

Caused by sales taxes and price hike:

Fears for Yemen's internal status

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
SANA'A & TAIZ BUREAU

Tens of Yemeni people rushed into the streets in a demonstration against price hikes in the last two days March, 17 and 16.

The processions, which took place in various governorates simultaneously were public's reaction to the skyrocketing of the basic commodities leaving more than 50% of the population economically vulnerable.

In Sana'a, merchants and grocery shopkeepers closed their stores, while hundreds of people joined the peaceful demonstrations in streets expressing their protest against the price modifications represented in the sales taxes.

Whereas the scene in Hodeidah was more hyper as hundreds of people went out to streets shouting with wrath against the rise of prices that negatively influenced the necessary goods.

Even university students were intrigued by this outrage.

About 3000 students protested inside the compass of the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Law in Hodeidah demanding just treatment of the educational staff at the universities and siding by their teachers, who have maintained their strike for the last couple of months so far.

There were a few gun shots and clashes with the police there in Hodeidah on Tuesday.

Simultaneously medium-sized vehicles quit their works in protest against the new fees on vehicles by the municipality and the city fund in Abyan. In the same time merchants forwarded a plea to the governor in demand for decreasing the taxes that caused the skyrocketing of prices.

In Aden, the police on Wednesday had some clashes with the people and tried to stop the processions.



Sana'a University demonstrating in protest to sales tax.

(Photo by Adel Basher)



Massive protest demonstration in Taiz

While Yemenis in Al-Dhale'a are going through the same rage. Merchants there have supported the others of Sana'a, Abyan, Hodeidah, and Aden when people held a strike closing their shops, stores, and markets.

On Wednesday, the information stated that there is a complete strike in Aden as well and it may extend in the coming days to include the other governorates.

A number of observers of the conditions showed their concern about the change of this public protest into disturbance to include the entire Yemen.

Thousands of citizens in Taiz went in heated demonstrations in the streets outraged against the government and especially condemning the authority prime minister and his recent decisions relating to the price hikes.

Worth mentioning is that the Yemeni merchants represented by the Trade and Industry Chambers are negotiating with the government about the Sales Tax Law that is going to be executed at the beginning of July 2005.

The Trade Chambers demanded the cancellation or amendment of this law in order to decrease the burden; they say that it threatens their interests. Besides, this increase means greater burdens on the shoulder of the common people as well as the trader and the national economy accordingly.

The merchants criticize the

strategies of implementing this law that require thousands of people in addition to collecting the taxes from each type of goods while the various stages of sales. Despite of the governmental tranquility, the strategies of implementation put the merchants before their fears.

The government confirmed that the sales taxes will be applied instead of the previous tax which was called production and consumption taxes though the merchants believe that the previous one was much more efficient in collecting the income and much more fit for the Yemeni circumstances.



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Yemen and Saudi Arabia sign border agreement

BY MOHAMMAD BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen and Saudi Arabia signed a border agreement on March 13.

The agreement stipulates the deployment of joint patrols to protect the border and prevent trafficking and infiltration.

The agreement was signed in a bilateral session meeting between Yemeni Minister of Interior General Rashad al-Alimi and his Saudi counterpart Prince Nayef Bin Abdul-Aziz.

The Yemeni Interior Minister said "The agreement came out with new aspects of cooperation between the two countries on security, economic and political levels".

"The security committees in the two countries reached an end to the demarcation of borders, set the signals of land

borders and made assurances to achieve the remaining duties in the near future," Al-Alimi noted.

"There are many other tasks for both countries to achieve with respect to joint security efforts and issues of citizens and we hope the border authorities to overcome any related difficulties."

Prince Nayef Bin Abdul aziz said "many of the border agreement items have been achieved and the final phases of the historical agreement signed between the two sides in Jeddah are being finalized, and they are still working on the supplements of the agreement with regard to the sea borders."

Previous disputes between the two neighboring countries lasted for over 60 years and led to a war between 1928-1932, and several clashes between border guards until 2000.



Yemeni Interior Minister Rashad al-Alimi (R) meets his Saudi counterpart Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz (L) in the Yemeni capital Sana'a March. 12. Nayef was on a two-day visit to Yemen for talks on security cooperation, anti-terrorism efforts and border issues. REUTERS

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Female journalists group created

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A new group known as Female Journalists without Borders Organization (FJBO) was official created last Sunday.

Its mandate is to raise awareness among female journalists, defend their rights and upgrading their skills in the field of journalism.

The declaration stated that the organization is ever open for Yemeni and non-Yemeni journalists.

A foundational board for the organization was formed, which includes a number of prominent female journalists from different official and party-affiliated newspapers, as well as many others from Sheba News Agency.

These members occupy different media and administrative positions.

This is the first organization for Yemeni female journalists.

Ibb's water shortage

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

Numerous rural areas in Ibb including Yareem, Olba, al-Jabal and Wadi Khairan are suffering from a severe shortage in underground water due to heavy exhaustion by artesian wells.

Water is heavenly consumed for growing qat and other plants, and this led locals in such areas to immigrate to remote places in order to get drinkable water with bowls and cars.

A man, Abdu Zaid Awdhah, from these areas said that there is an approaching catastrophe for people in those areas, yet the government has not taken any firm decisions to limit this crisis.

YCSSL has new website

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Yemeni Center for Strategic Studies (YCSSL) has a new website on the internet.

Ahmad al-Afandi Head of the Center stated that having the website will help enhance the contact with many other internal and external research centers as well as researchers and people interested in Yemen affairs inside and outside the country.

Dr. al-Afandi clarified that the website covers pages related to activities carried out by the center such as symposiums, workshops and lectures.

The website of the center also includes the Yemeni Strategic Report, Era Affairs Magazine, and public opinion questionnaires.

Fire destroys huts

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Several huts were destroyed after a huge fire broke out in al-Shuhada'a Zone, Hodeidah.

It destroyed at least five thatched huts while other five were badly damaged.

Eyewitnesses told the media that people living in the huts have been periodically harassed by sides that want them to

evacuate the zone.

They also said that the fire vehicles did not arrive at the scene on time and the fire had been already extinguished by some cars owned by citizens.

It is worth mentioning that fires have increased over the past few days in a number of Yemeni governorates, mostly in places inhabited by low-income and marginalized people.

Harsh tribal battles in Dhamar

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Dhamar has been in chaos for several days due to a battle involving the tribe of Hodeibah, in Al-Hada district.

It comes after the killing of the son of Sheik Ahmed Hussein Al-Hudaibi.

Different kinds of light and heavy weapons are being used in this battle.

The security forces have failed to contain the battle. Though 12 military vehicles arrived, they were compelled to withdraw.

The tribal battles take place frequently, while the government finds them hard to control.

Project planning workshop concludes

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The first phase of the Project Planning Course for general managers concluded on March 10. Conducted over three days, the course was organized by Taiz University in collaboration with Dutch Higher Studies Commission.

Abdul-Malik Muharram, Secretary General of the University, said the course is within the Yemen-Netherlands

cooperation program. It aimed to introduce ways of planning and project implementation as well as strategies to identify flexibility in multi-purpose projects to best serve the university and the community.

He added, "This stage will be followed by another complementary stage late this month, targeting 22 trainees representing the administrative and leading community in the university."

Swedish aviators visit

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A Swedish civil aviation delegation is in Yemen March 14-16.

The delegation is headed by Mr. Lars Rekks, Director General of the Civil Aviation authority and includes representatives of some seven companies specialized in different areas of aviation sectors.

During the visit, the delegation will meet with Minister of Transport Omar

Mohsen al-Amudi, the President of Civil Aviation Authority, Yemenia, and a number of representatives of major airports and other important organizations in Yemen.

The purpose of the visit is to explore the opportunities to expand and deepen the contacts and cooperation between the two countries in the aviation sector, and to present Sweden as a leading nation and reliable partner in this field.

School health inspectors do course

TAIZ BUREAU

The activities of the training course of the school health organized by the School Health Department in collaboration with the Social Fund for Development (SFD) for ten days was wrapped up on March 10.

A number of teachers from the different districts of Taiz participated in this course that aimed to avail a healthy school environment without infectious diseases.

The participants were given scientific and theoretical lectures on the medical skills in protection from diseases and infections.

This course came among the activities of the Department of School Health in Taiz and the Public Department of the School Health in the Ministry of Education trying the raise awareness of such significant issues.

Diplomats tour Socotra

BY MOHAMMED BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A number of diplomatic figures in Yemen made a tour to Socotra on March 11 and 12 to enjoy the beauty of the nature of this marvelous island.

The members of this trip were accompanied with some officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Public Authority of Tourist Development with a number of the media representatives.

They spent a memorable time of entertainment at Wadi Ayhfit, in the north of the island, where many valleys meet together. This is the place that is considered one of the key tourist areas in Socotra because of its distinguished green coverage.

Some of the island's officials describe this valley as a protectorate of great importance as regards with its plants.

This valley is distinguished with its water flowing from the other small valleys.

Al-Jumhuriyah workers attacked

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF
TAIZ BUREAU

Some armed men of a landlord attacked workers of Al-Jumhuriyah Newsstand at Al-Tahreer and Jamal St. roundabout last Wednesday, preventing them from moving the newsstand to a new place, regardless of permission from the concerned authorities and according to the recommendations of the general labors workings.

The landlord with his influential friends claimed that he was renting that area for cars to park.

The permission he had, however, showed that the ground floor should be a parking and another part of it, a police station, because the area was a public market.

The head of the police station also hindered the putting the newsstand in its new place, and the landlord refused to make the ground floor a car parking.

Airport drama

Ethiopian says she is Bin Laden's wife

BY MOHAMMAD BIN SALLAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A middle-aged Ethiopian woman recently attempted to convince officials that she is one of Osama Bin Laden's wives, after she arrived at the Sana'a International Airport from Saudi Arabia.

The incident happened March 9.

One of the passport officers at the Sana'a International Airport said to the media: "An Ethiopian woman aroused curiosity among the airport officers after declaring that she is one of the wives of Osama Bin Laden, the top leader of al-Qaeda Organization who is currently chased by the USA."

The source clarified that the Ethiopian national came to Sana'a via Riyadh-Sana'a- Addis Ababa, without holding a passport, except for an exit

license to the capital of her country. She got an exit license for her and her family from Khaled International Airport in Saudi Arabia.

The officer added: "We were surprised when she started to introduce herself with a loud voice saying 'I am Osama bin Laden's wife'." This also surprised other officials at the airport who gathered around the Ethiopian woman.

Al-Mu'atamar Net official Newspaper said that the Ethiopian woman tried to convince the airport officers that she is the wife of al-Qaeda top leader with the aim to convince the security authorities to detain her.

This, she said, was in an attempt to escape the completion of her flight to Addis Ababa with her other family members, who completed their procedures and moved her to the exit hall.

Period of oil-related tenders extended

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Nabeel Saleh al-Qawsi, President of the Oil Exploration and Production Authority, declared that the period allowed for companies to enter in the second international tender for the open blocs has been extended to April 15.

He added that this was agreed to by the Minister of Oil and Minerals to allow international companies sufficient time to apply for the tenders.

Mummies found in Marib

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Two mummies of a man and a woman have been found in Marib, in the area of Darb al-Dhabi, the ancient city of Braqish. The place is believed to be an ancient cemetery dating back to the Othmani era.

Abdullah Bawazeer said in a statement to September 26th Newspaper that the two mummies date back to about 1,000 BC, pointing out that the mummy of the man is 150 cm high and in better condition than the woman.

He added that the two bodies contain old writings in Himeria scriptures and other distinctive drawings associated with the ancient civilization of Yemen.

Sheik Ahmad Mohammad Al-Sharif from al-Ashraf Tribe, Marib, told The Yemen Times, "The two mummies were discovered by a gang who was in search of opium in one of the local cemeteries in the locality."

He added, "The gang members were immediately caught by the security authorities in the District while the two mummies were transferred to the National Museum in Sana'a last Wednesday."

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 the popular demonstrations in protest to sales tax law would force the government to desist from putting the law into force?

- Yes it would 62.3%
- No it wouldn't 26.9%
- I don't know 10.6%

Last edition's question:

Do you think establishing a ministry for women would enhance women's status in Yemen?

Definitely 62.3%
To a small extent 26.9%
It will have no effect 10.6%

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Marib farmers talk to YT: Funding fails to reach dam basin's poor

BY HASSAN AL-ZAIDI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

One of the achievements of President Ali Abdullah Saleh did was rebuilding the Great Marib Dam in 1983, with money from the UAE. Visiting the dam now, one is struck by the view of stagnant water in the Dam's basin and the homes scattered on the highlands built of athal branches surrounding the dam.

The Yemen Times talked to some of the owners of the huts and found that they used to own land and houses. They abandoned them when rising water from the dam flooded their lands and circled their houses. Mosquitoes have since turned their life into hell. They have received little compensation from the Ministry of Agriculture for their losses, not more than YR 20,000 per family. They moved to Sirwah area where the Queen of Sheba, Bilqis, erected her summer resort during

the peak of the Sheba Civilization, which prospered because of the water from Marib Dam.

After over fifteen years of homelessness and futile attempts at finding sources of income other than agriculture they have returned, crestfallen to the dam's basin. Some returnees had moved back as early as 1994 where they built huts made out of athal branches, which they often uproot with their bare hands. They receive no help from either the Ministry of Agriculture, or the Marib-based Eastern Areas Development Authority (EADA), which possesses tractors, shovels, and modern equipment swallowing millions of dollars under the pretext of helping farmers.

The Ministry of Agriculture and EADA officials instead use the money to build the finest villas in the capital city. The cost of the Deputy Agriculture Manager's new villa is estimated at YR45 million, and is being built in the most prestigious area of Sana'a. This continues while farmers live

in huts.

Farmer Ahmed Sa'eed Ali said, "I have come to this place to reclaim my land which my father abandoned when water from the dam flooded it. I have dug a well on one side of the valley and removed athal trees from part of my land. Now it is ploughed and cultivated... I grow my land hoping that I can make enough money to expand the farm and reclaim the rest of the land."

However, the market disappointed him and his tomato crop recovered only two thirds of his expenses. Part of the harvest perished on the farm due to lack of transportation.

"Prices discouraged me from renting a car. Transportation fares exceeded the price of the load of tomatoes. A 25-kilo basket of tomatoes is sold at YR 100. A carload is 80 baskets and the fares exceed YR 15000. Thus, I should pay an extra seven thousand in addition to the tomato price for transportation, and then add to this wages for workers taking care and plucking the vegetables."

Naji bin Saleh, another farmer, said, "after the return to the Dam's basin, farmers dug wells hardening their walls with concrete. There are some 50 wells in the basin each of which costs YR 300,000 (\$1620). Farmers buy water pumps that are made in India because these one costs just \$50."

Farmers also grow potatoes, and honeydew melons, cereals (wheat, corn). They are grateful to India. "We thank India which has exported cheap pumps to us. The Ministry of Agriculture is our enemy because it eats up aids in our name and has given as the crumbs," added Naji.

"The Agriculture Office and EADA do not provide us with facilities despite our constant demands to bring a caterpillar tractor and a shovel to help reclaim lands for cheap prices. They provide us with neither seeds nor consultation. Our crops suffer pests and our requests are turned down. The recent request was for the Agriculture Office to spray the Dam's basin so as to get rid of the mosquitoes that endanger our lives and has killed a number of children, but our calls fall on deaf ears."

Naji Tu'aïman said, "the soil is fertile and production is good, but the problem lies in the lack of equipment to reclaim lands. Tractors are scarce in the sowing season. This puts hurdles before farmers. Moreover, there is the low price of tomatoes and vegetables in general. Farmers incur the high price of the seed and bear the loss at times due to decreases in price."

He mentioned also some pests that affect farms and the need for agricultural consultants to instruct farmers on ways of combating diseases. "The Agriculture Office is concerned only with distribution of luxurious cars to officers, building colossal structures for offices and giving salaries for employees waiting in their air-conditioned offices for the US Ambassador's promises."

