

Khaled Said's case set for retrial

ALEXANDRIA CRIMINAL COURT WILL EXAMINE THE CASE ON 1 JUNE

By Nouran El-Behairy

The criminal department of the Court of Cassation decided on Saturday to accept the appeals presented in the case of Khaled Said.

Both the prosecution and defendants appealed sentences issued in October 2011 against police officers Mahmoud Salah and Awad Ismail; the two policemen were sentenced seven years in prison for cruel treatment, wrongful arrest and torture.

Said was dragged outside an internet cafe and beaten by two policemen in Alexandria in 2010; they smashed his head against marble stairs which led to his death, according to witnesses. The police



Khaled Said as a young boy with his mother

then claimed he was a drug dealer who choked on a packet of drugs he swallowed.

An independent forensic report

showed the packet was forced into his throat after his death.

The Alexandria Criminal Court scheduled the retrial for 1 June. "This brings us back to square one," said Khaled Said's lawyer, Mahmoud Afify.

He added that the court can either toughen the punishment or mitigate it; it can also support the initial sentence.

"Anything is expected, the court can even find them not guilty and then my brother's rights will be lost forever," said Zahra, Said's sister.

Said was viewed as a victim of police brutality. His incident is widely viewed as one of the main reasons for igniting the 25 January Revolution in 2011.

6 April demands release of detainees

6 April Youth Movement protest outside the High Court building calling for release of detained activists

By Joel Gulhane

Members of the 6 April Youth Movement gathered outside the High Court building in central Cairo on Saturday afternoon demonstrating for the release of detained activists.

Around 100 people stood on the steps outside the entrance to the Prosecutor General's office and called out the names of detainees such as Ahmed Doma, Abdela Rahman Mohsen, Youseff "Joseph El-Ostura" Ali, Hassan Mustafa and Omar Emad. Each name was followed by a cry of "Freedom" from the demonstrators.

The movement organised this demonstration earlier in the week and insisted on going ahead despite the arrest of cofounder and coordinator of the group Ahmed Maher on Friday night at Cairo airport.

Maher travelled to the US to take part in a conference in Washington DC, hosted by the New America Foundation. He participated in a panel discussing Egypt's democratic transition last week.

The US State Department confirmed in a Friday press briefing that during his visit, Maher met with "several senior State Department officials". This, according to the State Department, is common practice when Egyptian politicians and activists visit the US.

Maher was released by the pros-



Ahmed Maher (middle) outside the High Court building

ecution on Saturday morning after the movement's lawyers appealed the four-day detention pursued by the prosecution.

Maher was charged for his involvement with organising a protest outside Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim's house at the end of March, during which members of the movement threw ladies' undergarments at the house. At the time police arrested four men in

connection with the demonstration and Maher will now be investigated alongside them.

Maher was present outside the court in a car marked with the 6 April symbol.

Media spokesperson for the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) Murad Aly said that even if they disagree with some of the actions of the youth movement, the FJP condemns Maher's arrest. The Salaf

Reform and Renaissance Party expressed a similar sentiment, condemning the way in which Maher was arrested, regardless of the party's opinions of him and the 6 April Youth Movement.

The spokesperson for the group, Khaled El-Masry, stressed earlier on Saturday that the protest was unrelated to Maher's arrest and intended to call for the release of all detained activists.

Military denies 'killed Egyptians' rumour

States that 85 were arrested as they attempted to enter Libya illegally

By Fady Salah

The official spokesperson for the military denied on Friday rumours claiming that 50 Egyptians were killed by Libyan air forces near the Egyptian-Libyan border.

"The Egyptian Armed Forces asserts that reports claiming that several Egyptians were killed by Libyan air forces as they attempted to enter the Libyan territories are totally false," read a statement published on the defence minister's official Facebook page.

Reports claiming that several Egyptians were killed by Libyan air forces as they attempted to enter the Libyan territories are totally false

The statement said the real story was 85 people being arrested while attempting to enter Libya illegally. However, the spokesperson did not mention whether the arrested

were all Egyptians or not. The statement called on the media to be cautious when dealing with such sensitive news, as it might affect Egyptian-Libyan relations, according to the statement.

Several media outlets reported that 50 Egyptians were killed by Libyan air forces on Friday. The rumour went viral after a YouTube video was broadcast, where people claimed it shows the incident. However, the video turned out to be an older video that did not include Egyptians.

Protests planned for Nakba memorial

6 April Youth Movement (democratic front) among the organisers of protests

By Hend Kortam

Several days of protests and activities are planned to mark the 64th anniversary of the Nakba, when Israel declared independence in 1948.

The 6 April Youth Movement (democratic front) is among the groups organising events. Media spokesperson for the movement Mostafa Al-Hagari said the events start with a seminar on Saturday regarding the right of Palestinian

refugees to return to their homes in Palestine.

The seminar will be followed by a protest on Monday. The protest will be held outside the British embassy in Cairo, and protesters plan to draw pro-Palestinian graffiti on the walls of the embassy.

On Wednesday 15 May, a protest will be held outside the Arab League. The theme of the protest will also be the right of return. Arabs commemorate the Nakba on 15 May.

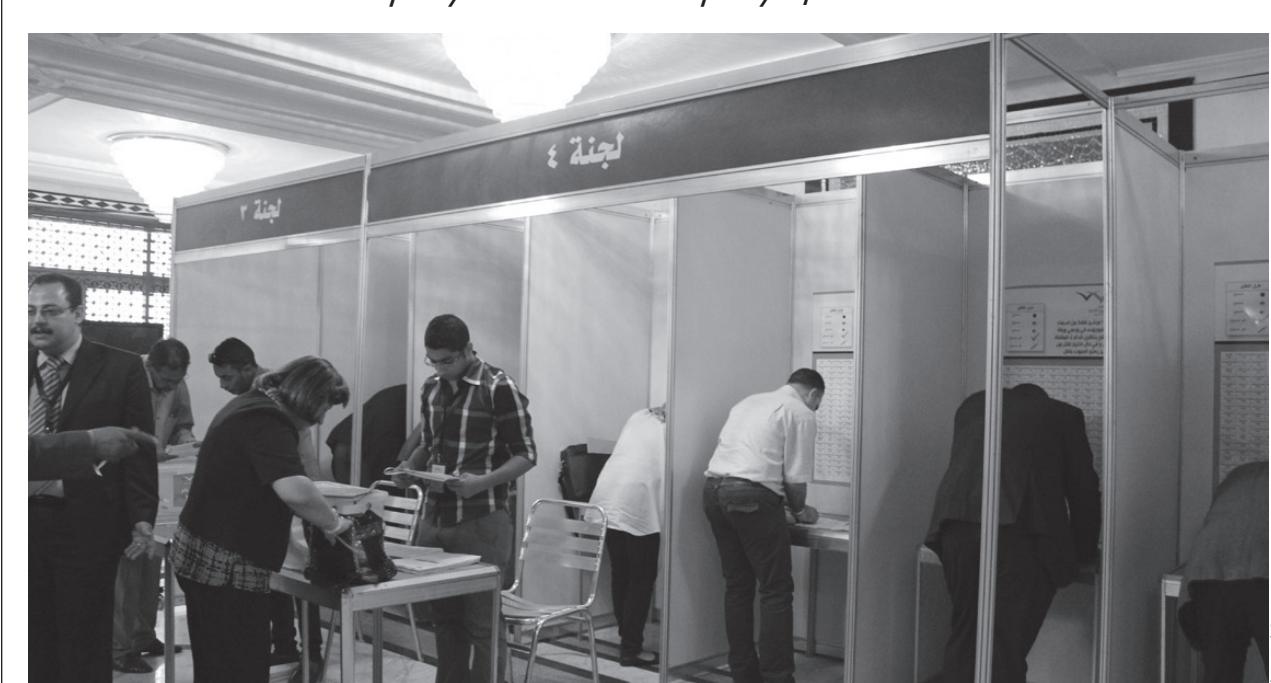
Nakba, Arabic for catastrophe, commemorates one day after Israel's declaration of independence, made on 14 May 1948 after the Arab-Israeli War.

"There is coordination that the protest takes place at the same time as protests in other Arab countries," Al-Hagari said.

He added that the movement is also coordinating with other political groups to see if they will join the activities.

Free Egyptians Party elects chairman

Ahmed Said re-elected as party chairman in the party's first internal elections



Members of the Free Egyptians Party cast their votes

By Nouran El-Behairy

The Free Egyptians Party held their internal elections on Friday to choose a party chairman and 100 members of the supreme committee.

Ahmed Said was re-elected party chairman with 734 votes, defeating Ehab Al-Tamawy who got 266 votes, while 234 party members competed over the 100 seats of the party's supreme committee.

The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, the Hesham Mubarak Law

Centre, the Shyfekom movement and the Danish-Egyptian Dialogue Institute monitored the party's elections. The party counted votes electronically as well as manually to ensure transparency.

