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GULF NEWS



NEWS 30th YEAR
** LATE EDITION

Mideast talks hit roadblock

OLMERT'S PLAN TO QUIT THROWS PEACEMAKING IN DISARRAY AS NETANYAHU CALLS FOR POLLS

Occupied Jerusalem (Reuters) Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's shock announcement that he would step down in September yesterday cast a shadow over Middle East peacemaking as Israel braced for weeks of political turmoil.

Israeli right-wing Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu called yesterday for an early election to replace Olmert. Top advisers said the embattled Olmert could stay in office for months as caretaker premier, long enough to pursue talks with the Palestinians and Syria.

But politicians said the leader had no mandate to commit Israel to any deals. "He has no legitimacy, not from the public, nor the Knesset, nor the government, to reach any understandings with the Palestinians or with Syria that would bind the government," said Communications Minister Ariel Attias of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party.

Olmert said on Wednesday he would step down after a September 17 vote within his centrist Kadima party to choose a new leader. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni has emerged as the leading candidate inside Kadima to succeed Olmert, but opinion polls show more Israelis would support Netanyahu, a vocal

Possible successors

- Tzipi Livni, 49**
Foreign minister and chief negotiator with the Palestinians. Former intelligence agent.
- Ehud Barak, 66**
Defence minister who leads the labour party. Former Prime Minister (1999-2001), general, and decorated commando.
- Benjamin Netanyahu, 58**
Leader of the Likud party, former Prime Minister (1996-1999) and decorated commando.
- Haim Ramon, 58**
Close Olmert confidant and the most active supporter of peace talks with the Palestinians.
- Shaul Mofaz, 60**
Transport minister and former army chief and defence minister.

critic of the government's peace moves, in a parliamentary election. Livni said yesterday that she continues to hope for a peace deal with the Palestinians this year.

It could take months for a new Kadima leader to assemble a coalition majority, and Vice Premier Haim Ramon said that Olmert could remain in office as caretaker until March, assuming new elections are called. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has pledged to work with Olmert and his successor.

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A PASSAGE TO JUSTICE



Karadzic appears at UN war crimes tribunal
Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic (right) enters the courtroom of the UN's Yugoslav war crimes tribunal at The Hague yesterday. Karadzic, in his first appearance at the tribunal, told the judge he would defend himself against charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. Appearing older and thinner than during the Bosnian war and shorn of the long, white hair and bushy beard that once disguised him, Karadzic refused to enter pleas on the 11 charges against him or have his full indictment read to him.

AUCTION

Basket of dates fetches Dh310,000

Dua A basket of dates fetched Dh310,000 at a charity auction at the Fourth Lina Festival yesterday. Shaikh Abdullah Bin Mohammad Bin Khalid Al Nahyan, the winning bidder for the dates, also donated Dh10,000 for the winner of a puzzle competition that was held as part of the festival. The Western Region's municipality, which is hosting the festival, also held an evening of recreation for families, where the UAE's own Al Fareej cartoon characters performed on stage and several Emiratis took part in poetry recitation sessions.

— WAM
See also Page 4

LITERATURE

Rowling to publish book for charity

New York Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling announced yesterday that she will publish a book of wizarding fairy tales in December and donate an expected \$8 million in proceeds to her charity for vulnerable children. *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, which will be published on December 4, is mentioned in the seventh — and final — Potter book as having been left to Harry's friend Hermione by Professor Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of their school Hogwarts. Rowling initially only produced seven copies of *The Tales*. Bloomsbury Publishing and Scholastic will now publish editions while Amazon will produce up to 100,000 collector's edition copies.



— Reuters

TRANSPORT

Lamborghini flown 10,000km for service

London A high-powered Lamborghini was sent on a 10,460km round-trip to Britain simply to have a service, sparking fury from environmentalists. *The Sun* said yesterday. The \$576,000 black and gold car was put on a regular Qatar Airways flight to London's main Heathrow airport, then flown back after having its oil checked. Servicing at an approved dealer costs £3,552. The cost of sending it by air freight was £20,000, the daily said, citing the airline, which confirmed it carried the Murcielago LP640 model last Friday and Monday.

