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*Al-Rantissi killed in a ruthless and brutal Israeli attack after assassinating Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who will be next?*

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**Palestinians look at the damaged car of Hamas leader, Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, after he was killed in Gaza April 17. An Israeli helicopter missile strike on a car in Gaza City killed top Hamas leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi. REUTERS**

GAZA, April 17 (Reuters) - An Israeli helicopter missile strike on a car in Gaza City killed top Hamas leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi on Saturday, Hamas sources and medics said.

Witnesses said two of Rantissi's bodyguards were also killed in the attack.

Medics said Rantissi had been rushed to a Gaza City hospital in a critical condition

after the attack. Sources said he had been wounded in the head with shrapnel.

Hundreds of Hamas members and supporters flooded to the hospital after news of the Israeli raid.

The air strike occurred hours after an Israeli border policeman was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber at the Erez crossing on the Israeli-Gaza border.

No immediate comment was available from Israel on the strike. Rantissi, a co-founder of Hamas, has become one of its two main leaders since Israel's killing of Hamas spiritual head Ahmed Yassin in Gaza on March 22.



**Critically injured leader of Hamas, al-Rantissi, arrives at a Gaza hospital April 17, where he dies minutes later. REUTERS**

Israel tried to kill Rantissi, public face of a Palestinian resistance group that normally stays in the shadows, last June.

On that occasion he and his teenage son were wounded in an Israeli helicopter missile strike on his car, also in Gaza City.

Rantissi had refused to go into hiding like many of his comrades on Israel's wanted list since Hamas launched a suicide bombing campaign to spearhead a 3 1/2-year-old Palestinian uprising.

He had long depicted himself as a Hamas politician with no links to the military wing of the movement.

But Israel had refused to accept the distinction, accusing him of being a top decision-maker on attacks and of using his media role to incite violence.

With Rantissi filling the role of Hamas spokesman, camera crews from around the world have trooped to his modestly furnished living room to hear him issue vows of revenge, often in calm, even tones, for Israel's killing of militants.



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## Yemen International Travel & Tourism Fair

Wednesday, 14 April 2004- Sana'a- Minister of Tourism and Culture, Mr. Khalid Al-Rowaishan, inaugurated at Hadda Hotel the Yemen International Travel and Tourism Fair, organized by the Yemen International Company for Health and Education Consultation. Seven different tourism authorities participated in the exhibition, displaying their various tourism products. The

exhibition consisted also of folkloric dances reflecting the historical cultural inheritance of Yemen.

The Minister of Culture and Tourism praised the holding of such exhibitions, which are considered very good for the promotion of tourism, indicating that Yemeni tourism will witness great successes in the near future due to the adopted measures.

### New one-year diploma program

## Health care managers get more training

BY STEPHAN PAHLS  
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Improving health care management across Yemen is the goal of a recently-launched one-year program that is now training 21 participants.

Under the auspices of Minister of Public Health and Population Prof. Mohamed Yahya Al Noemi, and the representative of the European Commission Delegation Sana'a, Jean-Bernard de Milito, the "Diploma Course in Health Service Management" was inaugurated recently at the National Health Management Training Centre in Sana'a.

The course upgrades the skills of middle-level health staff, whose task is to manage Yemen's public health services in the decentralized District Health System.

The first class of 21 trainees enrolled in the course comes from five governorates and eight districts, but Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population has indicated that health staff from every district in the country should take the course.

Most members of Yemen's district health management teams, which are in charge of planning and managing health services in the country's 332 districts, are medical assistants, nurses and technicians who have over the years moved into management positions without formal management

training.

Since the launch of the national Health Sector Reform in 1998, the Ministry of Public Health and Population, with the support from various multilateral and unilateral development partners, has made an effort to improve training for health managers.

The "Diploma Course in Health Service Management" received special support from the European Commission. A one-year course of 10 modules, it covers topics like planning, human resource management, health information systems, and quality management.

Each module contains one week of theory, taught at one of three national health training institutes in Aden and Sana'a, as well as a three-week supervised field assignment.

The course uses modern training methodologies. It was developed almost completely by national training and public health experts.

Since the course is modular, several classes can be taught simultaneously. But in order to bring it to a larger number of health managers, training institutes are currently developing a series of short-courses based on its full curriculum, which will be taught at the governorate level.

The diploma course is an example of successful cooperation between the health ministry, national health training institutes, independent national public health experts and donors.

### Due to recent developments in Iraq

## Japanese tourists cancel their visit to Yemen

Monday, 12 April 2004- Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Khalid Al-Rowaishan, confirmed, in his speech to Members of Parliament about the situation of tourism in Yemen, especially following the September 11 incidents and the wars on Iraq and

Afghanistan, that he has received a report from one of the travel agencies regarding the cancellation of groups of Japanese tourists of their visits to Yemen because of the recent developments in Iraq, especially in al-Fallujah.

### President inaugurates the third phase of security redeployment

## Salaries of security and armed forces increased

YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Saturday, 17 April 2004- President Saleh inaugurated today the third phase of the Security Deployment Plan. He also attended the graduation ceremony of a number of security and military personnel. In his address to the audience, President Saleh indicated that those heroes would carry out the third phase of security deployment in different regions. He said, "The security deployment in its first and second phases has achieved excellent success, in al-Jouf, Marib and Shabwah and in other parts of the country. The third security deployment will enhance the previous deployment in serving security and stability."

Concerning the possession of weapons, the President said, "Each citizen has the right to possess or carry

weapons, but it must be regulated and the legislative authority must issue a law regulating the possession and carrying of arms. The state does not want to ban the possession and carrying of weapons or to disarm the public. Anything said contrary to this is baseless."

The President confirmed that regulating the possession and carrying of weapons is merely a legal technicality since the weapons are for confronting enemies and for defending the sovereignty, security and stability of the country.

Regarding the intention of the government to increase the salaries of the state's employees, President Saleh said, "The economy and development need security and stability. Without security and stability there is no development and that the government

intends to increase the salaries of the security and armed forces and employees of the civil service will support this. We urge the government to expedite the process to increase their salaries to offset the increased cost of living and the suffering of citizens. Attention must be given to the security and military corporations, taking into consideration that the increase is to be from the bottom up, and not vice versa, so that the greatest increase goes to lower ranks."

The President, in his address, did not refer to whether the increase would include the retired category or not. It has been customary that the retired receive half of the increase granted to the working force. However, that is usually adopted following the issuance of a Republican Decree. Will the living conditions of the retired be considered?

## A workshop on Ozone in Taiz

The Public Authority for the Protection of the Environment, Ozone Unit, on Monday 5 April, in cooperation with Taiz Chamber of Commerce and Industry, organized the Fifth Workshop on Ozone, under the auspices of Governor of Taiz, Judge Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hajry. It focused on arbitration enactment in trading and importing ozone depleting substances.

The participants discussed the ozone layer, environmental concerns and the pollution of the atmosphere. They also discussed plastic factories and paint and chemical factories and the threats they pose to our environment and to the ozone layer. They also discussed how to implement effective laws on the

purchase of raw materials used in various industries and the handling mechanism to dispose of ozone depleting substances.

The Administrator of the Workshop, Mr. Faisal Ahmed Nasser, in a statement to Yemen Times explained that the workshop was to formulate legislation for Yemen regarding controlling the importation of ozone depleting materials, since Yemen has acceded to the Montreal Protocol and is obliged to execute obligations including the disposal of such materials. This could only be achieved through the enactment of legislation determining how to control these materials, as suggested by the Unit's legal advisor in the draft

project, the subject of this workshop. He added that since the draft is a combination of legislation from other countries, lacking the distinctive nature of Yemen, the Ozone Unit and United Nations thought it better to discuss the draft project with merchants in Taiz, considering the large number of businessmen in the city. Similar discussions are to take place in Hodeidah, Al-Mukalla, Aden and Sana'a, focusing on the development of legislation that can be practically implemented.

## Zonjubar Retirees Association demands benefits

Zonjubar Retirees Association called upon the Ministry of Education to pay the retirees a 20% increase in their allowances.

In an exclusive statement to Yemen Times, the Deputy Director of the Association, Bonah Saeed As-Sahely, imposed responsibility on the Ministry of Education as a result of its procrastination of the issue. Ms. As-Sahely

asserted, in her statement, that the communication efforts have shown the irresponsible attitude of the concerned department and its branch offices.

The concerned department, according to Ms. As-Sahely, has not kept its promises to the retirees who spent their lives serving their country, and demand now nothing but their deserved benefits.

## President of ICRC to visit the countries of Arab Peninsula

Geneva- Mr. Jacob Kalinberger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross arrived on 12 April in Abu Dhabi, the capital of United Arab Emirates for talks with Crown Prince of UAE, Sheikh Khalefa Bin Zaid and a number of UAE officials and the officials of UAE Red Crescent.

The visit reflects the attention of the International Committee of the Red Cross paid to the Arab peninsula and its desire to develop and enhance dialogue and cooperation with countries of the Arab peninsula. Talks focused on principal humanitarian challenges confronting the international committee throughout the world and touched upon the importance of humanitarian international law and obligations of member countries in the Geneva Convention guaranteeing respect of the law.

Mr. Kalinberger will continue his visits to the region with the Kingdom of Bahrain and Qatar for meetings with leaders of the two countries as well as officials of their national Red Crescent Organisations.

## Readers' Voice

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

### This edition's question:

Do you think that the Israeli assassinations of Hamas leaders are indeed helping stabilize the region?

- Yes, they are indeed helpful.
- No, they will infuriate the situation.
- No, there would be no change whatsoever.

### last edition's question:

Do you think that the sentence against Saeed Thabet has been politically motivated?

- Yes, the court was indeed acting upon orders. 70%
- Not directly, but hints were given. 16%
- No, the court did it by itself. 14%

Go to our website at:  
yementimes.com/#poll  
and have your voice heard!

## Sana'a embraces Young Arab Poets

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism will organize during the period 13-16 April the activities of the First Sana'a Forum for Young Arab Poets, within the framework of activities of Sana'a, the Arab Cultural Capital 2004.

The importance of this forum and poetic carnival lies in it being the first event of its kind focusing on young creative and innovative poets. Nearly 200 Yemeni, poets representing all poetic spectrums and genres, will participate.

## Yemeni Women's Union Women rights between Islam and the law

BY FAHMIA AL-FOTIH  
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

The executive office of Yemeni Women Union (YWU), sponsored by UNDP, held on Wednesday 14 April a seminar about woman rights in religion and law. The seminar took place at the YWU headquarters.

Ms. Ramzia Eryani, the Head of YWU, said "Islam has given women fair laws and the Yemeni constitution stipulates equality between men and women."

Eryani further said "I find a lot of organizations and Arab countries have written and discussed the laws related to women as well as international laws that ban the segregation based on sex. Islam has been just to women, yet, some people tend not to apply Islamic regulations due to false cultural concepts."

Eryani also added "We hope to have contact with everyone, Government, and Parliament and others, to enable us

to implement these laws. We would like also to thank UNDP for supporting women's issues in all fields and helping her get her rights."

Ms. Najat Al-Faqih, who works in the Studies and Research Department at YWU, told Yemen Times "Today this seminar is held to discuss the book 'Woman in the Islamic Religion', written by Ms. Ramzia. The aim of this seminar is to enrich this book."

Mr. Hamoud El-Hitar, a judge, pointed out the importance of organizing such a seminar to gather people interested in women's rights, and said that it is considered a step to correct the negative concepts related to the role of women and rights that Islam has bestowed upon her.

He also emphasised the status of women in the Yemeni constitution, which ensures her rights and equality between men and women.

Four working-papers were submitted, most of which tackled woman-related topics.

