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Do you think receiving Hareth Al-Dhari will negatively affect Yemen's relations with the United States and the Iraqi government?
I don't know (12%)
Yes (30%) No (58%)
This edition's question:
Do you think the Yemeni oil firms will be able to increase the volume of oil exports after they assumed the task from foreign operators?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know
Go to our website at: yementimes.com/#poll and have your voice heard

Yemen Times editor wins first Arab newspaper prize

By: Larry Kilman

Nadia Al-Saqqaf, Editor-in-chief of the Yemen Times, has been awarded the 2006 Gebran Tueni Award, a new prize from the World Association of Newspapers to honour an editor or publisher from the Arab region.

BEIRUT, Dec. 10 - Ms Al-Saqqaf, who is the first woman ever to be appointed an editor in chief of an independent newspaper in Yemen, received the award Sunday during the opening ceremony of the "Media In Danger - Press Under Siege" conference in Beirut, Lebanon. More than 1,000 people attended the ceremony.

The prize, which honours the memory of Gebran Tueni, the Lebanese publisher and WAN Board Member who was killed by a car bomb in Beirut last December, was presented to Ms Al-Saqqaf for demonstrating the values incarnated in Mr Tueni: attachment to freedom of the press, courage, leadership, ambition, and high managerial and professional standards.

The award carries a 10,000 Euro scholarship to enable Ms Al-Saqqaf to undertake advanced newspaper leadership training through the training institute of An-Nahar, the Tueni family's

newspaper in Lebanon.

"This is recognition of Yemeni journalists generally and especially Yemeni women working in the media. This should encourage them to grow and not give up," said Ms Al-Saqqaf. "I feel honoured to be recognized after only two years at Editor-in-chief."

Roger Parkinson, past president of WAN who presented the award, said: "Ms al-Saqqaf has expressed the determination to defend the independent editorial policy set by her father and founder of the Yemen Times, Abdulaziz al-Saqqaf, and to make a priority of high professional standards and skills."

"Despite a difficult media environment, Ms al-Saqqaf intends to make a difference by bringing to the readers of the Yemen Times accurate and meaningful information that they can trust. In this regard, her ambitions to raise journalistic skills within the newsroom, to improve the position of female journalists and to support independent news media in Yemen are most commendable."

Ms Al-Saqqaf, 29, took over the position of Editor-in-chief of the Yemen Times from her brother Walid in 2005. It is one of the most outspoken newspapers in the country.

Continued on page 2



Roger Parkinson (left), past president of WAN presenting the award to nadia alsaqqaf, editor in chief of Yemen Times, standing next to Naïla Tueni, daughter of Gebran Tueni and WAN CEO Timothy Balding.

National Security prevents editor from flying to Morocco

By: Mohamed Bin Sallam

SANA'A, Dec. 10 — The National Security prevented on Saturday the writer and political activist Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani, a leading member of the opposition Popular Forces Union and also the Editor in Chief of Al-Shawri website from flying to Morocco.

The editor was held at Sana'a



Abdulkarim Al-Khaiwani

International Airport and his passport was seized. Al-Khaiwani was accompanied by a police officer to the Interior Ministry, which apologized to him and returned his passport after a few hours. The ministry told Al-Khaiwani to book another flight to Morocco in the coming days.

The airport security authorities told Al-Khaiwani that he is not allowed to board the plane until they receive orders from authorities. The police told the journalist that a regional human rights course he was travelling for, organized by the International Red Cross, was cancelled.

Lt. Col. Mohamed Al-Mawiri, from the Interior Ministry, regretted what happened to Al-Khaiwani. "We went quickly to the airport to tackle the issue. We interceded to allow Al-Khaiwani to catch the Morocco-bound plane, but all efforts were of no avail," Al-Mawiri told the Yemen Times.

Continued on page 2

On the path to the world's best democracy

By: Glyn Goffin

SANA'A, Dec. 10 - The September elections were fair and they mark Yemen as an important democratic model for the region, said Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne from the European Union Election Observation Mission.

The observation mission was back in Yemen to present its final report outlining both the positive developments and the shortcomings of the recent elections.

"We saw open elections representing a milestone in political development," Nicholson stated. "There were shortcomings, but we don't want to undermine future elections in Yemen."

The report contains 35 recommendations to improve Yemen's electoral process and eliminate current problems.



Baroness Emma Nicholson of Winterbourne with the EU report.

To ensure that the shortcomings don't disrupt Yemen's democratic development, Nicholson presented the report to

President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the ruling and opposition parties and the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum. She received commitments from the president that he will work toward election improvements.

Although she said the elections were successful, she pointed out that there were failings, but the EU report "proposes throwing away those handicaps."

One of the main problems the report focuses on is the exclusion of women from the entire election experience.

"This fact seriously undermined the universality and equality of the electoral process, which are fundamental standards for democratic elections," the report says, outlining problems faced by women candidates and voters.

To combat this problem, Nicholson has

submitted a protocol focusing on equality and fairness between genders. The protocol was shown to President Saleh and today, Monday, Nicholson is calling on all political leaders to sign the document as a step toward gender equality.

"When women are excluded, all of society suffers," said Nicholson, who proposes the EU continue to work with the government to ensure gender equality.

Now that the final election report has been published and submitted, the observation mission officially is finished, but the EU hopes to see its recommendations embraced in order to assist with Yemen's 2009 parliamentary elections.

"If these recommendations are followed, Yemen will have the best democracy in the region and the world," Nicholson asserted.

As Safer marks first anniversary Five foreign bidders win tenders to explore oil in Yemen

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, Dec. 9 — The Ministry of Oil and Minerals announced Saturday that five foreign companies won international tenders for oil exploration in new blocks in Yemen.

The announcement was made as Safer Exploration and Production Operations Company marked its first anniversary of assuming the task of the former operator.

Minister of Oil and Minerals Khalid

Bahah stated that Indian firm GSBC won the largest bid and will explore in Al-Jawf governorate's Block 19, as well as Blocks 28 and 57 in Shabwa.

"Austrian firm OMV won Block 17 in Aden governorate, while Norwegian firm DNO won a tender to explore Block 84 in Hadramout governorate," Bahah indicated, adding, "Indonesian oil company, MEDCO Energy, also won a bid to explore Blocks 82 and 83 in Hadramout governorate."

The minister confirmed that the

competition results were a great success thanks to technical and financial requirements bidders had to meet. He added that such results are the fruit of hard work pursued by the ministry and the Petroleum Exploration and Production Authority (PEPA) to expand the scope of oil exploration by promoting open competition.

Continued on page 2 Safer celebration marking their anniversary.



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In brief

Hodeidah
The union of Yemeni women shows "I'm still a child"
Dec. 9 — The branch of the Yemen Women Union in Hodeidah arranged an artist and theater show for resisting violence against women. The play which is under name "I'm still a child" discussed the early marriage and health and social negative aspects; the expensive downy. This is the second show that union of Yemen women in Hodeidah has arranged in this year 2006 in the stage of the culture center in Hodeidah

Mahweet
Tops in immunization campaign
Dec. 9 – The general manager of the national program for immunization campaign in the Ministry of Health stated that Mahweet Governorate ranked first among the governorates in the best immunization campaign during 2006. The routine immunization campaign is covered most of the Mahweet districts and it had excellent results in distributing most immunizations to all the Mahweet citizens, according to the reports and periodical statistics.

Workshop on population culture and healthcare
Dec. 9 – The office of agriculture and irrigation arranged a workshop on population and healthcare. The workshop is one of the series of activities by the National Council which aims to teach and increase the awareness of citizens and to congregate the local authority and other organizations efforts to enforce the dangers of population increasing according to Mohammad Al-Tabahini, the manager of agriculture and irrigation office. Over 50 specialists in the population cases participated in the workshop.

Sana'a
Consumer protection warns against iron products
Dec. 9 — Yemen Society for Consumer Protection warns Yemeni people against purchasing remanufactured iron plates. The society said the color of these plates changes when food or drink is put on them. Also, the protection society warned consumers against using spoons made in China because these spoons are made of a bad quality iron, which rusts easily. Bracelets are among the articles which they warn people of wearing, particularly those made of iron and covered with a thin golden color. The society said the bracelets change color over time and cause skin allergies.

Good and lasting impression about Yemen
Dec. 9 — The U.S. business delegation, headed by businessman and former Governor of Carolina state David Bezin, left Sana'a after their talks with Yemeni officials. Bezin stated that they came to Yemen with an impression and they are leaving with another impression. Yemenis are good and have strong determination to make changes and the government is going in the correct direction and it is making reforms, but it has a lot of work to do, according to Bezin.

Taiz
World Bank reviews analytic water studies
Dec. 10 — The secretary general of Taiz local councils, Mohammed Al-Hajj, reviewed with the World Bank committee of water sector in Yemen, headed by Christopher Word, the analytic studies of water. The study evaluates social effects of water, especially those related to poverty. During the meeting, they affirmed the importance of the results of such studies and protecting water resources from pollution and wrongful consumption, in addition to the safe use of water and banning unplanned well drillings.

Thake
Al-Wafa troupe concludes it show
Dec. 9 — The national program for AIDS in the health office arranged an artists tour with Al-Wafa Theatre Troupe. The tour is part of a celebration for the international day for AIDS. Al-Wafa troupe concluded its show for year 2005-2006 with two plays then the troupe will make a big march around the governorate with cooperating of many charity organizations and foundations, students and some of the health office employees. The plays include "The Dream," "The Viruses" and "The Wisdom." The artists forum and Yemeni art syndicate will honor Al-Wafa troupe when they return to Sana'a.

80,000 Somali refugees now in Yemen

SANA'A, Dec. 9 — The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said 826 African refugees, including 633 Somalis and 193 Ethiopians, died in the open sea while they were trying to reach Yemeni lands.
This year at UNHCR in Maifa, Shabwa Governorate, there are over 11,000 Somali refugees and just under 1,000 Ethiopians bringing the total number to nearly 80,000, according to Al-Wahdah Newspaper.

Over the last two months, there has been an increase on group migration of Africans to Yemen.
Security sources said 2,100 illegal residents were arrested last November, including 500 women and 81 children. Over 2,000 of those arrested were picked up in Shabwa and among the arrested there were 1,760 Somalis, 335 Ethiopians and 5 of other Arab nationalities.
The commissioner's office said more than 22,000 people crossed the Gulf of Aden onboard smuggler's boats from Somalia over the last few months.
"More than 355 infiltrators died during their hazardous journeys and over 150 people are still missing," according to the UNHCR spokesman.
The same source said more than 1,500 Somalis and Ethiopians reached

Yemeni lands on just 12 boats during the last eight days. There were 17 known deaths and 18 people are still missing.
Most new refugees told the UNHCR they are from the south and middle of Somalia and claimed their freedoms had been largely violated by the Islamic Courts and they are threatened out of the tribal disputes within Somali midlands.
Yemeni official sources said the highest wave of arrivals was recorded last October and Coast Guard sources said they arrested more than 3,634 infiltrators and illegal residents, mostly near Shabwa's coast.
The same sources said they arrested 1072 people, including 223 women and children, during September.
Since the beginning of 2006 there have been 16,806 recorded arrivals with 14,146 Somalis, 2,533 Ethiopians, 124 of different Arab Nationalities. The number of women and children stands at 3,053.
There is thought to be a large number of unrecorded residents who managed to enter Yemeni lands without being arrested or recorded by the Yemeni Coast Guard.
African group migration started years ago and it poses a large concern for Yemeni authorities because of the economic and social consequences.

Al-Shaibani receives fellowship certificate

SANA'A, Dec. 2 — Yemeni businessman Alwan Sa'eed Al-Shaibani, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Universal Group of Companies, last week received the European Marketing Promotion Association's Honorary Fellowship Certificate.
Al-Shaibani was recognized for his efforts to develop Yemeni travel and tourism.
At the award ceremony, which several officials from the Universal Group of Companies attended, Abdulaziz Al-Tarb, who presented the certificate on the association's behalf, said Al-Shaibani was awarded for his effective efforts and his role in enhancing Yemeni development thus far.
According to Al-Tarb, who has a doctorate in economics, Al-Shaibani has demonstrated a prominent role in improving Yemeni infrastructure and increasing citizen awareness with the aim of activating tourist attractions and fostering local tourism. Al-Tarb further praised the group of businessmen for providing internationally famed airline services to passengers traveling

between Yemen and other countries.
Despite heavy losses the Universal Group of Companies has faced due to the tourism recession in recent years, the group was able to maintain its infrastructure, its workforce and its hotels. It never closed its doors, nor did it reduce its services because it had faith in the principle of national partnership," Al-Tarb noted.
Al-Shaibani remarked, "The European association's awarding of the Universal Group is an acknowledgement of its tourism activities despite various obstacles and difficulties. Consequently, any certificate of merit conferred upon the group reflects the success of its employees, whether seniors or juniors."
The Universal Group of Companies initiated its travel and tourism activities in 1983, adding hotel services in 1994. Over the past few decades, the company has developed into one of Yemen's largest firms with nine affiliates operating in areas of travel, tourism, hotels and transportation, as well as a Federal Express branch.