Prominent political figures including Head of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party (ESDP) Mohamed Aboul Ghar, former presidential candidate and leader of Al-Tayar Al-Sha'ab, Hamdeen Sabahi, Councillor Tahani El-Gebaly and National Salvation Front leader Osama El-Ghazali Harb attended the elections.

"After the elections, the supreme committee will elect the secretary general of the party within a month," said Shehab Wagih, the official spokesperson. He added that the electoral process was transparent and well-organised.

Mohamed Saad El-Katany, chairman of the Freedom and Justice Party, congratulated Said on his re-election. He added that he hoped the new era will see increased cooperation between the Free Egyptians and other political groups to achieve the goals of the 25 January Revolution.

Detainees in Tanta released on bail

PRISONERS ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED CONNECTION TO VIOLENCE FREED UNTIL TRIAL RECONVENES

By Basil El-Dabh

Five individuals who had been arrested for alleged connections to violence near the Muslim Brotherhood headquarters on 22 March were released on EGP 1,000 bail on Saturday.

The hearing was the first in the trial against the defendants, and was postponed to 14 July.

Khaled Al-Dweik, Fahed Abdel Mekid, Ayman Abdel Moneim,

Mohamed Al-Azab, and Youssef Al-Sayed were arrested two days after clashes took place in Moqattam between supporters and opponents of the Muslim Brotherhood. The five were transferred to Damietta prison following their arrests.

Before the court decided to release the defendants, clashes broke out outside the Tanta Criminal Court in Gharbia governorate where protesters chanted against President Mohamed

Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. The defendants face charges of destroying public property, disrupting traffic, and inciting violence.

The violence last March started when protesters marched towards the Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters in Moqattam and clashed with security forces, as well as supporters of the Brotherhood.

More than 200 people were injured during the violence.



Clashes erupted outside the main headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood in March

Coptic teacher remains in prison

Amnesty International calls for teacher's release as court renews her detention

The detention of a Christian school-teacher in Luxor was renewed on Saturday for an additional 15 days, pending investigation.

Demiana Abdel Nour, a 24-year-old social studies teacher in Luxor, presented herself to the public prosecution last Wednesday in response to complaints filed by parents of three students accusing her of insulting religion.

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) researcher Ishak Ibrahim said the complaints claimed that Abdel Nour—who teaches at Sheikh Sultan primary school—insulted religion and the Prophet Muhammad by saying that the late

on the Egyptian authorities not to prosecute individuals based on blasphemy laws, which criminalise criticism of religious beliefs or insulting beliefs," read a statement issued by the international organisation.

"It is outrageous that a teacher finds herself behind bars for teaching a class," said Hassiba Sahraoui, Middle East and North Africa programme deputy director at Amnesty International, in the statement. "If she made some professional mistake, or deviated from the school curriculum, an internal review should have sufficed."

Last September Beshoy Kamel was sentenced to six years in jail in Sohag;

three years for insulting Islam, allegedly for sharing offensive images of the Prophet Mohamed on Facebook, two years for insulting the president, and one for insulting the person who filed the case against him.

Nevine El-Sayed, a Coptic social studies teacher in Assiut, was arrested for contempt of religion, but was released in October when it was proven that the student whose parents filed the complaint was not in class the day the alleged incident took place.

Ibrahim pointed out that the lack of a clear definition for "contempt of religion" leaves the fate of such complaints to the opinions of some judges.

It's outrageous that a teacher is behind bars for teaching a class. If she made some professional mistake or deviated from the school curriculum an internal review should have sufficed

Pope Shenouda III performed more miracles than the Prophet, and allegedly placed her hand on her stomach to convey nausea when mentioning the Prophet's name.

Ibrahim added that the school's administration as well as ten other students have confirmed that there is no truth to the allegations. The EIPR researcher added that Abdel Nour had declared a hunger strike while in detention and was hospitalised on Friday.

Amnesty International has since called for the release of Abdel Nour. "On numerous occasions, Amnesty International has called

dent stood outside the courtroom carrying his picture while families of those who died in the 25 January revolution stood on the other side chanting against him. No clashes were reported among the two parties.

The trial was adjourned for half an hour to collect the demands of the many civil rights lawyers present in court. The session was then resumed to announce the postponement of the retrial so that the evidence could be more fully examined.

The court is expected to look into a report issued by the fact-finding mission established by President Mohamed Morsi in 2012.

Hosni Mubarak, his sons Alaa and Gamal, fugitive businessman Hussein Salem, former Minister of Interior Habib El-Adly and 6 of his aides face charges of killing protesters, squandering public funds and exporting natural gas to Israel.

Mubarak's retrial postponed

Judge postpones trial to 8 June so evidence can be examined

By Nouran El-Behairy

North Cairo Criminal Court Head Judge Mahmoud Kamel postponed the retrial of ousted President Hosni Mubarak, his two sons and his Minister of Interior Habib El-Adly until 8 June.

"The postponement gives civil rights lawyers the chance to coordinate on the case," said Khalaf Bayoomi, a civil rights lawyer.

The prosecution and defence had appealed the court's sentence issued in June 2012, which sentenced Mubarak and El-Adly to life sentences for failing to stop the deaths of protesters, and a retrial was set for Saturday.

On Saturday the defendants arrived at the Fifth Settlement Police Academy amid tight security and pleaded not guilty in front of the court; the retrial was broadcast live on state television.

Supporters of the ousted presi-

Tamarod members in Sohag arrested

The campaign members were released on Saturday afternoon after being arrested while collecting signatures for a petition demanding Mohamed Morsi's removal

By Hend Kortam

At least three members of the Tamarod campaign were arrested outside Sohag University on Saturday.

They were released later in the day after pressure from different political groups and parties, which gathered outside the police station where they were being kept.

Islam Al-Rayan, a member of the campaign in Sohag governorate, said the arrest took place at 11am outside the university while the members were collecting signatures for a petition demanding Mohamed Morsi's removal from the presidency. "It is a peaceful campaign," he said.

Al-Rayan claimed a lot of people were ready to give their signatures when "youth from the Muslim Brotherhood started antagonising us". He

said the campaigners ignored them when the Muslim Brotherhood's youth "got the university security to arrest the students".

The official spokesperson for Muslim Brotherhood students could not be reached for comment.

While Tamarod's Facebook page said only three were arrested, Al-Rayan said the detainees are four. He named Mohamed Yousef, Yehia Al-Zaq, Yehia Mekki and Mosab Hamdan.

Another member of the campaign in Sohag, Ala'a Adel, said people were gathered outside the university gates waiting to see what would happen to the arrested campaign members. After their arrest, they were taken to the university president's office.

Eventually, the police arrived and took the Tamarod members into custody.

Al-Rayan said the Tamarod campaign will be filing a complaint against the Muslim Brotherhood Youth and university security, which he described as "complicit" for arresting people who were outside the university campus.

He added members from different political parties gathered outside the police station where the members were detained to denounce the arrest.

Tamarod, or "Rebellion", is a petition campaign that was launched in late April to gather signatures disapproving of President Mohamed Morsi. The campaign is also calling for early presidential elections.

The campaign is aiming to collect 15 million signatures before 30 June, the day that will mark Morsi's one year anniversary in power.

Protests in Cairo over Suez Canal development

Popular Front for Suez Canal Axis protests outside Press Syndicate, Port Said criticises law in popular conference

Continued from page 1

Article 6 grants the general authority's chairman ministerial power over the region, but states that the Ministers of Defence, Interior, Justice and the chairman of the Suez Canal Authority will retain their authority. Al-Beshr criticised the idea of granting the general authority ministerial powers without holding them accountable to the legislative authority.

"If the Shura Council approves this law, it would be ceding its authority to legislate to the president," Al-Beshr said.

This, Al-Beshr wrote, violates Articles 1 and 5 of the constitution. Article 1 states that Egypt is "a unified, un-divided country", and Article 5 states that the Egyptian people are the "source of authority".

Minister of Defence Abdul Fatah Al-Sisi told state-owned Al-Ahram on Saturday that the Armed Forces' demands regarding the proposed law had immediately been met.

Article 13 of the proposed law states that the ownership of all state-owned lands inside the Suez Canal region would be devolved to the region's authority except lands of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Interior and the Suez Canal Authority. Article 15 prevents the authority from disposing of the lands unless through usufruct, excluding

residential areas.

Article 10 categorises the authority funds as 'private'. Article 14 gives the authority the right to strip individuals of their private properties within the Suez Canal region for the general interest of the state. Al-Beshr criticised this authority, questioning whether it

If the Shura Council approves this law, it would be ceding its authority to legislate to the president

could be used to grant the region's authority private funds.

"This law exempts investors in the region from taxes and customs," said Kamal. "It nullifies the jurisdiction of the labour law as well as the customs law within the Suez Canal region."

