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Monday, 21 March 2005 • Issue No. 826 • Price 30 Yemeni Riyals • Founded in 1991 by Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf

Register your weapon, or

Drop your guns

BY MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The ruling Party (GPC) caucus in the parliament voted with majority Saturday in favor of debating the firearms possession control draft law that has been crippled by the tribal figures for more than six years.

The draft bill which the Speaker of the Parliament Sheikh Abdullah bin Hussien al-Ahmar has been rejecting was transferred to the Security and Defense committee to discuss and then forward the law for debate and voting.

Amended of this law allows police to confiscate any unlicensed firearms which are commonly carried and spread all over the country. The last government failed to convince the Parliament in a six-year tenure to endorse the law to regulate arms possession.

The bill necessitates the control of arms possession and if endorsed by the parliament, every Yemeni citizen possessing any sort of guns has to get it registered at the Ministry of Interior, else to just leave it at home.

Al-Ahmar led a group of MPs from both the Islah party and the GPC rejecting the articles concerning the arms possession control while agreeing that arms carrying should be controlled. Other religious clerics like Shekh Abdulmajeed al-Zindani used to tell the people that they should be armed so that the government or political regimes cannot force non-Islamic laws into their lives.



A common sight in Yemen, Yemeni men carrying guns

They have claimed that "armed people can defend their religion better than those without arms." Such preachers have encouraged flooding the country with weapons of different colors and hues.

Member of Parliament Sultan al-Barakani, head of GPC caucus in the parliament, said that putting the draft bill on the present agenda of the parliament is a good step towards debating and endorsing the bid.

"This draft law provides the police

with power to seize and confiscate the unlicensed firearms," al-Barakani said. He earlier said that there are some figures who rejected the draft law.

The question of arms possession in Yemen has become a major headache for the government, which believes that there must be a law to regulate and control this issue, as arms have been a main source of violence and terrorism.

The government feels it's part of its campaign against terror, as the country has been embroiled into the tumult of

tribal revenge and other sorts of disputes, something, which boosted the zest for obtaining weapons for personal protection.

It also feels that free-rein on guns is curbing its efforts to achieve security and stability, as well as development.

Arms possession is no longer a sign of manhood and a part of the Yemeni culture as tribesmen used to think, but it has rather become a means to kidnapping, theft, and all sorts of crimes.

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Four Al-Houthi supporters killed

SANAA, March 19 (Reuters), Yemen Times Staff - Four supporters of a slain anti-U.S. cleric in Yemen, of the so-called the "Believing Youth", were killed on Saturday while trying to flee from police after a shootout, the official Saba news agency said.

It said a group of followers of rebel leader Hussein al-Houthi — who was killed by Yemeni forces last year — had sped away in a car after exchanging fire with police at the Talh market for weapons in Saada province, north of the capital Sana'a.

Four of the men were killed when the car overturned after colliding with a security vehicle, Saba said, adding that three other rebels and a policeman were injured.

Houthi was killed last September after two months of clashes with

security forces in which over 200 rebels and troops died.

The government of Yemen accused Houthi, leader of the Believing Youth group of setting up unlicensed religious centres and forming an armed group which staged violent protests.

Houthi was one of a number of rebel leaders in Yemen, but he represented a considerable target having engaged the security forces over a long period. His group is not linked to al Qaeda.

Yemen has cooperated with the U.S.-led war on terrorism since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

It has also cracked down on al Qaeda-linked militants after attacks at home, including the USS Cole bombing in 2000 and the 2002 attack on the French supertanker Limburg.

Public Roar over Sales Tax Inflames

Crisis between Opposition and Government

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
& MOHAMMED AL-QADHI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

A sales taxes law, originally made in 2001 but only being implemented now, is leading to massive demonstrations, and political crisis between the government and opposition parties. The public

roar over the sales tax law that is going to be put into practice next July has turned into a media barrage battle and a crisis between both the government and the opposition coalition as the government and its media has escalated its ruthless attack against the opposition parties, holding them accountable of the riots that took place in various governorates simultaneously which the opposition considered a public's reaction to the skyrocketing of the basic commodities and the 10% sales tax to be levied, leaving more than 50% of the population economically vulnerable.

Accusations between the ruling party and opposition parties have also led to state-run newspapers waging a media campaign against the opposition parties.

This followed a statement issued by the Ministry of Interior saying that the joint meeting parties are behind the violent acts accompanying demonstrations, and that the Islah Party is the primary problem.

The statement confirmed that some professions were not licensed by the security authorities, and that some detained elements involved in the violent acts are still being investigated.

In their meeting March 17, the joint meeting parties said the accusations are groundless.

One source said opposition parties had warned about consequences of these policies. The source added that the financial and administrative corruption reflect failure of the ruling party.

The source emphasized that the joint meeting parties usually stand by citizens, defend their rights and encourage them to express their opinions according to the constitution and the law, and

in a peaceful ways in order not leave a gap for chaos sparkers and crisis makers since this would be an opportunity for corrupt officials to protect their wrong policies.

In a statement issued March 18, the ruling People's General Congress called all citizens to be alert and not give a chance to malicious elements in the society to cause violence. The ruling party asserted that Islah and the other opposition parties disclosed their malignant plans that targeted security of people.

The statement mentioned that security investigations conducted have already disclosed that opposition parties were involved in fomenting violence. It added that these parties have malicious intentions to threaten security and stability of the nation particularly after they failed through democracy and dialog.

Continued on page 3

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European companies invest in Yemen

ADEN BUREAU

A number of European businessmen are visiting Yemen during the next couple of days in order to explore investment opportunities in Yemen.

Aden's Free Zone Economic Bulletin mentioned that the European commercial delegations visiting Yemen consist of representatives of 100 British companies, 12 Italian

companies from various industrial fields. The delegations will visit some of the provinces and meet a number of the Yemeni businessmen to study the possibility of executing joint investment projects.

Simultaneously, the Public Authority of the Free Zone is looking into requests of interested companies concerning the container port after concluding the contract duration with the Singaporean Company, OPM.

Al-Nahar Newspaper faces legal action

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Al-Nahar Newspaper appeared before the Press Prosecution on Saturday March 9. During the session, its Editor-in-Chief Shihab al-Ahdal and its Managing Editor Hajji'a al-Hijafi were questioned about a complaint submitted by Mohammed Ahmed Mansour, Member of al-Shura Council, Sheikh of al-Ja'ashin District in Ibb province, over the publishing of news that oppresses locals.

As per the court's summons, Mohammed Mansour considered the news story as libel.

He asked for interrogation of the Editor-in-Chief and the Managing Editor.

Al-Nahar had published news stories, articles and investigations accusing Mohammed Ahmed Mansour of committing violations against his natives.

The Press Prosecution had finished last weeks investigation of a complaint raised by the General Manager of Sana'a al-Thawra General Hospital Dr. Ahmed al-Ansi.

That was after the newspaper reported fatal medical violations and mistakes. The Prosecution referred the newspaper to the court.

One of the academicians considered these procedures as a form of harassment meant to gag journalism and prevent it from criticizing malpractices of some officials.

Information Minister addresses journalist

ADEN BUREAU

Hussein al-Awadhi, Minister of Information, says that the new wages policy will include journalists, as they are specialized staff. He expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Civil Service for incorporating journalists in the new policy which is to be announced shortly.

At the meeting with local media leaders in Aden on March 12, the Minister also said that local media needs to be improved. "The media outlet should be linked to citizens' concerns and cares, reflecting their day-to-day affairs and the changes in the country since the Reunification in 1990."

Mr. Al-Awadhi said it is significant to celebrate and mark the unification anniversary and display its implications in the form of the achievements during the post-reunification age under the reign

of his Excellency Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic.

"Media should expose the development success in education, health, roads, dams, etc. and the prominent role assumed by Yemen, its regional and international status, and its policies directed towards supporting stability in the area and its efforts to activate pan-Arab cooperation," he explained.

He added that the political leadership of President Ali Abdullah Saleh lay special emphasis on reinforcement of democracy and the freedom of expression.

The Minister praised the role of pioneering media personalities who will be honored on the anniversary.

"I hope media coverage of the occasion will live up to the great achievements brought about by virtue of the Reunification."

Mine Action Program batch graduates

ADEN BUREAU

A graduation celebration for the 10th batch of Mine Action Program (MAP) was held on Tuesday March 15th at the Executive Center of MAP.

During the celebration, Mansour al-Ezzi, Manager of the Executive Center of MAP, delivered a speech congratulating the graduates of this course whose study lasted for three

months that is considered the last one in the MAP.

He pointed out that MAP making use of activities has qualified a staff with great skills in the field of dealing with mines. They are now ready to transfer their experience when needed.

He explained that MAP after clearing Aden from mines is going to go to more difficult areas especially the deserts and mountains that require

special skills and abilities.

Al-Ezzi appreciated the level of adherence in the course confirming the necessity for practicing what has been learned.

Staff Colonel Fadhil Gharama, Manager of the Executive Center of MAP, pointed out that the course was distinguished from the previous ones because of the circumstances of training and the good level in adherence.

He recommended that all the graduates to be precise and careful when doing their duties in the field especially when their work with mines is dangerous.

The participants of the course have received a great amount of theoretical and practical knowledge in dealing with mines.

Then the graduates were handed their recognition certificates in the presence of a number of military officers and the center's staff.

Scientific event at Aden University

ADEN BUREAU

The first batch studying M.Sc. in Clinical Laboratory of Medicine at The University of Aden, defended their thesis last Wednesday March 16th under patronage of Dr. Abdulkarim Yahya Rasea, President of Aden University. The batch consists of three students only, who are considered the pioneers in this study in Aden.

The M.Sc. degrees were granted to

the three students who are Ms. Nedhal Abdullah Saeed Qahtan who's thesis was titled 'the spread of Hemoglobin among the births of Al-Wahda Hospital', Ms. Najat Mujahid Abdulqadir, whose research was titled 'the level of boric acid in the knee of the people who suffer from gonitis', and Mr. Wael Moh'd Abdo Qahiri whose thesis was titled 'Protein C of the first-time patients of heart muscle in the Republican Hospital in 2003.'

Lahj gets new projects

ADEN BUREAU

Abdul-Salam al-Mohammadi, Manager of Public Works and Roads (PWRO) in Lahj Province says their most important achievement last year was their technical supervision of many governmental projects.

"There are projects financed through the local councils subject to the our supervision. They number 17, two of which have been completed, and have cost YR 129,968,720. The Cleanliness Fund sponsors amelioration and lighting projects along roads and streets in the province," he added. The PWRO also conducted a prelim-

inary survey of roads needed by the districts of the province and mapping out designs for annexes of the Martyrs' Families Block, maintaining the Civil Service building, two floors of the Finance Office, two fences for playgrounds in Tiban district, a study of countryside roads, and maintaining the Internal Administration Office.

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Ministry of Transportation, represented by the General Land Transportation Corp., and the Iranian Industries Corp.

reached an agreement to resolve the problems resulting from the bus deal which Yemen bought in 2001.

The agreement which was signed

by The Yemeni Minister of Transportation Omar al-Amoudi and the Iranian Ambassador, states that 20 buses are to be returned to the Iran within the next three months and \$319,000 is to be retrieved from the price of the returned buses and the rest is to be used to buy model-2000 buses. The purchased Iranian buses were of a low quality and caused troubles.

Yemen and Iran solve bus problems

Request for proposals

A donor funded project providing technical assistance to improve the quality of basic education programs in Yemen requests proposals from local firms capable of providing Professional Engineering Structural Inspection Services. The YALA - Yemen Basic Education Program is seeking an engineering firm to conduct assessments of the structural integrity of selected school buildings in Mareb, Shabwah, and Amran governorates, prior to subcontracting for their renovation.

Background:

School renovation and rehabilitation is one of the major components of the YALA, which has agreed with the Ministry of Education to renovate a selected number of schools in the governorates of (Mareb, Shabwah and Amran). The first phase of the implementation steps is to make sure that the targeted schools are structurally sound and able to be renovated; and, that there is no risk of structural damage likely to during and/or after renovation.

The schools selected represent a range of different types of structural systems, including:

1. Mud brick load bearing wall + wooden roof with plain concrete sloped layer;
2. Cement blocks load bearing wall + wooden roof with plain concrete sloped layer;
3. Reinforced concrete structure + cement block external and internal walls; and,
4. Some cases of mud covered roof with load bearing wall structure (stone, solid cement blocks, mud bricks).

Work Required:

The Structural Engineering firm to be selected by the YALA team of architects should inspect the selected schools and assess their conditions according to the ACI code and the MOE general specifications.

The Scope of work for the selected structural firm will include:

- Study and inspect the structural reliability of each of the selected schools (approximately 150 to 200 schools over the next two years);
- Issue a signed certificate for each facility that explains the final result of the inspection with full legal responsibility; and,
- Submit a detailed estimate of the costs of renovating each school, including a detailed work plan for performing the assignment, and a work schedule of activities (all requested documents should be written in English and Arabic languages).

The Structural Engineering firm selected to conduct these preliminary assessments, and develop the cost estimates for renovations, will not be eligible to bid on the subsequent contracts to renovate the facilities.

Technical proposals must include the relevant services carried out in the last five years that illustrate qualifications.

Financial proposals must remain valid 45 days after submission date. Information on the outer envelope should include: name of the firm.

Firms are requested to submit a proposal written in English and Arabic languages **no later than the 10 in the morning on the 2nd of April 2005.**

The proposal should be submitted to the following address:

YALA - Basic Education Development Program
Sana'a, YEMEN
Tourist city, Tower 4, Apartment 4
Tel (01-302-736 / 302-758 / 304-100)
Attention to: Eng. Ahmed Al-Tashi

In Brief

- Mrs. Amatalaleem al-Soswa, Minister of Human Rights returned to Sana'a on Friday March 18 after taking part in the 61th cycle of Human Rights Committee in Geneva and during the cycle she presented a paper about the situation of human rights in Yemen.
- A symposium on the democratic changes was concluded in the capital of Hungary Thursday March 17 in which Dr. Abdulkareem al-Eriani represented Yemen in the symposium, which discussed the Yemeni experience in democracy.
- The Specialist Preliminary Punitive Court started trying the eight suspects involved in the formation of armed gangs with the aim to carry out acts of vandalism inside and outside the country and publish out incorrect information about Yemen.
- Yemen is participating in the World Preparatory Session on the World Health Survey, which aims to set a comprehensive work strategy to implement the health survey in the Gulf countries. It also aims at specifying the needs of the participating countries including technical support from the World Health Organization.
- Yemen participates in the third conference of ministers of telecommunication and information technology held in Bahrain between March 20-22 with the participation of 55 countries.
- The conference aims to activate the telecommunication market and discuss the aspects of cooperation among the participating countries.
- The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation is to organize on Tuesday March 22 a workshop on the millennium goals in the city of Aden.
- The workshop is due to discuss the preparation for the third five-year plan as well as the implementation of the millennium development project according to the basic needs of the society.
- The Supreme Security Committee under the Minister of Interior discussed Thursday March 17 the consequences of the late demon-

strations and the violent acts that accompanied them for the purpose of finding out the real motives behind them. It warned that the joint meeting parties should respect the constitution and the law and stop doing such acts that threaten the national security and stability.

- Al-Sa'eed Foundation for Science and Culture held on Thursday March 17 a lecture under the title "information as a tool for correct decisions" in the presence of a number of officials and personalities of distinction.
- Supported by Oxfam, the Yemeni Women Union in Taiz organized on Thursday March 17 a symposium on the enforcement of the prisons law with the aim of improving the prison conditions and providing prisoners with the necessary needs.
- In cooperation with the UNDP, the Human Rights Information and Training Center is to organize on Wednesday March 23 a special workshop for police officers on human rights with the aim to instruct trainees on the concepts of international conventions in the field of human rights.

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Sana'a mourns Yemen's great poet Ahmed al-Shami

Yemen Times Staff

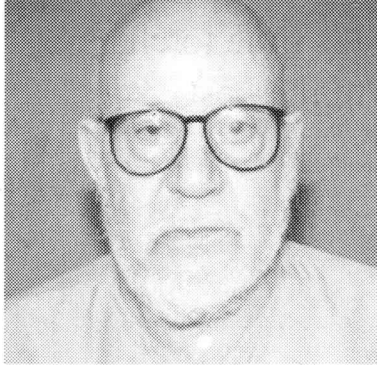
Yemen has on Thursday paid the last honors to the great poet and former member of the republican council Ahmed Bin Mohammed al-Shami who died in London at an age of 81 years.

The deceased al-Shami was among the forerunners of those who resisted the Imamate rule in Yemen and one of those who had taken part in the 1948 revolution.

He had been then appointed secretary of the council of ministers. After failure of the revolution, he was arrested and imprisoned with his free men colleagues.

In 1955, the Imam appointed him charge d'Affaires at the Yemen's embassy in Cairo and later a minister at the Arab Countries Union Council (Egypt, Syria and Yemen) in 1958. In 1961 he was appointed as minister plenipotentiary for Yemen in London.

After the eruption of the 26 September revolution in 1962, Mr al-



The late Ahmed Al-Shami

Shami was appointed foreign minister of the monarchists in exile and chaired the side of the royalists at Hardh conference between the republicans and the royalists that was held in 1965. After the national reconciliation in 1970, the late al-Shami was appointed member in the republican council and then an ambassador to London then Paris and ambassador-at-large until the year 1974.

After that date, he devoted his life to writing and of numerous poetical and literary works until his death.

