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PARTIES DIVIDED OVER MARCHES

Al-Dostour Party announced they will not take part in the marches to the presidential palace

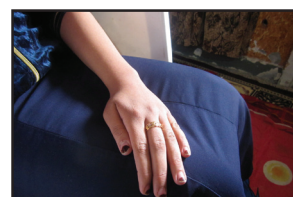
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From Tahrir to the palace gates

PROTESTERS MASS AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE

MORE GROUPS JOIN TAHRIR SQUARE SIT-IN

By Basil El-Dabbh

As the sun set in Cairo, tens of thousands of protesters massed against neat rows of state security officers in Heliopolis. The officers were part of a contingent blocking roads in the upscale Cairo neighbourhood, which hosted the destination of the protesters' marches: the Presidential Palace.

Marches left from Ain Shams, Matarya, and Hegaz Square and convened at Raba'a Al-Adaweya. From there they continued to Al-Tayaran Street and Salah Salem Street where they met marches from Al-Fatah Mosque and Al-Nour Mosque.

"We're going to the Presidential Palace so he pays attention to us," said Khaled Abdelsalem, who held a sign for No Military Trials in the Raba'a Al-Adaweya march. Abdelsalem said President Mohamed Morsy keeps ignoring the opposition, instead only listening to his own supporters as they gather in Heliopolis and outside Cairo University. "We're going to the palace so there is no way he can ignore us."

The Nasr City march had heavy representation from Hamdeen Sabahy's Popular Current. The protesters chanted "bread, freedom, and cessation of the Constituent Assembly," as they waved Egyptian flags and a banner with the image of Gaber Saleh Gaber, a young man killed in recent protests.

The marchers levelled accusations of illegitimacy at the Muslim Brotherhood's supreme guide, President Morsy and the upcoming referendum.

Ahmed Mayel, who held a sign reading No to the Constitution, said,

"the president keeps saying 'they're a minority, they're a minority.' Well, we're going to show him how big this minority is. We're going somewhere where he'll hear our voices."

Protesters broke through barbed wire barricades to reach the palace. Security forces withdrew firing tear-gas canisters, which protesters threw over the palace walls.

By Fady Salah

Professional syndicates and political groups marched to Tahrir Square on Tuesday afternoon to

join the sit-in that has been in the square for nearly 10 days.

The groups marched in protest against President Mohamed Morsy's constitutional declaration

and his call for a referendum on the proposed constitution.

A march leaving Shubra met up with another at Talaat Harb before converging with marches from Mohandeseen and the Cairo Opera House.

Yehia Kalash, marching with the Press Syndicate, is spokesperson for the National Committee for the Defence of Expression and Creativity. He said the articles dealing with freedom of expression and rights of journalists in the proposed constitution are "catastrophic."

Egyptian Communist Party member Sayed Fouad was injured during the revolution and said he has spent the past 10 days in Tahrir calling for the cancellation of the "dictator declaration." He added that his party would be marching towards the Presidential Palace on Tuesday night.

Other political parties chose not to march to the Presidential Palace. Al-Dostour Party made a statement on Monday night to the effect that they would march to Tahrir instead. The Popular Current favoured the escalation of a march to the Presidential Palace.

Deputy Secretary General of Al-Tagamo' Party Mohamed Saeed, who participated in a joint march alongside the Popular Current, said his party had yet to decide whether they were going to the Presidential Palace or not. "Unity is very important. We will wait for a decision from the National Rescue Front."



Demonstrators push up against the police line in front of the presidential palace while protesting against the draft constitution and referendum process

Hassan Ibrahim/DNE

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Former Constituent Assembly members speak out

Former members explain the reasons behind their withdrawal



Former members of the Constituent Assembly hold a press conference explaining their reasons for leaving the group

By Hend Kortam

Former members of the Constituent Assembly say that administrative issues within the assembly were part of the reason they withdrew.

In a Tuesday conference they explained why they withdrew from the assembly and how they feel about the draft constitution. Among the speakers at the conference were Hamdi Qandil, Hassan Naf'e, and

Salah Fadl who were all members of the 10 member technical advisory committee.

Amr Moussa, former presidential candidate, started the conference explaining that his decision to withdraw from the assembly was not a political decision but it was because of disagreements over certain texts in the constitution, and administration problems. Many speakers shared the same feelings, saying that some ar-

ticles were changed after consensus had been reached.

Hassan Naf'e, spoke about the problems he faced working in the technical advisory committee. He said that eight out of 10 of the advisory committee decided to withdraw because the committee's position is not the same as the position of political parties, which make ideological calculations.

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Currencies	Buy	Sell	Egyptian Stock Exchange		
			Closing	Daily Change	
CHF	6.4793	6.7921	EGX 30	4,991.59	3.46%
USD	6.105	6.135	EGX 70	442.90	2.75%
EUR	7.8626	8.2421	EGX 100	740.75	3.18%
GBP	9.6924	10.1603	EGX 20	5,707.78	3.08%
SAR	1.619	1.6393			

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Parties divided over marches

SOME POLITICAL GROUPS PREFER TO REMAIN IN TAHRIR, OTHERS HEAD TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE

By Rana Muhammad Taha

Opposition parties are united in protest at the constitutional referendum and declaration, but are torn over protest strategy.

Al-Doustour Party announced Monday night that they will not take part in the Tuesday marches to the presidential palace.

Protesters marched to the presidential palace Tuesday evening demanding the revocation of the constitutional declaration issued by President Mohamed Morsy as well as his decision to put the draft constitution to a referendum on 15 December.

"We are organising official marches to Tahrir Square," said Ahmed Al-Hawary, a member of the steering committee in Al-Doustour Party. Conflicting reports about Al-Doustour's participation circulated before the march.

Al-Doustour is wary that the Muslim Brotherhood could rally protesters and occupy Tahrir Square while the opposition march to the presidential palace. "We do not want the square to be empty," Al-Hawary said, justifying the party's decision.

The party said its members were free to take part in the marches to the presidential palace in an unofficial capacity.

"All student members of Al-Doustour Party are marching to the Presidential Palace," Mustafa Fouad, student member of the party, said before joining the march. Fouad said



Mohamed Omar

People rally at Tahrir Square during the day with some intending to join the marches to the presidential palace

marching to the presidential palace is a necessary escalation since the authorities are turning a deaf ear to protesters' demands.

"The march leaves Ain Shams University at 2.30 pm," Fouad said, adding that two other student marches, from Cairo University and Helwan University, would join with the Ain Shams University march; all would head to the presidential palace. He said student members of other parties are also marching to the palace; such as the Popular Current and the Egyptian Social Democratic Party. All parties are members in the National Rescue Front (NRF), established to unite all non-Islamist forces against Morsy's latest decisions.

"The Popular Current is taking part in the marches to the presidential palace as a form of escalation," said Hossam Mo'ness, founding member of the Popular Current. He added that the Popular Current would also participate in the marches heading to Tahrir Square "to maintain the rally in the square."

The Strong Egypt Party announced it would not take part in any marches to the presidential palace.

"The marches to the palace have been called for by the NRF," Ahmed Samir, media coordinator of the Strong Egypt Party, said. "We are not part of the NRF; thus, we aren't taking part."

Strong Egypt Party was instead remaining in Tahrir Square. "We've been in the square since last Friday," Samir said.

Opposition movements started a sit-in in Tahrir Square on 23 November, after Morsy issued a constitutional declaration which granted him sweeping new powers. The sit-in continued amid the finalisation of the draft constitution by the Constituent Assembly. The sit-in participants reject the draft constitution, claiming that it lacks equal representation for different Egyptian factions. They, in turn, oppose Morsy's decision to issue a referendum on the draft constitution.

Qandil speaks to America

PM talks about constitution and situation on the ground

By Connor Molloy

Prime Minister Hesham Qandil has called the draft constitution, "good enough... in no way a perfect text."

In an interview broadcast on American news network CNN he attributed the recent turmoil in Egypt to what he called a typical reaction before an important political milestone when, "people from both sides will want to have their voices heard."

While the prime minister said he was worried for people's safety, he also stated, "this is new Egypt where the police protect the people while they are doing peaceful demonstrations."

This is not something that sat well with Asma Al-Gredley who has volunteered in makeshift hospitals during clashes in Downtown Cairo. "I saw my friend Gaber [Saleh Gaber] get killed by police fire."

When asked about the trepidation that has been caused by President Mohamed Morsy's constitutional declaration, Qandil said not to worry because the president's new powers "will fall immediately after the referendum."

Ahmed Khairy, the spokesman for the Free Egyptian Party, said, "with all due respect to Prime Minister Hesham Qandil, we disagree. The president now has a full authority. He has legislative authority, execu-

tive authority, and at the same time the judiciary is now totally frozen. I don't know how he got an idea that there is no problem."

While Qandil made sure to point out that the future of Egypt is now in the hands of the voters, Khairy countered by saying that Egyptians have been put between a rock and a hard place. "It's a dirty game. They put the Egyptian people between two choices: accept the draft or accept the constitutional declaration. When President Mohamed Morsy says all the time that there is no problem with his power because it will just be a few weeks, he operates under the assumption that the constitution will pass. What if the people refuse? What will happen? This is a very important question."

The CNN interview was conducted by Christiane Amanpour, an Iranian-British anchor who has made a career reporting on the Muslim world. Throughout the interview she aggressively went after the prime minister, at one point posing the question, "what about people who are afraid that this is a masquerade for Islamism to rule Egypt?"

Qandil responded that Al-Azhar, a seat of Islamic learning in Cairo, will merely serve in a "consultative role." When pressed, Qandil was not able to clearly define what that role would entail.

Grand Imam plans to end polarisation

Methodology of undertaking unclear

Ahmed El-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar, is forming a coalition with the aim of ending polarisation in Egypt.

"Al-Azhar is doing this because it is our duty," said Mohamed Mostafa Game'a, the media manager for Al-Azhar, the country's most influential seat of Islamic thinking. "Al-Azhar is the home of patriotism and open to everyone from all ideologies."

On Monday the Imam met with Hossam El-Gheriany, chairman of the Constituent Assembly, and Mohamed Selim El-Awa, the former presidential candidate and current presidential advisor. Senior Al-Azhar advisers were also present as the group discussed ways to resolve the current divisions plaguing society

and political progress, according to Ikhwan online.

"The aim is to bring everyone together and end the rifts between the people," said Game'a.

The exact methodology is unclear, and so far the participants in the dialogue all seem to be from one side of the current societal schism between those favouring a religious presence in the constitution and those wishing to see religion and the law kept apart.

"Meetings are still going so we don't have a plan of action yet," said Game'a, adding that they will be coming up with a plan of action soon.

Their timeline is a short one as a referendum on the highly controversial constitution is less than two weeks away.

Overseas Egyptians to vote

By Basil El-Dabh

Egyptians living overseas will be able to participate in the upcoming constitutional referendum. The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs outlined the process in which Egyptians will be able to cast ballots via embassies and consulates.