Article 27 of the proposed law gives investing companies a number of perks. Companies would receive exemptions of trade and industrial activity taxes for ten years, stamp taxes and documentation fees for three years, and customs taxes on all imports necessary for the company's establishment such as machinery and instruments.

Article 7 states that the authority's administration would consist of 15 members, appointed by the president. They include the chairman, who would also take the title of deputy prime minister, alongside 14 other members, one of which would be appointed as deputy chairman. The 14 members must include two members with financial experience, two investors, three members with engineering and administrative experience and five members representing the governorates making up the region.

Article 1 of the law states that the borders of the Suez Canal region are to be outlined by a presidential decree. It added that the region includes East Port Said, northwest of the Suez Gulf, the Ain Sokhna Port region, and the Technology Valley in Ismailia, among other areas in the region.

Former Prime Minister Essam Sharaf, who was among the advisory team for the Suez Canal development project, resigned with his team on 24 April. Taher Hozayn, a former member of the advisory team, told Al-Ahram the resignation came after the governmental aid they were promised by the government was inexplicably withdrawn and the cabinet drafted the proposed law without consulting them.



Supporters of ousted president Hosni Mubarak rallied outside the Police Academy during Saturday's court session

Ahmed Al-Maliki

Foreign maids: a flourishing new market in Egypt



Ehab Shalaby

Nigerian maids babysitting children in a kids' area at a shopping mall

By Ehab Shalaby

It's a typical scene in one of Cairo's most well known shopping areas, abuzz with families popping in and out of stores and stalls. To maximise their shopping experience, many parents have dropped their children off in a specialised kids' area attached to the mall. Even a cursory glance into the fully-packed kids' zone reveals the situation clearly. The majority of the children are accompanied by foreign babysitters. There is no doubt that the market for foreign maids in Egypt is on the rise, with six out of ten babysitters of African descent, and only one of the remaining four Egyptian.

About five years ago, only well off families had a foreign maid at home, most probably a Filipino dressed in a white uniform who was paid in US dollars. But inside an average Egyptian household, it was customary to have an Egyptian servant who came in once or twice a week for general cleaning, or else a teenage housemaid who permanently stayed in the house with a pre-agreed monthly vacation. Nowadays, the situation is vastly different. Many families have approached maid agencies to help them employ a foreign servant due to the unavailability of Egyptian maids. One of the primary reasons: many women in Egypt, especially working mothers, believe that there are potentially more problems with having an Egyptian domestic servant rather than a foreign maid.

Hanan Al-Moussa, a 35-year-old working mother, says she has stopped hiring Egyptian servants because of the "many bad experiences" she has had. "Many of them have stolen my jewellery, money and children's clothes... This is in addition to the poor quality of service they provide," she says. Al-Moussa, who is away from her house for 40 working hours per week, also says Egyptian maids are not as responsible as foreign maids. "There is a really big difference between having an Egyptian babysitter who you know through a friend or relative, and a foreign maid who comes in through an agency," she says. If a foreign maid steals anything from the house, the responsible agent knows how to either deduct the costs from her salary or to return the stolen items to the house, explains Al-Moussa. "This is unlike Egyptian maids who are mostly thieves and cannot shoulder the responsibility of the entire house," she says.

But Amira Saleh disagrees. "I have had many difficulties bringing a foreign maid into my home. They don't understand what we say and their English is not so good. Most of them take at least three months to get accustomed to the house system," she says. Saleh had a Nigerian house-

keeper for almost four months and says the servant was "very slow... I would ask her to make me a cup of tea and she would make coffee with milk instead."

Foreign maids are usually divided into categories based on experience. African immigrants, mainly coming from Nigeria, Ghana or Guinea, do not mind cleaning and babysitting at the same time. Newcomers who have been in Egypt less than three months earn about \$400 a month. Just one year ago, inexperienced Nigerian maids used to accept a monthly salary of \$350. "Now the situation is different... They ask for more money because the demand is increasing every day," says Essam Abdel Hamid, a maid agent who has been working in the field for more than seven years.

He says that experienced African maids, who have been working in Egypt for more than a year, usually do not agree to do both housekeeping and babysitting. "They ask to do only one of the jobs because they feel they are more qualified than the newer, inexperienced ones," he says.

Abdel Hamid explains that an average African house helper works for 26 days with four days of vacation per month. "Some agree to sell their holidays while others do not... It depends on the agreement the maid has with the Madame (employer)," he elaborates.

A community of Nigerian maids

Dammy Oyinda, a Nigerian servant who has been in Egypt for over a year, says she used to work as a babysitter and a cleaner at the same time for about eight months, but now she only accepts cleaning assignments. "It is very hectic to work both. If the load is too much I can just change houses after three months," she says. Oyinda explains that a group of about 30 Nigerian girls gather at the house of their Nigerian agent Khadija. "She is the one who brokers the deals to bring girls from Nigeria to Egypt. The agreement is that we come to Egypt and pay her our salary for the first year before we can save our own money," she says.

Oyinda, whose Egyptian name is Salwa, is Christian, but she sometimes had to lie and claim she was a Muslim when she was working for a Muslim family. Speaking on how she finds work in Egypt, Salwa says she suffered a lot in the first three months and couldn't change her job, but then she got used to the nature of the work. Originally a hairdresser in Nigeria, Oyinda says she had to come to Egypt to send money to her four-year-old daughter back home. "I want to make money here so when I go back to Nigeria, I can give people money, not ask them for money," she says.

Nigerian maids are divided in Egypt exactly as they are in their

homeland. Muslim servants come from the North and Christians are mainly from the South. "We do not speak the same language, but we are a growing number in Egypt," Oyinda says, explaining that sometimes the large influx of Nigerian maids in Egypt leaves many unemployed. "A Madame can replace us anytime because there are hundreds of other Nigerian maids who are available to work instantly," she says.

Khadija, who brings Nigerian girls to Egypt, travels every month to mediate agreements for more Nigerians who want to come for work. "Every month I return with about 20 new girls. They stay at my house and I take care of them," she says. Upon their arrival, most Nigerians are able to secure five-year entry visas.

Oyinda says she usually turns to Khadija if she faces any difficulties with her Madame. "Sometimes my Madame wants to buy my holiday and I want to go and rest, so I call my agent to intervene," she says.

Other Nigerian maids come with their husbands, who are usually workers in Egypt or students at Al-Azhar University. Rahmat Hussein is one of these. "I accompanied my husband who studies at [Al-Azhar] University. I have to work to help him. This is my first month in Egypt and I am happy," she says. African maids who have families in Egypt do not usually sell their holidays. Aisha, maid from Guinea, says her husband does not allow her to sell her vacation because it is the only time they can meet. "He studies in the university and I have to work to help him with the accommodation costs. It is not easy working for an Egyptian family," she says.

Abdel Hamid says that his office works closely with Nigerian agents. "They come with a couple of girls every day and wait in the office hall until a family calls for a suitable maid," he says, explaining that he takes in their passports to guarantee that they will come back to the office in case any problems occur with the house they have been working in. Abdel Hamid says most Egyptian households prefer maids from Ethiopia, and they have to take one day off every week. "They are cleaner than the Nigerians and the Ghanians, but some people are afraid they carry HIV," he claims.

Hala Amin, a mother of three, says she is always concerned about the health status of foreign maids. "It is easier to have a foreign maid, but I am always afraid they carry illness. I have to send them for blood tests to make sure they are healthy," she says. Abdel Hamid does not conduct medical tests for African or Asian maids, but says the office can perform the checkups for extra fees.

The maids of Southeast Asia

Abdel Hamid says that Indonesians and Filipinos are considered the "best" in the foreign maid market in Egypt, often earning the highest salaries in comparison to their counterparts. "An average Indonesian maid earns \$700 a month and the average Filipino asks for \$750 to \$800," he explains. Nesma Mohsen, who has an Indonesian maid named Fatima, says she is satisfied with the maid, but says the only problem with her is that she refuses to take care of the children for long periods. "She came in as a cleaner so she does not accept working as a babysitter at the



Nigerian maid Dammy Oyinda after finishing the daily chore of cleaning the kitchen

Ehab Shalaby

all of us and at the end of the day it is better for us to work in a public place," she says. Safaa, her colleague, who works as a nanny in the same nursery, says she stopped working in houses because she found it "humiliating". "When I used to work as a cleaner in a house, I was ashamed to tell my friends or relatives about my work. Also, the financial compensation is very unfair," she says. An average nanny in a middle-class nursery earns from EGP 900 to 1200 a month. "We also earn overtime for extra hours worked in the nursery," Noura says.

With the rising number of foreign maids working in Egypt, Safaa and Noura believe that the demand for Egyptian servants is decreasing. "Many women prefer to have foreign maids because they believe they are more obedient and cleaner. But it depends from one Madame to another," Safaa says. Noura says that she knows of working mothers who send their kids to nursery and others who hire a foreign babysitter to stay with the children at home.