Various bodies have roles

A national approach for women's rights

For The Yemen Times

The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs is the highest government establishment concerned with women's issues.

The Supreme Council is chaired by the president, and assisted by seven ministers (one deputy minister and six women representatives, one of whom is the Chairperson of the Women National Committee, her deputy and heads of branches of the WNC in all provinces.)

The task of the Supreme Council is to ensure that women's concerns are included in national policies, and enhances women's status in the socio-cultural, economic and political spheres.

The Women's National Committee (WNC), established in 1996, is mandated to promote women's rights and to ensure women's development in policymaking, and programme implementation in keeping with the commitments of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The WNC is the executive body responsible for preparation of national and international reports on the status of women and is intended to establish branches in all the governorates.

WNC members include all women acting as focal points in line ministries and institutions (as a result of a ministerial decree to establish a Women's Directorate in each ministry), as well as members from civil society and autonomous government bodies at the central level.

Representatives from these form the board of the committee.

WNC plays a critical role in advocacy and is represented in different national policy making bodies such as the PRSP Technical Committee and Population Council Committee.

However, the WNC lacks the credibility and clout to carry out its mandate effectively, given its low status.

It is grossly under-funded and lacks the necessary budget allocation necessary to carry out its function.

These factors will continue to constrain the WNC from fulfilling its mandate of women's empowerment and ensuring gender inequality in national policy.

In addition, all the Ministries and central bodies have established women's departments entrusted with the responsibility of integrating gender in their respective policies and plans.

The number of women's departments increased from nine in 2000, to 30 in 2003.

While this increase is an indication of political commitment in the government's intent to push gender equality in its various functions, the gender focal persons are rendered ineffective either because they lack the resources, credibility or support of the host ministries in pushing their agenda.

Given WNC's poor resources and capacity they are unable to co-ordinate and supervise the work of gender focal points effectively.

Ministry of Human Rights
A woman Minister of Cabinet heads the ministry, a policy making body entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that domestic law is in accordance with international commitments and conventions.

Their mandate is to report on the status of human rights in Yemen both to the government and to international bodies such as the UN.

It works closely with the WNC in CEDAW monitoring process and raises awareness on international laws and conventions that Yemen is a signatory to.

Despite the proliferation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the last decade, only a handful work on women's rights such as the Sisters' Arab Forum and the Women's Centre for Research and Information.

These organizations are proactive in challenging state policies and laws towards promoting gender equality.

Other women's organizations adopt a welfare approach to women's issues and focus on awareness raising or income generating activities.

The women's movement as such is

fragmented and in its infancy in Yemen.

The Yemeni Women's Union is the largest and oldest NGO in Yemen, established in Aden in 1968 prior to unification.

Prior to the election of 2003, they tended to adopt a welfare approach to women's issues, but have since changed their strategic directions to tackle the issue of women's rights with the support of donor agencies.

Despite this shift, the limits to which they are able to pursue the agenda is limited given their supporter base is drawn from the majority party.

The national machineries and the civil society organizations need to work closer together in promoting gender equality in policy making and planning.

However, at present, they are seriously under-funded and lack both the capacity and wherewithal needed to push policy makers to integrate gender in future planning.

Providing them with adequate budget allocation would go a long way in ensuring that gender does not fall off the agenda of forthcoming policy making processes.

Research and academic institutions
The Women's Studies and Research Center in Sana'a was established in 1996 with donor assistance with the key objective of promoting gender equality through various activities.

The Center intended to create a gender sensitive environment inside and outside the University, to act as a resource institute in research and gender training, and offer courses on gender and development.

The Center experienced a set-back when it was attacked in 2000 by Islamic fundamentalists as promoting anti-Islamic principles.

Following which it was forced to downsize losing its credibility.

However, with a change in the political climate in 2003 there was greater acknowledgement on the different effect of development challenges on women and men.

Gender gained greater acceptance and legitimacy in the official development language.

The center got a second lease of life, was reactivated and a new Director and staff appointed.

In its new avatar as the "Women's Studies and Development Center" it has established a PRS and MDGs Unit.

The center seeks to promote gender perspective through research and training, as well as capacity building of both government and CSOs on the issue.

National strategy
The cabinet of ministers has approved the national strategy for women's development in accordance with the decree n. 212/2003 that focused mainly on four strategic issues:

- 1) Support the implementation of the Convention for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- 2) Reduce poverty and poverty impacts in Yemen
- 3) Enhance political participation of Yemeni women
- 4) Build the capacity of the WNC and other women associations in Yemen

Continued from page 1

Drop your guns

The possession of firearms in some remote tribal areas has made it difficult for the government to control these areas such as Marib, Al-Jawf, Saddah and Shabwa. It has made it possible for terrorists to carry out their operations even inside the capital city, Sana'a.

The question of arms possession in Yemen has even made the international community fear that illegal arms trade between Yemen and war-torn Somalia could take place, and the possibility of these arms falling into hands of terrorist militants.

A UN report submitted in November 2003 to the Security Council indicates Yemen as the source of weapons to a

number of East African countries, particularly Somalia, and often ending up in Ethiopia and Kenya.

The U.N. report said it was relatively easy to obtain surface-to-air missiles and import them to Somalia, noting that the missiles used in the failed attack on an Israeli airliner leaving Mombasa last November were brought to Somalia from Yemen.

The report was an attempt to unveil needed information about the flow of light weapons from the Arabian Peninsula to the Horn of Africa, which adds to the insecure conditions of this vulnerable region of the world.

The report also highlighted the myste-

rious trips by ships docking at Bosasa at Yemen, apparently without passengers. And it identified the need to track the sources of weapons in Yemen and the region, and then work on preventing arms dealers from easy access to such arms.

According to non-official estimations, there are almost 17 million pieces of weapons in the hands of the civilian population, yet former minister of interior Yahia al-Mutawakil said in 1995 that the light and heavy weapons that people own range between 50-60 million pieces.

Yemen's government in collaboration with the US bought heavy weapons from tribesmen with a cost of YR 6 billion (\$32 billion) as a part of its attempt to reduce the amount of heavy arms the people obtain.

Crisis between Opposition and Government

Meanwhile, Al-Thawrah Daily and September 26 Weekly waged an unprecedented media campaign against the joint meeting parties. In its editorial, the former described the opposition parties as opportunists who devote their efforts to sparking violence and instigating citizens to attack public properties. It accused the opposition parties of being rebellious, violating the principles of democracy and therefore they should not be cooperated with under any circumstances.

September 26 accused those standing behind the demonstrations of being extremists, as they do not respect the democratic values, rather, they employ democracy to harm the political life.

It added that the parties involved in the late violent acts should be referred to court according to the law of parties and political organizations, stipulating that any party attempting to threaten the security and the regime of the country should be sanctioned.

The state-run and the opposition newspapers as well the internet websites found themselves in a battle that changed from demonstrations and protests against sales taxes into exchanged political accusations targeting each other.

On-Going Debate over Merits and Demerits

The debate over the merits and demerits of the law has been going on. While businessmen are very critical to the sales tax law, government officials claim that the law would not target the ordinary people but only 1500 big businessmen and that it would reduce the tax evasion caused by smuggled commodities.

The Trade and Commerce Chambers already demanded the cancellation or amendment of this law in order to decrease the burden it would put on their business. claim that the target of this law will be the ordinary citizens whose purchase capacity will go down, raising the unemployment rate and causing economic stagnation.

"The law will put a heavy burden on the shoulders of the ordinary people. The reforms of the World Bank did not improve the economic situations, boosting investment, rather they just want to levy a lot of taxes which the people are unable to pay. Sales tax will reduce the purchase ability of the people whose income is almost 150%," Hussein al-Zubairi, member of the TCC union said in a press conference.

Businessmen even warned that the contribution of the private sector in the

development process will slow down, leading unemployment rise. "We as a private sector will not be directly affected as our role will be collecting taxes," said a businessman, claiming the multi-taxation system will not provide an appropriate environment to investment and might push local investors to quit the country.

Some economists believe that the implementation of the sales tax will lead to a more moderate consumption, and encourage imports, increase government resources to support and finance basic development projects. They claim that one of the features of the law is to achieve a sense of fairness between national and imported products, exempting the basic services from taxes, encouraging investment, fighting tax-evasion, etc.

The Economic Reforms Program, implemented since 1995, argues that reformation of the taxation sector stipulates exemption of products and basic services in order to improve people's living standard. The law aims at including in the taxes the additional surcharges through which the state will generate about 25% of the general resources and about 5% of the GDP.

For more information on the news sales tax, see the business page

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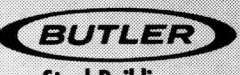
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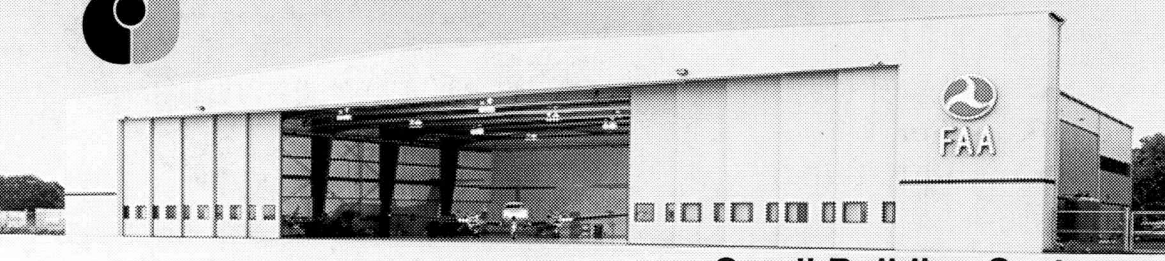
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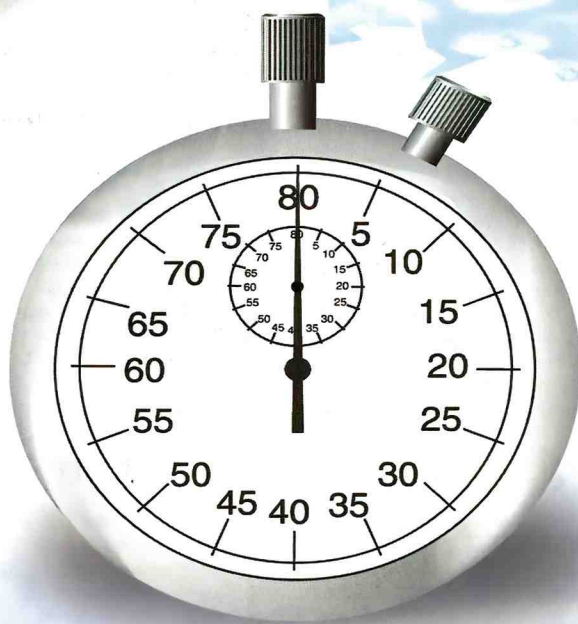
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Mr. Daniel Kutbi, with Mr. Hafedh F. Mayad

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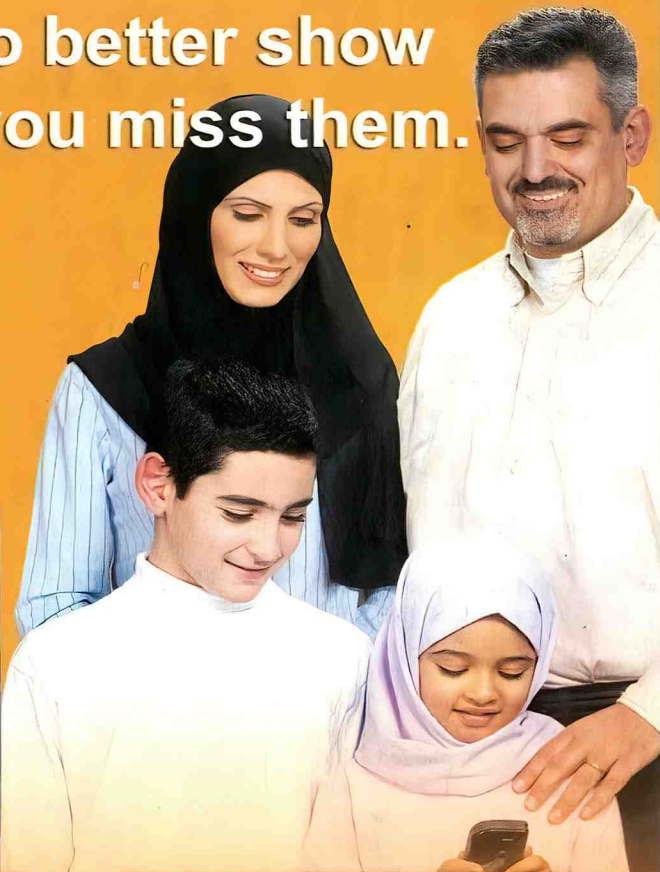
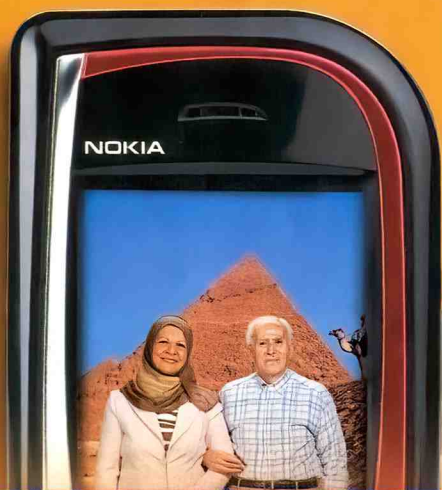
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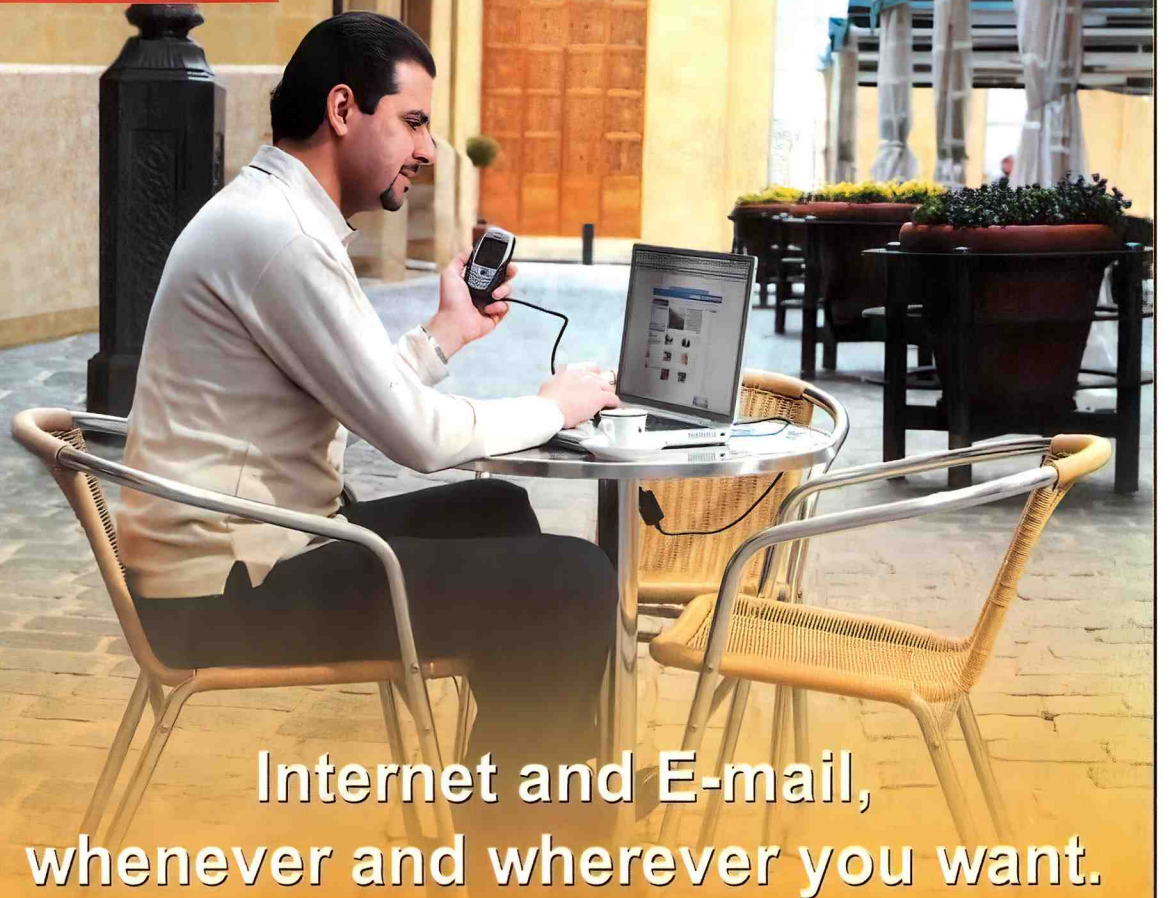
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Lebanon's president urges talks after car bomb

BEIRUT, March 19 (Reuters) - Lebanon's pro-Syrian president invited anti-Syrian opposition and loyalist politicians to begin immediate talks on Saturday, hours after a car bomb raised fresh fears of a return to the country's violent past.

The blast wounded several people in a Christian suburb of eastern Beirut, gutting the ground and first floors of a residential block and destroying nearby cars.

The explosion comes amid acute political tension since the Feb. 14 killing by bomb of former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri, and prompted President Emile Lahoud's first personal initiative to break the deadlock over Syria's influence in its tiny neighbour.

"The president affirms the need for such a dialogue meeting starting today in any place they agree on, including the presidential palace, which will keep its doors open," Lahoud's office said in a statement.

