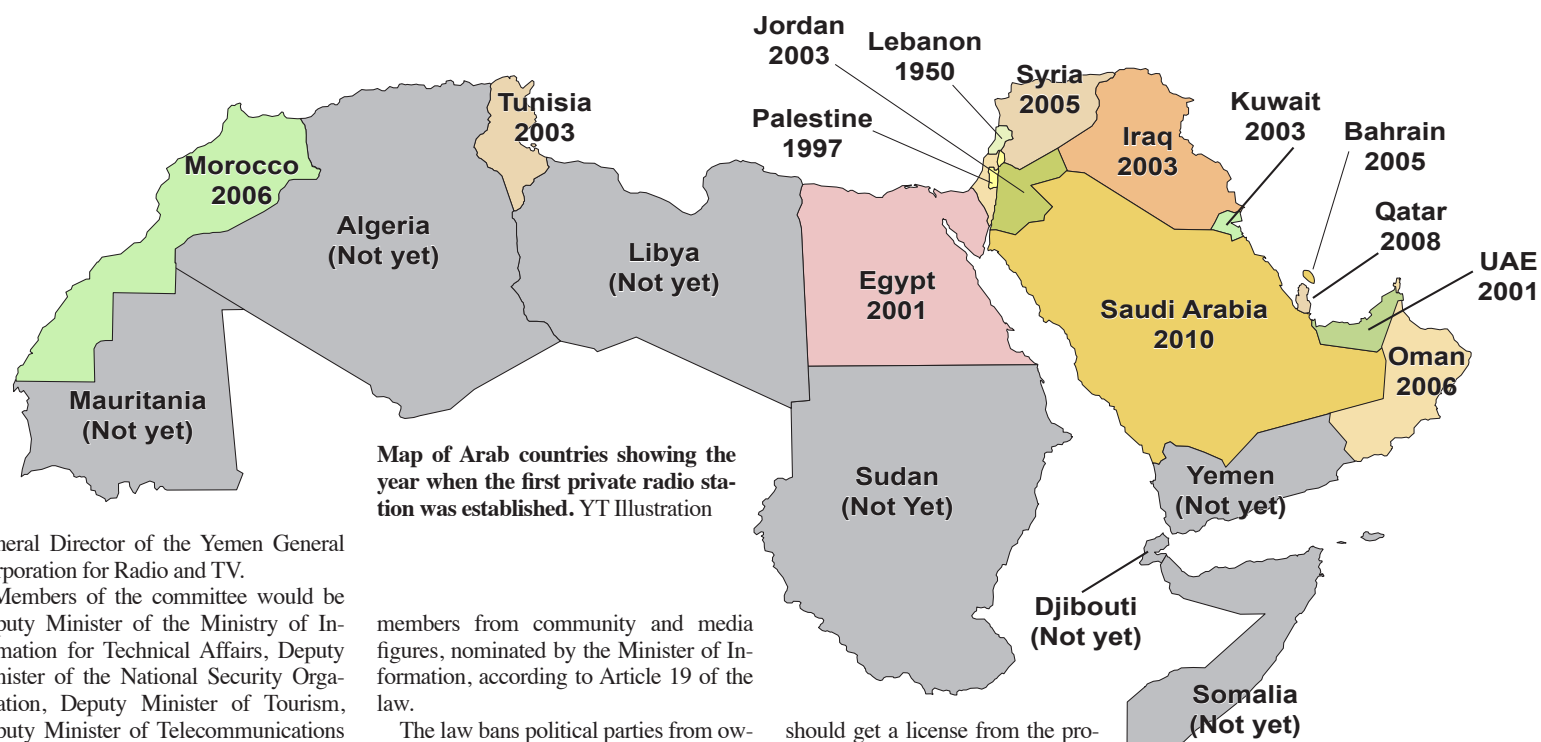
"There is culture of hatred in current newspapers, but people are still not affected by this due to the limited distribution of newspapers. They are also busy with audio and visual media," reads the memo.

"If we imagine that this negative bias, destructive ideas and articles that incite violence were to be broadcasted on television and radio, it could lead to more political and social conflict and sedition," added the memo.

The minister, in his memo to the cabinet, claimed that this law regulating the private possession of radios and channels would save Yemen from slipping into sectarian and tribal conflict.

The proposal states that a new state department, working under the Ministry of Information, would be formed to regulate audio and visual media as well as electronic media.

The name of this department is proposed to be "The Private Audio and Visual Media Regulating Committee" and the Head of this committee would be a new Deputy Minister of Information for Audio and Visual Media Affairs. The vice-chairman of the committee would be the



Map of Arab countries showing the year when the first private radio station was established. YT Illustration

General Director of the Yemen General Corporation for Radio and TV.

Members of the committee would be Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Information for Technical Affairs, Deputy Minister of the National Security Organization, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology, General Director of the Public Telecommunications Corporations, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and four other

members from community and media figures, nominated by the Minister of Information, according to Article 19 of the law.

The law bans political parties from owning channels or radios, according to Article 30 of the law.

The draft also reads that if any person wants to create a media website; he or she

should get a license from the proposed committee and should pay YR 20 million as license fees for two years, according to Article 53.

Continued on page 2

Renowned religious scholar declares forced marital intercourse to be un-Islamic Child bride dies because of forced intercourse

By: Nadia Al-Sakkaf

HAJJA, April 10 — Ilham Assi died at 13 because her 23 year-old husband forced himself on her violently. Ilham's genitals were ruptured and she hemorrhaged to death just a few days after marriage.

The groom who is now in police custody, Abed Al-Hikmi, had taken his child bride to a clinic and asked the doctors to give her tranquilizers so that she would not resist him. When they refused, he tied her up and had his way with the little child. He even took 'performance enhancing' pills before he raped the little girl.

The next day, Al-Hikmi carried his little wife back to the clinic because she couldn't stand or walk. Dr. Fathiya Haidar advised Al-Hakmi to leave his wife alone for the next ten days, as her vaginal canal was ripped. However, forensic reports suggest he did not.

There is no law in Yemeni legislation that defines a minimum age for marriage. However, there are Islamic legislations that prevent men from forcing their wives into intercourse.

Renowned religious scholar Mohammed Hassan said that the Islamic Jurisprudence prohibits forced intercourse between the husband and wife.

"If a woman is forced to bed by her husband, she should know that he is committing a sin and should be punished according to the jurisprudence. She should not think that Islam discriminates against women, it is the sole act of this man," he said.

He emphasized that, in Islam, marriage is a relationship based on kindness and empathy as read in the Roman's Chapter in the Quran verse 21: "And among His signs is that He created spouses for you from yourselves for you to gain rest from them, and kept love and mercy between themselves; indeed in this are signs for the people who ponder."

"The essence of the marital relationship

is passion and the husband should make his wife feel that he wants more than just her body for early pleasure but also her companionship and emotions, and so should the wife. Aggressiveness and violence in the bedroom is not acceptable in Islam," he added.

The Prophet Mohammed (MPBH) had said: "Do not fall onto your wife like an animal, and have a messenger between the

two of you." He was asked: "What is this messenger?" He replied: "The kiss and the conversation."

He also commented that some men, and even religious preachers, misunderstand the Prophet's saying that condemns a woman for abandoning her marital bed without excuse. The saying calls on wives to answer their husbands' needs and not ignore them when they ask for intercourse. The saying

goes: "Whatever woman does not answer her husband's call to his bed, and he sleeps angry with her, is condemned until she wakes up."

According to this statement which is used often by Muslim men to force their wives into intercourse, the husband actually does not force his wife, but is angry with her. This statement does not allow the husband to force his wife to bed.

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Deputy prime minister sponsors peace in Sa'ada

By: Mohammed Bin Sallam

SA'ADA, April 10 – Peace talks in the Sa'ada governorate has resumed after a temporary halt caused by disagreements between the Houthi insurgents and state officials.

Rashad Al-Alimi, deputy prime minister for security and defense, has managed to bring the two parties together and reach a consensus and follow up the reconciliation process that started two months ago.

The peace agreement signed in February by the state and Houthis contained seven points as conditions for peace in an area that has been a war zone since 2004.

Because of technical disagreement on the implementation of these points, the peace process stopped and signs of conflict had started to show.

However, personal intervention by Al-Alimi has succeeded and now the peace mediation committees are back

to work in Harf Sufian and neighboring areas.

Among the points of disagreement were the release of Houthi detainees still in the state's custody and the presence of Houthi militants in state premises in the Sa'ada and Amran governorates.

Moreover, the issue of demining the northern governorates is also one of the debatable points as the Houthis claim state-planted antipersonnel mines have already maimed more than 100 people in Sana'a.

Houthi-opposition alliance

The Joint Meeting Parties collation of six opposition political parties held its first meeting last Thursday by representatives of the Houthi insurgency.

The meeting in Sa'ada concluded with a memo on points of mutual interest, including the need for national reform, and demanding a non-exclusion policy in national dialogue. This is the

first meeting of its kind officially publicized in this way.

The Houthi groups have also given voice to their cause through civil society, especially with regards to the release of detainees.

'The right to live with my father'

Child participants in a seminar organized by the Women's Media Forum in Sana'a under the title "I have the right to live with my father" demanded the release of their fathers who are detained on the charge of being Houthis.

The state has announced the release of 161 Houthi detainees since last month, but HOOD, the Yemeni Organization for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms, said only 32 detainees were actually released out of a total of 2,000.

Simultaneously, the Houthis released 178 civilian and military men who had been detained by them during the recent war.

Teaching suspended at Sana'a University

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori
For the Yemen Times

SANA'A, April 11 — Since Saturday, lectures have been completely suspended at the University of Sana'a and the University of Amran, as all professors there have declared a full strike.

They are demanding that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research increase their salaries, provide the professors with medical insurance, and plots of land for the residence buildings promised to them by the state.

On Saturday, hundreds of professors protested at the university gates and threatened to continue the strike until their demands were met.

"The Union of Professors at the university will continue their strike and extend it into further protests in front of the Ministry of Higher Education, the Cabinet and Parliament," said Abdullah Al-Azazi, head of the union.

"In the case of no response, we will ask the entire government to quit, not only the Minister of Higher Education," he added.



On Saturday, hundreds of professors protested at the university gates and threatened to continue the strike until their demands were met.

Similarly the Union of Students at the university announced their support for their teachers' demands. They considered the professors' demands as legal and called on the state to immediately respond to them, to enable students to continue their education.

"Students are the victims in this full strike and those concerned should be held accountable for the consequences," said Ridwan Musawd, Head of the Stu-

dents' Union.

The professors' union at Sana'a University released a statement calling on all teaching staff to commit to the full strike.

Sana'a University is the main public university in the country, where Yemeni students receive free education. There are over 100,000 students studying there from both the capital and other Yemeni governorates.

Governors and ambassadors yet to submit financial disclosures

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, April 8 — The Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) has given notice to a number of governors and ambassadors, ranging from two weeks to a month, to provide their financial disclosures.

The SNACC gave governors of Ibb, Amran, Al Jawf, Dhale'a, Mahra and 337 other officials across the country two weeks notice to submit their financial disclosure. It gave also Yemen's ambassadors to Sudan, Salah Al-Ansi, Egypt, Abdulwali Al-Shamiri, UAE, Abdullah Addafi, Ethiopia, Derhem No'man and Czechoslovakia, Abdurrahman Al-Hamdi, a month to submit their financial disclosure to the authority.

These officials have not submitted their financial disclosures since the authority implemented the law, two years ago. The SNACC is now starting the second phase of receiving documents, according to the period approved in the law.

The financial disclosure is a document given by the authority to any government official, ranging from a General Manager to the President of the Republic. These officials record their possessions in these documents and submit them to the SNACC. The authority investigates this information and then checks if the pos-

sessions of the officials have increased whilst they have been in office. Those who violate the law or steal public funds are referred to justice.

The authority directed two memos to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, and Minister of Local Administration, Rashad Al-Alimi, requesting them to ask officials to submit their documents in the above periods.

The memos mentioned that officials included in the financial disclosure law have started submitting their papers for the second term, whilst the above mentioned ones are still delaying to submit their first documents.

"We want confirmation that these officials have handed in their financial disclosures during the mentioned periods. If not, we will apply measures included in the law in such cases," stated the authority in letters sent to the two ministers.

The letter directed to al-Alimi, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs, contains a list of officials who have not submitted their financial disclosures. The list included 56 deputy and assistant deputy governors, 85 districts' general directors, 67 secretary generals of local councils and 129 committee heads of local councils and tenders across the country.

Item No. 24 of the financial disclosure

law stipulates "six months imprisonment against any official who has not or refuses to submit his or her financial disclosure after notification. If he or she repeats this misdemeanor, they will be relieved from their job, according to enforced laws."

SNACC's Head of Financial Disclosure Sector, Mohammad Al-Matari, said these officials have not yet submitted their previous financial disclosures, even though the authority is into the second term of receiving documents. According to the law, the authority asks the targeted officials to submit their financial disclosures every two years.

The authority started receiving financial disclosures last October, after passing two years of implementation of the law in this regard, since October 2007, when the authority was initially established.

Al-Matari said the authority is now is targeting 18,000 officials included in the law. Most of them have handed over their financial disclosures for the second time. He noted that those who do not respond to the authority instructions will be referred for prosecution.

According to Al-Matari, the authority is currently training committees to start investigating the financial disclosure documents, after the hand over is finished.

Aden book fair: low turnout and no art books

By: Athmar Hashim
and Ebtisam Al-Asiri
For the Yemen Times

ADEN, April 11 — From March 22 to April 4, Aden hosted the second book fair, organized by the General Book Authority.

Around 150 Arab and local publishing houses participated with 200,000 titles. Visitors reported different reactions towards the performance of this year's fair and The Yemen Times met several to check out their opinions.

Um Mohamed, visiting a stand for publications on CDs and DVDs said, "Every media has its fans. CDs and DVDs can be useful for child education, but for me, reading books is preferable. At this time I'm interested to read about child upbringing, because it helps me to understand my own child's actions and how to respond to them".

Some visitors said that the fair suffered from a lack of art books.

"The fair this year lacks the art books that I'm interested in, especially those written by Yousuf Al-Seba'ee," said one of the visitors, who preferred to remain anonymous.

Religious books were abundant according to visitors who said they were

available in large quantities.

"The price of books varied so that every one could buy a book according to his or her own interests," she said.

Another visitor called Najmi Abdul Majeed described this year's book fair as under the desired level. "Marketing was weak and prices were high due to the devaluation of the Yemeni Riyal. Most books were religious, talking about reward and punishment and they are the same as those offered in previous years," he added. "Books about politics, history and studies were either unavailable or quite expensive," he said.

Emad Waheeb, a visitor who was moving between the publishing houses in the fair, said that when he visits any book fair, he often scans all the publishing houses and titles and then sees what he can buy.

"I found that all the publishing houses in this fair are the same ones that participated in past years," he said.

Books on personal development make up and cooking were the titles that attracted many women because they were discounted, according to Abdul Majeed.

The turnout to the book fair was poor, according to owners of publishing houses.

"The turnout was weak as compared

to other Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf," said Haytham Hassan from the Al-Amal publishing house in Cairo. "Although people from Aden are cultured and we discounted the prices, the turnout for purchasing remained minimal, probably due to the low income of people here. Most visitors came just to look and they did not tend to buy except during the final days of the fair."

He complained that last year he faced the same problems with the arrangement and timing of the fair.

"For the last two years, we have arrived two days before the opening and yet we stayed in the hotel without being able to arrange the books on the shelves. On the first day, therefore, we were not able to sell because we spent the whole day organizing our books," he said.

Ahmed Al-Numairi from the Sana'a Capital Library said that the fair had both positives and negatives.

"As a local publishing house, the timing of the fair was good for us because when it comes at the beginning of the year, there are new publications and we are able to buy these new books from Arabs participating in it," said Al-Numairi. "The negatives this year were the low turnout and the absence of art books."

Most deaths in Yemen are due to diabetes

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

SANA'A, April 11 — The Head of the Yemeni Association for Diabetes, Dr. Zaed Atef, revealed that 90 percent of patients in Yemen with this illness remain undiagnosed.

"The World Health Organization (WHO) annually donates USD 10,000 to diabetes patients, but not one single dollar reaches them, due to an absence of national strategy," Dr. Atef said in his lecture at the Al-Afif Cultural Foundation in Sana'a. "We call for health insurance for Yemeni diabetes patients such as in other countries, as most deaths here are as a direct result of diabetes."