## مطلوب موظفي تحصيل

- توجد وظائف شاغرة لمحصلين للعمل للفترتين الصباحية والمسائية (أ) ساعات لدى مؤسسة مبنية.
- ويشترط في القبول التالي:
- ١- أن تكون لديهم قدرة عالية في التخاطب والعلاقات العامة.
  - ٢- أن تكون لديهم مهارات في الإقناع والتواصل مع العملاء.
  - ٣- أن يقوموا بمتابعة الجهات باستمرار وإصرار إلى أن يتم تسديد المبلغ.
  - ٤- أن يكونوا بمظهر لائق وتعامل راقى مع الجهات.
  - ٥- يفضل أن تكون لديهم خبرة تزيد عن خمس سنوات.
  - ٦- يفضل أن يكون حاصلًا على شهادة جامعية في مجال الإدارة أو ما شابه.
- لمن لديه الرغبة في التقديم إرسال السيرة الذاتية على فاكس (٢٦٨٢٧٦): قبل نهاية شهر إبريل الحالي.
- ١- أن يقوموا بإستلام فواتير مع أوليات الطلاب من الإدارة المالية في كل يوم.
- ٢- أن يقوموا بتوصيل الفواتير أولاً بأول إلى الجهات المطلوب منها التسديد.
- ٣- أن يعدوا نموذج أعمال يبين الأعمال التي تم إنجازها.
- ٤- أن يقوموا بتنظيم أوقاتهم ليتلاءم مع حجم العمل وطبيعته.
- ٥- أن يكونوا مسؤولين ومسؤولية كاملة عن متابعة الجهات لتسديد الفواتير التي قاموا بتوصيلها مع مراعاة تليغ الإدارة فور رفض الجهات السداد.

## مطلوب مصمم إعلانات

مطلوب مصمم للعمل في وكالة إعلانات بدوام يومي من 9 صباحاً حتى 6 مساءً يتخللها ساعة غداء باستخدام ال PC بالمواصفات التالية:

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**In Brief**

**African mosquitoes kills 20 in Hodiedah**

A malaria epidemic has killed 20 persons, most of whom are children, in Hais Province, 136 km south of Hodiedah city, in less than one week.

A health source in the province said that the primary cause of death at the province's hospital is the epidemic and the hospital is unable to present enough assistance due to the lack of required equipment. He said that the fever symptoms of the patients are indicative of the malaria existing in some African countries.

It is worth mentioning that Yemen and Saudi jointly implemented last month a program to combat malaria

**Fires kill housewife and destroy a school in Taiz**

Friday, 9 April 2004, Taiz - A 27-year old housewife, Rania Ahmed Haza, was burned to death inside her house near of Al-Shab School after she spread Kerosene to kill insects inside her home. It is believed that kerosene is usually mixed with easily flammable diesel, which has resulted in the death of many victims in similar incidents.

Another fire incident took place inside of a school in Hujayyah region, which destroyed the school's records. Preliminary investigation indicated that the fire was started by an incendiary. The security forces are still investigating.

**Infamous youths harass foreign tourists**

Taiz- Al-Qahera castle is currently witnessing a flow of several groups of tourists from different foreign countries in addition to locals and nationals seeking a glimpse at the historic castle, recently renovated. However, these groups of tourists encounter harassment by Yemeni youths with an infamous reputation.

Tourism Police are trying to confront this problem. However, they are still short-handed in terms of having an operation room and place to stay on site. In order for tourists, locals and foreigners to feel safe and secure, especially since rocks were thrown at a foreigner by a mentally ill person, who was detained by the police.

**Late arrival of police at a fighting scene**

The late arrival of police at a fighting scene has resulted in the stabbing of a young man, called Sa' abyan, several times in different parts of his body.

The end of the fight and hospitalisation of Ar-Razi took place before the arrival of the police force, which upon its arrival started investigating the incident and looking for the fighting parties.

**Son kills mother**

Tuesday, 13 April 2004, Taiz- The sixteen-year old Labeeb Mohamed Nasser, from Al-Arouq region, Haifan province, attacked his mother with a knife, leading to her death. Preliminary information received by Yemen Times indicated that the young man is suffering from psychological problems.

In two separate incidents over disputes over pieces of land, two farmers were killed and one injured in Mocca Province, when the perpetrators resorted to using their machine guns to end disputes.

**Nasser advisor at the Ministry of Information**

The Prime Minister, Mr. Abdulqader Ba Jamal, issued last week a decree appointing Mr. Aimen Mohamed Nasser, the publisher and Editor-in-Chief of "Al-Tareeq" newspaper an advisor at the Ministry of Information.

Mr. Nasser, who is aged between 30 and 40, is a shrewd and active journalist involved in a number of movements related with human rights and civil society.

Journalists see the appointment of a young educated and active person at the Ministry of Information as a good omen regarding the adoption of and care for their cases and concerns.

Congratulations to Mr. Aimen on the new post.

**Journalism Freedom Protection and Training Center condemns violation of freedoms**

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Journalism Freedom Protection and Training Center (JFPTC) issued a statement condemning the judicial decision issued against colleague Saeed Thabit, Under-Secretary of Yemeni Journalist Syndicate (YJS) and correspondent for Al-Quds Press News Agency, who was banned from practicing journalism for six months in addition to a fine.

The statement described the sentence as "A disappointment and it brings more fear to the future of journalism and freedoms of opinion and expression in Yemen".

The statement says, "At the time advocates, activists, journalists and civil society corporations, inside and outside the country, were awaiting a decision which rebuilds the reputation of the judiciary in Yemen, they were shocked by the decision of Sana'a South Western Court on Tuesday 13 April 2004, banning Mr. Saeed Thabit from practicing journalism for six months. He described it as death sentence."

The statement added that various restrictions and pressure against jour-

nalists have resumed with the escalating policy and practice of kidnapping and arrests that some colleagues have encountered, including physical and mental abuse, intimidation, and deprivation of the rights to publish the information obtained for the public.

Many of the practices and judicial verdicts issued against colleagues exceed the borders of subjectivity and legitimacy. Verdicts like this do not only target the freedom of journalism guaranteed by the constitution and internationally demanded, but targets also "the ruling system", which consequently squeezed itself into a predicament and a dilemma before the world and the international community.

The encouragement of a policy of repression and the violation of freedoms and rights by the Political Security Apparatus, "adherent to the President personally" constitute a great offense against the reputation and obligations of the ruling party and broaden the scope for international condemnation. Yemen has become among the countries to receive the harshest criticism. In the first international ranking of journalistic freedom,

prepared by Reporters without Borders, Yemen was placed at the bottom of the list. Yemen was also among the 14 countries with the most violations committed against human rights according to the classification of Amnesty International Organization.

At the conclusion of the statement, the Journalism Freedom Protection and Training Center expressed its great concern at the various infringements of journalistic privileges in Yemen. It reminds the government of its obligations and commitments stipulated in international conventions, treaties and protocols, signed and ratified in the name of "The Republic of Yemen", as a country obliged to protect human rights, to advocate and embrace the freedom of journalism, and to guarantee and respect freedom of expression. As a country supposedly concerned with the strengthening of the building of the state, the independence of judiciary and abiding by international standards in policies, legislation, and judicial, civil and political dealings. Yemen is supposed to be a country committed to translating its obligations towards human rights and general liberties into reality.

**First workshop to update the general maps of Taiz city**

Taiz Bureau Yemen Times

Thursday, 15 April 2004, Taiz- Mayor of Taiz, Judge Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hajry, Councilor of the World Bank Dr. Sameh Wahby, Secretary General of the Local Council, Mr. Mohamed Al-Haj, Chairman of Planning and Development of the Council, Mr. Shawgy Hayel attended the opening ceremony of the First Workshop on the Modernization of the Maps of Taiz City, held at the Sofitel Hotel. It was

organized by the corporation building project of the local council in Taiz City, affiliated to the Development of the Municipality and Protection from Floods Project, with the participation of 60 members of local councils in the governorate.

Eng. Mohamed Nouman Al-Buraihy, Corporation Support Official of the local council pointed out that the previous plan renewal project, was not carried out properly due to lack of coordination among the related authority concerned with the protection of the city from floods.

During the meeting several working papers were discussed in connection with the project to protect the city from floods and the improved schematic plans for the city.



**Renewable Energy conference to be held in Yemen**

BY ISMAIL AL-GHABIR YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The First Regional Conference on Renewable Energy for the Middle East and North Africa will be held in Sana'a, during 21-22 April 2004, organized by the Ministries of Electricity and Water and Environment in coordination with international donor authorities for the electricity and water sectors.

The importance of this conference lies in the need to expand the number of beneficiaries of electricity to include all urban and rural parts of the country. We simply hope that the means to this electricity will come from the use of renewable energy sources (sun and wind) at lower costs. The circulation of this type of energy, through effective studies and designs, would change Yemeni rural areas and create genuine development, positively reflected in the lives of people.

The circulation of this experiment, after its success, and its dispersal at the national level, would reduce the burden of the high cost of fuel electricity and ease the complaints of citizens throughout the country, especially in hot coastal regions. In addition,

development without electricity cannot be achieved. Electricity is a primary element in the making of the future of Yemen. It sometimes hinders development and investment projects due to the high costs accompanying its installation and connection.

We hope that the conference will come out with recommendations transforming the working papers into effective projects, ultimately aiming at connecting electricity to more urban and rural parts of the country through renewable solar and wind energy through the better utilization of donations and international expertise in this field.

It is our right to dream that electricity will be connected to every home, farm and workshop. We hope for electricity that is pure and environmentally friendly, at a reasonable cost, in order to move Yemen from this situation to a better one, and to contribute to the development of agriculture, industry and community services.

Last but not least, at the time some of the countries of the world are reaping the economic and social benefits of technologies of renewable energy, many of countries of the region have not yet started to pay attention to this kind of energy, which is abundantly provided to them by nature.

**Dr. Nouman complains about Kuwaiti Hospital to the Prosecution**

Dr. Ahmed Abdul Aziz Nouman, Chairman of Al-Manar Scientific Corporation for Studies and Researches, complained in a letter to the Under-Secretary of Prosecution of the negligence and deteriorating living conditions at the Kuwait Educational Hospital.

"The negligence and apathy of staff and the administration of the hospital has reached a point where the hospital lacks basic medical standards and understanding", said Dr. Nouman in his letter.

This comes following the traffic accident involving the doctor's son on his way to school, resulting in a broken leg. The child was taken to the Kuwait hospital where the father witnessed and encountered unprecedented unprofessional medical practices from a hospital that used to be few years ago one of the best hospitals in the Republic.

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**Abyan Governor meets with members of local council**

The governor of Abyan, Fared Major, met on April 10, with members of the local council of Khanfar County to discuss the suspension of their membership.

During the meeting that took place at Al-Qasr, Khanfar County, the Minister discussed with the members their opinions and reservations that made them suspend their own membership until meeting with him.

The meeting, which lasted six hours and discussed the centralization of some issues, ended with the members' announcement of the resumption of their work as of the same day.

**Results of Children's Parliamentary Elections**

The General Secretariat of the Children's Parliament, in a press statement, announced the end of the elections of the children parliament for the current year 2004, held on Thursday 15 April throughout the Republic of Yemen. The statement indicated the victory of 35 children including 12 girls. 21,500 children voted in the election, and 243 stood as candidates, of which 79 were young girls.

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## Iran taps oil fund to tackle road accident deaths

TEHRAN, April 17 (Reuters) - Iran's parliament on Saturday approved \$250 million to set up roadside emergency centres in a country with one of the world's highest road death tolls.

It ratified withdrawing money from the Oil Stabilisation Fund for the government to pay its debts to the state-owned health insurance system and set up 100 roadside emergency clinics.

Lawmakers approved the sum in a session broadcast live on state radio. Every two hours, five Iranians die in road accidents.

## Palestinian bomber explodes at Erez checkpoint

EREZ, Gaza, April 17 (Reuters) - A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up on Saturday at the Erez checkpoint on Israel's border with the Gaza Strip, Israeli military sources said.