Damascus has already bowed to international demands it withdraw its troops from Lebanon after Hariri's assassination sparked street protests in Beirut against the Syrians, blamed by

many Lebanese for his death.

Syria denies the charge but has begun withdrawing the troops it poured into Lebanon early in the 1975-1990 civil war.

Lahoud also said he would miss the Arab Summit in Algeria next week because the turmoil in Lebanon required him to stay.

A key opposition leader responded to Lahoud's overtures by renewing calls for him to resign.

"If a new president is not chosen ... the future might be unknown," Druze chief Walid Jumblatt told followers.

Jumblatt stopped short of rejecting Lahoud's invitation outright, but has already said opposition figures would not join a new government unless the president stepped down.

That stance could wreck a bid to forge a unity government headed by pro-Syrian Prime Minister Omar Karami, who resigned on Feb. 28 under opposition pressure but was reappointed by parliament last week to form a consensus cabinet to lead Lebanon to general elections due in May.

On Saturday morning, dazed resi-

dents inspected bomb damage to their homes, shops and cars, sweeping up shards of glass and debris that littered the Jdeideh area.

The explosion shortly after midnight blew out balconies, shattered windows in surrounding buildings and gouged a crater out of an adjacent car park.

"I was standing under this building and we heard a huge explosion and there was a big cloud of dust, and glass flew everywhere.

We saw this car just fly into the air and land on the street right in front of us," said witness Rany Ayoub.

Civil war fears

No one claimed responsibility for the attack and it was unclear whether there was any political or sectarian motive, but some residents at the scene blamed Syria, accusing it of trying to sow sectarian divisions among the Lebanese.

Many analysts and politicians warn strains are evident in the precarious political, religious and communal balance achieved since Lebanon's civil war. They say political tensions could spill over into persistent violence.

"I was asleep.

My wife was praying when we heard the blast.

There are no doors in my house now. No windows.

All our stuff was turned upside down," said Tannous Jibril, an elderly man who lived on the first floor of the apartment block.

In the wall of the building's ground floor, which residents say housed small clothing stores, was a gaping hole.

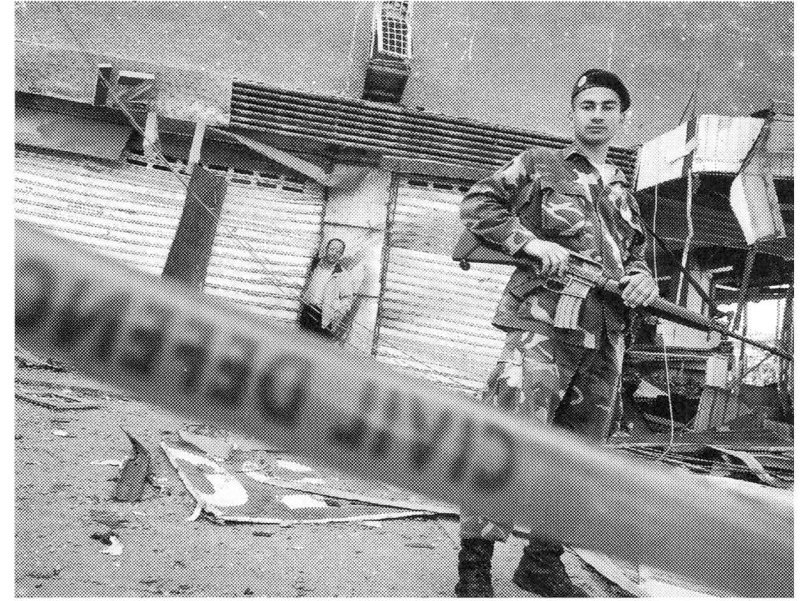
The blast smashed in the wall of a first floor office, exposing desks and cabinets inside.

Leading United Nations envoy Terje Roed-Larsen, who has been involved in negotiations with Lebanon and Syria, called on Friday for a cooling-off period in the country.

Syria finished the first phase of its pullout on Thursday.

A Lebanese security source said 4,000-6,000 Syrian troops had returned home since the withdrawal plan was announced on March 5, leaving 8,000 to 10,000 in eastern Lebanon.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan expects Syria to fully withdraw its



A Lebanese soldier guards the site of an explosion in a mainly Christian suburb of Beirut March 19. Lebanon's pro-Syrian president invited anti-Syrian opposition and loyalist politicians to begin immediate talks on Saturday, hours after a car bomb raised fresh fears of a return to the country's violent past.

forces before Lebanese elections.

Washington has also demanded the disarmament of Shi'ite Muslim Hizbollah guerrillas, a call the spiritual leader of Lebanon's Maronite

Catholics seconded on Friday during a trip to the United States.

Hizbollah, backed by Syria and Iran, has vowed to keep its guns to fight Israel.

Arabs pledge \$440 M to rehouse Palestinians

GAZA, March 19 (Reuters) - Arab countries have earmarked \$440 million for rebuilding hundreds of Palestinian homes demolished by Israel during four years of fighting, the Palestinian economy minister said on Saturday.

Mazen Sonnoqrot told Reuters that Arab ministers of finance and economy who met in Algiers ahead of a March 22-23 Arab League summit approved the plan to build new homes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"We presented a comprehensive report on hundreds of homes that the Israeli occupation had demolished and our demand was approved," Sonnoqrot said by telephone.

Israeli human rights group B'tselem said at least 4,100 dwellings in the occupied territories have been bulldozed or blown up

since a Palestinian uprising erupted in September 2001, leaving thousands of people homeless.

Some of the demolished homes were those belonging to Palestinian militants linked to suicide bombings which have killed hundreds of Israelis.

Israel maintained the tactic — which was condemned internationally as collective punishment — deterred future attacks, but suspended it last month under a truce declared by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

According to Israeli security sources, a Defence Ministry probe found that the demolitions' deterrent value was offset by the violent resentment they spread among Palestinians.

Israel has also razed hundreds of Palestinian homes it said were built without permits, or in order to clear space for a controversial West Bank barrier project launched following a wave of suicide bombings in 2002.

Palestinians see such demolitions as a bid to cement Israel's hold on occupied land they want for a Palestinian state.

Sonnoqrot said Arab countries also undertook to make good on an outstanding pledge from their last summit in 2002, to provide \$523 million to the Palestinians.

To support the fragile Palestinian economy, severely hit by Israeli restrictions on movement on goods, Algeria agreed to buy Palestinian exports such as olive oil, construction materials, drugs and shoes products, starting in April, Sonnoqrot said.

Bomb kills four policemen at Iraqi funeral

KIRKUK, Iraq, March 19 (Reuters) - A roadside bomb killed four policemen in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Saturday during a funeral for a colleague killed a day earlier, a police official said.

Lieutenant Colonel Yadkar Mohammed said eight people were also wounded in the attack.

Insurgents have killed hundreds of policemen in a bloody campaign to topple Iraq's U.S.-backed government.

The fate of the ethnically divided oil centre of Kirkuk is one of the most sensitive issues in negotiations on forming a government after the Jan. 30 elections.

Kurds are hoping to expand their de facto autonomous zone in northern Iraq to include Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad.



An Iraqi police officer stands guard near a damaged police four-wheel drive vehicle following a roadside bomb explosion in the northern city of Kirkuk, March 19. At least four Iraqi policemen were killed in the explosion which targeted their convoy on a highway in Kirkuk.

Freed Iraqi: Swedish hostage says no ransom paid

BAGHDAD, March 19 (Reuters) - An Iraqi-Swedish Christian politician kidnapped in Baghdad in January and threatened with beheading said on Saturday no ransom had been paid to secure his freedom.

"In terms of the ransom issue, we did not pay any ransom," Minas al-Yousifi told reporters at the headquarters of the Muslim Clerics Association, which has been involved in previous hostage releases.

The 60-year-old leader of Iraq's Christian Democrats, who returned from exile in Sweden to reestablish the party two years ago, was abducted by the Iraqi Vengeance Battalion, Martyr al-Isawi Brigade, and freed on Friday.

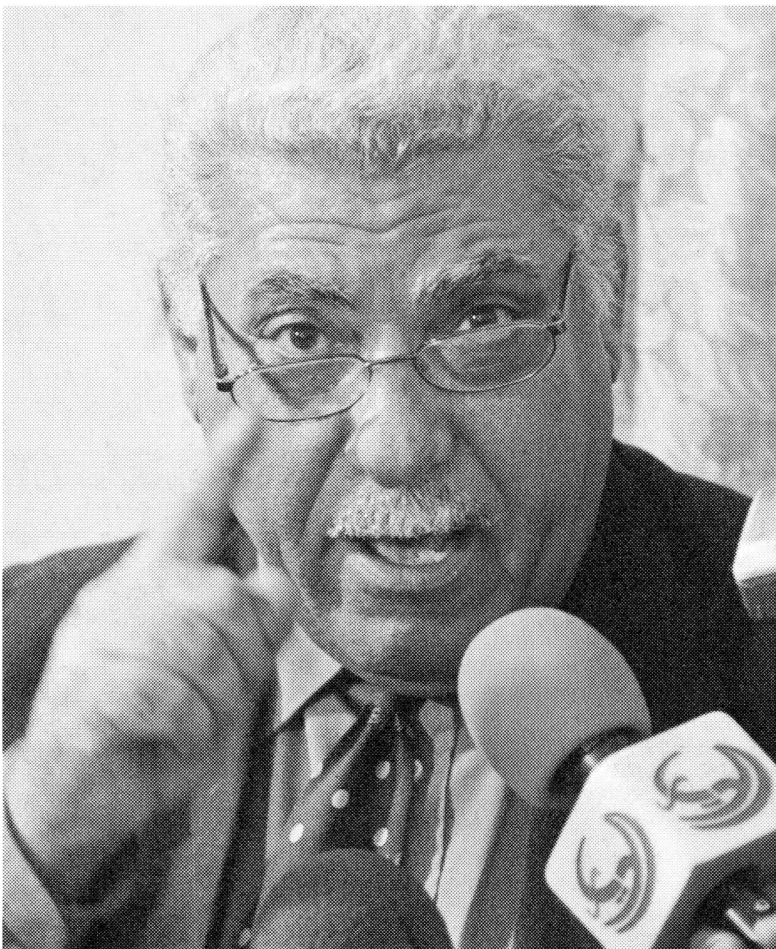
The militants had threatened to behead him unless a \$4 million ransom was paid and U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq. The kidnappers later reduced their ransom demand to \$400,000.

Yousifi said he had been kidnapped near a tunnel in central Baghdad on January 28.

He had made video-taped appeals for his release, calling on Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf and Pope John Paul to help him.

Yousifi said he believed he had been freed because his captors had asked various parties about him and then decided to release him.

In Stockholm, a Vatican diplomat said Vatican diplomats in Baghdad had played an active role in helping



Former hostage talks to media after being released in Baghdad Minas al-Yousifi, the 60-year-old leader of Iraq's Christian Democrats who returned from exile in Sweden to reestablish the party two years ago, talks to the media after being released by kidnappers in Baghdad March 19.

liberate him.

"All the Vatican diplomacy was working for that, also at the request

of the Swedish government," Gabor Pinter told Reuters.

"I cannot give any more details of

what happened as it is very delicate, even because of the future. The war is not ended yet, perhaps Vatican diplomatic help will be needed," he added.

He said Yousifi was in good shape and visited the Vatican embassy in Baghdad on Friday.

Insurgents and militants have killed scores of Iraqis and foreigners suspected of ties to U.S. troops. In many cases the payment of ransom is not publicised.

Yousifi's family and Swedish Christian Democrat politician Goran Hagglund, had complained that Swedish authorities and media were initially indifferent because he was not a native Swede — in contrast to the fuss made in Italy, for example, about kidnapped journalist Giuliana Sgrena, also released.

Yousifi sought asylum in Sweden 20 years ago to escape persecution under Saddam Hussein.

He and his family, who stayed behind running a family business in the city of Jonkoping, are part of a community of 60,000 Iraqis in Sweden.

Christians make up about 3 percent of Iraq's 27 million people.

Several churches have been attacked in the insurgency against the U.S.-backed government.

Insurgents and Muslim militants have kidnapped more than 150 foreigners in Iraq.

Most have been released but some have been beheaded.

Jordan calls for revival of Arab peace offer

ALGIERS, March 19 (Reuters) - Jordan tried on Saturday to persuade other Arab countries to relaunch an offer of eventual normalisation of ties with Israel after assuring them it was not proposing to dilute conditions Israel must meet.

Arab foreign ministers were discussing a Jordanian proposal to revive the peace initiative at a meeting ahead of a summit on March 22-23 in Algiers.

"There is no opposition to it.

There are various points of view and that is normal but we expect that the foreign ministers will approve it and submit it to the kings and presidents," Jordanian foreign ministry spokesman Rajab Sukeiri said.

The three-year-old Arab proposal offered Israel a normalisation of ties on condition that all land seized in the 1967 Middle East war was returned in line with U.N. resolutions.

It also called for the right of return of Palestinian refugees and the creation of a Palestinian state.

Some delegates had balked at the Jordanian proposal to revive the ini-

tiative, fearing it might go too far in normalising ties without waiting for the conditions to be met.

But Sukeiri told reporters the Jordanian proposal made no changes to a Saudi initiative adopted in Beirut in 2002.

"The resolution does not call for a premature normalisation but says that normalisation will be the result of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace ... and the principle of land for peace," Sukeiri said.

Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail told reporters his country supported the Jordanian proposal.

But an Algerian foreign ministry official said the plan had not yet got the full backing of delegates as some feared it would lead to a watering down of the Saudi initiative.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa was quoted by Algeria's official radio as saying that normalising ties with Israel would not be on the summit agenda.

Arab foreign ministers were also discussing the situation in Lebanon, Iraq and reform of the Arab League.

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Japanese protest against U.S. presence in Iraq

TOKYO, March 19 (Reuters) - Thousands of Japanese took to the streets on Saturday in protest against the U.S. presence in Iraq and Japan's dispatch of troops there on the eve of the second anniversary of the U.S. invasion.

Over 4,500 people marched in a Tokyo demonstration that took place during U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Japan, said Ken Takada, a member of civic group World Peace Now.

"The Self-Defence Force (Japan's military) should withdraw from Iraq immediately... and the occupation of Iraq should be stopped," Takada said.

One protester wore a mask of U.S. President George W. Bush and held a placard with a map of Iraq in the colours of the U.S. flag.

Another held a picture of what appeared to be Iraqi children in front of a destroyed building.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's decision to send about 550 troops on a non-combat mission to the southern Iraqi city of Samawa has split public opinion.



Japanese protesters holds pictures showing Iraqi victims during a rally in Tokyo March 19. March 20 marks the second anniversary of the U.S.-led war on Iraq. About 4,500 protesters gathered for the rally demanding the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, according to organisers. REUTERS

China coal mine blast traps 70 miners

BEIJING, March 19 (Reuters) - A gas explosion in a northern Chinese coal mine on Saturday trapped 70 miners, the Xinhua news agency said, the latest accident to strike the world's deadliest mining industry. The blast hit the Xishui Colliery near the city of Shouzhou in Shanxi province at about noon, Xinhua said. "Forty-nine miners were trapped,

and 21 miners of a neighbouring coal pit owned by another mine were also buried because the blast caused the collapse of the coal mine wall," Xinhua said.

Provincial Governor Zhang Baoshun was on his way to the scene to direct rescue and investigation work, it said.

The Xishui mine had annual

output of 150,000 tonnes a year, it said, but gave no further details.

On Thursday, a blast in a coal mine in the southwestern city of Chongqing killed at least 18 miners. China's coal mines are the deadliest in the world.

Last year, more than 6,000 Chinese miners were killed in explosions and other accidents.

Uganda cargo plane crash injures crew

ENTEBBE, Uganda, March 19 (Reuters) - A cargo plane contracted by Ethiopian Airlines crashed while landing at Entebbe Airport in Uganda, seriously injuring the pilot and crew, officials said on Saturday.

"A Ghanaian-registered cargo plane, carrying cargo for Ethiopian Airlines under contract has crashed on touch down at Entebbe Airport," Girma Wake, the chief executive officer of state-owned Ethiopian Airlines, told Reuters in Addis Ababa.

The Boeing 707 plunged into Lake Victoria, Africa's biggest lake, and witnesses said it was broken into several pieces with the main body split into two sections.

The cargo, mainly packets of T-shirts and music cassettes, were strewn around the scene of the accident.

"The cause of the accident is under investigation but a preliminary report indicated that there was bad weather," Girma said.

Officials said the pilot aborted his first attempt to land because of rain and on a second attempt the tail of the plane clipped an object at the end of the runway, sending it into the water.

"On average we have one plane crash into the lake each year.

But this is the worst anyone has seen for sometime," said Tim De Wet, the chief executive of Lake Rescue East Africa, a private company contracted by the Uganda government.

Rice presses N. Korea on nukes, Japan on beef

SEOUL, March 19 (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged North Korea on Saturday to return to talks on scrapping its nuclear arms programmes and said Washington's Asian allies could do more to persuade Pyongyang.

She also called on China's leaders to pursue greater democracy and pressed Japan to end its ban on imports of U.S. beef, but did not manage to get her Japanese counterpart to specify a timetable for reopening the lucrative Japanese beef market.

"Let me put it plainly: North Korea should return to the six-party talks immediately, if it is serious about exploring the path forward that we and the other parties have proposed," Rice, a former academic, said in a policy speech at a university in Tokyo.