"The causes of diabetes are obesity, unhealthy food, an inactive life, and hereditary factors," Dr. Atef stated, "Multiple births also cause diabetes in women."

"We have received a message from

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) calling for support in non-communicable diseases from the UN. The IDF have urged us to contact the Yemen representative to the United Nations and also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to support non-communicable diseases," he said. "The communicable diseases are supported enough, so we want the UN to focus on those non-communicable ones."

Dr. Atef indicated that 60 percent of patients in the world are afflicted with non-communicable diseases and 80 percent of them are prevalent amongst developing countries.

"These countries need strong support to alleviate the common diseases," he confirmed. "These are various, such as coronary diseases, diabetes, kidney, cancer, and lung diseases."

There are nearly 285,000,000 people

afflicted with diabetes throughout the world, according to Dr. Atef.

"There are increasing numbers of diabetes patients, especially in the developing world," he said. "There has been a decline in diabetes and coronary diseases in developed countries, but these countries have national programs and specialized institutions focusing on these illnesses."

"We totally refute people's allegations about the benefits of Qat as a diabetes cure," he concluded, "Qat increases diabetes symptoms and also makes chewers suffer psychological problems."

In 2000, there were 327,000 Yemenis afflicted with diabetes, according to statistics by the WHO but the Yemeni Association for Diabetes estimates that, by now, the number of Yemeni people suffering from this disease could be 1,300,000.

Images reveal devastation in Yemen's hidden conflict in the north

By: Amnesty International

SA'ADA, April 6 — The scale of the devastation caused by Yemeni and Saudi Arabian aerial bombardments of the northern Yemeni region of Sa'dah has been revealed in hundreds of images obtained by Amnesty International.

The pictures, given to Amnesty International by an independent source and taken in March 2010 in and around the town of al-Nadir, show buildings destroyed between August 2009 and February 2010 during the latest in a series of clashes between Yemeni forces and supporters of a Shi'a cleric.

Among the damaged or destroyed civilian buildings photographed are market places, mosques, petrol stations, small businesses, a primary school, a power plant, a health centre – and dozens of houses and residential buildings.

"This is a largely invisible conflict that has been waged behind closed doors. These images reveal the true scale and ferocity of the bombing and the impact it had on the civilians caught up in it," said Philip Luther, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa programme.

"This information has only now come to light through Yemenis who fled the conflict and have reached other parts of the country."

International humanitarian law forbids the targeting of civilian objects, as well as indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians, during conflicts. If such attacks are carried out deliberately, they are war crimes.

The bombardments came in the sixth round of fighting in the region since 2004 between Yemeni forces and the so-called Huthis – armed followers of a Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, a Shi'a cleric from the Zaidi sect killed in September that year.

Government restrictions on access to the region combined with landmines and other security concerns mean that no independent observers or media are believed to have visited the area in recent months.

The pictures are consistent with testimony given by many witnesses who had fled Sa'dah to Amnesty International delegates in Yemen earlier this month.

These witnesses, interviewed separately, repeatedly said that Saudi Arabian air



Three homes destroyed during an aerial bombardment, March 2010.

strikes, which began in November and were clearly different from earlier Yemeni military attacks, were of an intensity and power not experienced before.

They also said the strikes went on around the clock in the days leading up to their flight and the ceasefire in February 2010.

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, said in March that about 250,000 people from Sa'dah had fled the conflict, around 10 per cent of them ending up in camps. The rest are living with relatives or in derelict or half-completed buildings in the capital Sana'a and elsewhere in the country.

Unlike with previous rounds of fighting, families from Sa'dah fled further afield and most say they are not planning to return because their homes have been destroyed and they fear the conflict will resume.

Tensions in Sa'dah were originally sparked when followers of the late Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi, a cleric who had founded a movement in the 1990s to revive Zaidism, a branch of Shi'a Islam, organized protests against the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The protests focused on the Yemeni government's relations with the USA and were followed by arrests and detentions. In June 2004, the government ordered Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi to surrender. Armed clashes ensued between the security forces and Huthis until Hussain Badr al-Din al-Huthi was killed in September 2004.

The subsequent rounds of fighting in Sa'dah have resulted in hundreds, possibly thousands, of civilian casualties.

An agreement facilitated by the Qatari government in 2008 brought a short-lived lull in hostilities and some releases of prisoners on both sides.

However, the conflict resumed with new intensity in August 2009. The Yemeni government launched a military offensive codenamed "Scorched Earth" that included aerial bombing and deployment of ground troops.

In November 2009, the fighting spilled over the border with Saudi Arabia, which then deployed its army and air force inside Sa'dah.

All parties to the conflict are alleged to have committed serious human rights abuses, although Yemeni government restrictions on access to the area means that reliable information on abuses has been difficult, often impossible, to obtain. The government has accused the Huthis of killing civilians and captured soldiers.

Residents of Sa'dah have alleged that some Yemeni and Saudi Arabian attacks were indiscriminate and disproportionate, though it has not been possible to confirm this independently.

They have also said that attacks on markets, mosques and other places where civilians gather, as well as on large residential properties, have killed dozens of unarmed men, women and children.

Neither the Saudi Arabian nor Yemeni government has provided any explanation for such attacks. The Saudi Arabian government also denied refuge to people seeking to flee across the border to escape this new and more intense round of the conflict in Yemen.

Continued from page 1

New law proposal for audio and visual media

For establishing radios and channels the law bans non-Yemenis from creating any radio station or channel on Yemen's territory, according to Article 27. Any one wanting to create a radio station or channel should complete the application form that the private audio and visual media regulating committee would provide.

The applicant also should pay the license fee according to the kind of media tool he wants to establish, as for each one there are defined fees for radio, channel or website, according to Article 53. For creating a TV establishment that broadcasts countrywide, the person should pay YR 30, 200,000 as a license fee for ten years. But for TV establishment that only airs to some parts of Yemen, the owner of the establishment should pay YR 15,100,000 as a license fee for ten years.

For creating a radio station that broadcasts to all areas of Yemen, the owner of the establishment should pay YR 30,200,000 as a license fee for ten years, according to the same article. But for radio stations that reach

to only some parts of the Republic, the owner should pay YR 15,100,000 as a license fee for ten years.

The committee should scrutinize license applications for no more than three months starting from the application submission date, according to Article 32.

The agreement to license the establishment or cancel it comes from the cabinet after the Minister of Information submits his recommendations in a report presented to the cabinet, according to Article 36.

The establishment also should pay ten percent of advertising revenue to the committee every three months, according to Article 50. All collected license and advertisement revenues go to the Treasury and the committee has the right to allocate a percentage of this revenue to contribute in developing facilities of Public Radio and TV, in accordance between the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Finance, according to Article 51.

The law also entitles the Ministry of Information to appoint officials from its own personnel to monitor the performance of all private audio and visual media establishments and check that they do not break the law, according to Article 60.

According to Article 60.

All those who work in private audio, visual and electronic media should be working under the implemented press law in their professions, according to Article 6.

The proposal comes in 77 articles, in thirteen chapters.

Journalists' reaction to the proposal This law proposal has created much discontent among Yemeni journalists who consider it as a law that will directly target press freedom.

"It is a bad law targeting press freedom. It poses new restrictions that do not match the required openness," said Raheema Hujaira, Head of the Women Journalists Forum.

"The coming era for Yemen is a constructive period, moving through political, economic reform and combating corruption and the media is entitled to record that," she added.

Hujaira, who plans to establish an independent radio station in Yemen, said that this law would not be passed as there are many Yemeni activists who will fight for press freedom.

"We are enthusiastic about establishing independent radio, so we should all fight to cancel this law or get it amended," said Hujaira.

Their News

Felix Airways Signs on Coordination Agreement with Yemen Mobile

by Mohammed Al-Haj
For the Yemen Times

Felix Airways has signed with Yemen Mobile Telecommunications Company on a strategic partnership agreement to facilitate the exchange of services between both companies.

The convention signed by the Chief Executive of Felix Airways, Mohamed Abdullah Al-Aerashah and CEO of Yemen Mobile Engineer, Sadiq Mohammed Musleh.

The agreement includes participation, coordination in promoting for domestic tourism within the Yemeni provinces and to provide advertising services for Yemen Mobile via Felix Airways. In addition to other services and facilities that serve both companies.

Incorporated into the convention the implementation of the program to pro-



mote for tourism named "know your country" that will be adopted by Felix Airways among its holidays in coordi-

nation with the Ministry of Tourism, the program aims to promote the services of domestic tourism.

For his part, Shahab Al-Faqih, Marketing Director of Felix Airways that the two companies will work together in promoting for "know your country" program, which will facilitate the coordination for both companies.

Meanwhile, the meeting press conference has been organized by Mr. Nabil Al-Haidary, media officer in Felix Airways.

The Director General Executive of Felix Airways, stated that the company plans to launch new flights to the city of Abha in Saudi Arabia starting from next Wednesday, twice a week for up to Sana'a, Aden, after that in the coming period trips to the city of Jizan and Najran.

He said that this new airline comes after the launch of five regional lines in regular trips to (Sharjah - Salalah - Sultanate of Oman - Djibouti, Dammam and Medina).

In Brief

SANA'A Economy, good governance group to convene Riyadh

The working group of economy and good governance emerged from the Yemen's friends group is to convene at the foreign ministers level in Riyadh next May.

The weekly 26 September quoted Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Hisham Sharaf as saying that the Riyadh meeting would be preceded by two meetings, one in the German capital Berlin and the second in another capital has not been determined yet.

A final meeting of foreign ministers will be held in New York next September, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's meetings.

The working group of economy and good governance has held its first meeting in Abu Dhabi lately.

Sharaf said that the second working group on justice and role of law will hold its meetings in the Netherlands, Jordan and a country not defined yet.

The meetings will submit its initial reports to Riyadh and New York meetings.

Yemen, AFD discuss strengthening media cooperation

Director General of the Yemeni General Corporation for Radio and TV Abdullah al-Zalab held Wednesday talks with the Director of French Development Agency (AFD) in Yemen on ways of strengthening media cooperation between the two sides.

During the meeting, al-Zalab praised contribution of AFD to support development process in Yemen, expressing interest of the corporation to benefit from the support provided by AFD to develop technical performance in Yemen radio and television.

For his part, AFD director pointed out keenness of AFD to develop the current cooperation with the corporation, confirming its readiness to provide the necessary support to upgrade the Yemeni media performance; audio and visual.

MUKALLA President orders to release rioters in Hadramout

President Ali Abdullah Saleh received on Thursday in Mukalla leadership of the Local Authority and Security Committee as well as the General Prosecution officials of Hadramout.

During the meeting, they discussed a number of related issues to activities of the Local Authority as well as issues of concern to citizens in the governorate, in addition to riot and outlaw acts took place in the governorate.

He ordered to set free those jailed people due to out-law acts, specially those misled, in order to allow them the opportunity to prove good faith. He also directed security apparatuses to refer perpetrators of the riots to justice to undergo legal procedures.

President listened to a report over performance of the Local Authority and projects which have been implemented and those underway.

He gave directives to the security systems in the governorate to fully fulfill their tasks and responsibilities to preserve security and protect public and private properties, emphasizing professionalism and good behavior with citizens while carrying out missions.

Saleh affirmed the economic importance of Hadramout governorate, noting the great positive changes the governorate witnesses in areas of development, services and investment.

He renewed the call for investors to invest in Hadramout, in particular, and nationwide.

President puts foundation stone for fiber-optic cable 4th connection circle

President Ali Abdullah Saleh put on Wednesday the foundation stone of the supplementary project of the 4th Connection Circle of Fiber-Optic Cable between Dabab and Sah districts of Hadramout at a length of 185 km, totaled at YR500 million.

The project aims at modernizing and expanding connection to keep up with up-to-date technologies and secure telecommunication between the two districts and other governorates of the country as well. It would also secure international telecommunication.

Moreover, it targets providing telecommunication services for villages and residential gatherings in the area.

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Deputy Minister for Girl's Education and Training, Lamia Al-Eryani, to the Yemen Times:

“We will try to reach every village and help girls so that they can help themselves and their families.”

In Yemen, most students prefer a master's and PhD degrees to technical and vocational training diplomas. This is notably because of a lack of encouragement for the importance of technical and vocational education for Yemeni young people, according to Lamia Yahya Al-Eryani, Deputy Minister for Girl's Education and Training at the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training.

It is rare that Yemeni girls enroll in these courses, especially in rural areas, where there are very few technical and vocational training centers and a girl's education is usually controlled by inherited social traditions. Despite these traditions, many young female graduates with these diplomas have now joined the labor market.

The Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training's department for girl's education and training was established in late 2009 and has qualified about 25,000 girls, with different specializations, through many women's centers. Local and national organizations who advocate girl's rights to education, have praised the efforts of the deputy minister in encouraging Yemeni girls to seek technical and vocational training in order to enter the labor market.

Despite limited funds, Al-Eryani is trying to expand technical and vocational education by opening new institutes in Yemeni governorates. She is encouraging Yemeni girls, both from the city and the countryside, to join this training via local and international



Lamia Al-Eryani

organizations.

Deputy minister Al-Eryani holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Business Administration from the University of Kuwait, another in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Sana'a and a master's in Children's Rights from the Lebanese University in Beirut, as well as a Diploma in Early Childhood Development from the University of Victoria in Canada.

She is currently the Chairperson of the Shawthab Foundation Childhood and Development and a consultant on issues concerning children's rights. She has published two books, *My Memories Whisper to You* and *Convey Nostalgia*, and *A Chat*. She is currently finishing a new novel for woman. *Mohammad Ghouth interviewed Lamia Al-Eryani for the Yemen Times.*

organizations working in technical education and vocational for girls in the private sector. These are employed through private centers.

We have ongoing cooperation with local and international development agencies, implementing field research into this sector, in rural areas of all governorates. This includes the structure and professional facilities, as well as an update of the national strategy for technical and vocational education, including any new areas for joint strategies with the International Labor Organization.

The new strategic plan will meet the changing desires of girls in vocational and technical education and take into account the social labor market. It will address how we can change the negative perception of technical and vocational education for girls both in the countryside and city.

Are there organizations that support modernization in technical and vocational education for girls?

The Social Fund for Development has provided an analysis on the status of technical education and vocational training for Yemeni girls, and is developing a strategic plan to restructure sector management in education for girls at the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training Education, both at a central level and also in the remote governorates, far from the capital Sana'a. As well, it has developed a promising program for the construction of capacities and rehabilitation of girls into the labor market.

The World Bank has given us an expert in gender equality issues in employment and provided a revised strategy for technical and vocational education, so as to ensure that the issues of education for girls can be addressed.

The Department for Dutch Economic Development is supporting the establishment of a network set up by government, civil society organizations and the private sector to develop

cooperation in trying to increase the enrollment of girls to education. It is preparing a special guide for this purpose, which will hopefully strengthen the capacity of the education and training sector of girls in the labor market.

For his part, the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees has developed a special Women's Center in Aden, providing trainer training workshops.

The truth is that what has been achieved so far is the fruit of cooperation between all government agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations and international donors.

What are the new specialties added to the girls' education sector?

Specialties are as follows; a printing press, television and documentary film production, cartoons, and training in eye testing for appropriate medical glasses. We have created a special section for trade, accounting and secretarial work, office computers, hairdressing and beauty, sewing and embroidery, photography and management of weddings, fashion design, architecture, and agricultural production.

How can we change the negative perception in the community towards the education of girls?

We are trying to pinpoint and develop community awareness into the importance of education in this area and therefore focusing on changing the cultural negative perception in the field of technical education for girls.

I think that Yemeni culture has inherited many traditions which impede our task. As for adapting existing institutions within the culture in the countryside and the city, I think that this problem exists in many countries, not just in Yemen.

For example, a girl's father may be reluctant to send his daughter to a mixed Institute. We are trying to adapt to this situation and choose suitable places for girls, according to the means and capabilities available to us. We are trying

to change the so-called mixed institutes and change the views of the community. We can at least create qualified female teachers working in classes, encouraging family and society to educate their girls. We continue to attempt to open up areas such as the media and for girls to open their own private institutes and female schools.

We have produced a plethora of TV movies and brochures to raise awareness in the community about the importance of technical and vocational education for girls. These will be shown on television in the form of short commercials. We will also be distributing many of these in private girls' schools for post-primary education, with the cooperation of the German Department for Economic Development.

