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Hundreds in the streets following the burning of their slums as fire fighters arrive too late:

Hell in Aser

YASSER MOHAMED AHMED
YEMEN TIMES

A massive fire broke out in the 'Akhdam' slums neighborhood located in Aser in the Capital Sanaa last Saturday evening. The fire resulted in a dozen injuries but no deaths among the Yemenis of African origin and who are commonly referred to as 'Akhdam'. However the fire resulted in the loss of the homes of hundreds of people, who now are homeless.

The fire, whose cause is still unknown, has been attributed by police forces at the scene to an electrical short circuit, while some claim that a gas pipe blew up leading to the disaster.

"Regardless of the cause, what is to do now?" said one of the women whose slum was charred in front of her and her young children.

Fire fighters too late
Knowing that the fire could not be extinguished without the support of fire fighters, many of the residents of the area carried whatever they could of their belongings and left praying that the fire fighting forces would arrive on time. However, they were into a disappointment. "We have been waiting for more than two hours with no use. Neither ambulances, nor fire fighter trucks arrived to the scene on time," said one of the desperate survivors who was shedding tears in sadness for the loss of his only home.

Weak performance
According to eyewitnesses, the fire forces didn't seem to be well-trained



Whole families became homeless as the blaze destroyed their slums. (Inset: the final stages of the diminishing fire). Yemen Times photo by Yasser M. Ahmed

or equipped to handle such a blaze. They struggled for more than 4 hours to put the fire out, but they rather on some occasions resulted in spreading the fire further. "We had to use regular water to assist in extinguishing the fire. It was a horrific scene that I have never witnessed before. In fact, the smoke was so dense that I felt I would faint," said one of the residents.

Problem needs a solution
Many citizens living nearby complained that authorities have been

ignoring the plight of this minority and despite many calls to find solutions for them, they continued to live in those slums for many years. "We hope that this would be a wake up signal to the government to do something about this and bring a permanent and concrete solution to those poor people. Perhaps the government could build houses with apartments on this same land or elsewhere." One of the nearby residents proposed.

'Akhdams' insist on staying
However, many of the survivors

insisted that they will have to go back to this piece of land which they consider 'home' and rebuild their slums from scratch if they had to. Authorities are yet to confirm the cause of the blaze, but some of the victims are not ruling out a possible criminal intention. "We will fight against all odds and rebuild our homes. I hope and pray that this fire was not intentional so to take us away from this area. But even so, we will continue to stay in the place we lived for many decades," said one of the homeless minority members.



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A nod of approval

By Peter Willems

The Yemeni government has approved Iraq's new transitional government, which replaced the Governing Council last week.

"Yemen welcomes this step and hopes that the Iraqi people will approve it to stop the violence, end occupation, and restore peace, security and stability," said a government official in a statement published by Yemeni News Agency Saba last Thursday.

Sheikh Ghazi Al-Yawar, a Sunni Muslim, was chosen as the President, while 33 ministers were appointed based on the religious and ethnic division of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds in Iraq. Iyad Allawi, a US-backed former Baathist dissident, was named the Prime Minister before the new government was formed last Tuesday.

"I think that this new Iraqi government is very important," one Yemeni government official told Yemen Times. "I believe that this will give a lot of

hope to the Iraqi people so that they will get a new life in the future."

The day the new government was announced, violence erupted near the place where the ceremony was held in Baghdad, which furthered doubts over how security could be established in the unstable country. Insurgents launched mortar fire and car bombs killed up to 14 people, and dozens were wounded.

New Iraqi government officials have said that American troops, numbering over 100,000, would need to stay in Iraq to help curb attacks and stabilize the country. The revised United Nations Security Council resolution presented during the inauguration of the new government said that the coalition forces would remain in Iraq until the end of 2005 or early 2006.

"Like any country, we don't want to continue to be under occupation," said Allawi. "But at the same time, we need the support of the multinational forces to defeat the enemies of Iraq."

Continued on page 4

Yemeni troops prepared for Sudan

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni government is willing to send troops to Sudan as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force after the Khartoum government reaches a peace deal with rebels in the south, said an official at the Ministry of

Defense. "Yemen is ready to send soldiers if asked to go to Sudan as a peacekeeping force," General Ali Shater, Spokesman for the Ministry of Defense and Editor-in-Chief of 26 September, told Yemen Times.

The government in Khartoum signed tentative peace accords with the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Kenya on May 26 after two years of talks. The agreement included the sharing of power and oil revenue by both sides.

Talks will resume on June 22 to finalize the peace agreement, and UN forces will be sent to overlook the implementation of the peace deal.

According to General Shater, the number of Yemeni troops that will join the UN forces has not been deter-

mined. He added that Yemeni troops have been prepared and are ready to be sent to Sudan.

"Yemen has a well trained peace-keeping force and is well prepared," said General Shater. "If they are asked to go, they will go."

The civil war in Sudan has lasted for over 20 years. Up to a million and a half Sudanese have died and over four million have been displaced.

Yemen has appointed a liaison officer for its peacekeeping forces in New York to coordinate its efforts to assist restoring international peace and security.

Yemen also has observers in Sierra Leone who are participating in the international peacekeeping mission.

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In Brief

Yemen Times organizes Media Forum

TAIZ BUREAU
Yemen Times organizes on the afternoon of Wednesday 9 June 2004, at the Governorate Divan the "Media Forum", hosting Mr. Mohamed Taher, the Director of Finance Office in Taiz and specialists at the Accounting Unit.

Sicilian Kicker Group of Nakaira plays music for Sana'a, Arab Cultural Capital

Within the frame of activities of Sana'a, the Arab Cultural Capital 2004, and the celebration on the occasion of 14th anniversary of Yemen National Day, an Italian musical band "Nakaira" will perform a musical event at Sana'a Cultural Center on Wednesday 9 June 2004 at 7:00PM.

A monthly health bulletin



Aalam 21, is a new health bulletin issued its first edition in Sana'a in April 2004.

The bulletin contains a variety of health and medication topics and other informative subjects.

Dr. Riyadh Abdulmaula Al-Saqqa is the publisher and Editor-in-Chief of this bulletin.

Hand grenade exploded by a child

Thursday, 27 May, 2004- A hand grenade was placed by a child named Tawfeeq Ali Hassan Najy under some rubbish at the eastern entrance to Taiz city. The grenade exploded resulting in various wounds on three other children who happened to be near the site.

The security authorities are investigating the motives and from where the above child was able to obtain the hand grenade.

Canadian Educational Delegation at Applied Sciences University

A Canadian educational team has concluded its visit to Yemen, during which it visited the University of Applied Sciences and the Canadian School in Yemen.

Dr. Mohamed Al-Saeed, President of the University, in a statement to Yemen Times, said that an agreement was signed with the Canadian delegation for the mutual exchange of expertise between his university and the Canadian University that they represent.

Festival on combating revenge and violence

Dar Al-Salam Social Organization for combating Revenge and Violence will organize a cultural festival related to the experiments of the organization in resolving and treating the phenomena of revenge, violence and the misuse of weapons.

The festival's activities will take place during 9-14 June at the Culture House in Sana'a.

4 Yemeni citizens sentenced to the death penalty

Sana'a Criminal Court issued its verdict on June 2, 2004, sentencing 4 citizens to death for the premeditated murder of Mohamed Ahmed Qariah on 3 December of 1998.

The court, presided over by Judge Najeeb Al-Kadery, found Faisel Hamoud Bajsah Al-Shaif, who is in custody, and Adhm Najy Abdulhameed Al-Shaif, Najji Hamoud Najji Al-Shaif and Hamoud Najji Ahmed Al-Shaif, who are still at large, guilty of carrying out a robbery of the grocery store of Mr. Qariah on the evening of 3 December 1998. Mr Qariah was shot dead while resisting the robbery.

The first accused, who is currently in custody, was previously sentenced to a 20-year imprisonment term after he was convicted, by the same court, of kidnapping a number of tourists from the Netherlands in 1998 in Al-Jouf Governorate.

Statement by the Yemeni authority for defending detainees at Guantanamo

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni Authority for Defending Detainees at Guantanamo and Other Places and Against Torture and Violence held its first meeting on the morning of 3 June, 2004, presided over by the Chairman of the Authority and Member of Parliament, Mr. Faisel Bin Shamlan.

The meeting reviewed the "Sana'a appeal", issued on 11 April, 2004 by the conference "Human Rights for All", which decided to form private commissions to look into the illegal

activities and violations against the detainees at Guantanamo and into what happened at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The Authority, during the meeting, formed its presidium body and its working agenda for the coming period. Ms. Amal Al-Basha, President of the Arab Sisters Forum, and Ms. Rahmah Hujairah, President of the Yemeni Female Journalists Forum, were chosen as Vice Presidents of the Authority. Mr. Mohamed Najji Allawo, the Coordinator at HOOD Organization, was chosen as the rapporteur of the authority.

Sit-in at Yemeni Journalists Syndicate

"Al-Shamoa" newspaper, subjected to 100,000 Riyal fine, suspended from publishing for three months and whose Editor-in-Chief was sentenced to a three-month prison sentence, has called for an indefinite sit-in at the headquarters of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, which started last Sunday.

The sit-in is in protest against the recent court verdict against the news-

paper. The court's verdict coincided with the President's announcement to abolish the imprisonment of journalists, which received praise from the local and international press circles.

It is worth mentioning that "Al-Shamoa" newspaper covers and publishes corruption cases of officials in the government.

Security Cooperation between Yemen and Qatar

TAIZ BUREAU

Wednesday, 2 June 2004- Minister of Interior, Dr. Rashad Al-Aleeme, and visiting Qatari Minister of State for Internal Affairs, Sheikh Hamid Bin Jassem, in a joint statement issued at the conclusion of the visit, confirmed that the talks between the two sides focused on means to enhance bilateral relations in various fields, particularly on security issues, the exchange of information and expertise and fighting terror and organized crime.

The statement confirmed that the two sides agreed to activate and enhance the security cooperation agreement signed between the two countries on August of 2000.

The visiting Minister attended the graduation ceremony of the first batch



of coastguards, 600 graduates who received their training at the hands of US experts in an effort to enhance and strengthen the monitoring of the lengthy Yemeni coastline.

The US recently granted Yemen 8 military boats to assist Yemen in securing the 2250 km coast line.

The Yemeni authority says it needs 700 million USD to be able to monitor its coast properly.

Governor of Aden inaugurates a number of projects in Free Zone

Tuesday, 1 June 2004, Aden- The governorate witnessed a significant increase of pace in the number of projects inaugurated by the Governor of Aden, Dr. Yahya Al-Shaibi.

The foundation stone to Al-Rehab perfume factory was laid, which will work to produce high quality brands and cosmetics. In a statement to Sheikh Abdulrahman Bin Nafa, the progress on this project is proceeding well due to the facilities provided by the state to attract investors. The annual production of the factory is 30 million units. The project will be implemented in 18 months at a cost of 2 million USD.

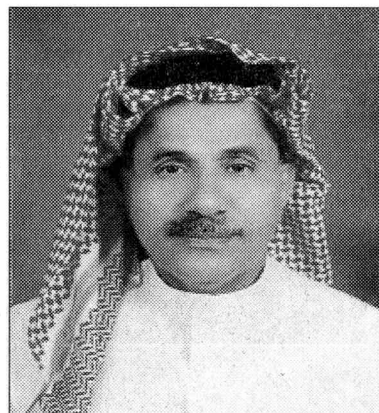
Sheikh Nafa said that as a contribution to Aden Governorate, Al-Manarah Park and Al-Arish rotary intersection would be renovated at the expense of Al-Rehab Perfume.

The Governor also laid the foundation stone to an industrial storage region affiliated to Aden Free Zone aiming to transform Aden Port into a pivotal international trade and investment center connecting the Yemeni economy with the world economy.

Dr. Al-Shaibi laid foundation stones to a number of service and development projects on the occasion of 14th anniversary of National Day. The foundation stone to a cement and brick plant was laid, and the plant intends to meet the needs and demands of the free zone and local consumption. The production capacity is 70,000 bricks annually and the cost of the project is 548,000 USD. The Governor inaugurated Tehama Co. Commercial stores, working in the field of the importation of cars, spare parts and heavy equipment for local and outside markets at a cost of 200,328 USD. The Governor

also laid the foundation stone to Bin Al-Haj Warehouses to store all sorts of dry goods. The project cost 120,000 USD.

The Governor of Aden also laid the foundation stone to Maj assembly line to assemble and store diesel generators. The period until the completion of the project is 17 months, and the project is expected to cost 2,633,023 USD.



Sheikh Abdulrahman Bin Nafa



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 President Saleh's call to abandon imprisonment of journalists will be applied?
- Yes, it will right away.
- Yes, but it will after the law is passed.
- No, it will have no effect on the situation
- I don't know

last edition's question:

Will the US fulfill its promise of granting the new Iraqi government full sovereignty?

- I don't think so 45%
I don't think the Iraqi government will have full sovereignty over armed forces and foreign policy 29%
It is possible after formation of an elected government 26%

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

Saudi media delegation concludes visit to Aden

ADEN BUREAU

Thursday, 4 June 2004- A Saudi media delegation concluded its visit to Aden after touring the city's historic and tourist sites. The delegation, accompanied by representatives of the Yemeni community in Saudi Arabia also paid a visit to Aden Tourist Trade Center, where they were received by Mr. Rashad Hayel Saeed who briefed them on the facilities at the center situated. The Center consists of an entertainment center for children, a tourist hotel, a parking lot, and 450 commercial stores, of which 250 are used by Saudi investors.

Mr. Saeed said that the work continues in order to inaugurate the center in the near future. The center costs an estimated 30 million USD.

The Saudi delegation expressed their admiration for the center and its fascinating modern architecture.

Apollo Opens the 1st Thai Exhibition during 7-10 June

On this occasion, Mr. Omr Al-Nehme, Marketing Director at Apollo International Exhibition Company, said that this exhibition came about following a series of visits and meetings between the Yemeni Ministry of Industry and Trade and Sana'a Chamber of Commerce and their Thai counterparts, and between a number of Yemeni businessmen and Thai industrialists.

The exhibition comes at a time when a number of Yemeni businessmen seek to expand their trade to the regional level and to enhance commercial relations between Yemen and Thailand. More than 85 Thai companies are participating in the exhibition seeking to establish marketing lines with Yemen and to find joint commercial relations between the two countries.

Mr. Sera Wood, the General Coordinator of the Thai Exhibition, on his part, stated that the purchasing of Thai goods by many Yemeni businessmen, the increasing number of visits by Yemeni businessmen to Thailand, and the good economic ties between Yemen and Thailand encouraged the organization of this exhibition.



Police computer literacy program

TAIZ BUREAU

Wednesday, 2 June 2004, Taiz- A graduation ceremony was held at the Hall of the National Institute for Administrative Sciences for the first batch of graduates from the police computer literacy program.

The computer training course was organized by the Police Department in Taiz in coordination and cooperation with the Institute. 60 computers were handed out to the graduates in accordance with the call of President Saleh



to circulate personal computers to the state's employees and in line with the plan of Ministry of Interior to increase computer usage within its operations.