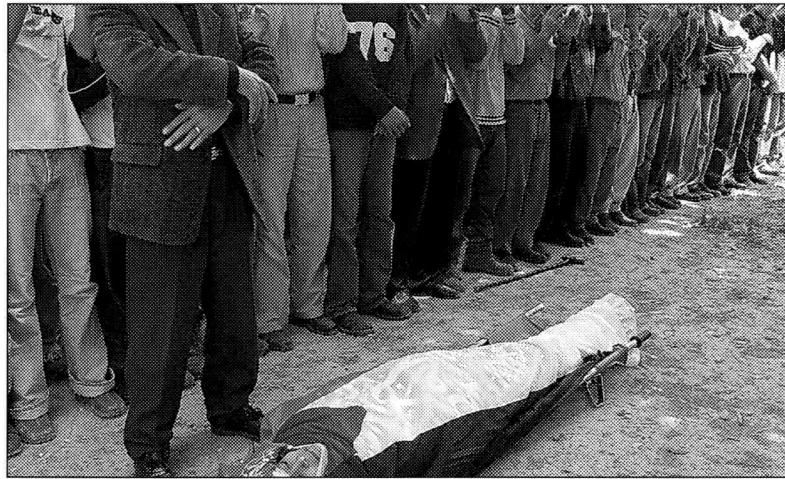
The military sources said four security officers were injured in the blast, which occurred days after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon won the endorsement of the United States for a plan to unilaterally pull out of the Gaza Strip.

They said the bomber blew himself up on the Israeli side of the Erez checkpoint, near an army post at the entrance to an industrial complex inside the crossing. Hundreds of Palestinians workers cross the checkpoint every day to work inside Israel.

The Palestinian militant groups Hamas and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which is part of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, claimed joint responsibility for the attack in an anonymous phone call to Reuters.

The caller identified the bomber as al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades member Fadi al-Amudi, 22, who came from the Palestinian village of Beit Lehiya near Erez.

Bush at the White House on Wednesday approved Israeli Prime



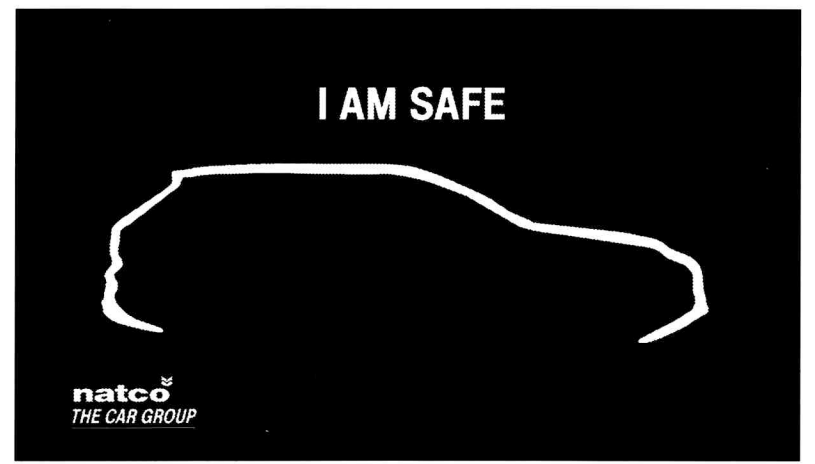
Palestinian pray next the body of 17-year-old Hussein Awad during his funeral near the West Bank city of Ramallah April 17. Awad died in hospital from injuries sustained from a rubber bullet fired by Israeli soldiers, witness said, during clashes in the village of Beitunia near Ramallah on Friday. REUTERS

Minister Ariel Sharon's pullout plan, which also calls to retain some West Bank settlements and bar refugees from returning to what is now Israel.

The decision was met with anger from the Palestinians, who said it was a blow to a U.S.-backed peace plan, and Hamas, the main group behind suicide attacks

against Israelis, urged Palestinians to abandon all peace moves.

The Erez border crossing has long been a target for Palestinian attacks. On March 6, six Palestinians died while trying to carry out a bombing on Israeli soldiers. On January 14, four Israelis were killed by a suicide bomber in the area.



## In besieged US base in Iraq, even phone calls risky

NAJAF, Iraq, April 17 (Reuters) - Huntering down in a military base in Najaf as hostile Shi'ite militiamen control the streets outside, the head of the U.S.-led administration in the Iraqi shrine city says even making a phone call is dangerous.

"If you watch the movies you would think that life as a diplomat is all cocktail parties and receptions," Phil Kosnett said on Saturday in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) headquarters inside a base defended by Salvadoran soldiers that has come under frequent mortar and sniper attack.

"That is not what it is about," he said. "I have people who are civilian information technology or administrative contractors who have been out lugging machine gun ammunition at forward fighting positions. My people have exposed themselves to sniper fire so that they could make a satellite phone call."

The base has been virtually under siege ever since militiamen loyal to rebel Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr launched an uprising earlier this month. One Salvadoran soldier based in the city has been killed and several wounded.

Sadr is holed up in Najaf protected by his militia and a 2,500-strong U.S. force has been sent to the outskirts of the city to confront him if talks on a peaceful solution fail.

But even moderate Shi'ite clerics

have declared that if there is bloodshed in Najaf, there will be fury across Iraq. The Imam Ali shrine in Najaf and the nearby Kufa mosque are among the holiest sites in Shi'ite Islam.

"People are weary and anxious in anticipating the restoration of peace in the city. The great majority of Najafees were furious when Sadr's militia took control of the city. They desperately want to see him gone," Kosnett said.

"However, there is a great concern — that coalition forces and the CPA share — that Kufa mosque and the Shrine of Ali are not destroyed in the process."

Colonel Dana Pittard, head of the 3rd Brigade Task Force that has assembled just outside the city, went in to Najaf in a Spanish military convoy on Saturday to visit the beleaguered CPA base. Kosnett told him the situation in Najaf was explosive, and that Sadr's militia men were not in full control.

"They are gunmen and thugs and many of them have come to town to take advantage of the situation. One of the most complicated elements of the situation is that Sadr does not have total control over all gunmen and thugs who are running around the streets of Najaf," he said.

"If Sadr could be trusted to peaceful resolution of the crisis that would be one thing. Now it is very difficult to say what is going to happen."

## Kidnappers free two Japanese in Iraq

BAGHDAD, April 17 (Reuters) - Kidnappers freed two Japanese hostages in Baghdad on Saturday, a day after a captured U.S. soldier was paraded in footage on an Arab television channel.

Jumpei Yasuda and Nobutaka Watanabe were unshaven and looked tired but in good health as they were handed over to Japanese diplomats at Baghdad's Um al-Qura mosque.

Insurgents have kidnapped more than 40 foreigners this month and have released most them. An Italian hostage has been killed.

U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair vowed to stamp out violence in Iraq, where U.S.-led forces are battling guerrillas in mainly Sunni central Iraq and trying to snuff out a revolt by a Shi'ite militia in the south.

The turmoil prompted the U.S. military to close parts of highways north and south of Baghdad indefinitely on Saturday. It said guerrilla attacks had made Highways One and Eight unsafe for civilian use and they needed repair.

But guns fell silent in Falluja, west of Baghdad, where air strikes and clashes have frequently punctuated a shaky truce.

"For the first time in days, Falluja is completely calm," said one resident in the battered city of 300,000.

Senior civilian and military representatives of Iraq's U.S.-led administration took part in peace talks for the first time

on Friday. The talks were due to resume on Saturday though it was not immediately clear whether they had begun.

### NO DEAL YET

A senior U.S. military official said a bridge to Falluja's main hospital had reopened to traffic, but no overall deal had been reached with the 1,000 to 2,000 fighters in the town.

U.S. Marines launched a crackdown in Falluja on April 5 following the gruesome killings of four American private security guards ambushed in the town the previous week.

The captors of U.S. Private Keith Maupin, seized after an attack on a road convoy west of Baghdad last week, released a videotape that showed him surrounded by masked gunmen.

Maupin, one of two missing U.S. soldiers, identified himself in a soft voice on the videotape.

The two freed Japanese hostages said they had been well treated during their three days of captivity.

"We had a good meal every day," Yasuda said. "We were caught around Abu Ghraib (on the outskirts of Baghdad) and after that we were blindfolded and changed house every day."

Three other Japanese were freed on Thursday, but several foreigners are still missing, including a U.S. contractor, a Palestinian, a Dane, a Jordanian-born businessman and three Italians. Captors have threatened to kill the Italians one by one unless Rome withdraws its

troops from Iraq.

### SADR DEFIANT

Blair said at a news conference with Bush after talks at the White House on Friday they would end a rebellion by a militia led by the radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, and also win their long battle against Sunni guerrillas.

Sadr is holed up in the holy city of Najaf with 2,500 U.S. soldiers poised outside vowing to kill or capture him.

About 200 supporters, including some wounded militiamen, filed into his office on Saturday to kiss his hand, seek his blessing and chant his praises, a Reuters correspondent said.

"If the Americans attack Najaf this will be zero hour and mass revolution. It will be a Shi'ite-American confrontation," Sadr's spokesman Qays al-Khozali told a news conference.

"The negotiations are stalled," he said. "I don't have any hope. I don't see a real desire from the other side."

A senior official of the U.S.-led administration said there were no negotiations with Sadr, but acknowledged contacts with various intermediaries claiming ties with him.

"Many people have approached us. We have not seen any that we have confidence in," the official said, stressing that Sadr, wanted in connection with the murder of a moderate Shi'ite cleric a year ago, must face justice in an Iraqi court.

The fiery cleric said on Friday he

would never abolish his Mehdi Army. U.S. officials say it must be disarmed.

The commander of U.S. troops outside Najaf for the past few days said their presence had made a difference.

"Sadr has gotten nervous," Colonel Dana Pittard of the 3rd Brigade Task Force told reporters. "Sadr's militia moved into the city instead of operating freely in the area."

Shi'ite clerics have worked hard to avert a bloody showdown in Najaf and its holy shrines, but a spokesman for one of the city's four grand ayatollahs said the Shi'ite religious establishment was not directly involved in talks.

A spokesman for Grand Ayatollah Ishaq al-Afghani said the Shi'ite hierarchy would not be drawn into Sadr's crisis with the Americans and accused Iran of sponsoring Sadr's militia.

April has been Iraq's bloodiest month since Saddam Hussein was ousted a year ago. The U.S. military has lost at least 92 soldiers in combat so far this month — more than the total killed in the three-week war that toppled Saddam.

A series of blasts shook central Baghdad on Saturday. A roadside bomb, apparently aimed at a U.S. patrol, wounded an Iraqi civilian, police said. Two mortar bombs hit a busy district, wounding a Sudanese national, witnesses said. (Additional reporting by Fadel Badran in Falluja, Ghaith Abdul-Ahad in Najaf and Michael Georgy and Haider Salah al-Din in Baghdad)

## Arab League members reject new Mideast U.S. policy

CAIRO, April 17 (Reuters) - The 22 members of the Arab League on Saturday rejected Washington's new policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying it was a threat to security and stability in the Middle East.

U.S. President George W. Bush said this week that Israel might be able to retain parts of the occupied West Bank and that Palestinian refugees should give up hope of regaining their homes in what is now Israel.

At the request of Palestine, a full league member, the Arab League held a

special session in Cairo at permanent representative level on Saturday to respond to Bush.

"The council...affirmed unanimously that it rejects the new American position, which is likely to wreck the peace process in the Middle East," an official statement said.