How far have you reached in this field?

Despite the short time of less than eight months since the establishment of this sector, about 25,000 girls have enrolled in technical and vocational education. We have set up dozens of women's centers and institutes, both technical and professional, throughout the various governorates of Yemen. Despite this, I can say that the participation of girls in technical and vocational education has not exceeded 13 percent. This is according to a recent report from the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education. They hope to be associated with the rising participation rate of girls in technical and vocational education. As to future plans, we have a draft plan for a more mobile education for rural girls, travelling from one village to another in each Yemeni governorate, so that they can educate girls and help them acquire the much needed practical skills.

The German Department of Economic Development is helping, via many projects, with the integration of girls into the labor market. In the sense that a girl from a certain area, needs to travel away from that area in order to enter the labor market, she may require other skills, such as life skills in project management and

the concepts and skills of training. This happens even before joining the labor market. So we are offering girls training programs to integrate them just after graduation from a center or institute for technical and vocational market work. This is in accordance with the conditions specified by the private sector. I think that this particular project has an important role. There is also cooperation at the present time to increase the enrollment of girls working towards qualifications for the labor market. Soul is one of the local organizations working in the field of technical and vocational education. It supports girls about to go into the labor market, helping them create a relationship with the society they are intending to enter.

What are the difficulties facing the updating of the girls education system in Yemen?

One is a failure to provide enough space for us within the ministry. We have been allocated only one side of a small building. There are also financial difficulties faced by the sector of technical and vocational education for girls. For example, I have plans to expand and modernize but there is no dedicated budget, especially since the government has reduced its expenditure to 50 percent. In the meantime, we are faced with so many difficulties that we have had to look for donors to support our development projects and to train Yemeni girls, both technically and professionally. We are continually striving to develop technical and vocational education for girls, in order to cope with many new developments. Our current interest is focused on girls in both rural and urban areas and we have a vision to find all working girls their specific career in life. There needs to be a relationship with the community surrounding many Yemeni girls who cannot even get a basic education.

We intend to reach every village and help these girls to help themselves and, in doing so, help their families too.

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Suleiman Daoud to the Yemen Times: "It is to the children that I owe everything."

Yemeni comedian Suleiman Daoud is perhaps best-known for his role in the popular children's series Kashkoosh. Through his roles on stage, he has distinguished himself as an actor and become in charge of children's theater at the Ministry of Culture. On April 1, he was honored by the Yemeni Poetry House for his role in raising awareness among society. He was the only actor among 37 writers and academics recognized for their talent.

By: Raghda Gamal
For the Yemen Times

How did you start out as a comedian?

My love for acting began from childhood. I used to watch movies and soaps and wished that I were the hero of these films and soaps. My first appearance was in the school theater, where I was a member of the scout team in school that used to organize art evenings.

This was until 1990 when I wrote a play called 'Ata'a in the Golden Cage,' which introduced me to directors who offer me to work with them on stage. [Ata'a in the Golden Cage discussed marriage, for example, how a father asks a lot of money from the man who wants to marry his daughter, but refuses to give his son the same amount for him to get married.]

Who encouraged you to be an actor?

The first one to encourage me was my father, who continues to do so despite all the frustrations such as lack of support. He is the one who stops me

from quitting when I feel frustrated and is my strong pillar.

Nowadays, my wife too encourages me and I want to thank her for everything she has done for me.

Did you follow any kind of training to become a comedian?

No, I'm an actor by nature. I believe that the most important thing for an actor is talent and, if he has it, he will continue.

Do you feel more at home on stage or in front of the television camera?

Theater is the 'father of the arts', and of course as I see myself more as a comedian in the theater. It comes first followed by television and radio.

Most of the time, you choose to act for children. What inspired you to act for children, not adults?

I never imagined myself as a representative for kids, but my performance in a series named Uncle Saber, where I played a character of a child, sparked the interest of director Ibrahim Al-Abeath, who offered me the starring role in the series Kashkoosh.

I would like to point out that the area of children's theater is a very crucial one, where the actor or the writer must be well equipped by the psychological study of the child to know the best way he/she will react. This is in addition to our problem here in Yemen of the lack of script writers and specialized writers for children.

Tell me more about your role at Kashkoosh series.

When I read the character of Kashkoosh, I was impressed by it and tried to study all its aspects. I spent time with children to know how they talk and their reactions to certain situations, so as to imitate in the series.

In the first season, I tried to adapt to the idea of playing a child's role, so I drew for Kashkoosh a particular image with the right outfits, and now I have ended up falling in love with this character.

Didn't you feel a huge risk of playing the role of a child?

Sure, especially because I didn't study anything related to children's drama, but the intensity of my love for the character in the beginning and the interaction of the young audience who cried "Kashkoosh" every time they saw me, made me decide to continue in the other seasons of the series.

Some critics say that the humor in Kashkoosh is stupid and that the series impedes children's development.

What do you think?

I have tried my best to represent the children of Yemen. If the critics are bold enough, they should create a better example than Kashkoosh instead of just criticizing.

Do you owe your fame to Kashkoosh?

It is to the children that I owe everything. Those children love me because I'm Kashkoosh in their eyes, Kashkoosh who the critics do nothing except criticize. I would love to send them [the critics] a message that if they have a good and creative piece for better entertainment for the children who watch Kashkoosh, I'm ready to play it.

These days, the world is celebrating World Theater Day. What plays did you take part in on this occasion?

I had roles in two plays. The first one was called 'Sentenced to Death,' directed by Mohammed Ali Al-Rakhm and produced by the manage theatre's management. The second is named 'The Jinn's Honey' and was directed by Yahya Suhail. Both plays mix comedy and tragedy.

What is your opinion of Yemeni theater?

In the past we have faced a recession, but the situation has improved now thanks to Abdul Hakim Al-Haj, the director of the theater and technical equipment department at the Ministry of Culture.



What do you think about showing Yemeni plays only at certain periods of the year?

Yemen faces a lot of economic and political issues that affect theater and we try to do our best through this bad situation.

Within this situation, what can be done to improve comedy in Yemeni theater?

The miserable situation of the country is the first reason for the low standard of Yemeni theater. We call on state officials to support the theater movement and its artists as without it we cannot create a culture among the people. It's so sad that talented Yemeni youth go astray towards addiction or terrorism, instead of their artistic talents being encouraged.

The situation will only improve if the government subsidizes theater, and encouraged businessmen to support

the activities of the Yemeni theater that competes with the rest of theaters around the world.

When you see Yemen's participants in the Arab festivals, you'll find that they are very talented. They compete with their colleagues and bring in awards only with basic material support, so imagine what the situation would be like if we were supported financially.

In your acting career, which one of your character roles are you most proud of?

Thank God, I am proud of all my roles because I first love a character and then work hard to give it all my abilities, which makes me love and feel proud of all my characters.

What are your future projects?
I'm preparing to shoot season three of Ajeeb and Ghareeb [a show discussing social issues for adults] and season five of Kashkoosh.

A new group of women at the Saleh Mosque think that in order to best raise the children of Yemeni fathers and foreign mothers, the mother's problems must be addressed first.

By: Shatha Al-Harazi
For the Yemen Times

Unlike most Yemeni teenagers, Samira spends most of her time at the Women Affairs' department at the Saleh Mosque, thinking up activities to help the foreign wives of Yemeni men. Samira is 16 and is the daughter of an American mother and a Yemeni father. She wants to help children like her, by starting with their mothers.

"If the mother has problems, then she won't have time to think about the best way to raise her children," she explained. "Differences between the father and mother mean that the children won't get the best out of their parents."

Samira's mother encouraged her daughter to start this program and was the first to participate in an agenda that welcomes the Muslim and non-Muslim foreign wives of Yemeni men to share their experience of living and bringing up their children in a different culture from their own.

The idea behind gathering all these mothers together is to find a way to raise their children, incorporating the strengths of both Eastern and Western cultures. For this to be possible, said participants, differences between the parents must first be addressed.

"Their differences appear with the passage of time," said a British lady who is married to a Yemeni man. "They argue over small things in their daily lives: decisions on what they are supposed to wear, what kind of topics they are allowed to discuss, and how to raise their children. All of this could lead them to the same conclusion: it is preferable to be stuck in unhappy marriage rather than be alone in a foreign country and deprived of their children."

Samira started by gathering the foreign wives of Yemenis at weekly meetings at the Saleh Mosque so they can share their problems. She has now been joined by Huda Al-Yafi'i, head of the Women Affairs' department at the mosque, where she helps advise newly-converted Muslim wives, according to her own experience.

One American woman said, "I had lived my life like any American person. I used to hang out with my friends, stay out late sometimes. It was my choice to become a Muslim," she explained. "No one forced me to convert to Islam, but what makes me sad is that my husband wants to raise our children in a strict religious way. He forces them to pray without convincing them that this is the right thing to do. My daughters

don't have much choice in their life." She added, however, that her daughters could still mix with female friends, which was good.

A Muslim British woman explained that she refuses to forget her culture of origin and become 'a copy of his female relative.'

"Although Yemen is a good country to live in and people here are so generous and helpful, they want us [foreigners] to emulate them, forget our past and own culture, and merge in with theirs," she said.

"When a Yemeni man travels abroad, he meets a foreigner and falls in love with her," she explained. "He convinces her to marry him and become a Muslim as well. In order to do that, he acts very open-minded, but once he brings her to Yemen he changes and many things are forbidden to her. He wants to make her a copy of his female relatives."

Unforeseen dependency

Another wife of a Yemeni, a Muslim American woman, said, "Some of us have opposed their own families to marry an Arab Muslim man, which means that she loses everything because of her choice. By coming to Yemen, she becomes more dependent on him to help her adjust in society. If he changes and starts to force her to act in a certain way, she will become miserable in a foreign country, where no one speaks her language."

"She might even regret marrying him, although she may not regret becoming a Muslim," she said.

"Another problem that foreign women face is living with their husbands' families," she added. "They actually tell the husband to control his wife and intervene in every decision they make, like wearing the hijab, how she should clean the house, and even when to wake up."

Tradition versus religion

D. S. is a Muslim Russian who lives in Yemen with her Yemeni husband.

"Even if two Yemenis from different governorates married, they would suffer differences," she said.

"All these problems wouldn't appear if people followed Islam over traditions, but because it's the traditions that stand in the way and create these problems. I am very active with Russian women here, so that's why I know a lot of their problems," she said.

"The most important factor that makes them sad is not having anyone who speaks their language. I know that when they moved with their husbands to live here, some of them were shocked because their husbands suddenly behave like different people.

When they return to Yemen, some husbands experience a kind of culture shock at the huge disparity between Western life and Yemeni life, and as a result become close-minded," she added.

Hand-in-hand

Huda Al-Yafi'i, head of the Women Affairs' department at the Saleh Mosque, is working on a program called 'Hand-in-hand We Stand', to enhance the lives of foreign women in Yemen.

"We are still at the beginning. Our idea was to work with the children, but we discovered that working with these children would be ineffective, if we neglected their mothers' problems," said Al-Yafi'i, explaining that it had initially surprised her when she realised these problems existed.

"This program of Samira's is very important because it highlights the foreigners' problems, not only in marriage but also about just living in a foreign country with a totally different culture. We are adding some programmes in the department to enable the foreigners to participate in social activities," she added. "We find that they face many problems adjusting to the new society, language, appearance and so on."

"We start with spiritual help, by gathering them so that they make friends," she explained. "That's how we fight their feelings of alienation. We listen to their problems and advise them."

Arabic and Islam courses

But the Women Affairs' department is doing much more. To help foreign women blend in, there will soon be Arabic language, Islamic sciences, and Yemeni culture classes at the mosque, said Al-Yafi'i.

"We hope that many foreigners reading this article will contact us so that we can know more about their problems, whether they are Muslims or not. We will also concentrate on the children of parents with two different cultures, for a new generation with strong skills."

Participants in the program think that husbands should participate. Although they have not yet decided how to involve this group, they have thought of offering lectures on how to treat a wife in Islam and how to accept her differences. If a husband could be helped to understand that his wife needs to be happy in Yemen, the children would automatically benefit, they said.

The product of two cultures

M.G. is one of those children. "I like having a foreign mother. I speak two languages and inherit two cultures," she said. "What is weird is that my mother lived her life so freely whilst I don't have that choice. Sometimes people

think that I act stranger than others of my age, and I am more Western than Yemeni - although my father prevents me from a lot of things because society would judge me badly."

"My mom's family are American Christian," she added. "They always ask about my prayers and fasting but they are interested in it. But some people in Yemen think that they are better Muslims than me because my mother was Christian before."

"I like wearing the balto [long black robe], but not when someone forces me to wear it," she continued.

Yemen versus the US

"I feel safer in Yemen because teenagers here are more mature than in the US," she continued. "There are no drugs here, but I hate it that most of the authority here belongs to men, while women rarely make their own choices."

"I have many friends, most of whom are Yemeni. They like me a lot, but I can feel that they don't consider me Yemeni like themselves," she said. "But the strange thing is that no male friends are allowed in Yemen, while it doesn't make any difference in the US."

"I love living in Yemen, but if I had to choose, I would choose the US because of better education and the freedom given to women," she said.

Contract title:

Supply of Vehicles to the Social Welfare Fund – III Project at Sana’a/Yemen

Publication reference :

EuropeAid/129-938/M/SUP/YE

Social Welfare Fund

Project In Support to the Social Welfare Fund
Republic of Yemen – Phase III (Europeaid/127434/C/SER/YE)
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and will also be published on the EuropeAid website:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>.

The Summary Procurement Notice shall also be published on the relevant Contracting Authorities Local Press: Yemen Times and Al Thawra Newspapers

The deadline for submission of tenders is on **18 May 2010** and must be at least 30 calendar days after the date of publication of this advertisement.

Possible additional information or clarifications/questions shall be published on the Contracting Authority’s website: <http://www.swf.gov.ye>

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Information where to find questions and answers and clarifications shall also be published on the Contracting Authority’s Local Press - Yemen Times and Al Thawra Newspapers.





IT Programmer Analyst
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Job Duties:

- a. Develops customized programs and modifies existing systems using corporate standards and according to the Standard Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC). Lotus Notes, MS .NET, Access, MS-SQL Server, Crystal reports and Oracle are the standard programming languages and databases used for developing customized software solutions. User requirements, and client interviews, are documented and conducted by the programmer, in conjunction with the IT Applications Specialist, and ultimately approved by the IT Manager prior to any work commencing.
- b. Performs all necessary system maintenance on applications used by departments such as Finance, RDD, Drilling, Production, Construction, Human Resources, HSE&SR, and Training. Such applications include, but are not limited to, SAP, DIMS, DriveRight, Lotus Notes, OFM, and Abra.
- c. Provides general maintenance and integration as required for all business applications. General maintenance includes, but is not limited to, small program modifications, program fixes, report changes, file repair and ad-hoc reporting.
- d. Assists in testing applications for projects involving major infrastructure or related business application changes, ensuring proper application operation in compliance with Company standards.
- e. Provide general IT end-user support and troubleshooting, which would include Arabic/English Operating systems and MS-Office Suite.
- f. Follows standard project management methodology for development projects including estimating, timekeeping, monitoring, and variance explanation of man-days used.
- g. Responsible for adhering to the corporate IT Change Management guidelines as directed by IT Manager.
- h. Performs other similar or related duties as assigned by IT Applications Specialist.

Minimum Requirements:

- a. Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science or Computer Engineering.
b. 3 years experience, which would include a strong programming background specifically with new PC based development tools. Computer skills such as Lotus Notes, MS-Visual Studio .NET, MS-Access, Oracle PLUSQL, MS-SQL server, Visual Fox Pro, MS-Windows XP, MS-Office and Red Hat Linux.
c. Excellent knowledge of English.

- ◆ **o Apply for this Job please apply to: recruiting_yearsan@essexnrc.com**
- ◆ **Applications should be submitted NO later than Date April 26,2010** **Faxed applications will not be considered.**
- ◆ **Make sure that you mention the job title you are applying for in the email subject.**
- ◆ **Only short listed candidates will be contacted.**



Petrophysicist- Cased Hole
Position # 0847
@ CPF/BAKPF (Masila, Hadhramout)
For Yemeni Nationals Only

Basic Function:

Responsible to assist the Team Lead-Petrophysicist in all of the daily petrophysical work activities. This includes the scheduling, programming and basic interpretation of Electric Line and Slickline Logging surveys.