The ceremony was attended by Undersecretary of Taiz Governorate, Sheikh Mohamed Al-Hayajem, and a number of security and police officials.

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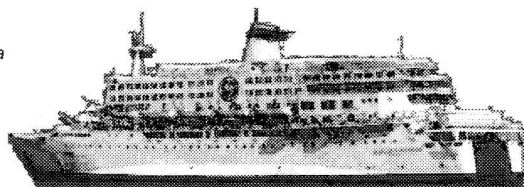
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International NGO active in Sa'ada and Al-Jawf seeks short term experts for the following areas. Assignments based in Sana'a with some travel to field:

Gender Expert: Local female consultant with extensive experience in gender analysis needed for two-three week consultancy between June 20 - July 15. Consultant to carry out an institutional gender analysis related to education.

Community Participation Expert: Required for 2-3 weeks assignment to design a methodology and manual for creation of model for innovative community development organization. Some level of Arabic essential.

Community Participation Coordinator: Short term employment offered for expert in community participation to take over temporarily for permanent staff member.

Assignment for 2-3 months duration. Candidate ideally should be fluent in Arabic, and have experience with CBOs, small grants, rural women's development, health facility committees, local councils and parent councils.

IEC Expert: Local consultant for 3-4 weeks assignment to develop and test an IEC package (information, education and communication) to promote girls education and involvement of community in education issues. Candidate should be fluent in Arabic, and have experience with girls education issues, experience in developing IEC, and experience in designing integrated campaigns to carry out awareness/advocacy for girls' education.

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Only short listed candidates will be contacted

An interview with Dr Abdulaziz al-Tarib on, Priorities of development and construction

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen Times has conducted an interview with Dr Abdulaziz al-Tarib that tackled several issues but mainly focused on internal Yemeni subjects and sounded out his ideas and opinions on them. Here are excerpts from Dr. al-Tarib's answers.

Q: While celebrating the 14th anniversary of the Yemeni unity, what are in your opinion the steps that form a beginning of launching development in Yemen, recalling that many economically backward countries have managed to achieve great development after the implementation of reforms?

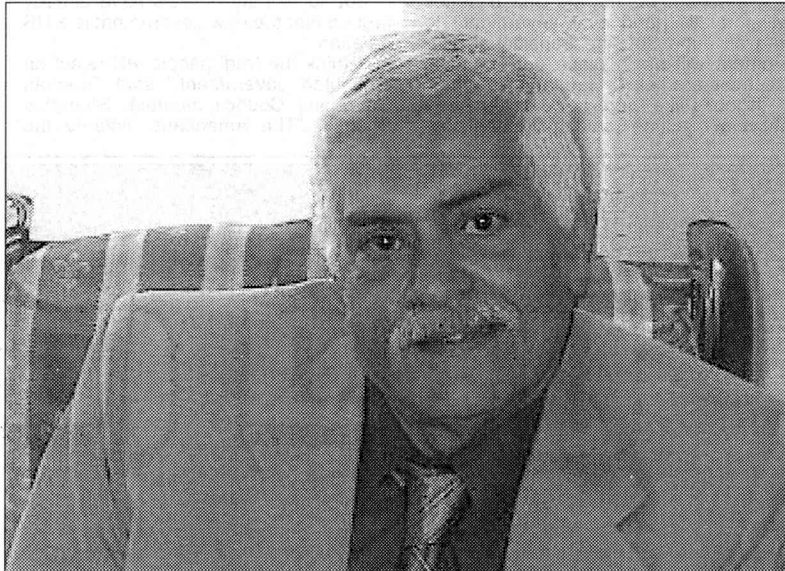
A: As a matter of fact, Yemen is capable of affecting many changes to market itself in Arab and international forums and has taken a number of steps, the most important of which are fighting corruption, combating smuggling and reconsidering its educational policy. Among other steps is close attention to the Free Zone in Aden, as investment has no homeland or boundaries. It moves towards areas where there are advantages and facilities and all countries have now begun to compete for foreign direct investment.

Q: Can this be realized on the ground?

A: It is possible if we believe in one another and each knows his role. Yemen is living in a more flourished and prosperous age after the unification, but it is in need of political will and decisions for fighting corruption, smuggling and unemployment as well as pensioning off a number of officials after honouring them and referring files of corruption and trying a number of them, as well as speeding up the modernization of the judiciary and prosecution.

Q: Does a loss of confidence remain the motive behind investment abroad?

A: Yes. This is a problem. Let's ask frankly, how we can demand others to come and invest here or there when many of us smuggle their money or the loans they obtain from banks abroad for investment. We have to realize the negatives of investment and its hindrances and then tackle them, because the world as a whole has become places and sites for investment attraction.



Dr Abdulaziz al-Turab

Q: For securing transparency, what is to be done to prevent corruption?

A: Corruption has transcended the boundaries of Yemen and other states. We have to subject to accountability the leading officials in banks and state institutions in the first place and to adopt the reports of financial audits and what is written in the press. Audit reports should be the practical criteria in the process of sending persons or institutions to prosecution and court.

Q: How do you view reforms from abroad, (ie. The Greater Middle East program)?

A: We request the presidents and kings to acknowledge the idea of renewal, modernization and reform and also to define their bases away from foreign intervention. The most important thing is that we have to begin. Concerning Yemen, the President has publicly announced that he intends to create large-scale changes. The entire people are welcoming the idea and the President has nothing but to immediate beginning. Presently we are celebrating the 14th anniversary of the National Day of 22 May, and we have to prepare the people masses for the next elections and feel credible, otherwise reforms would be imposed on us from outside by the new world order that aims to protect its interests and investments in the region.

Q: Unemployment has been aggravated due to the lack of job opportuni-

ties to accommodate the increasing working and university labour force, and unemployment leads to increase the degree of poverty. What is to be done about this?

A: Collapse of any nation begins with unemployment and it can't be solved without more investment opportunities and the encouragement of businessmen to engage in projects capable of employing a great number of people. Unemployment cannot be resolved by conferences and statements or begging states and organizations. It begins with providing job opportunities commensurate to the increase in number of citizens. It needs an attractive investment climate.

Q: Do we understand that we need a working plan and program and both short and long-term strategies to translate the President's statements into actions?

A: Society is demanded to have a sense of responsibility and support the revolution the President is announcing in the bid to fighting terror, corruption and negligence and to seek the support of the abundant national capabilities. Nevertheless, there is no objection to getting the help of Arab and foreign expertise to support national experts towards the right goal in selecting the best means for investment of our natural and human resources and our strategic sites. There is no defect in benefiting from the latest achievements of modern science and the successful foreign experiments.

The President is capable of stirring up the stagnant waters and unveils those who do not want reforms and those standing behind terror and smuggling. He is able at the beginning to lay the foundation of the modern Yemeni state of law and order. We must not be afraid of going ahead with more reform. The President's priorities have to deal with the judiciary in its various apparatuses; prosecution, courts and police. Other priorities are the free zone and the establishment of a new board of directors, because it is the foundation of investment. There is also tourism and its impediments and there must be an independent ministry for it. Also, more interest must be shown in exports and the adoption of export incentives.

Q: Unemployment, surplus labour and early retirement are issues that deserve care and interest. Should they be among the priorities of the President's program in the process of reforms?

A: Unemployment is the greatest chal-

lenge facing many states and its proportion has reached 10% of those capable of work. Surplus labour can be rehabilitated and sent to the labour market again. The actual treatment of employment is represented in increasing demand for labour and has two main ways: the first is the effect of steady growth and the second is that growth should contain a great amount of employment. For instance, in China employment rates continued in rise by 10% for many years, and this is also the case in Korea and Malaysia. The demand and its increase for labour must be associated with improvement of labour demand and development of education and training, and this is followed in the countries that successfully tackle the problem of employment despite the increase of their populations. To have the increase in demand for labour achieved effectively it is important to endeavour to open new markets for locally produced commodities, products and services. From that derives demand for local labour and factories can then function with their full production capacity and here result in low prices. It is important also that economic policies have to include incentives of employment. For instance, France has recently followed this approach when it has announced its intention to grant employment incentives. We recall in this regard what happened in the nineties when it was decided to grant incentives to establishments that open work opportunities for graduate youths, such as the state offering services to establishments in marketing and others. Using such a policy is not only the duty of the state but is also of the private and civil sectors, such as civil society organizations. The President, more any other time before, is requested to render care to the process of reforms, modernization and introduce the system of consultative bodies in the ministries and government institutions and activate them as well as regulate their meetings. The ministers should fix one day per week for receiving people and listening to their remarks and complaints. Each minister has to have a specialized advisor in each sector to whom the remarks and studies are referred to, instead of hundreds of useless advisors. In other words, we encourage expertise and skilled people to compete for the interest of the society. The President should assess the local councils experiment, including their authorities and tools of authority and to introduce the slogan of "plan with us, implement with us and rule with us" so that each citizen in Yemen would feel that he has participated and is not an accessory of the décor of pluralism and democracy.

The political parties are demanded to form shadow governments and to help the government and the ruling party instead of engaging in political intrigues. Presently, the ruling party has to listen and analyze ideas and opinions of the political parties. Security bodies should not chase the press. We are in need of a new style of governance and press quite aware of responsibility and should analyze rumours and not repeat them. We expect much from the President and all of us back trends of political, social and economic reforms

Q: What is your vision of a better investment future, your future plans and schemes as an Arab expert and international advisor in the field of administration?

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Once again I thank Yemen Times and I consider myself as one of your staff and as a soldier for the realization of reforms in Yemen through the Consultative Body to help and support the President of the Republic in the strategy of modernization and development.



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Taj Sheba presents "Nakaira" live in concert

"Onde sonore dal mediterraneo" is the title of Nakaira's new CD and it is also name of a Mediterranean wind. It enabled the first people who discovered it to trace new routes in the Mediterranean Sea and to enhance the spread of cultures and populations. This is the spirit that drove the band in the recording of its second CD of original and traditional music. It is a trip from Greece to Sephardic Spain, and to the outskirts of the Middle East, passing through Sicily, Nakaira's native land. The album rides on the wings of a song in Sicilian dialect, whose text was written especially for the album by Sicilian singer-songwriter Carlo Muratori, based on an original Nakaira theme.

The Taj Sheba Hotel is organising live concerts of the band as part of its "Italiano Fiesta" at the hotel on the 6th, 7th and 10th of June by the poolside. In addition, the hotel is flying down an Italian specialist Chef from The Taj Palace Hotel, Dubai who will pamper your palette's and take you through the cuisines of Italy.



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 Nektarios Galanis - Greek bouzouki, Violin, Vocal
 Technician: Fabio Grasso

The promotion has been organised in conjunction with the Italian Embassy in Sana'a, Yemenia and the Taj Palace Hotel, Dubai. According to the Sales & Marketing Manager of

The Taj Sheba Hotel, Mr. Arif Khan, "this is the beginning of a series of such promotions that the hotel has planned in the year to come to give the people of Sana'a the best of the world".

Continued from page 1

A nod of approval

The new government, however, has requested that it must be consulted about military operations conducted by coalition troops.

According to Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, the new government "needs to be consulted and its views need to be taken into consideration," when there are significant military offenses that could have serious political and security repercussions.

It is scheduled that the United States will formally hand over sovereignty to Iraq on June 30. The transitional government will be in place until national elections are held in January next year.

"It looks like there is no better alternative at this time," said the Yemeni gov-

ernment official. "It appears that the new Iraqi government is professional and will be able to prepare for the elections."

Negotiations went on for weeks before there was an agreement on putting together the new government. It is said that the deadlock was broken when Adnan Pachachi, former Foreign Minister and accused of being favored by the United States, turned down the job of President.

But some Iraqi officials have already argued that the new government is a US creation.

"I think the Iraqi people will reject an appointed government," said Turkman Governing Council member, Shanghai Shapuk. "The Americans dictated the

way."

Some Iraqis living in Yemen share the same opinion. "The government is just another tool the United States has made, and it will use it to control my country," said an Iraqi engineer in Sana'a. "It is just another puppet government, and I think the US soldiers will stay for a very long time."

But some Iraqis in Yemen feel optimistic.

"We have to give the government time in order to create stability," said Erfan Al-Shammari, an Iraqi doctor at Hadda Hospital. "The most important thing in Iraq now is security. If they can do it, it is a good government."

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Qaeda-linked group says set cars ablaze in Baghdad

DUBAI, June 5 (Reuters) - A group headed by suspected al Qaeda operative Abu Musab al-Zarqawi claimed responsibility for an attack on Saturday on two cars of the type favoured by Westerners in Iraq, saying it had targeted "CIA agents".

It was not immediately clear whether there were casualties or what caused the two four-wheel cars to burst into flames while driving on the main road leading to Baghdad's airport.

"A brigade of Jama'at al-Tawhid

and Jihad ambushed two cars belonging to the CIA, each carrying four people, at Baghdad international airport road. After a fierce battle, the mujahideen burned the cars and those in them," said the Arabic-language statement posted on an Islamist Web site.

It was not immediately possible to verify the authenticity of the statement. Zarqawi and his group have claimed a series of suicide bombs and attacks in Iraq on U.S. troops and on Iraqi officials in recent months.



A U.S. Army soldier takes notes next to burning vehicles after an attack on the airport highway in southern Baghdad June 5, 2004. U.S. troops cordoned off the burning wreckage of two cars on the main road to Baghdad's airport on Saturday, an area where militants have frequently attacked convoys carrying foreigners. REUTERS

Compromise sought in Sharon's Gaza pullout crisis

JERUSALEM, June 5 (Reuters) - An Israeli cabinet member trying to save Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government from collapse said on Saturday she still hoped to reach a last-minute compromise with dissident ministers over his Gaza pullout plan.

Talks between Immigration Minister Tzipi Livni, a Sharon ally spearheading mediation efforts, and three ministers from their right-wing Likud party opposed to the withdrawal proposal were due to resume later in the day, government officials said.

"I certainly think there's a chance until the (cabinet) vote on Sunday," Livni told Israel Radio.

Sharon fired two ministers belonging to the far-right National Union on Friday, ensuring at least an 11-10 majority in the cabinet when it votes on the U.S.-backed plan to remove all 21 Jewish settlements in Gaza and four of 120 in the West Bank.

But Likud could split and a key member of his government, the National Religious Party (NRP), might bolt. That would leave Sharon without a parliamentary majority and possibly facing an early election unless Livni can work out a compromise.

Under her proposal, the cabinet would approve the Gaza plan "in principle" while agreeing to hold off on any settlement evacuation until a second vote was held in six to nine months.

The watered-down language and a deal Livni has been trying to achieve on the level of government funds for building in settlements slated to go could be key to keeping the pro-settler NRP in the coalition, for now, and ending the Likud rebellion.

"The main problem that needs to be resolved for a compromise to be reached is the continuation of construction in settlements due to be evacuated," Livni told YNet, the Web site of Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth newspa-

per.

A political source said a deal could be reached to fund "essential construction", but Sharon was wary of giving the nod for broad expansion of settlements he plans to uproot.

BUSH BACKS PLAN

Three dissident Likud cabinet members, Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Education Minister Limor Livnat, want Sharon to abide by a May 2 party vote rejecting his plan to "disengage" from the Palestinians.