Students learn the Yemen Times ways



Ismail Al-Ghabri, Yemen Times staff, addressing the students.

SANA'A, Dec. 9 — Thirty students from Sana'a International School took a field trip to the Yemen Times on Saturday to learn about the inner workings of the newspaper.
The students, from grade nine to 12, were joined by their teachers Alan George and Hamish Erskine.
In the newsroom, the students participated in a question and answer session with Yemen Times reporter Mohammed Al-Jabri. He also spoke about the need for democracy in order

for a country to have fully-functioning media. The students listened intently as Al-Jabri explained the newsgathering, reporting and design process.
Later, the students toured the building, including the area where the papers are printed.
Sana'a International School is recognized for its academic excellence and caters to the expatriate community with students ranging from more than 20 nationalities.

Specialist programs prioritize development

By: Aziz A. Alhadi
For the Yemen Times

A major criticism of Yemen's universities is that university programs and research do not address the problems faced by the society at large.
Recent program announcements by the Sana'a Universities and Aden University indicate that if the charge held merit in the past, an about face for the future has begun and is receiving a high measure of praise.
The announcements were made by expert centers in Sana'a and Aden. The new specialist graduate programs are designed to address urgent development priorities in the area of water management, public service and gender. The programs will be at Sana'a University's Water and Environment Centre and the Center for Public Administration and at Aden University's Woman's Centre for Training and Research.
Unlike the sporadic one-shot training programs of the past, all three centers, supported primarily by grants provided from the Netherlands

through the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education, were established to provide the universities with a sustainable in-house specialist capacity to address pressing development needs of society in both the short and long terms.
Although less than two years in development, Mohamed Al-Mottahar, vice minister of higher education and scientific research, says the programs are "models of focused program development and development cooperation." Al-Mottahar is in charge of overseeing the programs being developed under the Netherlands organization, which aims at strengthening Yemen's institutional capacity in education and training.
The program is helping universities and the public change the image of Yemen.
One encouraging development is the obvious agreement those working on the programs. In the case of the water management programs for example, the strategies of both the Water Ministry converged with that of Higher Education, the Dutch Aid

program, the World Bank and the University of Sana'a.
Another highlight is the developing theme of "integration." As the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation stated recently, "Everything is connected to everything else. The current practice of dealing with issues separately is inadequate. To ensure sustainable development, the state needs to work in partnership with all stakeholders."
The most welcomed development is in line with what the Minister of Higher Education, Saleh BaSira has outlined for Yemeni researchers.
BaSira addresses the need for research into specific development problems in Yemeni society and all these centers are working toward BaSira's goal.
Most recently, at a meeting of experts organized by the Water Centre, a group of international and regional experts met for four days to study the issue of how Yemen can benefit from the reuse of wastewater for irrigation. This study shows the move toward linking higher education and research.

Training and teaching court in Taiz

TAIZ, Dec. 7 — A new youth court project aims to enhance youth's role in developing their community and spreading their awareness about human rights, democracy and their duties.
Held at the Al-Sa'eed Cultural Foundation, as many as 800 youths, representing all the political and social fronts in Taiz Governorate, participated in the inaugural ceremony.
At the event, National Cultural Center Director Abdullah Abdulelah Salam, reviewed the main themes the

youth court will establish such as considering the freedom of expression and dialogue, and welcoming criticism, other's opinion and highlighting issues that concern youth and developing their work abilities nationwide.
A methodology was approved for implementing the project via holding a monthly session involving 300 youths of the court members to meet government officials and the parties concerned with youth issues.
With these sessions, the youths are

expected to get basic information about their role in the parties concerned with their issues. Many workshops have been staged in the presence of 80 youths to develop their skills and select some of them as candidates to renew the joint work among youths to curb unemployment that has grown to 30 percent of the working age population.
The inaugural ceremony has seen several discussions and remarks that aim to implement the project and make it successful.

Continued from page 1

Yemen Times editor

She considers the Yemen Times to be a newspaper with a mission: it should not only criticise the government but also furnish solutions. Editorially, she focuses on raising the newspaper's general standards, with a strong focus on human rights, gender issues and women's rights.

The Yemen Times employs 60 people and has an average circulation of 10,000 copies. It is self-financed through advertising and sales revenue and is the most widely read English publication in Yemen.

Ms Al-Saqqaf has made it a priority to raise the professional standards of the journalists working at the newspaper and to improve the competence of female journalists in Yemen. Legal education is among upcoming projects for the staff, as well as training in how to report on scientific developments.

Ms Al-Saqqaf is a graduate of Sterling University in the United Kingdom and holds a Masters degree in Information Systems Management. Before taking over the reins of the Yemen Times, she worked for Oxfam in Yemen.

Gebzan Tueni was a unique figure in WAN affairs for almost 20 years, as a leading member of its Press Freedom Committee, a Board member for more than a decade, a regular participant in missions to press freedom "hot spots" and a constant advisor and support to the leadership of the organisation on Arab and press freedom issues. WAN and the Tueni family created the award to encourage other courageous and independent publishers, editors and newspapers in the Arab world.

The Paris-based WAN, the global organisation for the newspaper industry, defends and promotes press freedom world-wide. It represents 18,000 newspapers; its membership includes 76 national newspaper associations, newspaper companies and individual newspaper executives in 102 countries, 12 news agencies and 10 regional and world-wide press groups.

National Security prevents

Asked why Al-Khaiwani was held at the airport, the officer replied, "Al-Khaiwani has been blacklisted since he was jailed for political issues. We managed to drop his name from the blacklist, thus allowing him to fly whenever he wants."

Al-Khaiwani confirmed to the Yemen Times that he will not be using his legal right to sue the security authorities that prevented him from flying to Morocco. He said President Ali Abdullah Saleh is responsible for the act and asked him to clarify the reason behind this behavior. "All the security authorities treat me as if I am an opponent of the president," he said.

Al-Khaiwani added that he respects all the security officers at the airport and doesn't hold them accountable for the behavior since they only implement directives from high-ranking officials.

The Popular Forces Union General Secretariat condemned the National Security for abusing Al-Khaiwani's legal rights, particularly as he is running a news website. It said the editor was prevented from boarding the plane without any justification.

"The security authorities exercise strange and inhumane behavior, thus violating the constitution and law and interfering in the authorities of the judicial institutions, which should have taken these procedures," said Abdussalam Razzaz, Popular Forces Union Assistant Secretary General. "These acts abuse citizens' rights and freedoms."

Razzaz urged the concerned parties to take quick action against this

Five foreign bidders

Bahah added that such efforts are aimed at promoting the maximum number of open oil blocks.

According to the minister, this tender, the third of its kind, had three characteristics, one of which was promoting eight oil blocks, which is the largest number of blocks up until now.

Bahah mentioned that the competition aimed to achieve the best economic requirements in favor of the state, as well as protect investors' rights in a way to cope with international market demands.

"Investment volume is due to exceed \$9 million during the first exploration stage, which was the second characteristic of the tender competition. The third characteristic was that the government's share in oil production will grow," Bahah explained. "Additionally, the competition was distinguished by the fair cost in order to cope with the state's current conditions related to the oil industry."

The minister affirmed that of the total number of promoted blocks, only six remained to be re-promoted in the future.

Celebrating its first anniversary in petroleum operation, Safer is Yemen's first national firm working in the area of gas and petroleum.

At a ceremony attended by Bahah and other senior government officials, several lectures and speeches praised Safer's role in improving Yemen's oil sector.

According to the speeches, the firm attributes its success to support from President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his wise leadership. Safer faced numerous difficulties and challenges left over from its former operator, but it has become Yemen's second largest crude oil producer.

Headquartered in Sana'a, Safer is a wholly-owned entity of the Yemeni government. It was established in 1997 pursuant to Yemeni laws as the nation's oil and gas company empowered to conduct all petroleum exploration and development operations. On Nov. 15, 2005, it

assumed all upstream oil and gas operations in Yemen's largest exploration block, Block 18 in the Marib-Jawf area.
By employing suitable and up-to-date techniques, along with the integrity and dedication of its Yemeni and expatriate staff, Safer successfully overcame many inherited difficulties and achieved impressive results, including two new oil discoveries in Block 18.
Safer was forced to establish four key departments in order to overcome existing administrative and operational deficiencies: development and exploration, engineering and contracting, crude oil export and scheduling and risk management. None of these departments existed under the firm's previous operator.
During its first year of operation, Safer successfully produced an average of approximately 70,000 barrels of crude oil per day, as well as approximately 2.6 cubic feet of natural gas.

IBY: A whole bunch of new services

When asked about the new services, Abdullah Al-Arasi, publicity, advertising and product development manager declared that International Bank of Yemen exerts its efforts to provide best services and programs to facilitate all life aspects and develop banking services. And People certify that the bank was behind making a great move in all banking services in Yemen.

The new services comprise Al-Barq Service (Al-Barq Web for Financial Services), a package that includes many other services which will help make a revolution in Yemen's banking services and also facilitate all banking transactions before the customers.

Further, the bank extended its Easy Loans Service (buying on installments at the cash price and with no interest), enabling customers to buy a lot of things they are in need for via commercial shops that deals with the bank.

Recently, the bank issued an Electronic Visa Card for free, a service enabling its holders to reach their accounts from any place across the



Abdullah Al-Arasi,

world via ATM or POS.

The bank has also extended the working hours in all its branches, from 8 am to 8 pm. Thus, the customers can perform their privileges within the due time.

Finally, the bank changed its slogan from 'Distinct Banking Service'; a motto that was met so far, to 'Our Goal is the same' which indicates that we together with our customers are partners in the success achieved.

Aden receives MV Wan Haj 503

ADEN, Dec. 9 — Aden's Container Terminal welcomes MV Wan Hai 503's maiden voyage. This marks the beginning of Wan Hai Line's presence at Aden. Part of the Pacific International Lines and Wan Hai joint Far East-Europe Service, MV Wan Hai 503 is one of the newer and largest vessels of Wan Hai fleet. The vessel can carry a maximum of 4,252 TEUs. It has a designed maximum draft of 12.5m, length overall (LOA) of 269m and service speed of 23.3 knots.

Eight container vessels, four each from Wan Hai Lines and PIL, are deployed to the weekly line-haul service which calls Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Aden, Port Kelang, Singapore, Shanghai, Ningbo, Hong Kong and Shekou. This service is making its first call at ACT.

Wan Hai Line founded in 1965 is one of the Asia's most prominent shipping lines. It provides full-container vessel shipping services with direct calls to 43 major international commercial ports in many parts of Asia and Middle East. This makes it the one of the most comprehensive and intensive service networks available in Asia.

The line expresses confidence in ACT's operations, especially its fast ship-to-ship connections between mother and feeder vessels, making ACT a "catch-up port" when vessels are on tight schedule. It is pleased to include Aden in its Middle East network. Wan Hai Line hopes to look at further prospects in Aden.



Yemen's Minister of Transport said: "The inauguration of a new FE-Europe service and the maiden call of the Wai Hai 503 is a significant milestone for ACT. Aden is becoming increasingly popular as a Red Sea and ME-East African container hub."

For his part, Mr MMJ Subramaniam, CEO of OPM LLC (Terminal Managers of ACT) presented a plaque to the ship's captain, Capt Jaw Bao Lin, to commemorate the maiden voyage of MV Wan Hai 503 at Aden. He remarked: "We are honoured to have Wan Hai Line making Aden her port of call. It is satisfying to see that after wooing Wan Line for so long in our marketing campaign, Wan Hai Line has decided to call Aden."

ACT currently has 7 services with prime customers comprising PIL, Wan Hai, Hapag Lloyd, Evergreen, COSCO, APL and K Line.

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I Ahmad Keith Burgess (Muslim) of PO box 3337 Kilo 7 Sana'a Road Hodeidah To marry Wedad Salah Mohamed Algabil (Muslim) of Almenha Street Hodeidah At court of mystery of affairs Hodeidah during the month of January 2007, any person knowing of any lawful impediment to the marriage should without delay notify.