Overseas voting will take place from 8 to 11 December. According to a statement from the ministry, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Amr decided to extend the working hours of Egypt's consulates to twelve-hour shifts on those days, from 8am to 8pm in order to "allow the largest possible number of overseas citizens to participate in the polling."

For those unable to cast ballots in person at the consulates, the Supreme Elections Commission (SEC) will provide a printable

version of the ballot that Egyptian citizens will be able to download, fill out and mail to the consulates. Voters must include a copy of their Egyptian ID cards and proof of residence in the country from which they are voting.

Egyptians who were unregistered in prior elections will be ineligible to vote in the referendum. The Foreign Ministry cited the 11-day window between President Mohamed Morsy's announcement and the deadline for overseas voting as the reason that registration for new voters will not take place.

The SEC also cited a clause in the elections law that prohibits the amendment of voter lists after the announcement of a referendum is made.

Egyptians living abroad participated in both parliamentary and presidential elections through similar processes, although registration was permitted.

More groups join Tahrir sit-in

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Mohamed Abdallah Nasr, an Al-Azhar Sheikh and member of the group Azharians for a civil state said, "we are sitting here until Morsy leaves and tyranny goes away." Marina Tarek, a Copt, said she is participating in the protest because she dreams of a better future for his children. "I suffered from discrimination as a Copt and as a woman. I don't want this for my children." Tarek said she comes to Tahrir every day after work, and leaves at 11 pm.

Ahmed Hassan Shehate, a retired military officer, said he is in Tahrir because Sinai is in great danger; "we have shed blood for Sinai, and we won't surrender as Morsy is granting Sinai to his fellows in Gaza."

There are the unaffiliated citizens who are marching because they be-

lieve their lives will be changed by recent political events.

Ahmed Mohamed, a farmer from Al-Gharbiya, said that he is participating in a protest for the first time in his life because Morsy turned out not to be a president for all Egyptians. "I voted for Morsy and I regret it. He promised to buy our rice crops for EGP 2,000 but he didn't. He said he would cancel our debts but he didn't. He said he would be president for everyone and he isn't."

Rania El-Masry, a tour guide, said she lost her job after the revolution but was patient in hope for freedom and a better life. "Now we have no jobs, no freedom, and no life. I have never participated in any protest or march before. But now that we have nothing, I should definitely protest."

There were also marches in Al-Exandria, Suez, Mahala and Sharm El-Sheikh.

The 85 people deciding the fate of Egypt

Who are the 85 constituent assembly members who voted on the draft constitution?

By Fady Salah

Representing 82 million Egyptians, 85 members of the Constituent Assembly voted on the proposed constitution, scheduled for referendum on 15 December.

The Constituent Assembly has been criticised for not adequately representing different sectors of society. Many members withdrew from the assembly, including church representatives and non-Islamists, in opposition to the way the constitution was drafted. The withdrawing members claimed Islamist members abused their majority to draft constitutional articles that served only their interests.

Media also criticised the draft, saying it limits the freedom of expression and imposes censorship.

The following is a brief background of the 85 constituent assembly members who voted on the draft constitution:

Freedom and Justice Party and Muslim Brotherhood:

Out of the 85 members, 34 are from the Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party, its political wing. Essam El-Erian, Mohamed

El-Beltagy, Mahmoud Ghazlan and Sobhi Saleh are among the most well-known in this group. Osama Yassen, minister of youth, and Khaled Mahmoud El-Azhary, minister of labour and immigration, are also members of the FJP and the assembly.

Salafis:

Nineteen Salafi members voted on the draft, including Emad Abdel Ghafor, president of Al-Nour Party, and Nader Bakkar, the party spokesperson.

A representative of the revolutionary youth also came from the Salafi bloc. Mohamed Saad El-Azhary, a member of Al-Nour Party and the Salafi Calling, was injured on 28 January 2011 during the uprising.

Wageeh Abdel Qader El-Sheemy, the first blind MP and member of Al-Nour party, represented people with disabilities in the assembly.

Al-Wasat Party:

The president of Al-Wasat party, Aboul Ella Mady, its Vice-President, Essam Sultan, and Minister of Parliamentary Councils and Judicial Affairs, Mohamed Mahsoub, represented the Islamist party. Eman Qandil, the deputy secretary general of the party, attended the voting session to fill the



Hassan Ibrahim

The constituent assembly in session (File photo)

gap left by one of the withdrawing members.

Hadara Party:

The Hadara Party, which formed a coalition with FJP before the 2011 parliamentary elections, was represented by party president Mohamed El-Sawy and Hatem Azzam, the vice-president.

Independents:

Five independent members participated in the vote: Islamic thinker and

lawyer Mohamed Seleem El-Awwa, Islamic professor Mohamed Emara, political science professor Moataz Bellah Abdel Fattah, and theology professors Daoud El-Baz and Zaki Zidan.

Al-Azhar:

Osama El-Abd, president of Al-Azhar party and four other members, represented Al-Azhar in the assembly.

Public figures and civil groups:

Three members of Ghad Al-Thawra liberal party participated in the

vote, including party president Abdel Moneim El-Tunsi. Abdel Fattah Khatib, president of the coalition for tourism workers and deputy secretary general of the Egypt workers' union also voted.

Coptic law professor Gamal Gabriel was the only Christian in the assembly.

Head of Doctors Union Mohamed Khairy and constitutional law professor Atef El-Banna also participated.

Vice-President of the Court of Appeal, Chancellor Mohamed Nagy Derbala, and Mohamed Abdel Hameed El-Fegy, a member of Al-Wafd party, rounded out the assembly's public figures.

Judicial representatives:

Four chancellors represented the different judicial bodies.

Chancellor Hossam El-Gheriany, former president of Supreme Judicial Council, represented the Court of Cassation and headed the Constituent Assembly throughout its sessions.

Chancellor Taimor Fawzy Mostafa, president of the Administrative Prosecution Authority, represented the body in the assembly.

Chancellor Maged Shebetta represented the State Council, while Chan-

cellor Ahmed Khalifa represented the State Litigation Authority.

Ministry of Interior:

The only representative of the Ministry of Interior was Emad Hussein, Morsy's adviser for national security and assistant to the minister of interior.

Armed Forces:

Major General Mamdouh Shahin, assistant to the minister of defence for constitutional and legal affairs, and Chancellor Mohamed Magd El-Deen Barakat, head of military prosecution, represented the armed forces in the assembly.

Women:

Five women voted in the assembly. Four female FJP members were members of the assembly: Omayma Kamel, a member of Morsy's advisory committee; Hoda Ghaneya; Amany Aboul Fadi; and Azza El-Garf.

Eman Qandil from Al-Wasat Islamist party was the only woman represented from outside the FJP.

Students:

Ahmed Omar, a member of FJP and head of Egypt Students' Union, represented students in the assembly.





POLITICS

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Chaos in State Council as court postpones decree decision

By Ahmed About Enein

Judge Farid Tanagho had to adjourn a Tuesday court session three times as Muslim Brotherhood supporters interrupted proceedings with chants for President Mohamed Morsy and against his detractors.

The Administrative Judiciary Court at the State Council postponed cases calling for the cancellation of Morsy's 22 November constitutional decree and his call for a 15 December referendum on the draft constitution to Wednesday 5 December.

Supporters of the president filled the court hall, repeatedly interrupting plaintiff lawyers and chanting against the opposition and occasionally the judicial bench as well.

"Oh what a shame, the [remnants of the previous regime] are now revolutionaries," chanted Morsy's supporters as Muslim Brotherhood lawyers spoke over the plaintiffs, forcing Tanagho to adjourn five minutes into the session.

When the trial resumed again after 30 minutes, plaintiff Shehata Mohamed Shehata argued that the president does not have the right to issue constitutional decrees, a power he said was reserved only for "founding authorities such as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces."

The president, Shehata said, was an executive authority and as such could not issue constitutional decrees.

Muslim Brotherhood lawyer Abdel Moniem Abdel Maqsooud demanded



Mohamed Omar

In a fraught atmosphere the State Council postponed judgement on President Morsy's constitutional decree

the bench recuse "since the court already expressed its opinion on the decree in public."

The State Council, among several other judicial bodies such as the Cassation Court and Supreme Constitutional Court have all announced their rejection of Morsy's decree.

The court adjourned the session again for deliberation while lawyers and supporters on both sides stood on benches exchanging chants and insults.

"Down with the Supreme Guide's rule," chanted opposition lawyers while Morsy supporters shouted back, "power, will, faith, Morsy is firing on all cylinders."

Police forces in the hall finally interfered, separating both sides and getting

everyone to stop standing on benches before forming two lines on either side of the hall's middle pathway to block anyone from standing there.

The judges returned for a second time and postponed both sets of cases to the next day, for plaintiffs and the defence to hand in files and memos and also to consider the Brotherhood's recusal request.

Brotherhood supporters were pleased with the postponement while opposition lawyers were outraged. "Free revolutionaries support Morsy's decision," chanted Brotherhood supporters to which the opposition replied, "The people demand the fall of the regime."

Morsy's 22 November constitu-

tional decree gave him sweeping new powers including the protection of the Constituent Assembly tasked with drafting the new constitution and the Shura Council, parliament's upper house, from court dissolutions.

The decree also says that all of Morsy's decisions cannot be challenged in the courts but he later said that provision would only apply to "sovereign acts."

The State Council was among many judicial bodies to reject the decree and announce a strike. It said it would close down all its courts except the first district of the Administrative Judiciary Court, as it would be responsible for handling cases against the decree.

EU concerned by Morsy's decree

Cutting aid to Egypt not an option

By Joel Gulhane

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have voiced concern over President Mohamed Morsy's constitutional declaration. The MEPs discussed EU aid to Egypt, stressing that it has conditions attached but that cutting it all together was not an option.

The European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs held a special debate on Monday, entitled Situation in Egypt.

Some MEPs proposed cutting aid to Egypt during the meeting. European Union Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean Region, Bernardino Léon, stressed that "all EU aid to Egypt is subject to conditionality." He added however that cutting aid entirely "is not an option."

A statement released on Tuesday said "many MEPs expressed worries about the sweeping new powers that a recent presidential decree conferred on President Morsy."

The committee vice-chair Andrey Kovatchev said, "there are serious concerns about the constitutional declaration... which goes against the democratic principles of checks and balances and the rule of law." He added, "[the declaration] paralyses judicial control and converses unlimited powers to president Morsy"

Léon said during the meeting, "in the last two weeks we have seen

a deepening political divide." He also described Morsy's decree as a "mistake."

He reported that he and other EU representatives have had "very close contact with the most important political actors; the presidency, the foreign ministry, important political parties and representatives from civil society groups." He called for the creation of a consensus between "all political forces," and an agreement to be reached with the judiciary "to avoid an institutional clash."

Regarding Egypt's draft constitution and the upcoming referendum, Léon highlighted the need to "put the drafting and referendum process back on the right path... and result in a constitution that enshrines human rights, equality and dignity for all."