Opposition to the proposal U.S. President George W. Bush has called "a courageous step towards peace"

forced Sharon to postpone a cabinet vote at its previous session last Sunday.

Palestinians fear a Gaza withdrawal masks Israeli plans to hold on permanently to large areas of occupied land in the West Bank, a concern heightened by Bush's pledge to Sharon in April that Israel could not be expected to give up all the territory.

Opinion polls show a majority of Israelis support removing the 7,500 Jews who live in hard-to-defend settlements in the Gaza Strip, home to 1.3 million Palestinians.

Opponents of a Gaza pullout, which Sharon wants to complete by the end of 2005, say it would reward Palestinian "terrorism".

Sharon's firing of Tourism Minister Benjamin Elon and Transportation Minister Avigdor Lieberman of the National Union, a party with seven seats in the 120-member parliament, will leave him with a slim majority of 61.

The dismissals do not officially take effect until Sunday, but a source close to Sharon said he regarded them as final.

If the NRP abandons him, Sharon's coalition would have only 55 parliamentary seats, opening the way for a possible unity government with the main opposition Labour Party, which has 19 legislators, or elections, now scheduled for 2007.



Palestinians run away from approaching Israeli soldiers past a burning barricade in the West Bank city of Ramallah during an Israel army operation early morning June 5. REUTERS

Sudan's foes enter last phase of talks with signing

NAIROBI, June 5 (Reuters) - Amid shrieks of joy and singing, Sudan's government and southern rebels launched the final phase of talks to end Africa's longest civil war with a signing ceremony on Saturday.

First Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha and rebel leader John Garang signed a document incorporating six accords, the building blocks for a comprehensive peace deal to end 21 years of civil war in the oil-producing country.

"The document we have just signed...represents a solemn declaration on our part that war in Sudan is truly coming to an end," Garang said at the State House ceremony hosted by Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki in Nairobi.

Before a gathering of foreign digni-

taries, including Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher, Taha and Garang held aloft copies of the document in which both sides pledged to wrap up negotiations as soon as possible.

"I would like to reiterate the determination of the government of Sudan to continue the peace process and implement all texts relating to this peace process," Taha said.

The peace talks do not cover a separate conflict in Sudan's western region of Darfur, which the United Nations says has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The two sides are due to discuss ceasefire arrangements and how to implement a final deal when they resume talks on June 22.

Mediators in Kenya, where talks are being held, have said a final deal could be concluded within two months.

The government and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels signed landmark protocols on May 26 on how to share power and manage three disputed areas.

Previous accords relate to a vote in the south on secession after a six-year transition period, forming a post-war national army and the equal division of oil revenues during the interim.

Sudan's civil war has killed an estimated two million people, mainly through famine and disease since 1983 when Khartoum tried to impose Islamic sharia law on the mainly animist south.

Oil, religion and ideology have been complicating factors in the war.



Sudan's First Vice-President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha (L) shakes hands with Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebel leader John Garang (R) as their host Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki watches soon after launching the final peace process between the two June 5, in Nairobi. Sudan's government and southern rebels launched the final phase of talks to end Africa's longest civil war with a signing ceremony on Saturday. REUTERS

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Belarus police detain hunger strike sympathisers

MINSK, June 5 (Reuters) - Police in Belarus, an ex-Soviet state widely accused of curbing human rights, on Saturday detained two sympathisers backing parliamentarians on hunger strike to press for improved electoral laws.

Police seized the activists after they had pitched tents by the building where three members of parliament were fasting to demand fairer rules for October general elections — a barometer of President Alexander Lukashenko's popularity.

"They (the police) will have plenty of work to do," Marina Bogdanovich, a member of the opposition United Civic Party leading the sympathy protest, told Reuters.

"We have plenty of other tents. And at least 10 people say they want to join our protest."

The three members of parliament — Valery Frolov, Vladimir Parfyanovich and Sergei Skrebets — began refusing food on Thursday while acknowledging

that a hunger strike was not the best way to press for change.

Belarus's liberal and nationalist opposition fears widespread fraud in the October parliamentary vote and has demanded new laws providing for more independent observers and broader rights for them to oversee voting.

The hunger strikers are also demanding the release of opposition politician Mikhail Marinich, detained in April on charges of stealing official documents.

October's election will provide an indicator whether Lukashenko, in power since 1994, still holds sway over public life in the country of 10 million between Russia and Poland.

Lukashenko stands accused by the European Union and United States of failing to uphold human rights, harassing opposition leaders and cracking down on independent media.

The president still cherishes a dream of post-Soviet reunification with Russia, but Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin has grown cool to the idea.



Marina Bogdanovich (C), a member of the Belarusian opposition United Civic Party, is taken away by plain-clothes police during her hunger strike in central Minsk, June 5. Police in Belarus, an ex-Soviet state widely accused of curbing human rights, on Saturday detained two sympathisers backing parliamentarians on hunger strike to press for improved electoral laws. REUTERS

U.S. asks for extradition of senior Colombia rebel

BOGOTA, Colombia, June 5 (Reuters) - The United States has requested the extradition of Simon Trinidad, the most senior member of Colombia's FARC guerrilla army ever captured, the guerrilla's lawyer said.

Trinidad, a former high society banker who joined the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, in 1987, was served a copy of the extradition request this week in connection with drug trafficking, kidnapping and terrorism charges.

"There are two very vague charges that refer to shipping, or conspiring to ship, five kilograms or more of cocaine and taking hostages," Trinidad's lawyer, Oscar Silva, said in an interview late on Friday.

"But they don't say what issues, specifically, are at issue," Silva added.

Colombia's Supreme Court would now have to rule on the extradition request, he said.

U.S. officials could not be immediately reached for comment, but the presidential palace confirmed the United States had made a formal request for Trinidad's extradition.

The chief of Colombia's investigative police said earlier this year that his forces were gathering evidence

linking Trinidad to the 1997 kidnapping and killing of an American geologist working in northern Colombia as a mining consultant.

American Frank Pescatore was taken hostage by the FARC in December 1996 and killed in February 1997. Colombian authorities say the unit that kidnapped Pescatore answered to Trinidad.

Silva said the extradition request did not mention a specific kidnapping.

Trinidad admits to being a rebel, for which he has already been sentenced to nearly seven years in jail, but denies having planned kidnappings or even being an important commander.

His arrest was a major victory for Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, who has boosted defense spending with strong support from the United States.

Last month, Trinidad was sentenced to 35 years in jail for kidnapping a former mayor of the city of Valledupar. He faces dozens of other criminal charges in Colombia.

Authorities say he used his experience as a bank manager to identify kidnap victims for FARC, which relies on ransoms for much of its funding.



Francisco Galan (R) of Colombia's second-largest Marxist rebel force, the National Liberation Army meets with Colombian Vice President Francisco Santos (2nd L) and chief peace negotiator Luis Carlos Restrepo (L) in Bogota, June 4. REUTERS

Bush senses spirit of unity on Iraq, deal close



Riot police form a line during clashes with anti-war protesters in Piazza Venezia in Rome June 4. Thousands of armed police lined the streets of the Italian capital on Friday as activists gathered to protest against visiting President George W. Bush and the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. REUTERS

PARIS, June 5 (Reuters) - U.S. President George W. Bush said on Saturday he sensed a "spirit of unity" in the international community to help Iraq's new government and expressed confidence a U.N. Security Council resolution would be approved soon.

Bush thanked Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi for helping negotiate with some Security Council members who opposed the war, and include Russia and France, after talks in Rome with one of his closest allies in Europe.

Bush later arrived in Paris for talks with President Jacques Chirac, a critic of the Iraq war. Bush is likely to face street protests over Iraq but hopes to improve relations that were strained by the war, which France opposed.

"I sense a spirit of unity in terms of working with the new Iraqi government," Bush told a news conference in Rome. Of the resolution, he said: "I'm confident we will get one soon."

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell hoped for a deal "in the next couple of days" after Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi sent a letter to the Security Council on Saturday with suggestions

about how military operations in Iraq can be subject to a political review.

"As of this morning, we are very, very close to completing the work," Powell told reporters travelling on Bush's plane. "With the receipt of the Allawi letter, this puts us much closer to the finishing line."

The resolution endorses Iraq's new interim government and establishes a multinational force to provide security as the country tries to arrange elections in January.

U.S. and British officials believe only minor adjustments will be needed to win Council support. But Chirac wants a fixed timetable for withdrawing U.S.-led troops from Iraq and a top Russian diplomat said the resolution needed more work.

"We cannot say that it satisfies us entirely. We therefore believe further work is vital to reach agreement," Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov was quoted as saying by Interfax.

WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS

The United States and Britain on Friday proposed giving Iraq's new leaders the right to send home foreign troops, a concession Baghdad's foreign minister said would speed up adoption of a U.N. resolution on Iraq's future.

Italy has some 2,700 troops in Iraq, the third largest foreign contingent after those of the United States and Britain. Berlusconi reiterated his pledge to keep them there as long as an Iraqi government set to take power next January wants.

"(Berlusconi) fully understands that

our troops must be there at the request of a sovereign government," Bush said.

Bush compared his war on terrorism to the Cold War struggle against communism. "The fundamental question is will we hold the line and uphold our values," he said.

Bush, who met Pope John Paul on Friday at the Vatican, said he shared the pontiff's outrage over the abuse of Iraqi prisoners. Bush said he was honoured to have met the pope, who urged a swift return of sovereignty to the Iraqi people.

"He and I share concerns about treating people with human dignity," Bush said. "Like his Holiness, I was repulsed by the pictures I saw about the treatment by some of our troops towards Iraqi prisoners."

Bush's visit took place against a backdrop of anti-war street protests in Rome and violence in Iraq, where another U.S. soldier was killed in a roadside bomb blast on Saturday.

Thousands of protesters opposed to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq marched in Rome on Friday. There were skirmishes but it was not the mayhem many feared. Berlusconi called it a "flop".

The possibility of more protests awaited Bush in Paris, where he was to have talks and a working dinner with Chirac, who thwarted his attempt to get a U.N. Security Council resolution last year authorising war against Iraq.

On Sunday, Bush goes to Normandy to mark the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Ex-President Reagan dies after Alzheimer's ordeal

LOS ANGELES, June 5 (Reuters) - Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who forged a conservative revolution that transformed American politics, died on Saturday after a decade-long battle with Alzheimer's disease, sources close to the Reagan family said. He was 93.

His wife, Nancy, and family members had gathered at his bedside at his house in the Bel Air district of Los Angeles.

All U.S. TV networks broke into programming to announce Reagan's death just after 4:45 p.m. (2045 GMT) on Saturday.

Reagan has suffered from the brain-wasting Alzheimer's disease since 1994 and his condition is believed to have worsened in the past week.

Reagan, a film star turned politician, was U.S. president from 1981 to 1989. He was voted into office in a conservative revival that changed America's political and economic landscape for years.



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Unofficial tally shows Arroyo won Philippine poll

MANILA, June 5 (Reuters) - A Philippine election watchdog said on Saturday its unofficial count showed President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had won a fresh term by narrowly beating film star Fernando Poe Jr with 39 percent of the votes to his 37 percent.

The official tally from a May 10 general election will not confirm the winner of the presidential race until at least mid-June, but counts by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) have proved accurate in the past.

The NAMFREL "quick count" of 79.21 percent of the ballots which took four weeks was largely redundant after a senior election official leaked results on May 24 showing Arroyo had defeated Poe by about three percentage points.

"We neither declare a winner or a loser. Our job and our mandate is quite simply to provide advance results and that I think we have done," said Namfrel Secretary General Guillermo Luz told reporters.

Namfrel said it had to leave around seven million votes uncounted because of technical problems, discrepancies with official numbers, and some illegible returns.

The watchdog said it would deliver its final report on the election on June 30, the day the new government must be sworn in.

Some analysts however doubt the "quick count" results after Namfrel's credibility was diminished by the very slow count and the impartiality of its officers was questioned.

"Namfrel has lost its credibility. The count is too slow and they created too much conflict," political analyst Benito Lim told Reuters.

Opposition Senator Aquilino Pimentel had also questioned the citizenship of Luz, saying he had obtained information that the Namfrel official is a Canadian citizen.

Under Philippine laws, a foreigner is



File photo of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (C) together with Commission on Elections chairman Benjamin Abalos (R) greets supporters in Manila May 24. REUTERS

prohibited from interfering in or participating in any election.

"If he can prove that he is not a Canadian citizen, well and good. But if he cannot do so, I will file a criminal case against him," Pimentel said.

Three other presidential contenders split the rest of the ballots. Filipinos also voted for a vice president, half of the 24-seat Senate and some 17,000 posts at all levels of government.

Poe, whose camp has accused Arroyo's administration of cheating, has declared himself the winner, keeping the political temperature high in a country that has seen two "people power" uprisings and nine coup attempts in the last 18 years.

Arroyo, a U.S.-trained economist with a mixed track record, herself faced a one-day mutiny by junior officers last July. She rose from vice president in January 2001 when Joseph Estrada was ousted as leader by million-strong street protests.

Political analysts say Poe's support-

ers are playing for time to try to stir up public anger about cheating but the complaints have not generated the kind of fury that chased out Estrada three years ago and dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

Cheating is common in any election in the Philippines but NAMFREL and an association of Roman Catholic bishops have said they saw no signs of systematic or widespread fraud.

Court challenge

The Supreme Court said on Friday it would consider a petition filed by Poe's camp to stop the counting of votes for president in Congress but did not halt the tally itself.

The petition asked the court to disband a 22-member panel and order all 248 members of Congress to examine the returns.

Members of Arroyo's ruling coalition, who dominate the Senate and House of Representatives, have said they are confident the winner of the

presidency will be proclaimed before the current government ends its term on June 30.

After days of debate by opposition politicians, the Congress panel on Friday finally began counting the first few of the 176 master returns summarising an estimated 32 million ballots.

Arroyo was the clear favourite among investors, who were concerned about Poe's lack of experience and close ties to Estrada, a former actor popular among poor voters, who is now on trial for economic plunder.

But analysts say Arroyo — or any other Philippine leader — must take firmer steps to fight rampant corruption, control swelling debts and put the sluggish economy on a more competitive path in a region largely benefiting from a global rebound.

Security is also a major concern as troops in the mainly Roman Catholic nation battle Muslim and communist rebel groups.

UN investigates Congo rebel troop movement reports

KINSHASA, June 5 (Reuters) - The United Nations is investigating reports that renegade soldiers who took control of the eastern Congo border town of Bukavu are moving toward a second city, sources said on Saturday.

The reports of troop movements by soldiers loyal to General Laurent Nkunda were unconfirmed, said U.N. spokesmen in Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in Bukavu. Both said peacekeepers were looking into whether the conflict in eastern Congo was spreading.

"We have reports saying troops are moving out of Bukavu north and south and with the intention of capturing Walikale, said Hamadoun Toure, U.N. spokesman in Kinshasa.

"Some say they are troops loyal to Nkunda. This is very disturbing. After Walikale there's Kisangani. This is something that would be very dangerous for the peace process and for the region," he added.