Rice later arrived in South Korea,

where she was getting together some of the 37,000 U.S. troops based on the peninsula, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War that ended in an armed truce and leaving the belligerents technically still at war.

She meets with South Korean officials on Sunday.

U.S. and South Korean soldiers on Saturday began annual war games that Pyongyang called "nuclear war exercises", saying its buildup of nuclear arms was necessary as self defence.

North Korea also attacked Rice this week for labelling the secretive communist state "an outpost of tyranny" and said it would not deal with her.

Rice chose her language carefully in Tokyo and refrained from repeating the label that she used earlier this year to describe North Korea.

Rice reiterated that the United States

had "no intention of attacking or invading North Korea" and said Washington was prepared, with others in the six-way process, to offer "multilateral security assurances to North Korea in the context of ending its nuclear programme."

Call for flexibility

She also urged Asian partners in the talks — Japan, South Korea and North Korea's biggest benefactor, China — to work harder to bring Pyongyang back to the negotiations that have been on hold since June.

"We especially urge China to do so and I will do that when I go to Beijing," Rice said later after meeting Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura.

Rice travels to China on Sunday. While Washington wants its Asian partners to exert more pressure on North Korea, they, in turn, have called on the

United States to show greater "flexibility" to revive the talks, which also involve Russia.

The top U.S. diplomat's address on Saturday was the key speech of her first trip to Asia as secretary of state.

Rice has visited India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and, after Japan, she flies to South Korea and on to China.

U.S. officials said Rice's Saturday speech was not an ultimatum to North Korea, but declined to say how the United States would respond if Pyongyang still refused to resume the negotiations.

Washington believes North Korea is using Rice's rhetoric as an excuse to shun the talks so it can avoid deciding whether to scrap its programmes in exchange for security guarantees and economic aid, the officials said.

Rice said the United States and its

allies would not be silent about the plight of the North Korean people, the nature of Pyongyang's regime and its abduction of "innocent civilians of peaceful neighbouring countries", a reference to Pyongyang's kidnapping of Japanese and South Korean citizens decades ago.

Open Chinese society

Despite the U.S. need for China's support on North Korea, Rice prodded Beijing to develop a more open society in remarks likely to irk a Chinese leadership sensitive to what it sees as foreign meddling in its domestic affairs.

"Openness is the vanguard of success," she said. "Even China must eventually embrace some form of open, genuinely representative government if it is to reap the benefits and meet the challenges of a globalising world."

Rice held up the Japanese-U.S. rela-

tionship as exemplary and backed Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, but also complained over beef imports.

"The time has come to solve this problem," she said, adding that American beef was safe.

Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, however, said after talks with Rice that Tokyo would not be rushed.

In late 2003, after the United States reported its first case of mad cow disease, Tokyo imposed a ban on imports of U.S. beef worth more than \$1 billion a year.

Japan agreed in October to allow shipments of beef from young U.S. cattle but Washington has become increasingly frustrated because Tokyo has not worked through the technical details necessary to implement the accord.

الف مبروك

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Mr. Abdul-Rahman Mohammed al-Kuhali

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عموم محافظات الجمهورية

بأحر التهاني والتبريكات

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والى مزيداً من التقدم والنجاح.....

Words of Wisdom



The value of time should be one of the key aspects in our way of thinking. I believe that a society is oblivious to time, it is definitely primitive or at least backward, even if it has modern airports, and lots of machines. I believe that our political, economic, cultural and social leaders have a duty to insist on a better understanding of and interaction with time. This is a vital factor in our ability to join the 21st century

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

OUR
OPINION

Rising tension

Demonstrations are one way in which masses express their opinion regarding a particular issue, most of the time condemning it. Last week hundreds of Yemeni people went to the streets protesting against price hikes and demanding that the government would not go ahead with the latest economic modifications.



Nadia Al-Saqqaf
Editor-in-Chief

However, there is no excuse for turning such processions into dangerous events, where violence and injuries result from clashes between security and the public or among the public themselves.

Demonstrations as such are an indicator of how much awareness and freedom of opinion citizens have. However, when these events are mismanaged and manipulated to threaten public welfare and people's lives, then this freedom is abused.

Internal disputes in any country only weaken its stance. As long as there are instabilities, everything else will not function well. Instability harms investment, harms infrastructure and development, and most of all it gives a reason for intruders to interfere in the country's affairs.

The government and public are partners aiming at the best interests of this country, and they have equal responsibility in achieving this aim. Good governance is crucial and the government should earn the people's trust. At the same time the public should put more effort in cooperating with the reform policies and trying to direct the government and shoulder their responsibilities in development.

Only when the two partners understand each other and come to a mutual understanding, will the internal scene be stable.

As complicated as it might sound, there is actually a simple equation to it. Transparency of the government's strategies combined with integrating the public in decision-making are one part of it. The other part is building capacity of the people and making them more aware, so that they could become more positively involved in building this nation.

This equation must be balanced, or else the rising tension will mount and eventually explode in our faces, both in the government and public.



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

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Before May 22 ...

Clean Yemen's house

BY PROF. DR. ABDULAZIZ AL-TARB
FOR THE YEMEN TIMES

Nobody can deny that there have been certain changes in public life in Yemen during 2004. They relate more to appearance than to essence. Such changes can serve as symbols and indications more than being changes to the usual course.

It was clear from field visits of President Abdullah Ali Saleh that he wanted to present a new face and thought for construction and change by criticizing performance of unnamed high-ranking officials and governmental bodies, as well as local councils.

We do not want economic compensation for political loss. The approach of reform should target a robust treatment of the haphazard policies and hold accountable the corrupt officials who abuse investment and investors, indulge in a dog-eat-dog competition for lands, and sell state establishments cheaply.

We need to select the persons who are able to work while unbound by personal relationships, because all Yemenis should have their full rights in this country, as the President frequently says: The homeland is for all.

I think the time is ripe for a cabinet reshuffle prior to the coming parliamentary and local council elections. We should get rid of some repulsive corrupt faces in order to clean the Yemeni house, especially before celebrating the 15th anniversary of reunification, May 22.

We need to adopt more vitality and decisiveness in the economic arena by taking bold realistic steps to encourage private enterprises and attract investments so as to increase the growth rate and provide employment opportunities for the young people. We need also to reduce income taxes and increase customs exemptions for optimism to prevail.

Previous governments despaired to convince the ordinary man that the living standard would be OK. People in the street are witnessing the disaster of

routine and absence of accountability. Pressures mount on ordinary people as they observe the astronomical prices and wait impatiently for the much-spoken-about prosperity.

As the current policy has succeeded in overshadowing political reform, and as a year has elapsed since the president invited opposition for dialogue, such dialogue has been alternately cold and hot through futile maneuvers aiming at a postponement of essential democratic reform. The dialogue agenda includes just amendment of Syndicate Acts and practice of political rights. Controversy is still going on regarding imprisonment, harassment and trials of journalists despite the president's directive that nobody should be tried for his opinion.

This is the way 2004 ended, showing no progress in terms of reform. In the economic arena, results will not be clear until one year is passed, and in the political field we should wait for a number of years. We should extract lessons from other countries' elections to be prepared for the coming parliamentary, local, and presidential elections.

Lifting the resource curse

BY GEORGE SOROS

Countries that are rich in natural resources are often poor, because exploiting those resources has taken precedence over good government. Competing oil and mining companies, backed by their governments, are often willing to deal with anyone who can assure them of a concession. This has bred corrupt and repressive governments and armed conflict. In Africa, resource-rich countries like Congo, Angola, and Sudan have been devastated by civil wars. In the Middle East, democratic development has been lagging.

Curing this "resource curse" could make a major contribution to alleviating poverty and misery in the world, and there is an international movement afoot to do just that. The first step is transparency; the second is accountability.

The movement started a few years ago with the Publish What You Pay campaign, which urged oil and mining companies to disclose payments to governments. In response, the British government launched the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Yesterday, three years into the process, the UK convened an important EITI conference in London attended by representatives of governments, business, and civil society.

Much has already been accomplished. On the business side, the major international extractive companies have started to acknowledge the value and necessity of greater transparency. British Petroleum has undertaken to disclose disaggregated payment information on its operations in Azerbaijan, and Royal Dutch Shell is doing the same in Nigeria. ChevronTexaco recently negotiated an agreement with Nigeria and Sao Tome that includes a transparency

clause requiring publication of company payments in the joint production zone.

Most encouraging is that producing countries themselves are beginning to seize the initiative. Nigeria is reorganizing its state oil company, introducing transparency legislation, and launching sweeping audits of the oil and gas sector. It plans to begin publishing details of company payments to the state this summer.

The Kyrgyz Republic became the first country to report under EITI, for a large gold-mining project. Azerbaijan will report oil revenues later this month. Ghana and Trinidad and Tobago have also signed on. Peru, Sao Tome and Principe, and East Timor are currently in negotiations to implement the initiative.

Equally important, local activists in many of these countries are starting to use EITI as an opening to demand greater public accountability for government spending. My own foundation, the Open Society Institute, has established Revenue Watch programs in producing countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia and Iraq.

But there is a lot more to be done. Two-thirds of the world's most impoverished people live in about 60 developing or transition countries that depend on oil, mining, or gas revenues. The recently published transparency index from Save the Children UK shows that transparency is the exception, not the rule. Many important producing countries have yet to make even a gesture toward disclosure. There is no reason the major Middle Eastern producers should not be part of this transparency push, and Indonesia should join its neighbor Timor in embracing the EITI. It is also critical that state-owned companies, which account for the bulk of global oil and gas production, be sub-

ject to full disclosure.

Other governments need to follow the UK's lead and become involved politically and financially in expanding the EITI. France appears to have done little to encourage countries within its sphere of influence, much less to ensure that its own companies begin disclosing. The Bush Administration's recent decision to initiate a parallel anti-corruption process through the G-8 leaves the United States outside the premier international forum for addressing transparency in resource revenues while unnecessarily reinventing the wheel in the process.

Nor have the US and Britain used their power in Iraq to promote transparency in the oil sector. Let us hope that the new Iraqi government does better. It is difficult to see how democracy can take root if the country's most important source of income remains as veiled in secrecy as it was under Saddam.

The EITI still has a long way to go, but it is one of the most effective vehicles available for achieving a global standard of disclosure and accountability. This week's summit is an opportunity to assess progress and to define more precisely what it means to implement the EITI by establishing some basic minimum requirements on host countries.

Those committed to seeing the wealth generated by energy and mining finally result in better lives for ordinary people would do well to invest in the initiative during this critical stage. The EITI may not be a catchy acronym, but in concert with civil society efforts such as Publish What You Pay, it promises to do a lot more good in the world than most.

George Soros is President of Soros Fund Management and Chairman of the Open Society Institute.

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COMMON
SENSE

By Hassan Al-Haifi

Invasion anniversary

More of the same in
Iraq and elsewhere

March 20th marks the second anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. The results of the invasion so far have not yielded the glowing scenario of a peaceful and prosperous Iraq and the democratic transformation envisioned is far from being put into an institutionalized framework.

Let us go back a little to the eve of the invasion, when the United States was laying out its justifications for deciding to go it alone in Iraq, and the frightening picture the Bush administration was painting about what would happen if action was not immediately taken. Notwithstanding all the skepticism that was raised about the George W. Bush administration's claims and assertions about the threat that Iraq under Saddam was posing to the world, the Bush administration made it inevitable that the only way to remove that threat was by a unilateral invasion to topple the regime that was drawing up Armageddon for the world.

Even when the professionals in the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency were quite convincing of their assessments of the poor credibility of the White House claims about Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (existing and in the drawing board), the US insisted that it knew better.

First of all the rather quick speed of the "War" immediately threw most of the claims out the window. That in itself should have raised many doubts about the credibility of the Bush administration, in general and not just in Iraq, especially in the United States, which one was under the assumption that its leaders are indeed accountable for any efforts to mislead the American citizens.

The rest of the world already had doubts well before the invasion. Yet surprisingly, the spurious claims and intentional deceptions were allowed to be forgotten, as the theatrics sought to convince the American people that it "was worth it" and the effort made "Americans at home secure".

When actual further investigations after the invasion revealed the absence of any WMD, existing or in the drawing boards of the fallen regime of Saddam Hussein, still the Bush administration escaped accountability for such a costly misadventure and the ill-conceived plans to deal with its aftermath. To many in the world, even to those who do not enjoy democratic venues, this seemed puzzling, since America was viewed as the shining beacon of sound governance, transparency and accountability.

For many of us, outside the United States, the only hope we could hang on to was that indeed there were many Americans, who shared our feelings and were actually more outspoken about their Government's contempt of American principles of transparency and accountability. Thanks to the internet, there was a substantial number of channels, by which these Americans expressed their protest against this extreme turn of political interaction in the United States. For many observers, outside the US, the Presidential Elections of 2004 were bound to correct this odd turn of political developments towards the extreme right in the United States.

After all, American history has shown that within the American constitutional framework and institutional set up of the political process, America always managed to find its way out of any non-standard deviation. Moreover, the American people were expected not to fall for deception and to be intentionally misled more than once. But then again could they be? They were again made to forget that the power ultimately was in their hands and for some inexplicable reason, the Democratic Party was ill prepared to harness the American people towards bringing their country back in line with the fundamentals upon which America was established and in line with the beliefs of true freedom-loving people (not of the Israeli genre) throughout the world.

In fact, the Bush clique was far better prepared to meet any strategy by the Democrats that would have stood in their way of getting their President to carry on for a second term of more of the same deceit. Even with the obvious messy situation that has evolved in Iraq, and with the clear evidence of repressive tactics characterizing the "War on Terror", the occupation of Iraq and the ongoing chaos in Afghanistan, the Bush Administration came back, as if the American people (a little more than half of them anyway) were not around through all the calamities that Bush has gotten away with throughout his First Term.

On the contrary, as Bush proceeded with his second term, there was no reason not to go on with the theatrics and the deceptions. He says it proudly that the American people have given him the mandate to carry on with the agenda his clique has been preparing for now for two decades, along with their Zionist mentors and corporate bosses. So, with the Afghani and Iraqi stage far from stabilized, the second anniversary has not even been reached and the Bush Administration is already singing its theme of carrying on their liberation to other parts of the world, sometimes under the guise of containing Iran's possible nuclear armament, or liberating the Arabs from their dictators.

But with America so far to the right, is it qualified to bring on the liberation of the world, when many of its own people have elected to emigrate to Canada after losing hope in their own chances of improvement to more reasonable and responsible governance? What is apparent is the Bush Administration determination to spread the neo-con agenda to the rest of the world. The nominations of John Bolton as US Ambassador to the United Nations and Paul Wolfowitz as Chairman of the World Bank, who are known as being fervent architects of the Iraqi quagmire, are a clear indication of how the Bush Administration has reasons to celebrate its success in getting its way, right or wrong over the last two years.

This is what the Christian Science Monitor had to say about these nominations: "The nomination (Wolfowitz) follows last week's naming of John Bolton as US Ambassador to the United Nations, another nomination seen by many as going against the grain of Bush administration efforts to smooth relations with the rest of the world after the Iraq war. Calling the Wolfowitz nomination 'a slap in the face' to Europe and a cold shower on the good feelings left by Bush's recent trip to Europe, one European diplomat said, 'These two nominations portend a not very good time ahead.'"

What's in store for the next two years? Only God knows!

East and West



By JAMIL ABDUL KARIM

Easter week

Would Van Gogh paint the prodigal's feet?

I wonder if the prodigal son had blistered feet. And I wonder if Vincent Van Gogh, if he were alive, would come to Yemen to paint them.

You know the parable of the prodigal, as told by Jesus the Messiah. A young man abandons home, taking his inheritance early. He lives wildly, then winds up alone and broke and eating in the company of pigs. When he finally returns home, hoping to be just a hired-hand, his lovesick father runs, ridiculously, likely almost tripping on his thobe, to meet him in the distance. He throws his arms around his son. And he kills the fattened calf and throws a party.

Universal story

It's a universal story. American writer Ernest Hemingway tells it well in *The Capitol of the World* while writing about a runaway teenage son. After a lengthy search, the longing father buys a Madrid newspaper ad. "Dear Paco, Meet me in front of the newspaper office tomorrow at noon. All is forgiven. I love you." The next day 800 men named Paco are at the office wanting to restore a broken relationship.

It's Dutch painter Rembrandt who painted a scene of the prodigal being held in his father's arms. The painting has such impact, Catholic priest and scholar Henri Nouwen once traveled to St. Petersburg, Russia just to see the original. He stood in front of it for four hours, then noted it shows humanity's "yearning for a lasting home."

Vincent Van Gogh, who, like Rembrandt, was Dutch, painted similar themes. I'm reminded of this whenever I drive the dusty and busy streets of Yemen and slip the song "Vincent," by singer Don McLean, into my tape-deck. The lyrics explain how Vincent painted "weathered faces lined in pain." He put "frames around ragged men in ragged clothes." He "tried to set them free."

I find the imagery especially powerful here, because, as you know, Yemeni feet are not Paris feet. They are not London feet, or New York feet, or even Toronto feet.

Westerners visiting here are always interested to see that Yemeni feet, for one, are always in sandals. Riding a motorcycle? Working in construction? Going to the mosque? Sandals. And not surprisingly, like the poorer feet of the ancient world, Yemeni feet walk, long distances sometimes, in sandals that are battered and torn. Some Yemeni feet can get rather bruised and scarred and worn.