"Many complain that their care for children is not like ours. We speak the same language and we know how to pamper the kids and play with them," Noura says. There are, however, some Egyptian maids who still prefer to work in houses, like wives of porters in several Cairo neighbourhoods. Many of them continue to seek jobs as domestic cleaners to provide extra income for their families. Others have been serving families for many years and their commitment to them obliges them to stay in their position. Karima, who has worked with the same family for more than 10 years, says it is hard for her to start seeking a new job even if the salary is higher.

"I have been working with this family for ages. I saw their major events and happenings and I feel I am part of the family," she says, adding that as she is getting older her Madame is thinking about hiring a foreign maid to assist in the daily work, but that she would never let go of Karima. "Foreign maids can never replace Egyptian servants. They are temporary workers and will go back to their countries at some point. It is us who will be supportive to the families we work with for long periods," says Karima.

Despite the decreasing demand for Egyptian servants, many working mothers remain indecisive on whether to hire a foreign maid who provides a more stable service for a higher financial cost, or to rely on Egyptian cleaners who find it easier to switch between jobs and are considered by some to represent a riskier choice when hiring home help.



Nigerian maids commonly perform domestic cleaning or babysitting roles

Ehab Shalaby

The Brotherhood's democratic failures

Congratulations everyone, the Muslim Brotherhood is back, this time bigger and better, reaching further and deeper into everything. This absurd statement is unfortunately the overall meaning of the chain of events starting with the Cabinet reshuffle and ending last night with the arrest of Ahmad Maher.

First of all, the issue is not one of individuals. We just happen to know Mona, Alaa and Maher; but the three of them would tell you there are thousands who've seen worse and have not even been heard. The aggression and violence against individuals is nothing new. Second, the issue is neither one of merely a bad choice of government. The real issue is the presence of organised attempts to take over state institutions, consolidate the presence of the Brotherhood in specific sectors, form a Brotherhood entourage in sectors where the Brotherhood has no powerful presence, and use the state apparatus, whether executive or judicial, to corner the Brotherhood's opposition. Ahmad Maher is one ring in a long power-hungry chain of Muslim Brotherhood governance.

The overall meaning of this past week is a definite blow to all hopes of democratic governance by the Muslim Brotherhood. The concept of national interest itself is not present within Muslim Brotherhood actions and proposed laws.

Starting with the Cabinet reshuffle, the President and the Brotherhood restated their apathy towards all other voices. The unexplained insistence on Qandil as Prime Minister despite his repeated failure demonstrates that the Brotherhood is not looking for an efficient Prime Minister; they're looking for a docile one.

And as a result, Qandil and some of his ministers survived, including the very unique minister of information. Meanwhile, all economy-related ministries are under Brotherhood control, like investment and international cooperation. At the same time, new Muslim Brotherhood sympathisers or entourage members started to appear in places where the Muslim Brotherhood does not have a direct presence, mainly the judiciary and culture. The new minister of justice, after all, is one of the engineers of the electoral procedure that unjustly and manipulatively brought the Muslim Brotherhood to where they are today. On the other hand, the new minister of culture was a regular writer in the Freedom and Justice newspaper. The model currently implemented by President Morsi closely resembles models implemented by Mubarak



ZIAD AKL

with the Nazif government.

While trying to further consolidate their presence in the executive and the judiciary, the Muslim Brotherhood starts to use the apparatus of the state to arrest political activists for reasons that they claim to be legal, but are in fact political. Strange accusations void of content against

Mona Seif, Alaa Abdel Fattah and Ahmad Maher started to appear. There is an attempt to lower the ceiling of political activism and narrow down the present political opportunities by the Muslim Brotherhood. The main tool used in this process is political activists' unlawful arrest.

If you put executive control next to

to entourage in the judiciary next to activist arrest next to the draft judicial authority law proposed in the Shura Council, the final result would be a ruling regime that does the best it can to stay in power and to monopolise it. A regime that turned its back on its promises, like the Muslim Brotherhood did, cannot be trusted to carry out a transparent democratisation procedure. What we're witnessing now are very early signs of the collapse of the Muslim Brotherhood pseudo-democracy.

Therefore, what is really at risk is democracy, the overall meaning of our revolution, and the dignity of each and every memory. If we remain silent and allow the Brotherhood to impose its corrupt autocratic regime on us, all the revolution's values and principles will be meaningless. Those who think that they can rule Egypt with a fake corrupt democracy must be stopped.

PS. Hats off to the Free Egyptians Party, finally a promising political party.

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Calling all animal activists

Six days ago, three grizzly bears died at Giza Zoo.

Reports on the news stated that the three female bears were fighting over a male.

Thus ensued a slew of jokes about the prowess of the male bear, though how someone can find such negligence on the part of the zoo- hilarious escapes me.

Two days later, the Al-Watan newspaper broke the story; the three bears died because of a sedative overdose, leading to two falling over and breaking several bones, while the remaining one drowned.

A photo of a starving lioness at Alexandria Zoo ignited anger last August, gaining international scrutiny from animal rights activists. The zoo manager assured them the case was under control. A day later, the lioness died.

In November 2011, a lioness cub was rescued from an enclosure in the Red Sea and placed in Giza Zoo, which is supposed to act as a rescue centre if necessary. Mimi the cub was given to the zoo and several well-meaning animal lovers donated blankets, toys and their time to help her transition. Mimi died a month later.

Similar stories of the negligence of the seven governmental zoos in Egypt can be easily dug up. One only has to walk through one of them to see the abuse; malnourished lions, hippos swimming in filthy ponds, wild dogs injured and left untreated, seals that perform tricks on command, brown bears spoon-fed and petted by visitors

You do not have to be a specialist to see the abuse first-hand.

Giza Zoo, because it is located in the capital, gets the lion's share of media attention, followed by Alexandria Zoo. The conditions of the other governmental zoos in Beni Suef, Fayoum, Kafr El-Sheikh, Mansoura, and Tanta are even worse. Puny and injured animals suffering from malnourishment is a major concern.

One of the worst kinds of exploitation of wild animals in Egyptian zoos is what is commonly known as a "photo session". You pay EGP 20 and you can have your photo taken with your choice of wild baby animals- lion cubs, peacocks, monkeys, and more.

Parents flock to the photo sessions, wanting to appease their children's desire for a photo with a lion cub. It does not matter that human-animal contact is dangerous because of the transfer of viruses which can lead to the animal's death and at times, the human's infection. Nor does it matter that teaching children such behaviour only reinforces the concept of treating animals as toys. What matters is making money.

The zoo keepers are given very low monthly salaries, around EGP 200. To make ends meet, they depend on tips from visitors who, in turn, require tricks from the animals. The keepers have to care about the animals because they are their livelihoods. Unlike zoo keepers aboard, they are not given any awareness or animal behaviour courses. Most of them gain experience on the job. Some have had their job for over 20 years; their responsibility, according to

one keeper, is to "keep the animal alive". If the animal dies, the keeper takes the fall even if there is administrative negligence. Thus it is a vicious cycle of covering negligence instead of fixing the problem.

The General Organisation of Veterinary Services (GOVS) headed by Osama Selim supervises all four animal-related sectors: public zoos, veterinarian quarantine, veterinarian preventive medicine, and slaughterhouses. Selim happens to be the head of the veterinary services as well, while Fatma Tamam is Giza Zoo director and head of the public zoos!

The duality of positions means that complaints fall into a vicious cycle; if an animal dies at Giza Zoo, a complaint is then filed to the zoo director, who is Tamam. All complaints against the zoo are handed to the head of the public zoos- Tamam- too. Complaints filed with the Environment Police are also handed to Tamam for investigation!

In a country where people can barely make ends meet, animals do not rank high on the important issues list.

So why keep zoos functional? Money!

The money made out of yearly visitors is reported in the millions (the actual budget remains a top secret issue so far). Egyptians, who are quite poor, find that zoos are their only possible outing because of the low-priced tickets, particularly during holidays. Of course, the huge numbers of visitors, animals suffer a different kind of maltreatment; visitors ag-



SARA ABOU BAKR

itate them and some even throw hot drinks on them to "get a reaction". Last week, during the Easter holiday, children were filmed shooting at the antelopes with a BB gun!

To have a zoo is a responsibility. Animals cannot talk or express their pain, and so if one is not up to such a responsibility, it should be given up.

Activists have started an online petition to close down all seven governmental zoos, calling them "hellholes for animals".

Until Egypt can step up to its responsibilities, we call upon all animal activists in every country to help us close down these hellholes and find an alternative for these suffering animals.

"Of all the animals, man is the only one that is cruel. He is the only one that inflicts pain for the pleasure of doing it."

Mark Twain

s.aboubakr@thendailynewsegypt.com

The popular myth of the 'unpopular Ikhwan'

We all know it or seem to think we know it; we like to advance several pieces of evidence to suggest this infamously statement: "The Muslim Brotherhood's popularity is going down the drain!" However, we never seem to follow this notorious assumption with an important question: So what?