Farmer Aziz further said, "we have hope in the US Ambassador. We have heard that the US will support Marib's agriculture through loans for buying cattle, etc. This has not happened yet. Perhaps, the US support has come and the Agriculture Office's officials have invested it in building their own villas in Sana'a or purchasing lands."

Among the scattered huts, I found a three-part hut. Approaching it, I could see that there were three rooms each of which contained a number of school students.

"The school day is divided into two halves," said Sheikh Yahya bin Ahmed. "In these three classrooms, pupils from grade one through grade six study in the morning and grades seven to nine study in the afternoon. The Education Office has assigned teachers for the school, but they do not attend." The number of the students were 80, but some classes now sit idly because of the lack of teachers.

Sheikh Yahya continued, "Nobody has shown cooperation with us except for the Al-Saleh Establishment which visited us in the beginning of the school year and distributed 33 bags. We thank them for this. We also invite the UAE Ambassador to visit the area to see the conditions of the people and fate they suffer due to the construction of the dam, which has changed from an advantage into a disadvantage."

"I also invite the US Ambassador to visit the Dam's basin to see historic places and assess the achievements of the Agriculture Office and see whether any of the US promises to help Marib agriculture and farmers has materialized. I fear the support is pocketed by corrupt officials as was done by past aids from brotherly and friendly countries."

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AUDIT OF NEX PROJECTS

The United Nations Development Programme office in Sanaa, Yemen, would like to announce for an audit bidding. Interested firms are requested to read the scope and requirements of the audit and respond accordingly. All bids must be submitted no later than March 22, 2005 to the following address:

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1. Background

In each country office, the UNDP Resident Representative serves as the Resident Coordinator of development activities for the United Nations system. Through such coordination, UNDP seeks to ensure the most effective use of UN and international aid resources.

National Execution (NEX) is an agreement whereby UNDP entrust these resources and funds to national government authorities to undertake and manage UNDP-supported projects. The national government authority responsible for the overall management of the project is called the executing agency. These executing agencies are responsible for the management of all UNDP resources of nationally executed projects, and they are accountable to UNDP for the entirety of UNDP resources under their management. Each nationally executed project must be audited at least once in its lifetime.

2. Audit Scope

The overarching objective of the audit is to provide UNDP with reasonable assurance that its resources are being used for the purposes intended or, stated more specifically, that the executing agency is managing the project in accordance with the provisions of the project document and work plans.

The audit must cover, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Assessment of the rate of delivery;
2. Financial accounting, monitoring and reporting;
3. Management systems for recording, documenting and reporting on resources utilization;
4. Equipment/Vehicle use and management; and
5. Management structure, including the adequacy of appropriate internal control and record-keeping mechanisms.

The scope of the audit is limited to the executing agency expenditures, which are defined as including (1) all disbursements listed in the quarterly financial reports submitted by the executing agency and (2) the direct payments processed by UNDP at the request of the executing agency.

The auditor must certify and confirm the following:

- a) That disbursements are made in accordance with the activities and budgets of the project document;
- b) The disbursements are supported by adequate documentation;
- c) The financial reports are accurately presented;
- d) A management structure and systems for control are in place and observed;
- e) The executing agency and the UNDP country office have undertaken and have presented reports for monitoring and evaluation of the substantive activities and of the management system of the project;
- f) The procurement, use and disposal of the equipment are consistent with UNDP's rules and regulations.

The audit report

The auditors must produce an audit report, and shall do so to the extent possible. The report should include at least the following:

- The audit standards that were applied (INTOSAI standards, ISAs, or national standards that comply with one of these in all material respects).
- The period covered by the opinion.
- An assessment of the project's internal control system with equal emphasis on (i) the effectiveness of the system in providing the project management with useful and timely information for the proper management of the project and (ii) the general effectiveness of the internal control system in protecting the assets and resources of the project.
- A description of any specific internal control weaknesses noted in the financial management of the project and the audit procedures followed to address or compensate for the weaknesses. Recommendations to resolve/eliminate the internal control weaknesses noted should be included.

The auditors must submit the final audit report to the executing agency and UNDP.

The draft audit report should be submitted to UNDP country office by 20 April 2005 latest. The final audit report should be submitted by 30 April 2005 latest.

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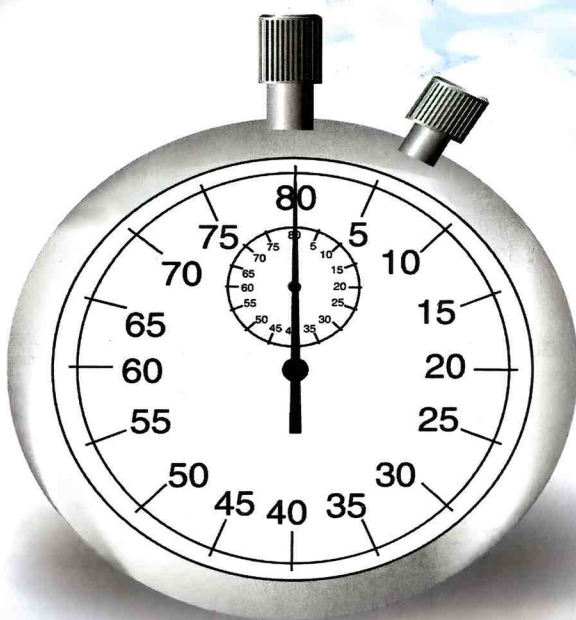
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OPEC says extra oil may not cap price boom

ISFAHAN, Iran, March 15 (Reuters) - OPEC producers on Tuesday considered a Saudi proposal for a modest increase in oil output but said they could not guarantee to cap record prices.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, meeting on Wednesday, is under pressure from consumer countries to take action to bring prices down from \$55 a barrel. Saudi Arabia is suggesting OPEC lift official output limits by 500,000 barrels a day (bpd), 2 percent, to 27.5 million bpd.

"Hopefully I will be convincing enough to move the rest to my thinking," said Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi.

The Saudi minister said his plan would mean actual OPEC output, including existing leakage of about 700,000 bpd over formal limits, would rise from 27.7 million to 28.2 million bpd.

Cartel President Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah of Kuwait said all in

OPEC were on board for more oil, but some countries wanted to delay implementing the extra supply.

With group output already close to a 25-year high, producer countries are showing signs of concern about their ability to meet rapid demand growth in the second half of the year.

Saudi on Monday took the unprecedented step of announcing future supply plans, saying it would lift output later in 2005 to meet another year of heavy demand growth led by China.

"It is too high but you should not blame OPEC," said Qatar Oil Minister Abdullah al-Attiyah of oil prices. "OPEC has done all it can do."

This is out of the control of OPEC. "There is not much we can do, we can make a good will gesture," said Algerian Oil Minister Chakib Khelil.

The only world producer with any significant spare capacity, Saudi is particu-

larly concerned about demand in the fourth quarter of the year, when seasonal demand peaks.

Fund managers diversifying out of equities and treasuries have helped benchmark U.S. oil prices to \$48.74 average so far this year, up from \$41.47 a barrel in 2004 and \$30.99 in 2003.

U.S. crude on Tuesday eased 13 cents by 1150 GMT to \$54.82 a barrel, just shy of October's record \$55.67.

"The price risks are more to the upside than the downside," said analyst Yasser Elguindi of Medley Global Advisors.

"There is lot more demand for the second half of the year than OPEC realised at the start of the year."

They need to catch up to that reality."

OPEC experts now are projecting growth of 1.9 million barrels a day on the 84-million-bpd world market, following last year's burst of 2.6 million bpd.

Worried that energy costs could derail economic growth, U.S. Energy Secretary Sam Bodman contacted a number of OPEC nations on policy ahead of the meeting, ministers said.

Inflated fuel bills have yet to cause any significant deceleration in world growth, but some in OPEC are concerned about the long-term impact of high prices on fuel demand.

"We're concerned about prices, we're also concerned about economic growth and we're particularly concerned about economic growth in developing countries," said Saudi's Naimi.

Others in OPEC see no economic damage from even higher prices, pointing out that the peaks of the 1970s, allowing for inflation, were equivalent to \$80 a barrel in today's money.

"Even at \$60 we see no economic impact," said Libyan Energy Minister Fathi Omar Bin Shatwan.



OPEC President and Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah (R) sign a gas contract with Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh prior to the start of the 135th meeting of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Conference in Isfahan in central Iran, 340 km (211 miles) south of the capital Tehran, March. 15. REUTERS

Iran says U.S. must do more to improve ties

TEHRAN, March 15 (Reuters) - Washington, which accuses Tehran of pursuing nuclear arms, must change its policies towards Iran and recognise it as a regional power if relations are to improve, Iran's foreign minister said on Tuesday.

In a policy shift last week, Washington offered Iran economic incentives to try to persuade it to scrap nuclear work which could be used to make atom bombs.

Washington said it would drop its opposition to Iran's membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the sale of civilian aircraft parts to Tehran as part of a coordinated strategy with the European Union.

Failure to abandon sensitive nuclear activities will see Iran's case referred to the U.N. Security Council, which could impose sanctions, they say.

Iran, which denies accusations it is secretly developing nuclear arms, has dismissed the U.S. offer as insignificant.

It says its nuclear programme is for electricity generation.

"Our (nuclear) rights cannot be exchanged for any economic incentives," Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi told a news conference. "Removing the embargos or similar incentives cannot remove our rights, but can be effective in improving ties and solving the problems between Iran

and the United States in a comprehensive way."

"The key for this problem is in American hands," he added.

"If America wants, it can improve Iran-U.S. ties by changing its policies vis-a-vis the Islamic Republic and recognising the Islamic Republic as an effective regional power."

Otherwise, no solution can be offered from our side."

Washington broke ties with Iran in 1980 after its embassy in Tehran was taken over by students who held 52 captives for 444 days.

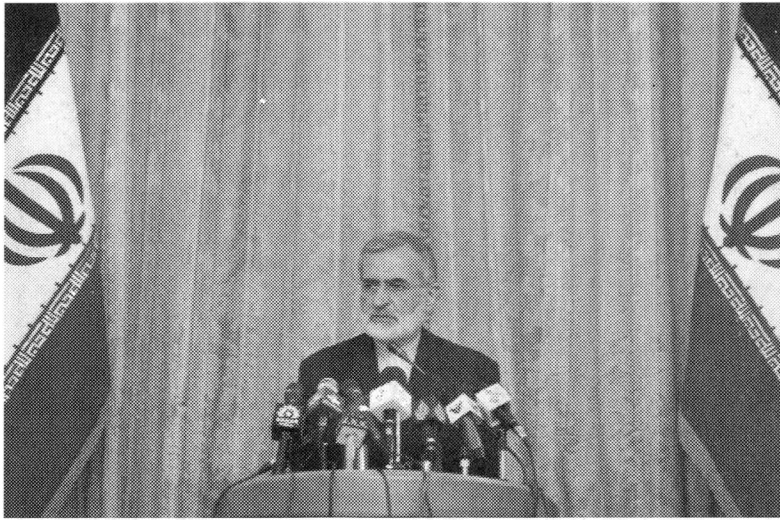
Billions of dollars of Iranian assets were seized and progressively tighter restrictions imposed on U.S. investment and the sale of U.S. products in Iran.

Cleric: Iran has nothing to fear

Tentative rapprochements over the years have petered out quickly. U.S. President George W. Bush dubbed Iran part of an "axis of evil", accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and secretly developing nuclear bombs. Iran denies the charges.

White House national security adviser Stephen Hadley warned Iran on Sunday not to take too much heart from the recent U.S. offer on WTO membership and aircraft spares.

Analysts say the U.S. move was aimed more at supporting the EU's ini-



Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi speaks to the media during a news conference in Tehran March. 15. REUTERS

tiative to reach a diplomatic agreement on Iran's nuclear programme and to gain EU support for Security Council referral for Iran should a deal fail to materialise.

Ayatollah Ali Meshkini, a senior hardline cleric, said on Tuesday Iran had nothing to fear from the united U.S.-EU front.

"Let the U.S. say whatever it wants and let Europe take our case to the Security Council ... Iran wants nuclear science," he told a meeting of the Assembly of Experts — an influential panel of clerics.

Kharrazi said Iran was ready to give

assurances that it will not produce bomb-grade uranium.

"We do not intend to enrich to the level that is needed to make atomic bombs and have imposed a limit ... that we enrich to the level we need for nuclear (reactor) fuel," he said.

Kharrazi said it was up to the EU to respond to Iran's proposal at a crucial meeting in Paris next week.

"We have given our proposals which are attractive ones and can solve the problem," he said while reiterating Iran's warning that it will withdraw from the talks and resume enrichment if it feels the EU is dragging its feet.

Egypt's Mubarak leaves Syria after Lebanon talks

DAMASCUS, March 15 (Reuters) - Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak flew to Damascus on Tuesday for talks with President Bashar al-Assad on Lebanon, where Syrian troops have begun to pull out under enormous international pressure.

The official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said Mubarak, whose visit was previously unannounced, and Assad also discussed matters related to the Arab summit in Algeria next week.

"The talks tackled current situation in the Arab arena and in particular the Lebanese arena," SANA said.

"The talks also tackled the brotherly bilateral relations," it added without elaborating.

Mubarak flew back to Cairo after the talks.

Assad has pledged a two-stage troop pullout from Lebanon, where anti-Syrian sentiment has been rising since the Feb 14, killing of Lebanese former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

Syria has condemned Hariri's assassination as a heinous crime.

Syria has kept troops in Lebanon since 1976 when it dispatched forces to help end Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution in September requiring Syria to quit its smaller neighbour.

The measure was sponsored by the United States and France.



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (L) shakes hands with his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak in Damascus March. 15. Mubarak flew to Damascus on Tuesday for talks with Assad on Lebanon, where Syrian troops have begun to pull out under enormous international pressure. REUTERS

U.S. Marine killed in action in Iraq

BAGHDAD, March 15 (Reuters) - A U.S. Marine has been killed in action in Iraq's western al Anbar province, the U.S. military said on Tuesday.

The military said in a statement the soldier belonged to the 1 Marine Expeditionary Force and was killed on Monday.

It gave no details about the incident on grounds it could put U.S. forces at greater risk from guerrilla attack.

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, 1,157 American military and Pentagon personnel have been killed in action in Iraq.

Including non-combat deaths the toll is 1,511

Palestinian plan to free militant stirs new row

RAMALLAH, West Bank, March 15 (Reuters) - Israel threatened to call off peacemaking moves with the Palestinians on Tuesday after President Mahmoud Abbas said he would free a militant jailed for killing an Israeli minister.

Abbas told Reuters that Ahmed Saadat, accused by Israel of ordering the assassination in 2001, would be freed after the long delayed Israeli pull-back of troops from the city of Jericho — due to happen on Wednesday.

"We will weigh carefully if there is any way of continuing the process when the message from Abu Mazen's side is becoming so negative and so contrary to the new spirit we would like to see," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told Israel Radio, using Abbas's nickname.

Abbas's announcement could strengthen his position ahead of talks he is due to start in Cairo, where he wants to persuade militant groups to formalise the ceasefire he agreed with Israel on Feb. 8.

But it appeared to raise questions over Wednesday's planned Israeli pull-back from the isolated, desert city of Jericho where Sadaat and three other militants are held.

Israel only agreed to pull back from

Jericho and two other West Bank cities on Monday.

Abbas said the Palestinians would release both Saadat and an aide to the late Yasser Arafat accused of smuggling weapons.

"Saadat and (Fuad al-) Shobaki will be released from prison in Jericho when Jericho is handed over to the Palestinians," Abbas told Reuters by telephone.

"The two men were placed by Israel on the wanted list and the agreement we have with Israel is that once it leaves our cities, the fugitives will have immunity.

Therefore, they will be freed, and the Israelis are aware of this."

Israel rejects release

Senior Palestinian officials dismissed suggestions from Israel that they had given assurances that Saadat and three others accused of involvement in the killing of Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi would not really be freed.

"If the Palestinians dare to release them, Israel will get them quicker than they can imagine," said Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader Saadat and the three others blamed for the killing of Zeevi, as well as Shobaki, are being

guarded in a Jericho prison by the British under a 2002 deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

Abbas did not specify whether the three others would also be freed.

