

# DAILY NEWS

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## Morsy hosts Abbas and Meshaal



Mohamed Morsy (R) meets with Mahmoud Abbas (L) in Cairo

President Mohamed Morsy met Wednesday in Cairo with President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas Chief Khaled Mashaal and held talks over Palestinian reconciliation.

Morsy and Abbas also spoke about intensifying efforts to reduce the hardships affecting the Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and further steps in Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations.

## UAE prosecutors interrogating 'women's branch' of plot to overthrow government

Women are being investigated by UAE prosecutors in connection with a plot to seize power in the Gulf state

By Joel Gulhane

A women's group is being interrogated by Emirati prosecutors in relation to an ongoing investigation into a secret organisation accused of plotting to overthrow the government, according to Emirati News Agency (WAM).

Salim Saeed Kubaish, the UAE attorney general announced that prosecutors are investigating what is allegedly the women's branch of an organisation charged with attempting to seize power in the Gulf state, said WAM.

Kubaish said the women's branch is vital to the overall structure of the organisation. He stressed that the women under interrogation are being treated with respect, adding that "the law does not differentiate between people on the basis of their gender," WAM reported.

UAE authorities last week refused to release 11 members of the Muslim Brotherhood following a request made by an Egyptian delegation that

travelled to the country last week.

The 11 men have been held for over a month and are charged with leading a Brotherhood cell in the UAE. The UAE authorities asserted that the men have to face legal proceedings and that nobody would be released on political grounds.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohamed Amr stated last week that Egypt does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

Mahmoud Ghozlan, spokesperson for the Brotherhood in Egypt said that he was unaware of any women connected to the Brotherhood being interrogated in the UAE.

Women can only become members of the Brotherhood through family ties; however they play an important role in the organisation. During the decades that the Brotherhood was persecuted by former Egyptian regimes, women were able to maintain the activities of the organisation whilst the male members were imprisoned.

## Presidency files complaint against Press Syndicate board member

Journalist accused by presidency of insulting Morsy

By Rana Muhammad Taha

The presidency filed a complaint against a Press Syndicate board member Wednesday, the latest move against journalists accused of "insulting the president."

The complaint, filed by the presidency's legal affairs administration, accuses journalist Gamal Fahmy of writing articles offensive to President Mohamed Morsy.

"Reports accusing journalists of insulting the president have long been filed by lawyers," syndicate board member Abeer Saady said. "The fact

that the presidency is now taking the matter into its own hands is unprecedented."

The complaint is the second the presidency has filed against a journalist. Yousri Al-Badry, a journalist at independent daily Al-Masry Al-Youm, was referred to investigation Saturday following a complaint by the presidency of publishing false news about the president.

An outspoken Muslim Brotherhood opponent, Fahmy is a columnist at independent daily Al-Tahrir. Fahmy could not be reached for comment. Additional reporting by Ethar Shalaby

## Parliamentary elections set for 25 February

Presidential advisor Yasser Ali has confirmed the date for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Ali said: "[Elections] should begin on 25 February in compliance with what is stated in the constitution; steps towards elections should start exactly two months after the passing of the constitution."

The constitution was passed on 25 December 2012 after much ten-

sion between Islamist parties and the secular opposition. The referendum witnessed a low turnout of 32.9% amid allegations of many violations.

Salafi parties have formed a coalition to under the leadership of Mohamed Salah Abu Ismail to compete over seats in the coming elections while the secular opposition has rallied behind the National Salvation Front, led by Mohamed ElBaradei and Hamdeen Sabahi.

## Sinai journalist released but still facing military trial

The military court in Ismailia held another trial for two civilians on Wednesday

By Ahmed About Enein

Al-Galaa Military Court in Ismailia released journalist Mohamed Sabry from remand on Wednesday and postponed his trial to 15 January. The court also postponed Youssef Nada's trial to Saturday.

Sinai-based activist and freelance photojournalist Mohamed Sabry is standing trial for "entering a prohibited military zone and filming a military facility" following his arrest last Friday.

Sabry was arrested near the border city of Rafah. He was reporting on the soldiers killed on the border in August. The military prosecution immediately referred him to a military misdemeanour court.

He was released and his trial will resume on 15 January, said No to Military Trials for Civilians member Mahmoud Salmani.

Sabry is also a member of the No to Military Trials for Civilians

movement.

The court was also trying Youssef Nada on charges of assaulting armed forces personnel.

Youssef is the son of Nada Fathy Nada, who is blind and works as an Imam at an Ismailia mosque. In 2008 the Imam bought a piece of land in the 10th of Ramadan area in 2008 that was adjacent to, although not part of, a military base.

Military forces attacked the land in June of the same year and took iron, cement and other building materials. Nada filed a complaint which was transferred to the military prosecution and ignored, said a report by the No to Military Trials for Civilians movement.

Despite Nada having building permits and many court orders in his favour, the attacks became frequent and the military would tear down his house each time.

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## 8 April officers released

After being imprisoned for supporting 2011 Revolution, remaining 8 April Officers are finally released

By Hend Kortam

The 8 April military officers who have been kept in military prison for taking part in protests have been released on Wednesday.

Sana' Sa'ad, the mother of one of the five officers, confirmed that her son Mohmaed Wadi was released.

Their release had been expected for some time because they had been taken to a hospital in Ma'adi for "psychological rehabilitation."

Nisrine Youssef who has lobbied for the release of the officers said the release came suddenly, even

though it was expected once they were taken to the hospital. "There were five officers and one recruit called Sayed Mady.... Mady is the only one left behind," she said.

The 8 April officers include around 30 military officers who took part in protests in support of the revolution in April, May and November. Most of them took part in a protest on 8 April 2011 dubbed the Friday of "trial and cleansing."

Activists and the officers' families have repeatedly contacted officials and even international organisations demanding the officers' release.

## The wonderful wrecks of the Red Sea



The Red Sea is renowned for its many dive sites on colourful reefs that teem with corals and fish life. But under the turquoise waters other treasures can be found: the shipwrecks of the Red Sea.

Wrecks are littered all over the sea, from the Thistlegorm in the north to

the Numedia in the south and many places in between. The reef of Sha'ab Abu Nuhas is famous for its row of wrecks that are lined up for the avid diver, with the Carnatic one of the favourite dives.

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| Currencies | Buy     | Sell    |
|------------|---------|---------|
| CHF        | 6.9465  | 7.2797  |
| USD        | 6.5121  | 6.5422  |
| EUR        | 8.3958  | 8.8628  |
| GBP        | 10.3048 | 10.7991 |
| SAR        | 1.727   | 1.7481  |

| Egyptian Stock Exchange |          |              |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------|
|                         | Closing  | Daily Change |
| EGX 30                  | 5,866.91 | 1.08%        |
| EGX 70                  | 502.40   | 0.23%        |
| EGX 100                 | 844.21   | 0.42%        |
| EGX 20                  | 6,763.97 | 0.89%        |

## Commentary

Shahira Amin writes:

Unlike Egyptian women, women in Tunisia and Libya fared better, thanks to their female-friendly electoral systems.

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ارزق احمد احمد اسعود

## NSF to outline prerequisites for candidates and form a formal structure

THE OPPOSITION GROUP WILL ONLY HAVE MORE THAN ONE LIST IN SPECIFIC DISTRICTS

By Ahmed About Enein

The National Salvation Front will issue specific prerequisites for potential candidates wishing to run on its lists or name.

Parties in the front have to present list candidates that are not enemies of the revolution or oppose it, present geographically spread out candidates, have the financial resources to run a campaign, have an impressive resume, especially for list leaders, and finally need to have a good reputation, Al-Ahram reported.

Candidates running for the one thirds of seats contested through individual first past the post voting are required to have prior electoral experience and political influence in the district they intend to run in.

The NSF elections committee headed by former National Association for Change general coordinator Abdel Gelliel Mostafa met on Wednesday to come up with a more concrete list of requirements.