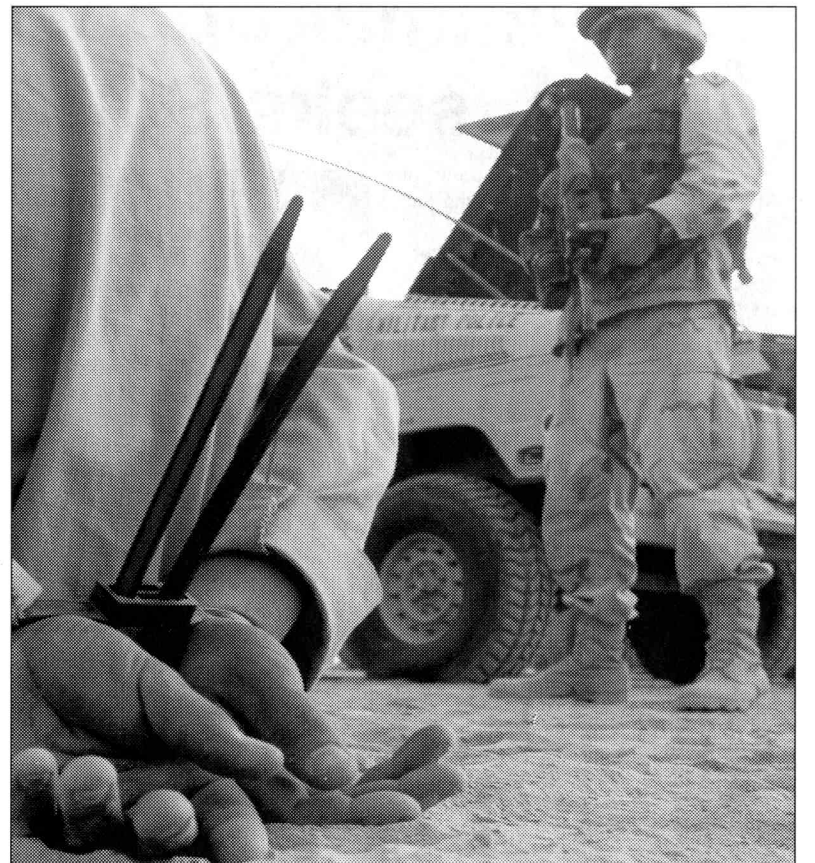
"This position encourages Israel to persist in its aggression against the Palestinian people and its threats to security and stability in the region," it added.

"(The council) calls on the United

States to do what is necessary to prevent the collapse of the principles of the peace process," the statement said.

The Arab League repeated the Arab position that no one but the Palestinians can renounce their right of return, which is enshrined in U.N. resolutions, and that Israel should withdraw to its borders on the eve of the June 1967 war.

The statement said the Arabs remained committed to their peace initiative of 2002, which offered Israel peace and normal relations with all Arab countries in return for withdrawal.



A U.S. soldier guards arrested supporters of the radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr at a U.S. military base near the Iraqi holy city of Najaf on April 17. The insurgency in the south is led by al-Sadr, who is holed up in the holy city of Najaf with 2,500 U.S. soldiers poised outside vowing to kill or capture him and dismantle his Mehdi Army. REUTERS

## Egypt frees Kuwaiti who caused plane scare

CAIRO, April 17 (Reuters) - A Kuwaiti man caused a disturbance on a Qatar Airways flight on Saturday and the pilot made an unscheduled stop in Cairo but Egyptian authorities released the man after several hours of questioning.

A security source at Cairo airport said the authorities concluded that the man, Hamad Fahd Jassem, 30, had mental and nervous problems and did not mean any harm.

"He did not intend to harm the passengers or the plane or divert the

plane by force, so there is no need for us to detain him," said the source, who asked not to be named.

Airline spokeswoman Salam al-Shawa said earlier that the man had tried to hijack the plane to Geneva but security sources in Cairo said he carried nothing with which to threaten the crew.

Egyptian authorities removed the passenger and his Kuwaiti travelling companion from the plane, which was travelling from Casablanca in Morocco to the Qatari capital Doha with a stop in the Libyan capital

Tripoli.

Jassem had alarmed the crew and passengers by talking incoherently, harassing passengers and trying to grab the public address system, the security sources at Cairo airport said.

After questioning Jassem in Cairo, doctor Nehad Gamaledin quoted the man as saying that after taking off from Tripoli he felt he was choking and had to stand up to relax.

Jassem has said he intends to fly on to Kuwait on another plane later on Saturday, the sources said.

## Kuwait heightens security over regional instability

KUWAIT, April 17 (Reuters) - Kuwait has heightened security measures in response to increased regional instability, especially in neighbouring Iraq and Saudi Arabia, a security official said on Saturday.

"The situation in Iraq necessitates that Kuwait be prepared for any occurrence at any given time," the official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

Neighbouring Saudi Arabia is battling a surge in violence and the king-

dom has cracked down on militants, believed to be linked to Saudi-born Osama Bin Laden's al Qaeda network, since suicide bombings killed at least 50 people last year.

The Kuwaiti official said the security measures include placing police checkpoints and patrols across the north and centre of the country and at borders. Tiny Kuwait, the launch pad for the U.S.-led war in Iraq last year that ousted former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, is now the main

gateway for reconstruction projects in Iraq. Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah last week expressed concern over the rise in instability in Iraq, including increased tension between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims, and its effects on neighbouring states.

Kuwait has witnessed a rise in tension between its Sunni majority and Shi'ite minority and the prime minister has held meetings with various groups to preempt any escalation.

## Airplane crash kills Indian movie star

Actress Soundarya, who had been campaigning for Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party, was headed to an election rally when the plane caught fire and crashed just after taking off from Bangalore, city police chief S. Mariswamy said.

The cause of the fire was not yet known.

The dead also included a party official, the pilot of the chartered aircraft and Soundarya's brother, party

spokesman Amitabh Sinha said.

Soundarya, 32, acted in more than 100 movies in several languages, and was one of Bollywood's top stars. She bucked Indian tradition last year when she kept on acting even after she got married.

"It is a great tragedy to the film industry," said Mohanlal, a film star who acted with Soundarya in several movies. "More than a co-star, she was a good friend."



The wreckage of an aircraft carrying four passengers lies in an open field opposite the Jakkur airfield in Bangalore, India, Saturday, April 17. A popular Indian movie actress, Soundarya, and three others were killed as their small aircraft crashed on Saturday. She has been campaigning for the Bharatiya Janata Party and was on her way to an election rally. AP Photo

# China gas blast kills up to 7, thousands evacuated

BEIJING, April 17 (Reuters) - Explosions at a chemical plant in southwestern China killed up to seven people and forced the evacuation of 150,000 residents from the bustling industrial city of Chongqing, an official said on Saturday.

But fears that toxic chlorine gas released in Friday's blasts would seep into the water supply or poison the air in busy downtown areas receded on Saturday as most residents began returning home.

"About 150,000 people in all were evacuated," an official surnamed Zhen at Chongqing's Foreign Affairs Office told Reuters by telephone. "Things have quieted down now."

The official Xinhua news agency said nine people were killed or missing in the accident.

"The gas leak was largely due to the outdated furnaces and other equipment," Miao Guanghui, head of a technical team at the scene, was quoted as saying by Xinhua.

The company could not immediately be reached for comment.

Blasts at the Tianyuan Chemical Industry Plant in Chongqing, a city



Firefighters rush to control a chlorine gas leak at the Tianyuan Chemical Industry Plant in southwest China's Chongqing municipality on April 16, 2004. Explosions at the chemical plant in southwestern China killed at least seven people and forced the evacuation of 150,000 city residents, state media said on April 17. Reuters

of 12 million people, spewed noxious greenish chlorine gas into the air and forced some 30,000 people to spend Friday evening in tents.

Journalists who entered the factory on Friday evening reported seeing broken glass and human body parts.

Residents had feared the accident would be a repeat of a December gas field explosion in rural Chongqing, which killed 234 people and turned the area into a death zone.

"We left our homes yesterday evening and returned in the small hours today," Mrs Long, who lives close to the chemical plant, said by telephone. "Now everything is back to normal, the department stores and schools are open as usual."

Xinhua said all seven chlorine tanks at the factory were leaking poisonous gas. The leaks started on Thursday.

It was the third chlorine gas leak at the plant since last year, Xinhua quoted a worker at the plant as saying. City officials had planned to move the chlorine plant away from downtown areas to another city, it said.

## Nepali police break up rallies, detain journalists

KATHMANDU, April 17 (Reuters) - Nepali police, trying to quell a wave of protests against the king and for democracy, broke up several rallies on Saturday and detained hundreds of journalists and others defying a ban on public gatherings.

Police rounded up the journalists as they protested against the detention on Friday of several reporters covering rallies demanding a multi-party government in place of King Gyanendra's royalist cabinet.

"Hundreds of journalists were detained at a peaceful rally," Reporters' Club Nepal said in a statement.

Last week the government banned protests by five or more people in a bid

to defuse the wave of rallies critical of King Gyanendra, who has ignored demands for a more democratic administration.

Journalists sealed their mouths with black ribbons and marched in a silent rally on Saturday demanding a public apology from the government for the detention of their colleagues.

"We were in a peaceful and silent demonstration when about 350 of us were detained," Narayan Wagle, editor of the widely read Nepali daily, Kantipur, told Reuters.

Dozens of human rights activists were also detained, and police also held more than 100 supporters of five political parties and broke up rallies that

were defying the ban, organisers said.

So far more than 3,500 people have been held, though many have been freed a couple of hours after being detained.

King Gyanendra has faced sustained protests since he postponed elections and fired the prime minister in October 2002, accusing him of incompetence in his efforts to contain a Maoist revolt in which more than 9,300 people have died.

The king appointed a royalist prime minister, but he too has been unable to defeat or make peace with the rebels, who have been fighting since 1996 to replace the monarchy with a communist state.

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## Myanmar opposition HQ opens, seeks Suu Kyi release

YANGON (Reuters) - Supporters of Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi sang democracy songs and demanded her release after the military government allowed her party to reopen its headquarters following a year-long crackdown.

Under the eye of plainclothes security men, National League for Democracy activists cheered as they raised the red-and-white party flag outside the run-down office, which had been shut since a clash between government and opposition followers last May.

"Only when they reopen all the offices and release the remaining leaders will our situation return to normal," a senior NLD leader told Reuters.

The reopening of the headquarters, which followed the release of two NLD officials from house arrest on Tuesday, has intensified speculation that Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi may be freed soon.

She and vice chairman Tin Oo are the last senior party leaders still confined to their homes since the May 30 clash which critics blamed on the junta.

Yangon denied orchestrating the violence, but it has come under fierce international pressure to end the crackdown, release hundreds of political prisoners and move toward democracy.

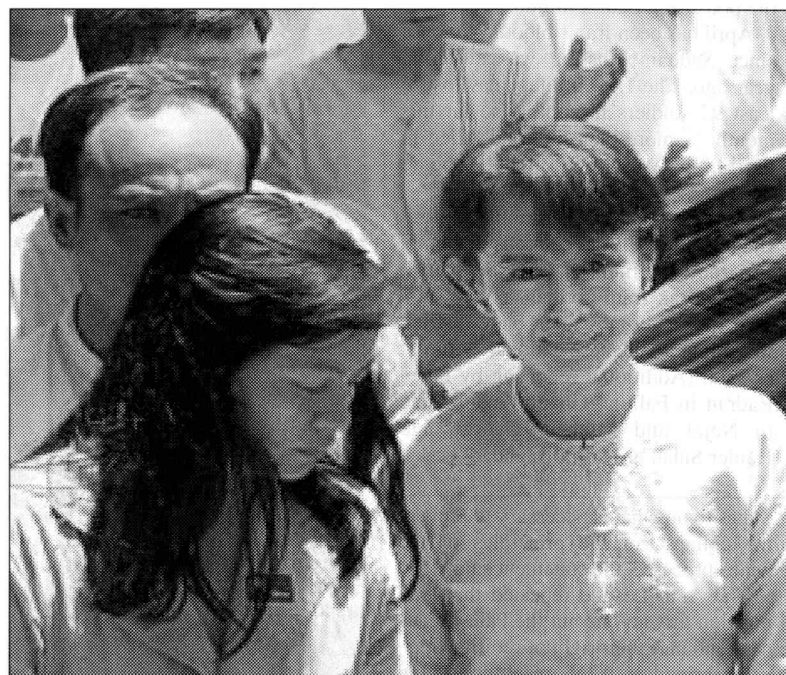
The military government, which has ruled the former Burma since 1962, has promised fresh constitutional talks next month as part of its "road map to democracy" announced last August.