Léon referenced the EU-Egypt task force recently set up to enhance bi-lateral relations, saying it was "based on promotion of peace, stability, prosperity and the overarching values of respect for social justice." Also included in the EU-Egypt task-force fact sheet are five articles on human rights, governance and civil society.

"The answer at the moment is more Europe in Egypt, more involvement, more engagement and more work," Léon concluded.

The meeting followed statements made by the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz, who accused Morsy of staging a coup.

Former Constituent Assembly members speak out

Continued from page 1

"Despite the different schools of thought, we discussed each article and managed to reach phrasing which we all approved of..." Nafe said. He also said they were handed a new draft almost every day and they did not know who was making the changes.

Nafe said that the final decision on the content was actually decided by a handful of people.

Waheed Abdel-Meguid, who was the spokesperson of the assembly, said things were going well in until mid-September when it became obvious that the People's Assembly would not be reinstated. Abdel-Meguid said that at that point, it turned into an election campaign by a few groups.

Some experts criticised the draft. Soad Kamel spoke about the economic and social rights addressed in the constitution and said that generally the phrasing of some articles related to these rights is fluid and unregulated. Kamel specifically mentioned Article 33, one of the most controversial articles. It states that all citizens are equal before the law and equal in terms of rights and duties and there is no discrimination between them. "The part that says that there will be no discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, language, or religion was removed," Kamel said.

Suzi Adly also spoke about women and children. She criticised Article 73 of the draft, which fails to ban human trafficking and was concerned that the draft does not address child labour.

Hamdi Qandil spoke about the freedom of the press in the draft constitution. While the constitution states that the press is free, it is free within the requirements of national security. Qandil called on everyone to vote "No" to the draft constitution in the 15 December referendum.

Finally, Mohamed Abdel-Qader, head of the Farmers' Syndicate, said that the only commitment he wanted from the state was the provision of arable land. "How are we going to eat?" he cried.

Abdel-Qader said that during discussions in the first four and a half months he was hopeful the constitution would be excellent, but the final document turned out to be very different.

Referendum widens rift among judges

Judges are torn between judicial independence and national duty

By Nouran El-Behairy

Despite the agreement of judicial bodies to supervise the constitutional referendum, judges can refuse to participate, leading to uncertainty over the referendum.

Judicial bodies like the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), the State Council, Administrative Prosecution and State Litigation Authority agreed to delegate judges and prosecutors to supervise the referendum scheduled for 15 December.

On Sunday, the Judges' club announced their refusal to supervise the referendum in response to President Mohamed Morsy's recent constitutional declaration.

They called the referendum "null and void" because of the declaration that, they say, represents a blatant assault on the independence of the judiciary

President Morsy issued a constitutional declaration on 22 November that protects his decisions from judicial review. He also removed former Prosecutor General Abdel Meguid Mahmoud and replaced him with Tala'at Abdallah.

"Supervising the referendum is not obligatory; they can refuse without any penalties" said Judge Tamer Kamal from Bani Suef Court of Appeals.



Hassan Ibrahim

Demonstrators march from Rabaa Al-Adawaya mosque towards the presidential palace to protest against the draft constitution and referendum process

He said that delegating judges required the agreement of three parties, the SJC, the judge and the general assembly of the court to which the judge belongs.

"If a majority of judges boycott the referendum, Morsy can release another declaration assigning another body to oversee it... the situation is already far from being legal" said a public relations official at the judges'

club who refused to reveal his name.

"Judges are paid huge amounts of money in return for supervising the referendum, which makes it hard to convince some of them not to" he added.

The allowance a judge receives for supervising the referendum has reportedly been increased to EGP 20,000, but the Ministry of Justice could not be reached for confirmation.

The official said that if Morsy were

to annul the constitutional declaration, the judges club would oversee the referendum.

Head of judges' club Ahmed Al-Zend held a press conference on Tuesday concerning the club's decision to boycott the referendum.

"Those who say 50 per cent of judges agreed to supervise referendum are liars" said Counsellor Ahmed Al-Zend,

He added that he had expected the Minister of Justice Ahmed Mekki to condemn the interference of executive authority in the judiciary, "but instead [Mekki] is supporting it."

Al-Zend said that judges face pressures from court heads and other judges to take part in the referendum.

"If all members of any given court agree to supervise the referendum, then I should resign, as I would have lied to you all" Al-Zend said.

Head of media committee of the State Litigation Authority Samir Al-Kamash said that he supported supervising the referendum because it is a "national duty."

"We conducted a poll among judges of the State Litigation Authority Club and the majority was for participating in the referendum" he said.

Al-Kamash added that one judge could supervise two ballot boxes if there were not enough judges to go around.

Mohamed Salem, deputy chairman of the Court of Cassation said Morsy is the only one who can end the current rift, if he reaches out to judges.

"Officials are hurting the reputation of judges everyday in the media; instead of honouring our judges we humiliate them... judges should not interfere in elections, let the state find another body to supervise it. Enough humiliation" he said.

International commentary on constitutional crisis

Commentators analyse both sides of the debate

By Joel Gulhane

With protesters marching from Tahrir square to the presidential palace on Tuesday night, Daily News Egypt takes a look at the international reaction to President Mohamed Morsy's declaration and the draft constitution.

Omar Ashour, Director of Middle East Graduate Studies at Exeter University analyses Morsy's position following his decree. In an article entitled Egypt's Democratic Dictator? Ashour states "Morsy has thus been put in the odd position of having to defend his decision against the protesters while simultaneously making common cause with them."

Ashour believes, "while many Egyptian may support Morsy's aims,

a dramatic expansion of presidential power in order to attain them was, for many, a step too far." He adds that the opposition, despite the divisions between the different groups, are united in the idea that "the price of cleansing the judiciary was too high, arguing that the constitutional declaration will lead to dictatorship."

He points out that while the opposition are calling for the use of democratic principles to be employed, some groups are themselves "not adhering to democratic principles, either." He believes that some desire to oust Morsy altogether rather than just forcing him to retract his decree.

Ashour believes that at the end of the crisis it will be the security sector

that emerges as the winner. He states "it will enforce the rule of law, but only for a price." He warns, "this constitutes a much more serious and lasting threat to Egypt's democratisation than do Morsy's temporary decrees."

William Partlett, writing for the Brookings Institution says "Egypt's constitutional debate has deep roots in constitutional theory." He believes that the stance of both sides reflect two different methods of "constitution-making."

Morsy and his supporters favour a "popular constitution-making" whilst the opposition and the courts object to the constitution being "the product of a bare majority," but favour "a more consensual and deliberative process that involves participation through

pre-existing institutions and law."

Partlett believes that the examples from the past have proved the opposition and courts' preferred method has "been far more successful in building a stable constitutional democracy." He points out this was achieved through the "use of deliberative roundtables, pre-existing law and judicial supervision to ensure an inclusive approach to constitution-making."

On the effect Morsy's decree will have on the constitution Partlett says, "this decision... threatens not only to make the new Egyptian constitution a divisive document but also to exclude and undermine a key institutional player in the implementation of this document: the courts."

Media outlet Spiegel rounded up the views on Egypt's current situation from across the German political spectrum.

The German media is sympathetic to both sides; the general view is that "while the Muslim Brotherhood's undermining of the pre-revolutionary judiciary is understandable, so are the protests against the Brotherhood's own actions."

Die Welt, a conservative daily, highlights Egypt's importance in the region and believes that "what moves Egypt today moves the region, tomorrow, and the shockwaves could very well spark fear and terror among the Europeans." It added "The future of Egypt will indicate for the whole of the Islamic world whether democracy and a Quran-based life can be reconciled."



Israel holds firm on settlements, world outcry grows

Jerusalem (AFP) - Israel's government on Tuesday stood firm in the face of mounting international pressure as it pushed ahead with a swathe of settlement plans seen as threatening the viability of a future Palestinian state.

Israel showed no sign of changing its stance even as Australia became the latest nation to summon the Israeli ambassador to protest plans to build 3,000 new settler homes in a critical area of the West Bank near Jerusalem.

Late on Monday, Israel, which is in the middle of an election campaign, said it would also revive plans for another 1,600 homes in annexed east Jerusalem.

"Are new homes in our capital Jerusalem really more dangerous to the peace process than the Palestinian Authority's refusal to talk peace and to recognise Israel?" tweeted Ofir Gendelman, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israel's settlement plans have always raised hackles but Friday's proposals - seen as payback for the Palestinians securing the United Nations rank of a non-member state a day earlier - are considered particularly contentious as such construction would effectively cut the West Bank in half.

The area in question is a corridor of West Bank land called E1 which runs between the easternmost edge of an-

nexed east Jerusalem and the nearby Maaleh Adumim settlement.

Should construction in E1 go ahead, connecting Jerusalem with Maaleh Adumim, it will make the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state almost impossible.

Israeli plans for E1 have been in the works since the early 1990s but have never been implemented due to heavy pressure, largely from the United States.

The international outcry since Friday's move has been intense, with UN chief Ban Ki-moon warning that should Israel build in E1, "it would represent an almost fatal blow to remaining chances of securing a two-state solution."

On Monday, France, Britain, Spain, Denmark and Sweden all summoned the Israeli ambassadors to protest the plans, which also drew criticism from Russia, Germany and Japan.

"The Europeans have removed the kid gloves. We have not seen such an extreme reaction to an Israeli decision in recent years," a senior Israeli diplomat told the top-selling Yediot Aharonot.

Other diplomats quoted by the paper were quick to point out that such a coordinated move by so many countries was likely to have been done with the approval of Washington.

"The White House authorised Eu-



Palestinian families start to return to their homes after a Jerusalem court order canceling the demolition of their houses by Israeli forces in the mostly Arab east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Atur

rope to pounce on the Netanyahu government and to punish it," wrote Yediot columnist Shimon Shiffer.

"It has to do with the Obama administration's recognition that a path has to be found to conclude the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians."

Washington has been deeply angered by Netanyahu's decision to move forward construction on E1, which the state department on Monday described as "particularly sensitive," warning that construction there "would be especially damaging to efforts to achieve a two-state solution."

And President Barack Obama's spokesman Jay Carney urged Israel's leadership "to reconsider these unilateral decisions and exercise restraint as these actions are counterproductive."

On Tuesday, Australia also summoned the Israeli envoy, with Foreign

Minister Bob Carr describing Israel's decision to unfreeze planning in E1 as "especially counter-productive." He also condemned Israel's withholding of tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority.

But Israel has showed no sign of bending as Netanyahu ploughs towards general elections in January, which he is expected to easily win.

"There will be no change in the decision that has been made," a source in Netanyahu's office said on Monday.

Several hours later, an interior ministry spokeswoman confirmed Israel had revived plans for 1,600 new settler homes in Ramat Shlomo, which caused a major diplomatic rift with Washington when it was first announced in March 2010.

Israel has not given details or a timeframe for the new settlement construction, which drew praise from headline commentators.