"Any candidate running on the NSF tickets must share the Front's belief in a civil state," NSF spokesperson Khaled Dawoud told Daily News Egypt.



NSF representatives meet at a conference in December (file photo)

The opposition bloc recently denied reports it would contest the upcoming parliamentary elections on two or more lists, insisting candidates from all the member parties would run on one unified list under the NSF banner.

There would only be two lists in places where NSF parties have several good candidates as to get the largest number of seats possible, but these districts will be few, said Al-Doustour deputy chairman and

NSF member Ahmed El-Borai. The NSF is expected to announce the formation of a more formal structure with a general secretariat and several committees later today.

## First female head of a party to represent Egypt at international conference

Al-Haq Party head Mariam Melad to represent Egypt at Berber conference

The founder and chairman of Al-Haq Party will be representing Egypt at the World Amazigh Congress conference.

The conference which will be held in the Libyan capital Tripoli is scheduled to start on 11 January and will be about constitutional entitlement. There will be representatives of every country in the world. Melad said she was picked because her party is the first Egyptian party founded on international human rights principles.

The Amazigh are the Berber people of North African countries such as Libya.

Melad said the Egyptian representation had to represent human rights since the recently passed constitution makes no mention of human rights treaties Egypt has signed.

"Many people do not know that Egypt was one of the countries that have contributed to writing these treaties," she said. In the conference, Melad will discuss measures needed to protect the rights of minorities while drafting a constitution. She will also discuss the marginalisation of Egyptian Copts

under the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood. "It is not just the Copts. All Egyptians have been marginalised except for the Muslim Brotherhood," she said.

Melad is believed to be the first Egyptian woman to head a political party. She started it in 2011 and it was officially launched in December 2012. She described the time she formed the party in a "time when there were currents that fought human rights."

Melad said in terms of human rights, Egypt is in a crisis because if a country signs an international treaty it has a limited amount of time to apply it. "If the period is exceeded without applying the treaty, the country can be taken to international courts," Melad said.

Human rights groups inside Egypt as well as international ones have criticised the constitution. In addition, the Coptic, Catholic, and Evangelical churches demanded that articles of concern are clarified by the presidency. A United Nations working group has also expressed concerns over the rights of women in the constitution.

## Human rights group demands compensation from Minister of Interior

Arab Organisation for Penal Reform calls on Ministry of Interior to pay reparation to over 30 victims of torture

The Arab Organisation for Penal Reform has called on the Ministry of Interior to pay compensation to over 30 victims of torture in police custody.

Head of the human rights group, Mohamed Zare', said the group contacted Minister of Interior Mohamed Ibrahim Moustafa regarding 16 people who have court rulings to receive compensation from the ministry. On Wednesday, the group addressed the minister with the names of 15 more people.

Zare' has worked on at least 160 cases like this. Many of these court rulings were handed down before the January 25th Revolution. One of the court rulings was handed in 2005.

Zare' does not believe that the ministry is deliberately putting off paying: "The ministry does not have enough money to pay the compensations... every time the ministry's treasury receives money it gets emptied in compensation to a number of victims..."

The sum of the money needed is estimated to be in the millions."

Torture cases have continued even after the revolution and one of the latest complaints the human rights group is working on is a torture incident that happened three days ago in Assiut. The victims' torture marks are currently being documented, in preparation for the case.

Victims who do decide to seek compensation through the judiciary are often pressured even after they are handed the court rulings.

Zare' said: "This is why torture in Egypt is systematic... people are asked to drop the charges... it happens all the time."

The Arab Organisation for Penal Reform is going to approach the presidency and the Shura Council with suggested amendments to laws that make it possible to get away with torture.

A spokesperson for the ministry could not be reached at the time of publication.

## Government calls off Matruh search and rescue

After two days of searching and bad weather, the hope of finding missing fishermen has dwindled

By Luiz Sanchez

The navy found an abandoned life-raft off the coast of Ras El-Hekma in the Marsa Matruh governorate on Tuesday evening, as part of the search and rescue operation for the crew of a fishing boat.

The life-raft was the fourth to be found, and early on Wednesday morning the search and rescue operation was officially called off.

According to state-owned news agency MENA the first three life-rafts were discovered on Monday evening but were all empty, which reduced the hopes of finding survivors.

On Monday a fishing boat sunk near Ras El-Hekma. The navy combed the area but strong winds and bad weather made the search difficult.

The Freedom and Justice Party said there were ten fishermen on board when the vessel suffered a broken propeller column and engine failure.

## Postponed for another week

Al-Gizawy's trial to resume on 15 January

The trial of an Egyptian lawyer accused of drug trafficking in Saudi Arabia has been postponed – for the third week in a row – until 15 January.

Ahmed Al-Gizawy has been in Saudi jail since his arrest in April at King Abdulaziz International Airport on his way to perform *umrah* (minor pilgrimage). Saudi authorities alleged he was in possession of roughly 21,000 Xanax anti-anxiety pills, illegal in Saudi Arabia.

The General Court in Jeddah on Wednesday stated the latest postponement was for further study of the case, state-owned Al-Ahram reported.

"There is no justification for the postponement," Al-Gizawy's wife Shahenda said after the trial. "The case is over; all the evidence incriminating Al-Gizawy has been refuted. He submitted evidence proving his innocence."

Two weeks ago, the legal adviser to the Egyptian consulate in Jeddah, Yasser Alwani, revealed for the first time that the packets of milk in which the drugs were allegedly found had a production date of 20 April 2012. Al-Gizawy was arrested on 17 April; three days before the



Stenciled graffiti artwork reads 'freedom to Ahmed Gizawy'

milk packets were produced. Alwani is currently providing legal counsel to Al-Gizawy, who is defending himself in court.

His family expected the court to rule at that hearing two weeks ago, but a ruling was postponed for a week to allow the prosecution to consider this new evidence. Last Wednesday,

during a hearing that lasted minutes, the prosecution announced they would not require further hearings. The session was then adjourned for another week.

"All those postponements mean one thing; they want him to remain in jail as long as possible," Shahenda said.

Al-Gizawy's family claims the lawyer's health has seriously deteriorated. He was transferred to a prison hospital almost a month ago. Al-Gizawy had previously claimed that he had been tortured during his interrogation and detention, but the presiding judge determined there was no evidence to support this allegation.

"We have continually demanded his medical records, but to no avail," Shahenda said. She stated she had tried more than once to meet with a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the presidency but they had declined to meet her.

Al-Gizawy had previously worked to improve conditions for Egyptians living and working in Saudi Arabia. Human rights groups have pointed at his activist track record as political motivation for the Saudi government to detain him.

Additional reporting by Basil El-Dabh

## Al-Watan Party gears up for upcoming elections

By Hend Kortam

The newly-formed Salafi Al-Watan Party met with representatives of other parties on Tuesday to discuss the upcoming elections.

Al-Watan Party representatives first met with representatives of Al-Wasat Party, which describes itself as using Islamic culture as its reference. Yousry Hammad, the vice chairman of Al-Watan Party said the meeting discussed the latest political developments and the upcoming election and election law. There were also talks of coalitions.

The spokesperson of Al-Wasat Party Amr Farouk said, "the meetings were just traditional meetings... Al-Watan Party is new and just wants people to know of it." He added there were no final talks about a coalition.

Al-Watan Party representatives have also met with representatives of the Building and Development Party. During these meetings, the criteria of



Hazem Abu Ismail is surrounded by his supporters during a rally outside the State Council court in Cairo on 10 April 2012 (file photo)

coalitions and their benefits in the upcoming elections were discussed, Hammad said.

A founder of the Building and Development Party Tarek Al-Zomor confirmed the meeting was about the nature of the upcoming election.

"There were talks about the idea of uniting some of the parties that defend the revolution," he said. He added that no coalition had been officially formed during the meeting.