Job Duties:

The incumbent shall

- a. Assisting with scheduling all cased hole logging surveys and operations. This includes arranging for all equipment needs and some on-site supervision.
- b. Prepares all programs associated with on-site work and obtains proper program approvals. Ensuring that all approved programs have been issued and distributed as per approved distribution lists. Provides Calgary, Sano'a and CPF with all data requirements. Files all operational reports and survey results from work.
- c. Provides quality assurance by comparing the data between the gauges run in each survey, and after the data have been validated sends to Sano'a and Calgary in a timely manner.
- d. Provides quality assurance for all cased hole logs by confirming tool calibration for all tools run in each survey.
- e. Identifies the Production Log Application and Select a Tool Suite from a Well Type, Completion or well bore Configuration.
- f. Understand the purpose for and communicate technical tool specifications, rolling equipment requirements and associated service requirements to competently order out the necessary equipment in preparation for a cased hole logging job.
- g. Organize the lease and safely spots the necessary equipment to conduct a cased hole logging operation. Follow the Nexsen safety guidelines.
- h. Create and understand the optimum well conditions for a cased hole logging survey.
- i. Recognize, predict, avoid and plan alternative action for potential logging problems.
- j. Define logging objectives, develop procedures to meet those objectives and guide the logging service company through the logging program.
- k. Provide quality control supervision, recognize bad log data and change procedures to meet the objectives, if necessary.
- l. Guide the logging service company through field print preparation and presentation of raw log data.
- m. Help to maintain the CPF databases and distribution of; Cement Bond Log summaries, executive PLT Interpretation summaries and Temperature Surveys.
- n. If required to drive shall know and understand CNFPY "Safe Driving Practice".
- o. Is required to report any unsafe acts and conditions (vehicle, driving or workplace).
- p. Know and understand the Responsible Care Ethics. Will follow the Responsible Care standards as applicable to their role within the Organization.

Minimum Requirements:

- Engineering Degree, preferably in Petroleum, Mechanical or Electrical Engineering.
- Experience: Minimum of 5 years in Petroleum related field.
- Fluent in written and spoken English.
- Good physical health.

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- ◆ Only short listed candidates will be contacted



Petrophysicist Position #1001 – Sana'a Office
For Yemeni Nationals Only

Job Duties:

- a) Leads core description, stratigraphic and environmental characterization process. Uses a wide spectrum of available data including results from 3D seismic surveys, core data, wire line logs, borehole imaging logs, petrophysical attributes and engineering data in the characterization process.
- b) Predicts the presence of hydrocarbons (oil & gas) in wells for calculations of oil and gas reserves and for reservoir studies in order to assist in formulating appropriate Asset Management Plans (AMP).
- c) Provides assessments of discovered reserves and undiscovered potential reserves and quantification of uncertainty in these estimates to support both oil and gas exploitation programs using deterministic and probabilistic methods.
- d) Estimates hydrocarbon resource size in generated prospects and performs related risk assessments.
- e) Performs independent studies, and analysis, interprets and draws own conclusions.
- f) Designs and monitors logging and coring programs and provides quality control with the input of the department's geophysicists, geologists and reservoir engineers and incorporates operations geology input into overall interpretation.
- g) Evaluates independently complex data sets, seismic and well log data for hydrocarbon potential and makes recommendations based on technical and business experience.
- h) Incorporates biostratigraphic, log character analysis, and seismic data to develop interpretation of depositional environment and facies distributions.
- i) Works with team of engineers on well designs and incorporates engineering input into overall interpretation.
- j) Participates in multi-disciplinary team following development well drilling operations to evaluate results.
- k) Participates actively in technical meetings with partners and government representatives as required.
- l) Travels internationally and to the Operating sites a few times each year.

Minimum Requirements:

- a) BSc Geology, BSc Geophysics or Engineering with 4 years of related experience in an Oilfield Company or MSc in Geology, MSc Geophysics or MSc Engineering with 2 years related experience in an Oilfield Company.
- b) Minimum 4 years of related petrophysical experience is preferred.
- c) Comprehensive knowledge of geological mapping, modeling and cross section software is a necessity.
- d) Understand conventional and advanced logging tools/services, theory of operation and tool responses, evaluation techniques and data acquisition systems.
- e) Good knowledge of English a definite asset.

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تحت شعار: جيل الحفاظ .. جيل التسامح والبناء

وبرعاية كريمة من فخامة

الأخ المشير، علي عبد الله صافي، رئيس الجمهورية

وبالتعاون مع الهيئة العالمية لتحفيظ القرآن الكريم

والنظمية الإسلامية للتربية والعلوم والثقافة (إيسيسكو).

الم

الجمعية الخيرية لتعليم القرآن الكريم وجمعية تأهيل حفاظ القرآن الكريم ورعايتهم



Words of Wisdom



Many countries hold elections. Even when these are not rigged, they tend to cement the old patron-clientele relations in a new grab. The reason is that the people in power use their connections (and state funds, media, bureaucracy, etc.) to achieve the election results they want. The result is that they create docile parliaments. Elections thus end up enabling those in power to hold on to it.

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

OUR
OPINIONMaking money
on the side

Yemen has multiple challenges on many fronts, yet the most difficult is the Yemenis themselves. Unfortunately, the senses of right and wrong have become quite skewed in this beautiful country. Mainly because life has become very difficult, citizens resort to anything to achieve their goals. Sometimes what Yemenis want is a decent life with access to adequate basic services. But because the situation has become hopeless, the concept of "Do It Yourself" has never been more popular.

Yemenis use whatever means they get to make money on the side, usually using their position of authority to do this.

For example, every Wednesday, the Zubairi police station staff round up all the African men they can and keep them in the station's custody until each pays around YR 2,000. Zubairi Street is one of the areas in Sana'a where a lot of Africans meet. There are many restaurants and shops and so it is easy to raid the places where they congregate and round up fifty or more of them. The pretext every time is a different one, yet the same in principal. One Wednesday, it is about a car being stolen, another Wednesday, it is a house, and a week later, it is a lap top.

The police once rounded up the African men searching for the person who stole a chair, according to those who were arrested. I don't know how precious that chair was, but it was clearly an excuse to extort money, especially since those arrested are usually all released by Saturday whether the so-called stolen item was found or not. The suspicion is that under the pretext of security, police at this station are gathering money for their weekend qat sessions or whatever they do on the weekends.

The same happens with the internet café owners. There is a regulation that internet cafés in Sana'a are to close down by midnight. The police comb Hadda Road to check that all cafés are closed. Whoever has not closed his shop by then is either arrested or made to pay a fine that goes directly into the pockets of the security patrol.

The list goes on. The point is that extortion, blackmail, theft and corruption are increasing very rapidly because people have become desperate on the one hand, and irresponsible or unaccountable on the other. There is no one to ensure that the right and wrong doers are separated or treated differently. This used to be the job of the state law enforcement authorities. Now they are either part of the problem or indifferent to it.

The worst part is that the victims are silent and acceptant. They think that this is the way things should be or, that if they say or do something about it, they will be just wasting their time. This is wrong.

As media, we at Yemen Times have decided to expose and try to decrease these practices as much as we can. In coordination with the relevant authorities we will do something about it. We have already started a project with the Ministry of Interior to monitor the practices of police stations and report violations. I am positive that we can make a difference, because if we don't, who else will?

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

Welcome to Qaedastan

Yemen's coming explosion will make
today's problems seem tame

By: Gregory D. Johnsen
Foreign Policy

In 2010, Yemen will celebrate the 20th anniversary of national unification. But it won't be much of a party: This could well be the year Yemen comes apart. Even the brutal 1994 civil war failed to threaten the structural integrity of this country chronically teetering on the verge of disintegration as much as the current crises, all of which may be coming to a head in 2010.

Yemen has so many dire problems that it's easy to be overwhelmed. Al Qaeda is growing in prominence, a Shiite rebellion is expanding in the north, and the threat of secession is renewed in the south. There's a brewing fight over what comes after President Ali Abdullah Saleh, age 67, who has ruled Yemen for 31 years; the country's elites are locked in a closed-door struggle to take power once he departs. Finally, and perhaps most intractably, Yemen is an environmental and resource catastrophe in the making. The country's water table is nearly depleted from years of agricultural malpractice, and its oil reserves are rapidly dwindling. This comes just when unemployment is soaring and an explosive birthrate promises only more young, jobless citizens in the coming years.

The overburdened and crisis-ridden government has never felt much urgency in dealing with this last category of concerns. But Yemen's first two troubles, security and governance, are a combustible mix -- and together they might explode in 2010 if al Qaeda consolidates its gains by taking advantage of a government in disarray. The organization, already the most regionally and economically representative of any group in the country, has only grown stronger over the past three years. Once disorganized and on the run, today al Qaeda members are putting down roots by marrying into local tribes and establishing a durable infrastructure that can survive the loss of key commanders. They have also launched a two-track policy of persuasion and intimidation, first by constructing a narrative of jihad that is broadly popular in Yemen, and second by assassinating or executing security officials who prove too aggressive in their pursuit of al Qaeda fighters. So, while U.S. President Barack Obama is busy trying to stamp out terrorist safe havens in Jalalabad

and Waziristan, new ones are popping up in Marib, Shabwa, and al-Jawf.

For much of his career, Saleh has been a master manipulator, surviving three decades in power in a country where his two immediate predecessors were assassinated within a year of each other. He's lasted so long by relying on a coterie of relatives and trusted allies. But now, the style and structure of his rule are beginning to fracture. Yemen's economic straits mean that he has less money to maintain his patronage network or play different factions against one another. Within his own Sanhan tribe, the once-strong bonds of loyalty are starting to show signs of strain as relatives and other powerful figures scramble for position in hopes of eventually seizing the presidency themselves.

Whoever does take power in the capital of Sanaa may find there's not much of Yemen left to rule. The country continues to dissolve into semiautonomous regions amid various rebellions, all of which feed off one another. The military's inability to put down the insurrection in the north is emboldening calls for independence in the south, while other groups, who sense Saleh's growing weakness, are beginning to press their own demands.

The United States has not helped matters. Washington's continued insistence on seeing the country only through the prism of counterterrorism has induced exactly the results it is hoping to avoid. By focusing on al Qaeda to the exclusion of nearly every other threat and by linking most of its aid to this single issue, the United States has only ensured that al Qaeda will always exist.

Instead of imploding, Yemen is going to explode. And when it does, Yemen's problems of today are going to become Saudi Arabia's problems of tomorrow. This is already foreshadowed by Saudi involvement in the northern conflict and al Qaeda strikes from Yemen into the kingdom. By the time Obama and his team cobble together a smarter response, the time for prevention will have passed and their only option will be mopping up the mess.

Gregory D. Johnsen, a former Fulbright fellow in Yemen, is a Ph.D. candidate in Near Eastern studies at Princeton University and co-author of *Waq al-Waq*, a blog on Yemen.

Focus on Rebellion in Yemen, not al-Qaeda

By: Brian O'Neill

Daryl Cagle's Political Cartoonists Index

Following the attempted Christmas Day bombing, many in America realized that there was a major al-Qaeda presence in Yemen, which was until then an only vaguely-mentioned country. News stories began describing the wrenching poverty and looming ecological and demographic nightmare that Yemen was facing. There were many stories about a persistent rebellion in the north of the country, which only recently has seen a cease-fire. And now, news reports out of Yemen are dealing with an increasingly violent secession movement in the south. Readers can be forgiven for thinking that governing Yemen is an endless routine of crisis management; after all, this is entirely accurate.

While these series of problems can be met with eye-rolling, as they are almost comical in their repetition, the rebellion in the south is a different animal altogether than the other rebellions. It, more than anything else, has the potential to tear this fragile nation apart.

The briefest of history is in order: North and South Yemen (terms that are geographically imprecise but politically expedient) have only been unified since 1990. Before that, you had a northern Republic and a Marxist southern state, whose main economic benefactor was the Soviet Union. Following the end of the Cold War, two poor states united, but uneasily. Political maneuvering and violence, much of it at the feet of still-President Ali Abdullah Salih, led to war in 1994.

The north won, and, in the southern narrative, essentially colonized their countrymen. In the battle, Salih relied on jihadists

recently returned from fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, and saw this as a chance to use their skills against a "godless" enemy. In return, the fundamentalists were able to impose their writ upon what had been a more free, secular people (they also destroyed Yemen's only brewery, an event which to this day causes the heart to break). Land was taken, and the south slumped into even deeper poverty.

Needless to say this chafed. What is now known as the Southern Movement began to coalesce in 2007, when army officers demanded their pension, and younger soldiers decried regional prejudice in promotions - the army being one of the few avenues for social mobility. Salih cracked down, and what started as a peaceful call for more rights and less economic repression turned into a call for divorce.

This is of far greater importance than the immediate threat of al-Qaeda. Qaeda is dangerous, both to Yemen and the West, but ultimately they do not pose an existential threat to Yemen. What they can do is both distract the government from dealing with its larger problems and take advantage of the distractions. As long as the southern issue festers, Yemen will not be able to deal with what we see as most important. It should go without saying that pressuring Salih to focus entirely al-Qaeda is self-defeating.

But this movement puts the U.S. in a problematic position. Salih is our ostensible ally, and the cart to which we have hitched our wagon. We have done so tentatively, wary of his endless calculation and machinations, but in the end we need him. However, it is not in our interest, morally or strategically, to be allowing our ally to crush a movement demanding women's rights, decrying the crashing literacy rate, and asking for both economic opportunities and - most awkwardly - the removal from their lives of Islamic fundamentalism.

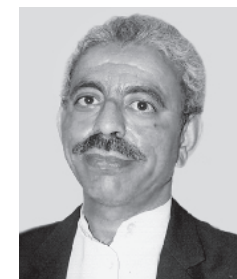
A divided country would break Yemen and let al-Qaeda flourish. Salih's brutish maneuverings could hasten that divide. Our desire to see Qaeda crushed might be interpreted green-lighting to that brutality. It gives one a headache. What the US has to do is withhold counter-terrorism money unless Salih goes to the table with the leaders of the movement, and works out a peace deal (which, to me, would have to include a large degree of autonomy, if only to build a wall to re-establish trust). It is difficult to temporarily ignore what is our primary interest in Yemen, but helping to solve this endless cycle of crises is the only way to ensure that a defeated al-Qaeda does not again resurrect itself from the fire.

Brian O'Neill, a former writer and editor at *The Yemen Observer*, is currently an independent analyst and Yemen security expert based out of Chicago. He has been published on Yemen in a number of journals, and blogs at *Always Judged Guilty*, which is largely, but far from entirely, about Yemen.

COMMON SENSE

In defense of the Honorable
Ms Jennifer Lowenstein
(Part 2)

A friend of mine, who understandably is disgruntled by the unusually exaggerated support that Israel and the international Zionist establishment enjoys from some of America's highest members of officialdom, did not feel I should have any appreciation for Ms Jennifer and her undoubting support in advocacy for Palestinian human rights. While my friend is entitled to express his views openly and candidly as he likes, I do not believe that anyone should ever regard human beings as good or bad in keeping with any ethnic, religious or racial background. Surely, there is no room for prejudice in defense of any cause, even with respect to the Palestinian cause. Here is my response to this streak of unnecessary and uncalled for ethnic hatred, which I would think to be not worthy of print, and the response below would surely indicate that Ms Lowenstein is worthy of much more than just appreciation and respect:



By: Hassan Al-Haifi

When the Jewish tribes betrayed the pacts between them and the Moslems, Mohammed overpowered them after the assault by the Meccan pagans was thwarted.

He left their fate to be decided by a JEW OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING. The latter decided their fate in accordance with the applicable traditional codes of the time and Jewish doctrine! (He ordered all men to be slain and the rest to be taken as slaves and all their property to be confiscated.) Thus most of them eventually adopted Islam, since their clerics did not prevent them anymore and were mostly freed as mainstream Moslems or joined the households of Moslems. Thus the last organized semblance of Jewish presence ended in the Arabian Peninsula.

At the time, the Christians were then chasing them wherever Christianity prevailed and the only Jewish communities of any connection to the Israelis were either becoming Moslems or living as small communities within Islamic domains.