"History proves that every time we insisted on our positions and were prepared to clash, the west has always capitulated, because justice was ours," wrote Dror Eidar in the Israel HaYom freesheet, which openly backs Netanyahu.

"The 3,000 housing units are a first and very modest step. More will follow. Fear not, Israel."

Ghana seeks to live up to promise in presidential vote

Accra (AFP) - Ghana holds what is expected to be a tight presidential election on Friday as the new oil producer seeks to live up to its promise as a beacon of democracy in west Africa.

Both of Ghana's main political parties have taken a turn at giving up power after a vote, establishing the country as a stable democracy in a region long plagued by suspect polls and turbulent, sometimes bloody, regime changes.

President John Dramani Mahama, 54, of the National Democratic Congress, only took power in July, when his predecessor John Atta Mills died following an illness.

The challenger, 68 year old Nana Akufo-Addo of the New Patriotic Party, lost by less than one percentage point in 2008, and insists he is poised to reverse that narrow defeat.

Voters will also be electing a new parliament, which has been expanded to 275 seats from 230. The NDC won a narrow edge in seats over the NPP in the 2008 vote.

Six minor candidates also appear on the presidential ballot and could together earn enough support to deprive either Mahama or Akufo-Addo of the majority needed for a first-round win.

If neither wins more than 50 per cent, Ghanaians will vote in a run-off on 28 December.

Ghana's success has garnered world attention, with US President Barack Obama selecting the country for his first visit to sub-Saharan Africa after taking office in 2009.

Having completed five elections since military rule ended in 1992 and

with an expanding economy fuelled by gold and cocoa exports, in addition to the newly found oil wealth, voters' expectations are greater than ever, analysts said.

"There is a higher bar, for whoever wins," said Dante Mossi, senior operations officer at the World Bank's Ghana office. "The name of the game has changed."

The economy grew at 14 per cent in 2011, the first full year of oil production, with eight per cent growth expected for 2012 and 2013, according to the World Bank.

Such rapid growth brings added "responsibility," Mossi said, and pressures a government to "increase services very fast."

There are already ripples of unease among some who feel their lives have not improved as the country has gotten richer, a trend which could spell trouble for the president, said Franklin Oduro, deputy director of Ghana's Centre for Democratic Development.

Many Ghanaians feel "they still haven't reaped the benefit of any economic policymaking and their standard of living hasn't really changed that much compared to a couple of years ago," he said.

Mahama may also suffer from divisions within the NDC, with national political icon Jerry Rawlings, a former military and elected head of state, openly voicing frustrations with the party he founded more than two decades ago.

But analysts say Mahama seems to have successfully introduced himself to the country in the four and half months he has been president and note that Ghanaians have chosen to re-elect in-

cumbents in two previous tests, including the 1996 and 2004 polls.

The winner will face the all-important task of managing revenue from oil production, which began in late 2010.

While the offshore Jubilee field has under-performed since production began in December 2010, averaging roughly 80,000 barrels per day, that number is expected to increase amid the prospect of further revenue from other commercially viable fields.

How to spend the cash has been a central issue of the campaign, with Mahama advocating a large investment in infrastructure and Akufo-Addo fronting his signature policy of free secondary school education.

Aside from oil, Ghana is one of the world's largest cocoa producers with gold also serving as a key source of revenue.

Because the nation of some 24 million people is so heavily reliant on commodities, its boom could be derailed if "world prices take a dive," Mossi explained.

But regardless of commodity price volatility, Ghana's future remains promising, he added, because the country has earned credibility through its democratic credentials and set itself apart.

To the east lies Togo, ruled by the same family for four decades, and to the west Ivory Coast, still emerging from a bloody civil conflict sparked by a disputed 2010 poll.

Meanwhile in Nigeria, the regional powerhouse and Africa's largest oil producer, massive graft continues unchecked amid serious security concerns.

Tunisia suspect in Benghazi attack 'refuses to speak to FBI'

Tunis (AFP) - A Tunisian suspected of involvement in an attack on the US consulate in Benghazi in which the US ambassador to Libya was killed is refusing to be interrogated by FBI agents, his lawyer told AFP.

"They wanted to interrogate him as a witness, but he has refused," Abdelbasset Ben Mbarek said late on Monday, referring to his client Ali Hamzi, and denouncing what he called "interference" in the Tunisian judicial system.

He explained that the attempt to question Hamzi, who was arrested in Turkey and deported to Tunisia in October, took place "in secret" 10 days ago, without his defence team being informed.

The justice ministry said it had no information on the subject, when asked by AFP.

But Fadhel Saihi, an adviser to the minister, told AFP that the Tunisian police were cooperating with US investigators over the attack, on 11 September, which cost the lives of ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans.

"We are against interference... But what happened in Benghazi against the American consulate was an act of terrorism and the Tunisian state has been called on to cooperate with the American authorities. It is a legal obligation," he said.

"The American authorities, if they ask [to interrogate the suspect], will do so through the mediation of the Tunisian police," Saihi added.

His lawyers have denied that Hamzi was involved in the attack.

Jordan king to visit Ramallah Thursday

Ramallah (AFP) - Jordan's King Abdullah II will visit Ramallah on Thursday, the first Arab leader to travel to the Israeli-occupied territory since the Palestinians won United Nations non-member state status, a Palestinian official said.

"King Abdullah will visit the state of Palestine the day after tomorrow, on Thursday, in the first visit by a top official to the Palestinian state after we received UN recognition," Nimr Hammad, political adviser to Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas, told AFP on Tuesday.

"The visit will confirm Jordanian efforts and support for the Palestinian people and their leadership," Hammad added.

Jordanian officials refused to confirm that the visit would take place on Thursday.

"No date has been set," a top government official in Amman told AFP after the Ramallah announcement.

Earlier, another senior Jordanian government official confirmed that the monarch was planning a trip to the West Bank, without specifying the date.

"The king will go to Ramallah soon and meet with Abbas there," he told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The visit seeks to reiterate Jordan's support for the Palestinians, build on their historic achievement at the United Nations and help them establish an independent state."

The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday granted the Palestinians non-member state observer status in a 138-9 vote.

The move will allow the Palestinians access to a range of international organisations, including potentially

the International Criminal Court, and raises their international profile.

But the upgrade was fiercely opposed by Israel and the United States, and the Palestinians face harsh repercussions.

Israel has already announced increased settlement construction and said it will not transfer tax funds it collects for the Palestinians this month. US funding for the Palestinian government is also on hold over the move.

The Palestinians are expected to ask Arab nations to provide additional funding to make up the shortfall, which comes as Abbas's Palestinian Authority already faces a major financial crisis that has left it frequently unable to pay its employees.

The king, who visited the Palestinian territories last year, met Abbas in Amman on Sunday and described the UN vote "as a major step."

Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

Abdullah paid his first visit to the Palestinian territories in May 1999, just months after being crowned king, meeting the late Yasser Arafat in Gaza. In April 2000, he made a first visit to Ramallah and returned four months later.

In November 2011 the king flew by helicopter to Ramallah for a brief stay of little more than two hours during which he held talks with Abbas who later dubbed the visit as "important and historic" but gave no other details.

That visit came just ahead of a key summit between Abbas and exiled Hamas chief Khaled Meshaal in Cairo to cement a stalled unity deal between the Palestinian president's Fatah faction and the Islamist movement.

One killed as police fire on Bangladesh protest

Dhaka (AFP) - A teenage activist from an Islamist party in Bangladesh was killed during clashes in which police fired live bullets to disperse crowds ahead of a nationwide strike on Tuesday, officials said.

Local police chief Tariqul Islam told AFP that the cause of the activist's death was unclear while a medical official said the 18-year-old died after being admitted to hospital with a gunshot wound to the head.

The Jamaat-e-Islami member died on Monday night in violence in the northern town of Chirirbandar, 300 km from the capital Dhaka.

"We fired seven rounds of live bullets, rubber bullets and tear gas shells," Islam, the local police chief, said.

Shihidul Islam, a nurse at Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said the activist died as he was brought to



Members of Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion stand alert during a nationwide strike in Dhaka

the clinic. "He has a bullet shot in his head," he told AFP.

About 20 policemen were also injured in the clashes, the police

chief said.

In Dhaka on Tuesday, Jamaat supporters torched two buses and set fire to tyres in defiance of police who were out in force patrolling the city.

Jamaat called the strike to protest against the trial of its leaders who have been arrested and face charges of war crimes during the country's 1971 liberation struggle.

The government blames Jamaat for much of the killing in the bloody nine-month war against Pakistan, in which it says about three million people died.

But the International Crimes Tribunal, created in 2010 to try war crimes suspects, has been widely criticised as being a political tool for the ruling Awami League government to target its opponents.

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BUSINESS

Plan to wean industries off government’s natural gas

GAS WOULD STILL BE SUPPLIED TO POWER PLANTS, HOUSEHOLDS AND VEHICLES

By Abdelkader Ramadan

The president of the Energy Committee of the Federation of Egyptian Industries, Tamer Abu Bakr, has outlined a plan to gradually end the government’s involvement in the sale of natural gas to factories and focus completely on electricity stations, households and vehicles.

As Egypt struggles to come to grips with the effects of an impending economic crisis, government support for subsidised fuel has decreased, leading to energy shortages in many of Egypt’s factories. Abu Bakr claimed that many of these factories have reaped enormous benefits in previous years from purchasing subsidised gas. However in the last two years the amount of subsidised gas available on the local market has become scarce and is no longer enough to satisfy the production needs of many of these factories. These factories then face a dilemma, either continue to rely on government subsidised gas and face inevitable closure, or look to alternatives to satisfy their demands.

Abu Bakr’s plan is based on a recent study conducted by the Federation of Egyptian Industries that calls for private import companies to supply Egyptian factories with natural gas in order to satisfy their energy needs. Many of these import companies claim that they will not sell natural gas to Egyptian factories for less than \$11 per million BTUs; a price higher than that of government’s,



Hassan Ibrahim

The president of the Energy Committee of the Federation of Egyptian Industries has outlined a plan to focus the government’s involvement in the sale of natural gas to electricity stations, households and vehicles

something which has turned off some factory owners. However Abu Bakr points out that many foreign factories buy their fuel for anywhere between \$14-17 dollars per million BTUs and are still able to export products onto the world market.

The federation’s plan calls for a transitional period to gradually wean Egyptian industry off subsidised gas. Egyptian industry is responsible for 25 per cent of the country’s natural gas consumption and 24 per cent of its oil consumption. Although a timeline was not put forth, the plan would see Egyptian industry eventually rely

entirely on the private sector to satisfy these demands. Under the federation’s plan, the government would continue to provide subsidised oil and natural gas to residential, commercial and government sectors.

Another part of the plan includes weaning Egyptian industry off oil, replacing it entirely with natural gas. Abu Bakr pointed to the fact that many Egyptian oil companies possess a weak logistical infrastructure, making it difficult for them to properly store and transport petroleum products. Abu Bakr estimated that re-building this infrastructure would cost tens of billions of dollars.