Al-Watan Party, headed by Emad Abdel-Ghaffour, was launched at a

press conference last week. It is co-founded by Emad Abdel-Ghaffour, the former chairman of Al-Nour Party. Similarly, Hammad was the spokesperson of Al-Nour Party. Many other members of the Salafi Al-Nour Party have left the party to form the newly founded Al-Watan.

The two parties have agreed to form a committee to resolve the issues between them including financial issues and deciding on which party retains their headquarters and official websites.

"I would like to tell everyone who talks about these issues that these issues will be solved by the heads of the parties, who harbour love and respect for each other," Hammad said.

Last week, Ahmed Mawlana, the spokesperson of Al-Shaab party said his party will join forces with Al-Fadeela Party and the party being formed by Hazem Salah Abu Ismail to form one party. He added that the new party along with other Islamist parties will form a coalition with Al-Watan Party.

## Report released into death of alleged torture victim

Blow to head likely cause of death of man in police custody, drug overdose excluded

By Rana Muhammad Taha

A toxicology report into the death of alleged torture victim Sa'ad Said released on Tuesday has ruled out drug overdose as a cause of death.

Said's family claim he was tortured to death in a police station following his arrest in November last year.

A forensic pathologist working on Said's case told Ahmed Shawky, Said's brother-in-law and lawyer for the family, that the report found no traces of drugs or toxins in the body, ruling out an overdose as a cause of death.

"We can't confirm the true cause of death until the full medical report is released," Shawky said. He was told that the medical report won't be published for another two weeks.

The forensic pathologist told

Shawky that the cause of death was a cerebral oedema caused by a blow to the head.

The preliminary forensic report noted bruises and wounds on Said's body. Said was arrested in late November following a fight in his neighbourhood in Giza. Said's family filed a report soon after his death, accusing Major Hisham Abdel Gawwad of torturing Said to death at the Giza police station.

Said has been referred to as a second Khaled Said; the torture victim whose death was considered a catalyst for the January 2011 revolution.

Ahmed Yousry, programme and workshops coordinator at the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre (HMLC), said during President Mohamed Morsy's first three months in power, 33 people died in police custody.

## Makhyoun wins Al-Nour leadership battle

NEW HEAD OF SALAFI PARTY OFFERS OLIVE BRANCH TO COPTS

By Rana Muhammad Taha

The head of Salafi Al-Nour Party's committee in the dissolved Peoples' Assembly became the new party head on Wednesday. Following his election, Youssef Makhyoun reached out to Copts, telling them "you are safe with us".

Makhyoun ran unopposed after his contenders withdrew from elections shortly before they began at the party's general assembly, held at Al-Azhar Conference Centre, Nasr City. Among the withdrawing contenders was Al-Sayed Mustafa Khalifa, former deputy head of the party.

Leading party member Sha'ban AbdelAleem expressed his content with the election results. "It is very pleasant that all general assembly members have reached consensus over the new head of the party," he said. He added that the way Makhyoun was chosen showed there isn't competition within the party for leadership.

Following his election, Makhyoun specifically addressed Egyptian Copts as "national partners", reported state-owned Al-Ahram. He asked them not to listen to "those who use the Salafis and Al-Nour party as a scare-tactic against you". He added that Islam preserves the Copt's right



Youssef Makhyoun won Al-Nour party elections on Wednesday, to become the head of the party

to resort to their religious law. "You are safe with us; we shall offer you nothing but welfare."

After Makhyoun's election, the general assembly moved to electing its high board members and secretariats across the nation. The high board would elect three to four deputies for Makhyoun, Abdel Aleem stated.

Wednesday's elections was the first since the rift which erupted within the party and ended up with its split. The party's former head Emad Abdel Ghafour teamed up with former spokespersons Mohamed Nour and Yousri Hammad alongside more than a 100 other party members who formed rival Salafi party Al-Watan a week ago.

## Arab League call for Palestinian prisoners to be treated as POWs

Arab League condemns Israel for re-arresting Palestinians following a prisoner swap and demands prisoners are treated as prisoners of war

The Arab League has demanded Palestinian detainees be treated as prisoners of war and for international intervention to secure their release.

The Arab League held a special meeting on Tuesday to discuss the issue of Palestinian and Arab prisoners in Israeli prisons. The meeting hosted a Palestinian delegation which was sent to Cairo to discuss the issue with Egyptian officials.

A statement released on Wednesday condemned Israel for re-arresting Palestinians who were released in a prisoner swap deal and expressed concern over the conditions for Palestinians and Arabs in Israeli prisons.

The delegates called upon the United Nations Human Rights Council to hold Israel to its commitments to human rights agreements, including the Geneva Convention. They also called on the council to commit to classifying

Palestinian and Arab prisoners in Israel as prisoners of war.

A request was also made in the statement for Arab members of the UN general assembly to apply pressure for a special session to discuss the issue and request a resolution including the opinion of the International Court of Justice.

In addition the delegates called for an international media and political campaign to show solidarity with the prisoners to help secure their release. The statement also called on the Red Cross to "shoulder its legal and humanitarian obligations towards prisoners and intensify its contact with Israel to stop the dangerous practices against prisoners."

The Arab League expressed particular concern for prisoners who are currently on a hunger strike adding that it "holds Israel fully responsible for the deterioration of their health and the threat to their lives."

According to the Palestinian Prisoner Club Association, Samer Al-Issawi is currently on day 167 of a hunger strike in an Israeli prison. Ayman Cherauna, another prisoner is also taking part in an extended hunger strike.

The issue of Palestinian prisoners has come to the forefront recently following the re-arrest of several Palestinians who were released as part of a prisoner swap deal, brokered by Egypt in 2011. The deal involved a swap of an Israeli soldier for 1,000 Palestinian. Al-Issawi was arrested in 2012 for breaching the conditions of his release.

In December there were 4,656 political prisoners in Israeli prisons, according to the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association's monthly detention report. The report said of these prisoners, 11 were women, 177 were children and 13 were Palestinian Legislative Council members.

## Sinai journalist released but still facing military trial



Mohamed Sabry has been released from detention but still faces military trial

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On 25 September 2012 the military attacked Nada's house again and destroyed the last remaining room in which his family lives. According to the report, during this attack the military shot at Nada's family using live ammunition and dragged the man through the streets while beating him.

Youssef tried to interfere but was beaten, had his arm broken, and was arrested. The report alleges Military

police personnel, led by Captain Ahmed Hindawy, tortured Youssef Nada at the headquarters of the army's Infantry Division 16.

Youssef has since been in prison and received no treatment. The case was transferred to a military criminal court and the first session was on 18 December 2012. The trial was postponed twice and picks up again today.

Over 12,000 civilians have faced military trials since the 25 January 2011 uprising.

The practice declined following the inauguration of President Mohamed Morsi, the first Egyptian civilian president, and the dismissal of top members in the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces that ruled during the transitional period.

However, at least 38 civilians have faced military trials in five different cases since November 2012.

Article 198 of the new constitution allows for military trials for civilians in special circumstances "as regulated by the law."

## US Middle East peace envoy in Cairo

David Hale meets with Egyptian officials ahead of Quartet meeting on Thursday

By Joel Gulhane

The United States envoy for Middle East peace was in Cairo on Wednesday for meetings with Egyptian officials ahead of a meeting of the Quartet on Thursday.

Spokesperson for the US embassy in Cairo David Linfield said Hale's visit is "part of our ongoing consultations with Egypt on a full range of issues,

in this case advancing peace in the Middle East."

He added that Hale was scheduled to meet with President Mohamed Morsi's assistant on foreign relations Essam El Haddad, intelligence chief Mohamed Refaat Shehata, Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives for Israeli-Palestinian affairs and Secretary General of the Arab League Nabil El-Araby.

The Quartet contains representa-

tives from the United Nations, European Union, US and Russia. Former British prime minister Tony Blair acts as the Quartet's special envoy.