Walikale is a transit point on the main road between Bukavu and eastern Congo's biggest city, Kisangani.

A former RCD-Goma rebel, who is now a member of the transitional government, blamed disturbances in Walikale on traditional Mai Mai warriors, normally loyal to the government.

"There are so many Mai Mai who are disgruntled because they thought they would get key positions in government and many of them did not," said the former rebel who asked not to be named.

U.N. peacekeepers said they would mount aerial surveillance to determine whether Nkunda's men were on the march or whether reports of trouble were unrelated to Bukavu.

"There are troop movements in every direction and if the reports are true by the time we find out it might be too late," said a U.N. source.

Nkunda has said he was moving his troops out of Bukavu to barracks nearby after a week of fighting that threatened to derail Congo's peace process and regional stability.

Congo blames neighbour Rwanda for aiding the renegade troops who say they are fighting government forces to protect fellow Tutsi tribesman.

Bukavu unrest

U.N. spokesman Sebastian Lapierre said there was shooting overnight in Bukavu and looting, presumably by Nkunda's men.

Lapierre said the United Nations was running continuous civilian rescue efforts. He said so far 1,300 civilians were being protected in the U.N. compound at Bukavu.

The Congolese Red Cross reported 23 new deaths, bringing the toll since fighting began last week to 90.

The fall of Bukavu sparked three days of protests throughout the vast mineral-rich central African country, as demonstrators furious that United Nations peacekeepers failed to protect the town burned, looted and attacked U.N. and government targets.

U.N. radio said five people were killed in Kinshasa protests. The city was calm on Saturday and some commercial flights had resumed.

The fall of Bukavu and the subsequent riots are the most serious challenges to date to Congo's shaky peace process and its government, struggling to assert its authority across Africa's third-largest state after five years of war.

The violence has also reignited tension with neighbouring Rwanda, which invaded Congo in 1996 and 1998. Congo President Joseph Kabila has accused Kigali of helping the dissidents — members of a former rebel group now part of his government.

Analysts say any conflict in the area is also complicated by South Kivu's mineral riches, which include gold, diamonds and coltan and were a major draw for occupying forces in the war.

Nkunda told Rwandan Radio on Saturday he reserved the right to send his forces back into Bukavu if government forces threatened his fellow Banyamulenge tribesman.

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Words of Wisdom



One of the key characteristics of working in the media is the concept of deadlines. Everything has a deadline. Everybody is under some kind of time pressure. While this pressure may not be good for one's health, it is a wonderful contributor to efficiency.

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



OUR OPINION

A new beginning for Yemen

The decision of President Saleh to abolish the imprisonment sentence in the press and publications law is a huge step forward that is worthy of praise and encouragement.

It was a delightful moment for me as a Yemeni to announce at the end of the 11th World Newspapers Forum held last week in Istanbul this good news which was received by applause. "You made our day with this news" was what many told me after the talk.

It is indeed a hopeful time for all of us in the press as we have been calling for the abolishment of this imprisonment sentence for so long.

I am glad that our efforts were not in vain.

Hence, I feel this could serve as a new beginning for us in Yemen to explore the new role of the press in our country. With such new initiatives to help reduce constraints on Yemeni journalists, we are opening the door for more creativity, initiatives, and responsible press to emerge.

This does not by any means imply that our fight for our freedom is over. We need to push for greater transparency, a freer flow of information, and greater respect for journalists.

Among the many things I learned through my participation as a speaker in the World Association of Newspapers conference I mentioned, was that newspapers can indeed have a great influence on a country and its future.

By applying more efficient and professional standards in our newspaper industry in Yemen, not only in editorial, but also in management and marketing, we can stand as a more respected and appreciated authority in the country. With a voice that is widely heard and respected, we can more effectively convey messages that promote civil values, freedom, human rights, the enhancement of education, investment in humans and the elimination of corruption and abuses of power.

It is in our hands as Yemeni newspapers to stand up to the challenge and begin on the path of hard work and dedication to our noble mission of conveying the truth with no excessive and unnecessary insult or defamation and without taking sides or being propaganda tools.

The necessary thing for us today is to realize that the world is moving very quickly towards newspaper alliances and blocks that serve to guide the misguided and help the ones in need. We have to form a strong power that can be heard and respected, but at the same time that we serve as a platform to introduce and disseminate values of professional and honest journalism, which need time and commitment to develop.

I take the opportunity to thank the President for taking this respectable and courageous step, which I believe will be followed by many others in support of his promises to bring about a truly democratic and free nation.

This is a new opportunity, so let's use it for a more professional and honest Yemeni press.

The Editor



Independent Cultural, Economic & Political Weekly
First English Newspaper in Yemen, founded in 1991
by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

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- Letters to the Editor must include your name and signature, address and telephone number. Letters should not exceed 2,000 characters in length. We reserve the right to edit letters and articles for clarity, style, length and legal contents. Any article or letter submitted cannot be returned to the writer under any circumstances.
- To advertise in the paper, contact the advertising department in any of the offices of the newspaper.

22 May 2004: the 14th anniversary of the unification of the country

BY ABDULRAHMAN MOHAMED AL-KUHALI
CEO AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL
YEMEN NATIONAL BANK

May 22, 1990 is a day registered in the modern history of Yemen and in the history of significant development transformation. The declaration of the unification of the country and the announcement of the Republic of Yemen under one flag coincided also with the announcement of a new era in the path of development, democracy and political pluralism, which has tremendously influenced all sectors and fields in the country. The establishment of the Republic of Yemen has contributed in the creation of a viable investment atmosphere, in the attraction of local and foreign investment toward development and modernization projects, and in the constant ascending of

revival rates of economic sectors with a noticeable improvement of modern services.

The anniversary of the unification is considered an important historical event. Since the unification of the country in 22 May 1990, fourteen years ago, several accomplishments have been achieved in the various fields at the state and society's levels. The foundation of the Republic of Yemen formed a practical transition and has set the way for broad horizons for a much-needed development and advancement renaissance as it is evidently shown in the southern and eastern governorates in comparison to the previous period under the former dictatorial regime. The accomplishments are not limited to the economic sector alone, but rather have reached the political, social and cultural fields, the professions and freedoms of the press, expression and human rights.

At the economic level, the unification of the country has assisted in attracting

national and foreign investment due to the encouragement, support and facilities constantly provided to all kinds of investors by the political leadership headed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The exchange sector achieved a tangible transition and major successes as it is patently clear, for example, the achievements made by Yemen National Bank at the local and international levels and the upgrade of its status worldwide to equal some of those banks in the Gulf countries.

The unification of Yemen is considered the paramount event to take place in the modern history of Yemen. The dream to establish the Aden Free Zone Project has come true as a direct result of the unification of the country.

On this precious occasion, I wish to convey my warmest congratulations to all Yemeni citizens and to H.E. Ali Abdullah Saleh, the President of the Republic of Yemen.

Aden Free Zone project admired by visiting delegations

BY DERHIM ABDO NOMAN
CHAIRMAN OF ADEN FREE ZONE

At the time of the anniversary of National Day, May 22, eyes head toward the economy. The importance of inward investment in the national economic strategy ensures the prominence of this issue.

The Aden Free Zone project is going according to plan as the project has achieved noticeable development due to personal attention and care of President Saleh and his constant follow up of this vital project, which is one of the accomplishments of the

unification of the country.

The number of vessels and carriers at the free zone during the first quarter of the current year reached 97 from various international ports, which unloaded 74,834 containers of various sizes. 28 carriers unloaded 28,126 containers during the month of April alone. The container port has been witnessing very rapid and active movements since the second half of 2003, which confirms the constant commercial activity in the port. The reduction in the risk of war insurance rate on ships coming to Yemeni ports to 0.0125% for container ships and to 0.04% for other commercial ships and oil tankers became effective as of

April 2004. Another reduction expected to take place next July will make Aden one of the most price-competitive ports in the region.

The Aden Free Zone project, during 2004, has earned the admiration of all visiting delegations that made reconnaissance visits from the Gulf countries and from several European countries. There are indications of investments from countries in the Gulf in the Aden Free Zone project.

After 14 years since the foundation of the Republic of Yemen, the country, under the leadership of President Saleh, has witnessed tremendous commercial and economic development.

Letters to the Editor

This is why Arabs get no respect

Ali Saeed, i.e., one of your writers was right! The Western World has absolutely no respect for Arabs or Islam when Arab and Muslim leaders bow down and kiss the storm-trooper boots of America and Israel. It does no good for countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey to have all those military weapons (from the West) if they have no intelligence and courage to defend the Islamic World. And if Muslims don't learn how to make their own weapons, they will always be at the mercy of their enemies. Israel has just come up with a new laser weapon that shoots down missiles. It is this technology that gives little tiny Israel the power to stand up and be respected by all the nations of the world.

Jerry Peterson
theeagleflysnow@yahoo.com

Why support Hamas?

It seems to me that the people and government leaders of Palestine really do support Hamas, which is an organization recognized around the world as a ruthless and brutal terrorist body. The leaders of Palestine have vehemently claimed that they are not associated with this group, yet the entire Muslim community seems to be mourning the recent deaths of two

Hamas leaders.

Let's not forget that Hamas has wrecked much death and destruction during the Palestinian/Israeli conflict too.

Mary A.
USA

Thanks Hoffman

I simply thank Mr David L. Hoffman for his letter (Message to Muslims) published recently in the Yemen Times. This world is a better place because of people like him still live in it.

Syed Ahmed
syed_ahmed39@hotmail.com

Where are the letters?

I have noticed an obvious omission of "letters to the editor" in the Yemen Times in the last couple weeks. The only "opinions" published are from editors of the paper. What's the problem? Can't stand the real truths from non Yemen, non Muslim, and non Arabic folks? Suppression of non Muslim thought? No freedom of the press? This is why the Middle East is such a violent region - a region torn with deep rooted hatreds (not just against non Muslim folks, but also against each other), with zero tolerance for anything non Muslim. Until the folks in the Middle East learn and practice tolerance (tolerance for personal philosophies non Muslim), the Middle East will remain a region run by despot, violent,

Letters to the Editor

repressive tyrants.

Donald Zimmerman

Dear Donald,

Sorry for the inconvenience. Sometimes technical reasons cause the impossibility of publishing the letters on time. We promise we will try to avoid that in the future. But as you can see the letters have now resumed.

—Editor

To Haifi: You aren't working for peace

To Hassan Al-Haifi I would say that being a Muslim you are not working for peace. You are misguided, mistaken and spreading hatred through disinformation and false accusations, which is resulting in death and miseries for number of innocent people living around the world at the hands of merciless killers and also bringing bad name to your religion.

Instead of teaching about Good and Evil, certain Radical Muslim Clerics only teach you about accusing, abusing and killing the non-Muslims. Most of the Muslims like you, are rejoicing on the brutal killings of the non-combatant innocent non-Muslim civilians and "The Murderers" have always been "Your Heroes".

Please wake up to save Muslims from becoming the most hated, isolated and suspicious people in the

world and start working for peace and reconciliation and prove to the world through your deeds that MOHAMMED (PBUH) teaches "love & peace" and not Cruelty, Inhumanity and "Hatred & Killing" of innocent civilians.

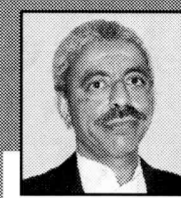
Let this be your motto
"Friend Of All And Enemy Of None".

S. A. Rehman
sar34@hotmail.com

Looking for Al-Gobani

Greetings from India. I am Naina working in Mumbai, India. I am desperately looking for my friend Mr. Nabeel Al Gobani or Nabeel Ali Ahmed for the past 8 years now. He is a Yemeni. I was so touched to see the website on Yemenis living abroad but could not find my friend on it. We were studying together in Pune, India. He left India in 1994 or 1995. His sister Ilham studied in New Delhi in a medical college. The family lived in Mecca Saudi Arabia. I was told he may be working now in Dubai. Please help me find Nabeel. I will be eternally grateful to you. Nabeel studied in Poona College and Symbiosis College between 1988 and 1993. My cell number is 9892233736 or my office in Mumbai is 23635280 and residence is 22008314. Please help!

Mrs Naina Athalye
India



COMMON SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Dispatch I from Malaysia

Anyone who has been fortunate to visit Malaysia on two different occasions is bound to judge that this vegetative paradise, with all its endowed greenery has also been blessed by inhabitants that see the land as a blessing to them, which they must manage in a proper way. That would be the only way to consider the blessings of the Al-Mighty as not just a blessing, but rather a trust in the hands of the inhabitants that needs care and cohesiveness to assure the sound use of the available resources to the optimum advantage of all stakeholders that can be optimally sustained for as many of the forthcoming generations as possible. This also simply does not mean the enhancement of the standards of living of the indigenous people of the land. Nor does this just mean those who have been driven by fate to come to this lush land of rolling hills and endless forests latticed with streams and waterways and man-made canals to drain the swamps. Anyone who has come to make a temporary abode for enhancement of well-being has often decided to make this a permanent home for the fortune seeker and his descendants. Thus, in Malaysia one finds an intricate ethnic mix of settlers who came from overseas that have dwarfed the indigenous population of proud Malays to become a minority that still constitutes a majority in this ethnic mix of Arabs, Chinese, Indians and other minorities. The obvious impression one is bound to make is that this is a good experiment in successful integrated nation building of multiple ethnicity, not just in the racial context, but in the religious and economic segmentation that characterize all the cordial inhabitants of the 9 "sovereign states" that make up the Federation of Malaysia.

For those of us who come from the Middle East, with the region's dominating arid characteristic, Malaysia blanket of green indeed is a source of refreshing change to the amazed eye. Trees that stand so close together in endless expanses of beauty and variety truly reflect an artistic array of landscape that certainly evoke a stronger admiration and praise of the Lord's splendid Magnificence.

On the human side, one is not able to forget the magnificent leaps and strides that this small nation at the midst of the Malay Archipelago that extends from Southern Thailand to the infinite number of islands that make up Indonesia has been able to achieve. The previous visit of this observer some 25 years ago brings to mind a rushed misjudgment that this land and its resources is actually in the wrong hands, with most of the indigenous population beset by poverty and most of the assets and resources of the land exploited and benefited from in an inequitable manner. Needless to say, the picture has drastically changed, within a short span of time to show that indeed the ownership of assets has taken some significant shifts and the lot of the indigenous population greatly improved. Before the Malaysian government embarked on the New Economic Policy, the indigenous population's ownership of the modern economic assets that were publicly traded did not exceed 1.9%. The indigenous population's reliance on traditional economic activity was driving them out of the entire economic windmill, producing a wretched display of poverty and economic stagnation. Once the New Economic Policy was put into effect, the share of economic asset ownership for the indigenous Malays rose to reach 20% of all modern economic assets. Bear in mind there was no nationalization or confiscation of any of the assets of the other ethnic elements that have managed to gather this former great share of asset ownership. The economic programs involved a recognition by these latter elements that there is indeed enough for everyone and that there is no fairness in preventing any access to the means of economic enhancement to anyone who is ready to work and produce for self-enhancement and for the further development of the land for the benefit of all the inhabitants. Needless to say that human resource development is a major factor in bringing about this shift of ownership composition and access is simply not enough, without improvement of the capabilities of the indigenous population and more importantly, without nation building that stresses cohesiveness and respect for all the ethnic segments that have decided on embarking on a joint effort that should bring tranquility to all.