The PFLP said it killed Zeevi in retaliation for the Israeli assassination of its leader Abu Ali Mustafa.

A Palestinian court jailed the men, but the supreme court later ruled they should be freed.

Palestinian officials said they remained incarcerated in Jericho "for their own safety" to protect against Israeli assassination.

Abdel-Rahim Mallouh, a PFLP leader in an Israeli prison, said Abbas had called to tell him the cases of Saadat and Shobaki would be dealt with alongside those of other fugitives that Israel has said it will stop pursuing.

Militant factions are meeting with Abbas in Cairo and have said that they could agree to formalise a ceasefire if Israel pulls back troops, ends all military operations and frees more of some 8,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said on Monday that such a truce by militants would not be enough and Abbas needed to dismantle the factions in order to restart negotiations on a final peace deal and statehood.

Turkey vows to implement reforms for EU membership

LONDON, March 15 (Reuters) - Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul on Tuesday rejected suggestions his government had failed fulfil reform pledges and said preparations for membership negotiations with the EU in October were on track.

Gul, in an interview with the Financial Times, also said a controversial draft law on regional subsidies would be revised to enable the International Monetary Fund to approve a \$10 billion stand-by programme by early April.

"We know that implementation (of the reforms) is most important," said Gul, referring to criticism by Brussels there had been a lack of implementation on several rights reforms Turkey passed last year to win a date for EU accession talks.

"We will continue."

There is no way to stop this," he said. EU envoy Hansjorg Kretschmer said earlier this month Turkey was showing "slippage" in its reform drive to join the European Union, though current slow progress should not jeopardise the start of entry talks on schedule on Oct. 3.

Many in the EU remain deeply uneasy about admitting Turkey, a large, poor, overwhelmingly Muslim country of more than 70 million people, even though negotiations could last a decade.



A wounded Iraqi man is treated in a wheelchair at al-Yarmouk hospital after he was injured in a car bomb explosion in Baghdad, March. 15. REUTERS

"Superhorst" enters heated German reform debate

BERLIN, March 15 (Reuters) - President Horst Koehler entered Germany's politically charged reform debate on Tuesday, urging the government and opposition to fulfil their "patriotic duty" and agree new measures to bolster a shaky economy.

In a closely watched speech ahead of a meeting between Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and conservative leaders on Thursday, Koehler called for a modernisation of social policy, a more efficient tax system, investments in training and research, and reform of the country's cumbersome federal structure.

"The Agenda 2010 reforms were a courageous start," he told an employers federation in Berlin, referring to economic measures unveiled by Schroeder's government in 2003.

"But we must be honest with people and tell them that we are not yet finished."

German unemployment hit 5.2 million, or 12.6 percent, last month, its highest level since the 1930s. Economists expect gross domestic product to expand by one percent this year, among the slowest rates in Europe.

Against that backdrop, pressure has mounted on Schroeder to take new steps to boost growth and create jobs.

Until recently he had shied away from adding to far-reaching welfare reforms which sparked widespread protests last summer.

But with high unemployment haunting him, Schroeder is now expected to propose a series of new measures on Thursday in parliament, just before he meets with the opposition.

Koehler, previously managing director of the International Monetary Fund, was appointed president last May and has vowed to "tell Germans the truth"

about the need to reform the economy.

While his powers in the largely ceremonial post are limited, Koehler has already demonstrated a desire to shape the national debate and has not shied away from controversial topics.

In November he surprised the Schroeder government by coming out against plans to scrap Germany's Oct. 3 Unification day public holiday.

Within days, the plan had been ditched.

He also raised hackles in Berlin in January when he voiced "serious doubts" about a new Air Safety Act that would give Germany's defence minister new powers to shoot down hijacked aircraft.

"Superhorst"

Ahead of his speech on Tuesday, Germany's top-selling Bild newspaper published an illustration of Koehler rip-

ping open his shirt to reveal the red and yellow Superman insignia.

"Superhorst must rescue Germany!" the paper blared.

Koehler spoke of the need to rip down barriers to growth and kick-start a stalled jobs market.

"Given the state of the labour market, we need a political fast-track for jobs in Germany."

He called for independent experts to vet all laws discussed by parliament to ensure they were conducive to job creation.

As he spoke, the head of the Bundesbank and respected ZEW research institute echoed his calls for reforms.

"Without new reforms, economic uncertainty is likely to continue during the months ahead," said the ZEW's Wolfgang Franz.

"That is why it is all the more impor-

tant that persuasive signals are sent out from the top-level talks with the German Chancellor if the reform process is to gain momentum."

Bundesbank chief Axel Weber said he would welcome comprehensive reform of the tax system and labour market.

Koehler, nominated to his current post by the conservative Christian

Democrats, headed the IMF for four years and led the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development before that.

The post is seen to be above the political fray.

Past presidents, such as Richard von Weizsaecker, have built the office into one seen as a moral authority for the nation.

Kosovo president unhurt as bomb rocks convoy

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro, March 15 (Reuters) - Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova escaped unhurt on Tuesday when a bomb hidden in a large metal garbage container exploded as his car drove past in the province's capital, Pristina.

Kosovo's U.N. administration said the blast was an "explosive attack against President Rugova's convoy".

"It must have been triggered by some sort of remote device," said a senior police source.

There was no immediate clue to who may have planted the device or why.

It came at a time of tension, one day after former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, a guerrilla commander in 1998-99, pleaded not guilty to war crimes at The Hague tribunal.

Unlike Rugova, he is regarded as a hero of the ethnic Albanian insurgency which triggered NATO intervention six years ago this month, driving Serbian forces out.

Talks are looming later this year on whether the ethnic Albanian 90 percent majority should get independence.



Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova

Police said the blast at 8:20 a.m. (0720 GMT) damaged Rugova's black Jeep as the moderate leader headed for talks with visiting European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, in town to try to broker a new governing coalition in



A policeman stands near the damaged jeep that was carrying Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova to a meeting with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana in the Kosovo capital Pristina when a device exploded in a metal rubbish container, March 15.

Haradinaj's absence.

"The blast was heard coming from a garbage container," a police spokeswoman said.

At least one person was wounded and windows were shattered in nearby buildings. Police sealed off the road and troops of the NATO-led peace force, KFOR, were on the scene.

"What happened today shows that unfortunately there are still bad elements that want to destabilise Kosovo," Rugova told reporters after meeting Solana.

No early clue to motive

In the guerrilla war, the Kosovo Liberation Army made effective use of improvised roadside bombs powerful enough to destroy Serb armoured vehicles.

A powerful remote control bomb was also used in the worst terror attack since the war, killing 11 on a bus carrying Serbs in 2001.

There have also been smaller explosions in Pristina, thought to be part of underworld turf battles and often unsolved.

Rugova's private villa in Pristina was targeted in March 2004 when a hand-grenade exploded in the garden.

Kosovo has been on edge since Haradinaj resigned as prime minister last week to face the Hague charges. The former guerrilla leader is accused of murder, rape and deporting civilians.

He called the charges an insulting, unjust bid by the court to "treat liberation fighters the same as aggressors", but he won international praise for agreeing to turn himself in.

A protest scheduled for Monday in his support was cancelled on Sunday by organisers who said they feared it could be hijacked by extremists.

A year ago this week, Kosovo was rocked by Albanian riots against Serb enclaves in which 19 people died and 4,000 Serbs and other ethnic minorities

fled their homes.

Rugova, 60, led a campaign of passive resistance to Serbian domination of Kosovo in the 1990s.

The coalition he formed with Haradinaj after Kosovo's second post-war general election in October 2004 was considered an unlikely partnership.

It was also unpopular with many ethnic Albanians in the ex-guerrilla camp, who despise the mild-mannered intellectual Rugova for never fully endorsing the anti-Serbian insurgency.

Analysts say that with Haradinaj's departure, Rugova faces pressure from the West to broaden his coalition by including the party of former guerrilla commander Hashim Thaci, a move that would marginalise Haradinaj's Alliance for the Future of Kosovo.

The United Nations hopes to open negotiations later this year on Kosovo's long-term status, provided it meets a series of benchmark standards on democracy, minority rights and security.

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French court jails six for bomb plot on US embassy

PARIS, March 15 (Reuters) - A French court sentenced French-Algerian Djamel Beghal on Tuesday to 10 years in prison for plotting to blow up the U.S. embassy in Paris and jailed five accomplices for periods of one to nine years.

The six men, all of Algerian origin, are suspected of having links to al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden but denied any role in the foiled 2001 plot.

They were charged with criminal conspiracy designed to commit an act of terrorism.

Kamel Daoudi, who was deported from Britain in 2001, received a nine-year sentence.

Daoudi, 30, was accused of masterminding logistics and communications in the embassy plot.

Two other members of the group were jailed for six years, another for three years and the last for one year.

Beghal, 39, was extradited to France from the United Arab Emirates in late

September 2001 after he told police in the Gulf state that he had helped plan a foiled suicide attack on the U.S. embassy just off the Champs Elysees in central Paris.

He later retracted his statement, saying he had confessed under "methodical torture".

The prosecution said Beghal visited training camps in Afghanistan in 2000 where he initially told investigators he met Abu Zubaydah, a senior al Qaeda official subsequently arrested in Pakistan in 2002.

Investigators found the suicide attack was supposed to have been carried out by Tunisian-born former professional soccer player Nizar ben Abdelaziz Trabelsi.

Trabelsi was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a court in Brussels in 2003 for plotting to blow up a NATO military base in Belgium on behalf of al Qaeda.

Trabelsi publicly confessed to plotting that attack, but not to the Paris plot.

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بندر أحمد هاشم - وضاح النجاشي - ذي زين النجاشي

September proposed for Afghan parliamentary poll

KABUL, March 15 (Reuters) - A joint Afghan-U.N. election commission has proposed holding Afghanistan's long-delayed parliamentary polls in mid-September, its chairman said on Tuesday.

The polls were supposed to have been held in tandem with last year's presidential vote won by U.S.-backed incumbent Hamid Karzai, which was itself repeatedly delayed amid concerns about security and logistical problems before taking place on Oct. 9.

"We suggest that the parliamentary election should be delayed for another six months."

It means that the parliamentary election should be held in the third week of Sunbula," Bismillah Bismil, chairman of the Joint Electoral Management Body said on Tuesday, referring to mid-September on the Afghan calendar.

The JEMB, which met political parties on Tuesday, will have to get the parties' blessing and will also need to consult donor countries funding the elections.

Karzai, installed as transitional leader after U.S.-led forces overthrew the Taliban in late 2001, does not have a political party, but his cabinet will need the approval of the new parliament to keep their jobs.

More than 10.5 million people will be able to vote in the election for a 249-seat lower house of parliament and



Afghan bread sellers wait for customers at a market in Kabul March 15. A joint Afghan-U.N. election commission has proposed holding Afghanistan's long delayed parliamentary polls in mid-September, the commission chairman said on Tuesday. REUTERS

provincial councils, and there will be a chance for new voters to add their name to the voter register.

Officials have said district council elections supposed to be held at the same time might not be possible this year, unless disputes over electoral boundaries are resolved.

Delay in the district polls would mean it would not be possible immediately to create a full-sized upper house, or Senate, since district councils

are supposed to send representatives to the chamber.

Fifty political parties, many of them run by former mujahideen who fought the Soviets and the Taliban have registered to contest the polls so far.

Some, including a new party formed by the runner-up in the presidential election, Yunus Qanuni, have still to complete the process.

These elections will be more complex than the presidential election, as

the commission will probably have to deal directly with several thousand candidates, said Julian Type, from the commission's operational planning unit.

Security will be a big issue, as ever, even though the Taliban failed to mount any serious attacks during last October's election and nearly all the heavy weapons in the country have been rounded up under a disarmament programme and around three-quarters of the private militias have been disbanded.

But turf rivalries are intense in a country riven by tribal and ethnic divides.

Regional warlords still exert plenty of influence and the numbers of small arms in private hands is substantial.

"There will have to be a robust (security) presence in all 34 provinces," Type said.

Two priorities for the commission will be to properly train the large numbers of electoral workers needed, and the establishment of a strong and transparent mechanism for dealing with complaints.

It will also take steps to ensure there is no repeat of the mix-up over pens used in polling stations.

In October, many election workers mistakenly used an ordinary pen to mark the hands of people who had voted rather than an indelible ink pen meant to prevent multiple voting.

Bomb kills one, wounds three in Thai Muslim south

BANGKOK, March 15 (Reuters) - A bomb killed one policeman and wounded three state employees on Tuesday in Thailand's restive, Muslim-majority south, where more than 600 people have died in a year, officials said.

"The bomb was placed in a booth near a rail track in Yala and exploded around 9:30 this morning and wounded two policemen and two state rail officials," Police Colonel Ekapop Prasitwattanachai told Reuters by telephone from the scene.

An official at the hospital in Yala

city said one of the two police officers died on the way to the hospital.

The blast was the latest incident in the renewed spate of separatist violence in the three southernmost provinces near the Malaysian border, where Muslim separatists fought low key insurgencies in the 1970s and 1980s.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who has sent thousands of soldiers to fight the separatists, has put the southern violence as his top security agenda after winning re-election in a landslide last month.



Thai soldiers inspect a destroyed railway post after a bomb explosion in Yala province about 1084 km (674 miles) south of Bangkok, March 15. A bomb killed one policeman and wounded three state employees on Tuesday in Thailand's restive Muslim south, where more than 600 people have died in the violence in a year, officials said. REUTERS

China says Taiwan distorting anti-secession law

BEIJING, March 15 (Reuters) - China accused Taiwan on Tuesday of distorting a new anti-secession law that mandates the use of military force against the self-ruled island if it formally declares independence, warning the move was "very dangerous".

China's parliament passed the legislation in a near unanimous vote on Monday, drawing an angry response from the island, which Beijing has claimed as its own since their split at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949.

A spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office defended the law, saying it sought to preserve peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and was aimed only at containing Taiwan separatist forces.

"The statement by (Taiwan's) Mainland Affairs Council ... maliciously distorts this legislation," the official Xinhua news agency quoted the spokesman as saying.

"This is to mislead and distort, purely with ulterior motives. Its aim is to cheat Taiwan compatriots and international public opinion and provoke cross-strait antagonism once again. This is very dangerous," the spokesman said without elaborating.

Mainland Affairs Council vice-chairman Chiu Tai-san has called the law a "blank check" to invade at any time and place and swallow up Taiwan.

It "unilaterally changed the status quo" in the Taiwan Strait, Chiu said.

The Bush administration has criticised the legislation, calling its passage "unfortunate" and a potential setback to



Pro-independence Taiwan activists deface paper effigies of Chinese leaders, to protest against the passage of an anti-secession law by China's parliament, in Taipei March 15. REUTERS

cross-strait relations.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said the United States opposed "any attempts to determine the future of Taiwan by anything other than peaceful means".

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice plans to raise the issue during her visit to China on March 20-21.

Passage of the bill could harden U.S. opposition to plans by the European Union to lift its ban on arms sales to China, officials and congressional aides said.

The Europeans imposed the embargo after China's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

President George W. Bush has voiced

concerns that ending the embargo could skew the military balance between China and Taiwan, and some U.S. lawmakers have threatened to curtail defence cooperation with Europe if it proceeds.

Washington switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, but the U.S.'s Taiwan Relations Act mandates that the United States supply Taiwan with defensive weapons.

The White House cautioned Taiwan as well.

"We don't believe anyone should be taking unilateral steps, or make unilateral changes that increases tensions," spokesman Scott McClellan said, adding, "We do not support Taiwan independence."

Militiamen kill 30 in northern Kenya : police

NAIROBI, March 15 (Reuters) - At least 30 people were killed during a village raid by militiamen on Tuesday in one of the deadliest such attacks in northeastern Kenya, police said.

Police said most of the 22 villagers killed in the early morning attack on Elgoliche village near Mandera on the Somali border were women and children.

Eight militiamen were also killed.