The Quartet has come under criticism recently by both El-Araby and the Arab League council. In a speech at the beginning of December El-Araby questioned its role, arguing that it has not made any substantial gains in achieving peace. The council made a similar criticism in November.

Hale met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Amman on Tuesday and is expected to return to Amman on Thursday for the Quartet meeting.

Calls have been made for fresh Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts to be pursued this year. In a joint Russian-EU statement in December, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and EU representative for the peace process Catherine Ashton underline the urgency of renewed, structured and sustainable efforts in 2013.

British foreign secretary William Hague made a similar call after a meeting in London with El-Araby on Monday saying, "2013 offers new opportunities to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by negotiation."



David Hale met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Amman on Tuesday

## NAC calls for nationwide demonstrations on 25 January

National Association for Change says the people must keep up the pressure on the government to achieve the goals of the revolution

By Luiz Sanchez

The National Association for Change (NAC) said on Wednesday they support the judges and prosecutors who refuse to co-operate with the Prosecutor General Tala'at Abdullah. The

NAC demanded in a statement that people reject Abdullah's legitimacy on the grounds that his position was attained illegally.

"The basis of democracy is the separation of powers and not the predominance of any authority over the other," the NAC statement read, adding that respect for public liberties and freedom of the press is also a cornerstone of democracy.

Wael Nawara, a member of the NAC, said that the call for a demonstration extends beyond support for the judges and prosecutors. He said there is a need to reclaim certain demands made during the revolution,

such as the need for an independent judiciary.

Nawara said: "We have had a lot of reservations about the way in which the former prosecutor general worked, but we do not believe the right answer is to undermine the independence of the judiciary."

He said President Mohamed Morsi should not have intervened in the judiciary, adding that the president especially should abide by the law and any issues the judiciary faces should be handled internally.

"The Muslim Brotherhood has almost all the power in their hands, in almost every sense, their Guidance Bureau is controlling the country and we know many legislators and members of the Shura Council now take their orders from them."

To the NAC, the centralisation of power in the hands of the brotherhood—which in turn is controlled by its three top-ranking members—is a

dangerous situation: "The democratic system is being hijacked by an illegitimate council, the Guidance Bureau, which is not a recognisable entity."

Nawara believes the revolution had managed to stop short of being tragic, such as the revolution in Libya or the ongoing Syrian civil war.

"Imagine if the revolution had turned violent like Syria."

"Protesting is only half of the revolution. It is a state of mind millions of Egyptians are still in and until we have a real system that allows for voters to be represented we will always use these tactics in parallel until we know the system has been fixed in a way that empowers the voters."

Nawara pointed out past protests that have made a difference since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, such as the protests in 2011 that put pressure on the Supreme Council of Armed Forces to hand over power earlier than they had planned: "In November

last year the pressure generated by protests in reaction to Morsi's decree forced him to issue a retraction."

"The revolution is not organised by any opposition, no one can claim to be the leader or the one who can command people, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood," he added, referencing the Brotherhood's ability to rally supporters for any cause.

The NAC statement highlights Morsi's appointment of Abdallah as an aggressive act and that the Brotherhood spares no effort to attack and threaten the independence of the judiciary, calling it an "open coup which rejects the goals of the 25 January revolution."

The statement concluded: "To resist and reject this coup on the foundations of democracy and the goals of our revolution... the National Association for Change calls on the masses to hold peaceful demonstrations in squares and streets across the country on Friday, 25 January."

## Syrian children out in the cold



Syrian refugee children peer from a tent supplied by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in al-Marj, in the eastern Lebanese Bekaa Valley, on 9 January, as stormy weather sparked widespread flooding, prompting chaos on the roads and a nationwide school closure. The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is already totaling 156,000, according to UN figures, and 200,000 according to the Lebanese government estimates.

## Censored China paper to publish 'as normal'

Guangzhou, China (AFP) — A Chinese weekly newspaper at the centre of rare public protests about government censorship will publish as usual on Thursday, a senior reporter said, following reports of a deal to end the row.

"The newspaper will publish as normal on Thursday," the Southern Weekly staff member, who declined to be named, told AFP after reports said journalists had reached an agreement with the authorities.

The row at the popular liberal paper, which had an article urging greater rights protection replaced with one praising the ruling communist party, has seen demonstrators mass outside its headquarters in the southern city of Guangzhou.

Public challenges to the authorities on press freedom are rare in China and the affair is seen as a test for the new Communist Party leadership under Xi Jinping.

"It was a case of internal politics," the reporter said. "I am writing an article as we speak, it's about Alexis de Tocqueville's The Old Regime and the Revolution," referring to the French thinker's analysis of the events of 1789.

The South China Morning Post said Guangdong province's communist chief Hu Chunhua, a rising star in the party, had stepped in to mediate in the row.

"There's a verbal agreement in place. Basically it's back to normal, but we'll see how the two sides react to each other in the future," Dow Jones Newswires quoted a Southern Weekly editor as saying.

Under the deal, journalists involved in the protests would not be punished and propaganda authorities would no longer directly interfere in content before publication, Dow Jones said.

The agreement is a "small victory" in a long-running struggle between journalists and censors in China, said David Bandurski, a Chinese media researcher at Hong Kong University.

"It's a victory in the most concrete terms, it's a turn back to a normalcy of censorship that journalists have become accustomed to," he said, adding that the high-profile stand-off could persuade officials not to further tighten controls.

A few protesters gathered outside the Southern Weekly's offices Wednesday holding banners including one reading "Democratic China". They had pushing and showing confrontations with pro-government rivals who played patriotic songs at them.

At their peak Monday the demonstrations drew hundreds of people and the campaign was backed by the blogosphere and celebrities on social media.

Beijing's propaganda department denied reports that the row was



Police look on as a man protests as a group of people calls for greater media freedom outside the headquarters of Nanfang Media Group in Guangzhou on 9 January

spreading with the resignation of the publisher of the Beijing News, part-owned by the Southern Weekly's owner, over a directive to reprint a dismissive editorial on the issue.

The commentary, originally in the Global Times, which has links to the

ruling party, said an "absolutely free media" was unlikely in the country, adding: "Media reform should be in line with China's politics."

Media and online posts said Dai Zigeng told a propaganda official he was quitting after being threatened

with the paper's closure if it did not print the article.

Extracts from it appeared on page 20 in Wednesday's edition, attributed to the Global Times.

But a Beijing Propaganda Bureau official told AFP: "Mr Dai is still at

work as usual."

In an apparent gesture of defiance, the Beijing News published an article on its website entitled "Southern Porridge", which sounds like "Southern Weekly" in Mandarin.

"A bubbling hot bowl of porridge from southern soil seems to have a brave heart," it said.

All media organisations receive instructions from government propaganda departments, which act to suppress news seen as "negative" by the Communist Party. But the censorship of Southern Weekly was seen as unusually direct.

Its original article called on authorities to implement the constitution, which enshrines rights including freedom of speech and assembly.

The paper's investigative reports made it one of the most circulated in China, with a keen following among urban intellectuals, but also left it subject to periodic purges.

Its editor was demoted in 2009 after the White House gave it an exclusive interview with Barack Obama, while authorities ordered Southern Weekly's former news director Zhang Ping to resign in 2011.

China came 174th in a list of 179 countries ranked for press freedom in 2011-12 by advocacy group Reporters Without Borders, falling three places compared to the previous year.

## Shot ex-congresswoman takes on US gun lobby

Washington (AFP) — Former US congresswoman and gun violence survivor Gabrielle Giffords put the National Rifle Association squarely in her sights Tuesday as she unveiled a major initiative for tougher gun laws.

Giffords, shot in the head in January 2011 while meeting constituents in her native Arizona, announced she was forming her own lobby group after a visit to Newtown, Connecticut where 20 children died in a December 14 mass shooting.

"We can't just hope that the last shooting tragedy will prevent the next," Giffords said, in an op-ed article in the USA Today newspaper co-signed by her astronaut husband Mark Kelly.