If only the world of politics was a popularity contest, this very popular myth would actually hold water. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, this notion is as close to a daydream as it is to reality. There are two main reasons why this statement will never materialise into any sort of progress or meaningful change, at least for now.

First, this much touted loss of popularity never seems to give rise to anyone else's popularity. It

is a loss in a vacuum. Let's survey quickly the status of the opposition and how they have managed to make advances in light of the allegedly dwindling popularity of Muslim Brotherhood.

The National Salvation Front (NSF) which has surfaced as the most eligible suitor for this loss in popularity is in a perpetual state of disarray. While former presidential candidate Amr Moussa, alongside other leaders, venomously rejects the notion that the NSF is crumbling, the front has walked away from several opportunities to score any significant advances or offer viable alternatives to the situation. Furthermore, this makeshift coalition is destined to be torn at the ideological level as it is comprised of all the currents of the political spectrum from leftists

to social democrats to conservative right-wingers. It is opposition by mere brute force rather than dialogue. Even the "force" part is questionable!

The other remaining forces of opposition such as the Salafis are dealing with their own demons. On one hand, they are seeing their support base splintered between the emerging Al-Watan Party and the Hazem Salah Abu Ismail supporters, just to list a few. Moreover, the group cannot lead a staunch opposition, which would risk them appearing to side completely with the NSF, for fear of alienating their own support base.

Second, the true measure of popularity is determined by numbers at the polls. We spend all day long recounting the colossal missteps by the Muslim Broth-

erhood; in reality there are too many of those to count. But when it comes to polling, the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist groups at large have secured five wins at the polls, including the March 2011 constitutional referendum, the 2011 parliamentary elections for both chambers and the presidential elections, and finally they were able to pass the new constitution. Time and again their ground campaign machine has delivered them victory. While some people will debate the decisiveness of some of those victories as well as cast doubts due to polling irregularities, the facts do not change. No single party is capable of reaching the masses on such a broad scale as the Muslim Brotherhood. It was only former presidential candidate Ahmed



DR MAHMOUD FOUD

Shafiq who came close to throwing a wrench in their campaign by mustering an equally efficient ground campaign and almost harvesting this unpopularity.

Politics firmly remains a game

of numbers and mobilisation. You have to win an election to get a mandate. Winning elections is all about brute work and field campaigning rather than loud rhetoric, talk show appearances and meetings behind closed doors. There are not many options on the table but to engage in the electoral process to prove or debunk the myth. Many people have regrettably become disenchanted with this process because it has failed to deliver the results they expected. The new reality is however not about who has the best vision but rather who can control the crowd. Or as in the great words of Alexander Woollcott: "I'm tired of hearing it said that democracy doesn't work. Of course it doesn't work. We are supposed to work it!"

Egyptian government asks Turkey for help to revive economy

DISCUSS USE OF \$1BN TURKISH AID, TWO COUNTRIES TO DEVELOP AN INDUSTRIAL ZONE IN EGYPT

Continued from page 1

This was in addition to harnessing Turkish expertise to assist Egypt in the fields of education and commerce, said Prime Minister Hesham Qandil during a conference held with a number of Egyptian and Turkish businessmen as part of his visit to Turkey.

During his meeting with Turkish officials, El-Shater called on them to increase their rate of investment in Egypt, which currently stands at \$1.5bn yearly, stating his confidence in Egypt's current investment environment. Meanwhile Al-Sisi signed an agreement pledging to borrow \$250m to help strengthen the two nations' joint defence strategies.

Qandil, along with Abdel Samie, Darag and 150 Egyptian and Turkish businessmen, also conducted a meeting of the Turkish - Egyptian Business Council. During the meeting, calls were made to address repeated security lapses throughout the country. Abdel Samie stated that he would be meeting with representatives from Egypt's Ministry of Interior in the coming days to ensure that Egypt's economic trade zones were protected. He added that a regional director for Turkish affairs will soon be appointed after the outstanding problems regarding Turkish investment in Egypt are addressed.

Qandil also said that he had recently entrusted Minister of Indus-

try and Foreign Trade Hatem Saleh, and the Investment Minister Abdel Samie to study and review the establishment of a Turkish industrial zone in Egypt, in addition to devising new ways to improve the country's legislative environment to encourage free trade between the two nations in a way that will help promote investment.

The prime minister added that Turkey would provide Egypt by the end of the month with 150 new clean energy vehicles to be used immediately upon arrival.

Economic cooperation between the two countries was beneficial for both sides, Qandil said. He added that ties with Egypt would help Turkey better penetrate the African market, while Turkey could provide Egypt with valuable commercial links to Eastern European countries. He further pointed to the special relationship enjoyed between the two countries, and mutual efforts currently being made to promote sustainable cooperation, which would help increase rates of economic growth for both countries.

Qandil further called on Turkish investors to put their money into plans to further help develop the Suez Canal area, which took in more than \$5bn in revenue last year, a small amount compared to the nearly \$100bn the prime minister envisioned for the future. He added

that Egypt will soon reap the benefits of such a project, within the next few weeks to several months, adding that officials were working diligently to avoid making the same mistakes of the past that led to huge losses.

He further stated that the political will to undergo such a project was currently present on both sides.

The prime minister also explained Egypt was working to repair links with other foreign investors, who were currently suffering from economic hardships, forcing them to scale back investment. He pointed to the calming of the Egyptian street as evidence that investment would soon pour back into Egypt, improving the country's economic lot. Headed that the Shura Council was considering passing a new legislative package aimed at providing guarantees to investors in order to encourage future development. Qandil pointed to the government's desire to develop and improve maritime trade routes in order to facilitate the transport of exports between both countries.

He added that Egypt was becoming increasingly more stable politically and in terms of security, a fact which will eventually help lead to the outpouring of Turkish investment into the country.

He added that the goal of the conference is to help bring businessmen from the two countries together to help facilitate the signing of future



Prime Minister Hesham Qandil said he had instructed government ministers to study the establishment of a Turkish industrial zone in Egypt

Cabinet handout

contracts and overcome any fears or concerns held by local and foreign businessmen regarding Egypt's investment climate.

Qandil pointed out that Egyptians successfully threw out one of the world's most repressive dictators in a period of just 18 days, saying that now there was nowhere for the country to go but up.

He went on to say that while

Hosni Mubarak's regime ruled the country using emergency law, Egypt today was a nation governed by the rule of law that did not rely on the use of a repressive police force to maintain stability.

Qandil stated that Turkey served as a model both politically and economically for those seeking to promote democracy in the region and promote equality between various

sectors of society, one that other countries could learn and benefit from, particularly Egypt.

He went on to thank Turkey for the political and economic support the country has provided to Egypt since the earliest days of the revolution, saying that the former has always been quick to provide aid and support in order to help Egypt address its economic challenges.

Central Bank of Egypt announces key interest rates will not change

Key rates for loans will remain at 10.75% and rates for deposits will remain at 9.75%, Central Bank says

Egypt's Central Bank recently announced on its website that key interest rates on deposits and loans would remain unchanged after a meeting held by its committee for monetary policy.

In a statement the bank said that key interest rates for loans would remain at 10.75%, with those for deposits remaining at 9.75%, add-



Egypt's Central Bank said that key interest rates for loans would remain at 10.75%

Gold tumbles 1.5% as dollar prices rise

The price of gold decreased 1.5% last Friday as US dollar prices rose. This has led to the increase in sales of precious metals, whose value dropped to their lowest level in two weeks.

The price of gold immediately dropped 1.3% to \$1,438.51 per ounce at 6.28pm GMT. Previously, prices had dropped 2.5% to \$1,420.60.

Future trading in the COMEX division of the New York Mercantile Exchange dropped to \$1,436.60, their lowest rate since last July.

Meanwhile, the price of the dollar rose to its highest rate in four years on Friday compared to the yen and to European shares. The price of German bonds decreased, however, after the release of America's recent job figures, which turned out better than most had expected, leading Japanese investors to begin purchasing foreign bonds.