But the NLD has refused to consider joining the talks until Suu Kyi, the party's secretary general, and Tin Oo are freed. It also demanded that party offices across the country be reopened.

"Without the participation of the vice chairman and secretary general, we the remaining central executive committee members will not make any decision in connection with matters concerning the National Convention," the NLD said in a statement released to reporters outside its headquarters.

"NLD FOR THE PEOPLE"

Hours after the military removed a lock and chains barring entry to the



Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, front right, smiles as she arrives at party headquarters in Yangon, Myanmar in this May 7, 2002. Myanmar's military government reopened the headquarters of Aung San Suu Kyi's opposition National League for Democracy party on Saturday, April 17, almost a year after shutting it and all other party offices, a party official said. (AP Photo/David Longstreath, FILE)

building, NLD supporters were busy cleaning. The office was untouched with pictures of Suu Kyi on the walls and banners proclaiming "Martyrs Never Die" and "NLD for the People."

Five Buddhist monks in saffron robes chanted their blessings to mark Saturday's New Year holiday.

Earlier, about 200 NLD activists gathered at Inya Lake, near Suu Kyi's tightly guarded home, where they released fish in a traditional merit-making ceremony.

Since major surgery in September, Suu Kyi has been confined to her lakeside home, her telephone cut off and visitors restricted. Before that, she was detained at a secret location.

Many in the international community regard the NLD as Myanmar's legitimate government. It won the country's last elections in 1990 by a landslide, but

the junta refused to hand over power.

The military insists its democracy "road map" announced in August last year is a serious attempt at national reconciliation, starting with a reconvened National Convention on May 17. The constitution-drafting conference was suspended in 1996 after the NLD walked out accusing the military of manipulating the process to stay in power.

Critics fear the road map is another tactic by the junta to deflect international criticism and keep its grip on power. They add the convention will have little credibility if Suu Kyi remains shut out.

"For national reconciliation, there must be a dialogue. And for a dialogue, Aung San Suu Kyi is the only one who holds the trust and belief of all the people of Burma. So they must release her," said a spokesman for an exiled group in Bangkok.

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# EU defuses tension with U.S. over Mideast

TULLAMORE, Ireland, April 17 (Reuters) - The European Union sought to defuse tension with Washington over the Middle East on Saturday, saying Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip could be a "significant step" on the road to peace.

In a statement after a meeting of foreign ministers, the EU emphasised what it sees as positive aspects of the unilateral Israeli plan, endorsed by U.S. President George W. Bush this week to the anger of Palestinians.

"The European Union welcomes the prospect of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip," the statement said.

"The European Council has stated that such a withdrawal could represent a significant step towards the implementation of the 'road map', provided that it is carried out in accordance with certain conditions."

The road map is a peace plan endorsed by the Middle East Quartet of the United States, the EU, the United Nations and Russia.

The EU said it concurred with Bush that negotiations on a lasting peace in the region must be agreed between the Israelis and Palestinians themselves "and must not be prejudged".

While restating its previous commitments to a two-state solution to the conflict and the need for full agreement if Israel's 1967 borders are to be altered, the EU made no mention of any disagreement with Washington.

"The European Union notes that President Bush is in agreement with the EU that secure and recognised borders should emerge from negotiations between the parties," it said.

Israel's plan, which envisages its withdrawal from Gaza while holding on to land in the West Bank, received a tepid response in Europe when it was announced on Wednesday.



Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs Brian Cowen (C bottom) jokes with Foreign Ministers (clockwise from L), Denmark's Per Stig Moller, Britain's Jack Straw, Latvia's Rihards Piks and European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana during a meeting of European Union Foreign Ministers at Tullamore, Ireland, April 17. REUTERS

EU ministers have criticised it during their two-day meeting in Tullamore, central Ireland, but now appear to have decided to work with it rather than reject it.

#### mixed messages?

Some ministers suggested Bush had sent mixed messages during his White House news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Wednesday but had since clarified his position, adopting a more conciliatory tone.

"It has been corrected by Bush, explaining that obviously the result of the process cannot be achieved in any other way than through negotiations between the two parties..." Swedish Foreign Minister Laila Freivalds told reporters. EU Commissioner Chris Patten also said the Americans appeared to have shifted ground.

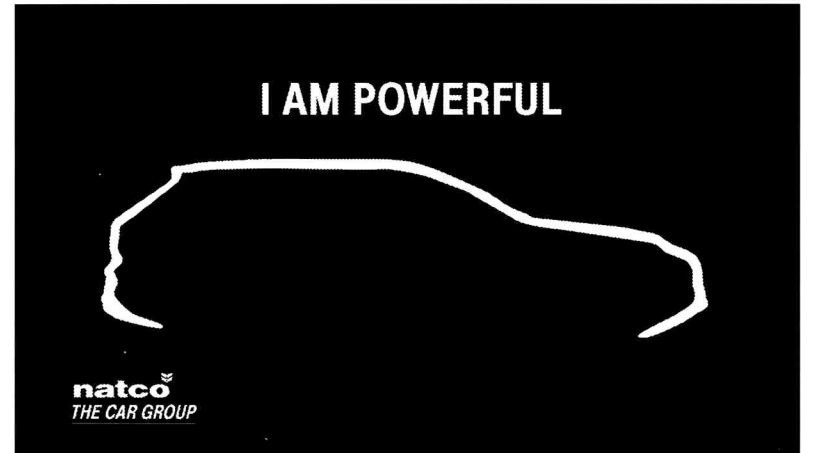
"(Bush) is still committed to the road map and he still recognises that there can only be peace — long-term sustainable peace — if there is a negotiat-

ed settlement," Patten said.

"Now, that's not entirely what was coming out from Washington earlier in the week."

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said the Quartet would meet in early May to discuss how to move the peace process forward. Officials said the meeting would most likely be on May 4 in New York and not in Berlin on April 28 as had been mooted.

The deal struck by Bush and Sharon has infuriated Palestinians and Arabs.



## Polish leftists cool on Belka, but defer decision

WARSAW, April 17 (Reuters) - A key Polish leftist party said on Saturday it was not inclined to support former finance minister Marek Belka for prime minister, but would hold one more round of talks with him before deciding.

Social Democracy of Poland (SdPL) parliamentary leader Jolanta Banach said the party was leaning toward pushing for an early election. If Belka fails to gain support from the SdPL next week it would throw attempts to find a new prime minister to replace the outgoing Leszek Miller into serious doubt, and increase the possibility of a snap election.

"We will decide after talking to professor Belka on Wednesday. We expect him to lay out the political scenario for coming months...In our opinion the optimum date for elections is autumn of this year," Banach told Reuters.

The SdPL — a group of 34 MPs who split off from the governing leftist coalition last month — had been due to make its final decision on Saturday.

Banach said on Friday that SdPL support for the pragmatic financier was fading. The unpopular Miller is

due to resign on May 2.

But, speaking at a news conference with Miller in their home city of Lodz, Belka said he remained optimistic that he could win a vote of confidence.

"Yes, I'm an optimist and every day confirms my belief that this government has a chance of being formed and doing something good for Poland," Belka said.

Belka's chances of gaining unified support from the ruling Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) increased on Friday when the party nominated Belka's chief rival, Interior Minister Jozef Oleksy, for the post of parliamentary speaker.

If Oleksy wins a vote for speaker, expected on Tuesday, it should remove him as a potential candidate for prime minister.

The SLD-dominated governing coalition controls at least 187 seats in the 460-member lower house of parliament and usually gets support from about 20 independents.

To win a confidence vote, Belka needs the backing of at least half of the deputies in the chamber during the vote, with at least 230 deputies present.

## NEWSMAKER Zapatero to juggle voters' hopes

MADRID, April 17 (Reuters) - Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, sworn in as Spanish prime minister on Saturday after a shock election victory, must now juggle his supporters' expectations for change with the realities of politics.

Zapatero ousted the pro-U.S., conservative Popular Party in last month's elections held days after suspected al Qaeda-linked train bombings that killed 191 people, benefiting from a voter backlash against the Popular Party's handling of the attacks.

Since then, the 43-year-old career politician has stood by his campaign pledge to withdraw Spain's 1,300 troops from Iraq if the United Nations does not take charge there by June 30.

He was a strident critic of the Iraq war and even after the elections maintained an undiplomatic tone about U.S. policy, calling the Iraq war a fiasco and urging President George W. Bush to take a long hard look at himself.

Now in power, he will have to choose between risking the wrath of the world's only superpower by pulling out the troops from Iraq or alienating his supporters if he leaves them there.

Zapatero hopes to remain on friendly terms with the United States, while mending relations with France and Germany that were strained by former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar's strong support for the war in Iraq.

Whereas Aznar dug in his heels over the proposed European Union constitution, refusing to see Spain's voting power trimmed, Zapatero wants a new charter signed by the middle of this year. That will almost certainly mean compromise for Spain.

At home Zapatero — who has an endearing grin and winks warmly at supporters — has pledged a new style of politics with "dialogue" one of his favourite words.

Criticised for a lack of aggression in opposition, his willingness to compromise will be essential in government.

Voters handed the Socialists 164 seats in parliament, 12 short of an absolute majority, so Zapatero will be reliant on support from smaller parties to push through his programme.

Zapatero won parliamentary approval to become prime minister with the help of regional parties and a left-wing group.

One of those parties is the Republican Left of Catalonia which sparked controversy this year when its leader — then number two in a coalition government with the Socialists in Catalonia — admitted he had met armed Basque separatists ETA.

Zapatero's pledge to try to make Catalan an official EU language could be a sign of bargaining to come with regional parties keen for more inde-

pendence from Madrid.

He will have to review security and intelligence services, clearly caught off guard by the March 11 attacks, that the authorities initially blamed on Basque separatist guerrillas rather than Islamic militants.

He has also made an ambitious promise to tackle the problem of expensive housing for young families by making available 180,000 affordable houses a year.

Zapatero seems easy-going but people who know him say he should not be under-estimated.

"He is a 15-round fighter, the kind that gets into trouble in the first four rounds, and then gradually takes over," Manuel Garcia, his former law professor, told El Pais newspaper.



New Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero stands in front of a poster with the names of the 191 victims of the March 11 train bombings at Madrid Atocha train station April 17, 2004. Rodriguez Zapatero was sworn-in as prime minister, nearly five weeks after surprising victory in general elections following the Madrid March 11 train bombings. REUTERS

### Specific Procurement Notice

## For Prequalification of Contractors for Yemen Rural Access Project, Phase II Rural Roads

This invitation for prequalification follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in the Development Business issue No.626 Of Mar. 16, 2004.

The Government of the Republic of Yemen has applied for a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) toward the cost of the Rural Access Program (RAP) Phase II, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under Civil Works contracts for rural intermediate roads. The Ministry of Public Works and Highways represented by the Rural Access Project - Central Management Office, (RAPCMO) intends to prequalify interested contractors for executing several road projects totaling approximately 1500-2000 km and improvement of village access roads. It is expected that the prequalification will be made available on **March 30, 2004**.

The projects for which this prequalification is issued will vary in length, nature, and complexity and range between, 10-50 km in length and totaling 1500-2000km. The works will consist of earthworks, structural works, hot and cold asphalt mix works, etc. The projects are spread all over the Republic of Yemen. Some contracts which are close to each other might be grouped in packages. Contractors will be prequalified for Bidding Capacity which will be the basis for the number of contracts/packages which could be awarded to the contractor simultaneously.