Vincent Van Gogh

Everyday pictures

So Van Gogh could easily find inspiration to paint the prodigal son's feet here. And there's something very relevant about this; because the writers of the gospels tell us that after Jesus the Messiah finished eating and laughing with his friends, after he hung out with the prostitutes, and tax collectors and other prodigals of his time, to make his lasting point unmistakably clear, he washed their grimy feet and went off to die for them.

How interesting, then, in Muslim Yemen, where there is not one Christian church for 20 million Yemenis, there are everyday pictures

that are so biblical, and so much more vibrant than in the planet's more-sophisticated places. It's something that some westerners here will keep in mind this week, which is Easter week, a week when more than 1.2 billion people on Earth mark their belief that Jesus the Messiah died for the forgiveness of humanity's sins, and then rose from the dead.

The other thing one can't help but ponder is Van Gogh's disillusionment. As a young man, before becoming a painter, he wanted to "sow the words" of scripture to the poor: to the working class in London's slums, in the grimy coalmines, in the surrounding farm fields. Later, painting the distinct realness of such men and women, he said, "Christ (the Messiah) is more of an artist than the artists; he works in the living spirit and the living flesh; he makes *men* instead of statues."

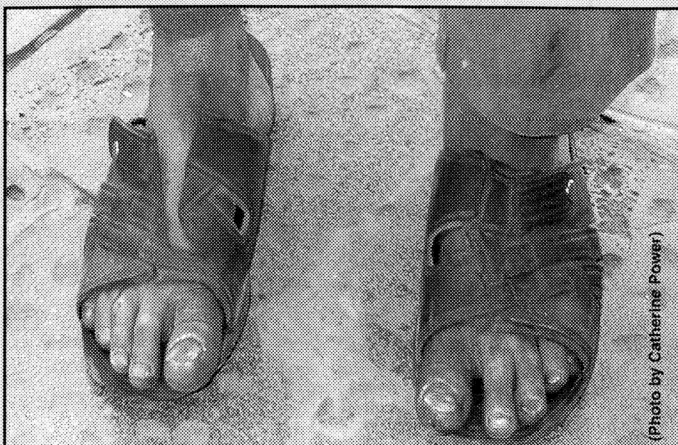
Stopping to look

Yet Van Gogh, this gifted and spiritually-rich man, died young, hopeless, by committing suicide, 115 years ago next week. Why?

Putting aside the 19th century's lack of treatment for mental illness, one can't help but conclude that the deeply-depressed Van Gogh couldn't absorb the rejection of having his work, worth a fortune today, go unrecognized. Apparently nobody could be bothered to understand the different language of his colours, the strange composition of his brush-strokes, no matter how true and loving they were.

Rather than stopping, even briefly, to look at what was a unique window into eternity, people simply walked by. Blindly. Like some do with Jesus the Messiah. It's something to think about. This week. Or any other.

Jamil Abdul Karim is a Yemen Times editor. Email: 140765@sympatico.ca



(Photo by Catherine Power)



By Samer A.

Middle East integration



By EL HASSAN BIN TALAL

He attempts now being made to revive the "road map" to a final settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the creation of a Palestinian state are at only a preliminary stage. The recent international conference in London, aimed at supporting reforms in the Palestinian Authority and shoring up support for renewed negotiations with Israel, is one of those preliminary efforts.

I suggest, however, that it is not mediation that is needed: what the Palestinians need now are partners. In their conflict with Israel, their natural and historical partner has always been Jordan.

That partnership was never broken. Articles 3 and 8 of Jordan's peace treaty with Israel refer explicitly to the refugee problem as one of the major issues still to be resolved, as well as citing the unresolved status of trans-border arrangements and of Jerusalem. Jordan is not outside the peace process, but an essential part of it.

The original road map sketched out at the Madrid Conference in 1991 envisaged two stages: the final settlement of disputes between the

Palestinians and Israel, and the permanent settlement of regional conflicts. Jordan's participation in both stages is crucial.

Indeed, the interests of the inhabitants of the three areas - Palestine, Jordan, and Israel - are so intertwined that their representatives will have no choice but to come to terms with one another if negotiations are to succeed. For example, the refugee problem cannot be separated from wider problems concerning the integration of all inhabitants of Palestine, Jordan, and Israel - where the refugees are most numerous - into civil societies where they may enjoy equal legal status and equal access to economic and cultural opportunities.

Such integration cannot be achieved on a unilateral basis but only by programs adopted by the host and donor countries in co-operation with each other; nor can it be achieved in conditions where there is complete political and administrative separation between the populations which places them under exclusive controls and fails to acknowledge the human needs of community and conviviality.

The economic and social development of the three areas demands an integrated approach to the exploitation of energy and other natural resources, particularly water. Without agreements on the conditions of such exploitation there will remain imbalances of living conditions and the persistence of rival claims with their

potential for future conflicts.

A recognized community of water and energy interests and programs for their joint exploitation, for example in the rift valley, may lead, as was the motivation for the first stage of European integration, to a wider integration on a wider scale in the region.

The status of Jerusalem is still an unresolved question on both the local and international scenes. That question was specifically listed in the Jordanian-Israel Peace Treaty. The recognition by the three parties of the primacy of the moral and spiritual over the political importance of the city could lead to arrangements on the ground which satisfy the legitimate claims of the three Abrahamic faiths, and subsume the eventual political status of the city to this moral authority.

The alternative to an accepted resolution of their problems by the three parties is the permanent fragmentation of the Holy Land, which can only lead to more confrontation and violent conflicts. The shadow of such fragmentation, with its unfathomable perils, now hangs over Iraq. In this troubled part of the world, the choice is, quite simply, one between regionalism and barbarism.

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal is the President of the Club of Rome, Moderator of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, and the President of the Arab Thought Forum.

Putin's deadly "great game"

By ALEXANDER ETKIND

President Vladimir Putin will visit Ukraine, the scene of his biggest foreign policy blunder, this weekend. Given his myopic actions at home, where he seems increasingly incapable of dealing with any institution that has any degree of autonomy, this seems unlikely.

For example, Putin recently abolished elections in Russia's provinces. From now on, presidential appointees will rule a country that is as complex and multi-national as the EU or the US. That's not a recipe for sophisticated thinking.

Indeed, elected officials in Russia have become an endangered species. The Kremlin black art of manipulating elections by deception and other means - called "political technology" by locals - will now be used only in other countries'

elections in, as these are the only real elections the Kremlin has to worry about, so neutered have Russia's own votes become. The justification for canceling elections in Russia is the need to fight terrorism - the end that now justifies all means.

How did it happen that every contemporary problem, particularly in Russia, seems to have been reduced to terrorist attacks and counter-terrorist operations? Poverty, racism, and ideological legacies are just as visible now as they were three or thirteen years ago. Terrorism has not exacerbated them. Security forces have not helped resolved them.

On the contrary, the "double terror" induced by terrorism and counter-terrorism distracts public attention from those problems that, as some of us still remember, produced terrorism. Palestine and Chechnya, two sites of pain and terrorist infection, have not healed.

Their national independence is now more elusive than it was before the terrorist era began.

The past was, of course, far from perfect, but governments and peoples everywhere appeared more capable of tolerating failure. When battles were lost, talks began. These talks eventually resulted in the formation of respected countries, from Italy in the nineteenth century, to India in the middle of the twentieth century, to Eritrea near that century's end.

Try to imagine Putin as Russia's leader in 1920, when Poland gained its independence from Russia, or in 1991, when Georgia did. Would he ever have engaged in peace talks? Nowadays, Rudyard Kipling's imperialist Great Game is decomposing into a vicious circle. Security forces respond to the growth of terrorism. The growth of terrorism responds to the strengthening of security forces.

The heavier the hand, it seems, the

stronger the resistance; the stronger the resistance, the heavier the hand. Real issues are buried beneath the crimes of the terrorists and the mistakes of the security forces. With every turn of the circle, both parties, terrorists and security forces, grow closer to each other. Their common interest is continuation of the game.

Opposing parties use the same weapons, develop comparable tactics, and preach increasingly similar ideals. So it goes, until the rules of the game change. But why would they?

In Russian history, there is an analogous situation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, socialist revolutionaries led by Evno Asef embarked on a series of terrorist attacks against state officials. Somewhere along the line, Asef became a double agent. Sometimes he killed an official who was not on good terms with the police. At other times, the police simply did not want

to betray their precious agent.

Manipulating each other, the terrorists and the security guys became indistinguishable. Call this the "Asef" effect. Once such an alliance was shaped, nothing but revolution could stop it - in this case, the Bolshevik revolution.

So the game must be stopped, if only for the survival of innocent bystanders - the rest of us. If you do not see humanity in your counterpart, you will not talk to him. You will either use him or kill him. So the "other" is elevated to the very center of high politics. This is the Asef effect in action.

The Bolsheviks did it to the bourgeoisie. The Nazis did it to the Jews. But classical empires learned not to do it to colonized people. Over time, they invented fascinating ways to control their subjects, combining education, bribery, and force. Learning the great art of Orientalism, the classical empires knew how to

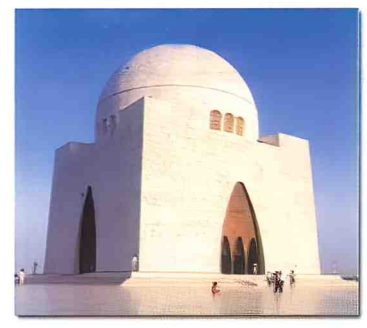
keep talking while keeping their distance.

Abolishing democracy in Russia's provinces, including Muslim-populated regions such as Tatarstan and Dagestan, is a deadly act. Civil peace in these areas was one of the few accomplishments of which contemporary Russia could be proud.

So is Putin suicidal? Unfortunately not. He owes his career to Chechnya, as Bush may owe his presidency to Iraq. But Chechnya, obliging as it is, is small, poor, and idiosyncratic. Converting vast areas of Russia into new Chechnyas, Putin and his clique calculate that - sooner rather than later - they will play out their games of terror and security with millions of Muslims in the oil-rich plains of Eurasia.

Alexander Etkind is Dean of Political Science and Sociology at the European University, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

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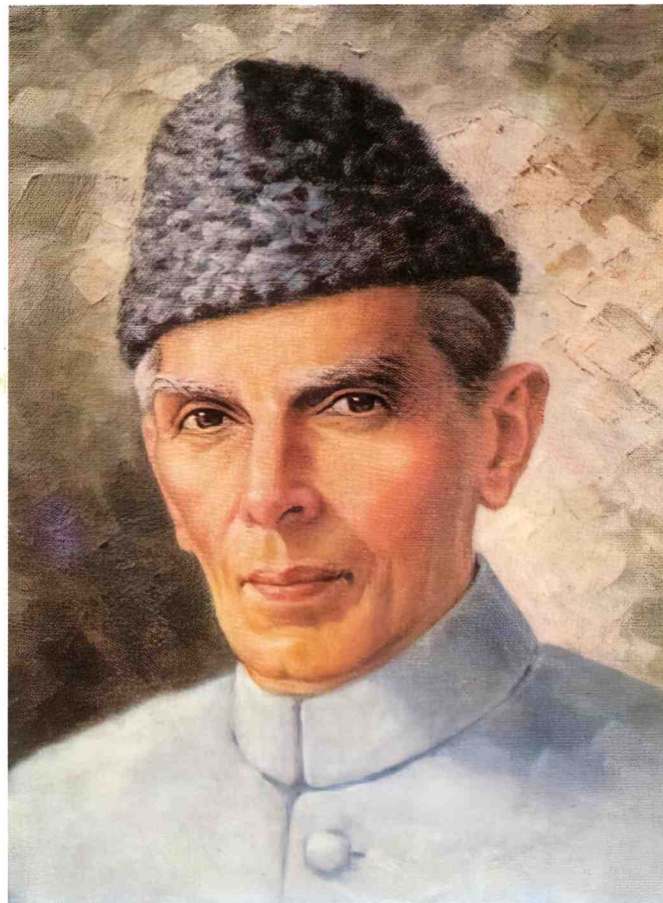
PAKISTAN



Celebrates 65th years with enlightened moderation, empowerment of women, economic stability and vast investment opportunities



Shaukat Aziz
Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah,
Father of the Nation



General Pervez Musharraf,
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Message of H.E. Nawab Amir Abdul Rehman Nousherwani, Ambassador of Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan National Day on 23 March 2005

“Pakistan stands for amity among nations for regional and global peace”

Dear brothers and sisters,

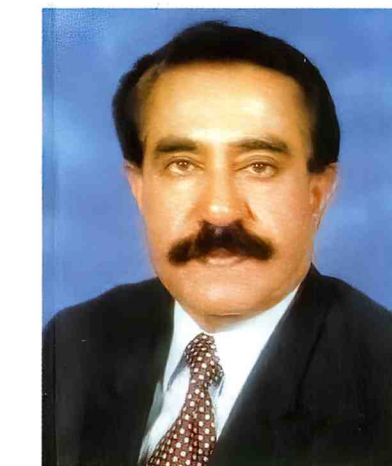
Today we are celebrating 65th anniversary of Pakistan's National Day. On this auspicious occasion I offer my heartfelt felicitations to my countrymen particularly our community living in the brotherly Republic of Yemen.

It was on 23rd March 1940 that the Muslims of South Asia under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah declared their collective resolve in the historic city of Lahore and passed a resolution for a sovereign state comprising the Muslim majority areas as their sole and common demand for the establishment of a homeland for their own where they could lead their lives in accordance with the tenets of Islam. It was this demand popularly called the Pakistan Resolution which gave impetus to the Pakistan movement and culminated in the creation of our great country on the map of the world on 14 August 1947.

While bowing our heads before Almighty Allah for the precious gift of freedom, we must also look inwards to assess as to whether we have been able to measure up to ideals and objectives, which constituted the basis for the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims of South Asia.

Today, Pakistan's economic performance and indicators stand out among developing countries and emerging market economies. Almost all vital statistics speak for themselves. During the past several years our economy has grown steadily at nearly 6% despite severe external shocks. Price stability and consistently low inflation rate were its other notable features. The manufacturing sector is presently growing at 14% which is unprecedented in our history. The stock market is a star performer in the region while the fiscal deficit has been significantly reduced. Export earnings and foreign exchange reserves have increased significantly. In fact we have consciously and successfully addressed the root causes of erstwhile economic disequilibrium reflected in the balance of payments, deficit, gap between import demand and export supply, low remittances and heavy debt servicing obligations.

Recently, Pakistan has been able to achieve considerable reduction in the size of its most expensive foreign liabilities bringing it down to US\$ 34 billion from US\$ 38 billion in 2001. Enhanced foreign exchange reserves and availability of soft loans was utilized to pay-off expensive loans amounting to around US\$ 1.2 billion to the IFIs. On the other hand, exchange rate stability enabled Central Bank to cut its discount rate



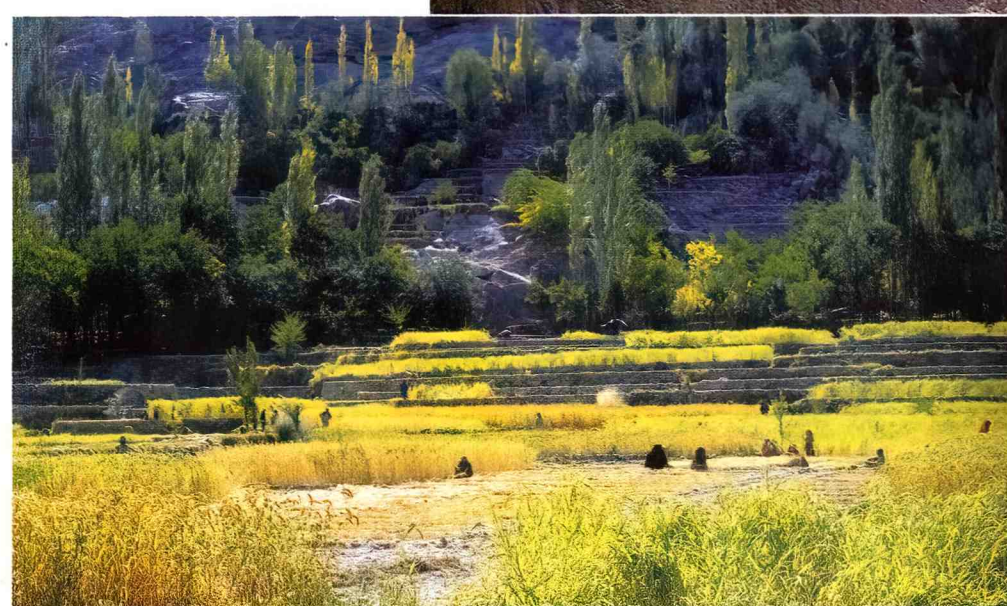
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to an all time low from 14.5% to 7.5% thereby easing monetary supply. Today, the interest rates in Pakistan are at a historical low. Pakistan is now poised to translate its macro-economic strengths into fulfilling the daily needs of our people, and raising their standards of living with effective participation of women. Steps including participation of women in Local Bodies, Senate and National Assembly are worth mentioning.

On the international front the Government of Pakistan made a bold and prudent policy choice to join the international coalition in the war against terrorism. The support has enabled the global coalition to make important gains in the anti-terrorism campaign and brought Pakistan great appreciation and important stature as a key member of the international community. Today Pakistan enjoys great respect in the comity of nations for its principled stand on different world issues. Pakistan stands for amity among nations for regional and global peace. In this spirit the Government and the people of Pakistan have been making sincere and unremitting efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute and making South Asia a region of peace and tranquility.