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zVACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites **Yemeni Nationals** to apply for the following position with its project Masila Community Water and Sanitation Project, in Resib area, Sah-District, Seiyun:

Post Title: Sanitation Engineer
Masila Community Water and Sanitation Project, in Resib area, Sah-District, Seiyun.
Phase 1: (3 month full time)

Phase 2: (1 year Part-time 6 days per month)
Phase 1: (3 month full time)

Responsibilities

- Under full-time guidance of the sanitation engineer with assistance of Community Committee, water engineer and presence of the PM, and minutes taken by the Director General of Sah District, mark on the ground (technique should be durable) the proposed location of all pipes, septic tanks, soak pits, etc.
- Simultaneously mark on satellite images
- Provide opportunity for all affected residents to comment, approve, request changes, etc.
- Make the necessary changes if needed to incorporate residents' comments and request changes on the ground as well as the designs, drawings, list of quantities, technical specifications

Phase 2: (1 year Part-time 6 days per month)

Responsibilities

- Directly supervise implementation of the new sanitation system in Resib
- Carry out on the job training activities related to sanitation during implementation phase
- Work in close collaboration with all Team members to ensure timely delivery of required Project outputs
- Directly supervise all stages of fieldwork implementation for the replacement of Resib water distribution system, and any other works implemented within the system.
- Supervise implementation of sanitation works in conjunction with water engineer.

Qualification

- Bachelor Degree in Sanitation Engineering, or Civil Engineering or any related discipline.
- 5-6 years Project management experience, including experience in supervising sanitation construction works, and experience working with UN project implementation rules would be an added advantage.
- Fluent in both Arabic and English with excellent report writing capabilities.
- Excellent Computer skills

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, P.O.Box 551 Sana'a/Fax: 448892/E-mail: (hr.ye@undp.org)
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Unemployed graduates volunteer between anvil of discrimination and hammer of poverty

By: Abdulwahab Al-Sofi
abdulwahab_alsofi@yahoo.com

A truer word never was spoken: Yemeni volunteers seeking employment. Many teachers voluntarily teach at government schools for years, hopefully awaiting their turn to receive official employment from Civil Service. Others volunteer in various governmental sectors hoping to receive their main employment.

In fact, such volunteers are victims of false promises by school administrators. When schools face a teacher shortage, they seek such unlucky graduates to fill the positions. They then volunteer for years without receiving even recognition for their hard work.

To the contrary, these volunteer teachers were astonished to see new graduates employed which whets their souls and fills them with a sense of frustration. Moreover, some lose their glimmer of hope completely and then prefer to sit at home.

In this regard, when visiting numerous places looking for such volunteers, one easily can find them everywhere – some of whom are willing to talk about their suffering – discovering that there are more women volunteers than men, who have less patience than women to work voluntarily for a long time.

Another volunteer at Hodeidah University has worked five years, hoping to receive her official employment

and suffering ill treatment by administration. Additionally, she couldn't believe when her colleagues received their employment before her, whereas, "I patiently wait for my dream to come true," she says.

Teacher Noura Ahmed Ismail has taught voluntarily at Al-Sa'eed School since 1997, specializing in the Qur'an and its science. "I renew my enrollment at Civil Service every year, hoping to be one of the lucky ones to receive annual employment. My name never is written on the list of candidates awaiting a vacancy. However, what is a pity is that I saw my colleagues' names, who then received employment, and new graduates receive their employment every year."

She adds, "I wrote many letters to those responsible for crediting me a vacancy like the other new graduates. However, they ignored my demand completely, as if I wasn't a citizen. Simply put, we volunteers are destitute of justice, but I still hope to receive mercy from our principals," she says.

One teacher has taught in a school five years because she has received promises of future employment, but such promises usually lead to nothing. "I pay YR 200 to go to school," she explains, "but it seems I await nothing except more suffering."

Teacher Hanan expressed her sorrow that she's taught for five years at Al-Sa'eed School as a volunteer, hoping to receive an education vacancy. "Although I have a literature degree,

I'm eager to be a teacher. For two years, I tried to complete my university studies, but I couldn't due to my bad circumstances," she added.

Another Hodeidah University volunteer narrated her story as follows: "After I finished my lengthy study and graduated from university, I started struggling for survival and searching for a suitable job. Preferring the teaching field, I visited every private school in my region. Ultimately, I taught in private schools for three years, during which time I experienced many difficulties and sufferings like I'd never seen before."

"Despite such work, the salary was insufficient for my personal disbursement and transportation. I'm embarrassed to mention it because it's only about YR 8,000 per month. It's ridiculous, but it's the truth."

"Moreover, ill treatment by the private school owners added insult to injury; thus, I decided to go to university because I had a glimmer of hope for a vacancy there. I began working as a volunteer two years ago and thus far, I'm awaiting my turn to be employed," she concluded.

Actually, what's narrated above are but a few instances representing many such stories across Yemen, the majority of which belong to society's lower class. On the other hand, those in the higher class (the rich) never once volunteer, receiving their employment automatically.

The following question should be raised: Are the promises of our deci-

sion-makers under the umbrella of reformation? The tremendous responsibility rests upon the government. The attitude of those responsible toward these volunteers is completely negative. Such volunteers are part and parcel of our community. Is their sentence of guilt that they must complete their studies? Alternatively, is such neglect their reward?

Saif Ali Al-Zuraiki, deputy manager of the Hodeidah Civil Service office, commented, "Volunteers in education or other government sectors aren't on our agenda. They aren't our consideration to give priority to appointing them. We never advise people to work as volunteers."

So, what are the criteria for distributing employment to new graduates instead of older graduates?

"We select our nominees according to several main criteria: annual grade point average, date of graduation and the regions in which nominees live are taken into consideration," Al-Zuraiki explained.

"Rumors narrated here and there regarding employment recommendations and supporters, known as vitamin (waw) in Arabic means "recommendation or bribe" are untrue. We select our nominees according to certain criteria already mentioned above," he added.

However, reality tells the reverse. Many real-life examples demonstrate how people manipulate others. Having majored in English language at Hodadah University's Faculty of



Many teachers voluntarily teach for years, hopefully to receive official employment from Civil Service.

Education, Sawsen graduated five years ago with a very good average, but isn't employed yet. She suffered a lot in order to obtain an education vacancy, but in vain. Each year, she receives a glimmer of hope due to news about the advent of new positions, but ultimately, such news turns to disappointment as soon as it's declared.

Sawsen was one of the most intelligent students among her university classmates, but what a pity that all of her colleagues received employment except her. Therefore, she wiped her tears and resorted to practicing her

English by teaching in a private school. Her salary is only YR 10,000 per month, which is insufficient for her daily disbursement and transportation. Hoping to achieve her end, she has decided to get her Master's degree in education.

Yemeni youths shoulder a great responsibility to build in every field. The government should provide work and create jobs for all citizens wanting it because when an individual finds work, he then can provide a decent, free and respectable living for himself and his family.

Celebrating International Volunteer Day

By: Nisreen Shadad

"Volunteers are the real inspiration for all of us. Volunteering is about people and beliefs...it's about people believing to make a difference. All of us – no matter what our work or spatiality or area of work – can volunteer and make a difference," says United Nations Resident Coordinator in Yemen Flavia Pansieri.

The panel at the Dec. 5 International Volunteer Day conference discussed volunteerism and its contribution to development. The event aimed to be a turning point in promoting volunteerism in Yemen and worldwide.

"Today is an initiative to all members of Yemeni civil society to admit the importance of the volunteer role in achieving Millennium Development Goals. In the early 1990s, Yemen had the biggest volunteer program and the largest number of volunteers in the Arab world. However, the number of volunteers is decreasing. We want this day to be a turning point in promoting volunteerism in Yemen and worldwide," says U.N. Volunteers Program officer Kawtar Zerouali.

Celebrating the day afforded an important opportunity for organizations benefiting from the experience of volunteers, as well as individual volunteers, to gather with one voice to highlight and promote their contributions to economic and social development at both national and international levels.

Contributing to volunteer work ennobles men and women and promotes their society. "Volunteer work is vital and important to develop our society and broaden our horizons because it furnishes society with needed skills," says Tariq Abulhoom Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the University of Science and Technology, "It activates and energizes Yemeni youths, who actually are aware of the dimension of society's problems and how to control them. It helps volunteers gain experience and invest their free time in a very productive way."

Both national and international volunteer programs play an important role in promoting volunteerism. Yemen's U.N. Volunteers Program and the Charitable Society for Social Welfare program served as models at the conference.

"It's a very effective and essential means to achieve Millennium Development Goals and requires the involvement of all people. We all individually – and civil society organizations in particular – have an important role to play in the country's development," Pansieri stated.

"In this respect, I'd like to underline an important fact: women play a very important role in promoting volunteerism. The U.N. Volunteers Program



The conference aimed to be a turning point in promoting volunteerism in Yemen and worldwide.

has a long history in Yemen – more than 25 years. We have up to a maximum of 30 volunteers in the country, both national as well as international, who assist in disaster management and humanitarian relief, as well as refugee and electoral support. They live in remote areas and in poor conditions. More than half are native volunteers and a third are women," she added.

Abdu Al-Majeed Farhan, executive director of the Charitable Society for Social Welfare, explained the reasons for his organization's success. "The first reason for our success is clarity of the vision, message and objectives, as well as noble aims and right principles and systems used in our methodology."

"The second reason is observance, evaluation and transparency in finances and administration. Such methodology leads to better-versed volunteers who trust us and consequently, volunteer in our organization," he concluded.

However, Mohammed Al-Masyabi, founder and chief executive of the Yemeni Development Foundation, says charitable associations and foundations must be systematic. "In our society, we used to volunteer, but it was hit-and-miss. Yemen has 5,000 charitable associations and foundations, but the Ministry of Social Affairs complains about lack of observance of rules and systems that charitable associations must follow."

Al-Masyabi also mentioned the importance of attending to eminent religious figures and scholars. "Those in this gathering aren't in contact with the public. We need people with influence on youths – religious figures and scholars – to be with us. We need people from all fields because every single person is useful," he maintained.

Eminent volunteer and honored guest at the celebration, Yahya Mohammed Ali Abdullah Saleh, cautioned volunteers about politicizing volunteer work. "Volunteers must work for the sake of the country's development, not wait to gain political placement or receive pay-

ment."

Panel members also gave inspiring speeches about understanding volunteerism and sharing their individual experiences. In his speech, Lukas Poliac, who volunteers at Girls World Communication Center, noted, "In my Czech language, volunteer is dobrovolnik means good and volek means will. Therefore, volunteer means good will. Being a volunteer begins here – having good will – and then there are many things to offer."

"Not only that, for me, it symbolizes the word democracy – to be free of what to do – but taking responsibilities at the same time. What volunteerism brings to us as volunteers firstly is developing people and helping society. The second is gaining new skills, experiences, friends and different perspectives," he concluded.

Mohammed Al-Sa'adi also inspired attendees with his experience, his spontaneous character and his tender nature, which led him to help patients in Mahwit governorate. "In Mahwit governorate, the average number of casualties from onchocerciasis [also known as river blindness] is approximately 90 percent. Onchocerciasis is a chronic parasitic disease that may result in changing skin color due to severe itching, which may lead to secondary infection and blindness in some cases. The cause of this disease is nematodes with hooked tails (onchocerca volvulus)," he explained.

"Having no medicine, Mahwit residents use knives and stones to scratch their skin harshly. I worked hard to fulfill their needs. The Charitable Society for Social Welfare supported me in controlling such a disease because most areas where onchocerciasis is endemic are poor and deprived of health care services. I learned the meaning of volunteerism when I saw their eyes sparkle," he continued.

However, while helping residents and distributing medicines to patients Al-Sa'adi faced several obstacles, the most

important of which was a trail of selling medicine, which he struggled long to bring to the poor governorate.

"While distributing medicine, a man in authority asked me to give him some of the medicine, but I refused. He informed the police against me and consequently, they put me in the prison. When residents got wind of my being in

prison, they all stood beside me until I was freed," he recounted.

Presenting certificates of appreciation to such volunteers in Yemen also enhanced volunteerism and gave recipients a feeling of honor. "Today is a day of gratitude and fidelity to all volunteers. It's the day we admit the priceless services volunteers offer and the invaluable

accomplishments they perform," Deputy Minister of Social Affairs Ali Saleh Abdullah said.

Initiated and funded by Yemen's U.N. Volunteers Program and supported by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the conference was planned and organized in partnership with the volunteer organizations.

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The World Bank Request Consulting Services for Children and Youth Strategy Action Plan Implementation

The Government of Yemen has requested the World Bank to provide technical assistance in the implementation of National Children and Youth Strategy. In response to the Government's request, the World Bank is calling for expression of interest from qualified individuals to provide the following consulting services:

- Assist in holding donor workshop to review and endorse the Youth Action Plan
- Assist in putting in place the annual implementation arrangements (change order)
- Finalize the Children and Youth Strategy Action Plans for **Age Group 15-24** that has been drafted by the Government based on the Strategy recommendations.
- Assist in developing monitoring and evaluation plan while aligning the strategy outcomes with the MDGs and Third 5-Year Development Plan for Poverty Reduction 2006-2010
- Assist in mainstreaming action plans into the sectoral work programs of the relevant line ministries and donors
- Provide capacity building and coordination support as needed to the relevant agencies involved in the mainstreaming process
- Reports to be submitted in Arabic and English languages to the World Bank and members of the Technical Committee (Ministry of Youth, MoPIC, HCMC, UNICEF and SFD)

The expected duration of the services is about 6-month full time working, based on assigned outputs, under the direction of the World Bank, with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Technical Committee. The selection of the consultants will be based on the World Bank procedures for Selection of Individual Consultants.