"Achieving reforms to reduce gun violence and prevent mass shootings will mean matching gun lobbyists in their reach and resources," she said, referring specifically to the influential NRA.

Her group, Americans for Responsible Solutions, will "raise the funds necessary to balance the influence of the gun lobby" and support political leaders who support tougher limits on the private ownership of guns.

President Barack Obama has promised new measures to address gun violence in the United States in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in which six school staff members also died.

The gunman, Adam Lanza, 20, also killed his mother, owner of the Bushmaster military-style assault rifle he used to cut down the six- and seven-year-olds before taking his own life in one of the worst mass shootings in US history.

The NRA, with a highly motivated membership and legendary lobbying clout on Capitol Hill, is proposing to post armed guards in American schools as a means to deter future shootings.

US Senator Dianne Feinstein has meanwhile pledged to reintroduce a national ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition clips that expired in 2004.

The NRA said Tuesday it would send a representative to the White House on Thursday "to hear what they have to say" following an invitation last week from the Obama administration for input on ways to confront gun violence.

In New York, meanwhile, the Gawker.

com blog Tuesday posted a 446-page list identifying what it called every licensed gun owner in the city, minus addresses, obtained from police via a Freedom of Information Law request.

Publication of a similar list in a suburban New York newspaper triggered outrage among gun owners who claimed they were being vilified for legally possessing firearms.

Guns are involved in more than 30,000 deaths in the United States, the majority of them suicides, and handguns rather than rifles or shotguns figure in most homicides.

Giffords, who resigned from Congress a year ago to focus on her rehabilitation, said she upholds the Second Amendment of the US Constitution that sets out the rights of Americans "to keep and bear arms."

"We don't want to take away your guns any more than we want to give up the two guns we have locked in a safe at home," wrote Giffords two years to the day after she was gravely shot and six others were killed, including a nine-year-old girl, in the parking lot of a Tucson, Arizona shopping mall.

"What we do want is what the majority of NRA members and other Americans want: responsible changes in our laws to require responsible gun ownership and reduce gun violence."

Giffords and Kelly said the first change they hope to see is the introduction of comprehensive background checks for the private sale of firearms within the United States.

"I bought a gun at Walmart recently and I went through a background check. It's not a difficult thing to do," Kelly said. "Why can't we...make it more difficult for criminals and the mentally ill to get guns?"

## Nine dead as Middle East battered by bad weather

Ramallah, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Abnormal storms which for four days have blasted the Middle East with rain, snow and hail have left at least nine people dead and brought misery to Syrian refugees huddled in camps.

In the latest incidents, officials reported that two women were found dead in the West Bank on Wednesday after their car was swept away in floods, while a 30-year-old man froze to death in Taalabaya, in Lebanon's Bekaa province, after he fell asleep drunk in his car. Snow carpeted Syria's war-torn cities but sparked no let-up in the fighting, instead heaping fresh misery on a civilian population already enduring a chronic shortage of heating fuel and daily power cuts.

With snow falling in the West Bank city of Ramallah, wintry weather was also forecast for Amman and Jerusalem, and the polar air mass moving down from Russia sent temperatures plummeting as far south as Cairo.

Torrential rain since Sunday in a region unaccustomed to such deluges has sparked widespread flooding that has led to school closures, transport chaos and helicopter evacuations from homes and cars.

Met offices warned that the below-normal temperatures threatened to turn the accumulated water to black ice and in Jordan police warned against all but essential travel as traffic accidents multiplied.

In Syria, state television broadcast regular live reports from the snow-covered streets of the capital, while activists in the battleground city of Homs posted images of a mosque in a rebel-held neighbourhood cloaked in white.

There was no respite for civilians from the 21-month conflict, however. Four children from the same family were among as many as 10 civilians killed in a pre-dawn air strike in a village just outside Homs, a watchdog reported.

Conditions were little better for Syrian refugees in neighbouring Lebanon, where flooding and wintry conditions prompted the UN refugee agency to begin moving those living under canvas.

"With this very harsh weather, shelters have been threatened and now that snow is hitting the Bekaa people are really in need of assistance," UNHCR external relations officer Cecile Fradot told AFP.

"Today we are relocating families whose shelters have been flooded in the north," she said.

"The situation is going to get worse, this is just the beginning of the winter."

The two women found dead near the northern West Bank city of Tulkarem, one from the ancient Samaritan community, had been posted as missing since Tuesday night. A third passenger, believed to have been the taxi



A man checks the level of the water in a flooded street in front of the Israeli separation barrier at the Qalandia checkpoint in the Israeli occupied West Bank, on 7 January

driver, was retrieved alive but was reportedly in serious condition.

The women's deaths, as well as that of the man who froze to death in Lebanon, has raised to nine the fatality toll reportedly linked to the weather since Sunday.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said that on Tuesday, soldiers helped evacuate a bus carrying 30 Palestinian children, as well as an ambulance stuck in floodwaters in the Jenin area of the northern West Bank.

On the Israeli side, army helicopters were used to rescue people from roofs and the tops of cars, and some 300 families from Bat Hefer, north of Tel Aviv, were evacuated from their homes after the nearby Shekhem River burst its banks.

In Jordan, the government declared Wednesday a public holiday due to the icy weather.

Police said many main roads were closed, advising people "not to go out unless necessary," as the hazardous driving conditions caused more than 700 traffic accidents in the space of 48 hours.

In Lebanon, schools remained shut nationwide for a second straight day, as a meteorologist at Beirut airport reported 5.5 cm of rain in 24 hours.

In the mountains above the capital, 10 cm of snow fell as low as 400 metres.

In Egypt, the search was called for 10 fishermen posted missing off the coast, while the port of Alexandria remained closed for a fourth straight day, state media reported.



Former US congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords smiles during the Democratic National Convention on 6 September 2012

## 48 Iranians freed by Syria rebels in prisoner swap

Beirut (AFP) — Syrian rebels on Wednesday freed 48 Iranians they had been holding for months in a swap for 2,130 prisoners detained by the Syrian regime, according to a Turkish charity, a rebel spokesman and Iranian state television.

"This is the result of months of civil diplomacy carried out by our organisation," a spokesman for the Turkish charity the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), Serkan Nergis, told AFP in Turkey.

The regime's prisoners exchanged for the Iranians were of several nationalities, including Turks, he said.

A spokesman for the rebel Free Syrian Army, Ahmed Al-Khatib, confirmed the deal, telling AFP in Beirut by telephone it was worked out through Turkish and Qatari mediation with Iran lobbying ally Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

Iranian television made no mention

of the swap deal, saying only that "the 48 Iranian pilgrims were released."

The Iranians counted several Revolutionary Guards members, according to the rebel group which snatched them in Damascus in early August and threatened them with execution.

The rebels released a video on 5 August showing the captives and Iranian military identification cards taken from them.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi on 8 August admitted there were Revolutionary Guards in the group, but claimed they were "retired".

Salehi had said all 48 had been on a religious pilgrimage to a Shi'a shrine in southeast Damascus, rejecting suspicions the Iranians had been providing military support to Assad's forces.

Wednesday's prisoner release was not immediately confirmed by Turkish or Syrian officials.

Separate to the abduction, Iran's Revolutionary Guards acknowledged on 16 September that members of its Quds Force, an elite external operations unit, had been dispatched to Syria.

But Guards commander General Mohammad Ali Jafari told journalists the Quds deployment was there only to "counsel" Syrian forces fighting insurgents, and not for combat.

Salehi's foreign ministry days later stressed that Jafari's admission did not in any way mean that Iran had a "military presence" in Syria.

Iran has said it is providing only economic and humanitarian aid to Syria's regime, which it sees as part of a regional "resistance" to Israel.

The United States and its western allies believe that Iran is also providing weapons, snooping technology and military personnel skilled in hunting down and suppressing opposition members.