Pre-qualification will be conducted through pre-qualification procedures specified in the World Bank Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits issued on January 1995 revised January and August 1996 Sep 1997 and Jan 1999, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the guidelines. Application for pre-qualification may be made for one or several projects.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the prequalification documents (address below) during regular business hours from 09:00 to 14:00 hours. A complete set of pre-qualification documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders upon submission of a written application to the address below and payment of a nonrefundable fee of US\$ 120.00. The method of payments shall be Cashier's chequ or direct deposit to RAPCMO. The document will be sent by email for overseas delivery and surface mail for local delivery.

Applications for pre-qualification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address below by 12:00 hour June 15, 2004 and clearly marked

#### "Application to prequalify for the Rural Intermediate Roads"

The Ministry of Public Works and Highways (MPWH)  
Rural Access Project- Central Management Office (RAPCMO)  
Attention: RAP-CMO Project Director  
P.O. Box :16472  
Phone : 00967-1-465224/225  
Fax: 00967-1-409626  
Email:rapcmu@y.net.ye

Applicants will be advised, in due course, of the result of their applications. Only firms and joint ventures prequalified under this procedure will be invited to bid for all Phase two road.







# شركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن تحقق إنجازاً كبيراً في مجال السلامة

## Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen Achieves Major Safety Milestone

**C**anadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen (CNPY), which operates the Masila Block 14 oilfields in Hadhramout Governorate, and its Masila Block Partners, Occidental Petroleum & Consolidated Contractors Company achieved two years without a lost time injury to its employees on April 8th 2004.

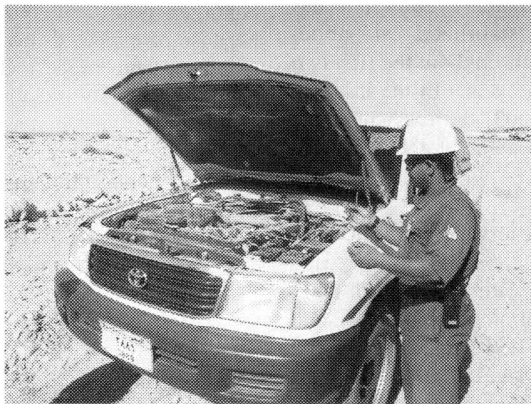
"This is an outstanding achievement" said Mr. Richard Jensen, President & General Manager of CNPY. "It puts us in the top ranks of safety world-wide in the Oil and Gas business. It has been through a high level of attention and adherence to CNPY's Safe Working Practices and daily diligence by both our Yemeni national and expatriate staff that we have been able to achieve this milestone. We are very proud of the dedication our employees have had to safety, on and off the job, particularly when driving vehicles".

"What makes this achievement most impressive is that there were over 3,750,000 man hours worked without a lost time injury during the two year period. Of course, we could not have made this milestone without the support of the Ministry of Oil and Minerals and the Petroleum Exploration & Production Authority".

Mr. James Kondol, CNPY's Environment, Health and Safety Manager, explained that the milestone was achieved during the time the company was introducing Responsible Care® initiatives. "We are the first International Oil and Gas Company in the world to introduce such an initiative. Responsible Care® is a blueprint for developing formal policies to manage business activities safely and responsibly and create ways to communicate effectively with the public".

"We introduced Safe Driving Improvement initiatives in 2003 and 2004. Our employees have a personal commitment to both the Safe Work Practices and the Safe Driving Policy. The implementation of these practices and policies has been a key element in our success in achieving two years without a lost time injury to any of our employees".

Mr. Kondol went on to say that the company's design and implementation of Individual Development Programs for Yemeni national staff has helped to improve safety performance in the period of over ten years CNPY has been producing oil from the Masila Block. Every Yemeni employee has a formalised Individual Development Program, which assists the employee in identifying training needs to improve his or her professional development, safety and of course administrative & technical skills. "Training is a key element in our safety program also. In addition to our intensive English language and technical training programs, employees are trained in all aspects of safety relating to their roles at CNPY".



**حققت** شركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن وشركاؤها في قطاع المسيلة رقم (١٤) وهم شركة أوكسيدنتال بتروليم وشركة اتحاد المقاولين العالمية إنجازاً هاماً يتمثل في مرور عامين دونما حدوث أي فقدان ساعات عمل ناتجة عن إصابات حتى تاريخ ٨ إبريل ٢٠٠٤م.

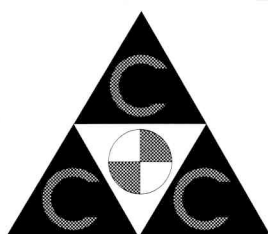
وقد علق السيد/ريتشارد جنسن الرئيس والمدير العام لشركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن قائلاً: "إن هذا إنجاز رائع، يضعنا على أعلى مراتب السلامة فيما يتعلق بصناعة النفط والغاز على المستوى العالمي. وقد استطعنا تحقيق ذلك من خلال المستوى العالي والاهتمام والالتزام بقواعد السلامة المتبعة في شركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن وتفاني موظفينا اليمنيين والأجانب على حد سواء. إننا فخورون جداً بما يتمتع به موظفونا من تفان فيما يتعلق بالسلامة وخاصة عند قيادة السيارات. ومما يجعل هذا المنجز أكثر تميزاً هو إنجاز حجم عمل أكثر من ٣٧٥٠٠٠٠ ساعة عمل دون حدوث أي تأخير ناتج عن إصابات خلال فترة العامين الماضيين. وبالطبع لم يكن ليتسنى لنا تحقيق ذلك المنجز لولا الدعم اللامحدود من قبل وزارة النفط والمعادن وهيئة استكشاف وإنتاج النفط".

وقد أوضح السيد/ جيمس كوندول، مدير إدارة البيئة والصحة والسلامة بشركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن أن هذا المنجز قد تحقق بتبني الشركة لمبادرة برنامج الرعاية المسؤولة: نحن أول شركة نفط وغاز في العالم تقوم بهذه المبادرة. إن الرعاية المسؤولة هي من أجديات تطوير سياسة إدارة نشاطات النفط بشكل آمن وبمسئولية وإيجاد سبل التواصل بصورة فاعلة مع الجمهور.

لقد قمنا بمبادرات تنفيذ القيادة الآمنة في عامي ٢٠٠٣م و ٢٠٠٤م. ويلتزم موظفونا شخصياً بممارسات العمل الآمن وسياسة القيادة الآمنة. وقد كان تنفيذ هذه الممارسات والسياسات عنصراً هاماً في تحقيق نجاحنا خلال فترة العامين الماضيين دون أي فقدان عمل ناتج عن حدوث إصابات لأي من موظفينا. واستطرد السيد/ كوندول القول بأن رسم وتنفيذ برامج التطوير الفردي بالشركة بالنسبة للموظفين اليمنيين قد ساعدت في تحسين أداء السلامة خلال أكثر من عشر سنوات من إنتاج شركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن للنفط من قطاع المسيلة. ويرسم لكل موظف يماني برنامج فردي للتطوير من شأنه أن يساعد الموظف في تحديد احتياجاته من التدريب لتحسين سلامته ومهاراته الإدارية والفنية. يعتبر التدريب عنصراً هاماً في برنامج السلامة أيضاً. بالإضافة إلى وجود برامج مكثفة في التدريب الفني وكذا في مجال اللغة الإنجليزية حيث يتم تدريب الموظفين في كافة جوانب السلامة المتعلقة بمهامهم في شركة كنديان نكسن بتروليم يمن.



CANADIAN  
nexen



OXY

# The need for better utilization of tourist sites



BY ISMAIL AL-GHABIRI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Everyone knows that Yemen has enormous potential for tourism, and environment tourism in particular. Most of the places of interest are beautiful and filled with abundant historical sites and naturally captivating views. This compels us to visit and to get acquainted with them to revive internal tourism, especially if we take into consideration that this would contribute to motivating the economy and national investment.

What we currently notice is the flow of tourists in hundreds and thousands, especially from neighboring countries, who are welcomed in Yemen for enjoyment, recuperation and travel to several tourists regions. This gives us a feeling of bliss and optimism for the future development of this kind of tourism, which is developing from day to day. Official and public awareness exceeding expectations is an indication of the sense of national responsibility that the investing sectors are carrying out at more than one tourist location. What the private sector is conducting is serious investment work, represented by investment projects in regions filled with tourism sites, which are regularly visited by sightseeing lovers. This does not count the locations situated on coasts, islands, desert edges and historic cities, places rarely found in other Arab and foreign countries.

In order to keep these places in an attractive state, continued investment must be exerted in this aspect. Moreover, it is important to support the environment and tourism related authorities and the General Investment Authority in utilizing the other remaining places, which are still virgin and untouched. There are many fascinating places surrounding our major cities, such as in the suburbs of Sana'a city. We hope that all related and concerned bodies would seriously engage in thorough planning and implementation in the form of public parks, considering most of them are naturally set and only require little attention, such as installing leisure and recreational sports equipment and some additional trees.

There is a place situated in the outskirts of Sana'a city, "Wadi Dahur", regularly visited by residents of Sana'a, could be better utilized for tourism purposes. It is only about ten kilometers from Sana'a city and it has become a regular destination for those celebrating weddings and a place to spend the weekends by locals, nationals and foreigners alike. Some of them enjoy getting closely acquainted with the Rock Palace located in the center of the valley. There are also similar places to that on western side of Sana'a, Asser and Sana village, and Wadi Hamul to the south, all of which could be utilized to attract local and foreign tourists. However, they need to be invested in by either the local councils, the Sana'a Secretariat or by the private sector instead of neglecting these places, which could turn in fortunes.



There is tremendous potential in many tourist sites -like the shown region at the outskirts of Sanaa- in the country, yet proper utilization is lacking.

I ACHIEVE MY HIGHEST GOALS



natco  
THE CAR GROUP

## Teaching methods – which method?

BY AHMED TAHER  
LANGUAGE CENTRE TAIZ.

The last three decades have witnessed the rapid increase of international communication in many different respects, such as trade, travel, tourism, etc. Many people have begun to develop an interest in modern languages, such as English. English has become the language of international communication.

In our country, English is used as a foreign language for limited purposes. The Ministry of Education exerted significant efforts in teaching English. But the teaching of English in Yemeni schools is not satisfactory.

One of the reasons for this is the methodology of teaching English. The materials are based on the communicative approach, but do the English teachers implement the approach? The true answer will be "No". There is a great gap between the approach and the practice. The real reasons for this gap are as follows:

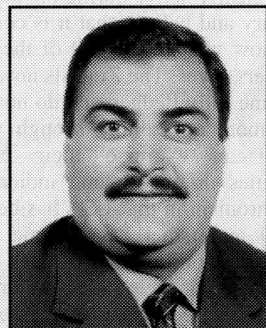
Most teachers are fed up with such methods of teaching of the language. So for them it is easy to follow the traditional method, namely the Grammar Translation Method. Teaching methods are notational variants of one another. Moreover, what is commendable in one is self-defeating in another. This creates confusion for the teacher. He/she hesitates to choose which method and how to teach. As we know, every method has its own limitations, so it is difficult to say that this method is totally the best method or that that method is totally bad. To illustrate, the communicative approach is suitable for teaching some topics, especially those involving communicative activities. The traditional method also suitable for teaching grammar. So there is not only one method

which is the best to be followed. The use of this method or that depends on many factors, such as the level of the learners and the classroom situation. In large classes, oral interaction is limited to one exchange at a time whether teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil. The ideal teacher will solve the problem.

The experienced teacher will vary the use of different methods. He/she always

thinks of what is the best method to achieve the aims of the lesson. He/she can create his own method which leads to the achievement of the aims properly. The ideal teacher will not wait till someone guides him to the best method. A final word to the English language teacher: "Be a methodologist when necessary, and focus on your aims. Then you will be a successful teacher."