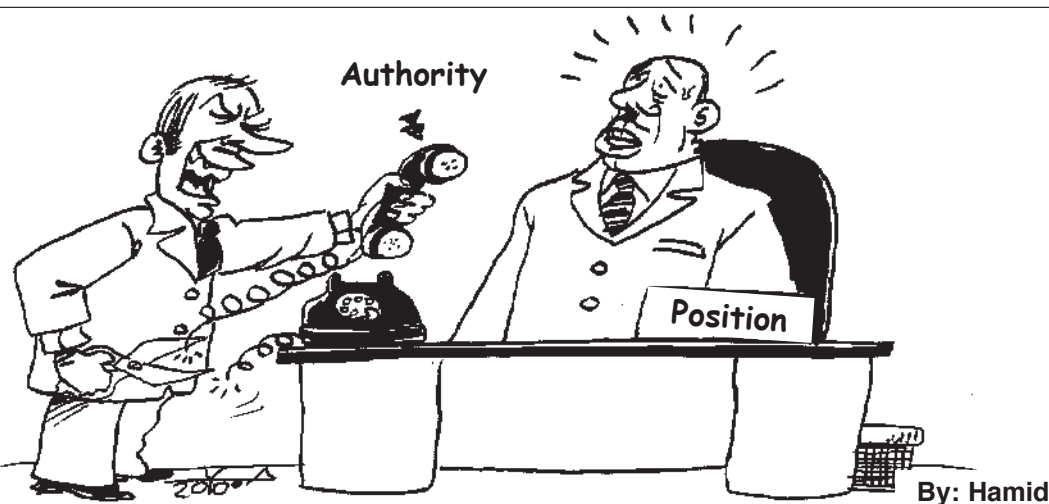
My experience over many years and many different relations with all types of people throughout the world did in fact reveal without question that there are indeed many Jews of good moral fiber and consciousness and who are very outspoken about Zionist ideology as being even anathema to Jewish religious teachings. I have known Ms. Lowenstein for quite a few years and her work on advocating for the Palestinians has surpassed the work of even many a prominent Palestinian advocate. I am not concerned about her background or even her political orientation. However, her writings on the awesome suffering of the Palestinians evoke a passionate feeling of bewilderment at the sick sadism of a chauvinistic ideology and her literary acumen expresses this far better than I have ever seen any journalist show. Moreover, she has gone to the field and exposed herself to perilous danger in an effort to expose the truth about the horrific oppression by the international Zionist movement of the Palestinians. I therefore cannot find any reason to ever doubt the sincerity of her unflinching effort to reveal the truth about the evil likes of Benjamin Netanyahu Ehud Olmert and before that Ariel Sharon, and she has done so with a literary finesse that surpasses even the capture of a still or moving picture camera lens. My frequent communications with this fine brave lady (she has been threatened in the US and in the Holy Land and often given the run-around career-wise for her unquestionable anti-Israeli stance) have inspired a very deep understanding of her true values and strong sense of human justice and equally strong contempt of man's recurrent inhumanity to man, especially in its Zionist cloak.

Here is a sample of Jennifer's writings. It is old, but I think you will agree that it makes a clear case for the fallacy of human justice in our age and the gross irresponsibility of mainstream media in revealing the truth about the ongoing tragedy that is painfully being unfolded daily in the Holy Land: <http://www.counterpunch.org/loewenstein08172005.html>

We, as writers, must recognize that anyone who possesses the powerful ability to put down thought on paper and reflect the horrible realities of life in convincing literary text is indeed worthy of our respect and unflinching support, without any erroneously misconceived biases, that might blind us to the fact that all human beings are indeed equal in composition and in human instinct, which fundamentally stands for good, until it is ruined by the evil SOCIAL orientations that have sought to partially or fully destroy the good in all of us, by one way or another."

Hassan Al-Haifi has been a Yemeni political economist and journalist for more than 20 years. He may be blogged at: <http://com-senfromyem.blogspot.com>

SKETCHED OPINIO



By: Hamid

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Yemen: Where men marry children

Fathers marry off pre-teen daughters here for many reasons, not least to remarry themselves

By: **Mira Baz**
Special to GlobalPost

A new white dress, chains of gold jewelry sparkling brightly and more attention than this 13-year-old girl had ever received before: It was like playing dress-up, but better, for Zainab Hussein.

"I'm a bride and I'm getting married!" she bragged to her friend, showing off her new jewelry.

A few days later, Zainab, who'd barely reached full growth, was married off to a 30-year-old groom who also was her cousin. He paid \$5,000 to Zainab's father for his child bride.

Now 28, she says of the experience: "It was very difficult. I still don't know who to blame. Blame myself? Blame my father? Or my mother? I don't know. I blamed my parents a lot."

There's much about her marriage that Zainab prefers not to recall. She had dreamed of becoming a doctor, but talks about it as if it were someone else's dream. She laughs occasionally and nervously, bitter and confused emotions about her early marriage bubbling toward the surface.

The ancient tradition of early marriage remains widely practiced in this country the United Nations qualifies as one of the poorest on the planet. Three million to 5 million Yemeni girls who live mostly in rural areas are often married barely into their teens, and sometimes younger, according to an estimate by the Women's National Committee.

Official figures for the average age of marriage don't exist. A recent study sponsored by OXFAM estimates that over half of Yemeni girls are married before they're 18, but the Women National Committee believes that in reality early

marriage is much more widespread.

Yemen emerged from centuries of isolation following a revolution in 1962, which established a modern republic. Without the resources of its oil-rich neighbors in the Gulf, it continues to be one of the poorest and most under-educated of Arab countries. Running water, electricity, education and other services are lacking in many rural areas.

Only 66 percent of the population had "improved drinking water sources" in 2006, Unicef found. Nearly half the population lives on less than \$2 a day, according to the World Bank, and the country has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.

There's no absence of protest against early marriage in Yemen. Local development organizations, along with U.N. agencies and the many international NGOs here, have lobbied since 2000 for a law that criminalizes marriage for women younger than 18. Last year, a draft

law settled on 17 as a compromise, but it failed in parliament due to what activists describe as strong opposition from influential conservatives.

And this week, dozens of Yemenis demonstrated in front of parliament in a show of support for a proposed new draft law that specifies the minimum marriage age for women at 17. Yemeni rights organizations have been lobbying the government on the new draft law since last year, but it has yet to be ratified due to opposition from religious conservatives.

Changing values and deeply rooted traditions, particularly one such as early marriage, will be tough here. Fathers believe they are protecting their daughters' chastity and purity from what are considered the dangers of adolescence when young men and women become sexually aware. If a girl entered a romantic

or sexual relationship before marriage, it would damage a family's honor. Some say earlier marriages offer security to these brides.

Development agencies point to a prevalence of early marriage in struggling countries and highlight those that succeeded at development and growth only after abolishing the practice.

According to the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA): "It is no coincidence that the same countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East that have high rates of child marriage are those with high poverty rates, birth rates and death rates, greater incidence of conflict and civil strife, and lower levels of overall development, including schooling, employment and health care."

When Zainab moved to her husband's rural village, she entered a life of endless toil. She shepherded the goats each day, gathered wood for the stove, and tilled the field as is typical of women's responsibilities in rural areas. Early every morning she would fetch drinking water from a source hours away.

She carried water even while pregnant, suffering three miscarriages.

Girls between 10 and 14 years old are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than women in their early 20s, UNFPA figures show, because their bodies are not yet physically equipped for pregnancy and childbirth.

"In rural areas, marriage is often viewed as bringing a helping hand to the house, to serve the family both inside the house and in the field," said Hooria Mashhour, deputy chairperson of the Women National Committee.

Zainab said she felt like a stranger among her husband's family. He returned to his other life in Saudi Arabia two months after they married. She was left alone to wait for his visits.

"When a groom is an older man," said Fawzia Al-Muraissee, the Yemeni Women's Union head of family guidance and health, "there's usually a financial aspect. If the groom works abroad, the father thinks that he's probably doing well and that his daughter will have a better life."

The younger the bride, the greater the age difference in the couple, according to a study by Barbara Mensch, titled "Trends in the timing of first marriage," cited by UNFPA. Based on research in 16 sub-Saharan African countries, the study found that husbands were on average at least 10 years older than their 15- to 19-year-old brides.

"Some believe that older men feel rejuvenated when they marry younger women," said Mashhour. "On the other hand, it could be a test that a man is still attractive to younger, beautiful women. ... From another perspective, a young girl is seen as better able to take care of an older man than an older wife."

When she bore her first child at 15, Zainab was angry, so angry, she'd strike her daughter in front of her husband's family to antagonize them.

"I had no feelings for my daughter, even when she got sick," Zainab says, now ridden with guilt. "I didn't have any maternal feelings. Now, why would I hit my daughter? She did nothing to deserve punishment. I just needed someone to take care of me and to love me, especially since my husband was away."

Yemen's civil society and government organizations, with the support of international development agencies, are working hard to combat early marriage. The Yemeni Women's Union launched a project last year to raise awareness. Villagers learned of the complications and psychological burden of early marriage and pregnancy.

The villagers said they were unaware

of the psychological burden that child brides developed. But their responses were emphatic.

Female villagers said they could not prevent their daughters from being married, Al-Muraissee explained. For example, Zainab's mother was furious about her daughter being sold off so young, but was powerless to thwart it.

"You have to educate our husbands, because they have the last word," the villagers told Al-Muraissee.

"And we did," she said. "We sent men to raise awareness among the husbands."

Some of the men were deeply affected, and resolved not to marry their daughters at an early age, while others were skeptical and resistant, she said.

Education is squandered on women headed for a lifetime of physical labor, according to local sentiment. It's a losing investment, and besides, it risks turning their daughters into unmanageable wives, so the perception goes.

The awareness project convinced villagers that an educated woman can contribute not only to her family — such as helping her children learn — but also to the village as a teacher, a midwife, or a healthcare worker for the women. It demonstrated that early marriage continues the cycle of poverty.

Efforts are paying off, but slowly. World Bank figures show that literacy among women age 15 and older improved from around 34 percent in 2005 to more than 40 percent in 2007 following programs such as the Union's.

Yemeni men say they, too, are victimized by early marriage. Sitting on a rocky ledge in the remote rural town of Al-Qobai, Mohammed Said, 27, gazed deeply at a stretch of barren land, beautiful and haunting. Shyly, he said he wanted to find a husband for his 8-year-old

daughter.

He spoke candidly, with no edge of cruelty. His daughter's price, or "mahr," which would be paid by her groom, seemed to be his only way out of his first and unhappy marriage. He said he needed the mahr money to marry a second wife.

It's just the way things are in this country, he said.

Men who marry during their adolescence grow unhappy with young brides, said the Yemeni Women's Union. With polygamy an option, 70 percent of men who married young said they later married a more like-minded second wife of their choosing, and reported being happier.

Al-Muraissee says.

Teenage bride Zainab said she thinks Yemeni men prefer younger women to mold into what they would like them to be. When her husband became ill and needed to be nursed, she stayed to help him, partly out of sympathy, partly out of fear that she would be unable to take her children with her.

"I couldn't leave him alone while he was sick," she says. "That's not right."

She became the sole provider for the family, farming and giving birth to three more children.

Zainab forced her husband to move to the capital with her. She continues to care for him, worried about losing her children if she divorces him.

"I couldn't take it anymore. I was in my 20s but I had aged so much, and I had had enough of rural life. I thought, 'My daughters will be 12 or 13 and I'll have to marry them off if I stay here.' So I moved my family to Sanaa, and decided to take a menial job. I wanted my daughters to go to school and graduate, because I was deprived of an education ... and of my childhood."

Released in translation

Imprisoned for alleged errors in translation, the ‘Wayward Quran Translators’ have been released from an Afghani jail

By: **Rachelle Kliger**
The Media Line

Three Afghanis have been released from an Afghani jail after serving short sentences for allegedly mistranslating the Quran, Islam's holy scripture.

Journalist Ahmed Ghous Zalmai, publisher Mohammad Ateef Noori and community leader Mullah Qari Mush-taq, were released on March 20, the International PEN organization said.

Reporters Without Borders, which has been following the case, confirmed their release as part of a presidential pardon in honor of the Nowruz festival and the first day of spring.

Zalmai and Mullah Mushtaq were serving a twenty-year prison sentence and Noori a five-year prison sentence.

"Obviously we are delighted," Cathy McCann, a researcher on Asia and the Middle East

for International PEN's Writers in Prison Committee, told The Media Line. "Broadly speaking, this appears to be a politicized case whereby the individuals concerned became caught up in a tension between secular political forces and the country's religious leadership."

PEN has been involved in a joint diplomatic effort to secure the release of a number of writers in Afghanistan.

"This case was raised through diplomatic channels with the Afghan authorities alongside other high profile cases, notably Said Parvez Kambakhsh," McCann said. "Ultimately, the release of Zalmai, Noori and Mullah Mushtaq is thought to have been the result of New Year pardons approved by religious leaders."

According to International PEN's information, the three were convicted in September 2008 under article 130 of the Afghan constitution for publishing the Quran in Dari, a Farsi dialect spoken in Afghanistan.

The translation was carried out by an Iranian living in the United States.

Zalmai said a copy of the translation was brought to the Tamim-e-Ansar Mosque in Kabul by an unknown individual in September 2007, and was very well received by those present.

He was asked to use his position as a well-known journalist and head of the publication department of the Attorney General's office to find a way to publish more copies of the translation.

Mosque leader Mullah Qari Mushtaq gave his authority as a religious scholar

for the new translation and Zalmai found a publisher.

After it was published, however, fundamentalist groups, parliamentarians and clerics demanded an 'exemplary punishment' for those involved in the publication.

A Kabul court sentenced the journalist Zalmai to 20 years in prison alongside Mullah Qari Mushtaq, leader of the Tamim-e-Ansar Mosque and a respected religious figure, in September 2008. Publisher Mohammad Ateef Noori was handed down a five-year sentence.

The conviction reportedly came about because they failed to print the Arabic original version of the Quran alongside the translation, as reportedly required by Islamic law in Afghanistan. There were also alleged errors and misunderstandings in the translation. Critics of the sentence said that the original verdicts exemplified the tight clutch that conservatives and Taliban sympathizers have over the judiciary in Afghanistan.

"There are still a lot of things to do to improve the polity and independence of the judiciary," Vincent Brossel, head of the Asia desk at Reporters Without Borders (RSF) told The Media Line. "Many religious people and conservatives have been influential in the judiciary at dif-

ferent levels and the case of Zalmai was very clearly instrumentalized and used by the conservatives sitting in the judicial system. The judiciary is abusing the blasphemy issue. They have trials where the defendant cannot oppose the accusations because it involves very risky issues."

"When you talk about blasphemy, the courts never consider freedom of opinion," he continued. "They just look at the religious angle. The sentences were very long so it shows how the judiciary is under the influence of the conservatives."

A positive trend, he added, was that lawyers in Afghanistan are now better qualified to defend their clients than they were in the past.

"But the judges are the same," he said. "So we don't see much change."

Karin Ask, an Afghanistan researcher with the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) told The Media Line that cases of this kind are not new to Afghanistan.

"The release follows previous patterns where Afghan civil rights activists and journalists who speak up, for example on an alternative interpretation of women's rights in Islam, are first convicted and only released after pressure from national and international activ-

ists," she said.

Ask explained that the severity of the original verdict was due to the sensitivity of the issue, in that translations of the Quran are seen as "taboo and sacrilegious by many orthodox Muslims."

"Making the text accessible in the vernacular is also a threat to the authoritative interpretation of the religious experts, the Ulema," she added.

John Macleod, Senior Editor and Acting Program Director for Central Asia at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting said the case could be drawing on a general atmosphere among conservatives in the country.

"It may be less about specific political opponents hijacking the issue than about conservatives in general seizing upon almost anything they regard as wrong — Indian films on TV, allegedly blasphemous publications, whatever — in order to harness a general sense of public discontent and beat up a government that is susceptible," he told The Media Line.

"The Western-backed government has to show it is committed to Islamic values in order to beef up its local credibility," Macleod continued. "It isn't that religion drives everything. It's that it is a very potent force in identifying who one

is and whom one is against. The Taliban base their claim to legitimacy by saying they are more religious than the government, which they argue is corrupted by Western influence. The government has to defend itself. It's an explosive debate. The more you can prove you are holier than your enemies, the more you discredit them."

Their release is believed to have been the result of diplomatic pressure.