Qualifications Required:

- A high level degree (at least a Master) or equivalent in economics or related fields focusing on education and labor market interface.
- A minimum of 10 years working in youth development and welfare policy.
- A minimum of 10-15 years of experience in analyzing and addressing issues of youth development within overall macro-economic, labor market, education, political economy, and poverty situation of the country.
- Working experience in analyzing and addressing issues of youth welfare, protection and development within a life cycle framework.
- Working experience in youth service delivery in a range of education, health, labor market and welfare systems.
- Experience in analysis of demand and supply of services to ensure services are targeted appropriately to ensure best outcomes for youth and their job prospects.
- Extensive knowledge of the dynamics of the Yemeni economy, labor market situation, education and health policies, safety net programs and poverty situation,
- Familiarity with social and economic analysis would be an advantage along with evidence of capacity to assemble and manage data/information required for the assignment of this nature.
- Experience in doing similar assignment in MENA region and Yemen in particular
- Fluency in English and Arabic

Please submit your application in a sealed envelop clearly marked **Child and Youth Strategy consultancy (Age Group 15-24)** by **December 30, 2006**.

attn.: Office Administrator, World Bank Office, P.O. 18152, Hadda, Street No. 40, Sana'a, Yemen

No applications received by fax/e-mail will be considered. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted



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- Assist in holding donor workshop to review and endorse the Youth Action Plan
- Assist in putting in place the annual implementation arrangements (change order)
- Finalize the Children and Youth Strategy Action Plans for **Age Group 0-5 and 6-14** that has been drafted by the Government based on the Strategy recommendations.
- Assist in developing monitoring and evaluation plan while aligning the strategy outcomes with the MDGs and Third 5-Year Development Plan for Poverty Reduction 2006-2010
- Assist in mainstreaming action plans into the sectoral work programs of the relevant line ministries and donors
- Provide capacity building and coordination support as needed to the relevant agencies involved in the mainstreaming process
- Reports to be submitted in Arabic and English languages to the World Bank and members of the Technical Committee (HCMC, Ministry of Youth, MoPIC, UNICEF and SFD).

The expected duration of the services is about 6-month full time working, based on assigned outputs, under the direction of the World Bank, with the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood and the Technical Committee. The selection of the consultants will be based on the World Bank procedures for Selection of Individual Consultants.

Qualifications Required:

- A high level degree (at least a Master) or equivalent in child development or related fields.
- A minimum of 10 years working in child development and welfare policy.
- A minimum of 10-15 years of experience in analyzing and addressing issues of child development within overall macro-economic, political economy, and poverty situation of the country.
- Working experience in analyzing and addressing issues of children and youth welfare, protection and development within a life cycle framework.
- Working experience in child care service delivery in a range of education, health and welfare systems.
- Experience in analysis of demand and supply of services to ensure services are targeted appropriately to ensure best outcomes for children and family.
- Extensive knowledge of the dynamics of the Yemeni economy, education and health policies, safety net programs and poverty situation,
- Familiarity with social and economic analysis would be an advantage along with evidence of capacity to assemble and manage data/information required for the assignment of this nature.
- Experience in doing similar assignment in MENA region and Yemen in particular
- Fluency in English and Arabic

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Words of Wisdom



One of the main problems in building a modern state in Yemen is that three blocks of our society perceive themselves above accountability. The sooner we see this and address it, the easier it will be to build a meaningful government based on law and order, and modern values.

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

OUR
OPINIONGebran Twini
award

Two days ago, I was among the most miserable, frustrated people in the world. Then, yesterday I was among the happiest persons on earth.

No, I am not a moody nut case; I am an editor trying hard to give my best in a troubled country, in difficult times.

I am a journalist, who when on the verge of frustration, was recognized and appreciated.

I had received the Gebran Twini award presented to me by the World Association of Newspaper in memory of late Twini editor of Annahar newspaper in Lebanon. Twini who gave a lot to press freedom until the day he died, one year ago.

I was chosen for my commitment to the values upheld by Mr Twini: attachment

to freedom of the press, courage, leadership, ambition, and high managerial and professional standards. These values are the legacy my father late Dr. Alsaqqaf passed to me. When I celebrated Twini in Lebanon, I felt as if I were celebrating my father. It was then when I realized that I was not only commemorating Twini and Alsaqqaf, I was commemorating all the free and brave journalists who did not spare anything for the sake of freedoms, even their lives.

It's been one year since Twini died, and 7 since my father was killed in a suspicious car accident. But still we remember them, and we remember many others who left us a legacy to live up to.

Two days ago, I was asking myself why the hell do I bother about deadlines and news stories, when I should be enjoying my time with my 8 months old daughter who was tugging on my dress wanting to play with the keyboard.

But then yesterday I knew the answer, it is because what I say and do matters, and because we can make a difference through our work. We are the voice of the poor, deprived and discriminated. Timothy Balding, CEO of WAN said it has been a bloody year for journalists, the worst on record, and no more so than in Arab countries. That is true, but also it was a year when journalists were the news instead of just writing them. And we brought our case to the front line.

This award is to my father, who taught me so much, who always said to me "hard work never hurts" whenever I would try and go the easy way.

This is to my Yemeni colleagues in the media, both men and women, who are struggling to find their grounds and identify themselves in this messy world. This is to all the freedom fighters and activities around the world.

Sending them all a message, that despite the hardships, if we put our heart to it, we CAN.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf
Editor-in-Chief

American democrats win the beginning of rift

It is known that the two big American political parties are of the same nature though the ways and means of their work, political tactics and visions towards many of issues and ways of dealing with them. Their common stance of the war on Iraq is known and rather some of the democrats were enthusiastic regarding the war and supported it more. However, the republicans control the congress and extremism of Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and the team of the neo-conservatives attribute the war to the Bush administration and pushed the war to its dangerous extent.

All the crimes perpetrated against the Iraqis were pushing them to take arms against an occupation aimed total destruction, beginning with occupation, destruction of the Iraqi state, army, security, the Ba'ath, the heritage and the civilization landmarks of one of the most important founders of human civilization. Moreover, the big crimes and turning the back to the international community, commitment of crimes in Abu Ghraib Prison and destruction of Iraq and its environment, have placed the American administration in the face of the world, freedoms and right of peoples, which America has often adopted. The slogan of preemptive war adopted by the American administration does not



By: Abdulbari Tahir

only mean Iraq or Afghanistan but rather it is a threat to humanity and international peace.

The war on Iraq and Afghanistan was in harmony with Sharon's war on the second Palestinian Intifada. In the midst of the colonialist war inferno Bush's statements and speeches of faith increased the flare of the war. The war appeared as if a repetition of the crusade wars or the war of good against evil and that led to escalation of "Islamist" terror in various areas. The larger terror would mostly create a type of terror cloaked with religion and defends the ideology.

It was not a coincidence that Bush divided the world into good and evil whereas Bin Laden divides it into faith and infidelity. Nevertheless, the two men draw on the same ideology and thought despite the difference in nomenclatures.

As is the case in politics, the democrats have benefited from the failure of the war on Iraq and have focused in their election campaign on the catastrophic and immoral results of the war, which they had previously supported. The collaboration of terror is no longer a secret. The terror of 9/11 awakened the demons of the upcoming empire that has for many years set the stage. The empire wants to lead the world, disregard international bodies and other poles. It is more probable one of the most international parties

sensing the danger of war failure in Iraq and reconciliation with Syria and Iran is Israel. The failure of this war and the indications that appear day by day mean the impossibility of Israel's ability to conquer the Palestinian. If the American master has failed then one of the most important results is the failure of the "good" student, i.e. Israel. That explains escalation of war against the Palestinians and the Lebanese, the adoption of the calls for partitioning Iraq and stopping the Iranian nuclear reactor.

The biggest failure Israel, as a colonialist state, would sustain with America's failure in the region and that would mean the beginning of the countdown of the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan and its continuous hegemony and threat to Arab countries.

There is no doubt the democrats victory and the tactical changes that may happen in their regional and international policy will be attributed in the first place to struggle of the Iraqi people and steadfastness of the Palestinians and the Lebanese in the face of the Israeli war going on since the defeat of 1948.

The occupation of Iraq serves colonialist objectives, the main of which, beside oil, is the protection of Israel and destruction of the Iraqi army as the strongest force in the Arab region threatening the Israeli entity. By invading Iraq, America did not only contributed to a transcontinental terror similar to its type, but also created, more importantly, national resistance fighting the occupation and it is by

virtue of America the Bush's Middle East project was undermined.

The defect of big countries and empires is similar to that of individuals because they do not learn the lessons of history and the past as well as experiments of peoples. The old and the new colonies are responsible for the creation of national liberation movement in the world and the experiment of America itself with the British, or its experiment in Vietnam, give evidence to the difficulty, if not impossibility, of conquering the will of the right however strong or tyrannical.

Continuation of the resistance in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan will determine the destiny and future of the "empire of good" in the Middle East and with victory of the Democratic Party the indicator of Bush's upcoming retreat could have actually begun. However, the extent of recession and the way it is going to follow and the methods of treatment are the most important. As much as there should not be belittling of the importance of the change in temperament of the American elector basically related to the war on Iraq and the victory of the democrats there should not be also an exaggeration in pursuing illusions of much change in the American colonialist policy, which the two, republic and democrat, parties have in common. But the democrats realize that their win was, from the beginning, related to the failure of the war and it is impossible to continue it with the same tactics. Really any retreat will refresh hopes of the resistance and

push many parties to join it and expand the area of support for it. In fact the latest Spanish-French-Italian initiative is one result of resistance escalation. The matter more important than failure of the war is the failure of the American and Israeli betting on tribal, sectarian, regional and ethnic affiliations with which they wanted to reshape the region. This war may prove that the interrelationship among the Arab body is stronger in premonition of Bernard Luis, the plans of the Pentagon and the CIA and the Mossad and bigger than the false outward appearances of the collapsing regional system.

The interconnection is very deep between the steadfastness of Hezbollah in Lebanon and defeat of the Israeli war, the victory of Hamas and escalation of the Palestinian resistance despite of the blockade, starvation and annihilation war. This means America's failure leads to Israel's failure and vice versa. The failure of the American-Israeli war pushes the two allies to a temporary tactical retreat, activation of the rear lines in the ally- Arab order which practices pressures against the resistance in Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon and works for visualizing the conflict as if it is a Sunni and Shiite issue. Olmert's statement on the common denominations between Israel and Arab moderate regimes is an indication and a beginning of the rift in the front of war.

Abdulbari Tahir is a Yemeni Journalist and the former chairman of Yemeni Journalists Syndicate.

Silence barriers broken

After long reluctance and denial the confessions are beginning to appear with regard to the disaster of the war of aggression on Iraq. Voices of those who deny the defeat began to be heard though with an amount of shyness. Probably the most dangerous and important confession is embodied by the ruling Republicans in the U.S. following their defeat in the congressional mid-term elections. It is their war leaders feeling of repentance, although some of them are still thinking victory is possible even if that can be on the American corpses or in a place other than Iraq. The Arab country brought to it destruction and collapse of all the red lines that were existent among its sons.

The United States did not achieve anything from this war besides the killing of the innocent and shedding the blood of the American youth in an uncalculated adventure under fabricated allegations and ridiculous accusations.

The American voters have admitted the war is a serious disaster and they were the victim of idiot leadership that deluded them into thinking the war on Iraq was only going to be a

winter picnic where there the soldiers will be back to enjoy the glories of victory and the commanders will be back to entertain dreams of seizing the largest oil reserve in the Middle East. The American electors also discovered the war administration began to realize that, after three years of grey days and nights, it has fallen a quagmire it had not expected and its problem is that it is stuck in the mud of this quagmire and could not drag their feet out of it, but with amputation and with what is severer than the defeat.

Maybe the most dangerous element with the confession of the defeated administration can be seen in dimensions of expelling the direct leader of the war, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who, for three years, kept his head buried in the sand so he could not see the successive losses and fire burning inside the rooms of the Pentagon. He was used to present a false picture of the military command, but then lost the respect their soldiers and realized the consequences of lying to their people. That idiot minister is on his way to stand trial for the mistakes he committed and the lies he fabricated – his expulsion one day after the elections equals sentencing him to death.