Last week's EGX30 index performance

Company Name	Reuters Code	Sector	Last Price	Close Price	Returns		Week Performance		Turn Over (EGP Mill.)	Volume Trade	Market Cap. (EGP Mill.)
					1-Week	YTD	12-Mths.	Max. Price			
Commercial Bank	COMI	Banks	33.6	33.33	7.03%	-3.59%	28.24%	33.60	30.60	38.86	1,165,973 19,931.39
NSGB	NSGB	Banks	28.15	28.53	1.89%	-18.97%	-4.07%	28.97	28.00	0.638	22,360 12,538.76
Ezz Steel	ESRS	Basic Resources	9.63	9.63	4.00%	-3.02%	35.25%	9.73	9.30	5.61	582,391 5,237.07
ELSWEDY ELECTRIC	SWDY	Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles	20.25	20.03	1.57%	-12.57%	-14.14%	20.25	19.80	0.167	8,354 4,423.68
MRRIDIVE	MOIL	Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles	1.1	1.11	0.00%	-4.31%	-10.48%	1.11	1.10	1.37	178,392 397.82
AIC Contracting	AIND	Financial Services excluding Banks	0.47	0.47	0.00%	-0.00%	-16.07%	0.47	0.46	1.362	2,898,274 251.27
Amer Group Holding	AMER	Financial Services excluding Banks	0.57	0.58	3.57%	-9.38%	-14.71%	0.58	0.56	1.88	3,244,685 1,732.63
EK Holding	EKHO	Financial Services excluding Banks	1.18	1.17	0.00%	-8.59%	6.36%	1.18	1.16	2.376	292,113 981.97
EFG-Hermes	HRHO	Financial Services excluding Banks	9.89	9.96	1.84%	-9.54%	-26.06%	10.06	9.76	21.36	2,145,460 4,792.51
Pioneers Holding	PIOH	Financial Services excluding Banks	4.16	4.19	3.20%	-13.79%	1.45%	4.24	4.08	1.916	457,505 2,105.00
Citadel Capital	CCAP	Financial Services excluding Banks	3.6	3.62	4.93%	-4.23%	-10.03%	3.67	3.80	11.56	3,194,644 2,320.70
Raya Holding	RAYA	Technology	5.47	5.44	0.93%	-3.89%	3.03%	5.48	5.40	0.373	68,672 350.66
Telecom Egypt	ETEL	Telecommunications	13.25	13.21	4.43%	-6.64%	1.62%	13.25	12.75	7.16	541,993 22,430.92
Orascom Telecom Media And Technology	OTMT	Telecommunications	0.50	0.50	2.04%	-9.09%	29.46%	0.51	0.49	2.553	5,095,599 2,675.30
Orascom Telecom	ORTE	Telecommunications	4.67	4.68	-0.43%	17.88%	39.70%	4.69	4.66	4.20	897,517 24,602.29
Sidi Kerir Petrochemicals	SKPC	Chemicals	12.53	12.54	0.80%	-5.36%	-1.26%	12.58	12.45	0.614	48,961 6,599.25
Egyptian Financial and Industrial	EFIC	Chemicals	9.33	9.23	4.77%	-6.96%	-16.24%	9.34	8.80	3.46	375,022 633.42
AMOC	AMOC	Oil and Gas	68.33	68.56	0.12%	-6.33%	-21.18%	68.90	68.24	0.456	6,652 5,924.54
Juhayna Food Industries	JUFO	Food and Beverage	9.07	9.09	3.53%	18.21%	104.73%	9.20	8.73	1.14	125,655 6,432.15
Orascom Construction Industries (OCI)	OCIC	Construction and Materials	241.98	240.29	-0.16%	-4.78%	-12.90%	241.99	239.16	13.776	57,329 50,333.27
Delta Construction & Rebuilding	DCRC	Construction and Materials	5.97	6.02	2.38%	-3.53%	7.12%	6.09	5.90	0.50	83,439 140.25
Modern Co. For Water Proofing	WATP	Construction and Materials	1.76	1.77	0.57%	-1.12%	-39.80%	1.80	1.66	1.587	896,959 181.56
Palm Hills	PHDC	Real Estate	2.26	2.27	4.61%	-6.97%	14.65%	2.30	2.18	19.49	8,594,444 2,390.17
TMG Holding	TMGH	Real Estate	4.09	4.11	3.01%	-7.22%	-4.20%	4.14	3.99	8.500	2,067,524 8,501.88
National Real Estate Bank	NRPD	Real Estate	17.33	17.57	4.58%	-11.89%	-13.15%	17.90	16.60	2.86	162,736 66.62
Six of October	OCDI	Real Estate	20.62	20.63	1.48%	1.48%	13.66%	20.90	20.40	3.357	162,745 1,888.79
El Kahera Housing & Development	ELKA	Real Estate	6.34	6.33	4.11%	-3.65%	38.21%	6.39	6.10	1.47	232,776 591.56
Arab Cotton Ginning	ACGC	Personal and Household Products	3.64	3.66	4.27%	-16.82%	35.56%	3.71	3.56	8.450	2,306,967 969.23
Oriental Weavers	ORWE	Personal and Household Products	21.3	21.36	-0.05%	-8.33%	16.45%	21.55	20.75	0.13	6,108 1,918.80
Egyptian Tourism Resorts	EGTS	Travel & Leisure	0.97	0.98	4.26%	-6.67%	-14.78%	0.99	0.94	1.079	1,103,172 1,018.50

Trading value and volume during the week

Markets	Trading Value (EGP Mill.)	Trading Volume (EGP Mill.)	# of Trades
Main Market	1,412.092	212.044	48,941
Bonds	498.25	0.480	—
Nilex	1.656	0.773	310
OTC</			

Investment Minister: Budget deficit 11.5% of GDP for the 2012-2013 fiscal year

Yahya Hamid, Egypt's new Investment Minister, said on Saturday that the country's budget deficit had reached EGP 200bn, or 11.5% of GDP, for the 2012-2013 fiscal year ending in June. The European Bank

for Reconstruction and Development recently stated that: "Egypt's budget deficit has increased to EGP 200bn, or 11.5% of GDP. We hope to see this number go down to 9.5% within the next year."

Egyptian National Railways seeks China cooperation to purchase 700 train cars for \$570m

By Rahab Saber

Hassan Zakaria, the president of Egyptian National Railways (ENR), along with a number of officials from Egypt's Transportation Ministry, conducted an unexpected visit to China at the beginning of last week, meeting with officials from the company SRN to discuss plans

for the latter to purchase 700 railway cars at an estimated cost of \$570m.

A source from within ENR stated that Zakaria received a surprise invitation from the Chinese company to discuss further cooperation between the two sides, adding that the meeting began last Sunday, lasting seven days and ending on

Sunday 12 May.

The source added that he did not expect the negotiations to end positively, as the Egyptian side had largely lost confidence in the quality of Chinese-made products, despite attempts made by the latter to meet the demands of their Egyptian partners. He added that the Egyptian side could not turn

down the meeting due to the strong political ties between the two countries.

Hatim Abd al-Latif, Egypt's Transportation Minister, emphasised that the Ministry had already sought to purchase 700 railway cars from China as part of its plan to further develop the Abu Qir and Suez rail lines.

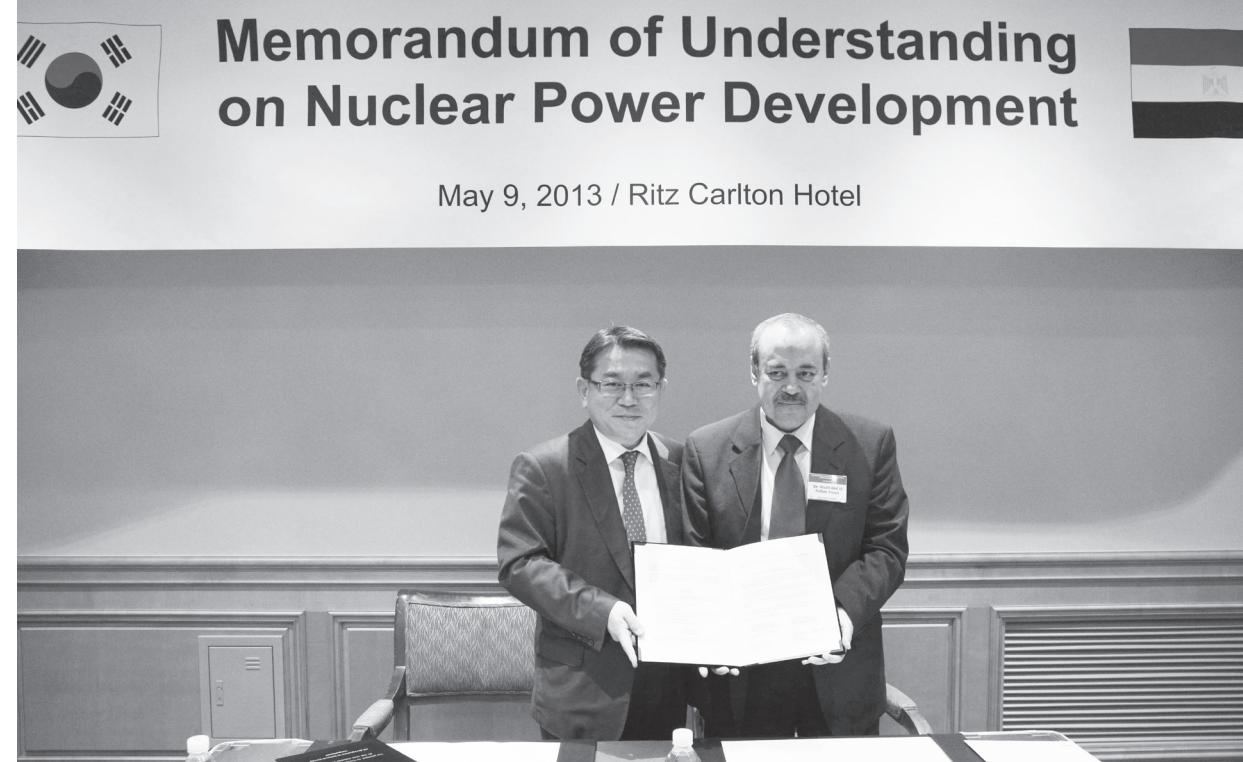
Egypt and South Korea sign agreement on nuclear power programme

By Joel Gulhane

Egypt signed a memorandum of understanding with South Korea on Thursday during a visit by an Egyptian delegation attending the nuclear power capacity-building programme of the Korea International Cooperation Agency, according to Egyptian news agency Yonhap.