The plan discusses the need for private import companies to reassess their contracts with Gasco, the Egyptian Natural Gas Company responsible for transporting natural gas along Egypt’s national grid, in addition to a host of other logistical issues. The plan calls for the government to reassess its seven per cent tax on imported natural gas, and to exempt the steel, cement and fertiliser industries from paying a tax. In the plan, the role of the government is limited to providing a regulatory framework that would help set prices and create an environment friendly to free trade.

Constitution crisis threatens investment, exports and business contracts

By Ahmed Salama

Businessmen in various economic sectors have warned of an impending economic crisis in Egypt, stemming from a decrease in foreign investment and drop in exports. A number of contracts signed with foreign countries responsible for recent investment into Egypt have also been cancelled or postponed.

This comes in the context of the internal divisions within Egyptian politics resulting from the release of the final draft of the constitution. These divisions have threatened to stunt Egypt’s economic growth and development, as large numbers of the country’s opposition and its judiciary have come out against the constitution.

Many foreign businessmen and investors have postponed planned trips to Egypt, leading many to fear that Egypt’s exports will decrease in light of the

country’s internal political divisions.

“The recent events in the Egyptian street will have a negative effect on the country’s economy, which still hasn’t fully recovered since the outbreak of the 25 January Revolution,” said the President of the Export Council for Ready-Made Clothes, Mohamed Qasim. He added that these events will lead to “a decrease in the country’s production rates and later its exports.”

Khalid Ibrahim, President of the Engineering Export Council of Egypt, said “the current situation will affect the entire country and will have a long-term negative effect on the country’s exports.” Ibrahim expressed hope that the current crisis in Egypt won’t lead to strikes in the country’s factories and ports which could threaten to paralyse the economy.

The Deputy Chairman of the Export Council for Ready-Made Clothes, Abdelghani Al-Abasiri, expects exports to

drop by 20 per cent throughout 2013 as a result of recent political divisions witnessed in Egypt since Morsy’s constitutional declaration.

Former President of the Export Council for Agricultural Goods, Sherif El-Beltagy, stated that the council would not be able to achieve its goals of reaching 20 per cent annual growth, adding that “strikes in the nation’s ports in addition to a general sense of political and economic instability in Egypt have cast doubts on the ability of the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade to reach its stated goal of exporting EGP 17.5 billion worth of goods by the end of 2013.”

The President of the Export Council for Woods and Furniture, Mohamed El Shabrawi, was sceptical regarding the Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade’s ability to live up to its goal of exporting EGP 14 billion worth of goods by the end of 2013, seeing as many previous clients have

cancelled their contacts with Egyptian companies. Many fear that ships importing goods into Egypt could not be guaranteed to return to their home countries on schedule, due to problems in the nation’s ports. He stressed the need for the government to lay out a clear economic path that would stabilise the country and attract both local and foreign investment.

“The recent demonstrations have had a negative effect on investment into Egypt, and the ability of businessmen to secure new long-term contracts. Such demonstrations mean that Egyptian workers are less productive and require more time to complete assigned tasks,” said Nagy Albert, a member of the Egyptian-Italian Workers Council.

He added that €3 million worth of investments into Egypt’s home furniture sector have also been postponed indefinitely.

EFSA finalises new sukuk law

By Mohamed SalahEldin

The Egyptian Financial Supervisory Authority (EFSA) has finalised a draft law to regulate Shari’a compliant debt tools (sukuk); the proposed law includes 30 articles setting a legal framework for the issuance and transaction of sukuk.

The law aims to expand the scope of activities that sukuk can finance and allow the issuance of business sukuk, whose holder agrees to contribute to the capital of the partnership in equal or varying amounts to establish a new project or share in an existing one, the holder is then considered as partner and not creditor.

An Islamic supervision committee will be entitled to identify the types of sukuk that may be released provided that they are compliant with Shari’a. The committee should be independent from EFSA and the issuing party, it will consist of three experts familiar with the Islamic “Jurisprudence of Transactions” chosen by the issuing entity from a list of registered experts prepared by Dar Al-Iftaa.

Guided by the experiences of other countries in the field of issuing Shari’a compliant bonds, the supervisory committee will have the authority to express its opinion on the issued bonds, which will be binding. The committee’s report will be made public to the traders, it will also set the necessary regulations for the issuing and subscribing procedures, in order to protect the holders and to achieve market stability.

The draft law regulates only sukuk issued by companies and legal persons and does not concern sovereign bonds issued by the government or legal public bonds.

EFSA says that sukuk bonds are an important instruments used by governments, companies and other legal persons to finance different activities and projects or to expand them.

Ahmed El-Najjar, member of the economic committee at the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), said they collaborated with the finance ministry to put forward a vision on the sovereign sukuk, and later they agreed to expand the scope, adding private sector sukuk to be under the same law, Al-Nour Party was also involved in the negotiations.

The financial supervisory authority had a different vision, “they suggested to make amendments to the existing law, instead of issuing a separate law, but we think that amendments are not enough to create an adequate legal framework for sukuk”, stated El-Najjar, “we welcome the participation of EFSA, but they shouldn’t impose their vision,” he added.

The FJP official insisted that there should be a unified law that regulates all kinds of sukuk whether governmental, private or joint; he expressed his optimism about the current situation saying that if the draft constitution passes, the issue will be referred to the Shura council which will hold the legislative power.

Saudi Fund for Development allocates EGP 1.4 billion to finance three projects in Egypt

The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) signed three concessional loan agreements with the Egyptian Government. The agreements were signed on Monday in Cairo by the Egyptian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Ashraf Al-Araby, and SFD Vice President and Managing Director, Yousef Al-Bassam.

As per the first agreement, SFD grants Egypt EGP 547 million, in a concessional development loan that aims to enhance the food security in Egypt by building new horizontal silos. The SDF-financed project will build by an additional number of horizontal silos, in order to enhance the overall seed storage capacities and minimise the storage losses. The second soft loan, which amounts to EGP 486 million, will contribute to enhancing the irrigation and drainage sector by installing new irrigation and sanitary drainage plants. The project will also finance the procurement and installation of new electric pumps and turbines in the newly established water plants, in order to help create a balance between the available water resources and the demand on irrigation and drainage facilities.

Under the third agreement, SFD will also allocate EGP 365 million, to fund a drinking water project in the Cairo district of Nasr City. The project aims to develop the efficiency of the drinking water grid in Nasr City, to enable it to meet the increasing demand on drinking water.

The 2 SFD-funded projects are expected to further enhance the economic and social development in Egypt, and improve the living conditions of its citizens. By virtue of the three agreement, the total funds allocated by SFD to Egyptian projects exceeds EGP 8 billion, which clearly reflects the depth of the bilateral ties at the official and popular levels.

Daily EGX30 index performance

Company Name	Reuters Code	Sector	Last Price	Close Price	Returns			Daily Performance		Turn Over (EGP Mill.)	Volume Trade	Market Cap. (EGP Mill.)
					Daily	YTD	12-Mths.	Max. Price	Min. Price			
Commercial Bank	COMI	Banks	34.06	34.14	4.63%	82.57%	46.52%	34.80	32.90	37.07	1,085,918	19,487.53
NSGB	NSGB	Banks	36.77	36.13	5.55%	77.89%	52.96%	36.77	35.00	10.616	293,810	15,182.23
Ezz Steel	ESRS	Basic Resources	8.45	8.25	2.74%	121.18%	66.33%	8.49	8.00	14.80	1,793,573	4,362.42
ELSWEDY ELECTRIC	SWDY	Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles	21.69	21.39	3.08%	3.13%	-3.99%	22.00	21.00	1.065	49,793	4,635.92
MRRDIVE	MOIL	Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles	1.03	1.02	0.99%	-15.60%	-23.72%	1.04	1.02	1.50	240,250	361.98
AIC Contracting	AIND	Financial Services excluding Banks	0.45	0.45	0.00%	-13.46%	-19.64%	0.46	0.44	3.175	7,060,301	240.58
Amer Group Holding	AMER	Financial Services excluding Banks	0.68	0.67	1.52%	21.82%	0.00%	0.68	0.66	4.86	7,210,202	2,006.20
EK Holding	EKHO	Financial Services excluding Banks	1.09	1.08	3.85%	10.20%	6.93%	1.09	1.05	4.033	613,274	872.87
FG-Hermes	HRHO	Financial Services excluding Banks	10.28	10.23	1.99%	2.20%	-8.74%	10.30	10.10	14.59	1,425,804	4,797.30
Pioneers Holding	PIOH	Financial Services excluding Banks	3.92	3.84	4.35%	72.97%	47.69%	3.95	3.70	7.992	2,080,877	1,840.00
Citadel Capital	CCAP	Financial Services excluding Banks	3.24	3.18	3.92%	24.71%	7.07%	3.25	3.06	10.99	3,453,351	2,000.38
Raya Holding	RAYA	Technology	4.77	4.69	5.16%	34.77%	17.84%	4.78	4.51	1.636	349,012	286.44
Telecom Egypt	ETEL	Telecommunications	12.37	12.25	1.16%	-7.27%	-12.69%	12.55	12.10	8.52	695,483	20,672.64
Orascom Telecom Media And Technology	OTMT	Telecommunications	0.52	0.52	1.96%	50.61%	50.61%	0.53	0.49	24.051	46,049,814	2,675.30
Orascom Telecom	ORTE	Telecommunications	3.52	3.50	2.04%	102.50%	102.50%	3.53	3.44	11.53	3,293,506	17,992.72
Sidi Kerir Petrochemicals	SKPC	Chemicals	12.24	12.28	0.49%	3.11%	-0.49%	12.40	12.22	2.349	191,240	6,415.50
Egyptian Financial and Industrial	EFIC	Chemicals	9.22	9.08	2.37%	1.91%	-11.50%	9.22	8.89	2.14	236,016	614.71
AMOC	AMOC	Oil and Gas	73.00	71.86	4.04%	7.35%	12.02%	75.90	69.96	0.752	10,459	5,946.93
Juhayna Food Industries	JUFO	Food and Beverage	6.6	6.37	3.58%	63.33%	48.83%	6.60	6.19	4.17	654,342	4,342.23
Orascom Construction Industries (OCI)	OCIC	Construction and Materials	234.90	230.27	3.86%	14.48%	6.73%	234.98	224.97	36.185	157,146	46,325.83
Delta Construction & Rebuilding	DCRC	Construction and Materials	5.8	5.73	3.43%	-25.49%	-31.38%	5.82	5.54	0.74	129,196	128.01
Modern Co. For Water Proofing	WATP	Construction and Materials	1.68	1.64	3.80%	-28.70%	-25.79%	1.68	1.60	1.282	782,285	161.16
Palm Hills	PHDC	Real Estate	2.05	1.99	4.74%	82.57%	56.69%	2.07	1.89	36.31	18,258,145	1,991.81
TMGH Holding	TMGH	Real Estate	4.03	3.99	2.57%	34.80%	9.32%	4.03	3.87	33.387	8,367,285	8,027.26
National Real Estate Bank	NRPD	Real Estate	18.25	17.85	4.32%	-9.02%	-23.06%	18.25	17.31	1.80	100,715	66.77
Six of October	OCDI	Real Estate	18.25	17.90	6.42%	124.59%	64.52%	18.30	16.98	6.063	338,661	1,525.18
El Kahera Housing & Development	ELKA	Real Estate	5.5	5.36	3.47%	38.14%	23.50%	5.50	5.20	1.50	279,055	485.63
Arab Cotton Ginning	ACGC	Personal and Household Products	3.37	3.28	4.46%	55.45%	27.63%	3.38	3.14	9.146	2,785,117	850.36
Oriental Weavers	ORWE	Personal and Household Products	21.9	21.53	2.52%	-22.29%	-23.01%	22.00	21.50	0.78	36,027	1,890.00
Egyptian Tourism Resorts	EGTS	Travel & Leisure	0.94	0.93	4.49%	10.71%	-2.11%	0.94	0.90	2.290	2,471,846	934.50