By: Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh

And in this regard one should not disregard confessions by British Prime Minister Tony Blair – the largest ally and partner in the scandals of lies. He has admitted clearly that the war on Iraq was a disaster. He has to say that his support for George Bush and his blood and the oil-thirsty gang has inflicted irreparable

shame on him and his country. There are some British politicians who hate the U.S. because they stole their former glory. The inheritor of their empire would say Tony Blair is faithful and managed with his cleverness to push the American administration and with it its people, to the quagmire of Iraq and its more dangerous ramifications.

The American loss of this failing dirty war does not stop at wasting hundreds of billions of dollars or at killing thousands of soldiers and officers. The bigger loss is coming from the complete lack of credibility and now the fear of world from the errors by the adventurous gang that resulted from the stupid ruler who controls the super power and uncontrollable wars.

Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Maqaleh is Yemen's prominent poet and intellectual. He is the director of the Yemeni Center for Studies.

Yemen-Pakistan
relations

Relations between Yemen and Pakistan has its roots since the Islamic period and the relationship have expanded and grown within time so they have their deepened roots in the memory of both nations. It is note worthy that Mohammed Bin Al-Qassim has his favor in reaching Islamic doctrine to this great nation which strongly adhered and defended Islamic doctrine all throughout history. It also has the honor to affiliate to Islamic nation of which it is undergoing some difficulties and complications.

Yemen-Pakistan relations witnessed some great bilateral conventions and agreements which covered trade, literary, cultural, economic fields and it flourished throughout the years. In this regard, Yemen is expecting more to come on the way particularly with the current visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Shauket Aziz meeting the Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Kader Bajammal under blessings and support of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Both countries aim to strengthening and consolidating the bilateral relations in all fields that serve both countries.

Yemen welcomes the visit of the Pakistani premier and sees it is an



By: Sameer Abdul Haq

opportunity towards opening the doors for benefits from high-tech programs which could cover various areas of education and small industries and our country needs these improvements for industrial establishments.

The investment law in Yemen provides opportunities for the Pakistani businessmen to invest in various fields such as gas, oil, tourism, fisheries and other areas of interest to Pakistani investors.

It is to note that the Pakistan School, based in Sana'a, has its educational and cultural role working with the Cambridge syllabus of which all such efforts enable our students to get a quality education in order to qualify them to join faculties and universities abroad or even in Pakistan.

All in all, the visit is part of keeping the strength in these already good relations on all levels. Meanwhile, the visit represents establishing peace and stabilization in the region and the world.

Sameer Abdul Haq
(sameer_fddg@yahoo.com)
is a senior specialist in the Premier Office.

Human
RightsBe an ambassador
of your country

I like to talk about tourism in Yemen. It is the first time I walked in the old market of Taiz. I was happy to see the number of tourists there, but I was struck by many stupid things. Young people looking at the tourists and laughing in their faces. Rude teenagers were saying unknown words and phrases to the tourists as they are speaking a foreign language. These negative action are bad and may make tourists hate our country. I hope that parents advice their sons to respect tourists. When tourists are

beyond their country they are feeling many strange feelings. So we should encourage tourists and make them feel as they are in their countries and families.

Ahmed Ali Al-Redhwan
ahmed25ali@hotmail.com

Don't let your
children bother tourists

A beautiful city like Sana'a Old City deserves to be visited by many people who like the beauty of the oldness and the wonders of the architecture. People as tourists come from all over the world to visit the city.

While tourists start their trip in the city with joy, then suddenly small kids following them and through stones and bothering them. Please, people of Sana'a stop this phenomenon by teaching children. Thank you for this chance to apologize to tourists.

Mohmmad alkhayri
alkh3002@yahoo.com

Dear Yemen Times staff
This is for me the first time to write letter to Yemen Times. I would like to use this opportunity to say congratulations. Please keep on with your great and

enormous job in order to get more success in the coming years. In the future you will get more challenges and difficulties on your job, but Yemen Times always proved it has faced challenges with strength since the founder of this journal Dr. Al-Saqqaf, may Allah have mercy on him. And I want to mention the wonderful smart Yemeni lady and the editor, Nadia Al-Saqqaf, for her unlimited effort to always bring us a truth from a difficult situation I pray to Allah to protect her to be strong as she is presently.

Waleed Alkadri
welid2005@yahoo.com

Letters to the Editor

Be an ambassador
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Yemen Press Review

By: Mohammed Khidhr



Al-Wahdawi weekly, organ of the Cassette rite Unionist Organization (NUO), 5 Dec. 2006.

Main headlines

- \$ 8.24 billion waiting for the corruption of 2007
- In a violation of the law, the president appoints secretary-general for Amran local council
- The NIO secretary-general congratulates President Chavez on his winning in the elections
- In solidarity with the NUO Abubakr al-Saqqf; The NUO a target of oppression by the authority
- Traffic accidents cause the death of 58 and injury of 321 in one week
- The NUO secretary-general takes part in humanity security forum in Japan
- Sheikh al-Dhari delivers a lecture in Sana'a for a united Iraq
- Money squandering by waters establishment in Hudeidah
- WB wars against fearful recession in the citizen income: Yemen the second worst country in the world regarding food
- Journalists solidarity with Yemen Observer, Al-Hurriyah newspapers after closure of Al-Rai Al-A'am newspaper

Writer Ahmed Saed says in his article by the end of each year the government markets to the parliament a draft budget of the state to be discussed and approve. Mostly the government does not come up any thing new achieving economic growth rates and the government financial statement is almost similar to those of previous years.

This year the draft budget for 2007 under discussion by the parliament put forward the question of raising the price of oil barrel to \$55 instead of \$40 which was in the previous year with the continuation of neglecting the issues related to the citizen's life and without offering

radical solutions and treatments the problems of electricity cuts, providing waters and ending poverty and unemployment and corruption.

The budget draft has not lived up to the ruling party and the government talks about the economic reform during the elections and the achievement of prosperity for the people. The contrary is true.

The government has moved contrary to the promises which president Ali Abdullah Saleh unleashed during the election campaign especially his promise of ending the poverty and unemployment let alone the railroad project and nuclear-powered electricity. The government also did not pay attention to the international classification of our country as the second poorest in the Middle East and North Africa due to the retreat in the individual income.

Among the issues the financial statement tried to overlook is that of unemployment that has reached to more than 40% while the World Bank expected in a recent report to increase as a result of the big increase of the population.



Al-Nidaa weekly 6 Dec. 2006.

Min headlines

- Judiciary condemns torture practiced by criminal investigations against Basma al-Zaghir
- 22000 refugees entered Yemen in three months, Aden Gulf sharks attack hundreds of Somalis and Ethiopians
- Skin eruption inside al-Mansoura prison in Aden
- Yemen Journalists Syndicate requests the president's intervention to put an end to the case of Danish cartoons
- The parliament sends 2007 budget to a joint committee to study it
- Court acquits Basma Mohammed Salem al-Zaghr from the charge of killing her parents

Writer Mohammed al-Ghubari says in his article from among all Arab oppositions only the Lebanese opposition has broken the barrier of fear and took to the streets to demand fall of the government. Up until now it is the only one that is still able to manage a peaceful democratic conflict in the face of the government.

For days the demonstrators gave being staying at two squares in Beirut and it has been the same period the police forces have been present at the same areas besides the demonstrators to protect and not to suppress them. It is an unfamiliar image in the Arab scene which is full of oppression and that is to see military men fully armed and their army vehicles present with demonstrators chanting slogans demanding the prime minister and his cabinet to step down. The picture is more beautiful when it depicts the city of Beirut that is tugged at by regional conflicts and influence of sects.

I think that the Lebanese opposition to continue in its peaceful democratic struggle and succeeds must be encouraged because its failure would be a kind of victory for the regimes in Egypt and Saudi Arabia that have quickly expressed their opposition of the opposition action and denounced the Lebanese to practice their democratic right to oust the government or support it. I may understand the Saudi stand that considers democracy as infidelity. Saudi Arabia has taken its stand in depending on two fact ors: first the sectarian stance that is hostile to the Shiite represented by Hezbollah and Anal movement and the second is commitment to support al-Hariri current that represented a base for the Saudi influence meanwhile there is no justification for the Egyptian strict position of President Hosni Mubarak rule. It can interpreted either as commitment to the American stand supporting the Senioura government and all the forces supporting normalization with Israel or its fear that the success of taking to the streets could transfer to Egypt in which the man has been ruling for 25 years suppressing and imprisoning his

opponents.

Before the Lebanese taking to the streets for toppling the government which is accused of conniving wit the Israeli aggression on the south we were strongly convinced it is impossible for an Arab country to repeat the Ukraine experiment but today we live on the hope of the Lebanese experiment success.



Al-Sahwa weekly, 7 Dec. 2006.

Main headlines

- Islah shoura calls on the government to carry out its duties
 - World Bank: Authority wrong policies complicated Yemen's problems and hindered reform efforts
 - GPC parliamentary bloc withdraws from parliament session, the government refuses to explain destiny of billions Authority kidnaps opposition activists
 - JMP challenges acceptance of the GPC candidate in Hudeidah by-elections
- Writer Zaid al-Shami says in his article the presidential and local elections have effected political and social shock and unprecedented mobility. It was expected that would give positive results to our life in general. The authority heard strong criticisms people were whispering during the time before the electoral season and the voices got higher during the elections. That has provided opportunity for straightening performance of the authority and its feeling of the citizens suffering. Then came promises of not repeating the mistakes and the necessity of tackling the impact of differences and conflicts to move to a new situation, a situation where the citizens live equal in rights and duties.

Although we have heard more than once the speeches of the president calling for turning over the chapter of elec-

tions and considering all as citizens entertaining full rights, the latest of which has been president Ali Abdullah Saleh speech in Aden during his meeting with leaderships of local councils of Aden, Lahj and Abyan but it seems that some would understand those speeches in the opposite meaning. Officials and influential practice various kinds of suppression and vengeance from employees, students and citizens who have taken part in the elections and have stood with parties of the Joint Meeting Parties or in adverse to stands of the ruling party, including who have some opinion from members of the ruling party.



Al-Wasat weekly, 6 Dec. 2006.

Main headlines

- Al-Dhari: Sedition in Iraq created by America and its agents, the resistance remains as long as there is occupation
- Al-Dhari describes the Iraqi parties in the government as agents and al-Kubaisi accuses al-Hakeem of working for annihilating the Sunnis
- Gunman attacks the American embassy, al-Khourri plays down importance of the incident
- Differences on mechanisms of spending sums of donors, Donors conference leaves diplomatic crisis between Sana'a and London
- Traffic accidents change to collective death and their rates in continuous increase
- GPC parliamentary bloc discusses lifting immunity of MP al-Ahmar
- Journalist protection committee: Official daily newspaper defames reputation of the editor in chief who won the prize
- World Bank: Yemen the second poorest country in the Middle East and North Africa
- Under intentional hiding of its figures,

Fearful rise in cases of AIDS infection

The editor in chief of the newspaper writes in his article there is no doubt the president of the republic is trying to exert efforts as part of his attempt for change, but this effort remains individual and related to him and his directives that are not confined only to strategies but goes to the extent of directing on detailed questions that are part of ministers specialties and even the general administrations in the concerned ministries.

The president may find himself at present concerned more than any time before with the people because of his gratitude for the people's support for him in the latest elections.

This necessitates from him to make them feel that he is behind any good that is achieved and the staving off of any calamity that it may happen. Despite the good intention the means does not help him attain the change he intends, if not to lead to the contrary of what he wants to communicate. The repeated directives on tackling the rise in prices did not lower them but increased them. An issue of this kind has direct relationship with the people and not having quick tangible results recoils against him rather than with him.

I wonder why he does not define priorities as a program having a definite time and entrusts the concerned authorities to consider and solve them. Then there would be reward for the right and punishment for the wrong so that to be lesson for others.

Expensiveness has shaken the people's confidence in their president specifically when it touches their living needs that have nothing to do with expensiveness in the world as it is promoted. It is rather related to local industrialists and products planted and distributed locally. Obstacles are many and the inherited pile is very heavy and that cannot be borne by one person however experienced and capable he is. The need remains for aides who have not been infected with corruption and advisors whom have not fallen in the mud of interests.

The ripple effect

The Arabs are divided over the results of the US congressional elections. Some are plagued with guilt for having contributed to the damage caused to the Bush administration; others are worried over the growing schadenfreude towards that administration. Some are anxious over the consequences of the growing influence in Washington of bipartisan forces that hate Arabs and all they believe in. Others, conversely, are convinced that our luck will change with the Democratic control of Congress and that the worst period in our relations with the US is over.

The Arabs can be forgiven for having given more attention to the congressional election results than, for example, to the massacre in Beit Hanoun. After all, many of them say, we're all subject peoples of, or profoundly affected by, that far-flung, highly influential and extremely powerful empire, and it's only natural that what happens in its centre should overshadow our other concerns. I believe that many Europeans, Asians and other peoples were similarly distracted by those elections from events closer to home.