— AFP

WEEKEND REVIEW

From iron hand to warm handshakes

Syria and Lebanon mark new era in ties

Gulf News Report

Back in 1946, after the last of the French troops had marched out of Syria and Lebanon, a heated debate erupted in the upper echelons of power in Damascus. The Lebanese had started demanding an exchange of embassies with Damascus and Syria's top leadership was opposed to having a Lebanese Embassy in Syria or, even worse, a Syrian Embassy in Beirut.

Ties between the two countries were then dealt a severe blow by the assassination of Rafik Hariri, Lebanon's former prime minister. At a recent summit among leaders of 43 nations from Europe and the Mediterranean rim, French President Nicolas Sarkozy prodded Syrian President Bashar Al Assad to establish diplomatic ties with Lebanon. What Sarkozy has failed to comprehend is that under Ba'athist Party reign, Syrians are divided between patriots and renegades, while no such distinctions are made by the Lebanese among their citizens. What most Lebanese crave is freedom and the choice to decide for themselves.

Details in Weekend Review



Driven to despair over road tests

Learners complain about long waiting period to get a driving licence

By MAYSAM ALI
Staff Reporter

Dubai Luma Mohammad registered for her driving licence at a Dubai training school in February. Seven months later, she does not have a date for the road test.

Despite recent plans announced by the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) to increase

the passing rate among applicants, the rate still hovers around 20 per cent. More and more drivers are complaining about the waiting period, the cost and the difficulty of passing the final test. Drivers complain because of unclear test criteria and they say they are not properly briefed about the reasons for their failure. "I will be repeating the same test in a couple of months but I don't know what to do differently to pass," said J.S., who failed her first test. Harish Vaswani, advertising manager at Bellhassa Driving Institute, said trainers are not to be blamed because they are well-trained and updated with driving test requirements.

See also Page 2

JACKPOT JITTERS

'Lucky' doorman shown the door

Millionaire had no plans to quit job at exclusive New York apartment

New York (AP) A New York City doorman who kept his day job at an exclusive Park Avenue apartment building has been fired from his job.

Kate Ferranti, a spokesman for the union representing apartment building workers, said Richie Randazzo notified the union's grievance centre this week that he had been fired. The building management company, Brown Harris Stevens, did not immediately return a call for comment.

Randazzo's father said that the letter did not specify the reason for Randazzo's discharge. He de-

clined to give his name and said his son was not home. Randazzo made \$40,000 a year as a doorman. He began taking in another \$65,000 every three months after hitting the jackpot on May 2.

According to reports, his attendance record was spotty after he won the lottery.

The Brooklyn resident said when he won that he had no immediate plans to change his life, but that he might indulge in a motorboat and a luxury car.



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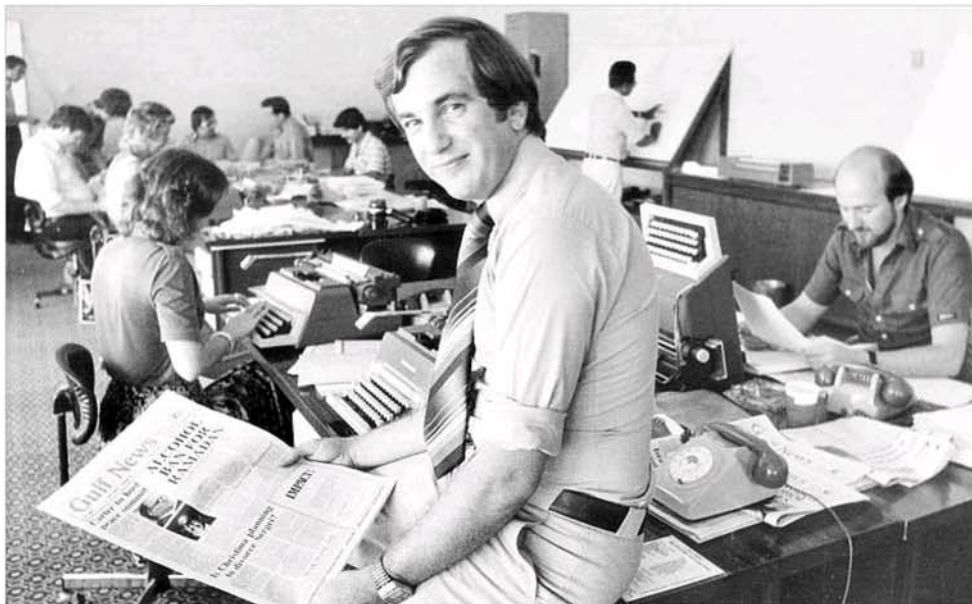