"Thirty people have been killed so far, 22 are the victims of the attack who are mostly women and children and eight of the attackers have been shot down by security forces and they are still pursuing them," police spokesman Jasper Ombati said.

The area has been the scene of previous fierce fighting between rival Somali clans, which local leaders say

have been fuelled by disputes over natural resources and politics.

Ombati said the attackers had fled further north with Kenyan police flown in from Nairobi in hot pursuit.

He said investigations had been launched to find out whether the militia had links with groups in Somalia or Ethiopia.

"We believe they are militiamen from the Murule clan," he said.

Japan asks for help to solve pirate kidnapping

TOKYO, March 15 (Reuters) - Japan called on the governments of three Southeast Asian nations for help on Tuesday after armed pirates kidnapped three crew members from a Japanese tugboat they attacked in the Malacca Strait.

More than 10 armed pirates on a small boat fired on the Japanese-registered 323-tonne boat "Idaten" in Malaysian waters around 1030 GMT on Monday, kidnapping two Japanese and one Filipino crew member.

The Idaten, owned by Japanese shipping firm Kondo Kaiji, was carrying 14 crew members.

The officials said the other 11 were unharmed.

A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said that Japan had called on the gov-

ernments of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore for cooperation.

"Through the embassies in each nation, we have asked for their help in finding information, ensuring the safety of the three kidnapped men, and investigation," she said.

Singapore said it would do all it could.

"Our port authority has immediately alerted our Coast Guard and all ships within Singapore waters to the incident," its Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

"Singapore will render whatever assistance we can."

The tugboat arrived at the Malaysian island of Penang on Tuesday evening.

Japanese officials said it was

unclear where the pirates went after the attack, although Malaysian police and the Indonesian navy were searching for them.

"There is no real progress," chief cabinet secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told a news conference, adding that no contact had been made with the kidnappers.

The Malacca Straits, one of the world's busiest sea lanes, was rated second worst in terms of piracy by the International Maritime Bureau, an ocean crime watchdog, last month.

The narrow strait between Malaysia and Indonesia, with Singapore at its southern entrance, carries more than a quarter of the world's trade and almost all of Japan and China's crucial oil imports.

Philippine police end prison siege, kill 22

MANILA, March 15 (Reuters) - Philippine police shot dead 22 prisoners as they stormed a Manila jail on Tuesday in a bloody end to a 24-hour stand-off with Islamic militant suspects.

One police officer was killed and six were wounded in the morning assault after troops fired tear gas and sealed the walls of the four-storey building before overpowering the inmates.

The government, embarrassed by the latest in a series of prison security lapses, hailed its security forces for killing three militant leaders suspected of carrying out high-profile kidnappings of foreign tourists in 2000 and 2001.

But the assault drew a quick threat of retaliation from the Abu Sayyaf

group, which has carried out a series of bomb attacks in the Philippines.

"This operation showered with the blood of our brothers will become like vitamins to us," rebel spokesman Abu Solaiman said in a statement sent to religious television network Net25.

"We will bring the war to Manila. That we promise."

The group claimed responsibility for three bombings last month in Manila and southern Mindanao island that killed 13 people and which were seen as an attempt to relieve military pressure on rebels fighting soldiers in a remote southern island.

Despite years of training and on-the-ground advice by U.S. special forces, the government has failed to wipe out the small Abu Sayyaf group.

More than 400 prisoners, including

129 suspected Islamic militants, were being held in the building.

Police said that a core of about 10 Abu Sayyaf members had carried out the uprising, in which the prisoners snatched a gun and shot dead three guards.

A police video taken after the assault and shown on local television showed several dead Abu Sayyaf suspects slumped on the prison floor with bullet wounds.

"Terrorism will never win in the Philippines," President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said in a statement.

"We shall ensure this incident does not happen again."

Rebel commanders dead

Manila police chief Avelino Razon said the police had received intelli-

gence reports as early as last December that Abu Sayyaf suspects might be planning a jail break and were smuggling in parts of weapons, mobile phones and explosives.

"We took some pre-emptive measures, but, apparently, there were lapses on the part of jail officials," he said.

The government said at first it had agreed to the prison rebels' demands, including speeding up long-delayed trials, but the talks broke down on Monday night when the militants demanded food and refused to give up their weapons.

Police said after the assault that they had recovered eight guns from inside the prison.

Monday's uprising came 11 months after a mass escape from a prison on southern Basilan Island.



Philippine detainees form a human chain following the end of a stand-off with police inside Manila's Camp Bagong Diwa March 15. REUTERS

Words of Wisdom



One of the key differences between a dictatorship and a democratic system is the role of the media in general, and that of the official media, in particular. If those individuals in charge of the media feel they are more responsible towards the public than towards the politicians, and perform their job on that basis, then that is a sign of a democratic structure.

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

OUR
OPINIONA game
called politics

News these days has taken a rather hilarious trend. The issues highlighted change just like a fashion. Most media people spend their time following the latest news and covering updates playing into the game of politics or rather the game of fooling the public and distracting their attention.

For example, today Middle East news highlights the Lebanon and Syrian issue while just a while ago it was Iraq and before that Palestine and the security wall. And while we are turning our heads right and left the picture becomes hazy and only those who can see through the shadows can make out what really is happening.

The truth is that we should make it a point not to be fooled anymore. We all, regardless of our orientation have the right to real information and we should be given time to absorb the incoming messages and decide for ourselves what our reaction must be. One of this century's problems is information overload. This is not only true with regard to information on the Internet but it is true in all aspects of life including the news. I once saw an interview for the political analyst Mr. Hassanain Haikal in which he commented that long ago, drama used to copy real life situations, however today, the opposite is happening as politicians are acting the show, playing the roles in the political game. This reminds me of what Shakespeare said so long ago "life is a stage".

This is why we have to be smart today when absorb the media. It is time to be critical about all we hear and see in the news and we have the right to choose our beliefs and not what the media dictates. What the media may glorify today, it could simply tear to shreds tomorrow and it usually does.

We must be selective, choose what to read, what to hear and give our minds space to analyze and decide on an attitude to adopt. It is really time to stand up for ourselves and refuse to be taken for a fool anymore.



Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

Mourning Beirut

MS. TAHANI SAEED AL-KHAIBA
GENDER COORDINATOR
PRSP PROGRAM
OXFAM - GB
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

I was in Lebanon on a training course on gender, citizenship and good governance, with a couple of my colleagues from Oxfam. We arrived on the 23rd Feb., just nine days after the death of Rafiq al-Hariri.

I had been to Beirut before, but this time the city was overwhelmed with sadness and depression. Shock was visible on the faces of the people and it seemed as if they could not accept the fact that al-Hariri was no longer alive. People in the streets and shops were gloomy, we had to stop the taxi driver before reaching our destination fearing that he would not be able to see the road as his eyes were full of tears as he spoke of al-Hariri.

Personally I have felt that the opposition has expressed itself in a peaceful way and the demonstrations were civil and smooth. I was afraid that some parties with special interests would take advantage of this dispute and trigger internal conflict within the

Lebanese community.

The opposition had their right to express their opinion but they should have put the safety and welfare of the nation over our personal requirements and point of views. If it wasn't for the stepping down of the government, God only knows what could have happened. Omar Karami is an experienced politician and his resignation absorbed public's anger and by this act he managed to allow things to settle and not break into something uglier.

However, the overall scene was tense especially the night before the demonstration when the government imposed a curfew from 5am in the city center where the procession was supposed to start the day of the announced demonstration. Our hosts had invited us the night before for a dinner party at the city center and we saw tens of youth who camped in the streets that night so that when the security stops people from entering that zone they are already inside. It was amazing, the spirit was radiating and I had to stop and chat with some of them. They explained that this is a transaction phase in Lebanon and that they want to be part of this movement. They were all heated up and enthusiastic demand-

ing freedom and the evacuation of the Syrians from Lebanon. "We are so happy to be able to express our feelings and we think that those days are like these lived by our fathers during the sixties during the Jamal Abdulnasser and Arab revolutions days. We wouldn't miss this for anything" one of the exited youth told me. They gave us the Lebanese flag and we wished them luck.

The next day the procession took place, but what struck me the most is that during the processions, the Lebanese security forces were smiling. It seemed they had instructions not to clash with the public, but I have never seen in my life such smiling faces of the security force. In fact, this was not only my reflection as the Lebanese Peace Organization organized carried out a beautiful initiative when it arranged for 100 children dressed in white carrying white roses to present the roses to the Lebanese police and security in appreciation of their humane and civil behavior.

It is indeed a transitional phase. The government stepped down, and the opposition felt that it achieved what it wanted but the question remains: is who killed al-Hariri?

About the assassination of Hariri

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The assassination of ex-premier of Lebanon, Rafik Al Hariri, is certainly another sad development amid the peace process going on between Israel and Palestine. The incident raised several questions as to who is behind it. Is it Syria, or the unidentified militant group claiming to kill him and/or US? At the moment it is too early to establish an opinion who killed him. But keeping in view the similar incidents happened in the history of Lebanon as well as the current situations developing from the tug-of-war between Syria and US, one's

mind goes to the fact that the involvement of US in the incident can hardly be ruled out. It's so because it's US that has been asking Syria to surrender willingly to certain conditions and demands. Let's take a look at those demands for which Syria is being pressurized;

1. Giving a clean certificate to US that Syria is not possessing or developing any such weapons like Iran and North Korea have done,
2. Syria was accused of having allowed a safe passage of the militants into Iraq through its porous border.
3. Syria is accused of having harbored those militants who are wanted by US,
4. Syria is threatened to withdraw its troops [about 14,500 stationed in

Lebanon] from Lebanon.

Maybe some more demands will be there, which have not yet come to light, but the apparent ones I just mentioned above.

So one is made to think about why US has voiced so angrily that whoever killed the ex-premier will be punished severely. I smell something different in this context, the involvement of US cannot be ruled out as she might have been trying to justify her impending attack on Syria, and that is another point she will not lose to score by diverting fingers towards Syria for the assassination.

Let's not forget that Syria is the second Muslim country after Iran that is considered to be a major threat to the US blue-eyed boy [Israel].

Letters to the Editor

Responding to
comments on terrorism

I would like to thank you your columnist Al-Haifi for his article "Fighting terrorism with sex?" Of course, such tactics are bound to fail in the long run, and even in the short run, there is nothing to be gained. As you will note, not one shred of useful information has been obtained from such tactics.

The U.S. is less safe that it was four years ago and the U.S. military has lost Iraq. Look at what has happened: Bush has killed about 150,000 people, wounded and crippled probably 200,000, destroyed the infrastructure of Iraq, angered millions, and what has he gained?

An Iranian clergyman, al Sistani, is now running Iraq. Instead of consulting wise leaders in the Middle East and in Europe, Bush decided to embark on a blood revenge war against the Moslems for 9-11, hoping it would make him popular. And he was right. Make no mistake, the majority of American citizens are enjoying the Iraq blood-bath. The majority of Americans are also enjoying the torture and humiliation of Moslem men. That's why Mr. Bush was elected again for 4 more years of slaughter.

As Venezuela's President Chavez has put it - the U.S.A is a terrorist state. But watch Mr. Bush when he attempts to solve his "Iranian nuclear problem" by attacking some other more defenseless country. Let us all hope that Iran secures its nuclear weapons. Then we will see those who oppose Iran like all bullies - a filthy coward.

On another subject, some are still asking 'who killed Rafiq al-Hariri?'

George Bush's spies, that's who. Look at the facts. The body wasn't even cooled and the U.S. ambassador to Syria

was recalled. In fact, the U.S. ambassador had her bags packed before the explosion. Look at more facts: The U.S. went to war against Vietnam on false testimony (Tonkin Resolution) and the U.S. went to war against Iraq on false testimony (where are the WMD, Mr. Bush?)

The U.S. just manufactured an excuse to bomb the hell out of Syria, nothing new there. When is the Arab world going to wake up and understand that the United States is the real source of terrorism?

Robert Lindh
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Street children
need our help

I was struck deeply after I read the article titled "Center for homeless children expands" in regards to homeless children in Yemen. I was moved by the efforts made by the Social Fund for Development to assist in expanding the facility.

As a family violence worker in the U.S., I have encountered many cases where abuse/neglect has been the major cause for the removal of children from their homes. It has also been the reason why many children run away. Understanding this dynamic is crucial only because building more facilities to house the homeless children is a blessing. However, it won't cure the problem.

On the flip-side, I believe reaching out into the community and teaching families how to be supportive parents may provide effective long-term results. Many of times it is due to the parents lack of knowledge on how to parent because of the poor parenting skills they experienced as children.

Even if the family structure is affected by poverty, neglect, abuse, or mental health issues, a strength-based

approach in dealing with family issues may be an outlet for all members of the family to cope. Coping strategies enhance personal growth in each family member to reshape their patterns of behavior and aspire beyond their comfort zone.

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The truth about
the source of terrorism

I read the Common Sense column on the so called "war on terrorism". But I want to say that we all know that there are countries (developed countries) that are behind most (if not all) of those terrorist acts all over the world. And also know that there are some naive youth who were brain-washed by people and countries that have interest in flourishing terrorist and terrorism.

However, we need to clarify one thing. Islamic movements and Islamic groups that work to spread the Islamic teaching and Islamic principles have nothing to do with terrorism and what is going on in the world. Those people who claim that they are part of Islamic groups and kill people left and right have nothing to do with Islam and Islamic movements around the world. We all know that Allah would prefer destroying the Holy Kaaba stone, instead of killing one human being with no reason, no matter what religion this human being follows.

So let's all work together to uncover the facts and search for who is behind all the mess in our region? Who has the interest to weaken our Islamic nation from East to West? Who is responsible of creating all those borders between Arab countries? These are the questions that we should ask, and try to really find an answer for.

Do not tell me "let's fight Terrorism", and do not tell me "if you are not with me, you are against me"...

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Article against
Ahmar justifiable?

It is not only misleading, but false, to say that the nation, the international community as well as the expatriate community were appalled by the article written by Al-Mithaq's political editor about Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmar and his sons.

As a Yemeni I understand why someone in the media spoke out and said what he said about Al-Ahmar. I'm sure that millions of Yemenis also understood what the writer wanted to say. As far as the international community and the expatriates, no one really cares about the story. To the world, Abdullah Al-Ahmar is not seen as a substantial figure.

Even though Al-Ahmar is the head of the Yemen's parliament and many of his sons are also members of the parliament, some of them are sometimes reported to be the first to violate and break the laws and rules of the country.

What irritates me and millions of Yemenis like me is the fact that president Saleh had allegedly sent a delegation of high officials to apologize to the Sheikh. Even worse, the author of the article is going to be prosecuted for the things he wrote. What happened to the democracy that President Saleh and Yemeni officials boast about to foreign governments and foreign press is truly shameful! It seems that even the concept of democracy and press freedom is yet to be understood in Yemen.

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COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Since when is
Israel a dictator
of morals?

It is really amazing to hear Israeli officials speak sometimes about the shortcomings of other nations or people, while holding themselves in such high esteem as a shining beacon of morals and sound sovereign behavior. As if people are expected to ignore the black (without any racial implications intended of course) history of Israel's coming into existence and its continuous manifestations of all the evils that a modern society must conjure up to carry on with its expansionist agenda. So, how much weight should really be given to the statements of Israeli officials on such matters of human rights or world peace, when the only way that Israel could come into being is by violating all the human rights that anyone can think of. It is even more of a comedy to hear Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, often lecture on civilized behavior and modern western ideals, when he was the mastermind of more than one massacre. Then there is the reference to ethics that the Israelis like to lecture about, when just about everything that Israel has obtained was obtained by the most flagrant disrespect of ethical or conscientious behavior, not to mention the heavy dose of arm twisting the international Zionist establishment relies on to "lobby" on behalf of Israel in the international community.

Just imagine, Israel is trying to convince the Arabs that it is promoting democracy in the Middle East, on behalf of the people of the Arab World, and has gone even so far as to say that it will not sign anymore peace agreements with any Arab Governments, unless they are democratic governments. Yet, most Arabs are aware that Israel has actually encouraged the establishment of tyrannical regimes, because democratic governments, as the Israelis well know, must succumb to the will of the people, and in the will of most Arabs, Israel is to be treated as a dangerous enemy, with a chauvinistic philosophy that is contradictory to the moral convictions that actually mostly had their origins in this region, not in Tel Aviv or Washington, as Israel also well knows.