In common with people in London, Paris and Berlin, many Arabs are pondering the part they played in bringing about what has been widely described as Bush's defeat. I can perfectly well understand the logic of America's friends in the Arab world who fault their governments for not responding to the Bush administration's call to democratise and to initiate far-ranging and substantial political reforms. When Bush embarked on his Iraqi adventure, he proclaimed three objectives. The first was to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, an objective that was based on a lie or deliberately fabricated information. The second was to hunt down Al-Qaeda embers and terrorist groups -- another lie: there was no connection between Saddam's Iraq and Al-Qaeda. The third was to establish a democracy in Iraq that would inspire and be emulated by other peoples of the Middle East. This was not so much a lie as it was rhetoric conceal-

ing the ideological designs of the neo-conservatives and of individuals of Arab origins in the American academic establishment. It was also clear from the outset that this objective, even if sincere, was unattainable. President Bush was wrong to have put his faith in the assurances of his aides that this objective would be easily accomplished. In the process, he depleted much of America's moral clout and political stock.

Neither was the Iraqi problem a candidate for a democratic solution, nor were the Arab peoples and their governments prepared to take this particular opportunity to overhaul their systems of government. Clearly, the Arabs' antipathy towards the pressures the Americans were applying far outweighed the pressures themselves, and this contributed to the Bush administration's electoral failure.

Since well before the Iraq invasion, Bush sought to obtain assurances from Iraq's Arab neighbours and some Arab governments slightly further afield that they would help ensure the security of Iraq's borders, as well as assuage sectarian tensions in Iraq. These governments did not refuse; even the Arab League declared its willingness to do what it could. The Bush administration -- or what's left of it -- cannot claim that the Arabs didn't help. They did, but they did so grudgingly. I, along with many others, heard American commentators remark that when it came to lending their support in Iraq, the Arabs were hesitant, inconsistent and negative. "Negative" is an attribute, not without considerable inspiration from Israel and the Zionist lobby in the US, that Washington has perpetually affixed to all forms of Arab political behaviour.

When the Lebanese crisis erupted with the capture of two Israeli soldiers followed by a brutal Israeli disciplinary campaign, the Bush administration

imagined that the opportunity was at hand to turn the tables in Iraq and recover some of its dwindling popularity in the US. The administration placed great hopes in Arab governments for steering Arab public opinion in a direction that would further the administration's aims in Iraq and at home. Again, Washington was disappointed. Many American newspapers remarked on how the Arab governments changed course mid-stream, and on the "negative" official and popular attitudes towards America that kept Washington from reaping the fruits of an opportunity that, as Seymour Hersh revealed, Israel and the US had been planning for some time.

In addition to this so-called negativity, anti-Americanism, or hostility to American foreign policy, has not abated in the Arab-Islamic world over the past few years. But the Arabs are not alone in this. According to opinion polls in Europe and Asia, hatred for American foreign policy has reached unprecedented levels, even, surprisingly, in Britain. I, therefore, have no cause to censure the Arabs for expressing such sympathies, especially after having watched the congressional electoral campaigns and noted the "hate campaign" the Democrats themselves mounted against Bush and his cabinet. However, during the campaigns, the American media gave considerable play to Arab anti-American feelings with the aim of furnishing additional evidence that the Bush administration had failed to develop a feasible policy towards the Middle East. If Zionist pressure groups were instrumental in this, so too were they in a tangential campaign focussing on Bush's energy policies and, specifically, his inability to compel Arab oil producing nations to lower the price of oil. In this regard, the Arabs were not only branded "negative" again, they were also accused of ingratitude to the US for the endless sacrifices it made in order to

protect the security of Arab states.

The Arabs can shout themselves blue in the face refuting their "negativism" and denying that it was a major cause of the failure of US policies in the Middle East and, hence, of the failure of the Republican Party in the recent elections. However, they won't find much sympathy in the US. After all, there is an element of truth in the allegation. It is well known that many Arab people suffer from the negativism of their government towards domestic, regional and religious issues that are crucial to the welfare of their peoples. That said, Arab negativism may have contributed to the Bush debacle, but it wasn't the sole cause or even a direct cause. With time it will become clear that the largest measure of responsibility falls on the neo-conservatives themselves. These are the people that pinpointed the Middle East as the linchpin for their imperialist designs, and these are the people who guided every step Bush took towards the declaration of war on terrorism and the invasion of Iraq. More crucially, these are the people who set American interests and political behaviour in their current ideological mould, which is the major and most direct cause of the anti-Bush vote in the congressional elections.

In view of all this, it seems reasonable to expect a period in which the influence of the neo-conservatives on US foreign policy fades and the US strives to exercise a modicum of realism in its handling of the Middle East. This will first entail coming to terms frankly and practically with the equations of the Middle East conflict and, particularly, the Palestinian cause. Second, it involves entering into negotiations with Iran, Syria and the resistance movements in the Arab and Islamic world. Third, the US must separate religion from politics in the conduct of international relations and in the treatment of Muslim minorities in the West. Finally, they must expose the myth of "the clash of civilisations" and work to raise public awareness in the West of this fallacy. In addition, Washington must place some restraints on the Zionist lobbies and their

disproportionate influence upon the centres of power in the White House and Congress. As the recent elections have confirmed, these pressure groups have swayed American policy in directions that conflict with American interests and principles. They were a major force behind the decision to invade Iraq, they have fuelled anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hatred in the US to a degree that threatens the lives and well-being of American Muslims, and more recently, they have begun to push for an invasion of Iran. In respect of the latter point, the remarks of former Israeli ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, concerning the possibility of US negotiations with Iran are telling: "Can we [Israel] rely on the US alone... and let the US do what it wants [with Iran]? No, by no means." Evidently, this remark was a response to a statement issued by Philip Zelikow, advisor to Condoleezza Rice to the effect that if the US is to create an Arab alliance against Iran, it would have to pressure Israel into making concessions to the Palestinians.

On the other hand, there is nothing to confirm that the recent congressional election results will compel Bush towards a more realistic foreign policy approach. If anything, the situation is more ambiguous. Some point to the setting sun of the neo-conservatives, as evidenced by Bush's dismissal of key neo-con White House staff, and by Defense Secretary Bob Gates's indication that he will do the same in the Pentagon. Others, however, argue that the neo-conservatives have gained considerable ground over recent years and that their influence now extends throughout many sectors of society, even within the Democratic Party. Whatever shift we see in the White House, they say, is purely cosmetic and solely intended to dissociate itself from the failures at home and abroad. It has been suggested that some in the White House had anticipated disaster and abandoned ship before it sunk. A comment issued by former Bush adviser Richard Perle several weeks ago supports this contention. The "king of the neo-cons" said, "if we had known that

the Bush administration would act so blunderingly and incompetently we wouldn't have urged him to invade Iraq." Further confirmation that the shift in the attitudes of the White House is superficial and transient is to be found in the knowledge that the elections brought many hawks into both Houses of Congress and that Vice-President Dick Cheney remains in place as the person best placed to recover from administration's electoral defeat, recharge the neo-conservatives resolve and shore up their bases of support in Congress and outside.

I have no doubt that Arab governments have a greater chance than ever before to influence policies on the Middle East, for the simple reason that in Iraq and elsewhere the US desperately needs the Arabs. But, regardless of what the US wants, I believe that the Arabs should summon the will to act in their own interests, quickly and on several fronts. That is of course, if the portrait Richard Hass painted of the future is accurate. In his recent interview with Der Spiegel, the president of the Council of Foreign Relations suggests that the future is grim:

"No viable peace process between Israel and the Palestinians is likely for the foreseeable future. Militias will emerge throughout the region, terrorism will grow in sophistication, tensions between Sunni and Shia will increase, causing problems in countries with divided societies, such as Bahrain, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Islam will fill the political and intellectual vacuum. Iraq at best will remain messy for years to come, with a weak central government, a divided society and sectarian violence. At worst, it will become a failed state racked by all-out civil war that will draw in its neighbours."

The picture grows gloomier still if we think of everything that Israel might get up to in such a dismal Middle East.

Gamil Mattar is director of the Arab Centre for Development and Futuristic Research.

Source: www.ahram.org.eg

An interview with Yusuf Islam

“To be, you must give up what you are”

Yusuf Islam, the man who was once Cat Stevens, talks about his first pop album in nearly three decades, about metamorphosis and about happiness.

Interview by: Guido Mingels

Quite a stir he's causing at the London office of Universal Music, this Yusuf Islam, 58. After a break of 28 years, the man who until 1979 was known as Cat Stevens, has returned to popular music with a secular album, "An Other Cup," and is asking for a cassette tape. Past brushes with journalists have made him warily keen to make his own recordings, but today he has no cassette for his recorder.

Thus, the excitement as people go scurrying off to search in all directions. The anecdote makes two things clear: music companies in 2006 no longer use cassette tapes and Yusuf Islam, technologically speaking, isn't so far removed from Cat Stevens. With this one exception, however, his life has changed completely.

Born Steven Demetri Georgiou in London in 1948 to a Swedish mother and Greek-Cypriot father, it was around 1970 that Cat Stevens' albums began to move the world to tears and sell more than 50 million copies. They were songs of uninhibited melancholy, searches for meaning and love and misunderstood existential angst sung by a voice with an almost transcendental quality, arguably the most hypnotic in pop history.

And they had a message: save the trees, let the children play, make peace. Many of his songs, "Morning has Broken" being just one example, have become timeless classics.

Like all converts, Yusuf Islam began as a radical. After turning his back on the music business, he sold all of his instruments and gold discs, learned Arabic and established an Islamic school in London. He married a Muslim woman in an arranged marriage and had five children. Once, running into his former muse Patti d'Arbanville by chance, for religious reasons, he declined to talk directly with her, communicating instead through her husband.

Refusing to have anything to do with musical instruments, his voice was heard only on didactic spoken recordings in Arabic. He hit the headlines in 1989 after ill-considered statements to the media created the impression that he was in favor of the fatwa pronounced against Salman Rushdie.

Although he acted immediately to try to correct this impression, the Sun newspaper headlined with, "Cat says: Kill Rushdie!" Consequently, many radio stations removed his songs from their play lists for years. The 1990s saw him involved in aid projects on behalf of the United Nations in places like Kosovo, Bosnia and Iraq, while he increasingly took on the role as advocate for Islam in the West, receiving the World Social Award in 2003.

The man from the record company is issuing final instructions. No political questions, ditto Islam – only music. The new CD lies in pristine splendor on the table. The cover design features a coffee cup filled with sparkling blue sea. The man who was once Cat Stevens is ensconced on a sofa, looking astonishingly small, dressed in a wool pullover and corduroy trousers, his beard lightly frosted with gray.

Congratulations on your new album, Mr. Islam.

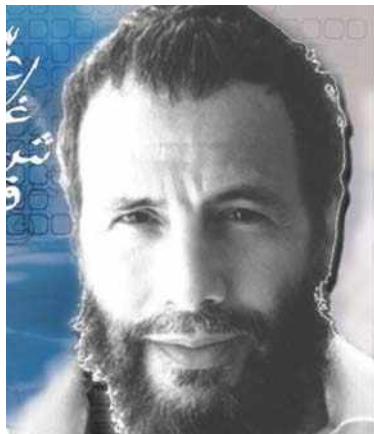
Islam: You can call me Yusuf.

Would you describe "An Other Cup" as a comeback?

Islam: Not really. I think this album carries on from where the earlier ones left off; it moves on from my earlier thoughts and songs. It's about where I am today.

You've put out this album under the name "Yusuf," but there clearly are many points of contact here with Cat Stevens. There are cover versions of some of your old songs, although in one case, you've added a de-secularizing touch by substituting the word "souls" for the earlier "girls."

Islam: That song originally was a love song. Now it's about a higher, divine love.



Yusuf Islam: "People must always be ready to face up to changes in their lives. If we don't change ourselves, life changes us."

For religious reasons, you haven't allowed yourself to make music for more than 20 years. Why the change now?

Islam: I only recently came to a decision on the question of using musical instruments, on whether or not it's allowed. Until that time, I was uncertain. There are many different opinions on this question within Islam and there's no clear doctrine. I needed time to be sure that I was doing the right thing. I believe I've found a very simple answer: Whatever does or inspires good is good; whatever does or inspires bad is bad.

Why is the album called "An Other Cup?" Why "An Other" rather than "Another?" Even your manager couldn't explain it to me.

Islam: Just a little grammatical quirk. I wanted people to understand that this album really is an other cup – not just another cup, but a different cup.

I don't understand.

Islam: The cup is also on the cover of my best-known album, "Tea for the Tillerman" from 1970, the insertion of the space is meant to show that things have changed since that time, that we live in a different world. The CD is a step in a new direction. Some people believe it to be a very courageous step to take. I'm building a bridge and trying to walk on it. Many people are afraid to step on to this bridge.