Head of the Egyptian delegation Khalil Yasso, the chairman of the group of Egyptian nuclear plants, signed the memorandum of understanding at the start of a seminar to discuss cooperation between the two countries in the field of nuclear power development, reported Yonhap. Yasso signed the understanding with the South Korean Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Yoon Sang-jick.

The agreement will see the two countries work together to train the workforce for a nuclear power plant, share technical information, and discuss ways to appease the



South Korean Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy Yoon Sang-jick (left) and Khalil Yasso, the chairman of the group of Egyptian nuclear plants, during the signing ceremony

concerns of local residents, reported Yonhap.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy has been looking into ways of reducing Egypt's dependency on hydrocarbon energy sources. Nuclear energy is one of the top options the ministry is considering. The cabinet has made plans to establish a bidding process for the rights to build a nuclear plant in El-Dabaa in Matruh governorate.

The residents of El-Dabaa joined other residents of Matruh governorate in a 28-day sit-in in September 2012 to raise awareness of conditions in the governorate. The residents of El-Dabaa claim their land was taken from them in order to build the nuclear plant and they also have health and safety concerns regarding the plant. President Mohamed Morsi visited the governorate in October 2012 and assured the residents of El-Dabaa that their concerns had been heard.

OPEC sticks to 2013 oil demand projection

(AFP) - OPEC said on Friday that it still expects global oil demand to inch higher in 2013 despite a weaker-than-expected first quarter and concerns about growth in China and the eurozone.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which accounts for around 35% of global crude output, forecast total average oil demand of 89.7 million barrels per day, up 0.8 million per day from 2012, unchanged from its previous projection.

"A fragile recovery in the global economy has been visible since the beginning of the year, but momentum has started slowing again and growth risks are skewed to the downside," the cartel said.

It said that for China, the main source of growth, recent data indicated that oil demand dropped significantly between January and March, with March showing the most sluggish rate in seven months.

This likely reflected "some weakness" in Chinese economic activity, with data for first-quarter economic growth coming in below consensus at 7.7%, OPEC noted.

Cleaner Saudi Yanbu refinery back online

(AFP) - Saudi Aramco's 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) Yanbu refinery has come back online after nearly two-month long maintenance, trading sources said on Friday.

Saudi Aramco Mobil Refinery Company (SAMREF), an equal joint

venture between Aramco and United States oil giant Exxon Mobil had shut the refinery in early March to bring a new cleaner fuel project online.

Most of the units were back online, traders said.

"The secondary units will take a

few more days to come back online. It's been a long turnaround and it's normal for the refinery to eventually come back up," said one trader.

The company's spokesman could not be reached for comment.

There has been a shift in Middle

Eastern refineries to produce cleaner fuel as they are looking to target export markets.

SAMREF's cleaner fuel project will be brought online by the end of the year but initial work was completed during the shutdown, traders said.

"They capitalised on the turnaround to do the new project's piping and valve connections," another trader said.

The cost of the project to reduce sulphur from diesel and gasoline was estimated to cost \$2.5bn, sources have said.

Amplats axes 6,000 jobs in South Africa

By Andrew Beatty

(AFP) - Top global platinum producer Anglo American Platinum on Friday unveiled revised plans to cut 6,000 jobs at its South African operations, risking renewed labour unrest.

Amid fierce government and union pressure, the company backed away from initial proposals to cut up to 14,000 jobs but unveiled cost savings worth \$420m (3.8 billion South African rand) a year.

"(The) principle issue is to turn our loss-making operations to profitability," said Amplats CEO Chris Griffith, denying he had put politics before business principles.

Amplats, which accounts for almost 40% of global platinum production, reported a more-than-140% drop in headline earnings in 2012.

Profits were obliterated by a higher

wage bill and increased electricity costs.

At the same time, expensive deeper mines yielded lower grade metals.

Amplats said most of the job cuts would come in the northern city of Rustenburg, a crucible of deadly labour violence last year.

Unions have vowed to fight any job cuts and fresh work stoppages are likely.

"It is a spit in the face to the workers and the people of South Africa," said union umbrella group, COSATU.

After reacting furiously to Amplats initial shock announcement, the South African government welcomed Friday's revision as "quite an achievement".

"If government and business and labour sit down together, you can find better solutions," said Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan.

"Hopefully government and busi-

ness can still work together to see how we look after those 6,000 people and ensure that there is a clear social plan to support them."

Friday's announcement of vastly reduced job losses will offer little succour to workers struggling with crippling unemployment.

At least one out of four South African workers is currently without a job and growth is anaemic compared to the rest of Africa, which is expected to grow at more than 5% this year.

And larger retrenchments are likely to have been delayed rather than abandoned.

Most of Amplats job savings came from keeping open the Khuseleka I mine.

Griffith suggested the facility, which currently employs around 4,500 people, will be closed within three to five years anyway, although

some jobs may be shifted elsewhere.

Analysts said further job losses appeared likely, and may well have been delayed to avoid fuelling tensions ahead of next year's presidential elections.

"We will, in the long run, still end up with the same number of job losses as originally planned," said Peter Attard Montalto of Japanese bank Nomura.

"It may just be there is a need to wait for a different time politically to be able to take that additional step."

The timing is embarrassing for the government, coming as South Africa hosts the World Economic Forum's "African Davos" in Cape Town.

South Africa's mining sector has been reeling since last August when 34 people were killed in one day at the nearby Lonmin platinum mine.

Since then, mines in the region have been hit by a series of wildcat strikes, go-slows and clashes between established and more militant up-and-coming unions.

At Amplats, five mine workers were shot in February by guards amid violence sparked by a turf war between the main National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and a smaller upstart Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU).

The decision is expected to cut production capacity by 250,000 ounces this year, around 11 percent of last year's total production.

On the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Amplats shares were down 2.4%, while the rand fell slightly against the dollar.

Amplats also has operations in Zimbabwe and Brazil. Its parent company Anglo American is one of the world's largest mining companies.

Oil prices fall sharply

(AFP) - Global oil prices recoiled on Friday on profit-taking and as the dollar surged to a four-year high point against the yen, dealers said.

Markets are awaiting the United States federal budget figures for April, a speech from Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke, and a two-day Group of Seven finance meeting in Britain.

Brent North Sea crude for delivery in June sank \$1.42 to \$103.05 per barrel in London afternoon deals.

New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) or light sweet crude for June, shed \$1.55 to \$94.84 a barrel.

"Brent crude oil retreated sharply on Friday, extending losses toward \$103 per barrel, due to some profit taking, as investors try to remain cautious ahead of the release of the US federal budget details later today and the G7 meeting," said analyst Myrto Sokou at the Sucden brokerage firm.

"WTI crude oil also fell sharply toward \$95 per barrel area, while the stronger US dollar weighs further on risk appetite."

G7 finance ministers and central bank chiefs begin talks on Friday on spurring growth, with currency factors likely to feature after the dollar spiked to a four-year yen high.

The surging greenback makes dollar-priced crude more expensive for buyers using cheaper currencies like the yen. That in turn tends to hit oil demand and price levels.

On Thursday, the dollar vaulted past the key 100-yen barrier for the first time in more than four years, as Tokyo's aggressive stimulus efforts to lift the Japanese economy continue to depress its currency, helping to

boost demand for Japanese exports.

And the dollar raced as high as 101.74 yen on Friday, touching a level last seen on 17 October 2008, with sentiment boosted also by upbeat US labour market data.

Meanwhile on Friday, OPEC said it still expected global oil demand to inch higher in 2013 despite a weaker-than-expected first quarter and concerns about growth in China and the eurozone.

OPEC, which accounts for around 35% of global crude output, forecast total average oil demand of 89.7 million barrels per day, up 0.8 million per day from 2012, unchanged from its previous projection.

"A fragile recovery in the global economy has been visible since the beginning of the year, but momentum has started slowing again and growth risks are skewed to the downside," the cartel said.

This week, the oil market was dented this week by evidence of swelling supplies in the United States.

"The main downside factor on prices right now is the huge oversupply in the United States," Kelly Teoh, market strategist at IG Markets in Singapore, told AFP.