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## Cityscape: Real-estate leads Egypt's growth in the coming period



Cairo governor, Osama Kamal, addressing the attendees during the conference

By Mohamed SalahEldin

Cityscape Next Move Wednesday has held a preparatory session breakfast meeting for its real-estate expo that will be held 28-31 March.

The breakfast was inaugurated by governor of Cairo Osama Kamal and attended by representatives from the ministries of housing and investment beside a number of renowned real-estate developers in Egypt and abroad.

In his opening speech Kamal said: "We have lots of opportunities for investment in Cairo but I ask you to widen your perspective and look into investment opportunities in other governorates, like Giza."

Kamal outlined Cairo's investment potential in tourism and industry, high-

lighting a number of projects available with land secured for use under Build Operate Transfer (BOT) and Public Private Partnership (PPP) models.

"We have a 17 acres of land for building a traffic accessories factory, we have also three facilities in Capritage Helwan on a 25 acre site that is currently in a bad shape but could be developed into therapeutic resorts and spas thanks to the phosphate rich water. There is also Helwan Big Garden which has the same kind of water," said the governor.

The governor also talked about recycling projects that will be put forward in cooperation with the Ministry Of Environment. Two sites have been dedicated to this purpose; 700 acres near Belbess and 1400 acres in

Katameya. A further 250 acres of land in Fostat overlooking Ein Elseera lake has been earmarked for therapy purposes or spas.

On the housing projects, Kamal highlighted 40 acres in Moqattam's central plateau divided into four equal areas ready to be developed.

Assistant housing minister Khaled abbas said: "After the revolution there was a transitional period where the Housing Communities Authority handled clients' requests, but after the election of Morsy there is a new era and the ministry is working on solving all the pending problems." He added that the real-estate sector is strong and is always in demand, saying demand exceeds supply by 400,000 housing units annually.

Ahmed ElSayed, responsible for "mega projects" in the General Authority for Investments (GAFI), gave a speech on behalf of the investment ministry saying that real-estate investment is an integrated societal investment because it responds to social needs. He noted that there are four housing projects on the agenda of the ministry aiming to create townships in Ain Sokhna, Al-Alamein, East Port-Said and Souhag.

ElSayed stated that the Canal Suez projects are a priority for the government adding that the time is suitable now for real-estate development.

Offering advice to businessmen, he said: "Projects have to start from bottom up and no one will get his business done simply by knowing the right person. This time is over."

## EGPC signs a \$265m Murabaha agreement with IITFC

Prime Minister Hesham Qandil commenced the signing of a Murabaha agreement Wednesday that would see the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (IITFC), a branch of the Islamic Development Bank, provide \$265m in funding to Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC).

This raises the amount of money provided to the EGPC by the IITFC since October 2012 to nearly \$500m.

The agreement was signed by Sharif Hadara, new head of the EGPC, and Walid Al-Wahib, Executive President of the IITFC.

This agreement represented the second installment of a previous agreement signed between the two parties on 1 July 2012, which stipulated that IITFC would provide the EGPC with funding totaling \$1 bn.

The signing ceremony was attended by Egypt's Finance Minister Al-Morsy Al-Hegazy, Osama Kamal, Egypt's Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister,

Ashraf al-Arabi, Minister of Planning and International Co-operation, Walid al-Wahib, Executive President of the IITFC, and Zinhum Zahran, Executive Director of the Islamic Development Bank.

Hijazi stated that this deal was a part of another \$2.2bn agreement signed between the IITFC and the Egyptian government back earlier in 2012, which sought to help the government secure and distribute a larger number of basic goods and necessities to its citizens. This would include petroleum products, wheat and other foodstuffs. He added that the government was also currently negotiating with the Islamic Development Bank to obtain more funding for a series of new infrastructure projects.

He further went on to say that these agreements reflected the confidence felt by regional and international institutions regarding the Egyptian government's ability to abide by its international obligations by their designated deadlines.

## European stocks rise on good start to US earnings

London (AFP) — European stock markets climbed on Wednesday following a positive start to the US earnings season that helped to offset weaker news closer to home, analysts said.

In late morning deals, London's benchmark FTSE 100 index of top companies rose 0.35 percent to 6,074.79 points, Frankfurt's DAX 30 index added 0.12 percent to 7,705.34 points and the Paris CAC 40 advanced 0.16 percent to 3,711.90.

The European single currency dipped to \$1.3077 from \$1.3079 late in New York on Tuesday. On the London Bullion Market, gold prices advanced to \$1,663 an ounce from \$1,656 on Tuesday.

"The cautiousness that prevailed yesterday has dissipated and investors resumed buying after Alcoa kicked off the earnings season boosting risk appetite," said Gekko Global Markets trader Anita Paluch.

"The aluminium giant's optimistic outlook on growth and demand lifted spirits creating positive atmosphere and setting a positive tone that helped to disregard the unemployment figures from the eurozone."

US aluminium giant Alcoa said on Tuesday that it had swung back into profit during the final quarter of 2012 on strong operations and a one-off gain despite a weakening of the metal's price.

Alcoa reported earnings of \$242 million (185 million euros), compared with a year-earlier loss of \$191 million. The results were boosted by a gain of \$161 million related to the sale

of a hydroelectric asset. "A return to profit after cost cutting and a bullish outlook for 2013 understandably has been taken well by the market," said Fawad Razaqzada, market strategist at GFT Market.

Earnings news out of Europe was far less rosy, with French auto giant PSA Peugeot Citroen announcing a 16.5-percent plunge in annual sales on problems in southern Europe and Iran and despite strong demand from Russia and China.

In London, shares in British insurer Aviva fell 2.33 percent to 373 pence after the group said it had sold its remaining minority stake in Dutch insurer Delta Lloyd to unnamed investors for £353 million (\$567 million, 433 million euros).

The announcement comes a week after Mark Wilson began his reign as Aviva chief executive following a turbulent time for the company, Britain's second-biggest insurer after Prudential.

Aviva said on Wednesday that it had sold its 19.4-percent holding for 12.65 euros (\$16.55) per Delta share.

Asian stock markets meanwhile closed mostly higher on Wednesday, snapping a recent losing streak thanks to Alcoa's earnings, traders said.

"Alcoa's results are generally considered a bellwether for the global economy and the fact that the aluminium giant forecasts higher demand in 2013 appeased investors," noted Stan Shamu, a strategist at IG Market in Melbourne.

However Wall Street ended in negative territory overnight, with the Dow falling 0.41 percent.

## Cellular networks raise rates in anticipation of new tax hikes

By Mohamed Alladin

In a surprise move for Egypt's mobile market, Mobinil and Vodafone Egypt have raised the price of prepaid minute-cards, in preparation for expected tax hikes on the country's telecommunications networks. Both companies said they would raise the price of lines for wholesalers by five pounds, and pre-paid cards by 20 piastres, while Etisalat Egypt notified its distributors that it would soon raise the price of its products.

Muhammad Talat, a distributor for Vodafone Egypt, said that the price of prepaid minute-cards in Egypt's wholesale market had risen between 20 and 25 piastres, with their price at distribution outlets increasing as much as 40 over the last week.

He said that these price increases should not have an effect on consumers, however that some distributors have been exploiting the current state of market instability in Egypt to raise the price of 10 pound cards to as much as 13.5.

He added that the price of mobile phones had increased after Mobinil

and Vodafone Egypt raised their SIM card price to 15 pounds. He added that the latter had also got rid of its incentive policy for wholesalers that grants them one pound for every phone line they register. Instead, every three months they would grant distributors a 3% commission on the amounts paid by clients per phone line.

Talat added that the current economic situation has forced businesses to raise the price of phone lines by EGP 20 in order to compensate for recent price increases. He further went on to say that businesses were counting

on the company's newly proposed 3% commission rate to help rake in profits. On the other hand Etisalat Egypt adhered to the demands of their distributors to raise the wholesale price of their products beginning in 2013.