In meeting with some of the officials that are playing key roles in the political and economic development, the observer must admit to being impressed by the transparent and clear manner by which Malaysian government officials retell their experience towards modern nationhood. One is also unable to overlook the ability of the Malaysian officials to speak about such issues as regional integration and common responsibility, which have become long forgotten rhetoric in the Arab World. For every Moslem and developing country beset by chronic retraction in economic and social conditions, Malaysia represents a shining beacon of hope that with some sincere and serious efforts and some degree of responsibility, the situation need not be altogether impossible.

YT Business

Not just a pipe dream

BY PETER WILLEMS
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

It's an ideal time to be an oil producing country. Crude oil prices have soared more than 25% in the past year to record highs. Around 70% of the Yemeni government's revenue comes from oil, and two decades after oil was first being produced, production is now up to approximately 450,000 barrels a day. With prices up this high, Yemen should be content.

But black gold doesn't last forever. Many believe that oil production may have reached its peak and might experience a slow decline over the coming years.

The best solution is Yemen's next best resource: natural gas.

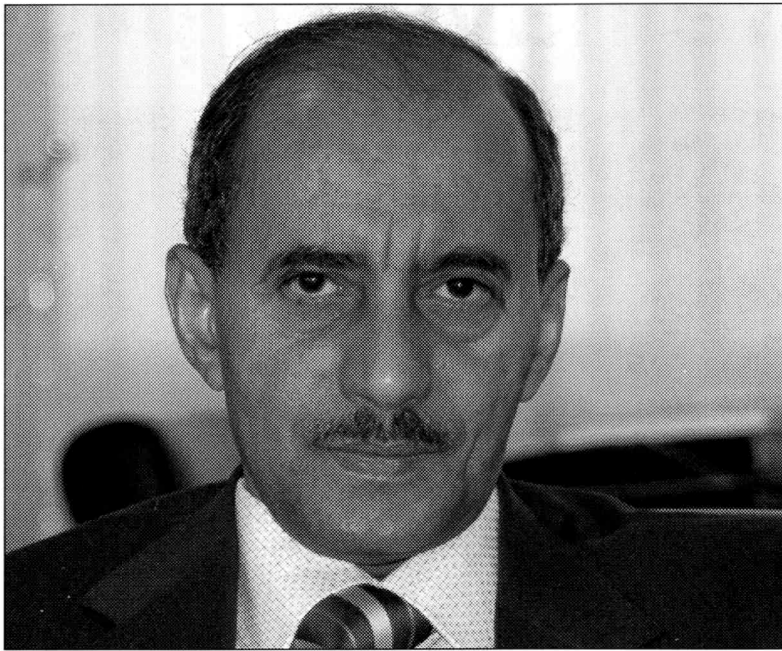
It is estimated that Yemen has 16 trillion cubic feet of natural gas below its surface. And according to Jean-Francois Daganau, General Manager of Yemen LNG, Yemen can produce and export 6.2 metric tons annually for the next 25 years.

But there is a hitch. Yemen LNG, the company given responsibility for gas in Yemen, has yet to find a buyer.

Seven years ago, Yemen was prepared to produce and export LNG (liquefied natural gas) and targeted the Asian market, particularly Japan, Korea and Taiwan. But around the same time, Asia was hit hard by an economic meltdown and potential customers ran for cover.

"Yemen LNG was ready to market gas in 1997 and planned to target Asia, but there was an economic crisis in Asia in the fall of 1997. There has been no increase in the demand for gas since," said Daganau. "Yemen LNG has had to go and look for other markets."

While Yemen LNG is out searching for



Director General of the Gas Division of the Ministry of Oil and Minerals Taha Al-Ahdal (YT photo by Peter Willems)

a market willing to commit to importing Yemeni LNG, it is ready to launch its project to get gas to a customer.

In the Marib area, Yemen Hunt Oil Co. extracts more than 3 billion cubic feet of gas per day, strips out 22,000 barrels of liquids to add to crude oil then re-injects gas back into the ground.

Once there is a customer, Yemen LNG will build a 320 kilometer pipeline that will carry gas from Marib to Bal Haf, a site on the coast west of Mukalla where a liquefaction plant will be built.

Shareholders of Yemen LNG (France's Total, state-owned Yemen Gas, US Hunt, and South Korea's SK and Hyundai) will pump \$2 billion into the project if there is

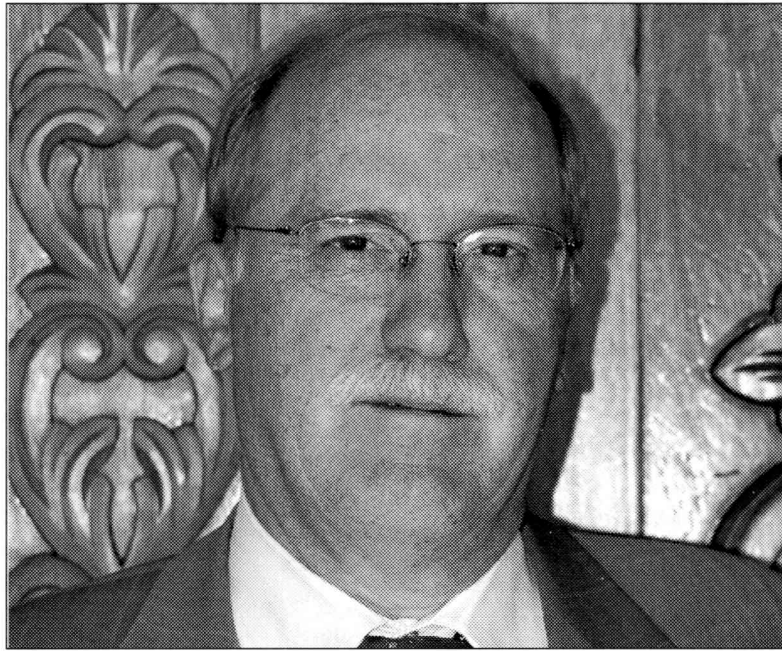
a buyer, and the pipeline and plant will take around 43 months to be completed.

"Our project is ready to be launched," said Daganau. "We have the gas."

Since Yemen first started looking for customers in the late nineties, the international gas market has become more competitive.

"In 1997, suppliers of gas were masters of the market," said Director General of the Gas Division of Yemen's Ministry of Oil and Minerals Taha Al-Ahdal. "But after the Asian crisis, demand has dropped and more suppliers have emerged. Suppliers now outweigh the demand for gas."

Yemen also faces tough competition in



Jean-Francois Daganau, General Manager of Yemen LNG (YT photo by Peter Willems)

the Arab region. It is believed that Qatar has over 50 times the amount of gas than in Yemen, and Qatar's reserves are under the sea, which provides easy access. Yemen's Gulf neighbor has already been a producer of gas for 10 years.

But Yemen LNG sees opportunities on the horizon. Asian economies that suffered from the crisis in the nineties have been showing signs of recovery in the last few years and are now growing again.

"If Asian economies take off, the demand for gas will go up with it," said Daganau. "This will offer a good chance for Yemeni gas to be sold. We have been waiting for a stronger demand, and now the possibility of having a market is

increasing every day."

Daganau said Yemen LNG marketing is based on numerous advantages for potential customers if they decide to buy Yemeni gas. He mentioned that Yemen has proven to be a stable supplier. Since oil was first produced in 1986, there have been no interruptions of delivery, whereas countries shipping out of the Persian Gulf are operating in a potentially volatile area.

Yemen can compete on prices. Gas has already been extracted in the Marib region, so no investments will be required for discovering natural gas. Yemen LNG is also open to allowing a customer to buy into the company and become a partner.

Exchange Rate for the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	184.5100	184.6800
Sterling Pound	338.6400	338.9500
Euro	225.4800	225.6900
Saudi Rial	49.2000	49.2400
Kuwaiti Dinar	626.0500	626.6300
UAE Dirhem	50.2300	50.2800
Egyptian Pound	29.6900	29.7200
Bahraini Dinar	489.4200	489.8700
Qatari Rial	50.6800	50.7300
Jordanian Dinar	260.2400	260.4800
Omani Rial	479.2800	479.7200
Swiss Franc	147.4700	147.6100
Swedish Crown	24.7800	24.8000
Japanese Yen	1.6871	1.6887

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

With the worldwide economy finally on the rise again, Yemen LNG has added more to the countries it is targeting. China is now seen as virgin territory that could be a vast market to serve.

"We are going after the Chinese market," said Al-Ahdal. "It is a very big market and has just started dealing with LNG. We hope it will develop in the next few years."

Also on the list of potential buyers is the United States.

"The United States is now starving for gas," said Daganau. "The demand is huge, and it is draining the LNG suppliers everywhere."

Another target Yemen LNG is keeping a close eye on is Korea. It may be in need of a new supplier as the demand for gas is on the rise. And, more importantly, the two Korean companies being a part of Yemen LNG - SK and Hyundai - would make it easier for Yemen to enter the Korean market.

"Korea is a very important market," said Al-Ahdal. "The two Korean shareholders in Yemen LNG are big companies in Korea. It would be a good way to enter Korea with their help."

And although Yemen is still waiting for a buyer of LNG, the chances of finding one soon are increasing.

"We are watching carefully because if economies take off in the Far East, markets will ask for more natural gas," said Al-Ahdal. "We are watching the Asian economies, especially the Korean market, and we are starting to see a window opening."

Invitation for Prequalification for Upgrading of the Sana'a Wastewater treatment plant

The Republic of Yemen has received a loan from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development towards the cost for the upgrade of the Sana'a Wastewater Treatment Plant. It intends to apply part of the loan for the implementation of technical measures required for the upgrade of WWTP process and operation.

The Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation intends to pre-qualify contractors and/or firms for the construction of civil works for mechanical and biological wastewater treatment, as well as sludge treatment using anaerobic digesters with gas holders and power co-generation plant, and the installation of respective electro-mechanical equipment. The location of the works is adjacent to Sana'a International Airport. It is expected that invitations to bid will be made by the end of October 2004.

Prequalification will be conducted through the procedures as specified by the funding organization, and is open to all First class-national and international eligible bidders as defined in the guidelines.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information on the project at the Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation (SWSLC) (address below). The project information will be sent to interested bidders by e-mail against a nonrefundable amount of US\$100.

Applications for Prequalification should be submitted in clearly marked envelopes and delivered to the address below by 12.00 A.M (Yemen Local Time) on 31 July 2004. Late applications will be rejected.

Attn. Mr. Ibrahim Ahmed Al-Mahdi
Sana'a Water and Sanitation Local Corporation (SWSLC)
WWTP Project Management Unit
Al-Hasabah, beside the Ministry of Public Health and Population Sana'a
Republic of Yemen
Telefax: +0967 1 230 656
Tel: +0967 1 238 640
e-mail: cdteam@y.net.ye

CANADIAN nexen VACANCY

Instrument Technician (Code - 001)

Yemeni Nationals

Location: Mukala, Hadhramout
Department: Maintenance
Schedule: 14 Days On / 7 Days Off
Non-Camp Resident
work day hours from 07:00 to 17:00hrs

Job Duties:

- Installs, repairs, calibrates, troubleshoots and maintains all instrument control systems in the Terminal and Mainline facilities. Covers control valves, electronic pneumatic transmitters, electronic flow measuring devices, electronic and pneumatic pressure controlling devices, chemical injection pumps and PLC/data acquisition equipment.
- Provides on-the-job training to instrument technician trainees in any of the areas covered in (a) above.
- Troubleshoots and repairs other equipment such as office equipment, fire & gas detection systems, etc. within the scope of skill and training.
- Carries out other similar or related duties and preventative maintenance work as deemed necessary to support the Terminal activities.

Minimum Requirements:

- Diploma in instrumentation. B.Sc. in instrumentation is preferable.
- 6 years of related experience.
- Excellent knowledge of English.
- Valid Yemen driving license.

If you have the above requirements, please send your CV to the following address.
NOT later than June 15, 2004

Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen
Human Resources
P.O. Box 15137
Sana'a Republic of Yemen
Attention: Human Resources, Recruitment Section
E-mail: recruiting_sanaa@nexeninc.com

Application Criteria:

- Please make sure that your CV contains all the needed personal, contact and qualification information, **no need** to attach any certificates unless we request them.
- Please **don't** call us, we will call you if you are selected for test and interview, **which will be based on the most qualified applicants.**
- Please **mention** in your application the **job** you are applying for and the **code number.**
- Preferable to send CVs via the **E-mail** address. Faxed CVs **will not** be considered
- Unclear and untyped CVs **will not** be considered, use normal font and **do not** decorate the CV.

Interview with Ms Nadereh Chamlou, Senior Advisor in the World Bank MENA region and principal author of the WB - MENA gender report to the Yemen Times:

"We, in the Middle East and North Africa Region, can no longer afford to stay behind. We have to advance, we have to progress!"

Nadereh Chamlou is a Senior Advisor to the Chief Economist of the Middle East and North Africa Region of the World Bank. She also leads the Gender and Development agenda for the region. Mrs. Chamlou came to Yemen at the end of last month to share the recommendations and findings of the World Bank's Gender Report with the decision makers and many authorities, such as Prime Minister, al-Shura Council, the Parliament, the Women's Council, university students, civil society, some of the donors and private sector organisations and others. The report "Gender & Development in the MENA: Women in the Public Sphere" highlights the centrality of gender issues for the economic growth and development of the region. The other purpose of Mrs. Chamlou's visit is to find out what the World Bank can do specifically in Yemen and the objective is to send an assessment on Yemen and build into it what could be done in the next phase. Nadia al-Sakkaf of the Yemen Times met with Mrs. Chamlou and discussed the findings of the gender report and her visit to Yemen;



Ms. Nadereh Chamlou

The MENA Region

The Middle East and North Africa Region of the World Bank covers the countries from Morocco to Iran and from Syria to Yemen and Djibouti. It has a very diverse set of countries, both rich and poor countries, and it has countries that are extremely resource rich and labor abundant and countries that are very poor and at the same time labor abundant.

Over the last few decades, most MENA countries have dramatically invested in their populations with generous public spending on health and education. In 2000 average spending on education reached 5.3 percent of GDP - the highest in the world - and 2.9 percent on healthcare.

Women have also been beneficiaries of these investments. Women's health and education indicators point to remarkable results in a short period of time. The average literacy rate for women in the region rose from 16.6% in 1970 to 52.5% in 2000. By the year 2000, nine girls for every ten boys were enrolled in primary schools across the region, while 74% of girls and 77% of boys were enrolled in secondary school. Today, MENA countries are well on their way to meeting one of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the international community, which calls for bridging the gender gap in primary and secondary enrollment by 2015.

Women in MENA countries are also living longer and healthier lives. Their life expectancy has increased by ten years since 1980, largely due to better healthcare and a fall in maternal mortality. The expansion of women's education also contributed to the dramatic decline in fertility rates from 6.2 in 1980 to 3.3 in 2000.