"The Afghan authorities are being pressured from many sides," Macleod said. "On the one side, there are the kind of conservative forces who pushed this case. On the other is the international community which is effectively keeping them in power through military might, but has been disconcerted by the general lack of governance and a sense that last year's elections were deeply flawed... For the latter, it isn't great to be seen to be backing a system that locks people up using the same kind of reasoning the Taliban employ."

"The release is probably due to the embarrassment such convictions cause to the national government, which just doesn't need accusations that it is implementing draconian religious laws at a time when its international credibility is already at stake."

Is China Asia's Stabilizer?

By: **Fan Gang**

All eyes this week were focused on President Clinton's summit meeting with President Jiang Zemin. Although disagreements between the two men over human rights aroused the most notice, a deep, surprising harmony about Asia's financial crisis was also on view for those who cared to look. For while every currency in East and Southeast Asia was devalued recently (some more than once), China's currency, the RMB, remains steadfast. Indeed, as Japan's economy flounders, America -- like most of the world -- praises China's emergence as a force for stability in the chaos of Asia's regional economy.

But can China sustain this "contribution" to regional stability and still take care of its national interests? Across the Pacific, people fret about the RMB's continuing stability. Such fears are unjustified, for it is in China's interests

to keep the RMB from depreciating, particularly given China's current external conditions. Because of its large trade surplus (\$40 billion in 1997) and increasing foreign exchange reserves (\$139.9 billion, equal to 15% of GDP) China is struggling against the pressures of the RMB's appreciation, rather than depreciation.

Since Asia's crisis broke out, China has suffered a sharp decrease in exports to Southeast Asian countries, but has enjoyed increased exports to other markets, such as America and Europe. In the first quarter of 1998, for example, exports to the US increased by 24%, and exports to European countries increased by about 30%. As a result, China's exports in the first quarter of 1998 increased by 12.8%, its trade surplus was \$10 billion, up 56% compared to the same period last year.

This May China did suffer its first monthly fall in exports, by -1.5%. But China's imports decreased by even more, dropping 2.8%. So a trade surplus

remains, and foreign exchange reserves continue to grow, and now stand at about \$150 billion. From a purely technical point of view, China is well able to maintain the exchange rate unchanged.

Regional exports have declined by more 20% since last July; investment from the region into China has fallen too. Any further decline of the regional market for Chinese exports and/or in investment from the region will worry Chinese policymakers. Thus stabilization and recovery in all Asia is in China's interests, even if recovery in those countries which devalued their currencies leads to more intense competition in world markets for China.

Another factor working against RMB depreciation is that deterioration in China's balance of payments may not improve China's international competitiveness. China has over \$130 billion in outstanding foreign debts, equal to about 12% of GDP at today's exchange rate. Depreciation will inflate China's debt burden and increase the costs for

additional borrowing that the government may undertake to finance its infrastructure investment projects.

Depreciation, moreover, may also not improve the competitiveness of Chinese goods either, as up to 40% of China's exports nowadays are from manufacturing industries using imported parts and materials.

Complicating the debate is Hong Kong. Devaluation of China's currency may have a positive direct impact on Hong Kong because Hong Kong is a net importer from Mainland China. However, the indirect impacts are negative and risky. If China devalues it will incite a new round of competitive devaluations across Asia. In such circumstances, Hong Kong's Dollar would be exposed to another wave of "attacks" from speculators. Defense of Hong Kong's peg to the US dollar would be more costly than anything experienced so far.

China would be better-off if it returned to the "managed float" it practiced since 1994 but pushed aside in

the wake of Asia's crisis and the need for a stable RMB. Such flexibility, by allowing for slight incremental changes over time, would provide investors with greater certainty, as it would sweep aside today's worries about whether or not China can keep its exchange rate fixed at today's level or sharply devalue the RMB downward.

Whether or not China will enjoy such flexibility again depends on regional stability. So long as Asia remains unstable, the negative impact of RMB devaluation on the regional market for Chinese goods and the Hong Kong dollar will be the primary focus of Chinese policymakers. But today's willingness to stabilize the regional economy does not mean that China will pay any price for stability, nor that it will do carries these regional burdens forever. Three factors may cause China to change course:

1. If the Japanese yen again falls dramatically, inciting another round of regional devaluations;

2. If China's domestic market picks

up and demand for imports increases significantly, causing a trade deficit;

3. If the Asian economies that devalued their currencies recover and significantly increase their exports and China begins to have a large trade deficit

Beyond managing the uncertainties surrounding Japan's economy through the rest of this year, the challenge for Chinese policymakers will come when Asian economies start to grow and China's domestic market heats up because of the government's ambitious infrastructure investments. If all Asia is not stabilized by that time, it will be very difficult for China to make internationally-minded decisions in their management of the RMB.

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For more than a decade, Canadian Nexen's scholarship program for Yemeni students has been a success story



By Fakhri Al-Arashi
NewMedia

Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen proudly announced its new group of scholarship recipients on March 2nd. The new students will join their peers at the University of Calgary in Canada. The 11 new recipients were selected from over 500 applicants from all over Yemen and the competition was tough.

The 2010 recipients were announced in the presence of H. E. Abdulaziz Abdulghani, Chairman of the Shura Council and Head of Nexen's Scholarship Steering Committee, and H.E. Amir Al-Aidaroos, Minister of Oil & Minerals and Member of the Committee. Also in attendance from the Yemeni government was Dr. Mohammed Mutahhar, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Mr. Phil Milford, President & GM - Canadian Nexen Yemen, Mr. Ali Sohaiki, Vice President & Deputy GM - Canadian Nexen Yemen, and Ms. Andrea Bosnjak, Manager, Community Investment, Nexen Inc. - Calgary, Canada, who are also part of the committee. Also, the scholarship 11 recipients attended the announcement in addition to a number of press reporters. To be clear, Nexen usually fund 10 scholarships annually. This year, a female recipient has been selected to replace another female recipient that had been selected last year and recently withdrew from the program due to her special circumstances. It is worth mentioning that Nexen's Scholarship Steering Committee includes H.E. Dr. Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H. E. Dr. Saleh Ba-Surrah, Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research, as active members.

Canadian Nexen has a world-class operation in Yemen. The company has been working in Yemen for almost 20 years, operating Masila Block 14 and East Al Hajr Block 51 in Hadhramout. During this time it has also supported the country's development in numerous areas including education, health, electricity, water, roads, sports, human resource capital and infrastructure.

The most well-known program Canadian Nexen created is its post-secondary scholarship program in Yemen. The company wanted to implement a legacy project to recognize the positive relationship it has with the Yemeni government and to thank the Yemeni people for its support. In 1998, the company established a merit-based scholarship program which has awarded 120 scholarships to date. This unique educational opportunity has transformed the lives of young Yemeni men and women. In addition, it has served as an example to other companies in Yemen who have introduced similar scholarship programs to advance the educational attainment of Yemenis.

Mr. Edward Prados, Country Director of AMID-EAST Yemen said: "Canadian Nexen is the pioneer of the private-sector scholarships program in Yemen. Their program is considered to be the most successful, largest, and oldest such scholarship. For the past twelve years, Canadian Nexen has donated 120 scholarships including this year. The program is very prestigious and well known as a unique and generous opportunity which contributes to develop the skills of talented Yemeni youth. It has been so successful that other companies have followed the example of establishing scholarships like Nexen's."

"The education system in Canada, U.S. and U.K. is considered to be the best to send students for study, but it is very expensive. Canadian Nexen is taking the initiative to raise awareness of this education system and bringing students from Yemen to benefit from the best educational systems in the world. The students come back with extensive knowledge that is above and beyond students elsewhere. Building on their extensive language skills, they specialize in sciences, engineering, computer science, MIS, health science and a variety of engineering majors.

Yemen, as a developing country, critically needs these skills."

Andrea Bosnjak, Manager of Community Investment at Nexen Inc. - Calgary, Canada, said: "It's always a difficult decision for the Scholarship Steering Committee to select just 10 recipients, as the students we interview are exceptional and very qualified," explained Bosnjak. "I admire the courage these students have to leave their families, friends and home to advance their education abroad. It's not an easy thing to do. We have a certain number of students who return back to Yemen after they graduate and we have others who remain in Canada. All of our graduates are getting jobs and they are doing well in their fields. This program helps students to acquire the tools for their success. They are contributing to the progress of their country, whether they are in Canada or in other parts in the world," concluded Bosnjak.

Mr. Ali Mohammed Sohaiki, Vice President & Deputy GM - Canadian Nexen Yemen, said: "Canadian Nexen has extraordinary relations with the government and people of Yemen. The company took the initiative by sponsoring national and private activities since the very beginning of its operation in Yemen. There will be a total expense of over US\$ 2 million package for the ten qualified students to study in the University of Calgary, Canada. In Canada, the students gain advanced learning, which enables them to have better jobs and a better life. The Yemeni students are very talented; some of them go back to work in Yemen and help the national economy and others continue their academic study. The whole program is fully sponsored by Nexen Inc., Canada."

The scholarship program was created at the request of H.E. Abdulaziz Abdulghani and the late Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf at a meeting that was held in Toronto, Canada in 1997. They identified advanced education opportunities for Yemeni youth as a priority development area. Canadian Nexen supported this concept and created the scholarship program that has now been in operation for over 12 years. It is also a highly successful one with 97% of the recipients completing their programs.

The average cost per student to attend the University of Calgary is approximately \$45,000 per year. In Canada, the students gain advanced education and unique life experiences, which enable them to access promising career opportunities down the road. Each scholarship fully funds a four-year bachelor degree, which includes tuition, books and a monthly living allowance. The continuation of the company's business in Yemen will lead to more programs and new opportunities for Yemen and the Yemeni people.

Mr. Phil Milford, President & GM - Canadian Nexen Yemen, said, "Yemen, as a developing country, needs people who have specialized knowledge to further the country's progress and growth. I am very impressed by these exceptional students and I wish that I had an additional 50 scholarships so that we could take more students. There are students with marks in the high 90s in the sciences, math, and English, which is incredible. Through our scholarship program Nexen provides access to higher education and the opportunity to gain a new perspective as a result of experiencing a new culture. The students not

only acquire knowledge but have life experiences that will enable them to work for international companies, NGOs and government whether in Yemen or around the world."

"The company's main business is oil and gas production, however, social responsibility is a commitment the company takes seriously, whether it is in Yemen or other locations around the world where it operates. In 2008 the company contributed US\$ 1 million to disaster relief for the floods in Hadhramout. The company also sponsors a Canadian medical team of cancer specialists to travel to Yemen every year to support the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Canadian Nexen proves it is not just about oil and gas; it is about ensuring that the communities where it operates benefit from its presence."

"There are more business opportunities in Yemen that Nexen would like to look at which includes further exploration, contract extension for Masila Block 14 and new opportunities. We have a very good working relationship with the government of Yemen and we work closely with the Ministry of Oil & Minerals, PEPA and other governmental groups," said Milford.

H. E. Abdulaziz Abdulghani, Chairman of Shura Council, congratulated the lucky winners of Canadian Nexen's Scholarships Program for being proudly selected out of more than 500 competitors. "The selection process is fair and systematic and we expect for these students distinguished success as they are the elite of selected nominees," said Abdulghani. "You will be representing Yemen. In the future, we are waiting for your marvelous achievements and performances as you were been marvelous in high school. You have to benefit from knowledge and skills and dedicate your efforts and time for this goal as your colleagues already studying in Canada did. Canada is a country that cares of improving human and academic development," he addressed the winners. "I expect you to finish your scholarship with excellence and come back to serve your country by your knowledge and experiences. Always look for excellence as we are looking to you with proud and pride."

concluded Abdulghani. Also, Mr. Abdulghani expressed his thanks and appreciation for the support provided by Canadian Nexen that makes this scholarship program possible.

Minister of Oil & Minerals, H. E. Ameer Al-Aidaroos, said: "The experiences of Canadian Nexen in developing the community and stimulating the sustainable development wheel in areas within and around its exploration activities are significant milestones in the company's march. We greet the company efforts in sending Yemeni students to study qualitative majors. We are celebrating today the 12th batch and this assures that the scholarships project is a successful one so we praise Canadian Nexen's efforts in this regard. In fact, Canadian Nexen have a good reputation in its business and it truly represents: 'A REAL SUCCESS STORY' along the past twenty years with non-stop process even in the summer of 1994."

"Nexen has produced more than billion barrels. It has a reputable environmental profile, represents and reflects the appropriate and encouraging investment environment in Yemen. The company still exists in Yemen and the Ministry is studying all the capabilities to enhance and develop the partnership with Canadian Nexen," concluded Al-Aidaroos.

Students' Reactions:

"I achieved 95% in the secondary school and looking to specialize in mechanical engineering. I applied last year to the program and was not accepted but I was successful this year. Nexen has a very transparent selection process. This scholarship is the first step for a better future and I aim to do something in the future to support the development of Yemen," said **Aref Abdo Ali Ahmed**, Aden.

"I applied on the last day that applications were being accepted. I was not expecting to be awarded a scholarship even though I had a high school average of 94%. I look forward to joining the University of Calgary," expressed **Mohammed Omer Abdallah Al-Bity**, Hadhramout.

"The scholarship is a golden opportunity that meets with my ambition to study abroad. I scored 94% and my country has the priority and I am proud to come back and help the people who need my knowledge," **Muram Abdalatif**, Aden.

"I felt that I had an excellent interview so was confident about receiving a Nexen scholarship. My ambition since childhood has been to study computer science. I want to develop new computer programs that will have a positive impact on Yemen," said **Ragheb Saad Ba-Rahyan**- Mukalla, Hadhramout.

"I was so excited to have been selected for this scholarship given the large number of applicants. I look forward to studying chemical engineering and to bringing my skills and knowledge back home to Yemen to advance its development," said **Raba'a Mohammed Farea Al-Azazi**, Taiz.

"I heard about the program from my friends and my family encouraged me to apply because I had a high school average of 96.87%. Also, my ambition has always been to pursue higher studies in Canada or in the United States. I will be studying health sciences at the University of Calgary," said **Huda Ali Ali Al-Nasser**, Sana'a.

"I scored 95.37% on my secondary school results. I'm looking forward to studying abroad and to coming back to Yemen with the knowledge and experience to help develop my country," said **Sabrin Baligh Abdullah**, Aden.

"After secondary school, I decided to take a break from my studies and spend time in Sana'a. By chance, I heard about the scholarship and I completed the application. I had some doubts about applying but I received 95.5% in my secondary school results so felt I was well-qualified," **Shehab Abdulmalik Soltan**, Taiz.

"I had always dreamed of getting this scholarship. I did very well in the interview and had a high school average of 96.87%, so I felt I had a good chance of being selected. I have chosen mechanical engineering as my field of study," said **Odai Abdulrahman Essmael Mohammed Al-Mokadam**, Ibb.

"I graduated last year with an average of 96.5%. The scholarship program is very competitive and I'm proud to have achieved my goal. A scholarship financed by Nexen is a great opportunity and I look forward to pursuing higher studies," said **Majed Yaseen Ahmed Own**, Sana'a.

It is worth mentioning that **Ghamdan Khalil Ebrahim Mohammed**, Aden, is also a 2010 scholarship recipient but I could not interview him due to his special circumstances.

Omani researcher Rafi'a Al-Tale'i:

Arab workers are the only way to preserve the identity of the Gulf

By: Yahya Al-Dhobaibi
For the Yemen Times

Omani researcher, Rafi'a Al-Tale'i said that Gulf countries need to change their policies toward Yemen through allocating more positions for Yemenis in the Gulf job market.

She said that the Yemeni labor force has advantages that make it a good candidate to meet Gulf market requirements. This would protect its social identity and culture, unlike East Asian labor.

Recently, she presented a paper during her participation in the Yemeni Labor Conference, in which she discussed the necessity of intensifying the training and qualifying of Yemenis to fill the place of East Asian labor leaving Gulf countries.

In her paper entitled 'The Current Labor Conditions in the Gulf and the Problems of Identity', Al-Tale'i suggested that Yemeni labor will be a solution combining economic factors and the protection of identity where Yemenis would be paid less, as compared to East Asian workers.

Furthermore, attracting a Yemeni labor force to the Gulf should not be a challenge in terms of the cost of bringing in the labor, especially for work that doesn't need high or specific qualifications.

"What distinguishes Yemeni labor from the Asian one, is that Yemen is closer to the Gulf in location, not to mention that Yemenis belong to the same culture. This aspect is not found within an East Asian workforce," Al-Tale'i added.