On the other hand, there are the statements of Israeli officials that really are so ridiculous on top of being an insult to human intelligence. Listen to what the Israeli Foreign Minister recently said about the possibility of Iran possessing an atomic bomb: "The idea that this tyranny of Iran will hold a nuclear bomb is a nightmare, not only for us but for the whole world." To start with, the Israeli Foreign Minister should be reminded that when Iran was under the autocratic rule of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Israel had the most cozy of relations with the Shah's regime. No sensible human being will ever dismiss the fact that if there was any regime that fit the description of "tyranny", it was the Shah's regime. Moreover, the Shah's coziness with the Israelis was absolutely in total disregard of his "subjects" perception of the Zionist state, which they considered to be just one manifestation of his tyrannical rule! Moreover, any objective observer of the Iranian scene will confirm that Iran is far from being the tyranny described by the hate filled Israeli Foreign Minister. Not only are the Iranians far better off under the present regime, than they were under the Shah, but Iran is probably one of the most dynamic democracies of the Moslem World, and the regime was set up with the full backing and support of the Iranian people. Now we come to the matter of possessing nukes. If there is any nightmare that really already exists in the region, it is the more than 200 nuclear weapons possessed by the Zionist state. Such an arsenal by any means cannot be viewed as merely serving defensive purposes, as the Israelis wish the world to believe. There are no adversaries facing Israel that have any nuclear capability to speak of and Israel's conventional military capability is far superior to the combined military prowess of the entire Arab World, which it must be remembered is not under any unified command structure, and more often than not is dedicated to maintaining the political regimes in power in most of the Arab states. Thus this claim gives rise to suspicion. In fact, Israel's nuclear capability is already a nightmare even to Israel itself, as many reports have stated that the Israeli nuclear facilities are leaking radiation and are already presenting a threat to the Israeli public and the people of the neighboring Arab states. Surely such massive nuclear capability is simply not meant to just to protect Israel from her "hostile Arab neighbors", but rather to give Israel more distant international outreach that could be used to threaten other states or embezzle demands from them that advance Israel's interests. So, such statements are more worthy of a state that has been a nightmare to the people of the region almost since the Balfour Declaration was issued (1917).

It is really ironic that Tel Aviv - and for that matter Washington also - could go on lecturing about how nations should be governed and the application of morals, when their history is riddled with the worst illustrations of man's inhumanity to man. Both countries were established at the expense of the indigenous populations of the land they sit on. This expense is measured in rivers of blood, land, and the eradication of a once thriving culture in both cases. Furthermore, both societies have a dismal racial and ethnic record, with the US only recently coming to terms with its horrendous treatment of the black population in that country, which was brought over under one of the most oppressive slavery regimes in history, and even after their freedom from slavery, still were refused the most basic of human rights, not undermining their right to human dignity.

As for the Israelis, they uprooted the entire population of Palestine, most of whom are still living on the handouts of the international community under the most oppressive "foreign" occupation of what remains of their land, which continues to shrink, while being subjected to the most dehumanizing efforts to annihilate them or remove them to make way for the further expansion of the Zionist state. In the West Bank and Gaza, the nightmare is as real as the air the Palestinians are breathing, and not just a figment of the imagination. If the situations in Gaza and the West Bank are the outcome of western ideals, we certainly do not want them. In this context, who can really be trusted with nuclear weapons, states that thrive on stealing the land and livelihoods of indigenous nations, or a nation that may have a right to defend itself from possibly becoming victims of the Zionist nightmare, which is already a reality?



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A week in review

Presented by Mohammed Khidr

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Main headline

- Pessimistic international warnings about mysterious future surrounding Yemen

- PM forms a committee to study situation of university professors

- Justice Minister discusses ways and means of judiciary independence with chief justices

- Security chief of Mareb denies the stealing of mummies in the governorate

- In Saadah, a person kills five people and runs away

- Al-Khouba residents fear from a new "tsunami" hitting their town

Columnist Dr. Hosni al-Jawshaie says in an article the strike announced by Yemeni universities professors, physicians and pharmacists has entered its third week and the government has not offered the suitable solution up until now. The government has the habit of always taking the wrong course or the counter-stream. The proposed solutions are not convincing to all parties. All that has been submitted until now to the union of teaching staff or the union of physicians and pharmacists pours in the field of tranquilizers, but as for radical solutions, there is none in the offering. On the contrary, the government has pored oil on fire when it has given the green light to presidents of universities to begin the process of putting pressure on the teaching staff.

It is clear that the government does not want to bear further financial burdens therefore it has decided to dispense with the bigger number of Yemeni and non-Yemeni teaching staff in order to use their salaries for raising the salaries of remaining others. This is a sterile policy not in interest of higher education and its outputs because the teaching staffs who work in private universities form more than 80% of the total number of teachers. Foreign teachers would form

only 10% of that number.

In other words, the government has to reconsider all salaries of government employees and not only salaries of organized unions whose members rally behind their leaderships and declare various strikes, which in turn harm the country's economy.

26 September weekly,
organ of the
Yemen Armed
Forces, 10 Mar.
2005.

Main headlines

- President Saleh: Efforts would be continued for enhancement of defensive capability of our armed forces
- Yemeni-Eritrean commission signs seven agreements on cooperation, Eritrean president praises president Saleh's efforts I realization of security and stability in the region
- Attending ceremony of handing over border demarcation documents, Saudi interior minister prince Naif in Sana'a
- The Yemeni government prepares an official response to American Department of State's reports
- New legislations for strengthening Yemeni woman political participation, before parliament
- Higher Council of woman discusses enhancement of the woman's political, economic and social role
- Minister of oil and minerals heads a delegation to Paris to take part in conference of Yemeni gas project financiers

Columnist Faisal Jallul says in his article that American administration and since the events of 11 September 2001 insists to say that the Middle East is a seminary of dangers threatening it. Those dangers lie in this vital area of the world, and to tackle that problem, the new conservatives proposed a start of war of civilizations. That maybe called the talk of President Bush about the necessity that his country should launch a new crusade war against the region. But soon he has discarded that talk after some of his spokesmen mentioned that

the matter did not exceed a slip of the tongue. After the transient talk of a crusade war the opinion of the American administration settled on adoption of the idea of freedom and democracy and to circulate it in the Middle East, claiming that the Americans have to act beforehand regarding those dangers in the region's countries through changing it. Consequently, they would spread the said values and rather impose them by force if necessary. Thus, there was the singling out of axis of evil countries represented in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

Then Kabul and Baghdad were occupied and since then Washington is still causing us headache with talking about the afghan and Iraqi democracy as an example to follow suit.

The problem of the United States of America in the Middle East is similar to the colonialist countries that occupy others' lands and wish to give that occupation all descriptions of benefits of that occupation. They work on convincing the concerned peoples that the occupation is not in reality an occupation but rather freedom and democracy. But the difference between Washington and the European colonialist countries is that the latter was intelligent and smart whilst the American colonialism has beaten record figures in bragging and stupidity.

Al-Sahwa weekly,
10 Mar.2005.

Main headlines

- Wages strategy, narcotizing injection to pass on the price dose
- Physicians and pharmacists union suspends strike, grant government a grace period
- Chechnya leader Maskhadov killed
- Female journalists without borders organization declared
- Malaria sweeps Bani Saad area
- Local and world denunciation against aggression on lawyers and journalists at capital secretariat

SKETCHED
OPINION

By Samer A.

appeals courtroom

- Prosecution rejects re-issuance of Al-Shoura newspaper
- Women National Committee denies what al-Mithaq newspaper has published of statements on Islah conference

Columnist Zaid al-Shami writes that after a long waiting and media propaganda and political preparation, the government has announced what it has called as wages strategy. The strategy project admits the existence of big corruption inside the state institutions and the employees performance is very low, criteria of salaries are incorrect. In addition, equality and justice in receiving salaries even by those holding the same degree are absent.

The new project deems the employee is a problem but not a human wealth, and should be ridden off. It has overlooked the possibility of benefiting from this wealth, rehabilitating and training it. Focus was put on the ridding of the largest number of those employees, which consequently would increase the number of the unemployed in the country and the destruction of hundreds of thousands of families. Despite that the

talk about the strategy had begun four years ago, the project has drawn up a program for five years to be implemented by the year 2011. Because the government want to send to pension hundreds of employees, the project stipulated that the pensioners cases would not be considered but after the 2011. Pensioners are now suffering from negligence and low level of salaries. The new strategy has come with many problems needing to be another strategy to tackle and it has no clear-cut vision or definite financial figures that would make the employee feel that he would get a salary guaranteeing for him dignified living.

Saut al-Shoura
weekly, issued by
Union of People's
Forces of Yemen, 14
Mar.2005.

Main headlines

- Criminal court considers the case of al-Dailami and Muftah, security arrests their relatives
- University professors suspend their strike on conditions
- On the sales tax law, Merchants

request the government to amend the law and remove dangers it implies

Writer Aidi Al-manifi says it was supposed, according to the primary judgment, that the Al-Shoura newspaper would be released and permitted again to issue after six months of suspension. It was also supposed that beginning from last week it should have been on newsstands, but the general prosecution refused that under an illegal pretext that there was an appeal of the verdict and thus the newspaper must not resume its publication. The prosecution also demanded intensification of the punishment and appeal the verdict against it. This means there is an intention to extend and double the period of the verdict against it.

We will continue calling on the government to respect the Yemeni human rights and also to respect its constitution, laws and international agreements it had already endorsed. The government should immediately release the Shoura newspaper and also set free the journalist Abdulkarim al-Khaiwani and others because the question of prolongation has become well-known to the world.

VACANCIES

With the Small and Micro Enterprises Promotion Service (SMEPS)

The Social Fund for Development has developed the Yemen national strategy for small and micro enterprises (SME) development, and the strategy was approved by the Council of Ministers on January 17, 2005. It includes the establishment in 2005 of a national agency to promote the small and micro enterprises – the Small and Micro Enterprises Promotion Service -(SMEPS) - which will be responsible for directing and coordinating activities to provide improved non-financial services for small and micro enterprises, primarily in the non-agricultural sectors, by planning, directing, coordinating and monitoring several programs in cooperation with the concerned private- and public-sector parties that will provide services for the SME sector.

Those programs will include several types of initiatives, such as:

- Short training courses for improving the technical skills of small and micro enterprise owners and their experienced employees.
- Training youth in vocational training centers and community colleges on small and micro enterprise management.
- Arranging training/study tours for small and micro enterprise owners in Yemen and abroad to improve their abilities and the quality of their products, and widen their perceptions of new business opportunities and SME sub-sectors.
- Promoting development of new types of businesses and methods of work;
- Arrangement of visits for consultants to study selected SME sub-sectors to identify their needs and ways to develop the sub-sectors.
- Arrangement of visits for consultants and experienced workers in particular sub-sectors to help small and micro enterprise owners in planning and expanding their enterprises.
- Establishment of an information network to provide non-financial services, which may include internet services and specialist advisers, to help increase the ability of small and micro enterprise owners to take advantage of such information on markets, improved and new products, production techniques, and sources of raw materials.

It is expected that by its fifth year of operations the SMEPS agency will have helped to establish a number of private enterprises providing services to SME owners in the non-agricultural sectors.

The Social Fund for Development hereby announces job vacancies for the specialists that will establish, direct and implement the SMEPS in Sana'a and several other major Yemeni cities and their environs:

1- Managing Director – MD (1 vacancy in Sana'a) :

S/he will be responsible for establishing and directing the SMEPS agency and coordinating between the agency and the Social Fund for Development, as well as other concerned organizations. The MD will perform the following duties:

- Develop and direct the implementation of an action plan to establish the

SMEPs, as well as annual work plans for it.

- Coordinate SMEPS' activities with donor and implementing organizations (service providers), and to sign implementation agreements with service providers and SMEs.
- Hire and manage the SMEPS staff team.
- Prepares activity reports for the supervisory parties.

The successful applicant is expected to meet the following requirements:

- University degree in a related technical or economics/marketing field.
- 5 or more years work experience, with a minimum 2 years in a senior managing position.
- Proven teamwork and leadership abilities.
- Spoken and written fluency in English as well as Arabic is essential.
- Computer skills.
- Knowledge of and experience in small and micro enterprises is strongly preferred.
- Must be willing and able to undertake extensive travel within Yemen and abroad.

2- Financial and Administrative Manager (1 vacancy in Sana'a) :

S/he will be responsible for establishing and maintaining the financial and administrative systems of the SMEPS agency, and for the conduct and supervision of its record-keeping, accounting, and administrative affairs. His/her main duties will be:

- To help the MD in setting up a financial and administrative system for the agency, and subsequently operating that system under the MD's overall supervision.
- To oversee the financial and accounting side of the SMEPS, and to prepare its financial statements.
- To supervise the administrative affairs of the agency.

The successful applicant is expected to meet the following requirements:

- University degree, or an equivalent high and recognized professional qualification, in accounting.
- A work experience is preferred.
- Computer skills, including knowledge and experience of accounting software packages.

3- Small and Micro Enterprise Development Project Officer - SMED (10 vacancies in Sana'a and other principal Yemeni cities) :

The Project Officers will be responsible for developing, launching, administering and monitoring SMEPs projects and activities in cooperation with concerned parties, within the several types of SMEPS programs listed above, and will coordinate with the different parties to monitor the projects and assist their implementation as necessary: such parties will include small and micro enterprise

owners and SME associations of such owners; private and public training and other non financial service providers; and individual consultants and experienced workers. Incentive training will be given to the project officers. They will perform the following duties:

- Assist in the development of proposals for projects and activities for improving non-financial services for SMEs within the context of the SMEPS action plan and annual work plans, and assess such proposals originating from SMEs, service providers, or other relevant organizations.
- Prepare the project plans and documents under the direction of the Managing Director.
- Make contacts with, and liaisons between, different concerned parties in Yemen and abroad as required.
- Monitor the progress of the projects and activities, including the fulfillment of conditions for SMEPS financial contributions, and prepare periodic progress reports for the MD.
- Develop SMEPS corporate knowledge and expertise in various relevant fields and sectors.

The successful applicants are expected to meet the following requirements:

- University degree in relevant specialist technical or economics/marketing field.
- A work experience is preferred.
- Knowledge and working experience in at least one of these fields or sectors: marketing, information technology, business and/or technical training, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, electronic engineering, clothing and fabrics, agro-industry and food processing.
- Spoken and written fluency in English or French as well as Arabic is preferred.
- Knowledge of and experience in small and micro enterprises is preferred.
- Computer skills (word-processing, spreadsheets, databases, internet use and search).
- Must be willing and able to undertake travel within Yemen and abroad.

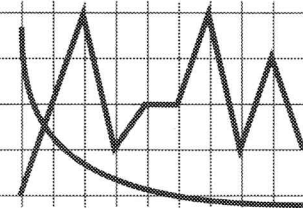
Application should be enclosed in an envelope written on it "Small and Micro Enterprises Promotion Service-vacancy" and delivered during official working hours 08:00 to 16:00 o'clock (Saturday through Wednesday), or by 12:00 o'clock on Thursdays, at the following address:

The Social Fund for Development, Faj Attan, Sana'a. Republic of Yemen.
Telephones: +967 1 449669, Fax: +967 1 449670
Or send by e-mail: sfd@sfd-yemen.org

The application should specify the position applied for.

The last day for receiving applications will be on March 31, 2005.