The Republic of Yemen and Pakistan enjoy warm, friendly and cooperative relations. These relations derive their strength from common cultural and religious ties and abiding interests of both countries in each other's well-being and stability. The Government and people of Pakistan cherish their fraternal ties with the Republic of Yemen and the support and cooperation which we continue to receive from the brotherly people of Yemen under the wise leadership of His Excellency Marshal Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen.

At the end, I pray for the progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan, the people of Yemen and the entire Muslim Ummah.



Pakistan: attractive destination for investment

By Alauddin Masood

Pakistan has become an attractive destination for profitable investment due to liberalization of economy, deregulation measures, improvement in macro-economic framework, continuity in economic policies, unprecedented incentives and, above all, a level playing field for both foreign and domestic investors.

With business an economy, the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan is continuously rising, which is reflective of investor's increased interest and confidence in the country.

Amongst foreign investors, who announced early this year, to make investments in Pakistan, notable ones include Germany's Daimler Chrysler and UAE's Coastal Group, who have shown interest to invest around three billion dollars in Pakistan. The group intended to invest two billion dollars in hydel power generation and approximately one billion dollars in the

automobile sector for producing trucks and cars.

The UK's Jeffrey International Group has announced to invest 70 million pounds in Pakistan, over the next three years, on different projects, making a beginning with launch of Global Spirit Airlines between Islamabad and Manchester from July 6th, 2005. Germany's Metro Super Market Company (GMS) planned to set-up a chain of super markets in the country including two super markets each in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

Brazilian and Saudi investors have showed interest in investing in the dairy, energy and cement sectors, while Limited (PTCL) alone planned to invest 750 million dollars in telecommunication sector in the next two years.

Improvement in the country's key macro-economic fundamentals and Pakistan's strategic location, with easy access to the Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, amongst others, were some of the factors contributing to making

Pakistan a manufacturing base for exporters and consequently an attractive destination for investment.

Recently, Pakistan was currently witnessing a high growth rate and the country expected to meet or exceed this year's growth targets due to reform measures and macro-economic stabilization. During July to December, 2004 the large-scale manufacturing sector showed 16.1 per cent growth, while it grew by 18.1 per cent during 2003-04. During the financial year ending June 2005, Pakistan's real GDP was targeted to grow by seven per cent and attain a growth of eight per cent within the next two to three years.

With a constant rise in GDP and the country's middle class population, the demand for consumer goods and automobiles has increased manifold in Pakistan, which is a market of 150 million people. The automobile sector has, in particular, shown a remarkable performance during the last couple of years. During 2004, some 120,000 vehicles were sold and the sale of vehicles was likely to jump to 160,000 by 2006.

During the last three years, around 220 business delegations from 40 countries, including USA, Germany, UK, UAE, Singapore and Malaysia visited Pakistan. If the number of foreign delegations visiting the country and the expression of interest by overseas investors about investment in Pakistan is taken as a yardstick, it would lead one to the conclusion that the tempo of FDI inflow was likely to further increase in the future.

The net inflow of foreign direct investment during July, 2004 to January, 2005 (i.e. the first seven months of the financial year 2005) climbed by a staggering 101.23 per cent to \$ 606.90 million. Out of this, the total direct investment during the period climbed by 62.69 per cent or US\$ 175.50 million, and stood at \$ 515 million.

Pakistan is also pursuing privatization as an important programme of its economic reforms agenda, which was set to play the role of facilitator and regulator to provide an enabling environment to entrepreneurs to invest and do business. After privatization of Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC) and with the privatization of mega companies like Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), Oil and Gas Development Corporation Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan State Oil, Karachi Shipyard, Faisalabad Electricity Company and Pakistan Steel, the rate of investment is expected to further increase.

Pakistan has also opened all economic sectors for foreign investment, allows up to 100 per cent foreign equity, remittances of profits, dividends, royalty and technical fee. Moreover, foreign private investment is fully protected in Pakistan, as the nation subscribes to the belief that foreign investment builds bridges between people and communities and it is in the country's own interest to see foreign capital expand.

With foreign exchange reserves hovering around \$12 billion, Pakistan has stopped taking high cost loans from international donors. Instead, the country has entered the international capital market and it floated a \$ 500 million Eurobond in February, 2004 and \$ 600 million Islamic Bond (Sukuk) in January, 2005. Both the bonds were over-subscribed several folds, which reflects a great degree of confidence of the international investors in Pakistan.

Indo-Pakistan peace process, mega projects like Gwadar deep-sea port and growth in macro indicators coupled with liberal facilities for investment offer tremendous opportunities to entrepreneurs for beneficial investment in Pakistan.

In Brief, Government's prudent policies and hassle-free investment environment has made Pakistan a hub of business activities for the Central Asia and Afghanistan and the country is now poised to becoming a regional manufacturing hub covering South Asia, Middle East, Africa and Central Asia.

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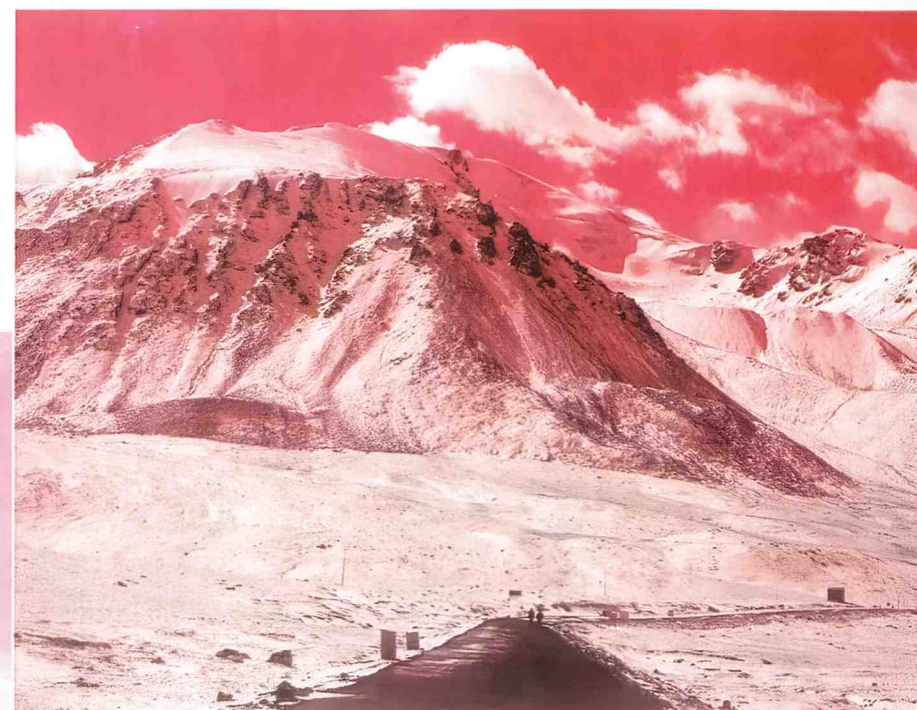
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Tourists attractions in Pakistan

By Tariq Ali

Pakistan is a destination of special interest for travelers and tourists. Its main attractions include adventure tourism in the Northern Areas, cultural and archaeological tourism as found at Taxila, Moenjodaro, Harappa, Swat, along the Kirthankorams in the North to the vast alluvial delta of the Indus river in the South, Pakistan remains a land of high adventure and nature. Trekking, mountaineering, white water rafting, wild boar hunting, mountain and desert jeep, camel and yak safaris, trout fishing and bird watching, are among the few activities that entice the adventure and nature lovers to Pakistan.

Indus Valley Civilization
The Indus Valley Civilization was at its peak from the 3rd till the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. Discovered in 1922, Moenjodaro was once a metropolis of great importance, forming part of the Indus Valley Civilization with Harappa (discovered in 1923) Kot Diji and Mehrgarh (discovered in 1984).

Northern Pakistan
Northern Areas of Pakistan, spread over 72,496 sq. km are the most fascinating regions of natural beauty. Amidst towering snowcapped peaks with heights varying from 1,000 to 8,000 m, the regions of Gilgit, Hunza and Baltistan recall Shangri-La. The cultural patterns of these regions are as interesting as their geography. The people with typical costumes, folk dances, music and sports like polo and buzkashi, provide the tourist an unforgettable experience. Nowhere else in the world is such a great concentration of high mountains, peaks, glaciers and passes except in Pakistan. Of the 14 over 8,000 meters high peaks on earth, 04 occupy an amphitheater at the head of Baltoro glacier in the Karakoram range. These are: K-2 (8,611 m, world's second highest), Broad Peak (8,047 m) and Gasherbrum-I (8,068 m) Gasherbrum-II (8,035 m). There is yet another which is equally great, Nanga Parbat (8,125 m), located at the western most end of the Himalayas. In addition to that, there are 68 peaks over 7,000 m, and hundreds other over 6,000 m. Northern Pakistan has some of the longest glaciers such as Siachen (74 km), Hispar (59 km), Biafo (59 km), Baltoro (58 km) and Batura (52 km) in the Polar region.

Gandhara Civilization
Gandhara region, the hallowed center of Buddhism, had once been the cradle of the world famous Gandhara art, culture and knowledge. The archaeological remains found in Taxila, Peshawar, Charsadda, Shahbaz Garhi, Jamai Garhi, Takht Bahi, Swat and Karj carvings along the ancient Silk Road (KKH) have well recorded the history of Gandhara.

The Silk Route
For centuries, it remained the main trading route between the South Asia and the Central Asia. After the completion of

the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in 1978 along the same route, joining Pakistan With Chinese Muslim autonomous region of Xinjiang, the ancient trade link has been revived. The KKH has provided a great opportunity for international travelers to explore the unspoiled natural beauty, unique culture and ancient traditions of Northern Pakistan together with other Silk Road countries like China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

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for trade & investment

Head Office
Tel: 967 1 206613
Fax: 967 1 215579

المركز الرئيسي
تلفون: 967 1 206613
فاكس: 967 1 215579

Tender Announcement No.1/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No.1/ 2005 for the following:

Procuring, installing, checking and submitting a space digital television station with all the components of a space channel.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Tender fees are US\$ 500, non-refundable, and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements:

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 2- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 3- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 4- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 5- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Saturday May 14, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am in the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 2/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 2 / 2005 for the following:

Procuring and checking varied sound devices for the Space Television Channel.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

The bidder should pay US\$ 100 as non-refundable tender fees, and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements:

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
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- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Tuesday April.12, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 3/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 3 / 2005 for the following:

Procuring, installing, checking, submitting and guaranteeing five digital montage units and other five wireless montage units with all their components and accessories.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Fees of tender: non-refundable US\$1500 and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 2- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 3- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 4- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 5- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Wednesday April.27, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 4/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 4/ 2005 for the following:

Procuring, installing, checking, submitting and guaranteeing Portable Digital Television Cameras for **May22 Channel**.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Fees of tender: non-refundable US\$ 500 and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 2- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 3- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 4- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 5- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Saturday April.30, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 5/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 5/ 2005 for the following:

Procuring, installing, submitting and guaranteeing video devices and other varied devices for the technical libraries of **May22 Channel**.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Fees of tender: non-refundable US\$ 500 and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 2- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 3- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 4- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 5- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Wednesday April.13, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 6/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 6/ 2005 for the following:

Procuring, supervising the installation, checking, guaranteeing and submitting Broadcast Transmission Devices (FM) with aerial systems for the two local Radios in Sa'ada and Shabwa.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Fees of tender: non-refundable US\$ 600 and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements

- 7- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 8- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 9- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 10- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 11- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 12- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Saturday April.16, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 7/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 7/ 2005 for the following:

Procuring, checking, guaranteeing and submitting varied sound devices for the two local Radios in Sa'ada and Shabwa.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC - Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Fees of tender: non-refundable US\$ 600 and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 2- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 3- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 4- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 5- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Monday, April.18, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

Tender Announcement No. 8/ 2005

The Yemeni General Radio and TV Corporation (YGRTC) announces about the General Tender No. 8/ 2005 for the following:

Procuring and submitting oil for Diesel-power engines.

Specialized companies (manufacturers in this field) having the desire to obtain the documents of the tender should apply to the Headquarters of the YGRTC-Engineering Sector- General Department for Projects- Sana'a- near the Ministry of Public Health and Population, during the official working hours.

Fees of tender: non-refundable YR10,000 and those who like to get a copy by post will pay additional US\$100 for post fees.

Requirements

- 1- Enclosing a preliminary sum of money as a deposit worth %2.5 of the total price of the bid within 90 days from the date of opening the envelopes.
- 2- Enclosing a copy of tax card valid for 2005
- 3- Enclosing a copy of the commercial register card valid for 2005
- 4- Submitting the envelopes stamped with red wax
- 5- Abiding by the conditions mentioned in the documents of the tender
- 6- Bringing the original copies of the above-mentioned documents at the time of purchase for verification.

The date and place of opening envelopes:

The envelopes will be opened on Saturday, April.23, 2005 at exactly 11:00 am, at the headquarters of the YGRTC.

The time is now to fight disease

BY ZACKIE ACHMAT AND MABEL VAN ORANJE

It is possible for a child born just ten years from now to live in a world where AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are on the wane. But this can only happen with considerable investment. Now. Otherwise, today's grim picture will only get worse. Each day, these diseases kill 16,000 people—devastating entire communities and plummeting countries deeper into poverty.

Upping the ante could turn the tables. Recent successes in Brazil against AIDS, in Mozambique against malaria, and in China against TB, show what can be achieved on a global scale with more resources. There are new ways of directing aid to where it is most needed.

A key instrument is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Created

in 2002 as a partnership between governments and civil society, the Global Fund is unique in the way it aims to deliver assistance. Driven by real needs on the ground, projects are designed and implemented by recipients, and its procedures and operations are transparent.

Of late there has been much talk about intensifying efforts to eradicate poverty. Ahead of the G8 summit in Scotland in July, a coalition of non-governmental organizations has launched the "Global Call to Action Against Poverty," and the UK host has made Africa a top priority. Building on this momentum, the campaigns for debt relief, trade reform, and increasing aid to poor countries have gained traction. Yet, while pledges to increase development assistance have soared, short-term funding is woefully inadequate.

Any strategy for raising living stan-



Zackie Achmat Mabel van Oranje

dards must include urgent measures that address AIDS, TB and malaria. Stemming the spread of this deadly trio of diseases is the linchpin in the global fight against poverty.

Unchecked, these diseases not only sap the strength of national economies, but jeopardize peace and security. Teachers and nurses are dying; police and security forces are being hard hit, and 14 million children have already been orphaned by AIDS. We now risk

failing to meet the Millennium Development GOAL, set out by the United Nations, of reversing the spread of AIDS, TB and malaria by 2015. This failure will make remote any hope of reaching the other Millennium goals in the fight against poverty.

A comprehensive response to AIDS, TB and malaria is needed. Acting now means less spending in the long run. Investments in effective prevention, treatment and research in 2005 and 2006 will save millions of lives, lessen the socio-economic impact of the diseases in poorer countries, and remove the need for increased spending on these chronic crises in the future.

The Global Fund plays an important role in this funding environment, providing approximately 66% of all current external funds in the fight against TB, 45% in the fight against malaria, and

20% of all external support to combat HIV/AIDS. Since the Global Fund was founded three years ago, it has built an impressive track record: approving 310 grants totaling \$3.1 billion in 127 countries and disbursing \$920 million since 2002. Despite the scope of its mission, it has a minimal bureaucracy, which allows for a flexible response to changing needs.

The Global Fund is not perfect; as with all new organizations, it is experiencing growing pains. Yet, issues such as procurement policies, trade-offs between efficiency and ownership, and the balance between government and non-governmental organizations as implementing partners are being addressed through the Fund's open and inclusive governance systems.

If the Fund is to live up to its potential it will need \$2.3 billion to continue its work effectively in 2005. The first of

two replenishment conferences for the Global Fund is taking place this week in Stockholm, with the aim of securing financial pledges to cover grant commitments in 2006-2007, as well as to fill the gap for this year.

Donors have long preached the importance of a funding vehicle such as the Global Fund—one that is needs-driven, relies on local input, and promotes donor coordination. They now have a chance to make good on their word. With many battles ahead in the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria, it would be a disgrace if this opportunity is squandered.

Zackie Achmat is Chairperson of the Treatment Action Campaign (South Africa) and Mabel van Oranje is Director for EU Affairs of the Open Society Institute.

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Staying the course to control dengue

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI

Four groups are continuing their surveillance of the dengue fever in Hodeidah province under the National Malaria Combat Program (NMCP) supported technically by experts from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The groups which have been working since February 20, 2005 are monitoring averages of propagation of mosquito which transmits this virus disease. Some 140 workmates have sprayed more than 53356 homes and the process is on progress.

Dr. Osama Ahmed Ali, experts in insect at the WHO and the NMCP said that insect investigation teams have discovered that propagation spots are in homes, plastic, concrete and iron tanks, earthwares all of which are dangerous because they provide a fertile ground for the propagation of viruses causing the dengue fever. He called for more promotion of health awareness among citizens to instruct them how to store waters hygienically.

A Yemeni medical source said that number of the dead from the dengue fever in Hodeidah reached 36 persons after the new three deaths.

The symptoms of the disease include severe fever, front headache, less blood plates and white blood cells.