She stressed the need to be aware of the possible problems that might face Yemeni labor, if brought to the Gulf. She pointed out that maybe the Yemeni workers would not have an easy time if it, as is the case with workers who work in various professions in the Gulf.

"The main problem that must be tackled is the way some employers treat their employees where the former feel superior to those who come to earn a living," she explained.

She said that rapid growth in Gulf countries was the main reason behind the bad treatment of employers towards their employees, because they assume that owning money gives them the right to treat their workers as slaves.

The problem of identity, according to Al-Tale'i, is not confined to Gulf countries. Rather, it is spread throughout the world.

In the Gulf, the problem has several dimensions. The first is that immigrants form the majority of population in the Gulf where they do not only threaten the identity of Gulf countries but also are a problem for Gulf governments. Politically, the issue of human rights causes further concern for Gulf governments to tackle.

The second dimension is that English has become the first language for trade and economic transactions in Gulf companies. Consequently, the number of private schools and colleges, teaching English instead of Arabic, is on the increase.

She pointed out that the acceleration of economic growth in the Gulf and the interaction between people of all nationalities and religions taking place in a small area, isolating the original community, is resulting in a loss of identity.

"In most Gulf countries, the immigrant communities stay away from the original community. They do not live in the same areas and do not deal with each other except in the work place," she explained.

She mentioned that there are many factors that help form identity: values, general knowledge, religion and mutual ideas shared by a specific group of people. Through these factors, people express their beliefs, hopes and visions.

According to statistics, foreign workers form about 12.5 of the 35 million population of the Gulf. The number of Indian workers has increased from the mid-seventies to 2001, when it used to be 150,000 and has now become 3.3 million.

She said: "According to statistics, in Saudi Arabia workers are estimated at 1.5 million. The UAE came in second with 950,000. Oman comes third with 312,000. The fourth is Kuwait, with 295,000. Bahrain and Qatar come last in the list with 130,000 workers each.

She pointed out that many educated Arabs have said that people in Gulf countries express difficulty communicating in Arabic. The increasing number of churches, bringing non-Arab babysitters and the establishment English schools and colleagues that teach neither Islamic culture nor Arabic, are on the increase.

According to Al-Tale'i, the Bahraini Minister of Labor, Majeed Al-Alawi, described in an interview with Al-Sharq newspaper, that the Asia labor force is a potential time bomb.

She said that 25 percent of the workers

in Gulf countries are Arabs and that they confront more obstacles than other employees from different nationalities. She added that the Arab employees are threatened with losing their jobs, if any problems arise between the Arabian governments.

In the Language and the Identity Conference, held in Doha, Qatar from February 15 to 17, Gulf countries were given as an example. The participants all agreed that there was serious problem threatening Arab identity, especially with the absence of Arabic language in both media and education. They said that the lack of Arabic is ascribed to the neglect of the language by the non-Arab employees because English is the accredited language in most official establishments. This threat highlights the danger Arab identity may face, especially with the knowledge that the number of incoming workers is higher than that of the native people.

The problem of identity, as seen by people in the Gulf, is of three dimensions. The first and the second dimensions are related where the number of locals is decreasing, thus the status of the Arabic language and the Islamic culture is receding in people's lives.

The third dimension, according to the researcher, is the recession of the pan-Arabism in favor of ethnicity and sectarianism. This may create tensions between people who are not connected except in the workplace and therefore have no social and political connection either.

She said that some educated people see that the Gulf's cultural identity merging into other cultures, to the extent that English is used in places other than work. English indicates the educational progress of people.

Arabs from these Gulf countries should worry because the non-Arab workforce has affected them in that they no longer use Arabic to communicate with their workers. They have become the minority in their own countries and the immigrants are the majority.

The researcher said that the small number of the Arab employees in the Gulf would not affect these countries in terms of enhancing Arab identity, due to the fact that they are such a small minority as compared with non-Arabs. She confirmed that by replacing the Asian labor with Arabs, it would solve the ideological

identity problem in Arabian areas.

Enhancing the national identity in Gulf countries, as the researchers advise, cannot be separated from enhancing Arab identity in general.

"In the fifties and the sixties, the Arab labor force was not favored, due to their revolutionary and nationalistic bias. This could have affected Gulf countries by the use of political pressure against the Gulf by Arabic national regimes. The policies to attract East Asian labor, which was cheap, resulted in directly challenging the existence of this identity, causing an unsuitable population balance as well," the researcher said.

She added that, despite these countries having surpassed other Arab nations in terms of economic, political, educational and even psychological development, they have lost their identity and helped deepen the ideological and sectarian feelings of the people there.

She clarified that allowing more Arab labor into these countries would not directly aim at reminding people of their Arab heritage, but rather make people think of their need to develop more within an Arab environment.

She said: "Nothing prevents Gulf countries from reviewing their development policies to indulge a cultural dimension into the building of their societies, if governments want to protect their Islamic identity."

Al-Tale'i explained that with the increase of labor coming from the East and South Asia to the Gulf, an imbalance in the population has emerged together with social problems. Families in the Gulf are over dependent on East Asian servants and rely on them for simple tasks that parents should do.

She added that people in the Gulf prefer East Asian labor because these people are brought up to believe that work is a 'must', but Arab people, including those in the Gulf, are brought up to think that work is just a path for making money.

During the discussion of her studies, she presented a number of results on the subject of workers in Gulf countries and this identity crisis. She also presented the different views of researchers on the dangers a non-Arab labor can cause, in terms of identity.

Arabs outnumbered

She said that the danger does not necessarily lie in the workforce coming

from East Asia but because of the actual number of them, being more than the native population in some Gulf countries.

The researcher went on to explain that the exceeding number of the foreign workers now feels uncomfortable and it is therefore important to reform the laws and conditions that caused this situation to worsen.

"In the future, Gulf countries with a small population density, will obviously have to continue with construction projects, and will need cheap labor, particularly in areas that people don't like to work in, either because of social backgrounds, or for the conditions of low wages and long working hours," she said. "However, increasing unemployment among locals and growing concern about the population imbalance can help stop the enticement of this non-Arab labor force."

Al-Tale'i noted that the researchers believe that the solution to this problem must be linked with political, economic, social and educational reform, with an emphasis on human development.

The researcher spoke of the advantages of Arab labor in her experience working with both Arabs and foreigners. She said that communication is easier with Arabs and that they work with some understanding of each other, not to mention that they share many traditions. This similarity definitely leads to the employees working within the same value systems and feeling equal in every aspect, except that the locals receive a higher salary.

She added that locals are better in the work field than foreigners and in many cases the former show the latter how to work.

"I have noticed that the non-Arab workers can be dispensed with and replaced by Arab employees," she said. "These foreign workers can be more reliable but they want money in return. The Arab worker, however, respects work more and can work just for the sake of it, not of money."

She added: "My experience in working within the private sector made me re-think how people automatically assume that East Asian labor is better, that they are dedicated to their work and that it is difficult to replace them with locals."

Scared of 'Saudization'

"There is much evidence to show that a

new way thinking has started to emerge among these workers' minds, where they conspire against the locals because they are aware of the Saudization or Omanization which they think will lose them their jobs. They do not want to teach or train locals; only a few of them will offer to do it," she added.

"Some intellectuals in the Gulf and some government officials believe that the Asian labor force hold negative attitudes, because they are not concerned with issues of culture. This may be true to some extent, because most employees are not educated and they occupy the lowest jobs where it is said that there is a policy aimed at neglecting the Arabic language and Islamic culture. But the issues of rights and injustice that these worker may feel, whether they have are correct or not, will lead to a demand for justice and the lost rights, not to mention the threat that will be felt if they know that their source of a livelihood might be lost," the researcher said.

She stressed the need for Gulf governments to re-draft laws and policies to protect the rights of the non-UAE national workers and to train the locals in order to qualify them to fill jobs currently occupied by foreign expatriates.

She added that Gulf countries lack the mechanisms of the modern state based on the concept of citizenship, justice and equality. Without this, minorities will not be able to integrate into Gulf society that tends to be closed into itself.

The Arab and the Yemeni labor force, according to the researcher, may not face the same problems faced by Asians: the superior attitude of the people in the Gulf, the greediness of employers and the practices of job brokers. Unless there are clear human rights and fair conditions, minorities will never feel secure and, as a result, will not integrate into Gulf society.

She stressed that by reforming legal procedures and law enforcement, this will help workers feel equal and thus they will become more secure and become true members of society.

"Most of those who have a green card are wanting American nationality because they feel that American law will protect their rights. This is exactly what Gulf countries need. Perhaps with some formal changes and a direct and clear mandate, people in these countries will become equal by a law that guarantees them their rights," she concluded.



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Interested applicants, should email their CVs to the following by **April 15, 2010**:
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Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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Climbing enthusiast uses sport to promote environmental awareness



By: Oliver Holmes
For the Yemen Times

High in the mountains encircling Sana'a, Josh Maricich, the president of the Yemen Adventure Club and a climbing enthusiast, sits halfway up a rock cliff face surrounded by Yemeni school children. He's wearing a safety helmet and harness, and gripping a rope while hoisting a fellow climber. Yemeni children, dressed in green school uniforms, beg him to have the next turn at climbing as he tries to keep his attention on the young man 10 meters above, whose life is literally in his hands.

"I started climbing here a few years ago as a hobby, but then I began bringing Yemenis from the nearby village and young people from the city," Maricich told Yemen Times while he was trekking around the mountains to find new areas to climb.

Maricich and a friend, who has now left Sana'a, started the Yemen Adventure Club a couple of years ago and the group has not stopped growing since. Maricich now has grander plans for climbing in Yemen.

"Our climbing activities have two aims here in Yemen. The first is to teach Yemenis how to climb, so eventually they'll be able to buy their own gear and come climbing themselves. Maybe one day they'll set up a club," said Maricich.

"Secondly, I hope that when Yemenis come to climb, they'll start to see the value of the environment, and its preservation."

Carrot-and-stick idea

On April 1, Maricich realized both of his goals. As many as 200 Yemeni youths, school children, and foreigners made their way to the village of Sen'a, just outside the main city of Sana'a, for a 'Clean and Climb.' The beautiful village—full of historic mud brick houses, cobblestoned roads, and an unusual plethora of plants and trees—has lost part of its charm as the streets are overflowing with litter.

Maricich has brought groups here on weekends to climb and noticed how the village has become besieged with rubbish. He decided to use the 'Clean and Climb' as a way to make a dent in the culture of litter, ubiquitous in Yemen.

The morning of the event was spent picking up litter at the top of the village, closest to the cliff face where Maricich climbs. School children from the village were all eager to get involved and by the afternoon nearly 400 garbage bags and two garbage trucks were full of trash, according to the Yemen Adventure Club's Facebook page.

In the afternoon, everyone had a chance at climbing. Maricich's carrot-and-stick idea made it possible to clean part of the village, educating Yemenis and foreigners on the impor-

tance of environmental awareness, and also to enjoy an afternoon of climbing and barbecuing.

"I wish there was cleaning like this in other places around Yemen," said Basel Mousa, an interpreter who came along to participate. "Aden, Ta'iz and most of the big cities would benefit from this sort of attitude."

"I hope this will raise awareness; this is really what Yemen needs," he added, while climbing up loose rocks on his way to the cliffs.

Yaser Muhammed agreed: "Cleaning starts by example: If you start cleaning, other people will see that it has value and will copy your actions," he said, sitting on a rock overlooking the newly cleaned village.

"If every villager cleaned, this village would look beautiful," he added.

A long way to go

Although a significant and symbolic step, Maricich's efforts are just the beginning. Only a small area of the village was cleaned and the majority remained flooded by blue and red plastic bags, sweet wrappers, empty yogurt cups, and soda cans.

Many Yemeni school children didn't seem to completely grasp the concept. After cleaning the village, they took off the plastic gloves provided for them and discarded them on the way up the mountain. During the late afternoon, after everyone had had the chance to climb, the bottom of the cliff face was littered with water bot-

tles and plastic bags. The BBQ area further down looked like a dumpsite.

But Maricich's efforts were applauded as a pioneering move to create a culture of environmental awareness by those attending the event throughout the day. One Yemeni student mentioned that the gesture was greater than the practical outcome.

Eco-tourism potential

Although Maricich is adamant that he has no commercial plans for climbing, he hopes that Yemeni climbing enthusiasts might use the sport to create a culture of eco-tourism here in Yemen.

"The Yemen Adventure Club started as a non-governmental organization to tackle idleness. I saw that there weren't many activities for the Yemeni youths and therefore they will spend their time chewing qat to socialize and enjoy themselves," he said.

"But, if a Yemeni who climbs with me wants to buy an off-road car and bring tourists here to climb and earn a living, it would be great," he added.

After being contacted by Maricich, world champion climber Daniel du Lac made the trip to Yemen from France recently to uncover the untapped potential Yemen has to offer.

"As for climbing-tourism, I'm a little disappointed because we've had a hard time finding rocks that were good enough to set up ropes on," said du Lac a couple days before the event.

Du Lac and Maricich had spent the days running up to the event scouting out new places for climbing routes. Often they found that the rock was too crumbly or too hard to put bolts in to attach the ropes to. But after the 'Clean and Climb,' du Lac's outlook had changed.

"I'm really pleased today," said du Lac on the day of the event. "The potential for climbing here is massive. We found a few good areas to set up routes."

"This spot is great: it is close to the city, accessible, and the beautiful mountains and scenery would make it an ideal spot for a climbing school," said du Lac minutes before scaling up a seemingly un-climbable cliff, to the applause and encouragement of the scores of Yemenis below.

Maricich told Yemen Times the new routes would be named after the first person who was able to reach the top, as an incentive to new climbers.

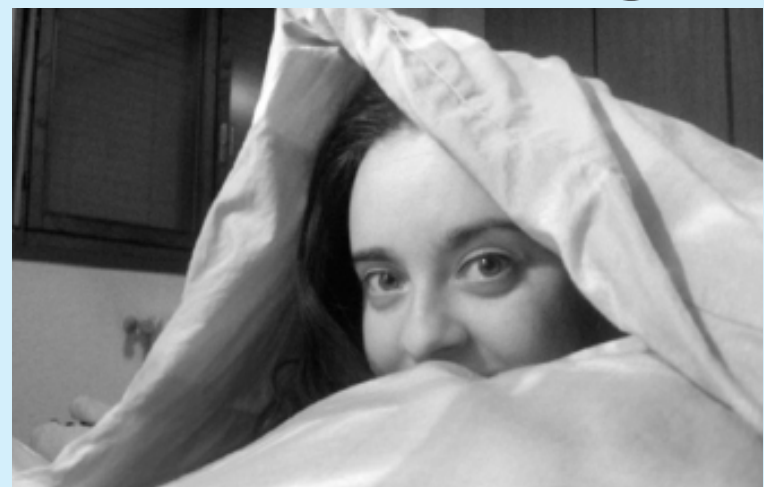
HEALTH WATCH

By: Dr. Siva



This weekly column is to disseminate health information to the readers in Yemen and outside. Dr. Siva is currently working at Aden Refinery Company Hospital. Life style diseases and cancer prevention are his special interests. Complementary medicine and Naturopathy are his passions.

Wake up fresh in the morning



For many of us, getting out of bed every morning as soon as the alarm goes off is almost impossible. We sit till late night surfing the net or watch a movie on television. Or we chew qat and discuss world affairs till the wee hours of the morning and go to bed reluctantly. We eventually get out of bed, only to feel rushed and frantic because we are late for the office. In today's mechanical world, there are many people who find it difficult to wake up fresh and happy.

Sleep makes us a bit down. How we wake up in the morning depends on a few factors that very easily can be modified or changed by us. These small changes may make some difference:

1. Avoid chewing qat: Avoid chewing qat, taking coffee or tea, sugar, chocolate or alcohol just before bed. They may upset your nervous system and intestines in such a way that you will have a very light sleep that doesn't recharge you at all.

2. Avoid coffee, red wine and chocolate the night before:

Coffee, tea, chocolate or alcoholic drinks can upset your gut more than any other food and ruin your sleep. Try not to have these things after lunch time.

3. Avoid taking dinner right before sleeping: As the digestion process takes a while, avoid going to bed right after dinner. Try and leave a minimum of two hours in between your last meal and your bedtime.