The US government's Energy Information Administration earlier this week said that American crude stocks rose to 395.5 million barrels in the week ending on 3 May, the highest level since 1982.

The build-up in US supplies indicates production is outstripping demand, putting downward pressure on prices.

US inventories are a vital focus for traders because the United States is the world's biggest economy and its largest oil-consuming nation.



Some of the 12,000 miners sacked by Amplats last year protest their dismissal in Rustenburg in October 2012

AP Photo/Alexander Joe



ART & CULTURE

Art should make a statement and Culture is what surrounds us.

EVENTS

MUSIC

Eftekasat and Makadi Nahas

Egyptian band Eftekasat will be belting out their famous tunes along with Jordanian vocalist Makadi Nahas.
Cairo Jazz Club
197 26 of July Street
Aguza, Cairo
Tel: (02) 3345 9939
12 May 9pm

The Telephone Opera and Les Misérables

The American University in Cairo is hosting an operatic night of a unique nature, where two operas will be sung, one after another. In addition, Les Misérables will be sung in Egyptian Arabic.
AUC New Cairo
Road 90
Fifth Settlement, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2615 1000
12 May 8pm

FILM

The Hunt

Dina's Hostel is screening the Danish film The Hunt, by director Thomas Vinterberg featuring actor Mads Mikkelsen. The film revolves around a father who struggles to get custody of his son and then finds himself involved in a web of lies.
Dina's Hostel
42 Abdel Khaleq Serwat Street
Downtown, Cairo
Tel: 010 0302 5346
12 May 7pm

EXHIBITION

Hybrid

Artist Shaimaa Sobhy mixes humans with animals to create some innovative creatures in her new collection at Gallery Misr.
Gallery Misr
4 A Ibn Zenki Street
Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2735 0604
12 May 11am

Fashion Reincarnated

Fashion designers use an array of materials to recycle them as apparel. The exhibition is in cooperation with the Embassy of Sweden.
Darb 1718
Kasr El Shama Street
Old Cairo, Cairo
Tel: 012 7941 1698
12 May 10am

Covering One's Back

The exhibition features a collection of photographs from photographers from Switzerland and the Arab World.
Gezira Art Centre
1 El Masravy Street
Zamalek, Cairo
Tel: (02) 2737 3298
12 May 10am

Weather



Sunday, 12 May

Alexandria	24°C / 18°C
Aswan	39°C / 23°C
Cairo	30°C / 20°C
Hurghada	35°C / 22°C
Luxor	36°C / 21°C
Sharm El-Sheikh	36°C / 22°C
Suez	26°C / 16°C

Grace and legends combine in exquisite performance

By Thoria Abou Bakr

On Thursday 9 May the cultural programme India by the Nile concluded its month-long festivities with a classical Indian dance evening by the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble. Indian ambassador to Egypt Navdeep Suri gave a speech on the occasion.

"We hope that we have sent a message to the world that Egypt is a safe place," said Suri. He mentioned that the goals of the programme were to promote Indian culture. "We spared no effort to make sure we bring some of our finest to Cairo."

He explained that even though the festival had started with a Bollywood-inspired concert, "there is more to India and we wanted to end with some classical dance".

Nrityagram, which literally means "dance village", was founded by Protima Gauri, an Odissi dancer, in 1990. In the village students are taught dance and yoga, martial arts

and Sanskrit literature. The ambassador commented that the dances of the ensemble "are inspired by stories that are 2,000 years old".

On the Nrityagram website, Gauri is quoted explaining her philosophy: "I dream of building a community of dancers in a forsaken place amidst nature. A place where nothing exists except dance. A place where you breathe, eat, sleep, dream, talk, imagine – dance. A place where all the five senses can be refined to perfection. A place where dancers drop negative qualities such as jealousy, small-mindedness, greed and malice to embrace their colleagues as sisters and support each other in their journey towards becoming dancers of merit."

Thursday's dance performers, Surupa Sen, Bijayini Satpathy and Pavithra Reddy, were tasked with recreating Sanskrit myths and telling stories of the universe's origins through dance.

The first dance was Shiva Ashtakam, or Ode to Shiva, the

Hindu supreme god described as "the yogi to whom yoga itself submits". The song describes him to be adorned with a necklace of snakes and to have long hair through which the moon shines. He is the lover of Parvati, a Hindu goddess, who is considered to be the goddess from whom all other goddesses are reincarnated. Shiva is the cosmic dancer who creates and destroys worlds and to whom everything bows.

The second dance was Ritu Vasant, which explores the dynamic world of Odissi dance.

The third dance was one of Gita Govinda's Ashtapadis, Dhira Samire, which was expressed by the dancers via facial expressions as well as dance moves. The poem tells the love story of Krishna and Radha, and Radha's emotions of jealousy and love when Krishna is late.

The last dance was the Ardhanarishvara Stotram by Shri Adi Shankara, which tells the story of the universe's creation, when the ultimate yogi splits into two, the male Shiva and the female Shishav:

Her body is the colour of a camphor blossom, his is like camphor; her body is sprinkled with musk-vermillion powder, his is smeared with the ash of funeral-pyres; she is adorned with anklets and bracelets of gold, he wears a multitude of glittering snakes; she wears a garland of mandaara flowers, he wears a garland of skulls; she is draped in silks, he is clad by the sky; her hair is dark like the monsoon clouds, his



The traditional Indian dances told the stories as recounted in ancient Sanskrit myths and were performed by professional dancers

Indian Embassy

matted locks flash with lightning. Her dance creates the universe. His Tandava dissolves everything. I bow to the mother of the universe. I bow to the father of the universe. Om namah Shiva. Om namah Shivah.

The dances were exquisitely

performed with meticulous attention to the movements. Many of the stances and poses of the dancers were reminiscent of yoga, and their grace and synchronicity impressed and entertained. The great performance was a worthy way to conclude the month long festival.

Fundraising concert a great success



Soprano Racha Rizk and the Cairo Opera Orchestra during the concert in the Cairo Opera House

On Wednesday 8 May the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) held a fundraising concert at the Cairo Opera House to benefit Syrian refugees in Egypt. The concert was attended by people from all walks of life, including many Syrians who are currently living in Egypt.

The orchestra was led by Maestro Nayer Nagui, who studied conducting under the tutelage of Professor Maestro Dominique Roti at L'Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris. He became the Cairo Opera Orchestra Artistic Director and Principal Conductor in 2011. He is also the founder and musical director of the Cairo Celebration Choir.

Also among the list of musicians was famous oud player Naseer Shamma, who graduated from the Institute of Musical Studies in Baghdad in 1987. He is known for his concern with humanitarian issues, volunteering to play for free in many fundraising concerts for different issues across the Arab world.

The operatic pieces were sung by Syrian soprano Racha Rizk, who graduated in 2002 from the High Institute of Music in Damascus, and Ragaa El Din Ahmed, who studied under the tutelage of Professor Sobhi Bedair. They were also joined by singer Abdel Kader Aboul Seoud, who formed the Syrian group Al-Rawda.

Before the beginning of the concert Mohamed Dayri, the regional representative for UNHCR Egypt, gave a short speech. He thanked the attendees, as well as the British Embassy in Egypt and the Arab League.

"We are witness to a humanitarian tragedy beyond comprehension, one of the worst humanitarian crises of the twenty-first century... Indeed, the Syrian humanitarian crisis requires an urgent solution that brings to an end the prolonged suffering of Syrian communities that have endured a lot over the past two years. Since

the start of the crisis in Syria, UNHCR, together with UN and non-governmental organisation partners, has been striving to protect the vast number of internally displaced families still inside Syria."

"Then there are refugees, currently over 1.4 million, predominantly women and children, who have fled to neighbouring countries and of course to Egypt."

"Tonight we are paying tribute to them all, to the people of Egypt, to the government of Egypt, to the donor countries and to the local and international charity organisations in Egypt for the hospitality and generosity that you have extended to Syrian families and communities who have fled their homes, their livelihoods and sought sanctuary here in Egypt... Your presence here tonight, your generous contributions are testament to the spirit of human solidarity," Dayri said.

The evening started with the orchestra playing the overture of Mozart's The Magic Flute, followed by soprano Racha Rizk singing Ach Ich Fühl. Then tenor Ragaa El Din Ahmed sang Donizetti's Una Furtiva Lagrima. The concert continued with some songs from Bizet's Carmen, but perhaps the highlight of the evening was when Ragaa El Din Ahmed sang Nessus Dorma so beautifully that the concert hall was filled with the grateful audience's applause.

After the intermission Iraqi musician Naseer Shamma took to the stage and played some of his famous pieces on the oud. Many attendees were very touched by singer Abdel Kader Aboul Seoud's Bakteb Esmek Ya Belady (I write down your name, O my country). Some listeners kept shouting "Allah" as a sign of appreciation for Aboul Seoud's great rendition of the song. The evening ended with the orchestra playing the overture of The Barber of Seville with oud player Naseer Shamma.

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