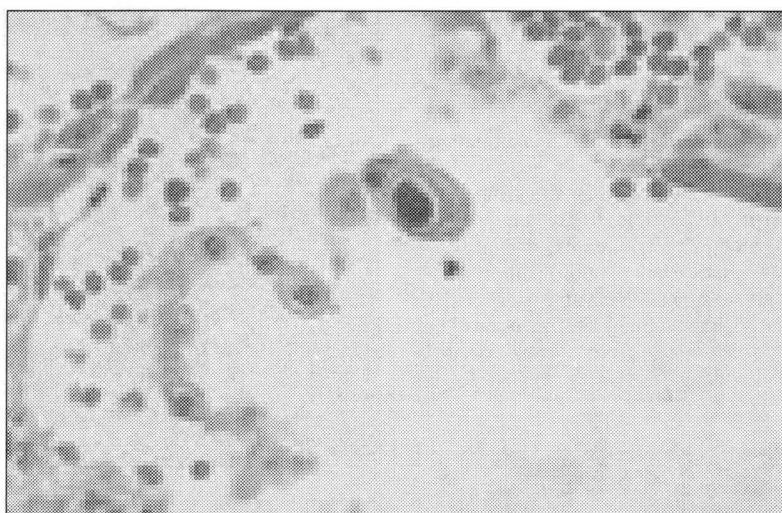
Music stars perform to support Mandela AIDS drive

GEORGE, South Africa, March 19 (Reuters) - Nelson Mandela joined movie and music stars on Saturday at an international concert to raise funds for women in South Africa suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Film star Will Smith was master of ceremonies, and Annie Lennox and Queen were among those entertaining more than 15,000 fans sprawled across the lawns of the exclusive Fancourt golf estate near George, about 400 km (250 miles) from Cape Town.

Mandela, 86, was given a thunderous reception when he joined the crowd — many of them youths brought in from a nearby township — at the concert, named 46664 after Mandela's prison number during his 27 years in apartheid-era jails.

"I would love to enjoy the peace and quiet of retirement, but I know that like many of you, I cannot rest easily while our beloved continent is ravaged by a deadly epidemic," said Mandela, who has retired from public life but launched the 46664



drive to raise funds for live-prolonging anti-retroviral drugs.

HIV/AIDS activists praised Mandela when he announced in January that his only surviving son, Makgatho Mandela, had died of an AIDS-related illness, aged 54. The announcement was seen as a major boost for efforts to end the stigma attached to AIDS.

AIDS has hit South Africa harder than any other country, and an estimated five million of the country's 45 million people are infected with

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Nobel peace prize laureate Mandela said the concert was dedicated to the women of Africa. "As daughters, mothers, sisters and grandmothers, every day they experience and live out the reality of this epidemic," he said.

The concert was beamed live on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Africa channel and is the second such event after a star-studded extravaganza in Cape Town in November 2003.

Disease threat as Angola rains displace thousands

LUANDA, March 19 (Reuters) - Thousands of people in central Angola made homeless after heavy rains face the threat of killer diseases like malaria and cholera, a senior U.N. official said on Saturday.

Areas of Kwanza Norte were badly hit by rains in December, January and March, and floods were reported this week in Bengo province, said Matthew Olins, senior field coordinator at the U.N.'s Transitional Coordination Unit.

The extent of the damage in Bengo was still to be assessed, he told Reuters.

While some of the displaced have found shelter with family, neighbours, in vacant buildings and in an emergency camp, others remained homeless, Olins said after a trip to the worst-hit areas.

"There are still a significant number of people whose living conditions are still completely inadequate, more or less sleeping outdoors," he said.

The United Nations confirmed that 9,965 people had been made homeless by the rains in one municipality of Kwanza Norte province, with local authorities reporting a further 4,000 people lost their homes in another

area. No deaths had been reported, which Olins said was "a small miracle", but he added conditions were now ideal for an increase in diseases such as malaria and cholera.

"Yes, absolutely, there are all the conditions necessary for an increase in malaria, diarrhoeal-related diseases and waterborne skin infections," he said.

"Preventative measures have to be taken now to make sure that any serious outbreaks are avoided," he added.

The government had provided most of the assistance so far, with the United Nations responding with support to rehabilitate water systems, provide safe drinking water and medical support.

"This assistance has been well received but it's not enough just yet. We're talking about a small-scale emergency," Olins said.

Families in Kwanza Norte — one of the most important agricultural regions in Angola — lost crops and farmland, making them dependent on food aid until they are able to resettle.

"Food assistance will be required until the families again are able to harvest something. Families have lost their main means of survival," Olins said.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position within its project "Strengthening National Capacity in Human Rights:



Human Rights Knowledge Manager (SC/B)

Perform the administrative and management tasks of the project, coordinate the process of establishing an editorial committee. Oversee the Baseline study on Human Rights education at Yemeni higher education institutions. Develop TORs for establishing three provincial Information Centers

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates. UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and female candidates are encouraged to apply.

UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448841/
E-mail: (registry.ye@undp.org)

The deadline for receiving applications is Thursday, 31th March 2005

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position within its project "Capacity Building to National AIDS Programme (NAP) and Mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS issues into Poverty and Human Rights projects:



Project Manager (SC/A)

Establish and manage the office at premises of National AIDS programme (NAP) and Study the broad project work plan and develop detailed 3 monthly activity work plans for operational details of the project to ensure timely and const effective implementation of the different project activities.

Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates. UNDP is an equal opportunity organization and female candidates are encouraged to apply.

UNDP, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448841/
E-mail: (registry.ye@undp.org)

The deadline for receiving applications is Saturday, 09th April 2005.



TENDER

CARE International Yemen, support from the European Community is looking for suppliers of European made 4WD vehicles to participate in an open tender procedure. There are 3 vehicles in 2 lots (1 pick up vehicle, 2 saloon cars). For details of the vehicles and application procedures, please e-mail care@v.net.ye, telephone 01 504377 / 243379 or call in at 68 Arwa School street, near Mujahed Street, Sana'a. Deadline for submission of tenders is 21st April 2004.



CARE International in Yemen is looking for a consultant to conduct a "literacy training of trainers course" in Hajja.

The consultant is expected to design, organize and conduct teacher training courses in Hajja town in April/May for village women to become functional literacy teachers in their respective villages. The consultant is also expected to provide the necessary material for the new literacy teachers and for the village level literacy courses.

The candidate should

- be female
- have a degree in education
- have experience in organizing and conducting literacy training
- have fluent spoken and written Arabic

Further information and terms of reference can be obtained from the CARE office in Sana'a.

Applications can be sent to: CARE, 68 Arwa School St. Telephone 01 243379 Email: care@v.net.ye. The deadline for application is March 31, 2005.

YT Business

Demonstrations across Yemen Trades and business fear new tax

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The government announcement that it would enforce the law of the general tax on sales at the beginning of next July has triggered a crisis between the government, tradesmen and businessmen.

Several governorates in the past few days have seen massive protests by owners of trades demanding rescinding of the law.

While the government says the implementation of the law is aimed to unify taxes on income, production and consumption, the tradesmen fear from an increase of taxes would double prices of produced and imported goods. Such a result would hurt purchasing power of consumers.

The sales tax imposes taxes on goods and services at the time of selling and importation by 10% of their total value.

The sixth article of the law determined the volume of money for which a tax must be paid, and which must not be less than YR50 million for goods and YR40 million for services.

The Higher Council for Investment has called for a dialogue with the government, and expressed its refusal of protest enforcement of the sales tax law. And the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry has held opposition parties as being the ones instigating tradesmen and citizens for demonstration.

Protestors have taken to the streets in



Sana'a, Hudeidah and Taiz, demanding the government rescind the law which the government considers as serving the consumer through the exemption from taxes of a good number of goods and services necessary for the citizens.

However, the law has also included imposition of taxes on local and imported merchandise already subject to the tax of production and consumption, namely benzene, kerosene, oils and greases by a 2% of sale price to the consumer, and liquefied gas by 0.5% of the selling price to consumer. As for oil products, the tax on selling price to the consumer is 1%. For local cigarettes, the sale tax would be 60% and for imported ones by 65%, the qat by 20%, cement by 5%, iron by 5%, car spare parts by 5% and cars by 25%.

The law, however, stipulates the exemption of sales tax on construction materials of bricks and blocks. Things also exempted are the ploughs, harvesters, seeds, fertilizers, inputs of fish production, poultry and cattle fodders. The law has defined 27 goods exempted from the sales tax. They include wheat, dairies, bread, vegetable ghee, eggs, meats, chicken, honey, soap, paper and notebooks, spare parts for tools and equipment and ambulance cars.

Tradesmen and businessmen say terms in Article 16 are unclear for deduction of tax inputs, and also the law gives the taxation authority the right to amend the value subjected to tax if the selling of the goods and services are different from what is claimed.

Yemen needs new strategy to meet rising population

By MAHYOUB AL-KAMALI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Results of the general census show that the total population of resident Yemenis is over 19 million people, and almost two million people in the expatriation are pushing Yemen into a new strategic population policy.

This new policy should be commensurate to the population density and the realization of the goals of the sustainable development in the country.

According to preliminary indicators, there is variance in population distribution between the governorates. Taiz governorate has occupied the first place by having 2.4 million people, Hudeidah 2.1 million, Ibb 2.1 million, and the spacious governorate of Hadramout 1.03 million.

These indicators dictate on the government reconsideration of population policy, particularly since the number of males amount to more than 10 millions and the number of females are more than 9 million.

This situation requires finding development plans and services projects meeting the needs of social development according

to the new census.

Specialists say Yemen needs programs for restoring balance to the track of geographical distribution of the population, in addition to facing the needs in health, education, employment areas as well as raising the status of Yemeni women.

Hence, the new population policy has to accommodate bases and scientific criteria for expansion of participation in planning and evaluation of population programs and activities in a manner harmonious with needs and requisites in their regions. This is especially so in the rural areas where they need projects and services in various areas.

Those indicators also confirm the necessity of developing sources of national income and local resources allocated for development and working for curbing the spread of unemployment.

The increasing population growth imposes on the government the drawing up of programs for families, expansion in female education and providing material, financial and human requirements for population programs. This is especially regarding the programs that help achieve reduction in matrimonial fatality, rate of infant fatality as well as raising the medi-

um of life expectancy at birth to reach at 70 years in the year 2015, according to the Millennium Plan goals.

Specialists also believe that efforts must be joined for the establishment of active partnership between the government, the private sector, and the non-governmental organisations to take part in social and economic development. The importance of the private sector role is more apparent in evolving health and educational services and provision of job opportunities. This is because the responsibility is common with regard to the increasing population.

Results of the census also should urge to finding an environment for population information, enhancement of the institutional build up capacities of concerned technical apparatuses with statistics and creation of a complete information system on population activities and their continuous evaluation.

Thus, the results of the census have come to add more woes and concerns to the government. It has to work seriously to carry out a population policy guaranteeing the citizen's life, supply him with opportunities necessary for stability and active participation in realization of the goals of sustainable development.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أجمل التهاني وأرق الأمنيات
نرفها للشباب الخلاق

أحمد طه موسى

بمناسبة دخوله القصر الذهبي

فألف ألف مبروك

المهنئون:

ريوان علي السقا
عبد الناصر الخطيب

وكله الأهل والأصدقاء

أجمل التهاني وأطيب الأمنيات

مع باقات من الورود والياسمين
نرفها لك من العروبيين

عبد النور أحمد قائد
أهنية عذبة محمد الصغير

بمناسبة دخولها القصر الذهبي
مع تبتاتنا لها بحياة زوجية سعيدة
وبارقاء واليبين وعقبى البكراري

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- Internationally recognized professional certifications or licenses.
- A top university degree. International educational experience is a plus.
- Strong Microsoft Office applications skills, e.g.: Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint, Visio, and Project. Spreadsheet modeling and/or database design skills are a plus.

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- Strong spoken and written communications skills
- A top university degree. International educational experience is a plus.
- Ability to learn and develop rapidly and take on independent responsibility.
- Quantitative background (finance, mathematics, statistics, economics, accounting).
- Strong Microsoft Office applications skills, e.g.: Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint, Visio, and Project. Spreadsheet modeling and/or database design skills are a plus.

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Yemeni dresses display yesteryear

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemeni dresses are considered the best and most diverse in the Middle East, as they reflect the ancient folklore of Yemen and can hardly be seen in other countries. The Yemeni dresses are characterized by a variety of colors and unparalleled antiqueness.

Dresses have become an outstanding expression about the culture, thought and identity of a certain society. The shape and design of distinctive Yemeni dresses go back to the ancient life of the country that was full of folklore and beautiful decorations.

The Yemeni dresses with their decorations and designs reflect the thought, taste and creativity in the society; they constitute a significant window into the values and traditions of the Yemeni society and confirm the

cultural identity and originality of belonging.

Diversity

The diversity of traditional dresses in Yemen can be ascribed to various factors, the most important of which is the diversity of geographical terrains that in turn led to the diversity of botanical and animal raw materials.

The diverse weather had its influence in the diversity of dresses and methods of textile and making dresses. The historical sources also have their own effects on the variety of dresses, however, they did not mention the characteristics of the variety, and up until now, no specialized studies have been conducted in this field.

There are some characteristics and features that divide the Yemeni dresses into different types, and the most striking features are those perceived in dresses in the mountainous areas due to the quality of the raw material used in such areas.

In addition, there are multi-color dresses made of wool, cotton and silk, which are designed for covering the whole body; they depend mostly on the red, green and blue colors and are embroidered with metal coins and precious stones.

Another wonderful feature of dresses of the mountainous areas is that they are lavishly embroidered and have distinctively decorated sleeves.

Dresses in the hilly areas are usually made of silk and cotton and embroidered with silver strings and other glittering strings.

Yemeni women are closely connected with the diversity of dresses and some have obtained great numbers of them.

Nowadays, we see that the old Yemeni dresses are used during official occasions and in wedding parties. The bride and the groom put on distinctive dresses dating back hundreds of years.



Younger girls dressed in unique Yemeni costumes.

Our duty to maintain

Yemeni antiquities need attention

BY YASSER AL-MAYASI
YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Yemen is one of richest countries in the Arab region in terms of the possession of structures, as the Yemeni Library has thousands of writings which reflect the glory of Yemen's past. Such writings are considered a real wealth for archeologists and are characterized by their diverse contents that deal with different sciences and arts.

Without these rare writings and antiquities, the civilization of Sbeba, Himier, Qataban and many other states would no longer be explored.

After such antiquities proved able to tell us about the ancient Yemeni civilizations, they became subjected to plundering and trafficking with the malicious aim to deny Yemen its history and glory. The phenomenon of trafficking Yemen's antiquities has

been known for many years.

Over the last few days, the National Museum received two antiquities after they were seized in Britain. The smuggling of antiques out of Yemen can be attributed to various factors, and great deal of scriptures is still in the hands of citizens who usually sell them to foreigners and businessmen with high prices.

Antiquities and old writings are never taken to the concerned bodies in the government in spite of the fact that a department for maintaining scriptures was established in 1980.

It was to achieve five main goals, such as collecting and maintaining the Arab heritage for researchers of different scientific levels and appointing a well-trained cadre to repair and bind writings.

Foreign researchers and scholars mentioned that the Yemeni writings number up to around one million, and they are scattered in different libraries and mosques all over

Yemen.

Large numbers of these writings are in the hands of some individuals in and outside the country; there is no exact number because of the lack of accurate statistics and the halting of a writing-survey project that started in 1998.

In the Scriptures House, there are around 4,047 volumes of different arts and realms of knowledge as well as rare versions of the Holy Qura'an.

However, regrettably, these scriptures have been ever subjected to ongoing conspiracies of trafficking. The scriptures are seen smuggled across lands, sea and air by organized gangs.

Nowadays, maintaining scriptures has become the duty of everyone. However the former class is more accountable to set firm legal procedures and preventive measures because maintaining scriptures means maintaining the antique history of Yemen.

Sana'a hosts Thai exhibition

BY YEMEN TIMES STAFF

The Capital City of Sana'a is hosting the Second Thai Exhibition during March 20-22, involving some 50 Thai companies looking for prospects of finding a market for Thai products in Yemen, said Omar al-Nihmi, Marketing Manager of Apollo International Exhibitions.

"The Thai exhibition is a true translation of the good Yemeni-Thai relationships and a sign of the improving economic ties as Thai products are readily purchased by Yemenis," he

added.

"The exhibition which is held in both Aden and Sana'a comes after the success of 2004 Exhibition and the lucrative deals between businessmen from both countries."

The exhibition will feature products from the following industries: automobile spare parts - computer sets and accessories - electric devices - furniture - accessories - decorations - hospital appliances - leather products - stationary - construction materials - jewellery - foods and drinks - clothes and fabrics - gifts - health and beauty - household tools - pharmaceutical and laboratory equipment - chemicals

Al-Nihmi added that the exhibition is held in a response to the desire of Yemeni businessmen. Bilateral meetings are going to be held between Yemeni and Thai businessmen who will discuss the possibility of commercial exchange.

The exhibition is held for the second year under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the General Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Aden and Capital Secretariat Commerce and Industry Chambers.

The City of Aden, the country's economic hub, hosted the Thai exhibition during March 15-17, 2005.

الف مبروك



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CONNECTING PEOPLE

Some useful tips for effective communication in business



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Everything we do and say in business communicates something about our company to our customers. Some things are obvious and some things are ever so subtle. Small businesses sometimes mistakenly think that they are exempt from the more formal trappings of business, but that could be a fatal mistake. Here are some tips for communication in business:

What do you do?: When someone asks you this pertinent question, have a ready well rehearsed response prepared. The response should give people the impression that you are a professional. Never say you do it part time! Even if you do! Tell them in one or two sentence response exactly what you do in a way that piques their interest. Take some time and come up with something that works for you.