The bridge between East and West. **Islam:** Exactly. The coffee cup is also a symbol of the hidden treasures of Islamic civilization. Coffee houses, the cafés we see today on every street corner, are a Muslim invention. They had them in Istanbul in the 15th century and even earlier in Yemen. So the cup becomes a symbol for the things we share with one another.

One of the songs you sing on the album is the Nina Simone classic, "Please Don't Let Me be Misunderstood." Was covering this meant to be a comment to the press in answer to the malicious headlines that came your way?

Islam: Yes, it's a perfect fit. I'm just a soul whose intentions are good.

What is it you're thinking of when you ask in the song not to be misunderstood?

Islam: From the first day after I became a Muslim, many people saw it as a strange thing to do and they were very negative in their reactions. This is undeniable if one looks back at how the media – or certain parts of the media – have portrayed me over the years, from the very first day onward. These people had no idea what I stood for when I was Cat Stevens, so they could understand Yusuf Islam far less.

You're thinking of headlines like, "Cat says: Kill Rushdie!" that appeared in the wake of your comments...

Islam: I won't even go there! I won't even go there.

I only meant...

Islam: I wouldn't even start that.

But the song does refer to...

Islam: I would change the subject if I were you.

Didn't you already ask this question in a 1970 song? "I wish I knew, I wish I knew, what makes me me, what makes you you?"

Islam: Yes, very good, you're right. The things I've learned since then I try to express in my music.

Does that mean Cat Stevens asks the questions and Yusuf Islam provides the answers?

Islam: No, but at least I've moved on a bit since then.

How would you describe yourself today? Musician? Teacher? Cultural mediator?

Islam: I'm many things. I'm a father. I'm also a son. However, I have a biography that's been documented much more publicly than that of most other people. That is, in some ways, a gift.

It's pushed you into the role of an ambassador for Islam. You're the world's best-known convert and have to provide answers. Are you comfortable with that?

Islam: It's a great responsibility, but it's also one that suits me. All I have to do is speak about what I've done and what I think. I'm a mirror, a magnifying glass, through which Muslims can see the West and the West, Islam. However, that means I must always be pure and transparent.

A great burden.

Islam: Yes, but it seems it's been ordained for me. People must always be ready to face up to changes in their lives. If we don't change ourselves, life changes us – and therein lies the key. Everything we see in nature is in constant flux. Human beings tend to want to hold on to what they have.

That's something you always avoided as Cat Stevens. Just when the public or the music industry thought they could categorize you, you changed.

Islam: Yes, maybe. That reminds me of something very wise said by a philosopher, I think his name was Eckhart...

Meister Eckhart, a Christian mystic.

Islam: He said, "To be, you must give up what you are." I believe that to be very profound, very profound. That's more or less what I did and maybe even what I'm still doing.

What about the Muslim community, for example, the scholars who influence you – what are they saying about your return to music?

Islam: That remains to be seen, but there's something in Islam called the principle of common good. What that means is that whenever one is confronted by something that's not mentioned in the scriptures, one must observe what benefit it can bring. Does it serve the common good, does it protect the spirit and does it serve God? If the scholars see that it's something positive, they may well approve of what I'm doing.

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This interview previously was published by the Swiss magazine Das Magazin.

Hip Hop hits Sana'a



SANA'A, Dec. 9 - Capping of a two-week program of touring and training, the 12 members of Common Beats performed at the French Cultural Center before a packed house on Monday. Mohammed "Chad" (pictured above), a student at Sana'a University, said, "These things aren't welcome everywhere, but I'm not surprised this is welcomed here, I'm always encouraged when I perform."

PHOTO BY GLYN GOFFIN

Literary
Corner

By: Abu Al-Kalima Al-Tayybah

Yemeni Annals
(Hawliat Yamaniyah) (vi)

Subject Book: Yemeni Annals (Hawliat Yamaniyah) [1224 – 1316 AH (1809 – 1898 AD)]
Author: Muhsin Bin Ahmed Al-Harazi et al
Checked and Edited by: Abdullah Mohammed Al-Hibshi
Language: Arabic
Publisher: Ministry of Information and Culture
Year Published: 1400 AH/1980 AD
No. of Pages: 661

Continuing with a year by year summary of the Annals we proceed as follows:

1258 AH (1841 – 1842 AD): The Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Hamid passes away and the succeeding Sultan Abdul-Majid Abdul-Hamid takes over as Sultan. The usual tribal insurrections here and there. The people of Haraz ask the Imam to relieve them from the occupation of the Yam tribesmen (see last Local Councils, Issue 1002). Here the author relates how a slave was able to gain so much power and influence because the Imam had trusted him, but people were complaining that the slave was taking too much duties from the merchants and from the tribesmen. The slave had even made contacts with the British, so he convinced the Imam that he should send him to Aden to make some settlement with the British and they will confirm him as Imam of Aden as well. But the slave was met by tribesmen, who wanted to loot all the money and gifts he was carrying. The author said that he had emptied the treasury in Sana'a, but the Imam let him do as he pleased. The Khawlan tribesmen were able to loot all the valuables that were with the slave and his accompaniment. Thus his mission to Aden was averted. A rebellion broke out in Sana'a because of the "oppression of the slave". The Sheikh Rowaishan also occupied an outpost in Anis called Al-

Manar "and the author states, "nobody was able to drive them (Bani Dhabian-Khowlan) out from the outpost. In the meantime, the tribes around Sana'a decided to raid the city and appoint "whoever they liked as Imam". They also called Bakil to join them in the raid. The tribesmen gathered in Rawdha (6 km north of the heart of Sana'a). The attack was repulsed because the author states that Sana'a is a God protected haven. When the tribesmen tried to go over the wall of the city, "the wall would appear that it was as high as the sky." Moreover the weather was very cold outside the city, whereas in the city, according to the author no one felt any of the cold. This is punishment for trying to invade the save haven of Sana'a. This year also saw the death of the Imam after a severe illness and his nephew Ali Ibn Al-Mahdi declared himself Imam on the 19th Dhulhajjah 1259 AH (January 10, 1844)

1260 AH (1844 – 1845 AD): The new Imam sought to consolidate his rule over the tribes. But like his predecessors he was subjected to the same tribal annoyance. This is the year that the slave Fairuz, who had been a nuisance to so many people was tortured and killed for all the oppression he has meted out on so many people, thanks to the trust that the previous Imam Al-Hadi had in him. All the money he took from the Treasury was also returned. The Imam sent tribal forces to subdue Dhamar and Yarim and also sent forces to return Rayma back to the fold after it was taken by the Sharer Al-Hussein Bin Ali Hairdo.

1261 AH (1845 AD): The author states that many "heavenly and earthly miracles appeared. He states that a small planet appeared with a light that illuminated "like a rainbow". Another celestial body also disappeared. It had a green light and it blew up making a sound like a cannon. An expedition was sent out to subjugate the area of Lower

Yemen. There was a lot of corruption in this period and confusion was widespread throughout the country. The locusts appeared this year followed "by their offspring and they covered the whole country". A comet also appeared with a tail "coming from the South East and its tail extended towards the East" When the Imam changed his Minister, the author notes that the country became more stable and more areas came under the subjugation of the state. Al-Mahdi was unable to keep the Imamate for long and he realized that his nephew Mohammed Bin Yahya Al-Mansour was gaining the allegiance of the tribes and the people, to the point where Al-Mahdi realized that his opponent (who is also a relative) was getting the upper hand. He then abdicated the Imamate to Al-Mutawakkil Mohammed Bin Yahya, who declared himself Imam on the 17th Jumad Awwal 1261 AH (24th May 1845). According to the author this Imam was just and pious and tended to the needs of the people. He also freed all prisoners and called on all those who were known to be oppressors to come arresting all those whom the people complained of. This Imam had been away from Sana'a (in Mocha) for fifteen years or so. He is said to have visited Mecca and Medina and even called upon the Ottoman Sultan, who assigned him as Ruler of Yemen.

1262 AH (1846 AD): In the meantime the Imam was getting the allegiance of all the tribes and when the "Commander of the Foreigners in Aden learned of the growing power of the Imam, he requested reinforcements from India. Two thousand Indian troops came and reinforced the garrison in Aden. The Imam Al-Mutawakkil went out on expeditions throughout Yemen solidifying his hold on the country. If he called upon some Sheikhs or senior officials to come to Sana'a and they did not answer, before they knew it the Imam would be there with some of his best troops and this created a good impression among the tribes, who saw the Imam as a brave and chivalrous nobleman.

Correction: In the last issue, the last year covered in the Annals was mistakenly put as 1357 AH. Actually it should have been 1257 AH (1841 – 1842 AD).

Body LANGUAGE

Bus route gestures: Taiz roundabout

By: Nisreen Shadad

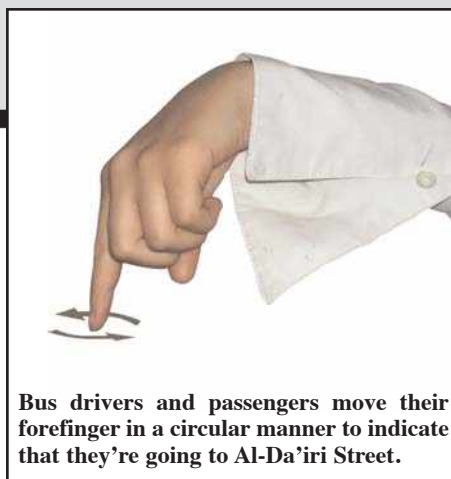
Driving a Yemeni bus and calling riders to get on is slightly problematic because buses have numerous

routes, but often use the same departure point.

In order for riders to communicate with bus drivers, Yemenis created gestures and signs that easily refer to where buses are going. In the past, illiterate men dominated as bus

drivers, so both drivers and riders needed a way to communicate with each other. Once citizens became more educated, the bus's direction was written on its front, as well as coloring certain routes red, yellow or green.

Regarding the gestures Taiz roundabout bus drivers and riders use, they move their forefinger in a circular manner to indicate that they're going to Al-Da'iri (circle) Street. "We gesture in such a way to indicate the name of the street, Al-Da'iri," bus driver Ahmed Ali Morshid explains. However, fellow bus driver Ali Abdulrahman Sa'ad disagrees, "This gesture is due to the circular roundabouts the bus driver must navigate."



Bus drivers and passengers move their forefinger in a circular manner to indicate that they're going to Al-Da'iri Street.

Nowadays, gestures to determine a bus's direction have begun disappearing because it can be recognized by the bus's sign color, as well as the name written on its front. For example, the Taiz roundabout bus route is green. Its point of departure is Al-Hadeeqa (the garden) and its last stop is the new Sana'a University.

This is the first in a series about Yemeni bus gestures.

The **Banker**

The Banker Awards 2006

National Bank of Yemen wins "Bank of the Year – Yemen Award"

National Bank of Yemen (NBY) has been awarded the prestigious "Bank of the Year-Yemen" Award for 2006 by The Banker Magazine

National Bank of Yemen has been adjudged "Bank of the Year 2006– Yemen" by The Banker Magazine, one of the most widely read and respected financial publications worldwide and is part of the UK-based Financial Times Group. The Award ceremony took place in the Dorchester Hotel, London on 30th November 2006.

Mr. Abdul Rahman Mohamed Al Kohali, Chairman of National Bank of Yemen accepted the award during The Banker Awards 2006 gala ceremony. Chairmen, CEOs, and top officials representing the banks and financial institutions from around the world attended the ceremony.

On the occasion of the award, Chairman Abdul Rahman M Al Kohali said: "Receiving The Banker Award reflects NBY's high standard of performance and competitive edge in all banking activities and practices. Such an achievement will constitute a driving force to proceed further in our development strategy to meet the needs of our customers, and confirms the confidence our customers have in us as a trusted, financial institution. NBY will continue in 2007 its bold and pioneering strategy which has positioned it as the first choice for the customers in Yemen'.

A news release by The Banker said: "National Bank of Yemen produced outstanding figures for 2005 with an impressive 48.9% growth in net income and a high RoE, rising to 24.9% from 20.9% the previous year. The good performance is attributed to excellent local resources, efficient management, excellent correspondent relations and a conservative lending policy that has resulted in improving asset quality and better results. The strong growth has continued into 2006 where net



(Middle) Abdul Rahman M. Al Kohali, Chairman of National Bank of Yemen, receiving the Bank of the Year-Yemen award. From right to left: Michael Burk, BBC Correspondent, and Brian Caplem, Editor, Banker Magazine.

profits before tax grew by 38.8% for the first six months of the year."

The statement by The Banker noted also that: "The Cyprus-based rating agency Capital Intelligence has affirmed in October 2006 that the NBY's long and short-term foreign currency ratings were –B and B respectively, while the outlook remains "stable" with financial strength at BB. These ratings reflect the improvement of the bank's overall financials, particularly profitability, asset quality and capitalization."