### تهانينا المنصب الجديد



تم تعيين

الأستاذ / هيثم

حسن حسني

مديراً عاماً لفندق رويال كونكورد بعدن

لخبرته المعروفة في إدارة العديد من الفنادق العالمية داخل اليمن وخارجه

وبهذه المناسبة يتقدم عمال وموظفي

فندق رويال كونكورد بعدن

بأحر التهاني وأطيب الأمنيات

مزيداً من التوفيق والنجاح في مهامه الجديدة

## Tender Announcement

Presidium of Tax Authority

Announces Tender No.2, the year 2004

To Print and Import a Quantity of band rolls (sticker stamps) for Local Cigarettes

International interested specialized companies can obtain tender documents (specifications and general conditions) from the Tax Authority situated at South of Al-Safeyah, near Ministry of Finance for the non-refundable sum of (20,000) twenty thousand Riyals in an official receipt. To be paid by the representatives of companies or the authorized agents at the Republic of Yemen.

### General rules:

- 1- Companies and international printing offices working in the field of printing paper currency or have previous experience in implementing world's pendrol are permissible to inter the tender. With qualification certificate authenticated by Central Bank of Yemen or related authority at country of origin with ratification of Yemen Embassy in that country.
- 2- The tender documents to be presented sealed with red wax with the following included:
  - a) A preliminary insurance deposit of 2.5% of value of offer and in same currency payable to Tax Authority in an unconditional check issued by a local bank accredited by Central Bank of Yemen valid for (150) one hundred fifty days from date of opening the Tender's envelopes.
  - b) Copied of (Tax Id + Insurance Id) for local agents effective for the year 2004.
- 3- Tax Authority is not bound to accept the lowest offer.

The Tender's envelopes will be opened publicly at exactly 11:00AM, on Monday 10/5/2004 in presence of offer's holders or their representatives. Offers not meeting required conditions would not be considered.

Address: Safia near the Fianance Ministry, Sana'a  
Tel. 264813, 263809, 503825, Fax. 263102, P.O. Box 11336, 5746.  
Emial: [taxauth@y.net.ye](mailto:taxauth@y.net.ye), WibSite: [www.tax.gov.ye](http://www.tax.gov.ye)

# Local Press

Prepared by Mohammed Khidhr

26 September 15  
Apr 2004.

**Main headlines**

- President Saleh: Political reforms could not be imposed from outside but spring from peoples' will
- Chirac: We appreciate Yemeni's efforts in supporting security and stability in the region and its successes in fighting terror
- Yemen and Turkey to sign an agreement on security cooperation and fighting terror
- Border demarcation with Saudi Arabia progresses normally
- In his article on the American fall in the Iraqi trap columnist Faisal Jallul says it is mostly thought that Washington did not comprehend the volume of dangers the war on Iraq was fraught with. Leaders of the White House thought the scenario of the Taliban regime collapse in Afghanistan a year before the fall of Baghdad, cooperation of the Afghan parties with the occupying troops and joining of international forces, including the United Nations, could be repeated in Iraq the moment of the regime of President Saddam Hussein falls. They also thought that implicit and public acceptance by Iraq's neighbours for the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime would open an opportunity for stability of occupation in this country and re-formulate its order according to the occupier desire and also that could lead to terrorize the refusing countries in the region and maybe topple a number of them according to what is known as the domino theory and then changing the entire Middle East region.

It is obvious that temptations of occupying Iraq; oil, rapid victory, a regional change for serving Israel, ideological victory, governing the United Nations and re-limiting of its role and others, have made Washington forget and disregard controls of security and safety in this adventure and ridicule from European rejections and turn its back to international laws and rules. Moreover, the Washington's exultation of the rapid fall of Baghdad has pushed it to commit more follies and mistakes by taking crazy decisions such as dissolving the army and all Iraqi government establishments and to work for recomposing a new state so that a new history for Iraq would begin by the date of the occupation. Washington did not listen to all European and international warnings of the aftermath of staying in Iraq without a legal and moral covering. It has also did not heed to the advices of its allies on the necessity of speeding up the transfer of power to the Iraqis but rather it began swiftly planning for toppling a number of counties neighbouring to Iraq. But since the beginning of the various forms of Iraqi resistance last summer, Washington has begun searching for a plan for a face-saving way of getting out of Iraq. If Washington is not able to crystallize a strategy of getting out of the Iraqi quagmire, its allies do have such a strategy. Among syllabus of the strategy is rendering affairs of this country to the United Nations and perhaps engaging the Arabs in solving the Iraqi crisis and maybe participation of the NATO and others on condition is that to be under the care of the United Nations.

**Al-Sahwa weekly,**  
15 Apr 2004.

**Main headlines**

- Large-scale indignation against the verdict against Saed Thabit
- Lawyers hold their third conference
- Al-Afif cultural association discusses democracy in Yemen
- Al-Shami calls for resolving the problem of vengeance
- Border crimes; organised gangs for children smuggling
- Columnist Zaid al-Shami writes that the occupation of Iraq, destruction of its infrastructure, elimination of its political system, controlling its oil and burning its libraries have not yet satisfy the American greed and have not make it convinced to leave Iraq for its people. America on the contrary has begun the war again by destroying the city of Falluja and exaggerates in shedding the blood of its population, using all types of weapons such the internationally prohibited ones as the cluster bombs. All that is done against the citizen refusing the occupation, that refusal recognised by all international and heavenly laws. What we have been

## Main headlines

- Festival on solidarity with the Palestinian and Iraqi peoples
- Saudi boycott on Yemeni products lifted
- FM: It has been ascertained that al-Heela detained in Afghanistan
- Yemen realizes the highest percentage of tourism
- A week of assailing press freedoms
- GPC competes with itself in Bar Association elections
- Opposition and government condemn war crimes in Iraq
- People's demonstration condemning the Zionist American occupation
- MPs demand questioning the government concerning the disappearance of Ahmed Salem Ubeid
- Al-Heela imprisoned in Afghanistan
- Indian judge sentences a Yemeni with 250 thousand dollars in fine
- Saudi Arabia arrests 47 thousand Yemenis on borders
- Al-Atwani: Parliament is a paralyzed authority and government agent
- Saudi director of border guard: Our forces managed to arrest Yemenis
- Nationalists and Nasserites defend Falluja, take part in Adhamiyah battle
- At democracy conference in Turkey, Qahtan: Conflict of civilizations, fabricated and untrue
- 51 thousand infiltrators, Saudi Arabia intensifies its measures
- Yemeni-French summit discusses regional and international developments
- Bilateral relations, the situation in Palestine and Iraq and terrorism, top talks of the two presidents
- Yemeni security delegation visits Britain
- Minister of fish wealth says Yemeni-Iranian cooperation in steady development
- Omani interior minister in Sana'a to sign a security agreement on security cooperation

complaining of brutality and crimes against the Palestinian people we find it today repeated in Iraqi cities as more ferocious and brutal. The Americans seem to have no calculation of consequences and they see there is no value of the Arab human and would not care about shedding his blood and strangely enough they demand the Arabs to their hands to those slaughtering their sons and violate their sanctities.

These situations are abnormal and incompatible with our ideology, morals and values. The political and intellectual elites have to undertake their duties and shake the stagnant waters and the Arab rulers have to not bury their heads in sand because in doing so they are writing black chapters in their history.

an end to the resistance acts.

Falluja, the small town in Iraq refused the war and foreign invasion and remained resisting for about a week has forced the "advocate of democracy" to start negotiation and ceasefire for twelve hours and fulfilled that before an honorable battle against the invaders and in this battle all America's deceptions about spreading democracy and freedom and prosperity in Iraq have evaporated. Finally the resistance would triumph.

**Al-Wahdawi weekly,**  
organ of the Nasserite  
Unionist Organisation,  
13 Apr 2004.

**Main headlines**

- Organisation's head of the political office: Yemen needs an overall revolution
- Political security arrests 10 prayers inside the Grand Mosque
- A message from al-Heela: I'm imprisoned in Afghanistan for 16 months
- Yemeni sells his house to pay back quarter million dollars
- 255 teachers in Sana'a request the parliament to have their salaries paid
- In protest to refusing implementation of the president's directives by the capital mayor and interior minister, taxi drivers stage a sit-in before the parliament
- WFRT concludes a civil education course in Taiz
- Taiz governorate population demand the parliament to stop a price dose
- Arab sisters human rights forum organizes a qualitative course for canon and law students
- In Sana'a five killed and others wounded in clashes to prevent stealing of a government car
- Iraqi resistance kills hundreds of Americans and destroys tens of equipment



The newspaper's political editor says in his article the parliament has kept silent for a long time against the government's price doses. This silence angered the people and pained their wounds that are bleeding greatly because of those doses implemented in compliance to external interference represented by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund neglecting the level of national income and the individual's share of it.

The parliament's stands towards such issues proves as if it is represent-

ing the government but not the he people that have elected it and pinned on it heir hopes in defending them and standing by their issues.

The parliament is nowadays demanded to explain its stances to the people if it is capable of doing that because its silence about he issues of doses and external interference to impose the kind of reforms it intends and according to its plans, shakes the position of the parliament and torpedoes its mission of representing the people and preserving the country's

interests and sovereignty.

If the parliament maintains its silence or wanted to follow the government to justify its doses and supporting them by parliamentary legitimacy it may be considered as relinquishing of representation of the people and defending their rights and interests. By such stands it may be held responsible for helping the opening of way to implementation of external scheming to come up with its political reforms that are serving their goals and interests in the region.



By Yahya Al-Olfi  
alolfi@hotmail.com

## Reflections

### Waiting for Godot or waiting for Jehovah!

ipping my Coffee as usual at Moddish Café a sudden discussion broke out between two individuals about the relationship between Zionism, Israel and the American statehood with regard to who has the hegemony over the other and who orders the other one about. In fact, I was puzzled by each of the two arguments.

The first alleged that Bill Clinton's scandal was authored and directed by none other than the Zionists and that this shows how much they have penetrated the organs of American statehood (referring to a Netanyahu menace to Bill Clinton prior to the eruption of the famous scandal in which an American Jewess was involved). He also noted that Americans embracing Judaism are being celebrated and promoted compared to normal Americans. He gave examples about famous Americans whom everybody used to believe were not Jewish such as Barbara Streisand, Fred Astair, Woody Allen, Larry King, Ted Turner etc.

The other individual responded that USA is a great nation and that Jews are just Jewish in religion and belong to their relevant ethnic groups, that Einstein the great scientist was indeed an ethnic German but hailed from a German family embracing Judaism and gave an example about today's Bosnians who are of the same race as the Serbs, but due to their religious affiliation they became declared enemies and that the Serbs exerted considerable efforts to exterminate the weaker Bosnians who happened to embrace Islam. He argued that the USA, in its capacity as the sole superpower, considers Israel simply as its springboard or front line base for expansion in the Arab World so as to exercise control over the oil-rich countries and consequently have power over all nations, namely the industrialist world.

After hearing such a discussion I

decided to try and find out who is who, and which is which. Simply, whether USA is the master and Israel is its lackey or is it the other way round! In fact, I have come across lots of information related to this matter and I am intending here to share it with the readers and hope to receive their comments on the subject, because it is an intriguing subject just like the old argument of the scholars: which came first the chicken or the egg? Whether Zionism has benefits for humanity or is an evil that must be eradicated (recently a UN resolution criticizing Israeli settlements in the West Bank was vetoed by the USA and its protégé Congo)?

Many people consider Zionist influence clearly active during the last half century and believe that it is continuing now with the arrival of the Neo-Conservatives. The Zionists now have become fully fledged and do not need any more a medium through which they can exercise their power. Realities on the ground indicate an anachronism in that USA has become Israel and Israel has become USA. The Neo-Cons seem unfulfilled in the expression of their Judaic culture, but are rather reckless in their political and military Judaism. The USA on October 01, 2003 vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling on Israel to cease building the racist separation wall and is now exerting pressure on the Iranians to stop their nuclear project whilst Israel, which possesses a fully fledged nuclear capability and is considered undoubtedly a real threat to world peace, remains out of reach of any condemnation whatsoever.