Email: Email is a fast becoming a vital and important method of communicating with our customers. You don't have to go anywhere and you have time to sit and contemplate the best communication to your customer. While you're contemplating, think on this: Your customer cannot hear your voice or see your facial expression and they cannot

ask any questions for clarification. Be careful that you don't use language (words) that can be misconstrued. Guard against cracking jokes that may be taken the wrong way. Put yourself in their shoes before you type. Make sure you are clear. Pretend you don't know anything about your business and answer as if the customer is from another planet. Nothing yields frustration like an email that presupposes that your customer has full knowledge of your business.

Phone calls: Make sure to use good phone etiquette. When you call a customer, give your name and ask for the person you wish to speak with. Be clear, confident and courteous. Most of you know this. However, if you are a woman calling for another woman's husband, please -please -PLEASE tell his wife why you are calling or where you are calling from!—especially if he is not at home. Please do not let your children answer your business phone unless they are old enough to understand how to properly use a phone and take a message. AND GIVE YOU THE MESSAGE!

Business Cards: Get some! Carry them with you! Give them out! This communicates an air of professionalism and that you are prepared to do business. It creates opportunities to do business that you might not otherwise have as well.

Stationary: Most entrepreneurs understand the need for professional looking business cards, but some small

businesses are still corresponding with their customers with plain white paper. It is so easy these days to create even a simple stationery with your business address and perhaps a logo of some sort with your PC.

Appropriate Attire: This one is pretty self explanatory. If you are going to meet with clients or customers, you should be dressed for the occasion. Some business encounters will call for more formal attire and some will be more casual. Make sure that your attire suits the occasion as well as the nature of your business.

Be prepared and on time: This one is for your peace of mind as well as your communication to your customer. If you are running late, you may appear disheveled and you may feel pretty damned disorganized. Make sure you bring everything with you that you need in a neat and orderly package. Do not run in with books falling from everywhere and notes scribbled on little pieces of paper that stick out from all sides of a worn out folder. This communicates to your customer that you don't respect their time, that you are not really prepared to do business properly with them or that you have too many responsibilities to give your customer the attention he/she requires and deserves.

Keep Your word: If you tell a customer that you will call at 2:30pm, call them at 2:30pm. If you do not yet have the answers you need for them, call them and let them know this. One of the fastest ways to communicate that your

customer is not worth your time!

Customer Service/ Complaints/ Returns: This is one of the hardest parts of business. The one thing that ties every customer service call together is that the customer is allying because they are not happy campers. Understand that you will not be able to please everybody. Be calm, courteous and listen closely to what they are saying-not only to their words, but to their feelings behind their words (voice and facial expressions if possible). This will help you understand what they are really looking for you to do. Some customers will have a legitimate complaint: the product was defective; the service wasn't helpful or didn't work for them. These customers are merely looking for you to fix what is wrong. Usually you can diffuse these customers and make them satisfied customers by simply apologizing and rectifying. If you can somehow make good on your product or service, then do so. If you cannot, refund their money.

Some customers just have much too high an expectation for your product or service. They want it to do something that it was not designed to do. And some people are just complainers. Watch out for these customers! You will end up bending over backward; for them and they will only become angrier. Give them what you feel is fair or even more than fair. Tell them so. Be prepared for them to go away mad anyway. You can't please everyone, but if you are more than fair, you might be able to persuade these customers that you did everything you could have done, even though they didn't get exactly what they wanted.

A letter to the teachers of English: 78 Language teacher education and training (2)



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

Dear Fellow teachers,

I hope my argument against training teachers of English and educating them makes sense to you; you can question me any time you feel misled or carried away.

I strongly feel that today's classrooms are much more different from those in the past, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Our students are genetically gifted with more intelligence than us; we should honour this innate 'superiority' of our students. This inborn intelligence is either bettered or worsened in the situation each one lives; that is why we suggest an affable home climate and a congenial school climate. Unfortunately, most of our students have a conducive home climate and left at our mercy at the schools and colleges. It is sad that most of the time they fail to get such a climate in schools as well, especially in English classrooms, mainly because we belittle their capabilities and treat them at a much lower level, psychologically and sociologically. What I mean is that we hardly take them into confidence when we plan our lessons or teach the lesson in the classes; the examples we give them sometimes are of the lower mental abilities, the exercises we set for them are less challenging and the tests we give them are not at all demanding. Most of our clever students who get at this 'secret' of our professional activities through their keen, constant observation, beat us out of our exams memorizing and reproducing the answers to get higher scores. I have heard many students who are not good at the art of mugging the answers

up growl at the exam results when they see the 'muggers' get ranks and not the real intelligent ones. When it comes to using the language skills in the interviews for jobs or any such events, the rank holders betray their incompetence, because the ranks were the prize for their mugging up and not for their intelligence.

My contention, therefore, is that training does enable the teachers to provide a healthy climate in the classrooms to our students; only education helps. Educating the teachers results in giving them abilities to tackle any eventualities in the classrooms, academic or otherwise; developing in the teachers competence to evaluate the teaching materials and adapt them, if necessary, to tackle the classroom crises, if any and turn them to the advantage of the students, to design suitable testing tools for their classes. Teacher education prepares teachers to meet the challenges of today's classrooms, academic, sociological and psychological. In addition, it inculcates in the teachers a positive attitude to research and enables them to find answers to most of their classroom problems.

Some of the readers might wonder if the teachers of English 'educated' in the Faculties of Education do have these abilities. I have come across many teachers with these abilities and their classes are success stories and models to follow. I am not unaware of those who find it difficult to manage their classes and get frustrated when they face problems in the classrooms. I will not put the blame wholly on these teachers, because the curriculum of the Faculties of Education is partly responsible for their poor performance, as they were not prepared well to meet the classroom challenges. We will discuss what should be done to improve the situation later.

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

Campus causerie

A spectrum of cultural activities at Saba University and UST, Sana'a

By DR AYID SHARYAN AND AMAR AL QADI

A Celebration And Speech Competition was held at Saba University by the Department of English on Thursday 13-12-2004. The event, the first of its type, was a spectacular success thanks to the efforts of the organizing committee The Rainbow Group which implies unity in diversity. A number of students from all levels, university members, and parents attended the program. Many students participated in the different phases of the competition comprising Greeting Word, recitations from the Holy Quran, Reciting Poems, acting out a play, Debate and Speech Competition. Successful competitors were awarded merit certificates after the resolution of the panel of judges (Dr Ayid Sharayan, Dr Ahmed Al Qadasi, Dr Abdulsalam Al Gherafi and the lecturer Fairuz Daifallah). The Celebration and the Debate were supervised by a number of professional university teachers of English from Sana'a University.

The program was inaugurated with a reading from the Holy Quran by Mohamad Al Wasabi. Then the session of poem recitation began. About twenty students recited poems of different themes related to love, migration patriotism, etc. This was followed by a sketch dealing with the misuse of English displaying little learning, ultimately leading to total distortion of the texture of translation. The sketch was prepared by Amar Al-Qadi who acted a role in addition to Ahmad Al Daouis and Nabel Al Sagheer of 3rd level. This was followed by a debate 'On Migration: Pros and Cons'. A section of immigrant students presented their views with numerous illustrations on the benefits of immigration. A counterargument was presented by their opponents.

Amar Alqadi, for instance, pointed out that Immigration has been recommended in all religions, cultures and sects because it is important to improve one's standards of life. It solves social, economic, and political problems. A similar view was held by Hanan Al Ammar who stated numerous justifications for immigration:



The function in progress

upward social mobility, get better dividends in life and education. Cowards and cynics who did not reach out in their lives have a pathetically limited vision. Abdullah Al Khonbashi argued that people who travel are of great use to their home countries. They serve their people in the best possible way. Without migration, it would not be possible for them to build schools, hospitals, industries, and many other vital projects. Yasimn Qaid held the view that immigration is unavoidable for Yemenis due to poverty and a spirit of exploration. But modern perspectives are no doubt mixed, particularly for the new generation who suffer a crisis of identity torn as they are between father's home and mother's country. Khalid Abu-Zaid did not agree about the shortcomings of immigration. In his perception, it is out and out beneficial: earning money, getting experience, making business both home and outside the country, learning foreign languages and cultures being some of its plus points. Enas Ahmad shares Khalid's views. She added that immigration is a unique privilege to enjoy oneself and benefit from the experience of others that can be useful in building one's country.

The very sound counter-arguments advanced were as valid as the opponents' views. One of the proponents was Zenah Dhaifallah, an ex-expatriate, who held the view that immigration is destructive as it poses uncountable problems for the

immigrant and the family whether at home or abroad. Loss of one's heritage, belonging and values are but a few simple examples. Adjustments at home or abroad, after tasting another life, become a formidable problem by immigrants and their children. Zenah's ideas are echoed by Amal Al-Akhfash who viewed migration as an escape from reality. Showing her strong resentment of migration, she compared herself to a tree that blissfully lives and dies in its own home, bringing homely atmosphere and fruit to its surrounding. Ahmad Al Douis gave a real-life example of the devastation of migration by referring to the Yemeni immigrants who returned empty handed from Saudi Arabia in 1991 or the Yemenis who came before them from Vietnam and Ethiopia due to some changes in the political atmospheres in the respective countries. They returned to live in slum areas and their own country readily welcomed them. Had they been at home, things would have been much better for them and their families. Saleh Farag cited lines from Alzubaery to share some of his reflections on migration where the person is suspiciously looked down upon as an alien when he is outside or when he returns home. Immigration becomes a double-edged sword in that case. Omar Al Amri argued that charity begins at home. If someone is a failure at home he can never succeed outside. Home is the testing ground of an individual even though it

is not without suffering and failures. Ball said and done, immigration is a losing battle for the individual and the community. Lamia Al Dobae argued that countries cannot be built in the hands of others except their citizens. To stay at home is a sort of duty that is preferable to escaping to an unknown destination in quest of greener pastures. Raneem AL Saidi looked at the social problems that migration causes, such as divorce, desertion, and fatherless children, lost generation that knows no responsibility. Khulood Husein dwelt too on the staggering social problems that have no remedies. Immigrants return even with a different tongue that does not pertain to their native land.

Other competitors who took part in the debate were Hana'a Al Dainny, Mohammad Sharaf Abdull Naser, Asma Al Hammal, Afaf Al Salali, Abeer Al Awadi, Ammar Abu Fara'a, etc.

It was followed by a speech delivered by Ammar Al Qadi. The jury expressed their appreciative comments on the function and announced the results of the competition. The distribution of the merit certificates ended the event.

Such a cultural event helps students to use and practice their language, share ideas, interact with different opinions, search for truth and knowledge, and not be bogged down by uninformed personal opinion galore. It is a vital step towards broadening student's mental horizon and critical thinking that is based on application and evaluation of information.

The Experience of Muslims in Britain

The 4th level students (Department of English, Women's College) of the University of Science & Technology (UST) organized a discussion on The Experience of Muslims in Britain and New Trends in Higher Education on 27th of December 2004.

The chief guests were Dr Hameed Al Asali, and Mrs Tracy AL Asali and Prof Dawood Al Hudabi, Rector of UST. Students, faculty members, students of all levels from UST, Sana'a University and Saba University attended the session.

Dr Hameed Al Asali, and Mrs Tracy AL Asali talked about The Experience of Muslims in Britain. Dr Hameed Al Asali highlighted the position of the Muslim community in Britain for he lived there since his childhood. He was of the opinion that Muslims in Britain are better than in other places in Europe. He spoke about the Yemenis who settled there. Some according to him are as they came to UK. They refuse to partake in the country's overall cultural make-up. They are unable to integrate into the host society. His opinion was that Muslims in Britain should ideally integrate themselves into the mainstream while maintaining their own identity. He stressed the view that British Muslims are patriotic, partaking of the country's socio-cultural fabric as well as maintaining their own identities since the host country allows different minorities to practice their own belief. However, unfortunately, some of the Yemeni immigrants there do not avail themselves of the technological, academic or economic chances that are open to them. He also spoke about upholding faith in a surrounding that is secular to a great extent: schooling, society, and other institutions. As a child it was a startling experience for him to be told that man is originated from monkeys (Evolution theory). He was enlightened to learn about the creation and the origin of mankind according to Islam. This enables him to regain his identity and overcome the identity crisis that many suffer from.

Mrs Tracy AL Asali recounted her experience of Islam and how she became a Muslim. Being the daughter of a Christian family, she had her own conceptions about religion. Christianity, according to her, fell short of answering

many of her queries. She came to know about Islam through some of the Muslims there. After a thorough and critical comparative evaluation she embraced Islam. She also got married to a Muslim for many years now. She elucidated how Muslims can practice Islam in Britain and how they can give a better understanding of Islam through their collective, endeavour. She was particularly impressed by the cooperation and fellow feeling of Muslims.

An illuminating talk captioned New Trends in Higher Education was presented by Prof Dawood Al Hudabi. He focused on how education should enable graduates to communicate efficiently with their counterparts in other countries. He raised a point why not start a degree in one country and be able to complete the same degree in another country? He called for some kind of education that can be global, not necessarily limited to one place or nation. He blamed the orthodoxy of inculcating values that separates more than unites. He expressed his views about the new trends in higher education and the role of the university that is in constant change to meet the need of the market, whether locally or internationally. To churn out idle people who are misfits is not cost effective in business or academic language. Undergraduates should undergo a period of training to fulfill societal or market needs. If exposed to rigorous, professional training, they can fit anywhere in the world.

The guests responded to a host of queries that highlighted major issues related to both the topics. The event was a substantial step for a better integration between people of different cultures.

Honesty and friendship



By SADDAM MUHSEN
FOR THE YEMEN
TIMES

We can make friends anywhere, through neighbors, through work and through classmates. But what does friendship mean?

It is something that it is very valuable but you cannot buy it. It must be protected. You have to take care of friendship because it is very easy to lose a friend. It is like a treasure that must be safely kept, friendship is soft.

Friendship means wanting to give more than to receive, wanting to share whatever you can to make someone's life easier, sharing not only the good

times, but also the painful times.

Friendship means to give love for others and to say "I am here for you". Being able to laugh together, to cry together and to overcome difficulties. Friendship is maintained by wiping away the black spots from our hearts.

True friends are those who are honest, trustworthy and helpful, they are those who would willingly sacrifice themselves for the sake of the friendship.

People who forget the good times and betray those who trusted them, those who disguise their true characters behind masks and care for none but themselves are fake friends. They provide a kind of friendship that is feeble and cannot withstand the weakest tests in life. Not all friends are good friends but there will be a few who will be faithful forever.

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An interest for tourists

Varied bird species call Yemen home

By YASSER AL-MAYASI
 YEMEN TIMES STAFF

Recent scientific studies reveal that Yemen is one of richest countries in the region in terms of birds, as it's a cross-point for different species of migrating birds in the autumn and spring.

Such birds come from cold places in the north of Asia, like Russia, and also from some areas of South Africa.

The International Birds Organization (IBO) announced that around 370 species of birds can be seen in Yemeni lands, and 13 species settling in the south of Arabia are unique to the world.

There are also around 54 main locations of birds in Yemen which are distinguished with water resources and botanical coverage. A large number of Arabian birds (61 families and 177 species) already exist in the Yemeni Island of Socotra.

Experts specializing in ornithology ascertain that there are several factors behind the heavy existence of birds in Yemen such as biodiversity, nice weather and the



geographical nature of Yemen.

The study conducted by the IBO in cooperation with the Yemen Environment Protection Council indicated that the African birds migrate to Yemen in spring to make nests and grow their younger ones. But in winter, a

large number of birds migrate from north Arabia and Europe towards Yemen to escape the cold weather.

Another scientific study confirmed that the smallest bird in Yemen is named "Tamere Wadi al-Nile" (Sunbird), whose length

does not exceed 10 centimeters and weighs five grams. The biggest bird is the Arabian Bustard which weighs 10 kg. The flamingo, a long legged bird, is thought of as the tallest bird in Yemen, and the swift is the fastest one among Yemeni birds.



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The Yemeni birds are concentrated in the mountainous areas. These areas are preferred by birds that can live even in a wasteland. But the Arabian Bustard lives in Tehama Plain. Bald Ibis, who is threatened, lives in fresh water swamps near the city of Taiz and in some southern valleys. The Arabian Golden Sparrow lives in the areas that are rich with agricultural crops. Other

birds including Plover live mostly in the coastal areas. Yemen's interest in birds crystallized in signing an agreement on the artificial incubation of the Asian Bustards living in Yemen, giving them an access to settlement as well as keeping them alive. Tourists and visitors can watch the migration of birds, particularly in the area of Bab al-Mandab, as well as in many other distinctive areas across Yemen.

Yemeni honey gains international reputation

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By Yemen Times Staff

Yemeni Honey is considered the best internationally and its fame is due to its quality, purity and the distinctive methods of producing it. The weather diversity in different areas all over Yemen, and the availability of rare trees and clean land also add to the quality of the Yemeni honey.

The capital city of Sana'a is the biggest honey market and has over 150 honey centers from where Yemeni honey is exported to other Arab markets. Honey tops the list of expensive exports

that bring back hard currency. Dua'ani honey, produced in Hadramout, is considered the best honey in the country and costs around YR10,000 per kilogram (\$55). Palm trees, one of the sources of nutrition for the bees are widely spread throughout Hadramout, which also produces Al-Sedr honey, one of the most expensive kinds of honey due to its high production costs.

Honey is used in treating people who suffer from anemia, diabetes, and heart and skin diseases. Honey is also used to treat scratches as it prevents the development of bacteria and other germs.

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