"MENA can better achieve its growth potential with greater inclusion of women in the economy"

Yet gains in women's health and education, with as much as 63% of university students being female in

some countries, have not translated into commensurate gains in employment. While the rate of participation of women in the labor force in MENA has increased during the last three decades from less than 23% in 1970 to 32% in 2000, it still ranks among the lowest in the world.

By looking at the MENA region as a whole, there are a number of similar problems that are common across the region. All the MENA countries suffer from a high rate of unemployment. The countries of the region have had very high population growth and about 70% of the population, that means two out of three, is below the age of 30. And unemployment is affecting the young people much more than any other region and at a higher rate than experienced before. In 2000, MENA's labor force totalled some 104 million workers, a figure expected to reach 146 million in 2010 and 185 million by 2020.

Creating work for today's unemployed workers and future, first-time job-seekers will require nearly 100 million new jobs over the next two decades. This is much more than the number of jobs created in the region during the past fifty years.

Already half the region's young people find themselves without work, with youth making up a big chunk of the total unemployed, ranging from 37% in Morocco to 73% in Syria. Most of the young unemployed have intermediate or advanced education.

Another factor of commonality in the region is that women in this region suffer from inequality. This woman is more educated and capable than previous generations and more at par with the men of her generation. The Bank's report demonstrates that the MENA woman is almost as educated as the MENA man and that she is as educated as women in other developing regions of the world. This generation of women is different from previous generations. They are more capable, and increasingly they need to contribute to the economic wellbeing of the family. So why is it that the MENA woman lags in terms of labor force and political participation? The MENA woman today wants more of life, she thinks she can do more, she is more capable, and she wants the reward. Yet, despite these gains, women continue to face social and legal barriers that prevent them from effectively participating at their potential in the economy and public life.

The New Development Model

At the annual meetings of the

World Bank/IMF in Dubai, the World Bank launched four major reports on trade, employment, governance and gender. These reports present a thorough analysis of the main challenges of the MENA region. The reports propose what is called "The New Development Model". In this model there is a focus much more on the private sector rather than the public sector, which was in the past the main engine for job growth and economic development. In the future, it has to be the private sector that is driving the economy and that is the creator of jobs. The private sector has to be more open, more export oriented, and more diversified.

In order to be able to create the 80 to 100 million jobs that are needed the private sector must be increasingly more creative, more able to change with globalization and better able to foster and utilize human talents and resources. Success in accomplishing these structural shifts will depend on widening and depending on the stock of human capital and raising the productivity of labor. Successful export economies, including those in MENA countries and in East Asia, have relied heavily on women's work to propel them into the global marketplace.

"There are three main social transformations necessary to make the new development model work: better governance, improved education, and women's empowerment"

In order to move from this old public sector driven development model to a private sector driven development model we have to have a better governance system in place. By a better governance system we mean stake holders and people have to be more involved in the decision making process, such as in the PRS in Yemen, and at the same time, the public and the private sector have to have greater responsibility and accountability. Good governance rests on the twin values of inclusiveness and accountability, respecting everyone's rights and responding to everyone's needs.

The second change that has to take place is a better education system, because people in this region don't have enough skills. It is true that education in the MENA region has

improved a lot in quantity, but the problem with the general level of education is that it needs to be improved in quality.

The third change that has to take place is that women have to participate more in the economic, political and public spheres. We have invested a lot in female education but still there are barriers in benefiting from this education. This investment is not fully utilized due to barriers, and these barriers have a high cost to the economy, per income capita and families because they prevent the families from enjoying the welfare that they could have achieved. The report "Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere" identifies the economic and social obstacles that women in the MENA region face in seeking employment. The report analyses the potential economic benefits of engaging women in the work force, and suggests a plan of action that would help pave the way for expanding their role in the economy and public life.

The Yemeni situation

Yemen, as a country, is considered one of the poorest in the MENA region. It therefore, qualifies for the softer window, international develop-

problems, such as education for women in terms of quantity and quality. High fertility and population growth is also an important challenge and contributes to continued poverty, simply because population growth is faster than economic growth. A host of social barriers also limit the woman's ability to participate and contribute as much as they can to the economy. Yet it is very encouraging to see that the level of political participation of women is relatively higher than it is in other MENA countries.

Yemeni government knows that education is very important in making sure that women are empowered and that there is a need to change gender relations in the family level, because if children are not taught gender equality at the family level it is difficult to teach them this outside the home. There is commitment to the gender issue from the leadership and recognition that gender is important to the future development of the country.

"Greater gender equality is not just for the sake of women, it is more for the sake of families and the economy as a whole. This means gender must be included in all aspects of decision-making, policy and projects."

Women can contribute to the success of policies if their contributions and gender relations are evaluated appropriately. Women are not only affected by policies, but they can affect the success and outcome of policies. Asian countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and others were successful in creating export industries because they capitalized on what the women were able to do. Much of their success in textiles and electronics was due to benefiting from gender specific characteristics. We need all sorts of industries and all kinds of private sector activity. There are certain advantages and insights that women bring to the table, and there are certain advantages that men bring to the table. For instance, women make on average about 80% of the purchasing decisions of the family. Some successful companies have increased their female workforce at all levels in order to better understand their con-

sumers and increase their market shares. Other countries are promoting women's entrepreneurship not only to increase private sector development, but also to increase female employment as women-owned businesses tend to hire more women.

The new economy is going to be more about the knowledge and service economy, and less about physical might. Women are increasingly being more educated and going to universities and are now looking into practicing their skills. Many of them are also looking to set up their own business in the private sector. Countries that have higher levels of female labor force participation also display lower overall unemployment rates. This is contrary to the commonly held belief that women will take away jobs from men and raise unemployment. Fewer and fewer women have the luxury of staying at home. With the rising cost of living, women have increasingly no choice but to work outside the home and for many families it is the only way to escape poverty.

Into the Future

We now know what the challenges are in the MENA region and perhaps what the possible solutions are. Political commitment by the leadership is critical. The other side of this equation is women's advocacy to identify, study and inform policy-makers of gender issues that affect economic development and welfare of families. There are demographic pressures for gender inclusiveness. The younger generation wants much more than the older generation; they are more connected with the outside world, they are much more educated and much more aware. Families today are smaller and as a result there is more gender equality within the family. Therefore, there is more demand for equality of access to opportunity, equality under the law and equality of voice. What needs to be done is work on the capacity building of the executing institutions, and

to make them more gender responsive. What is needed also is to integrate gender into most aspects of development through a better and more inclusive implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Today's generation is more educated and more aware than previous generations, and hence, demands a better life style, more freedom and more knowledge. Maybe a generation ago it was best for the mothers to stay home with the children but today the cost of education is higher and the cost of health is higher and the children have more demands. Women can no longer be sitting at home and the society should accept this fact. The traditional role of the mother and a wife today has to be done in a different way today, not for the women alone but for the family. The future of this region is going to be very much influenced by the way women look at life.

Revenge in "Ahwar" Province

ADEN BUREAU

Ahwar Province is considered one of the most important provinces in Abyan governorate since it has fertile arable lands and it is famous for growing first grade long staple cotton, watermelon, red pepper and other legumes. Most of its inhabitants are fishermen since it is situated adjacent to the Arab Sea coastline, extending to Hadramout.

Ahwar Province awaits a prosperous economic future, especially since the coast road between Aden and Hadramout, being improved by Bin Ladin Group, goes through the center of the province. The constant traffic and transport of goods will definitely lead to its economic revival.

However, Ahwar Province continues to suffer from revenge related cases that date back to 10s of years ago, and is crippled by recent revenge cases that have become a major concern for citizens.

Yemen Times paid a visit to examine revenge cases and how they could be settled or resolved.

The road to Ahwar:

Ahwar Province is located 180 KM from Zinjubar, the capital of Abyan. Upon the arrival, Yemen Times began interviewing several social dignitaries to

get more into about the revenge cases that have distorted the reputation of Yemen.

Mr. Mohamed Ali Mashhour, a Member of Parliament and a social dignitary in the province confirmed that revenge cases are widespread in the province. "Serious efforts have been made with tribes and social figures to curtail the problem before it gets out of hand and to come out of the vengeance quagmire, which has negatively effected the economic and investment situation in Yemen in general", said Mr. Mashhour. He added that the tribes have agreed to prevent the carrying of weapons and entry of arms into the province and inside markets.

"The visitors' arms would have to be deposited at the security checkpoint on the outskirts of the province before entering the province and to be returned back to them on their way out of the province. In the event of a violation this agreement, the weapons will be confiscated and or the perpetrator will be fined", said the Member of Parliament.

However, the roles of the security and judiciary authorities in the province must be enhanced, and the cases related to arable lands must be resolved and returned to their lawful owners since many of the revenge cases are related to this single issue.

"All revenge related cases must be set-

led, especially a recent case when two citizens were killed inside the marketplace, and the tribes have agreed to confiscating the perpetrator's 10 million Riyals worth of watermelon harvest", said Mr. Mohamed.

The MP pointed out that Ahwar is considered the land of opportunity for many cotton growers and farmers who also come from nearby provinces because of its fertile lands. He said that the recent visit of President Saleh has boosted the efforts to build more water barriers and dams to use floods for irrigation, in addition to the President's instruction to establish a training center for fishermen so that Ahwar's citizens would get the most benefit from the fisheries industry. The Mr. Mashhour concluded his statement by confirming that the elimination of vengeance cases would provide a new push to establish development projects and to revive stalemated ones.

Mr. Awadh Al-Dowain, President of the Agricultural Cotton Association, said that the mentality of vengeance and taking the law into one's own hands must be rooted out. The vengeance cases are hampering the development of the country, in addition to threatening the social and ethical systems of society. Mr. Awadh pointed out that the issue of vengeance was eliminated in the past in Ahwar, but the difficult economic situations of many citizens, the unemploy-

ment of many others, and the inadequate measures to deter and to punish the perpetrators by the security apparatus and to bring them to justice have encouraged many citizens to remember and to dig up past vengeance issues.

"The absence of deterrents and tangible solutions to disputes between land owners and farmers has led to a widening of the vengeance case terribly", said Mr. Awadh.

He added that the state must bear the responsibility to provide security and stability to all citizens, to implement effective laws, and to hold violators liable and

accountable. The state's prestige and veneration must be respected and observed. The role of the judiciary, marginalized in Ahwar, must be enhanced and strengthened. The various media organizations must contribute effectively to awareness campaigns on the negative social and economic impacts on all citizens and the country from sustaining vengeance cases.

"The government could eradicate the phenomenon of vengeance in Yemen since the partitioning of the country was also eradicated", said hopeful Mr. Awadh.

Another social dignitary who expressed his views about the vengeance issue was Mr. Abdulah Baba, who said, "In the past, vengeance was not as common as today. There were strict laws in place against the spread of this phenomenon. But today, the increase of the population and illiteracy, especially in rural areas including Ahwar with a 75% illiteracy rate, have provided conditions for vengeance to flourish. The phenomenon can only be confronted through the collective efforts of all citizens with the state and the implementation of justice for all".

Du Oud returns to Yemen

BY MOHAMMAD SAEED AL-MEKHLAFI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF, ADEN BUREAU

Organized by the French Cultural Centre of Sana'a and in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Du Oud French Music Company presented two concerts, accompanied by Yemeni singer Abdulatif Yaqoob, which took place in Aden on 25th and on 29th May 2004 at the Yemeni Cultural Centre in Sana'a.

In a statement to Yemen Times the French cultural centre manager in Aden, Mr. Sebastian De Ledicque stated "Du Oud Music Company has recently come back to Yemen after the successful concert which was performed last February, marking the happy accession of Sana'a being the cultural capital of the Arab world. The two day concert included various Yemeni French pieces of music



reflecting the deep relations between the two friendly countries, music being the language of communication all over the world."

It is worth mentioning that the two concerts coincided with Yemeni cele-

brations on the 14th anniversary of Unification, on 22 May. Governor of Aden, Dr. Yahya Al-Shaibee, Security Director of Aden, Colonel Abdullah Qairan, and a host of intellectuals attended the concert.

Money and its relativity

BY SUMAYA ALI RAJA'
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

I was raised in a culture where the income of my working parent, who was a government official, was 150 Riyals (Maria Theresa silver thalers) plus a huge sack of wheat, another of rye, a bushel of sugar and other basic commodities.

We were considered very privileged. We owned our own home: a two-story house with a huge garden and had a cow that was milked every day. No one owned a car then, but if we needed to take a trip, we had the use of a government car with driver once in a while.

We were enrolled in the only school possible in English, (The American School of Taiz), in Taiz, which was the seat of government until 1962. All of Yemen lived there, whether you were from Saada, Hajja, Sanaa, Marib, Hodieda, Dhamar, or Ibb. We were from Sana'a but grew up in Taiz.

We vacationed in al-Makha (Mocha), the Red Sea port famed for its historical importance in the coffee trade until the eighteenth century. We stayed in the old hospital located on the sea with breath-taking views of the seashore. We assumed it was a hotel since there were no patients or doctors. Al-Makha of my childhood is a ghost town with crumbling houses; the sea, sand and fish were its great attractions.

Money we didn't have, but we had a bit of land here and there plus a few privileges like riding the Imam's horses, vacationing and scholarships for our education to name a few.

As the first family to be raised in all of Yemen without the hindrance of the veil, people in Taiz assumed that we were super rich and tried to rope father

in their business ventures.

I was raised with no idea or need for wealth or money. Poverty? If you own your own home and make enough of a living to raise your family, that was the utmost of riches to us.

I have been living in Paris for over a decade. The French have a very unhealthy respect for money: they don't talk about it but seem to be obsessed by it, unlike the Americans who discuss it openly and know how to get it. I don't talk about money, have learned to respect its power; have flaunted it a little in Sana'a. Use it definitely. Keep it? How!

I have managed to survive in Yemen, Kuwait, the US, Great Britain, and now in Paris. How? By working, borrowing, helping, giving more than I have, and innately knowing that the more I give the more I receive. It sounds crazy but it isn't because I gave you a glimpse into how I was raised.

I will always owe money to my family and friends and likewise they will always be indebted to me. It goes round and round.

Everywhere I have lived I have observed the relationship between people and their money. In Yemen, going from not having to having is huge. We are the biggest consumers of the latest fads. To appear poor is a sin, unlike the French who appear poor to prove their lack of corruption. The Kuwaitis equate money with their personality. The Americans are down to earth about money: they want it, get and spend it like there is no tomorrow. The French don't buy more than they need and save.

The thing that living in Paris has given me is the thought, that: "No one is privileged", and it is a badge of honor not to spend.

Yemen gave me my sense of hospitality and being continually blessed.

The US taught me to work on something I enjoy whether I am overpaid underpaid or unpaid. To work is the essence of life.

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Waiting in the shadows

By JOHN R BRADLEY*

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Naif's persistent denial of the existence of sleeping terror cells inside the kingdom after the September 11, 2001 attacks was again contradicted by another incident of violence inside the country. Since the 12 May Riyadh bombings last year, when extremists carried out a series of coordinated attacks on Westerner-populated residential compounds, the Saudi authorities have lost more men to the militants, and killed more of the militants themselves, than any other security force in the Arab world.