Market indices performance

Index	Value	Daily Ch.	YTD Ch.
EGX 30	4,991.59	3.46%	37.80%
EGX 70	442.90	2.75%	6.57%
EGX 100	740.75	3.18%	15.19%
EGX 20 Capped	5,707.78	3.08%	45.40%

Market Brief

Markets	No.	Volume	Value(LE)	Trades
Listed	173	135,971,121	420,479,655	23,452
Stocks	171	135,930,821	379,507,639	23,448
PDBonds	1	40,000	40,946,516	2
Bonds	1	300	25,500	2
Nilex	8	1,729,920	652,828	175
OTC	12	2,048,744	24,371,701	53
Deals	12	2,048,744	24,371,701	53
Orders	0	0	0	0
Total	193	139,749,785	445,504,184	23,680
Total Market Cap		347,430,010,666		

Direction	No.	Volume (000's)	Value (LE 000's)	No. of Trades
Listed stocks	172	135,931	379,533	23,450
Gainers	143	128,385	371,790	22,976
Decliners	13	234	3,805	208
Unchanged	16	7,312	3,938	266



COMMENTARY

Disclaimer: Commentaries published by Daily News Egypt do not reflect the position of the paper, but the independent opinions of their authors.

To vote or not to vote

All over Cairo, a tired yet classic debate is underway among the secular population: Given that Morsy (he is no longer my president as far as I am concerned) intends to go through with the referendum on the constitutional draft that the flawed constitutional committee completed in a day, should the people opposed to it vote “No,” or boycott the vote and reject the referendum as a farce?

Both sides as usual have compelling arguments. For those on the boycott side the situation is simple: The constituent assembly is both unrepresentative and legally flawed, and the constitutional draft it produced has at least 60 articles that are catastrophic in terms of separation of powers, women’s rights, workers’ rights, children’s rights, the separation of mosque and state, and contravening international treaties that Egypt has signed. On top of all of this, Morsy is strong-arming the entire country by giving himself absolute power with the now infamous constitutional declaration, and stating that the only way to dissolve it is if people go and vote in the referendum. For those who wish to boycott, the choice between a dictator and this mess of a constitution is no choice, not to mention that the chances of the vote being rigged are very high since the Muslim Brotherhood is not above playing dirty and they control the body that will administer the referendum. To the boycotters, it’s a farce that shouldn’t even be acknowledged or participated in, and to do so would only give it legitimacy it doesn’t deserve.

The “No” voters don’t disagree with the reasoning behind a boycott, but they do have a compelling argument of their own. For the first time since the revolution, their side has the majority. With the secular side uniting, and the widespread unhappiness with brotherhood rule, it will become very hard for Morsy’s gang to forge the results if everyone went and voted. Also, this revolution

started because the people wanted democracy, and yet every time the revolutionaries are faced with a hard choice, they urge people to boycott (remember the parliamentary elections and presidential elections- the two elections that got us into this mess) instead of mobilising their base and voting, and look where boycotting has gotten us. The mechanism of democracy in Egypt is flawed, but running away from such confrontation on principle is not fighting for the soul of the country against an enemy that won’t be satisfied until they establish an Iranian-like rule in Egypt. For them, this is a chance to show the Islamists their true size in Egyptian society; that the Brotherhood are nothing but an organised fanatical and violent minority that won’t rest until implementing their vision of taking the country back to the seventh century. To the “No” voters, boycotting is tantamount to suicide at this point.

For me both sides have valid arguments that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. At this point most people have made their choice, so instead of wasting the next 10 days in useless infighting as usual, I suggest that both sides actually work together. The boycotters should focus their energies on actually making the boycott a beneficial event to destroy on the street the legitimacy of Brotherhood rule if they do pass their illegal referendum. They can do that by organising marches and campaigns to expose its flaws, to showcase what this new dictatorship will be like and to slowly chip away at any popularity left among the undecided regarding the Islamists. It also wouldn’t hurt if they organised the monitoring of the referendum campaign correctly this time, with volunteers and operation rooms to correctly document the various types of fraud that will surely take place in this referendum and completely delegitimise this constitution.



MAHMOUD SALEM

The “No” voters on the other hand need to actually do some real work this time: Map out all of your acquaintances, family and friends and call them one by one and if they are not boycotting, convince them to vote “No.” Go to the buildings and stores in your area and knock on every door and talk to people. Organise or join people in organising the logistics of getting voters to the polling stations in an efficient and organised fashion that won’t allow a single vote to go to waste due to laziness or complacency. If you have family members or businesses in other governorates then work on convincing and organising them as well. Make phone calls instead of sending text messages, talk to other people instead of those in your circle, work instead of complaining. This is a battle worth fighting.

Also, if you belong in either camp, please learn from your opponents: They are fighting for their survival, because they know that if this constitution doesn’t pass, then they are done for. The same applies to you. This is war, and war has a very simple rationale: You have to be willing to die, in order for you to win and live in peace. Have conviction, stand your ground and fight.

Mahmoud Salem is a political activist, writer, and social media consultant. www.sandmonkey.org

Morsy’s stepchildren

They went out in the thousands; Egyptians from every walk of life and almost all political affiliations protested in Tahrir against President Morsy’s latest decree and the draft of the new constitution. However, they were not the only ones protesting. Islamist groups, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis, protested too, but in support of the president and the new constitution, which, in their eyes, is Islamic and consistent with the “core” values of Egyptian society. They proclaimed their protest to be a “true million-man march,” labelling the Tahrir protestors as un-Islamic, the secular minority, infiltrated by the ex-regime and even funded from abroad.

The Muslim Brotherhood is waging a war of perception, not just for domestic consumption but for a western audience, too. Perception is crucial for two reasons: To defeat non-Islamist opponents, who may lose faith quickly when watching the endless number of pro-Morsy protestors in comparison to their relatively lower number in Tahrir and, secondly, to convince western nations that Islamists are the only reliable, powerful force in Egypt and that they are backed by the “majority” of Egyptians.

Eighty years of a mushrooming underground within Egyptian society has resulted in deep mistrust of mainstream establishments. Islamists view members of these establishments and other non-Islamist forces with deep suspicion and consider them elitist, anti-religious snobs. The strict rules that govern the Brotherhood’s internal structure were partly introduced to protect the group from outside “corruption.” This combination plus simmering resentment and years of grievance have finally exploded in the recent crisis in Egypt, and it partly explains the abrupt, odd way that Morsy has chosen to deal with it.

Moreover, Morsy, who likes to address Egyptians as his “brothers and children,” clearly feels at ease only among his brothers and children within his party, but he seems

to struggle with dealing with “others’ brothers and children,” whom he has inherited as part of the whole package of ruling Egypt. He, it seems, despises everything the others stand for; their individuality, their boldness, and their persistent scrutiny. No wonder he chose to explain his decree by addressing his supporters in front of the presidential palace, and he ignored those in Tahrir as if they were his “stepchildren,” an inconvenience that he is hoping he can overcome. Their protests were not part of his curriculum and have pushed him to revert, even more, to his own natural tendency of defiance and autocracy.

Rather than suppressing his opponents by force, Morsy has decided to snooker them. By calling for a referendum on his proposed constitution, he has put his opponents in an extremely difficult situation. He is banking on his supporters to deliver a clear yes vote, which would reinforce his claim that the majority of Egyptians are backing him up. He also has managed to secure legal backup, as Egyptian judges are divided between being anti- and pro-Morsy. While the Judges Club, the largest representative organisation of judges in Egypt, has issued a recommendation to its members not to oversee the referendum, the Supreme Judiciary Council has agreed to delegate judges and members of the prosecution to assume that responsibility.

Tired, drained, and divided, the Egyptian opposition now has two painful choices: Either boycott or participate in the referendum and vote no. Boycotting is not the better option; if the government imposes a fine for skipping the vote, many Egyptians (who are already struggling economically) will ignore the boycott campaign. This overlooks the fact that boycotting is never a good idea; Islamists are ready to mobilise their supporters just to turn up and a voter turnout of 30 per cent or less is all that is needed for the result to be viewed as legitimate.



NERVANA MAHMOUD

On the other hand, participating in the referendum is not without risk. If the majority votes yes, it will be a victory in Morsy’s war of perception and non-Islamists will definitely look like the minority. However, if the majority votes no, then Morsy is almost certain to stick to his decree that protects him and grants him full power, until a new constitution can be drafted. A very clever game of snooker from Morsy.

It is time for cool heads and clear plans for non-Islamists if they are to win this round of the legitimacy war. Protesting against Morsy will always help, but it is not enough. It is time for aggressive campaigning to explain the pitfalls of the new constitution and how it can negatively affect the general public.

Fighting autocracy is not the war of the elite; it is the war of the oppressed who have suffered for decades under the junta’s police state. A smart campaign to expose the flaws of this shambolic constitution may attract a big section of Egyptian society. It is not too late to fight smartly and campaign in every trade union, syndicate, and university in Egypt. It is the only way to strike the back at Morsy and force him to understand that the non-Islamists are not stepchildren, but legitimate sons and daughters whom he must take seriously.

Nervana Mahmoud is a doctor, blogger and writer on Middle East issues. You can follow her on Twitter @Nervana_1

Sometimes, I am not sure what shenanigans are worse

On the one hand, in the past couple of weeks, the Muslim Brotherhood has resorted to citing the popularity of pages on Facebook, TV polls, and 24-hour street surveys to ‘prove’ the popularity of President Morsy’s recent decree giving him supra-legal powers.

I may be biased in my view of those claims. I do not refer to my bias vis-à-vis the Muslim Brotherhood. To my cost, I’ve always tried to portray the Brotherhood as a regular political force, rather than a group of aliens from outer space, hell-bent on sending Egypt into the dark ages.