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Hitting deadline
Above and top: Shaikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the then Dubai Ruler, at the office of Gulf News. Left: Tim Edgar, the first editor of Gulf News, in the editorial room at the airport road office.
Gulf News Archive

PUBLISHING PIONEER

TIM EDGAR, THE FIRST EDITOR OF GULF NEWS, REMEMBERS HOW IT WAS TO START A NEWSPAPER FROM SCRATCH

By MAHMOOD SABERI
Senior Reporter

Dubai "Among the memories that will always remain with me was setting up our first picture receiver from Reuters (news agency). We were too impatient to wait for technical support so the local bureau-chief, Colin Fox, and I climbed onto the roof of the Gulf News office to try to rig up the giant aerial ourselves," said Tim Edgar, the first editor of Gulf News.

"It was so hot on the roof that the soles of our shoes were literally melting and we had to wear gloves to prevent the huge array of metal cables from scorching our hands. We could only work for a few minutes at a time and with no mobile telephone or walkie-talkies, we had to rely on a relay of people shouting to one another to tell us to move it marginally this way or that way to get a better signal."

"It was immensely frustrating because [we were] just trying to receive pictures of good enough quality to use," he said.

In an e-mail interview from Belgium, Edgar said the other most frustrating part of starting a new paper was the pre-launch. "... a month prior to the launch we published a full newspaper every day — and then simply threw it away. Producing dummy issues was necessary to train staff and to iron out the inevitable glitches but it was very disheartening that so much effort went into something that nobody read."

Asked whether newspapers will eventually die out, the former editor said he did not think so.

"Like many journalists, ink runs in my veins, so I'm probably biased. But I believe that quality newspapers will still be around for a good many years to come, especially those that can skillfully combine the art of a printed paper with the speed and convenience of an online presence. They are written differently and as long as one complements the other, I believe they can happily coexist and even benefit one another," he said.

But then he adds: "Of course, as our chil-

dren grow up they are going to be more computer savvy and more used to reading on a screen than we are today. But ultimately there are a lot of people who agree that there is still nothing quite like holding some good quality newsprint," he said.

Excerpts from the interview:

GULF NEWS: In your view, what exactly is the function of a newspaper today? Is it still to entertain, educate and inform the reader?

TIM EDGAR: Yes, definitely. But it just needs to do it in a different way than it did 30 years ago. At the time Gulf News was born, people turned to newspapers as a source of basic information on what was happening in the world around them. Today, that first source of information is often the broadcast media which can't be beaten

“It really doesn't surprise me at all that Dubai has become the global centre that it now is. It was already a city of entrepreneurs, always hatching plans for future projects.”

Tim Edgar
First editor of Gulf News

for its sheer speed of delivery and immediacy of breaking news. So people turn to newspapers to find more in-depth coverage or a different angle on stories they already know something about.

Do you read Gulf News online today? If so, what changes do you notice?

I read Gulf News online and I now have an e-paper subscription.