This week, the Al-Saud family's new resolve to deal with militants with an 'iron fist' was reinforced during the hostage drama in Al-Khobar, during which militants killed 22 people, mostly foreigners, before apparently striking a deal to win their freedom. Only the unnamed ringleader was captured. It was the second attack on an oil-related target in the Islamic kingdom in the space of a week, but the first in the Eastern Province, a region of densely packed refineries and export terminals that make up the nerve centre of the Saudi - and global - oil production.

A claim of responsibility from Al-Qaeda posted on the internet made only brief reference to the oil sector, focusing instead on a familiar rallying cry of 'riding the Arabian Peninsula of infidels' while renewing a 'determination to repel the crusader forces, to liberate the land of Muslims and to introduce Sharia'. Meanwhile, there were already signs that the 'infidels' in the Eastern Province, whose expertise the Saudis largely rely on to run the vital oil industry, were starting to move to neighbouring Bahrain for fear of new violence, the Gulf News daily reported.

Bahrain, known for its Western-like lifestyle, is linked to Saudi Arabia by a causeway. Executives in the Saudi oil sector can live there without obtaining a separate visa. In a new twist, The Sunday Times quoted intelligence officers in London as saying a possible

'spectacular attack' in the near future could target the causeway itself.

Saudi officials, nonetheless, sought to reassure foreign oil executives - and quell a dramatic rise in crude oil prices - after the lethal attack on the offices and homes of expatriates working in the country's most important industry. The government has reportedly decided to expand its protection of sensitive facilities to include offices with significant expatriate staff. A battalion of the elite Saudi National Guard, which reports directly to de facto leader Crown Prince Abdullah, would be deployed from its base in the country's Eastern Province to fulfill that task.

For many participants on radical Islamic websites, the attacks in Al-Khobar did not go far enough. A typical posting on the site of the London-based Saudi opposition group 'The Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia' - accused by the Saudi government of having had advance knowledge of the attack on Yanbu last month in which five Westerners were killed - called for Al-Qaeda to learn from the Iraqi resistance and to start targeting oil facilities, rather than just their personnel.

The Saudi oilfields are remarkably vulnerable to a major terrorist assault. Over 16,000 kilometres of pipeline crisscross Saudi Arabia, mostly above ground, an oil web more than double the size of Iraq's, which insurgents have repeatedly managed to sabotage despite the massive US military presence in that country.

In his book *Sleeping with the Devil*, former CIA operative Robert Baer wrote that Ras Tanura in the Arabian Gulf, the world's largest oil-exporting port, is a possible terrorist target. A small submarine or boat laden with explosives could knock out much of Ras Tanura's output, he said.

Meanwhile, Crown Prince Abdullah, the Kingdom's de facto ruler and a moderate, blamed 'Zionists' and 'followers of Satan' for recent terror attacks. 'We can be certain that Zionism is behind everything,' he said after the attack on Yanbu earlier last month in which five Westerners were killed. The

Crown Prince's chief ally, Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal, also a moderate, has since criticised the United States-led war on Iraq as a 'colonial' adventure aimed only at gaining control of Iraq's natural resources.

While that argument could be made quite strongly by anyone else, it is a bit surprising coming from a member of the Al-Saud family. During the Iraq war, Saudi Arabia secretly helped the US by allowing operations from at least three air bases, permitting special forces to stage attacks from Saudi soil and providing cheap fuel. The American air campaign against Iraq was essentially managed from inside Saudi borders, where military commanders operated an air command centre and launched refuelling tankers, F-16 fighter jets and sophisticated intelligence-gathering flights.

Why all this musical chairs? Before the Iraq war began, everyone seemed to be talking about how Saudi Arabia would be targeted for a regime change after it ended. The bombings in Riyadh and subsequent terror-related events also clearly brought home the reality of the domestic threat to their rule. It was in the context of the Iraq war, too, that the reform process was initiated by Crown Prince Abdullah and Prince Saud Al-Faisal.

Prince Naif is now telling the reformers that have been arrested, while he is clamping down hard on the terrorists, that he is acting on the orders of Crown Prince Abdullah. The fear is that moderates in the Al-Saud family have been buying time with their reform agenda without intending to fully implement it. Historically, the ruling family has been a force for modernisation. But when it initiated earlier reforms, for example under King Faisal in the 1970s, it managed to consolidate its power base in the process, as well as that of the Wahhabi religious establishment with which it still rules in partnership. Then the kingdom was in the middle of the oil boom. Today, it is in the middle of an economic crisis, facing challenges that are among the most serious to its political stability since its founding, for which

there is no historic precedent.

The signs are not promising. With the Iraq war having descended into chaos, the Saudis are blaming Israel for everything that goes wrong, and attacking the US for staging a war that could not have been launched without their assistance. Postings on Al-Qaeda-oriented sites claim that the Saudi royals are now being attacked primarily because they allowed the US to invade Iraq from the land of the two holiest Muslim shrines, but it seems obvious that while

this may have increased radicals' appeal, the attacks would have occurred on an alternative timeline even if the US had not invaded Iraq.

Attacks like those in Yanbu and Al-Khobar are likely to become more frequent in the lead-up to the first partial elections next February. It goes without saying that the militants are anti-democracy. A statement last week purported to be from the Al-Qaeda chief in Saudi Arabia, posted on a website, urged his followers to continue an urban guerrilla

war of assassinations, kidnappings and bombings. Two days later, one cell acted on his command. There are many, many more waiting in the shadows, and for a sign.

* The writer, a former managing editor of the Jeddah-based Arab News, is author of the forthcoming book, *Saudi Arabia Exposed: Princes, Paupers & Puritans in the Wahhabi Kingdom* (Palgrave-Macmillan, March 2005). His website is www.johnr-bradley.com.



By Yahya Al-Ojfi
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Reflections

Lawful larceny, the will, Yemen's equal deterrence policy.

The four billions & Almighty's bounty

Once had a chance to attend with some of my friends a banquet held by one of this country's illicit nouveaux riches. At one of the tables near me I noticed that there was a cluster of seemingly state administrative officials, may be ministers and below as I have heard.

After a while they appeared to be somewhat drunk and deeply absorbed in a friendly discussion, for they spoke about everything at their complete ease and vented lots of their suppressed secrets. They spoke about their many villas' different styles; their many new annually built villas sold and acquired, the new model cars and most importantly their new techniques in pilfering public moneys as well as some investments in schools, universities and hospitals domestically and other lucrative ventures abroad. One of them appeared to be a liquor connoisseur for he was absorbed trying different brands, when asked how about him?

He answered lightheartedly and most of the time kept laughing uproariously, dear friends! We are all lawful thieves!

After some prompting, he asked them to listen to what he was going to tell them, so he said "look here! My dear friends my late father, may his soul rest in peace, once told me a wisdom about legitimate pilferage. All of a sudden most of them kept mum and attentively concentrated on what he was going to say (perhaps wishing that such a wisdom might become of use).

The connoisseur said that his father was a prominent administrative official and it is indeed very unfortunate that Yemen had lost such a perceptive expert. That he himself because of being his son, has become a responsible, something which he avoids to mention publicly and always alleges that he climbed the ladder step by step through lawful means and because of his being a highly qualified element. Being drunk he also bragged that his father was a real red-eyed man (i.e. a local Yemeni term used to refer to a dexterous official pilferer).

His friends shouted at him, interrupted him and urged him to divulge his precious wisdom once and for all, instead of beating about the bush. So he said "guys listen! I once confessed to my late father about my qualms namely my fear of being caught red-handed stealing public money.

After some meditation, my wise and experienced father may his soul rest in peace! told me "My Son although nothing shall happen to you because you shall have first to give influential people their share at the finance ministry and at the Inspection organization, but, always do abide by and do not ever follow another advice other than this precious one:

"Never ever, forget that you can all the time pilfer public moneys with complete impunity provided that that be as per the law". So friends "as per the law" I have now many villas, I travel abroad five to six times on fake missions including pretending to be ill and even fraudulently obtain exaggerated medication charges (he always lies that he has got a cardiac disease and travels annually under this pretext). I have many bank accounts all over Europe and beyond.

Furthermore, my children are American citizens and I am going to be

Canadian within a few months' time. One of them seemed to be still an amateur in the field, asked him, how come! How do you do it? The man answered pretty easy make any project such as a wall, a gate, purchase furniture, organize a seminar, purchase a building, a landplot etc. and agree with the entrepreneurs on a real and an exaggerated phony price and get the difference for yourself.

He then scoffed at the inquirer and said "it seems you are still an apprentice and still have a long way to go! Anyhow, having had the chance to witness personally the level of some of our responsible men, who are in most cases, assuming high positions I easily discovered how such low level people are in control of our destinies and how idiots we are to believe or even expect anything positive from them.

During the same day in the evening while skipping through channels I came across an unpopular channel based in London and sides with that who pays more, ironically the channel named itself "The Independent" and was airing an interview with two of our great ministers. Albeit, I knew that the men wouldn't come with anything new my curiosity urged me to force myself and hear what they were going to say.

The first minister named Mohammed Altayib, when asked about the incomparable corruption Yemen is undergoing he declared. Look, these are mere conspiratorial lies our country has no corruption occurrences and these are lies by those people who have ill-consciences and those harboring evil towards our homeland, Yemen has no corruption at all. It is poor and thus stealing is not an easy matter. We are the best in the region with regard to democracy, human rights, and freedom of press. We have presented lots of reform proposals and this is why we are invited to the G8 summit.

Easier said than done! I tried to convince myself that what he said was true but found out that unfortunately it was completely contradictory to reality and everybody knows for sure that Yemen incontestably boasts having one of the most corrupt administrative systems on planet earth. When will we ever learn that pitiful lies do not work, that truth and transparency are always our first steps towards a better situation.

We badly need transparency and if one cannot say anything positive better keep silent and act by the Arab proverb "if talk is silver silence is gold". So please Mr. Minister, be a little rational because President Ali Abdullah Saleh himself has acknowledged that Yemen suffers from corruption and how can the president order reform if we have ministers ready to cajole necessarily and unnecessarily.

Later Mr. Qirbi our foreign minister in a deplorable declaration that made me laugh incessantly, like the prime minister's wisdom concerning "Catha Edulis" mentioned that the spread of arms amongst Yemenis provides what he termed as an "equal deterrence" opportunity! What a genius discovery? Because of Mr. Qirbi's deterrence policy huge numbers of Yemeni individuals are being killed by the minute all over Yemen in tribal, clan and even due to trivial causes because of the abundance of arms.

Even our governmental newspapers are brimful every day with such sad

incidents, so please Mr. Foreign Minister do not defend the indefensible because based on my own observations and the doubtful report of the interior ministry, killings and homicides in Yemen are the highest and I am not convinced the least by your so called equal deterrence formula.

Because only a few days ago eight policemen were savagely killed by armed men in Al-Rawdah. Also, to substantiate what I am saying, recently youngsters from Khowlan killed a boy because he defeated them in a football match. They killed him savagely with their Yemeni Jambiyas (traditional Yemeni Daggers) and the affair is still pending judgment.

If Yemen had followed the Omani policy regarding sealing Jambiyas (Taljeem Al-Khanajir) wouldn't that have been better left alone carrying arms and machineguns.

The minister when out of office in order to exercise equal deterrence shall have to carry constantly a machinegun. Another deplorable incident happened in Rada and involved the death of the security manager and his fellow policemen, so where is your equal deterrence?

No stability can take place when there is corruption and injustice. Stopping the corruption process perpetrated by ministers and their underlings and having a fair and express judicial system shall lead to less arms.

The president and the government should concentrate on the equality and abandon the "Chieftains Authority" because it is a tool for chaos and anarchy and is counter productive on the long run for it makes us develop backwards not forwards.

Some of our corrupt officials make their wives give birth in USA so that they can get USA nationality. So if they do trust Yemen's status quo, its being secure and prosperous why they are anticipating the unanticipated!!!

Returning to the banquet thing I forgot to mention that at the entrance of the pilferer's castle a beautiful Arabic inscription reads, "This is from the Almighty's Bounty".

Jokingly one of the invitees mumbled no this is somebody else's bounty..... how ungrateful! Crossing the gate we were ushered into a beautiful garden with an immense marbled swimming pool.

At a corner another inscription reads "Regarding Almighty's bounty bestowed on you, unquestionably you can always brag "" by the way the owner of this paradise two decades ago was merely a penniless poor fellow.

To end this I would like to comment on a declaration made by our Prime Minister in that Yemen has a 4 billion income and that it is merely half the deficit of a neighboring country.(The prime minister has proven his being quick-witted in sophistry).

For his information most of the Yemenis unlike their neighbors are hard working people, they are farmers, fishermen, Shepherds, craftsmen, expats .etc and are not awaiting for the government's meager salaries so if the said amount is believed to be true undoubtedly half of it goes at least to private pockets, given the crystal clear daily lawful stealing as mentioned hereinbefore.

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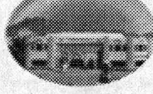
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239

I. What to Say

Situation and expressions: (68)
'Get well' wishes

Solace to sick is a sacred service. 'Get well' wishes, on the one hand, infuse in the sick much-needed cheer, a robust optimism and hope that ensures speedy recovery and, on the other, restores the inner well-being to the indisposed.

- Relax till the time you are back on your feet. A little wish for you to get well soon. Warm wishes fondly come your way to hope that you recover soon and be at your best.
- Hoping for your quick recovery. Thinking of you and hoping good health and good times are right around the corner. Get well soon.
- Thinking of you and wishing you well. If we plant good deeds on sunny days, their beauty will remain in spite of clouds and rain. Remembering all the nice things you have done, the things that make you so dear, and hoping these rainy days will pass and sunshine will

reappear. Please get well soon.

- Wishing you a speedy recovery. To let you know you're thought of in a very special way and to hope you feel a little better each and every day. This comes warmly to say that all the understanding and warm encouragement are with you as you rest. May you return to good health as fast as possible and remain so, always. Get well soon!
- Get well soon. Hope you're taking care of yourself and getting lots of rest; so it won't be very long before you're feeling at your best.
- This brings a bit of sunshine to brighten up your day, to let you know you're thought of in a very special way. When you're not feeling well, sometimes it's easy to start feeling a little lonely too. That's why I just wanted you to know that now, more than ever, you're in my mind and in my head. And hope tender love and indulgent care will boost your sense of inner wellbeing and put you back on the road of recovery. Take care.
- Sorry, you're sick. Wishes for you to hope the days are few until you're feeling strong again and just as good as new. Get well soon.
- As you recover in the hospital, hope this little message

will make you aware of how often you're thought of and how much others care.