Rather, I refer to a bias built over years of sociological research and survey analysis. That background corrupted me; otherwise, I might have more easily forgotten that, for example, a Facebook poll in a country where the internet has less than a 15 per cent penetration rate is somewhat preposterous. Perhaps I might have been more easily convinced that a survey on a TV station that is already renowned for its bias towards the Muslim Brotherhood is perhaps not the most objective source. Or maybe I might have neglected the

fact that face-to-face street polls in a country of 83 million people can’t actually be done in 24 hours, even if your sample sizes are perfect.

On the other hand, I’m not quite sure what to make of the opposition and its strategy. Actually, let us not call it a strategy – I’m not actually sure if there is one to speak of. There is mobilisation: that is for sure. What they are mobilised for, on the other hand, remains a bit of a mystery. Calling for a sit-in in Tahrir is not a strategy – at best, it’s just fodder for those who outside of the square ask, “where are the youth of the revolution who wanted elections to be delayed, so they could prepare?” At worst, it’s just whining.

I support the existence of a strong, effective opposition in any country under any system, whether I support the ruling party or not. Because a healthy political system is one where the ruler is held to account, and knows he is going to be held to account. But while this opposition is good at the ‘opposition’ part, it needs some urgent work on the ‘effective’ aspect.

It’s a long, old story now. Following the constitutional referendum

in March 2011, the results should have taught the opposition that it needs to plan a lot more effectively. But when parliamentary elections took place nine months later, they were still badly organised and performed miserably as a result.

When the presidential elections took place the following year, perhaps they might have considered that splitting the non-Brotherhood, non-feloul vote, in a critical vote for Egypt’s transitional process, was probably not a great idea? Perhaps they could have foreseen that different pro-revolution, non-Brotherhood candidates meant that the vote would be split right down the middle?

The constitution is due to be voted on, and the opposition wants a “No” vote. Is the strategy to stay in Tahrir, and not talk to the rest of the country? Was the strategy to maintain the call for a press strike on 4 December, losing a precious day to get the arguments out into wider society?

All very strategic. Not.

Tahrir is important for two things in Egypt: mobilisation in the short term, and change in the long term. When I say ‘mobilisation’ I

mean it has to lead to something else. When I say change in the long-term, I’m not talking political change but the changing of people. Any person who was in Tahrir during the 18 days from 25 January 2011 can testify to the transformation it engendered in people – and indeed, the protests in Tahrir over the past two weeks are closer to those 18 days than any other protest. But for this political standoff, simply being in Tahrir is insufficient.

Egypt does not stand at a crossroads – it stands on quicksand. Polarised forces are pulling her in two directions. I place more responsibility for this polarisation at the feet of those who are supportive of the Brotherhood – because it is one of their own that is in the presidency. With that extra power comes extra responsibility – whether they like it or not. Moreover, if I wanted to play the religion card (which I won’t), then I’d say that if people want to use religious sentiment to get votes and support, they should expect to be held to account to extremely high standards of ethics and morals. They certainly do not get a blank cheque to be more partisan and break public pledges.

On the flip side however, the non-Islamist political sector has missed opportunity after opportunity to be more effective. No one is in a position to ‘blame’ the Brotherhood for the disinuity and impotence of the opposition – that blame should be laid at the door of the opposition itself. It’s really as simple as that. Moreover, the educational and economic elite of Egyptian society, which has generally flocked to the anti-Brotherhood position, has not lived up to its own historic responsibility. That elite, one has to remember, was almost completely absent from political life and activism prior to the 25 January revolution – and in many ways, complicit in the abuses of the Mubarak regime. After the revolution, many of them became active. But many of even those activists remained within their own bubbles, and did not break out to engage with wider society – including those sectors they did not agree with. There are exceptions, of course; but generally, that remains to be the case, and is part of a broader set of reasons as to why Egypt is where it is.

In all likelihood, there is going



DR H A HELLYER

to be a constitutional referendum in 10 days. Regardless of the outcome, these issues of polarisation, self-isolation, and mental parallel universes are going to remain. Until those issues are tackled and resolved, no-one really wins in Egypt. And incidentally, Egypt really does lose.

Dr. H A Hellyer, a nonresident fellow at the Brookings Institution, is a Cairo-based specialist on Arab affairs, and relations between the Muslim world and the west. He was previously senior practice consultant at Gallup, and senior research fellow at Warwick University. Find him online @hahellyer and www.hahellyer.com.

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IN-FOCUS

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Under-reported and underage: Early marriage in Egypt

EARLY MARRIAGE IN EGYPT IS A PREVALENT PROBLEM, TOO OFTEN FRAMED WITHIN A RELIGIOUS VS. SECULAR DEBATE

By Sarah El Masry

Early marriage was raised in public discourse recently. Nader Bakar, the spokesperson of Al-Nour party, which supports early marriage, looked to the United States in defence of the party's position. "In the state of New Hampshire the age of marriage is 14 with parental consent and in California marriage is not dependent on age, but on parental consent," he told his party's conference.

The irony of a Salafi looking to the US as a role model was not lost on critics, who further more pointed out how decontextualised his statement was. The differences between the US and Egypt rendered the comparison meaningless they argued. Enforced federal laws to prevent child abuse, a developed health care system and governmental agencies that offer child protection in the US contrasts sharply with Egypt's own struggle to enforce child marriage laws and create institutions to safeguard women.

A survey published this year by the National Council for Women illustrated the scale of the issue of early marriage in Egypt. It found that 22 per cent of girls were married before they were 18. In the governorates of Port Said and Fayoum, this figure increased to 38 and 31 per cent.

The issue of early marriage is usually framed in terms of a religious versus secular debate. However the reality is significantly more complex, involving an interplay of cultural norms and traditions with poverty and illiteracy.

Like mother, like daughter

It's noon and the road to Doweika, a poor neighbourhood in Cairo, is crammed with cars, minibuses and tuk-tuks spewing choking exhaust. Reaching the hills, the microbus stops and the uphill walk begins. The gradient is socio-economic as well as physical. Four-storey buildings and paved streets give way to shacks and paths and a sea of rubbish.

Nora's family lives here. Om Sameh, Nora's mother, sits on a plastic chair on the porch of the apartment, feeding the ducks and chickens that scratch in the dust outside. Inside the apartment, a young girl, tall for her age, hurriedly covers her hair and opens the door. When Nora notices that guests accompany her mother, she rushes to tidy the sofa and the rest of the tiny living room. Though the apartment is small and run down, Om Sameh's family have made an effort to decorate it by hanging a large portrait of Nora's beautiful face. Her chore complete, Nora stands in the hallway, shyly listening while her mother discusses her engagement.

The family originally migrated from Fayoum to Cairo after Om Sameh was married at the age of 14. She became pregnant four years later. She miscarried but the following year she gave birth to Sameh, the eldest of her four children.

Among her own family and relatives Om Sameh says she would have been ostracised had she remained unmarried beyond the age of 17. "I wouldn't have left my family because whatever you do people will talk to dishonour you in a way, that's why I preferred for Nora to get married as early as I did; to protect her chastity."

She says, "in our norms and traditions, because we're originally from a rural area in Fayoum, the girl gets married early because if she passed 16 years old she is said to be a spinster and has missed the right age for marriage."

UNICEF defines marriage under the age of 18 as child marriage. Dalia Mansy a project manager at Hawaa El Mostaqbal Association, an NGO that works to raise awareness of early marriage, explained that culture is the dominant factor in early marriage. She said, "the culture of some communities in Egypt is that when a girl hits puberty and gets her period, she should get married to her cousin or a relative."

Zeinab Heada is a gynaecologist and a senior technical adviser for the women's rights program at Care international in Egypt. She works on a project dealing with early marriage in Menya. She explained, "at first we thought the problem was poverty. However, the



A poll in 2012 by the National Council for Women showed that on average 22 per cent of girls are forced into early marriage

more we dug into it, we found out that the local culture propagates this type of marriage in which the family of the girl plays a central role and illiteracy perpetuates the problem."

Straight from school into marriage

Om Sameh did not go school. No one in her family believed in education for girls. But for her daughter, she thought Nora should at least learn how to read and write.

"Nora is leaving school by the end of the year, by that time she would have completed her primary education," she says. "This reassures me that at least she has learned reading and writing in case something, God forbid, comes up in her marriage she could work with that level of education."

Nora cried when she learned she was leaving school. Om Sameh, says she is not afraid of getting married but Nora's expression doesn't share her mother's confidence. Nora remains silent however.

Defensively Om Saleh says, "if her father stops working for whatever reason, I can't do anything. I can barely go out and buy things on my own. I didn't want her to be like me. With some education she can work, if circumstances force her to. I didn't want her to have my experience so I insisted she finish her primary education at least."

Nora looks wistful listening to her mother talk about her leaving school. However she insists she's happy about

the engagement. "I told my classmates about it... some of them are engaged as well and are getting married at the end of the year like me."

Nora doesn't know much about her fiancée and speaks shyly about what she does know. "He is 18 and he has a job with a daily wage. He didn't go to school!" She seems happy that she has more education than him.

Largely inhabited by rural migrants, the demographics in Doweika are similar to the other overcrowded villages around Cairo. In Kafr Hegazy, a village two hours from Giza, an informal survey conducted on any given afternoon suggests that the majority of girls in the street are either engaged, married or mothers already: Amira married at 15 and pregnant at 16; Shimaa married at 14; Amal engaged at 13; Manal, 20, two children already, married at 14. Their stories all echo Nora's, with only minor differences.

They did not even reach middle school. Manal, tried to convince her husband to let her attend literacy classes, but he refused, asking her to save her energies for the children and the house.

Ashraf works at the health unit in Kaf Hegazy. He married his daughter off when she was 14 or 15. "She was beautiful and I gave her the choice," he says. "I asked her if she wanted to continue your education or get married. She chose the latter and the right suitor was there, so I did not hesitate."



A sea of rubbish separating buildings and shacks in the Doweika area of Cairo



Al Fayoum Street in the neighbourhood of Doweika where most of the inhabitants migrated from Fayoum bringing with them practices such early marriage



Poverty is one of the primary reasons for early marriage

Legal loopholes

In 2008 an amendment to child protection laws raised the legal age of marriage to 18. However legal loopholes renders it largely unenforceable.

Om Sameh will be using one of those loopholes to arrange Nora's marriage. To enable her to marry legally, Om Saleh will change Nora's name on her birth certificate. They will go to the hospital and other governmental bodies and claim that they have lost Nora's birth certificate and ask for a new one. She added, "they won't know her true age because she looks much older than 13."

"I opted for changing Nora's age instead of making urfi contract," Om Sameh says.

An urfi contract is an informal contract between the two families that does not involve the state. While the community may accept that the couple is married, the state does not, and the girl misses out on any legal protection.

Heada says, "the problem with urfi contract is that the husband of the young girl signs this secretive contract with the parents of the girl, but if that paper is lost, there is nothing that validates the marriage or documents the children if there are any. Again this deprives the girl of her legal rights."