The paper has changed almost beyond recognition. It now has so much more impact and is rich in news. The fact it is so colourful also helps. It is more than I could have ever dreamed of being possible when we started 30 years ago. It certainly makes

me feel very proud to have been part of the small but dedicated team who first launched Gulf News all those years ago.

What were your first impressions of Dubai and the UAE?

When I first arrived in Dubai (in September 1974) there were few paved roads and construction was only just beginning on Dubai's first international hotel, the Intercontinental in Deira. People told stories of how dangerous it was to travel at night between Sharjah and Dubai because it was easy to get lost and veer off the sand tracks towards the sea.

There was no road to the East Coast either. Instead, we would follow the wadis and hope our navigator would remember the way back again. They were very exciting times and there was a great sense of adventure. Electricity and water supplies were challenging to say the least.

But it is funny, looking back on it now; it really doesn't surprise me at all that Dubai has become the global centre that it now is. It was already a city of entrepreneurs, always hatching plans for future projects. Even in those days, good local business stories were plentiful.

When I arrived there were only a handful of Western expatriates, most of whom were employed in key positions by banks or international companies involved in infrastructure projects. If you spent more than a week eating at the restaurant at the Ambassador Hotel you would have met them all.

Our leisure time was spent at the Dubai Exiles Rugby Club, exploring the souqs or trying to play golf with fluorescent red balls so that we could find them in the sand.

The noise [and smell] of the engines of the abras on the Creek and the smell of the spices in the souk are memories that will always remain with me. They are almost the

only things that didn't change in the five years I was there, although I recognise now that such changes pale into insignificance compared to those that have taken place since.

How was your job, was it a gruelling 12-hour schedule?

Honestly, 12 hours a day would have been a luxury. For three months prior to the launch and for several months afterwards, many of us virtually lived at the office, working up to 18 hours a day. It was certainly tough but at the same time there was something

very satisfying about producing a newspaper each day, sometimes against incredible odds. The power would sometimes go off for hours on end; the telex machines would fail; or we would simply run out of time, laboriously cutting and pasting each of the stories onto a page, one at a time. Oh, how I wish we had had some of today's modern technology.

www.gulfnews.com/30thyear



INQUOTES

Text and pictures by Abdul Rahman

“I have been reading Gulf News for three years, ever since I arrived in the UAE. I read the headlines first, then local news and the rest. I would like to see more local news and more about new building projects and property news. My favourite sections are *tabloid!* and *Friday* magazine.”



Ameenhah Mahmood
Property Consultant

“I would like to read more about social and cultural events. I have been reading Gulf News for two years. I always read the front page first, then the local news and the India pages. I read the paper early morning at home and in the evening I read *tabloid!*”



M.K. Mohammad Ashraf
Property Consultant

“I read Gulf News first thing in the morning and have been doing it for 20 years. My favourite section is the main news section. I scan the headlines and read the local and Indian pages. I would like to see more social and culture related news.”



M.A. Bava Kutty
Electrical Engineer

“I enjoy reading Gulf News every day and I think it is a perfect newspaper. I would like to see more features about astronomy in the paper. I have been reading Gulf News for 25 years. My favourite sections are *tabloid!* and the classifieds.”



Faten Aman
Public Relations Manager

“I like the paper for its unique design and I think Gulf News is an excellent paper in the region. I have been reading the paper for a year since I arrived here. I read it early morning at the office. My favourite section is the main news section.”



Manuel Mercier
Deputy Defence Attache at French Embassy

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GULF NEWS 30TH YEAR



THE NATION | MEDIA **Publishing pioneer**

Tim Edgar, the first editor of Gulf News, remembers how it was to start a newspaper from scratch.

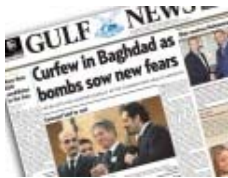
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EDITORIAL
Gulf News boasts an enviable presence in the publishing industry



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