Hassan Abdullah, president of the Technical Office for Egypt's Tax Authority, stated that none of the companies are entitled to any of the fees collected as a result of recent amendments to Egypt's tax code, regardless of whether they had already raised the price of their products or sought to do so in the future.

### Daily EGX30 index performance

| Company Name                          | Reuters Code | Sector  | Last Price | Close Price | Returns |        |         | Daily Performance |            | Turn Over (EGP Mill.) | Volume Trade | Market Cap. (EGP Mill.) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---|------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|-------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
|                                       |              |   |            |             | Daily   | YTD    | 12-Mths | Max. Price        | Min. Price |                       |              |                         |
| Commercial Bank                       | COMI         | Banks   | 39.28      | 39.00       | 2.79%   | 12.81% | 93.64%  | 39.28             | 38.00      | 93.23                 | 2,390,671    | 22,658.81               |
| NSGB                                  | NSGB         | Banks   | 35.00      | 34.98       | 0.46%   | -0.65% | 59.51%  | 35.12             | 34.71      | 5.761                 | 164,692      | 15,443.92               |
| Ez Steel                              | ESRS         | Basic Resources                               | 10.63      | 10.75       | 0.66%   | 8.26%  | 184.39% | 10.90             | 10.60      | 23.15                 | 2,153,318    | 5,802.07                |
| ELSWEDY ELECTRIC                      | SWDY         | Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles | 23.22      | 23.23       | 0.48%   | 1.40%  | 7.50%   | 23.25             | 22.85      | 2.842                 | 122,359      | 5,165.42                |
| MRRIDIVE                              | MOIL         | Industrial Goods and Services and Automobiles | 1.18       | 1.18        | 0.00%   | 1.72%  | -1.67%  | 1.20              | 1.17       | 2.28                  | 297,954      | 422.91                  |
| AIC Contracting                       | AIND         | Financial Services excluding Banks            | 0.49       | 0.50        | 0.00%   | 6.38%  | -7.41%  | 0.51              | 0.49       | 2.352                 | 4,712,015    | 267.31                  |
| Amer Group Holding                    | AMER         | Financial Services excluding Banks            | 0.67       | 0.67        | -1.47%  | 4.69%  | 21.82%  | 0.69              | 0.67       | 3.17                  | 4,701,773    | 2,066.99                |
| EK Holding                            | EKHO         | Financial Services excluding Banks            | 1.30       | 1.30        | 0.78%   | 1.56%  | 38.30%  | 1.31              | 1.29       | 5.036                 | 599,763      | 1,082.69                |
| EPG-Hermes                            | HRHO         | Financial Services excluding Banks            | 11.58      | 11.65       | 0.52%   | 5.81%  | 9.49%   | 11.76             | 11.53      | 15.99                 | 1,372,247    | 5,543.44                |
| Pioneers Holding                      | PIOH         | Financial Services excluding Banks            | 5.09       | 5.10        | 0.79%   | 4.94%  | 127.68% | 5.18              | 5.05       | 8.115                 | 1,590,322    | 2,530.00                |
| Citadel Capital                       | CCAP         | Financial Services excluding Banks            | 4.19       | 4.24        | 0.24%   | 12.17% | 71.66%  | 4.31              | 4.17       | 19.30                 | 4,556,495    | 2,765.23                |
| Raya Holding                          | RAYA         | Technology                                    | 5.79       | 5.84        | 0.69%   | 3.18%  | 64.04%  | 5.95              | 5.75       | 0.883                 | 151,211      | 372.50                  |
| Telecom Egypt                         | ETEL         | Telecommunications                            | 14.93      | 14.94       | 1.84%   | 5.58%  | 9.77%   | 15.11             | 14.77      | 12.53                 | 838,660      | 25,042.74               |
| Orascom Telecom Media And Technology  | OTMT         | Telecommunications                            | 0.58       | 0.59        | 0.00%   | 7.27%  | 70.88%  | 0.60              | 0.58       | 18.841                | 32,082,767   | 3,094.96                |
| Orascom Telecom                       | ORTE         | Telecommunications                            | 4.23       | 4.26        | 0.71%   | 7.30%  | 146.47% | 4.30              | 4.18       | 40.60                 | 9,538,315    | 22,189.27               |
| Sidi Kerir Petrochemicals             | SKPC         | Chemicals                                     | 13.42      | 13.41       | -0.52%  | 1.21%  | 11.56%  | 13.55             | 13.37      | 7.295                 | 544,039      | 7,077.00                |
| Egyptian Financial and Industrial     | EFIC         | Chemicals                                     | 10.42      | 10.59       | 0.86%   | 6.75%  | 18.32%  | 10.71             | 10.42      | 4.62                  | 436,482      | 727.67                  |
| AMOC                                  | AMOC         | Oil and Gas                                   | 75.00      | 74.81       | 0.84%   | 2.21%  | 4.16%   | 75.00             | 74.00      | 1.787                 | 23,886       | 6,387.76                |
| Juhayna Food Industries               | JUFO         | Food and Beverage                             | 7.77       | 7.84        | -0.51%  | 1.95%  | 105.24% | 7.90              | 7.70       | 3.97                  | 506,110      | 5,563.70                |
| Orascom Construction Industries (OCI) | OCIC         | Construction and Materials                    | 269.90     | 270.76      | 0.50%   | 7.29%  | 28.49%  | 272.90            | 267.06     | 38.794                | 143,279      | 56,290.10               |
| Delta Construction & Rebuilding       | DCRC         | Construction and Materials                    | 6.63       | 6.68        | 0.15%   | 7.05%  | -14.80% | 6.80              | 6.63       | 0.94                  | 141,070      | 154.12                  |
| Modern Co. For Water Proofing         | WATP         | Construction and Materials                    | 1.97       | 1.98        | 5.32%   | 10.61% | -21.43% | 2.03              | 1.80       | 4.189                 | 2,118,185    | 191.76                  |
| Palm Hills                            | PHDC         | Real Estate                                   | 2.64       | 2.68        | 1.52%   | 9.84%  | 141.44% | 2.72              | 2.63       | 66.44                 | 24,800,994   | 2,767.56                |
| TMG Holding                           | TMGH         | Real Estate                                   | 4.75       | 4.77        | 0.42%   | 7.67%  | 60.07%  | 4.85              | 4.73       | 14.233                | 2,980,833    | 9,801.92                |
| National Real Estate Bank             | NRPD         | Real Estate                                   | 21.04      | 21.27       | 0.81%   | 6.67%  | 11.95%  | 21.56             | 21.04      | 3.06                  | 143,882      | 82.34                   |
| Six of October                        | OCDI         | Real Estate                                   | 21.80      | 22.14       | 0.36%   | 8.90%  | 179.90% | 22.60             | 21.80      | 6.266                 | 283,061      | 2,000.32                |
| El Kahera Housing & Development       | ELKA         | Real Estate                                   | 6.61       | 6.67        | 0.60%   | 1.52%  | 68.43%  | 6.80              | 6.60       | 3.78                  | 565,805      | 621.56                  |
| Arab Cotton Ginning                   | ACGC         | Personal and Household Products               | 4.56       | 4.55        | 3.88%   | 3.41%  | 107.76% | 4.70              | 4.39       | 33.421                | 7,343,550    | 1,159.89                |
| Oriental Weavers                      | ORWE         | Personal and Household Products               | 23.5       | 23.69       | -0.50%  | 1.67%  | -15.81% | 23.99             | 23.50      | 0.95                  | 39,909       | 2,142.90                |
| Egyptian Tourism Resorts              | EGTS         | Travel & Leisure                              | 1.17       | 1.18        | 1.72%   | 12.38% | 37.21%  | 1.20              | 1.16       | 5.414                 | 4,600,874    | 1,218.00                |

### Market indices performance

| Index         | Value    | Daily Ch. | YTD Ch. |
|---------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| EGX 30        | 5,866.91 | 1.08%     | 7.40%   |
| EGX 70        | 502.40   | 0.23%     | 5.31%   |
| EGX 100       | 844.21   | 0.42%     | 5.48%   |
| EGX 20 Capped | 6,763.97 | 0.89%     | 6.65%   |