The American Zionist relationship dates back prior to the establishment of Israel in the Middle East in 1948. In fact, it dates back to the beginning of the 19th century when the puritan movement in USA (termed Christian Zionism) called for the resettlement of Jews in Palestine and the establishment of a national homeland for the

Jews, in other words the revival of the Kingdom of Israel as a preliminary step for the apparition of the "Messiah Kingdom", because that presage precedes the second apparition of the prospective Messiah. Such radical Christian movements depend in their opinions on the reading of the Old Testament, whose axis is Israel and its chosen people. The creation of Israel, in Palestine, shall confirm the Pentateuch prognostications. Thus puritan movements in the USA mobilized public opinion with such Zionist beliefs. Hebrew names were borrowed for themselves, children and their settlements. They considered themselves the true Hebrews and their children as the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land. They sent exploratory missions to Palestine and began building Jewish settlements in the middle of the 19th century to the extent that President John Adams (1767-1849) called in a letter to his Jewish friend Manuel Noah for the retrieval of the Jewish homeland in which he said "I wish to see again an independent Jewish nation in Judea". The American priest William Blackstone exerted huge efforts in the service of the Zionist movement and published a book titled "Jesus is Coming" which was translated into 48 languages and was the second most extensively distributed book after the Bible in the 19th century. Then he founded in 1887 in Chicago an organization called "The Hebrew Mission on behalf of Israel", which was considered by most as the first lobby group working in favor of political Zionism. William Blackstone's most significant efforts were represented in the petition he filed to the American President Benjamin Harrison on 5th March 1819, signed by 413 American high ranking figures, in which he asked him to use his influence in order to achieve the Jewish claims for the occupation of all historic Palestine as their ancient homeland. To be continued.

# Journalism: a stagnant progress lacking funding



BY YASSER AL-MAYASI  
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

With the unification of Yemen in 1990 we took the first steps on the path of democratic behavior, permitting freedom of expression. Articles 6, 27 and 47 of the constitution confirm the right of expression for all citizens. The foundation of the Republic of Yemen created an encouraging atmosphere for democracy and the strengthening civil liberties in general. This is patently clear in the huge number of newspapers, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations that have appeared in the Yemeni arena since 1990.

Subsequently, the formation of the Yemeni Journalist Syndicate was a natural result, to embrace the large emerging group of journalists. This journalism entity was enhanced by the issuance of Press Law No. 25, in 1990. Then the journalism conference of June 1990 came to unify the work of journalists under the umbrella of Yemeni Journalist Syndicate. Mr. Abdulbarry Mohamed Taher became the first President of Yemeni Journalist Syndicate.

The second conference of the Syndicate was supposed to take place three years later, but due to many differences of opinions and problems resulting from various political circumstances, including the civil war of 1994, the syndicate's work was flat and

ineffective during nearly nine years from time of holding the first conference.

The second conference took place in March 1999 amid disputes and differences. It was expected that the conference would come up with decisive solutions to all disputes. However, this objective was not totally achieved. Disputes surfaced starting at the hall of the conference in different forms and shapes. Most of the disputes and differences focused on the legitimacy and outcome of the conference. Many opposition journalists boycotted the conference and declared instead the formation of what they called, the "Yemeni Association for Defending Journalists". The efforts of several mediators and their suggestions paid off in the settlement of the disputes between the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate and the boycotting opposition, which contributed to the relative stability of the Syndicate's work. Yemeni Journalists Syndicate was able to achieve progress and relatively distinguished accomplishments during the period following the second conference till the end of 2001, for the first time since the unification of the country.

In the scope of the Syndicate's work, Yemeni Journalists Syndicate worked in three directions:

- 1-Rooting the definition and mission of the Syndicate's work and strengthening the bases of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate on the principle of asserting the YJS as one of the most prominent civil society organizations.
- 2-Developing an unprecedented professional rules agenda, which was



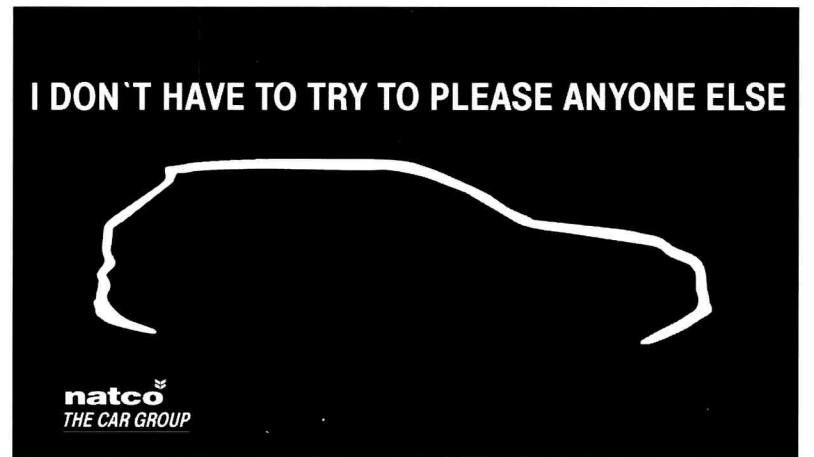
A boy selling newspapers in Sana'a. Yemeni newspapers are struggling to survive amid economic difficulties

not politically motivated, as previously was the case.

- 3-Concentrating progressively and seriously on the selective membership of journalists affiliated with it in the frame of its internal rules and resolutions of the general conferences, preventing partisan work as much as possible, organizing meetings and committees and implementing activities, cases and developments through spontaneous mechanisms.

### Regarding work at the level of the profession and foreign relations

During the following ten years, permits were issued for many newspapers and magazines. The Ministry of Information was the authority concerned with the issuance of these permits. Before issuance, certain conditions were to be met and pieces of information supplied, such as full



name, type of requested permit, name of printing office, name to be of the newspaper or magazine and a bank financial statement stating the capital allocated for investment in the newspaper or magazine. However, many journalists still could not continue to proceed towards the achievement of their journalistic ambitions because of the financial hurdle.

Yemeni Newspapers can be divided into commercial advertisement newspapers, news reporting newspapers and economic newspapers. Financial funding represents a stumbling block facing newspapers and determines either continuation or termination. The strong and supported newspapers are few and mostly consist of the official newspapers, including Al-Thowra daily newspaper, 26 September (mouthpiece of Armed Forces), the daily 14 October issued in Aden, and the daily 'Al-Jumhoreyah' issued in Taiz. Only a few independent, private and political party-affiliated newspapers actually own printing capabilities. The majority of newspapers face a lot of difficulties in printing. They are usually referred to the state's Al-Thowra Printing Corporation or the Armed Forces Printing Offices to print their newspapers.

It is of no surprise to see many newspapers go out of business because of the minimal revenues generated from commercial advertisements for various commercial companies due to the lack of effective marketing mechanisms at most Yemeni newspapers. The modest level of staff training at most newspapers also detracts from the performance and possibility of success of many

newspapers.

### What about funding by donor organizations?

Due to different circumstances, newspapers could not establish solid supportive relations with donor organizations and authorities. The big Syndicate's work failed to sustain relations with donor organizations. Most of the donor organizations could not present support to journalists except through their entity, the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, and many of these organizations would not present support directly to newspapers even though they have presented support to other non-journalism and information organizations.

Negligence here was not only on the part of the newspapers but also on the part of the donor organizations as well. The organizations failed to support the progress of information dissemination in Yemen since they failed to sense the concerns and deteriorating situations of journalists.

With the sluggish economic situation, the ability of most newspapers to meet the various technological challenges and accelerating events has become unpredictable, mainly dependent on financing, with the exception of a few local organizations that were able to snatch unpretentious funding towards the training of journalists of various newspapers.

Last but not least, the need for donor support and funding remains a vital and an important matter to allow newspapers to continue, which is indeed vital to the promotion of democracy in the Republic of Yemen.

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## KAP celebrates second anniversary

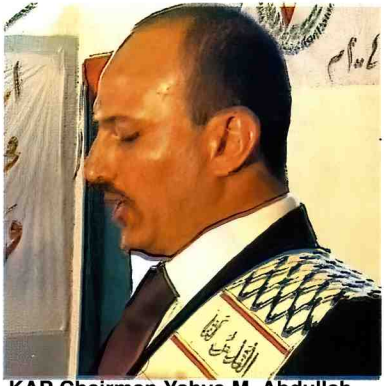
Yemen Times Staff

The Kanaan Association for Palestine (KAP) has celebrated last Saturday at its headquarters in Sana'a its second founding anniversary amid presence of a large number of prominent officials and personalities and KAP's members. Among the most senior Yemeni guests were the Advisor to the President Dr. Hassan Makki, the Minister of Higher Education Dr. Abdulwahab Abdo Raweh, Former Minister of Human Rights Dr. Wahibe Fare' and many others.

The festivity started with an entertainment session by two fine Yemeni artists, who sang national and patriotic songs that resemble the role of KAP in supporting the Palestinian cause.

### Chairman blasts Sharon

The event was then followed by a brief statement by the chairman of KAP, Mr. Yahya Mohamed Abdullah Saleh, who praised the efforts exerted by the members and supporters of the association and emphasized KAP's role in supporting the Palestinian people and their just case for an independent state with sovereignty and dignity. He also blasted the actions of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in building the so-called security fence and continuing



KAP Chairman Yahya M. Abdullah Saleh

atrocities against Palestinians. "There is only one way to combat this evil criminal of war Sharon, and that is through resistance and resistance only," Yahya said.

Mr. Yahya also criticized the recent Bush statements approving the Sharon plan of unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and called it a disgrace to the international community.

He also expressed gratitude to the ones who donated and supported the association to make it grow and become in the strength that it enjoys today.

"I seize this opportunity to thank all who participated through financial donations and through moral support and

**TODAY I EXPECT THE BEST**

guidance in making our association an active association to support our Palestinian brothers," he added.

### Special guest from Palestine

The special guest attending the event was H.E. Palestinian Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Naem Abu Hims, who also praised the efforts of KAP during his speech and revealed the surprise achievement in beginning the first phases of planning to start construction of the Kanaan School in Khaleel City in Palestine. The school will be built based on a donation from President Ali Abdullah Saleh to the Palestinian people channeled through KAP.

"This is indeed an overwhelming and exciting moment for me as I see our Yemeni brothers coming out in support of their Palestinian citizens. This school and later the university to be donated by your country is a clear example of this," he said.

He also described the suffering of Palestinian teachers and students under Israeli occupation and emphasized the appreciation of the Palestinian people for the positive role of President Saleh and the Yemeni people in supporting the Palestinian cause.

### Video presentation shows achievements

A video presentation was then displayed, which describes the different activities that KAP held and organized in the last two years, and gave special emphasis to the new campaign launched to collect one million signatures of people rejecting the Sharon security fence. KAP wishes to send the signed petition to the UN as an indication of international opposition to the Sharon wall.

The presentation also described the strides and achievements of the association and reminds of the special occasions held recently, including the ceremony to bid farewell to the former Ambassador to Yemen, Mr. Yahya Rabah.

The event also witnessed the inauguration of the new English website of KAP (www.kanaan4p.org/englishsite/), which featured different segments such as news, donation links, information about the association, and other informative sections.

### New KAP website inaugurated

The website used modern technology to enhance the viewing quality and ease of use of the website, which will be a gateway to the Internet browsers throughout the world, who will all have the opportunity to be informed about the atrocities committed against the Palestinians and KAP's activities to support Palestinian cause.

Meanwhile, donations have also been made and announced during the event including a financial donation in the form of YR 500,000 from Mecca Cola along with another donation from the National Beverage Company - Canada Dry, which generously contributed part of its revenues to the association.

### More donations

Mr. Yahya Mohamed Abdullah Saleh also inaugurated the textile exhibition of the association in which textile products in the form of Palestinian dresses, etc are sold and their revenue is returned to the welfare association.



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