4. Tune your sleep environment: Your sleeping environment needs to be of refreshing and recharging nature. The room should never be closed, dark or dingy. The quality of air you breathe in your sleep is very important. Bad quality air can lead to headaches, stuffy noses and tiredness. Leave the window a little bit open. Let carbon dioxide float away and let fresh oxygen drift in. Comfortable non saggy mattress covered by cotton sheets offer comfort. The cot should not make any squeaky sounds. Windows should be open and fresh air flowing. If you are in the habit of sleeping with the AC on, the temperature should be optimum.

5. Go to bed early: If you want to get up earlier, you have to go to bed earlier. The benefit to waking up early is that you'll perform better and be more alert at the time of day that you need to be.

6. Go to bed happy: One of the best ways to get good sleep is not to discuss some problem with your spouse or get into an argument.

7. Deep breathing and meditation: Clear your mind before falling asleep. Practice deep breathing techniques. If you can spend a few minutes meditating you'll have maximum results.

8. Think something pleasant before sleeping: Think positive before you sleep. Remember the law of attraction.

9. Empty your bladder: Your kidneys continue to work when you are asleep and by morning your bladder will be full. If your bladder fills up early, you might feel the need to go during the night and this disturbs your sleep. Therefore, it is important to go to the toilet before sleep even if you feel no need.

10. Get enough sleep: Allow enough time to get the amount of sleep your body needs. The average recommended amount of sleep is 6-8 hrs but everyone is different. Notice the difference between six and eight hours of sleep and how it affects you. Know how much you need.

11. Avoid sleeping pills: Unfortunately, many people turn to sleeping pills and other medications to solve their sleeping problems. In case you can't get to sleep, you can try some visualization techniques which may help you to get to sleep.

12. Put your alarm away from the bed: Never keep your alarm next to your bed. Always keep it a bit far which will cause you to wake and walk for a while. This will stop you from just hitting the snooze button and diving back under the covers.

13. Get up straight away: The best things you can do to wake up early and feel alert and fresh is to get up straight away. You may feel that you are getting a bit more rest by hitting the snooze button, but hitting the snooze button awakens your brain so it can never fully go back to sleep as it is anticipating the next alarm sound. So you will feel more tired than if you had just got up straight away.

14. Wake up with a smile: As soon as you wake up, smile. Again, remember the law of attraction. There are opportunities and blessings waiting for you. Open up your heart to receive them. Look on the bright side of the day.

15. Let the sunlight in: Opening your curtains to let the sunlight in is a great way to make you feel more awake. Your mind will respond to light and bring you out of sleep.

16. Have a glass of water: Your body loses fluid overnight which can make you feel a bit tired when you wake up. Having a glass or two of warm water on an empty stomach will kick start your metabolism and as such you will wake up faster and feel more alert.

17. Stretch and exercise: When you are groggy in the morning, a nice stretch in the fresh air can wake you up fast. Also, doing physical activity releases endorphins making you feel good. The more you exercise the more energy you will have as you become fitter and healthier. Have sufficient time to take a walk every day.

18. Eat a high energy breakfast: Skipping your first meal of the day affects your energy level. You need to eat breakfast to get your metabolism going and making energy for your body. Have a healthy breakfast and feel energized throughout the day. Drink fruit juice everyday which will keep you blissful and fresh.

19. Get up at the same time every day: You need to get out of bed at the same time every day, even on weekends. If you change times every day you will re-set your body clock and find it extremely difficult to get out of bed.

20. Take a nap in the afternoon: The primary reason for people finding it extremely difficult to wake up refreshed and happy is that they are not getting enough sleep. Try to take a nap for 20-30 minutes during the day. It helps reduce stress and you will feel refreshed.

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خلال الفترة ٢٠١٠/٥/١٢م وذلك في قاعة مركز السعيد - شارع الزبيري (صنعاء)

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Extraordinary Muslim women (Part 3)

The voices of Muslim women of all backgrounds are repeatedly silenced in today's headlines and within our accounts of history. Their achievements are often forgotten, or worse, never known. The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) marked the international day for women by celebrating some extraordinary Muslim women leaders of our past and present. Highlighted below are a few of the countless Muslim women that have shaped the world.

The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) is a program of the American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA) and the Cordoba Initiative (CI). ASMA aims to elevate the discourse on Islam and foster environments in which Muslims thrive through interfaith collaboration, youth and women's empowerment, and arts and cultural exchange. The Cordoba Initiative works to improve relations between the Muslim World and the West by offering innovative, viable, and sustainable solutions with concrete outcomes. The mission of WISE is to build a cohesive, global movement of Muslim women that will reclaim women's rights in Islam, enabling them to make dignified choices and fully participate in creating just and flourishing societies.

Benazir Bhutto

Known for: First female prime minister of Pakistan

Dates: Hijri 1371 – 1427 AH
Common era: 1953 – 2007 AD

Country: Pakistan

Benazir Bhutto was the first female leader of a Muslim country in modern history. She was the Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1988 to 1990 and from 1993 to 1996.

Born to a politically influential and wealthy family, she was educated at Harvard and Oxford University. Her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was Prime Minister before being ousted by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and hanged in 1979. In subsequent years, Benazir was imprisoned multiple times on charges of conspiring against the government. She then moved to Britain, organizing a movement against the military government from exile. In 1986, anti-Zia protests spread across the country, and she was allowed back into Pakistan. She was elected co-chairwoman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), along with her mother. In 1988 she was elected Prime Minister.

In 1990, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed Benazir from office, citing corruption. In 1993, she was re-elected as Prime Minister, after which she focused on rural development and education. Three years later, in 1996, she was dismissed on corruption and mismanagement charges by then President Leghari. Soon after that, she went into exile while her husband served a prison sentence on corruption charges.

In 2007 she returned to Pakistan after she reached an understanding with President Pervez Musharraf. She was the leading opposition candidate in the Pakistani general election of 2008 when she was assassinated outside the city of Rawalpindi in December 2007.



“I was taught that ladies try to have good manners... [But] being nice should never be perceived as being weak. It is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of courtesy, manners, grace, a woman's ability to make everyone in the room feel at home. And it should never be construed as weakness because it's the men who get the biggest shock, when they construe that niceness in a woman as weakness.”

—Benazir Bhutto in BBC World Service, “Women in Power Reveal What It Takes: Benazir Bhutto, Former Prime Minister of Pakistan,” at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/wiwp/statcon/bhutto_quote.shtml

Betty Shabazz

Known for: Social activist and educator

Dates: Hijri: 1352 – 1417 AH
Common era: 1934-1997 AD

Country: United States

Betty Shabazz was a prominent social activist, health professional, and educator. Betty Shabazz (born Betty Dean Sanders, later on known as Betty X) was raised in Detroit, Michigan by adoptive parents and attended the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. After two years in Alabama, Betty moved to New York to begin nursing school at Brooklyn State Hospital. It was during her time as a student there that Betty Shabazz met Malcolm X, the dynamic civil rights leader and Nation of Islam member. They married in 1958, two years after meeting.

In 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated while giving a speech in Harlem, New York, leaving Betty to raise their six daughters on her own. Soon after her husband's death Betty, returned to school and earned a doctorate in education from the University of Massachusetts in 1975. She then began working as an administrator at Medgar Evers College, eventually overseeing the college's Office of Institutional Advancement and Public Relations.

In addition to her work, Betty traveled extensively, speaking on racial equality and civil rights. Betty died in 1997 three weeks after suffering from third degree burns from a house fire set by her grandson, Malcolm. More than 2,000 people attended her memorial service.



“We can say 'Peace on Earth.' We can sing about it, preach about it or pray about it, but if we have not internalized the mythology to make it happen inside us, then it will not be.”

—Betty Shabazz (http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/authors/betty_shabazz_quotes.html)

Hassiba Boulmerka

Known for: The first Algerian to win an Olympic medal

Dates: Hijri: 1387 – Present AH
Common era: 1968 – Present AD

Country: Algeria

Hassiba Boulmerka was the first woman from an Arab or African nation to win a world track championship, as well as the first Algerian to win an Olympic medal. Algeria's best known female distance runner, Hassiba began running at a young age. Throughout the late 1980s she began making a name for herself on the international stage. It was during this time that conservative Islamic elements in Algeria condemned her and her role as a prominent female athlete. The continued harassment forced her to relocate her training to Europe. Despite this setback, she competed in the 1500 meter race in the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. She won the race, earning Algeria its first gold medal. She continued her professional running career, participating in the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. However, she sprained her ankle in the semi-finals and then retired from professional sports in 1997.

Since then, Hassiba has continued her work advocating on behalf of female athletes. She was elected a member of the Athletes' Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and in 1999, she lobbied the group to put more pressure on governments that discriminate against female athletes.

I screamed for joy and for shock, and for much more. I was screaming for Algeria's pride and Algeria's history, and still more. I screamed finally for every Algerian woman, every Arabic woman.



Boulmerka on her win at the 1991 Tokyo world championships (Nancy Foley, “70. Hassiba Boulmerka, Track and Field” in Sports Illustrated for Women)

Jehan Sadat

Known for: Associate resident scholar at the University of Maryland

Dates: Hijri: 1351 AH – Present
Common era: 1933 AD – Present

Country: Egypt

Former first lady of Egypt, Jehan Sadat has played a key role in advancing women's rights and education, both in her native Egypt and globally.

Born in Cairo to an Egyptian father and a British mother, the young Jehan married the future President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, in 1949. In the late 1970s, she played a pivotal role in reforming Egypt's civil code through the Egyptian Civil Rights Laws, which expanded the rights of women in regards to alimony and divorce. In 1972, Jehan Sadat founded Wafa' Wal Amal (Faith and Hope) which provides rehabilitation, skills training, and other social services to war veterans and civilians. It is one of the largest rehabilitation centers in the Middle East. Jehan Sadat earned her bachelor's degree in Arabic Literature; she earned both her master's degree and her doctorate in Comparative Literature from Cairo University.

As the founder of the African-Arab Women's League, Jehan Sadat has attended numerous conferences and seminars as an advocate for women and children. She is also one of the founding members of the Talla Society, a cooperative that trains and equips women with practical skills to help them become economically independent and self-sufficient. In addition, she authored two books, A Woman of Egypt and My Hope for Peace.

Jehan Sadat is now an Associate Resident Scholar at the University of Maryland, where the Anwar Sadat Chair for Development and Peace was created in her late husband's memory.



“My work with women, with children, with the poor, is, in fact, the very essence of Islam. Why should I be invisible just because I am a woman?”
—Jehan Sadat, A Woman of Egypt

Khaleda Zia

Known for: First female prime minister of Bangladesh

Dates: Hijri: 1364 – Present AH
Common era: 1945 – Present AD

Country: Bangladesh

Khaleda Zia, the first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh, governed the country from 1991-1996 and again from 2001-2006. She currently leads the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

In 1960, she married Ziaur Rahman, who at that time was a captain in the Pakistani army. In 1971, he declared the independence of Bangladesh and became president six years later. Rahman established the BNP in order to move away from military rule.

It was after Ziaur's assassination in 1981 that Khaleda began her political career. In 1984, the BNP elected her chairman of the party. She spent the next seven years fighting against the military government of General Hossain Mohammad Ershad. She endured political harassment and was arrested on multiple occasions. Under her leadership, the BNP – although the political opposition party – did not compromise its principles for the sake of a political alliance with the ruling military government.

Ershad resigned in 1990, and the BNP won the election a year later. In 1991, Khaleda Zia became Prime Minister after securing a majority of votes from Parliament. During her first term, Zia worked on education, gender, and environmental issues. She has been credited with instituting compulsory primary education and free education for girls up to grade 10.

Although the BNP lost to Sheikh Hassina's Awami League in the 1996 elections, it garnered enough votes to become the largest of the opposition parties. During this time, the BNP created alliances with various other political parties. This alliance was large enough to win a majority of the votes in the 2001 elections. For the second time, Khaleda Zia was installed as Prime Minister. In 2006, she was ranked #33 in Forbes list of the 100 Most Powerful Women.

In 2006, her term as Prime Minister expired. She again ran for political office in the 2008 elections but lost to Sheikh Hassina's Awami League.



“If we want to progress as a country, if we want to remove poverty, if we have to spread awareness of family planning and bring down population growth, we have to educate them [girls], give them equal rights. Women have to prove that they are no less than men. I am trying to end [the] dowry [system]. That will only happen when women start working as professionals.”

—Khaleda Zia in an interview with TIMEasia Magazine, April 3, 2006

Laleh Bakhtiar

Known for: First American woman to translate the Quran into English, WISE Shura Council Member

Country: United States

Laleh Bakhtiar holds a BA in History from Chatham College, Master's degrees in Philosophy and Counseling Psychology and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. Bakhtiar is also a Nationally Certified Counselor and Licensed Professional Psychotherapist in the State of Illinois. She is co-author of A Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture (University of Chicago Press) and author of SUFI Expressions of the Mystic Quest (Thames and Hudson), three volumes of God's Will Be Done on Moral Healing and some 15 other books on various aspects of Islam.

Bakhtiar has become the leading authority on the Sufi origins of the Enneagram. She has also translated over 30 books on Islam and the Islamic movement into English. Bakhtiar is the first American woman to translate the Quran. In her Sublime Quran translation she interprets the controversial verse that has led to domestic violence in the Islamic community to the way the Prophet understood it. Instead of husbands being allowed to beat their wives, she translates: “husbands should go away,” let the anger subside and then consult with one another. Bakhtiar is presently Director of the Institute of Traditional Psychology and In-House Scholar at Kazi Publications. She has taught Islam at the University of Chicago.



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To read the biography of more Muslim women or to recommend one go to <http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/muslimwomen>

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Basil for perfume, medicine and beauty



Abubakr Al-Bani, respected Shabwa resident, in traditional costume with basil in his headdress.

**By: Nasser Abdulla Nasser Salah
For the Yemen Times**

Arabia Felix, the country of blessings, is a land of agriculture. It is, some say, "a hidden treasure," and one of the pillars of the economy. Yemenis have cultivated its lands for centuries.

Yemen is described as an agricultural country in the Holy Quran: "Sheba's homeland used to be a marvel, with two gardens on the right and the left. Eat from your Lord's provisions, and be appreciative of Him - good land, and a forgiving Lord." (Sheba 15)

Agriculture employs more than half of the Yemeni work force. Areas of cultivation roughly correspond to precipitation. The diversity of climate in Yemen is definitely the secret behind thriving of vegetation which makes it possible to distinguish three general regions: the coastal plain and its wadis, the middle highlands and the interior mountains. As a result, many kinds of fruit and vegetables are largely seen in the markets throughout the year; for example tomatoes, onion, papaya and banana.

According to Abubakr Al-Bani, a respected resident in Al-Said, Shabwa, people in Yemen, especially in Shabwa, love growing basil, an aromatic herb that they call shuqur. It has become a favorite plant to many who plant it on the rooftops.

"We used to plant this plant in an earthen container on the rooftop of the house called 'mushqur' - a term derived from the plant shuqur," said Al-Bani, whose family have been builders of traditional houses in the area for generations.

He explained that basil- shuqur is a plant known to us to come in seven different types such as ghuzzab , mashmum, mahilibiya, ghithlan, shahada, and sakab.

Perfume and medicine
"To my knowledge, this plant is cultivated in some parts of the world to serve as a kitchen herb. However, industrially, it contributes in providing an oil used in perfumes," he said.

"Shuqur, especially in our district, Al-Said, is used as medicine, and shahada was given orally to babies for

colic and as ear drops for headache," he explained.

"Basil served to perfume beds, clothes, and the hair of women," he said.

A type of shuqur known as shahada is used in the shroud for the burial of the dead, according to Al-Bani. But basil were also part of the rituals of the living.

"Some types of basil used to be brought to the mosque on Fridays," he said, " and, when somebody held a sprig of shahada close to his nose, it is customary for him to immediately say, 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His messenger.'"

In addition to this, people prefer to have it on joyous occasions such as Eid, weddings, or on Fridays.

Locals said that the basil was ground in powder together with imported aromatic herbs known as teeb, a perfume prepared only for women.

"In the past traditionally most people used to have some sprigs of basil like bands worn on their heads as a decoration and as fashion," explained Al-Bani. "Additionally, it is offered to the people who accompany the bridegroom when they come to take the bride home."

"As far as I know, basil, especially the ghuzzab type, is one of the ingredients of what is called akhdharayn, a green cream used the perfume hair ," said Salma, a nurse, of the cream famous in Lahj that also contains musk, ambergris, and teeb.

Growing in and around the house and in farms, basil is a close friend to Yemenis until the grave.

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