YT Business

Exchange Rate for
the Yemeni Rial

Currency	Buying	Selling
US Dollar	187.7600	187.9900
Sterling Pound	360.0300	360.4700
Euro	251.5900	251.9000
Saudi Rial	50.0700	50.1300
Kuwaiti Dinar	642.6800	643.4700
UAE Dirhem	51.1200	51.1800
Egyptian Pound	32.3700	32.4100
Bahraini Dinar	498.0400	498.6500
Qatari Rial	51.5900	51.6500
Jordanian Dinar	265.0100	265.3400
Omani Rial	487.6800	488.2800
Swiss Franc	162.2400	162.4400
Swedish Crown	27.7400	27.7800
Japanese Yen	1.7936	1.7958

Source: Central Bank of Yemen

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The National Hotel and Tourism Institute (NAHOTI) and the Modern American Language Institute (MALI) signed an agreement last week in which MALI will provide intensive skills training for NAHOTI trainees.

The direct beneficiaries are the government of Yemen, represented by the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training. NAHOTI's academic teaching staff will be the participants in the training programs.

MALI is Yemen's only institute that is certified as a University of Cambridge diploma center and is the only center to offer the internationally accredited travel and tourism diploma.

The MALI program is aimed at those who are interested in a career in travel and tourism and in one of many linked service industries. The qualification may also be used by those already working in travel and tourism who wish to have their skills and



Those involved in the signing of MALI to provide training for the National Hotel and Tourism Institute trainees (from the left): Tarek Abulzhab, Project Coordinator of GET, Mazen Luqman, Managing Director at MALI, Gamil Redha, Project Coordinator of SPAVT, and Kai Partale, Senior Consultant at SPAVT (Yemen Times photo)

experience recognized and certificated. The University of Cambridge, based in England, will give certificates to students who successfully complete the program.

The program is under the umbrella of the Strengthening Priority Areas of Vocational Training (SPA-VT) project, funded by the European Commission (EC) and managed by the European consultants, German Education and Training GmbH (GET).

The European Commission (EC) supports the strengthening of the hotel and tourism sector in Yemen. It aims to build the institutional capacity of Yemen's vocational training system through further development of tourism and its importance to the economy.

The EC also focuses on strengthening the performance capacity by improving the trainers' qualifications through programs on six key occupations: front office, house keeping, food and beverage service, food production, tour guide and tour operator.

Equality still far off:

Women in state administration

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A recent study showed that the proportion of Yemeni women working in government institutions reached 2.76 per cent of employees. There is only one woman in the parliament (and 300 men) and two women in the Shura Council (and 109 men).

Women's representation in the local councils does not exceed 35 of the 6000 members. There is one woman minister and not one ambassador. In the diplomatic service, there are two women holding a degree of minister plenipotentiary among 108 males, two female undersecretaries, and 11 female directors general. There are only 32 women serving within the judiciary.

The study said that there are many local, regional and international factors that limit

women from attaining at positions of decision-making. Local factors are mainly because of poor education and the failure to change many of misguided attitudes towards women. Cultural and social traditions also tend to see women as dependent upon men. In addition, the political parties have, thus far been more interested in women as voters than as candidates.

The study pointed to the way that poverty impacts upon women more than men. It is estimated that 83 per cent of the people living in rural areas are affected by poverty, 87 per cent of whom suffer from food poverty. The study published by the National Committee of Women confirms the significant gaps in education levels. In the academic year of 2002-2003 62 per cent males and only 38 per cent females entered into education.

There is a further gap between education levels in rural and urban regions.

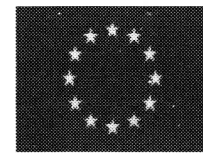
The rate of illiteracy among

Yemeni rural women reaches some 78 per cent, while in the urban areas it is still around 40 per cent. The study says, however, that recent years have seen a slight drop in illiteracy among females of 15 years of age.

Regarding health services, the study confirmed the lack of equality in receiving health care. The health sector is suffering from deterioration aggravated by scarcity of resources necessary for spending on public health.

Many women are in a state of economic subservience to men and many are exposed to poverty and are being compelled to both work inside and outside the house.

The study also shows a large gap in what is guaranteed for women in the constitution and the law and what is actually practiced on the ground. The proportion of women exposed to violence is still high, some estimate that as many as 50 per cent of women experience some form of violence.

Support for Administrative Reform (SAR) Project
EuropeAid/113703/C/SV/YE

Employment Opportunities

Project Secretaries / Office Managers (4 Posts)

The Support for Administrative Reform (SAR) project is fully funded by the European Union (EU), and is located in the Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance in Sana'a. The project operates in three (3) sub-offices located at: Ministry of Public Health and Population, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and the Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority (CAMA)

The SAR project is seeking to employ three dedicated and professional secretaries / office managers to work in the project offices, providing secretarial and administrative support to EU long term advisors

Roles and Responsibilities.

General office management, filing, and diary keeping
Limited document translation, (English / Arabic)
Word processing

Qualification

Minimum of higher education certificate / degree
Good English skills
Good organisational skills
Proven computer end user skills (MS Office applications)
ICDL - International Computer Driving License an advantage

To apply for the above positions, please fax or email a letter of application and your CV to: -

EU Team Leader
SAR Project
CSMP
Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance

Fax: 481 951 (Sana'a)
email paul.martin@yemenar.org

Closing date for CV's - Seven (7) days after this publication

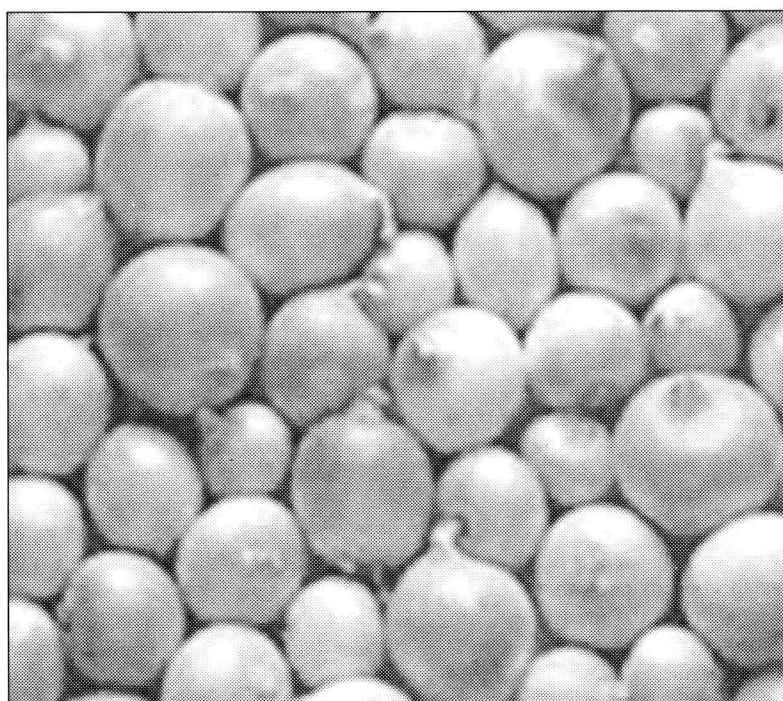
Yemeni onions
invades Saudi markets

By YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Saudi investors importing onions from Yemen say that there are more than 180 tons crossing the border each day.

The Saudi newspaper "Al Iqtisadiyah" said that the reasons behind the rise in the volume of Yemeni onion imports is mainly due to the Arab agreement on customs duty reforms.

Yemeni farmers say that the Baftum onion, which is grown in Hadramout valley is the most popular. This species was awarded the prize of the Arab Organisation for Development as the best variety of onion because of its quality, resistance to disease, and longevity.



Abdulghani Ali: one of great men in Yemen's history



BY GHAZI ALI
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Whoever passed away and left decent reputation and kindness behind is not dead. Abdulghani Ali, the chaste man and wise scholar; one of the prominent revolutionaries and one of the makers of the economic, critical and financial policies.

It is our right as well as the right of sons and generations to recognize the role played by such a great man after the national Revolution. In a short review, it is not possible to mention all the qualities of such a great man, however, his brother Ghazi made a mention of the life of late Abdulghani, he did so in full.

'A symposium heading 'The famous forty, 1947 was recently held, under the sponsorship of YCSR-YAI (Yemen Centre for Studies & Research and American Institute for Yemeni Studies) and was attended by many audience on the first day in the auditorium hole of COCA (Central Organization for Control & Accountability) and on the second day in YCSR meeting room.

The symposium was in fact organized under the Chairmanship of Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Eryani and Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Makaleh, President of YCSR on the first hand in coordination with Dr. Christopher Edens of the AIYS and Dr. Robert Burrowes, Political Scientist of the University of Washington. A working paper was prepared by Mr. Burrowes, presented and summarized to the audience on the first day of the meeting. Some key questions were raised by four of the audience but in vain unanswered, given poor excuses in blunt way and deaf ears for a next day answer similar to that from a teacher to his students.

The paper that was distributed to audience containing combination of ambiguity, a declared enhancement in favor of 'The Famous Forty, 1947 Pioneers' including information and other references. It has fallen short of accuracy and perhaps still it is aimed to

initiate justification for sufficient grounds to the first step of a newly written history of Yemen in the English-US version likely to be counted upon as future reference to a new history for Yemen. Yet the paper has even gone far beyond limits in serving as well in a form of propaganda to some gentlemen, who were among the second mission and to a few in the third generation of scholars who left from Yemen in the fifth and sixth decades. The greater astonishment was the act of separable behaviors in not mentioning the Yemeni scholar who then left on private scholarship from Aden in 1947, at their own father's expense, and so on, etc.

Our hero here, a pioneer, most talented and a gift of God in a time of need, was Dr. Abdul Ghani Ali Ahmed, whose name was as in all cases, occasions, deliberately absented, marked unaccounted for, ungratefully hidden from history papers or perhaps fallen in a mode of protectiveness even this time by the American writer and fellowship comrade from YCSR sponsoring the symposium perhaps in a discriminative act of behaviors.

Dr. Abdul Ghani Ali Ahmed was a true hero in the making of the '26th of September 1962 Revolution'. He was the 'one' only member from civil services in the 'First Yemen Revolutionary Board of Command'. He and Dr. Abdul Raouf Abdul Rehman Rafai Al-Shamiry, were the only 'two' graduated who returned to Sana'a and worked in 'bait al-maal' 'finance bureau' for Imam Ahmed bin Yehya bin Hamid Ad-Deen in the Royal Palace. They were the two economists who knew the movements, activities, the insight and inside of Imam and the Royal palace. He and Dr. A. R. Rafai, were the two unchallenged and key architects who initiated the fundamental grounds in planning and organizing the creation of the revolution day. They were the initiators and architects in the success of the Yemen economy. Two months from the revolution day, Rafai expired in a plane crash and Abdul Ghani Ali found himself alone - to plan for every thing and to organize the finance among which issuing, signing and endorsing the first

Yemen currency in coins and in notes of one Riyal, five and ten Riyals. Even the governor of the CBY who joined finance service when he returned from abroad on perhaps the introduction of late Mohammed Mussawa, he was then young and now he has printed attractive book on the 'Currency of Yemen' yet master's voice denied and given little or bellow initial reference, on the financial figure who architected and gave birth to Yemen economy and boost its financial policies from vacant and poverty to a substantially recognized countable position - thanks to heaven.

Dr. Abdul Ghani was real architect in all financial and economical organization of Yemen including but not limited to, currency control, the banking system, YOMINCO, YGEC, NWSA, Customs, Tax Authority, Grain & Foreign Trade Corp, Sana'a University, and formed the infrastructures, upraise and generated the country from birth to the 20th Century, in spite of five years of civil war started after the revolution period till the organized cue of November 5, 1967, by the so called moderate group when influenced by foreign neighborhood during the dismantling of Egyptian force when embarked from Yemen back home after Egyptian-Israeli 1967 war. Dr. Makaleh, Chairman of YCSR, could have appraised Bob that Dr. A. Ghani Ali was the Ministry of Information and South Yemen Affairs from mid April 64, when he was under his administration in the Yemen broadcasting station! In addition, Dr. A. Ghani was very sensitive, a poet and intellectual writer of verses of poetry. His poems remains in save custody over many years for it is being left in good care of Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Makaleh, who has already demonstrated quite a few of them publicly and promised over times, to maintain them in groups, rephrase them in collections together and perhaps hopefully combine them in attractive illustration prior to its reproduction and final printing stage under his care and honest supervision. Abdul Ghani was a treasure deserving



Late Abdulghani Ali

volumes of authors' writing on different approaches in economy related, political science, jurisprudence & legislative, poetry & literature for on the performance and accomplishments realized during the years of his services not just a biography. For a legal man holding a Degree of "Barrister at Law with honor" from Cairo, MA and PhD from Cincinnati Ohio University, a talented Economist, a poet and a creator of many achievements who then inspired every one of his time by his motives and love to the nation.

Most interestingly were those points given in the paper presented by Bob Burrowes perhaps if my understanding is not incorrect, intended in conjunction with YCSR's support to influence a history book for Yemen in English language ready made in USA. While history can not be utilized for propaganda purpose to serve to the benefit of a handful supervisory team of gentlemen assumed to provide feed back, data acquisition, knowledgeable support, acquaintance, translations and the related services in to a foreign language. It has proved beyond doubts that U.S. is aiding and exposing to Arab countries the sense of transparency not in its theoretical ideology but perhaps in its proper formation and

implementation. In anticipation of such transparency, Yemen history has to adhere to the standards of accuracy, prepared on basis of principles and merits in order to achieve an acceptable goal to speak for itself not only in the new era but also for future generations. Data and informative details on those honest heroes who gave their lives in revolting against the Imam dictatorship and stood by their principles in sacrifice for building the nation's economy, prosperity and ensuring stability to the massive population has to be highlighted and made accessible but must not be dismissed or forgotten when the status of history can then be realized and prevail to the new generations to come.

Additionally, need not be forgotten for the same cause, the two hero silent partners and most competent policy makers who then continued to have their say in the decision making. The one foremost financial figure who gave birth to the Yemen economy from below zero level was Dr. Abdul Ghani Ali, due to his competence, cleanliness and honesty and the other one was a military pioneer Col. Abdullah Guzaian. Both should never be ignored not only by YCSR and YAI but also by any and all intellectuals, researchers and governmental authorities in Yemen. No one on the Yemen soil and those on earth who knew of them, can deny their roll and performance. Musheer Abdullah Al-Salal had little or no say when ruling and enhancing policies in their absence but to consult them in years of his commandment. The sincerity of the two associated with many other factors including those honest unnamed hero silent partners and the responsiveness of the massive population then lead to the success of Republic.

Those heroes who then intended to turned Yemen 'a country of the middle ages' to 'jump to the 20th century' in five years of sleepless days and nights between 26 September to 5 November 67, unifying the scattered lands, planning and fetching the broken financial status from below zero level in the years of civil war to a sound economy

in the hope to implement the 'Japanese ideology and experience' undertaken after world-war II, in bring about a success to the Yemenis, a nation from the unknown part of the global who a few or nobody knew about since, to the new world. Wouldn't all that rewarding the treasure and worth deserving the world admiration?

Those heroes who then served under the Imamate's rules, undergone hardship, years of bitterness, quietly and patiently encountered pressures and enormous troubles, resisted the sufferings of years of dictatorship and finally planned and created the New Revolution on the day of 26th of September 1962. Those people deserving the rewards when one intends to write the history of Yemen in English US version. The principles of fairness must practically prevail in deeds from all the assignees during acquisition of proper data, obtaining information and references that ought to be true and proper leading to a trustworthy and impartiality but not favoring friends nor be bias on account of national interests consequently causing controversy that may lead to accountable consequences. In consideration of above, it is my earnest hope that one day, a genuine service and work performance can be secured to prevail longer. Who knows, perhaps it wouldn't be a surprise when not in the too distance future, a history of Yemen in its English book, could be found in one of the libraries of Washington DC or perhaps still accessible from the web-site.

Perhaps our good friend, Bob could not be blamed in having his thumb print in the research for a probable history for Yemen. As in the say, 'Sin writes history, goodness is silent'. For those English spoken who have participated in demonstrating their capability in its preparation, could probably be questionable for clarifications especially when a number of them were not in Sana'a until about the seventies. Yes again, 'The good we do today becomes the happiness of tomorrow'. Two email messages were sent in a rush to Bob on 5 and 6 March 05, expressing relevant opinion.