The Banker Awards listing provides awards in 137 countries along with eight regional awards including Global Bank of the Year. The Banker Awards also include awards in cash management and securities services, together with two corporate social responsibility commendations. Together they represent the best commercial banking performances across the globe.

Oral health is at the bottom of Yemeni priorities

Qat, shammah (tobacco placed between the lip or cheek and gum), smoking cigarettes, fluoride in water and lack of health awareness are the main factors damaging Yemeni oral health.

The Yemen Times met Dr. Khalid Al-Dhuree, head of the Mouth and Jaw Surgery Department at Dhamar University's Faculty of Dentistry, who also runs a specialized center for mouth and jaw cosmetic surgery. Al-Dhuree discussed Yemeni health culture, focusing on oral health and the role of local Yemeni habits, which lead to tooth loss.

Interviewed by: Moneer Al-Omari
alomari_mn@yahoo.com

What can you say about Yemeni health culture?

Health culture in general is absent, if nonexistent. Very few people visit doctors for regular check-ups. Yemenis are among the most ignorant worldwide regarding health. Most lack health education and don't even care. Health is the bottom priority for Yemenis. No one will visit a physician or specialist except when he falls sick. Further,

being sick won't lead Yemenis, particularly those in rural areas, to hospitals or medical centers. They'll only make such a decision when they can't move, eat, drink or go about their daily business. They'll remain in bed days or weeks awaiting recovery from above.

How do you see Yemeni culture regarding dental health?

When Yemenis don't care about health in general, in principal, they also won't care about their teeth. Some haven't used a toothbrush in their lifetime –



Tooth discoloration and staining, dental fluorosis, is common among Yemenis due to the level of fluoride in drinking water.

they don't even know what it looks like or how to use it. They won't even use siwak, which is prescribed in Islam and recommended by Mohammed (pbuh). Most of those coming to my center request pulling their bad teeth and don't know anything about cleaning, filling or other techniques nowadays.

Most Yemenis don't bother about their dental health. Further, they don't take any trouble to learn about it or how to protect their teeth. If it only regarded food and drink, the matter would be easy and there would be few problems. Besides the usual habits of eating and drinking, most Yemenis – especially those in the countryside – chew qat for many hours together with cigarettes and shammah.

If a bad tooth hurts, most won't seek a doctor's help, but will try to pull it themselves. If they fail, they'll go to traditional medicine practitioners to extract it using unclean dental tools, which causes many future problems, such as bleeding gums.

They sometimes will pull more than one tooth, caring little about problems that may arise in the future regarding teeth and gums, etc. Lacking the required education, most rural Yemenis pull their teeth whenever they hurt, not knowing anything about filling or treating teeth. They think about their teeth only after they pull all of them and have difficulty eating food or chewing qat, at which point they begin considering dentures.

Describe the effects of shammah, qat and smoking on teeth.

Shammah is one of the primary causes of mouth cancer, as scientifically proven by a Yemeni doctoral student in Germany, who discovered a direct correlation between mouth cancer and using shammah.

Because it's treated with chemical fertilizers, qat causes cancer and further leads to gum erosion, formation of abscesses in the gums and causes problems in the temporomandibular joint from chewing it for long hours.

Irrespective of the smoking effects everyone knows, smoking also causes mouth and tongue cancer.

When combined, using shammah, smoking cigarettes and chewing qat can lead to bad breath and teeth staining.

Do you think Yemen's drinking water has something to do with teeth staining or any other dental problems?

Yemeni drinking water is polluted and has a high percentage of fluoride and salts, which cause Dental Fluorosis and teeth staining, along with other dental problems.

What's your opinion of siwak?

I recommend it because it's been proven that siwak contains bacteria-killing materials, prevents gum inflammation and makes the mouth smell good.

If not apprehended, what effect can dental problems have on the body's other systems?

If not treated, tooth and gum problems can lead to cancer and affect other systems. Further, they can affect victims psychologically. The mouth is the outer gate to the body. Those with stained teeth often are prevented from laughing, which leads them to introversion. Tooth loss can cause indigestion and subsequently, malnutrition and physical weakness. Dental problems would be hazardous to those Medically Compromised Patients.

How do you evaluate the recent Ministry of Health workshop involving dentistry and mouth and jaw surgery?



Shammah is one of the primary causes of mouth cancer in Yemen.

I believe dental problems will be around as long as qat, shammah and cigarettes exist and the health culture is so weak. However, I pin my hopes on the Nov. 15-16 Ministry of Health workshop, which involved dentists nationwide.

The workshop aimed to establish a dentistry strategy wherein the Ministry of Health will have a specialized dentistry sector with a private budget.

Recommendations involved collaboration between the Health, Higher Education and Education Ministries. The Health Ministry was asked to upgrade dentistry and allocate a special budget for it, while the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was requested to allocate more scholarships for specialists in dental preventive medicine. Further, the

Ministry of Education was asked to include instructional materials on dentistry in schools.

Do you have any final comments?

I implore Yemenis and your readers to give up smoking, chewing qat and using shammah.

Further, they must clean their teeth with a toothbrush and toothpaste three times a day. If there's no toothpaste or toothbrush, they can use siwak, as prescribed in Islam. Finally, they must visit a dental specialist every six months to ensure that there are no problems.

I ask parents to provide more care for their children's teeth and observe their growing up so doctors may intervene at the proper time. They also must help their children get used to a toothbrush and toothpaste because, "Prevention is worth more than cure."

Yemeni dams and their opportunity costs

By: Dr. Gerhard Lichtenthaeler

The village children had waited eagerly for the onset of the rainy season. When the floods finally arrived during August 2006, the newly constructed dam filled rapidly.

Mohammed and many of the village boys were pleased because the dam presented a wonderful opportunity to splash in the water. "Al-hamdulillah, no accidents have happened yet," Salih remarked.

Like many of the area's farmers, he put high hopes in the small dam, which took nearly two years to complete. "It really is strange," he says, "Those with wells just downstream and in the area of the dam haven't noticed any recharge yet. But a few well owners from other villages several kilometers away report that the drop in groundwater levels has slowed."

During a November 2006 site visit,



In 2005 the dam was filled with water.

only a few small portable petrol pumps were pumping water from the dam to irrigate the surrounding fields. "Why

aren't more farmers utilizing the water?" I asked. "Most of us have our own well, so there's no need," Salih replied.

Having been completed in 2005, the dam in question was empty in July 2006 when photographed. Following the 2006 summer rainy season, the dam (measuring 120 x 60 x 3 meters deep) contained approximately 20,000 cubic meters on Oct. 17 (see photo).

To locals from the nearby village, the 2006 rains were good and in their perception, the dam had filled to promising levels.

In comparison to the 20,000 cubic meters of water in the dam after the main rainy season in 2006, a single pump in the same basin can pump approximately three times as much groundwater per year, or approximately 60,000 cubic meters. This figure is based on a well yield of six liters per second, pumping 12 hours a day and a total of 240 days per year during growing seasons.

Granted that irrigation efficiency measures provide water savings of 30 percent or more, the same amount of water that was stored in the dam could be

saved annually by a single pump, which usually irrigates up to five hectares of land. According to a recent well assessment for 2006, the agricultural plain where the dam is constructed has 1,500 wells and 2,600 wells in the basin's catchment.

While the cost to equip one pump and the land irrigated by it with a modern on-farm irrigation scheme comes to approximately US\$7,000-US\$10,000, the dam cost YR 89.5 million, or nearly half a million U.S. dollars.

Therefore, for the price of this small dam, 50 pumps irrigating approximately 250 hectares of land could be transformed into modern irrigation schemes, thus saving 50 times the amount of water the dam had stored at the end of the 2006 rainy season. Given that average landholdings in the basin's



In 2006 the dam was not providing any water.

agricultural plain are two hectares or less, 125 farming families or more would directly benefit.

Dr. Gerhard Lichtenthaeler works for the German Development Cooperation, in support of the Ministry of Water and Environment and the National Water Resources Authority. The views expressed here are his own.

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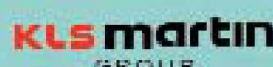
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Wool spinning: A vanishing handcraft

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

“**H**aving inherited the craft from our fathers, we're called 'handcrafters' because we spinning wool into clothes, mattresses and shopping bags,” wool spinner Abdullah Ali Al-Jawfi says from his workshop in the Old City of Sana'a.

“Following the advent of modern textile and carpet factories, all but a few dispensed with our products. In the past, people ordered every type of wool clothing from us, but the situation now has changed and we've become street vendors selling our products on the streets,” he adds.

“Handcrafters”

In ancient Yemen, the term “hand-crafter” was given to those who collected wool, spun it and made things from it to sell to others. Thus, society treated them rather as low-class Yemenis, called “dawashin” (beggars) and “mazamerah” (musicians/drummers). “Nobody will allow his daughter to marry a handcrafter, nor will any man marry a handcrafter's daughter,” Al-Jawfi clarified.

Describing their work, he says, “We collect sheep's wool, purify it of stains and then spin it and transform it into clothing.” He further explained how wool is spun, saying that spinners first craft a 50 cm.-long stick with a noose on one end and a pin-shaped iron piece to wrap the wool during the spinning process.

“The iron piece is moved to the right as we continue spinning the wool strands by hand, transforming them into various-sized bundles. Afterward, we collect the wool and make dresses of various sizes and shapes,” Al-Jawfi continued.

“We produce sleeveless wool overcoats worn over thobes, fardahs (rough

textured mats similar to blankets) to put on mattresses and shopping bags called ‘shamlah’,” he noted, “We also make ‘gherara’ (a large sack for grain and hay), in addition to other similar articles mostly favored by farmers and locals living in rural areas.”

Despite the fact that the craft is quite old, wool spinning is expected to vanish. Most people whose fathers were spinners now have stopped spinning for many reasons, one of which is low revenues. Spinners complain that they don't make enough money to purchase raw materials required or sustain their families.

“Many people gave up this handicraft and sought other work as the number of customers buying wool clothes decreased. Another reason is related to the advent of modern garment industries, which produce large quantities of clothes at little cost and energy,” Al-Jawfi concludes.

From sheep to sleep

“We raise and tame sheep and then shear their wool. Because they know we need wool, some people shear their sheep and give the wool to us,” says Ali Saleh Al-Miqyadhi, another wool spinner who has remained in the industry.

Craftsman Naser Sa'ad Al-Sane'e explains, “Some of us raise local sheep and shear their wool in the winter to spin and transform it into useful items, especially bedding mattresses. Due to the profession's deterioration, we have no benefactors to fund us. Meanwhile, the number of clients decreased because of the availability of alternative modern garments.”

“No one comes to buy from us except a few elderly people living in rural areas because they're accustomed to wearing our traditional products,” he adds.

Regarding whether they receive any type of support, Al-Miqyadhi replied, “We receive no funds, which is why we



A fardah overcoat made of sheep wool to be worn over a thobe.

still use our outdated wooden tools. This village is named Al-Miqyadha because all of its people are handcrafters. But for the time being, only a few of us still are pursuing the craft.”

According to Al-Miqyadhi, some items such as fardahs, yalaq (vest), gherara (jacket), shamlah and za'al strands (used for mats) are priced at YR 3,000, 1,500, 2,000, 3,000 and 5,000 respectively.

He notes, “We have no regular clients. People only buy a little of what we produce to have them as antiques on the walls of their homes.” Al-Miqyadhi adds that women help collect wool, as well as assist in spinning and weaving. “We face several difficulties due to wool shortage and very few clients, coupled with a lack of attention toward the handicraft,” he says.

Asked how many pursue the vocation, Al-Sane'e responded, “We were a family of craftsmen and each one of us learned how to exercise this handicraft. But now, only the elderly pursue the handicraft because they stay at home while we go out in search of other sources of income.”

Women spin too

According to Al-Sane'e, women also spin. He says women usually collect the wool, purify it of stains and transform it into string. However, he complained that they encounter difficulties finding sheep wool and that every single fardah costs them YR 3,000 to produce and requires an entire month to collect wool and transform it into a fardah.

Saleh Ali Hizam, the oldest among the spinners, indicates that women usually cut the wool, purify it from stains and spin it into strands during their leisure time.

“We collect wool from those with sheep. Sometimes, we also buy wool from butchers who slaughter sheep and then spin it into clothing. We receive no funds from other parties,” Hizam explains, “Many of us spin wool and transform it into clothing for themselves after the number of buyers decreased due to the spread of modern garments.”

“Each spinner makes an average of YR 10,000 per month. Residents and farmers in rural areas buy some of our products, using them as bags for grain, crops and hay,” Hizam notes, “We face difficulties associated with wool short-



A “handcrafter” displays some of the wool products he has for sale on the street.

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