(B) Composition

Expand the central idea contained in the maxim

71: HE PRAYETH BEST WHO LOVETH BEST

Last week's topic

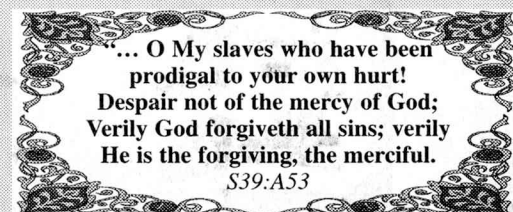
70: HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL IN THE HUMAN BREAST

Alexander Pope has said:
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest.
The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come
Hope, indeed, is the elixir of life. It sustains life. It is what comes everyday with a new dawn and helps a person to tide over the problems, setbacks and obstacles that threaten to dampen his spirit. It is the dream of a waking man. In the best of times and in the worst of times, the candle of hope illuminates his path. Emily Dickinson, the celebrated English novelist, rightly observes: 'Hope is the thing with feathers

That perches in the soul.

Hope gives us the inner strength and beauty and impels us to move ahead with zest, vigor and vitality. So when there is no hope there can be no endeavor. As the Old Testament mentions, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Hope is the driving force and is the only tie with keeps the heart from breaking. So, it would be no exaggeration to say that hope is life.

V. Pearls from the Holy Quran

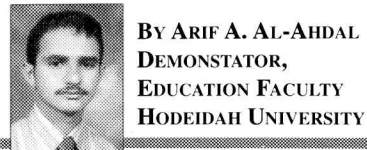


VI. Words of Wisdom

"As the sun colors flowers so does art color life."

—Sir John Lubbock

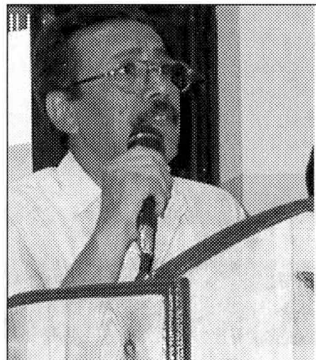
ICS English Speech Competitions, held at Hodeidah University



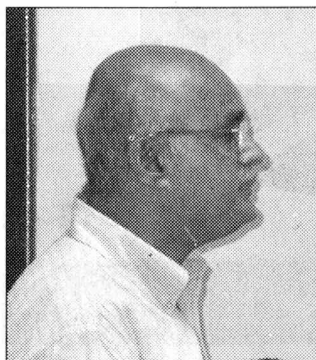
BY ARIF A. AL-AHDAL
DEMONSTRATOR,
EDUCATION FACULTY
HODEIDAH UNIVERSITY

Under the sponsorship of the International Community Services (ICS), the department of English in the faculty of education, Hodeidah university held its annual speech competitions on May 12, 2004.

Out of a large number of participants in the first round of the competition, only 18 students of different levels (1 to 4) were screened to take part in the final round, thanks to the careful choice of the topics by the selection committee comprising Prof. Ashok Sinha, Head English department, DR.I.B.Sharma, Mrs.Shefali Bakshi, Mr. Fahed Al-Ogeli and Miss.Looloo Mohd Saleh who were also the organizers of this competition. There were three sections namely, English debate, poetry recitation and speech, for each of which 6 contestants were selected. An important sidelight of the recitation section was



Dr. Abbas Al-Harazi



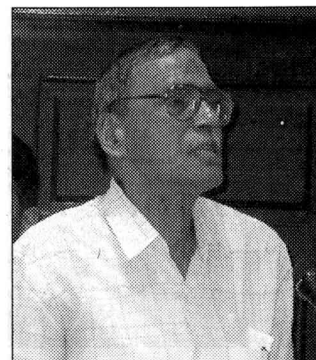
Prof. Dubey



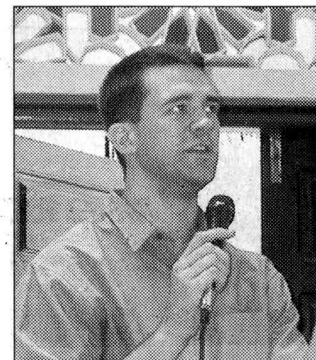
Mrs. Shefali Bakshi



Mrs. Amanda Plooy



Prof. Ashok Sinha



Mr. Jason Clegg

that all the poems recited were composed by the students themselves.

Dr. Abbas Alharazi, Vice Dean of Students Affairs, Dr. Ali Khairat, Vice Dean of Academic Affairs, Prof. Ashok Sinha, Head English dept., Mrs. Amanda Plooy, Mr. Jason Clegg of the ICS, Hodeidah and a number of teachers and students graced this occasion. In the fitness of things, the British Institute sent Mr. Ahmed Alwusabi and a group of students to audit this function. Prof. U.S. Dubey of the Hodeidah university, Mr. Marius Postimus of the ICS head office, Sanaa and Mrs. Fatoum Othman Head English Dept., APTECH institute constituted the panel of judges.

The function began with a recitation of some verses from the Holy Quran rendered by Mr. Abdulla Qazal a fourth year student. This was followed by a welcome address by Prof. Ashok Sinha in which Prof. Sinha highlighted the significance of the event in generating volumes of self confidence among the students. Dr. Abbas Alharazi and Dr. Ali Kahirat also spoke on the occasion and stressed the importance of such a competition.

In her speech, Mrs. Amanda Plooy of the ICS Hodeidah wished the con-

testants all the best in their performance. Mr. Jason Clegg introduced the competition judges time keeper Dr. I.B. Sharma and the moderator.

Asmaa Ahmed Dayl, a final year student, who spoke on the internet in Yemen and the role it plays in the diffusion and dissemination of knowledge, won the first prize in debate. and Mohd Ali Alhammadi, a second year student, who spoke on the prospects of Yemen's export of oil won the second prize. Eman Ali Altairi, a third year student, with her

highly animated and illuminating recitation of her touching poem on 'No more war' bagged the first position in the poetry section, and Ibrahim Ali Gibreel, a third year student, who thoughtfully spoke about the exuberance of beauty and its aesthetic appeal in his beautiful poem entitled 'Beauty' bagged the second position. In the speech section, Hamza Ali Khairat, a first year student, who held the audience spell-bound by his wonderful performance dilating upon the steps that Yemen should to get rid of

poverty, won the first prize and the second prize went to Ahmed Ali Hassan a second year student who analyzed the same topic from a different perspective.

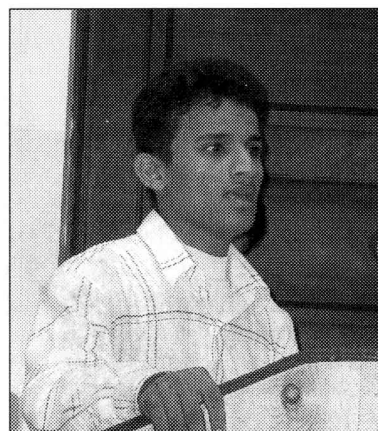
The outstanding performances of the competitors in the three sections of the competition were highly appreciated by the three judges, as well as by the packed audience.

In his comments, Prof. Dubey congratulated the winners and asked them to keep it up. He also boosted the morale of those who did not win the prizes to smile and try again, exhorting them for their spirit of participation that mattered the most.

Mrs. Shefali Bakshi proposed a vote of thanks. She thanked the ICS

team without whose help the said competition would not have been such a spectacular success. She also lauded the efforts of the competitors who evinced a keen competitive spirit evidenced by the fact that since the first day of the announcement, they met her asking for suggestions and guidance.

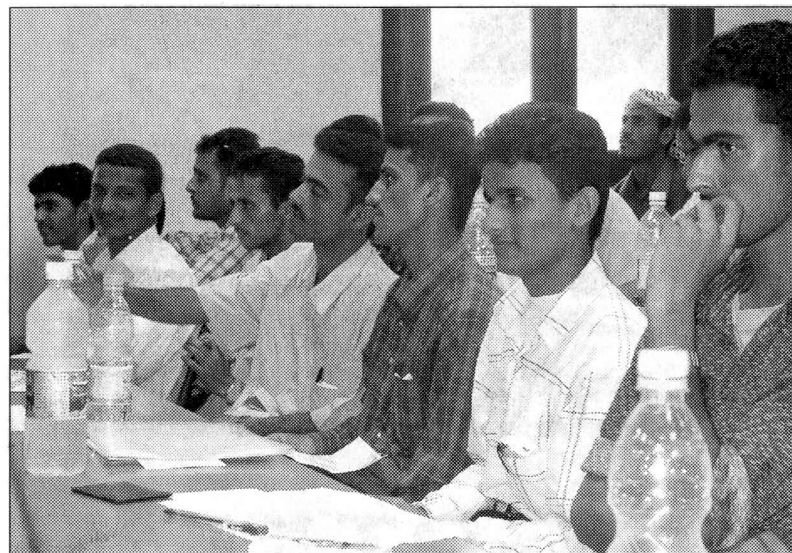
In all fairness, a word of appreciation is due to Mrs. Shefali Bakshi who played a key role in making the competition a grand success. As the curtains were drawn on this grand celebration, everyone hoped that more of such competitions will be organized in quick succession, for the larger interests of the student community in Hodeidah University.



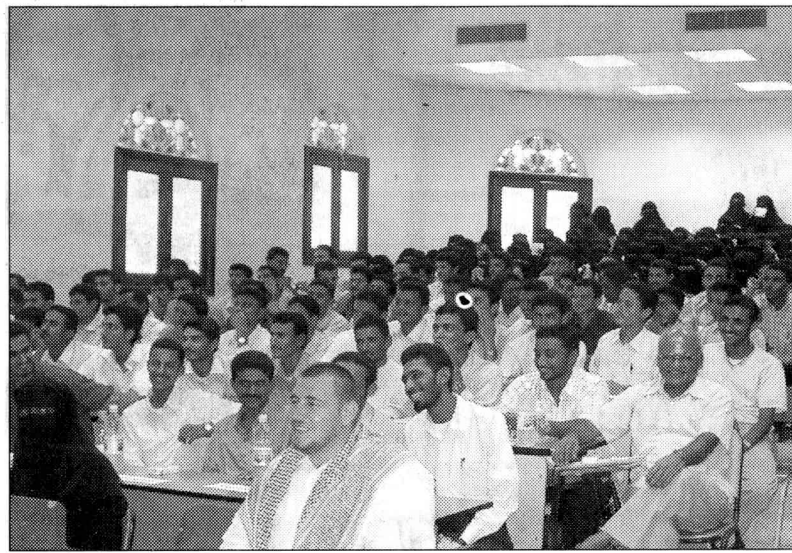
Nazeeh, Level 1 participant



The panel of judges



Participants in eager anticipation



A section of the audience

University of Sana'a, Faculty of Arts
Department of English
Cultural Week 2004
Results of the competitions

Prize winners of the Inter-university debate

Prize for coming first

- Ahlam Abdul Raheem al-Salwi, Sana'a University

Prize for coming second

- Nahla Moh'd Henneiber, Sana'a University

Prize for coming third

- Saba Ali Ahmed al-Khatari, Thammar University

Certificate of excellence

- Amal Ameen Abdo al-Kirshy, Thammar University
- Talal Ahmed Abdo, Taiz University

Certificate of merit for doing very well

- Yusif Abdul Raheem Shawsan, Ibb University
- Moh'd Ali al-Kholaiby, Ibb University

Certificate of merit for doing well

- Ameen al-Ahdal, Hodeidah University
- Adel No'aman, Taiz University
- Fatma al-Saqqaf, Hodeidah University

Prize winners of the Inter-university competition in reciting passages from Shakespeare

Prize for coming first

- Waseem Abdullah Hameed Zuhra, Sana'a University

Prize for coming second

- Huweidah Abdul Jaleel Jailan, Sana'a University

Prize for coming third

- Khadijah Ahmed, Taiz University

Certificate of excellence

- Nima Ahmed, Thammar University
- Ameen al-Ahdal, Hodeidah University
- Sawsan Thabit, Hodeidah University
- Majid Moh'd Ali Shamsan, Ibb University

Certificate of merit for doing well

- Saba Ali Ahmed al-Khatari, Thammar University
- Mo'ad Ali Dabwan, Taiz University
- Abdullah Mohammed Saleh al-Duais, Ibb University

Prize winners of the Inter-faculty speech competition

Prize for coming first

- Sameerah Ahmed Sa'ad al-Othary, Faculty of Arts, Sana'a

Prize for coming second

- Ramzi T. al-Absi, Faculty of Education, Sana'a

Prize for coming third

- Shaima Mohammed Ahmed Mosleh al-Rai'ai, Faculty of Languages, Sana'a

Certificate of excellence

- Mohammed Abdul Kareem Modaffer, Faculty of Education, Mahweet

Certificate of merit for doing very well

- Taher Ali Ahmed, Faculty of Education, Amran

Certificate of merit for doing well

- Hassan Moosa, Faculty of Education, Sadaq
- Sadiq Yahya Hezam, Faculty of Education, Amran

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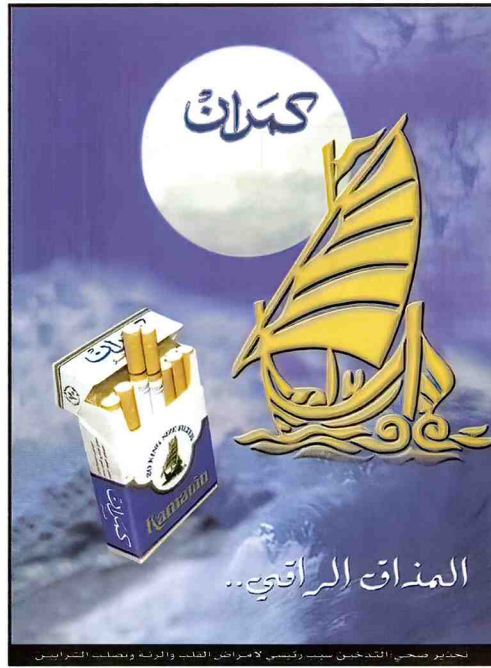
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Five years after his death: Dr. Al-Saqqaf remembered

Five years have now passed since the death of the founder of Yemen Times, Prof. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, who died on the 2nd of June 1999. Readers from all over Yemen sent articles of support and encouragement for the staff of the newspaper, headed by Al-Saqqaf's son, the current Editor-in-Chief, Walid.

Five years have past so quickly amid global, regional, and local changes that no one could have anticipated, yet something that has never changed is the fact that Dr. Al-Saqqaf is still remembered by vast numbers of Yemenis and foreigners in Yemen and abroad.

Many of the friends of Dr. Al-Saqqaf recall his vision for a modern Yemen with human rights and liberties respected, and development on full scale. He passed away before his dream of such a Yemen was fulfilled. His death is still mourned five years later, as many find there is no alternative that was able to take his place or even contend for it.

Today, we remember the courageous warrior whose weapons were paper, ink and computers. As editor and



Late Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

publisher of the Yemen Times, he insisted on taking the country's ostensibly liberal press law at its word - and regularly suffered the consequences, which never deterred him from going on and on.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that Dr. Al-Saqqaf will continue to live through his many good deeds, the knowledge he taught students at Sanaa University and elsewhere, and through the strong establishment he founded, Yemen Times, which today rises in the whole region not only as a newspaper, but as a civil society organization that has contributed greatly since his death in promoting the same values he has been calling for throughout his life.

Today, we mourn him again five years later, with great hopes that his dreams of a modern and strong Yemen, with high literacy rates, a strong economy, and true democracy, will indeed be achieved.

We pray for his soul to always be in peace in the heavens.
 Amen...

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