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Study says mountain living good for heart and health

LONDON (Reuters) - If you want to live longer and lower the risk of heart disease, a move to the mountains may help.

Research by scientists in Greece shows that mountain dwelling is good for the heart and longevity. People living at higher altitude have lower odds of dying from heart disease than those closer to sea level, even if they have factors that could increase their risk.

"Residence in mountainous areas seems to have a 'protective effect' from total and coronary mortality," said Dr Nikos Baibas of the University of Athens.

He and his colleagues suspect that the increased exercise from walking up mountainous terrain gives the heart a good workout and enables it to cope with lower levels of oxygen.

The researchers studied the health records and death rates of 1,150 Greeks who lived in three villages near Athens over 15 years. One village was 1,000 yards above sea level and the other two were in low-lying areas.

Although men and women living in the mountainous village had higher blood pressure rates and other risk factors than people in the other villages, they had a lower rate of death from heart disease and other causes after a 15 year follow-up.

"The contrast was more evident among men than among women," Baibas added in a report in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

Heart disease is one of the world's top killers. Smoking, high blood pressure, raised cholesterol levels, being overweight or obese and a family history of the illness increase the odds of developing the disease.

Anti-Cancer Compound in Green Tea Identified

By PATRICIA REANEY

LONDON (Reuters) - Spanish and British scientists have discovered how green tea helps to prevent certain types of cancer.

Researchers at the University of Murcia in Spain (UMU) and the John Innes Center (JIC) in Norwich, England have shown that a compound called EGCG in green tea prevents cancer cells from growing by binding to a specific enzyme.

"We have shown for the first time that EGCG, which is present in green tea at relatively high concentrations, inhibits the enzyme dihydrofolate reductase (DHFR), which is a recognized, established target for anti-cancer drugs," Professor Roger Thorneley, of JIC, told Reuters.

"This is the first time, to our knowledge, a known target for an anti-cancer drug has been identified as being inhibited by EGCG," he added.

Green tea has about five times as much EGCG as regular tea, studies



have shown. It decreased rates of certain cancers but scientists were not sure what compounds were involved or how they worked. Nor had they determined how much green tea a person would have to drink to have a

beneficial effect, he said.

Thorneley said EGCG is probably just one of a number of anti-cancer mechanisms in green tea.

"We have identified this enzyme in tumour cells that EGCG targets and understand how it stops this enzyme from making DNA. This means we may be able to develop new anti-cancer drugs based on the structure of the EGCG molecule," Thorneley explained.

The scientists decided to look at EGCG after they realized its structure was similar to a cancer drug called methotrexate.

"We discovered that EGCG can kill cancer cells in the same way as methotrexate," Dr Jose Neptuno Rodriguez-Lopez, of UMU, a joint author of the research published in the journal Cancer Research.

EGCG binds strongly to DHFR,

which is essential in both healthy and cancerous cells. But it does not bind as tightly as methotrexate, so its side effects on healthy cells could be less severe than those of the drug.

Thorneley said EGCG could be a lead compound for new anti-cancer drugs.

The findings could also explain why women who drink large amounts of green tea around the time they conceive and early in their pregnancy may have an increased risk of having a child with spina bifida or other neural tube disorders.

Women are advised to take supplements of folic acid because it protects against spina bifida. But large amounts of green tea could decrease the effectiveness of folic acid.

"This enzyme, (DHFR), is the one folic acid supplements are given for. Folic acid deficiency leads to neural tube development defects," Thorneley added.

Police Hospital responds

By COLONEL HAMOUD MOHAMMED AL-KUDAIMI

We have received a letter from the management of the Police General

Hospital in Sana'a dated February 19, 2005 reacting to the interview conducted by the Yemen Times with Dr. Rosa Dirhim Mukrid published in issue No. 787 dated November 4, 2004. That is before three months. We are surprised at the belated reply of the hospital although the Minister

of Interior met Mohammed bin Sallam, interviewer, and discussed the issue a few days after the interview.

Nevertheless, and despite the late response, the Yemen Times will give the hospital's management the right to have their response published on the same page, which featured the interview. What follows is the reply:

"Dear Editor,

The Yemen Times published in its issue No 787 dated November 4, 2004, an interview titled "Hospital demands and the ministry asleep

...weak medical system", by Mohammed bin Sallam in which the writer quoted claims of an employee in the hospital, Dr. Rosa Dirhim Mukrid.

We do not claim perfection but whoever does not work does not make mistakes. You can visit the hospital or ask previous visitors. No new hospital in Yemen has reached such a status as did our hospital, which performed two hysterectomies by uteruscope. This is an example, which is a clear evidence of success, staff's proficiency, and efficient administration aided by the leader-

ship of the Ministry represented in the Financial and Administrative Sector. You can also make sure by visiting the department where the claimant worked and knowing how well she maintained relations with her colleagues within the medical profession. You can also refer to her occupational file that is full of complaints and violations and her non-conforming with working hours.

Dear editor, I hope that you will publish this reply on the same page where you published the claims of the said doctor. Her are mere allegations because they are groundless.

Facts of Life



By DR. KHALED M. NSOUR
NSOUR1977K@HOTMAIL.COM

Do you feel sleepy after eating?

Have you ever felt like needing a nap after having a well-cooked meal? And did you think why you feel cold too?

Well, unless the reason was that you are escaping cleaning the dishes it will probably be due to one or more factors below.

Eating sugary foods or those made from flour, such as bakery products or pastas, causes blood sugar to rise higher than normal. This causes your pancreas to release large amounts of insulin, which drives one of the protein building blocks called tryptophan (see fig 1) from your bloodstream into your brain, where it is converted to serotonin that makes people fall asleep naturally at night.

Many meals contain the L-tryptophan. This essential (cannot be made in the body) amino acid needs to be taken on an empty stomach and without any other amino acids or protein in order to make you drowsy.

Some people think, however, that feeling drowsy is not necessarily due to this tryptophan. Tracy Gensler, a registered dietitian in Chevy Chase, U.S.A., says tryptophan does not deserve nearly the blame it gets for making us sleepy. "The body wants to focus its efforts on digestion," Ms. Gensler says. "Drowsiness occurs after any big meal, regardless of the meal components. Digestion of any large meal, whether it's a high-protein, a high-fat or a high-carbohydrate meal, causes the familiar after-meal drowsiness."

So, what does this have to do

with feeling cold?

Large meals force your body to use precious energy stores for the huge task of digestion. When your stomach is full, blood is directed away from other organ systems, including your nervous system. The result? You will feel the need to snooze after any big meal, particularly if it is high in fats and carbohydrates. Blood rushes to your gut, robbing the rest of your body of oxygen and nutrients, thus the feeling of cold arises.

How could I eat my meal and do not feel sleepy?

Through my search on the net I found many people who suggested some answers to this question. Some of these were of personal experience while others were based on medical advices. One of those solutions was to simply stop eating when you're full! Another is to eat less than served to you. One funny but true suggestion that I found was by eating meals rich in peppers.

Many people can avoid feeling sleepy after eating by restricting foods high in sugar and flour. When it is important for you to be alert, eat foods that do not cause a high rise in blood sugar, such as vegetable salads, nuts, seeds, meat, fish and chicken. Try to eat 2 or 3 small meals instead of one big meal. Try to have more meats and vegetables. Have a little cheese for a snack rather than candy.

So, why are you sleepy after a big lunch or dinner? It's a combination of the type of food, amount of food, and of course, your sleeping habit.

See you next week...

U.S. warns of dengue fever in west Yemen

The U.S. embassy in Yemen has advised against travel to the western coast of the Arab state due to an outbreak of dengue fever, a sometimes-fatal disease.

"The World Health Organization has advised the U.S. embassy that a dengue fever outbreak has afflicted the port cities of Hodeidah and Mokha on the western coast of Yemen and the surrounding coastal area. Estimates of the number of cases vary," the mission said in an advisory dated March 9.

"Yemen's health services network does not have adequate resources to mount a mosquito eradication campaign, nor the resources to systematically identify and treat suspected cases when they occur," it added.

The embassy advised against travel to the Hodeidah region until there were better estimates on the scale of the outbreak.

Yemeni officials were not available to comment, but a parliamentary committee has said there were reports of dengue fever and malaria in the country.

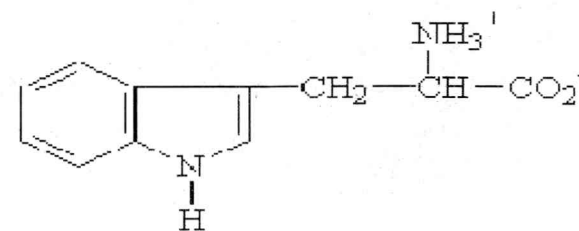
Dengue fever is transmitted through the bite of an Aedes mosquito infected with a dengue virus. There is no specific treatment for dengue infection.

Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, backache, joint pains, nausea and vomiting, eye pain and rashes.

وظائف شاغرة

- ١- مدير مشروع: بمؤهل بكالوريوس هندسة ميكانيكية
 - ٢- مدير مصنع: بمؤهل خريج هندسة صناعية
 - ٣- مسؤول صيانة: بمؤهل خريج هندسة ميكانيكية تخصص ميكانيكا آلات صناعية، يجيد القيام بالعمل الفني والإداري.
 - ٤- مدير مبيعات: بمؤهل خريج إدارة أعمال تخصص تسويق ومبيعات.
 - ٥- مدير مالي وإداري: بمؤهل تخصص محاسبة، وحاصل على شهادة (CFA).
- على أن يشترط في المتقدمين لوظائف المذكورة أيضاً توفر التالي:
- خبرة عملية من ٥ - ٧ سنوات.
 - إتقان العربية والإنجليزية تحدثاً وكتابة.
 - إجادة استخدام الحاسب الآلي.
 - لديه الطموح اللازم للتطوير.
 - لديه القدرة القيادية التي تمكنه من دفع الآخرين لتحقيق الأهداف.
 - متحمس لإنجاز العمل والولاء للشركة.
 - لديه قدرة عالية للتخطيط والتنظيم وكتابة التقارير.
 - لديه معلومات مالية وبنكية تؤهله على التفاوض بشأنها.
- ٦- فني صيانة: بمؤهل
 - خريج هندسة ميكانيكية تخصص ميكانيكا آلات صناعية.
 - لديه خبرة عملية في موقع مماثل.
 - لديه القدرة على القيام بالعمل الفني.
 - إتقان العربية تحدثاً وكتابة بالإضافة إلى الإلمام بالإنجليزية.
 - الإلمام باستخدام الحاسب الآلي.
 - لديه الطموح اللازم للتطوير.
 - ٧- عمال بقسمي الإنتاج والصيانة:
 - شهادة ثانوية عامة.
 - إتقان اللغة العربية تحدثاً وكتابة بالإضافة إلى الإلمام باللغة الإنجليزية.
 - الإلمام باستخدام الحاسب الآلي.
 - لديه الطموح اللازم للتطوير.

فعلى الراغبين تقديم السيرة الذاتية في ظرف مختوم باسم مدير عام الاستثمارات الخارجية ص.ب. ١٥٧٠٧، صنعاء - الجمهورية اليمنية، في موعد أقصاه شهر واحد من تاريخ الإعلان وستتم المفاضلة بين المتقدمين واختيار الأشخاص المناسبين لحضور المقابلة الشخصية



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If you believe you have the right qualifications and qualities to succeed, please email your CV within 10 days from this advertisement to: Jaip25@gmail.com

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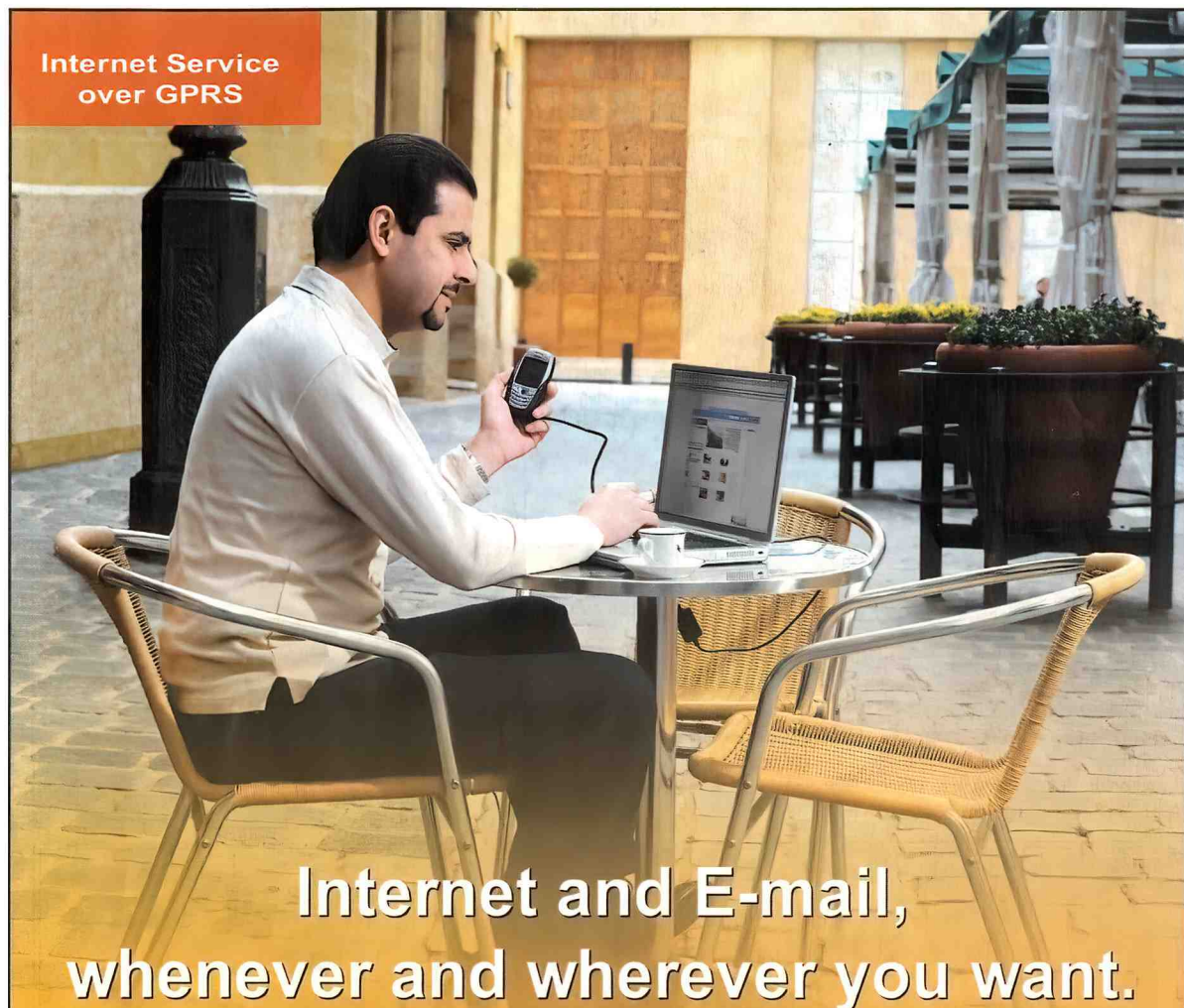
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Chelsea go 11 points ahead



Chelsea's Didier Drogba celebrates after scoring against West Bromwich Albion during their Premier League match at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday. Reuters

LONDON (Reuters) - Chelsea have stretched their lead at the top of the Premier League to 11 points with a 1-0 win over struggling West Bromwich Albion at Stamford Bridge.

Didier Drogba's first-half goal on Tuesday takes Chelsea on to 74 points from 29 matches with Manchester United in second place on 63 and champions Arsenal a further two points adrift in third.

Chelsea dominated from the start as they put the visitors' defence under constant pressure in a match rearranged because of the west London side's appearance in the League Cup

final.

They were rewarded after 26 minutes when striker Drogba tucked the ball home from eight metres after Damien Duff lost his marker down the left and cut back a precise low cross.

It was the 50th goal West Brom have conceded in the Premier League this season and only bottom club Norwich City (58) have let in more as the pair struggle to avoid relegation.