Om Sameh realises this and says, "if Nora got pregnant, urfi contracts are not guaranteed. Even though she is marrying her relative we still need to have an official paper for the baby to be registered."

Om Sameh has also rejected the idea of a *zawag el-safka* marriage. The term literally means a business contract and it is the worst type of early marriage. Often *zawag el-safka* marriages involve an underage girl and a much older man. The marriage contracts typically involve a payment to the girl's family and specifies the length of the marriage, from days or weeks to months. It is essentially child prostitution in the guise of a marriage.

"No, it has never been that way for us," Om Saleh says. "We just marry out children early to protect them. Because Nora's body is a woman's



Ahlam's does not want her twins to be forced into early marriage like their older sister Amira

body, she shouldn't wait for too long."

However not all parents share Om Saleh's views on *zawag el-safka*, seeing it instead as an opportunity for their daughters. Abeer Ali is a project coordinator at Al Fostat Association, an NGO working on women's empowerment and endangered children. She says, "the families who orchestrate [business] marriage don't even know they are selling their daughters, they think they are insuring their future by making them marry rich Arabs who spend around EGP 50,000 on such marriages (buying gold, clothes and feeding the girl). What they don't know is that the invalidity of the marriage Islamically and legally."

The child of a child at risk

A child born of an early marriage faces diminished prospects. Health wise there are more likely to be complications, and legally they may face discrimination from the state. A child under 18 cannot make a legal contract or enroll in the army. If they commit an offence they are treated as a juvenile. Physical, emotional and mental development is ongoing. A girl under 18 who becomes pregnant is at much higher risk of miscarriage and other pregnancy complications. Many of the girls in the villages have miscarried, and treat it as a fact of life.

Heada says, "pregnancy poses many risks not only for the girl but for her child as well. The child will have a weak build because of malnutrition and the weakness of the mother's body."

If a child is born of an urfi marriage, the state will not issue parents with a birth certificate. "Without a birth certificate, the baby cannot receive immunisation shots. The baby is then at risk of those same epidemics which Egypt has struggled to end, such as polio," says Heada.

Boshara, a nurse at the health unit in Kafr Hegazy says, "in our village many of the girls are married before the legal age and when they get pregnant... However, no matter how they are taken care of they are negatively impacted physically and physiologically, especially if they miscarry."

A girl married at a young age is also at a higher risk of abuse, physical and psychological. Not to mention the potential trauma of sexual rela-

tions. Often, they are not told what to expect, as was the case for Ahlam.

Married at a young age Ahlam says, "I didn't know anything. My husband was much older than me. I used to get scared of him and hide under the bed or in the wardrobe. This would get make him violent and he would hit me. I would give up in the end, but it made me hate him."

Om Sameh is unconcerned about the potential risks for Nora of marrying early. "We live by God and he helps us to get sustenance," she says. She has four children herself and says, "it took me forever to convince Nora's father to stop after four; he wanted more."

Heada, Mansy and Ali work with NGOs, grassroots organisations and the government to spread awareness about the problems associated with early marriage, but it is not an easy task.

Mansy says, "people respond with resistance because you're trying to alter the traditions and beliefs they have been living under for a long time. When the parents meet a suitable suitor for their daughter who is willing to pay a *mahr* (dowry), they marry their daughter to protect her, and, sometimes to get her off their hands."

Sometimes Mansy convince girls who have suffered badly in an early marriage to hold focus groups and awareness visits to the houses of families who considering marrying their daughters young.

"Many early marriage cases do not work and these cases are used as good deterrents for parents who were planning to marry their daughter the same way," Mansy says.

For Heada, focusing on education is a key to solving this problem. An educated girl is likely to break the cycle of early marriage because she is likely to want her daughter to be educated as well, which will keep the girl in school, lessening her chances of being married early.

UNICEF considered the correlation between women's empowerment and child welfare. Almost all indicators showed a positive correlation and the report concluded, "healthy, educated and empowered women are more likely to have healthy educated and confident children."

At the health unit in Kar Hegazy, there are many young women who work as social pioneers. They visit families and talk to them about early marriage and its risks for their daughters. Some families are responsive, but the larger population remains indifferent.

Om Sameh is aware of the problems that might come with Nora's marriage, yet her husband's stubbornness, her determination to preserve tradition and her indifference to the risks prevented her from saying no.

"Nora will be fine," she says.

Nora stands next to her, a child inhabiting a woman's body, and says nothing.



LIFESTYLE

EVENTS

FILM

Cairo International Film Festival


The 35th annual CIFF opened last month and you can expect an assortment of Egyptian and international cinema to last you the entire autumn. Some of the films have discussion and Q&As, so be sure to check.

Cairo Opera House
El Borg Gezira
Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2739 0114
5 December all day

The Edge of The Image

This screening explores the changes and technological transitions in the history of cinema and its visual language. Attendance is free.

Cinatheque
19a Adly Street
5th Floor, Apt. 29
Downtown, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2395 1386
5 December 10am

Weather 	
Wednesday, December 5	
Alexandria	25°C / 16°C
Aswan	33°C / 19°C
Cairo	23°C / 15°C
Hurghada	28°C / 20°C
Luxor	31°C / 18°C
Sharm El-Sheikh	31°C / 20°C
Suez	23°C / 12°C

Bite Me Cairo: A Passion for India

By David Blanks

"When two Englishmen meet, they talk about the weather," said PJ as we sampled his spinach soup, "but when two Bengalis meet, they talk about food." The soup, like many of PJ's dishes, was smooth and creamy, but without cream; it had a deep flavour profile, rich in herbs and spices, but without too much heat. The conversation was equally rich and smooth, with laughter and anecdotes, a deep knowledge of Indian cuisine, and an enduring pride in Indian history and culture. Probal Bhat-tacharyya is a man with a passion for India.

PJ and his wife, Dalal, opened their first restaurant, Tandoor Mahal, in Achrafieh, Beirut in 2000. It was, by all accounts, modest, warm, welcoming, and authentic: just like this charming couple. Sadly for the Lebanese, but fortuitously for us, politics intervened, and they eventually moved to Cairo where they opened Nawab, 21B, Baghat Ali Street, Zamalek in 2009.

A *nawab* is a sort of prince. It was an honorary title bestowed by the Mughal emperors on important landowners in northern India in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were men of leisure, and one of their pastimes, like other Muslim nobles in North Africa, Arabia, Persia and Turkey, was food. Mughlai cuisine, the dominant trend in Indian restaurant food world-wide, was born of this tradition.

Having grown up in Calcutta, and having learned these traditions in his homeland, PJ was somewhat dismayed that he could not find good Indian food on his extensive travels as a corporate executive. So when he met his *begum*, Dalal, who shares his passion for Indian cookery, they decided to go into the restaurant business together. A *begum* is the prince's wife, and their latest venture, Begum, 34, Road 276,



Foodist at work

Maadi, is every bit as authentic, warm and welcoming as the Zamalek branch.

My own princess and I were delighted to learn about the history of Mughlai cuisine from PJ and Dalal as we sampled their *bahjis*, *pakor*as and *pappadoms* in anticipation of a full on Indian feast. This is the real deal. The only Indian restaurant that even comes close in Cairo is the Mughal Room at the Mena House Oberoi, but Nawab and Begum are both more affordable and more accessible.

There are some other regional dishes available, such as *Balti masalas* from Kashmir and *Vindaloo* from the east coast, but the heart and soul of the menu is northern Indian cuisine with all its familiar dishes, many of which are prepared in a clay tandoor oven over natural charcoal.

We tried the lamb *korma dillpasand* which, like all of Begum's food, was steeped in spices and aromatics in a subtle rather than overpowering fashion; the prawns *malai kebab*, which are a Bengali specialty; the chicken *pasanda*, which is stuffed with and baked in a thick sauce of cashews and almonds reminiscent, in a way, of the famous Turkish *shar-kaseya*; and a baked *tandoori* white fish

marinated in ginger, garlic and tomatoes.

Something we especially loved was the fact that Begum is a haven for vegetarians. In addition to the spinach soup, we tasted the *palak paneer*, which is a cheese dish that PJ and Dalal make fresh in a way that cannot be found elsewhere in Cairo, and the aromatic *dal makhani*, a deep mixture of lentils and kidney beans. There are more than two dozen vegetarian dishes on the menu.

If you desire a sampling of all things authentically Indian, Begum does a noon brunch on Fridays that features street foods from across the continent including what is known as "Desi Chinese," an Indian version of Chinese that every local cook masters. In fact in India Desi Chinese and Moghulai dishes are often available in the same restaurant, and PJ and Dalal intend to open their own Desi Chinese restaurant next door to Begum sometime next year.

Another way to sample everything they have to offer is to get together a party of eight or more friends, call ahead, and have the chefs set up your own private buffet. Keep in mind that the restaurant itself is modest, and that they do not have an alcohol license, but if you bring your own party, it would be an excellent way for everyone to get the chance to try as many of the dishes as possible. Already Begum seems to be the restaurant of choice among visiting Indian tourists and the local Indian ex-patriate community and there could hardly be a stronger recommendation than that.

And if you have something particular in mind, or just want your own, private culinary tour of India, pass by and experiment. As we discovered, the *nawab* and *begum* of Indian food in Cairo are friendly and easy to talk to, and their passion for food pours out of the kitchen.

BITES FIL BEIT

By Iman Adel Abdel-Fattah

We love food. We love the real, down to earth, tried-and-tested, handed-down-through-the-generations, local Egyptian food. Here is your chance to learn how to make these local delicacies in your own home. And just so you know what to ask for, we have added how to say the ingredients in Arabic. No more excuses, off to the *souq*!



Bisilla bel gazar we sauce tamatam – Peas with carrots in tomato sauce

Ingredients

- ½ kg meat cubes – *lah-ma*
- ½ kg peas – *bi-sil-la*
- 3 medium carrots, in small cubes – *ga-zar*
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped – *ba-sal*
- 3 large, ripe tomatoes – *ta-ma-tam*
- 2 tbsp tomato paste – *sal-sa ta-ma-tam*
- 1 tsp margarine, or 2 tbsp oil – *sam-na* or *zeit*
- 1½ cup water – *ma-ya*
- salt and pepper – *malh* and *fil-fil*

Directions

- Heat the margarine or oil in a medium pan over medium heat. Add the onions and stir until they turn yellow. Add the meat cubes and fry until brown while stirring frequently.

- Shell the peas and wash well. And the peas and carrots to the meat and stir well. Add ½ cup water and leave to cook for about 15 minutes, adding water frequently.
- In the meantime, add the tomatoes with ½ cup water in a blender and blend until juiced. Add to the pan with the vegetables and meat. Add the tomato paste, ½ cup water, salt and pepper.
- Cover pan and reduce the heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Add more water when needed. Serve with plain rice or rice with shareya (fine, fried vermicelli pieces).

Note

- You can also add potatoes to the recipe. Peel, wash and cut the potatoes into bite sized cubes and add to recipe with peas and carrots. Follow the rest of the steps as stated above.

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