Drogba should have scored a second goal just after the hour mark when he turned defender Thomas Gaardsoe outside the penalty area but flashed his low shot wide of Russell Hoult's far

post.

Ten minutes later the Ivory Coast forward had another clear chance to increase Chelsea's lead but somehow managed to head the ball wide of the post from an unmarked position.

West Brom battled gamely and a Kanu volley moments later was headed over by the excellent Robert Huth, but the Midlands side rarely looked capable of getting back on level terms.

The loss leaves Albion second from bottom just a point above Norwich.

Their haul of 21 points means they are five away from the position of safety occupied by Crystal Palace.

expressed appreciation to the committee and said he wants to remained focused on "playing the best baseball I possibly can."

A spotlight has been on Giambi since his name surfaced in a grand jury investigation into BALCO, the Bay Area laboratory at the heart of a worldwide steroid scandal.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported in December that he told a grand jury investigating the BALCO case that he had used steroids.

Heat top Knicks, Blazers into playoffs

TORONTO (Reuters) - Dwyane Wade nailed a jumper at the buzzer to help the Miami Heat edge the New York Knicks 98-96 Tuesday to earn their 10th consecutive win and become the first team to clinch a playoff berth.

Wade finished with 24 points while Shaquille O'Neal contributed 23 as Heat also became the first team this season to record 50 wins.

The Knicks had looked poised to end Miami's streak when they pulled ahead 92-89 but despite support from the raucous New York crowd could not hold off the Heat who went on a 7-0 run to regain control with two minutes to play.

New York clawed back to level the game at 96-96 before Wade took the ball with 13 seconds remaining, ran down the clock and sank an 18-foot jumper.

Stephon Marbury scored 24 points for the Knicks while Tim Thomas added 20.

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson scored a game high 36 points outshining Kobe Bryant to help the 76ers pound the Los Angeles Lakers 108-91.

The NBA's leading scorer, Iverson also contributed nine assists, five rebounds and three steals to the 76ers cause while Bryant had 20 points for the Lakers.

Rookie Andre Iguodala added

15 points for Philadelphia.

In Chicago, Rashard Lewis notched 30 points and Reggie Evans snared 19 rebounds sparking the Seattle SuperSonics to a 99-93 victory over the Bulls.

Ray Allen contributed 17 points and seven assists for Seattle while Ben Gordon led the Bulls with 21.

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 36 points and snared nine rebounds powering the Cavaliers to a 92-73 win over the slumping Utah Jazz to post their third consecutive win.

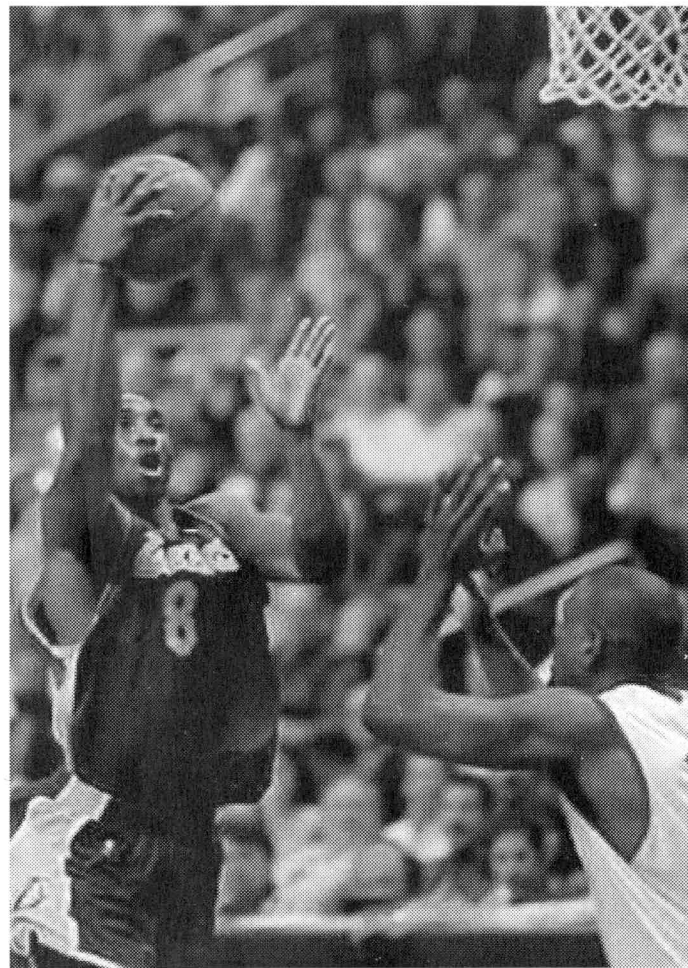
Andrei Kirilenko had 14 points and nine rebounds for the Jazz, who dropped their sixth straight game.

In Sacramento, Peja Stojakovic had 27 points and Mike Bibby added 21 points, 10 assists and six rebounds as the Kings beat the Orlando Magic 105-94.

Steve Francis had 25 points while Grant Hill added 24 for the Magic, who lost a season high fifth consecutive game.

In Dallas, Kevin Garnett had 25 points and 12 rebounds while Sam Cassell returned from a seven-game injury layoff to score 15 to lead the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 100-91 victory over the Mavericks.

Dirk Nowitzki led the Mavericks with 21 points while adding 15 rebounds and four assists.



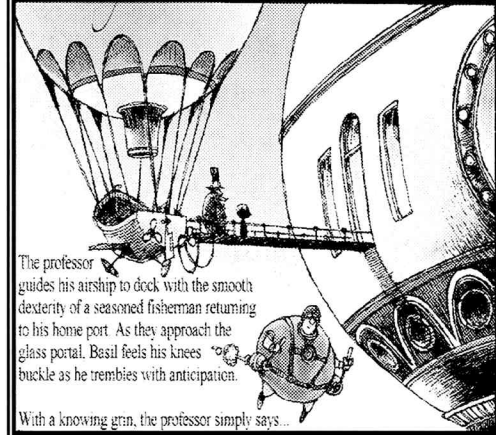
Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (L) shoots over Philadelphia 76ers forward Chris Webber during second quarter NBA action in Philadelphia, March 15. Reuters

Non Sequitur

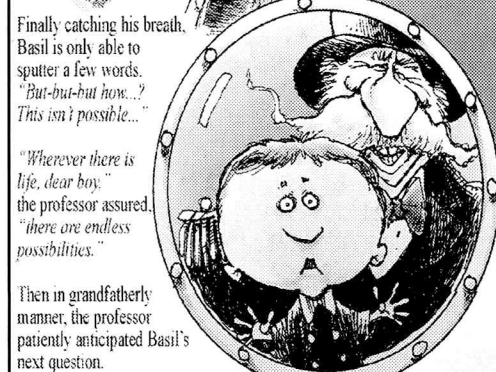
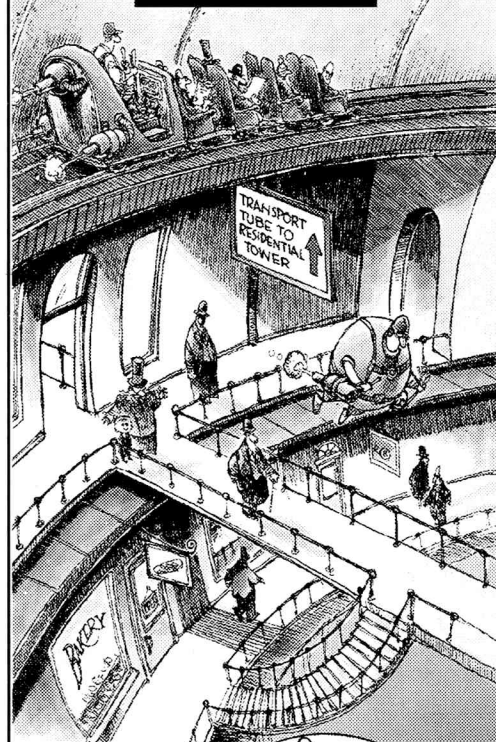
by Wiley



Ordinary Basil /Sailing high into the atmosphere, Professor McGookin reveals a sight beyond Basil's imagination, a city in the clouds!



With a knowing grin, the professor simply says



Finally catching his breath, Basil is only able to sputter a few words. "But-but-but how...? This isn't possible..."

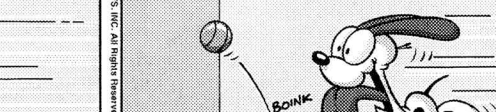
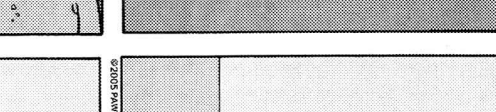
"Wherever there is life, dear boy," the professor assured, "there are endless possibilities."

Then in grandfatherly manner, the professor patiently anticipated Basil's next question.

"How many people back home know about this place, sir?"

"The sum total, to date, of the number of ground-dwellers who know about Helios is...one. And guess who that one is?"

Suddenly, Basil didn't feel so ordinary.



THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

BY Eugenia

<p>Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)</p> <p>Take the world by storm today. Be specific about your needs and your objectives. You have to compensate for any competition that may want to oppose you. This can be a very productive day if you forge into the future with confidence.</p>	<p>Cancer (Jun 21 - Jul 22)</p> <p>You will be in the mood to have a little fun, do a little shopping and make some personal improvements. A financial or legal deal can be settled today. Investments look positive, but don't overestimate your budget.</p>	<p>Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)</p> <p>You have a big heart, and you are willing to go the extra mile if need be. You can make the people around you happy today with your creative suggestions and willingness to stick by them as long as they need you. Your kindness won't be forgotten.</p>	<p>Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)</p> <p>Pay more attention to your peers. Someone you least expect may not be standing in your corner. You may want to be a little bit secretive about your plans. Don't take on too much or try to please too many.</p>
<p>Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)</p> <p>You'll be surprised at how much you can get done if you deal with agencies or institutions. You will have the savvy to manipulate business situations as well as the charisma to enforce your ideas. A strong message can be sent today.</p>	<p>Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)</p> <p>You have the opportunity to open a door that will lead to some inspiring concepts. You have plenty to be grateful for, and the more gracious and humble you are, the more you will be offered in return.</p>	<p>Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)</p> <p>Today is all about looking your best and spending time with someone you feel deeply about. Changes are coming your way, so begin the preparation needed. Take a moment to realize your own capabilities.</p>	<p>Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)</p> <p>You've got it right, so stop questioning everything. It takes confidence and trust in what you are capable of doing in order to be successful. Follow through with a creative idea you have been pondering.</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)</p> <p>Don't take anything or anyone for granted, especially the person who is always there for you. You may be feeling good about your own accomplishments, but you should be giving praise as well.</p>	<p>Virgo (Aug 23 - Sep 22)</p> <p>You may have to do a little friendly persuasion today. As long as you coax gently and are complimentary, there will be no problem. If you become critical and emotional, expect to face strong opposition.</p>	<p>Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)</p> <p>This could turn into a push-pull sort of day — one person wanting you to do one thing and another trying to convince you to do something altogether different. Use your head and you will find the perfect solution.</p>	<p>Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20)</p> <p>You may not know which end is up today, especially if someone you care about is confusing you with his or her actions. Be diplomatic but don't let anyone know where you stand. Being a little mysterious will protect you from malice.</p>

Derivation الإشتقاقات

ألفاظ وطائيات للغة العربية

Noun	الاسم	Adjective	الصفة
مطر	rain	مطر	rainy
ضباب	fog	ضبابي	foggy
شمس	sun	شمسي	sunny
بعد	distance	بعيد	distant
شاب	youth	شاب	young
خوف	scare	مخيف	scary
جمال	beauty	جميل	beautiful

بيانات المتسابق

الاسم :

المدنية :

Ans & Winner contest : 36

1. Eliminate / 2. Automatic

3. Observe / 4. Improves

Fathi AlSaberi

Contest No. (37) مسابقة رقم

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Prepared by Al-Farouk Institute of Languages & Computer

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Area of salt-water _____ 3

Look closely at _____ 7

Flavor _____ 5

Always _____ 7

Require of want _____ 4

Opposite of male _____ 6

Uncle's wife _____ 4

King of the jungle _____ 4

القطع كويون المسابقة وارسله عبر الفاكس مع الإجابة . (معهد الفاروق صنعاء) -
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GARFIE!

Garfield is playing with a ball. He is sitting on the floor, and the ball is rolling towards him. He is looking at the ball with a curious expression.

قص هذا الكوبون وارسله إلى صحيفة يمن تايمز على فاكس 268276 او على صندوق بريد 2579 - صنعاء
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In the frame of tourist promotion

Foreign diplomats enjoyed Socotra

By MOHAMMED BIN SALAM
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A number of diplomats came back to Sana'a on March 14 after enjoying a 3-day journey to Socotra. The journey was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with Yemenia Airways and other tourist offices.

The group of diplomats consisted of diplomats from Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, and Holland. They were accompanied with Muhiaddin Al-



A group of foreign and Arab diplomats while visiting Socotra.

Dhabi, the first Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The survey program of the Arab and foreign diplomats was performed in the frame of efforts devoted to promote tourism and activating the tourist activities in the Yemeni islands especially Socotra that is in the Indian Ocean which occupies the highest position in terms of tourism.

The diplomats have known a number of places such as: Hulaf, Muri, Qadheh, and a variety of areas that Socotra is famous for.

The group of diplomats made sea trips in order to know the lifestyle and escapes of life with the various cultural and social activities. A night artistic session was attended by the visitors in which many aspects of Socotra's cultural heritage including poetry, prose, dance, and singing was presented.

The trip members showed their promising expectations of the island's tourist future because of its being one of the rare tourist areas with captivating distinguished features.

Even Schroeder is impressed

Popular markets are Yemen's heritage

By YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Over the last few days, the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder toured the popular markets in

the old city of Sana'a, markets that date back several centuries.

The German Chancellor appreciated their human heritage and treasures that attracted his attention.

According to several international experts in the field of tourist promotion, these markets can be a

great source of income. The significance of such markets in promoting tourism compelled us to give a brief profile about their history and strategic location.

Yemen was famous over several decades for the revival of its popular markets, which are flooded with a variety of commodities particularly hand-made articles. The Yemeni popular markets contain animal, fishery, agricultural and traditional wealth, in addition to handicrafts, dresses and rarities.

These markets are very distinctive, owing to the variety of their products and traditional handicrafts, as well as the sale and purchase of different commodities. There are markets in the historic cities and some rural areas that are usually staged seasonally, creating social and cultural jobs and a meeting point for many people.

It is remarkable nowadays that the popular markets in cities and rural areas across the country attract tourists and visitors; they show unique attractions and offer visitors different gifts and popular dresses.

The Yemeni markets proved to be able to convey good impressions to foreign tourists reflecting the significance of the Yemeni history and demonstrating the glory of architecture in the construction.

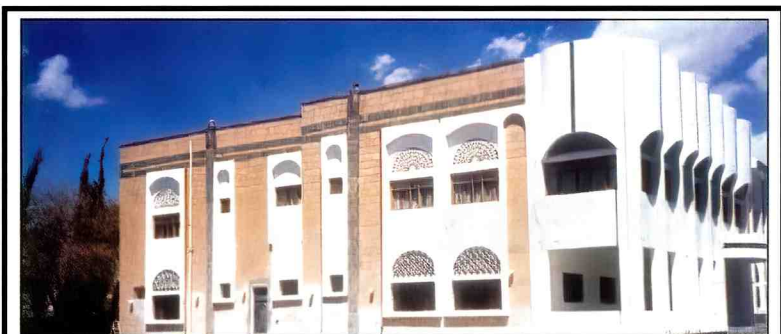
These markets are endowed with musical singings and popular dances reflecting the Yemeni traditions, as well as good smells from agricultural products.

Annual festivals, including events like horse racing, are often staged,

particularly in the coastal city of Hodeidah whose markets are famous for traditional handicrafts, and the manufacture of silver, kitchen tools, carpets and decorative stones that add more charm to the beauty of construction.



Different kinds of grains merchandised in one of the Yemeni popular markets



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