### Market Brief

| Markets      | No.        | Volume             | Value (LE)         | Trades        |
|--------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Listed       | 189        | 152,293,255        | 770,469,231        | 32,326        |
| Stocks       | 182        | 152,167,641        | 640,975,706        | 32,318        |
| PDBonds      | 5          | 125,500            | 129,482,114        | 6             |
| Bonds        | 2          | 114                | 11,411             | 2             |
| Nilex        | 7          | 1,064,810          | 2,374,447          | 284           |
| OTC          | 9          | 2,042,472          | 7,844,380          | 224           |
| Deals        | 4          | 34,329             | 6,345,300          | 6             |
| Orders       | 5          | 2,008,143          | 1,499,080          | 218           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>205</b> | <b>155,400,537</b> | <b>780,688,058</b> | <b>32,834</b> |

| Direction     | No. | Volume (000's) | Value (LE 000's) | No. of Trades |
|---------------|-----|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Listed stocks | 183 | 151,985        | 640,359          | 32,220        |
| Gainers       | 94  | 94,617         | 548,715          | 26,093        |
| Decliners     | 59  | 9,913          | 43,412           | 3,744         |
| Unchanged     | 30  | 47,454         | 48,232           | 2,383         |

# COMMENTARY

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

### Egyptian economy: Fixing a mud house in the rainy season

The current hot economic topics of the IMF loan, floating the Egyptian Pound, increasing taxes and inflation are all symptoms of a crisis of denial that the Muslim Brotherhood government is schizophrenically going through. They tend to forget that the Egyptian economy is nothing but a poorly constructed mud house, incapable of surviving serious downpours and in need of complete reconstruction.

For some reason, the Brotherhood government tends to ignore that there was a revolution with strong economic motives and demands. Bread, freedom and social justice. Would the recent economic moves have met these very basic demands? Obviously, it is not the intention. And ironically Gamal Mubarak's economic legitimacy is still there and prevailing.

Let us go back a few years and remember 2004, which represents a dramatic transformation that worsened the situation for the poor in comparison to Mubarak's early 1990s economic transformation in coordination with the IMF. Under the president's older harsher neoliberal transformations in collaboration with prime minister Ahmed Nazif, new regulations were introduced. In this period, the business elite upgraded its position from supporting Mubarak's regime in exchange for economic benefits to being the regime itself.

The 2004 economic laws simply confirmed the new development of the nature of Mubarak's regime, which was clearly at the service of the upper crust, both the local and the foreign. Definitely, not in favour of the middle, nor the lower middle income groups. A quick reading into the new taxation and competition protection laws proves the point of where that corrupt regime was going, and actually still is going.

The worst in that taxation law was the generalisation in defining tax-payers' groups, which was totally against the very basics of social justice. The

law unified the tax for all commercial and industrial activities, whose profits top EGP40,000 a year. Such an injustice made the small business owners barely making any profit pay an equal rate as the big corporations - foreign or national - that make annual profits estimated in tens or hundreds of millions. A newly introduced practice that is aggressively unfair and does not even occur in the most capitalist economies in such a blunt manner.

Another law was introduced in 2004 with the goal of "competition protection". The old monopolies had always fought against its issuance and attempted to protect their own economic privilege and dominance over the market existing since the late 1970s. Such monopolies have actually succeeded with the blessing of Mubarak's son to introduce that law in a very superficial structure that made no positive change at all within the highly monopolised Egyptian markets.

One of the many monopoly examples is the cement sector, where prices went up from EGP110 per tonne in 2002 to 280 in 2004. However, back then the cost of producing one tonne were less than EGP100 with 100% locally produced input materials. That was following a massive wave of privatisation of most of the cement sector's public companies.

Back to the IMF! The mighty global organisation that should be extremely happy providing such a miserable loan to Egypt. First, it cannot afford to lose Egypt as a political partner in the region. Second, whether it was the Supreme Council for Armed Forces (SCAF) or the Brotherhood, they both serve the organisation's goals, adopt their structural adjustment strategies and the aggressive enforcement of the free market economy.

The IMF is nothing but an agent of the global economic powers representing their interests in the region; read



MAHER HAMOUD

about its foundation with the World Bank following the second world war. It has kept a sharp eye on political developments in post-Mubarak Egypt and insists on offering its "support" in the form of huge loans and by portraying disastrous and pessimistic future to the country, if not taken. But of course only with their pro-rich conditions.

Well, we have to ask ourselves this question over and over again: Did the revolution fail? So far minimum wages are still at an inhumane level while post-Mubarak governments in the past 24 months following his ousting are still imprisoned in the same economic mentality of Mubarak economics and Gamal's legitimacy that have the same pro-rich practices. Well, still the answer is confidently no, it did not fail.

Actually, what we should be sure of is that a revolution has just started and it is simply an agreed upon logic for those believing in change. It was just the beginning of a long path to go through grabbing economic rights and the aspired for social justice from those dictating them. The people have drawn their own roadmap and they still do keep the regime toppling manual in their hands.

As for that economic mud house the Brotherhood and the IMF are fixing, sadly we will have to watch it collapse soon and the pay for the cost. We'll be stuck in the monsoon until the country is cleaned up.

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## REBEL ECONOMY WRAP

### Egypt's households key to dollar crisis

A somewhat contrarian Reuters analysis this afternoon should calm those panicked by Egypt's currency woes:

"The key to preventing a messy devaluation of Egypt's pound may lie with the country's households, whose dollar holdings are being eyed by foreign investors as a critical gauge of trust in the authorities."

So in fact, it is "not the withdrawal of foreign investors from a market but the flight of local households and businesses from a currency that is instrumental in [the pound's] collapse," according to the article.

That means that despite what all those big foreign investors might be saying about the collapse of the pound, take no notice, because it's ordinary Egyptians who are critical to avoiding a currency crash.

"Increased household dollarisation and a run on the currency, that's the big risk," says Jean Michel Saliba,

BofA-Merrill Middle East economist, who estimates households account for more than 70% of deposits in the banking system.

In contrast, foreigners hold a mere 3-4% of the local bond market, according to other estimates from Barclays."

This is an important indicator of how public perception is crucial and inherent to economic stability. The Morsy administration's handling of the IMF loan negotiations - which have lasted almost 20 months, have contributed to worries over the economy.

But it was a series of bad decisions: pushing through an unpopular constitution; issuing an "all-powerful" decree and then backtracking and announcing tax hikes before suddenly suspending them that have only served to undermine confidence in the economy and push panicked Egyptians to swap their pounds for dollars.



FARAH HALIME

Essentially, if the government wants to stop the run on reserves and the pound, President Morsy must convince the nation he is in control. Right now, that's exactly what the public do not see.

Farah is a business journalist and founder of Rebel Economy, a blog focused on how regional economies are rebuilding after the Arab Spring. www.rebeleconomy.com



## Fighting for inclusion

A few weeks ago I was invited to a UNDP-sponsored forum on "women's participation in post-revolutionary parliamentary elections." Policy makers, legislators and opinion leaders from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia had gathered to share their experiences in legislative elections held following the mass uprisings in their countries and discuss ways of ensuring increased participation of women in political decision making.

In all three countries, women played a significant role in the mass protests that toppled autocratic regimes but the "Arab Spring" has brought neither the freedom nor the political gains that these women had aspired for. Instead, the women today find themselves at risk of losing some of the rights they gained under the former regimes.

"After playing a key role in the protest movements, the women were expected to retreat from public life and were sidelined," lamented Maya Morsy, UN Women Egypt's country coordinator.

In Egypt, not only were women shut out of the decision making process, but those who participated in protests demanding a faster pace of reforms during the transitional period were also subjected to (what appeared to be systemic) sexual assault and violence.

Yet they refused to be pushed back into the shadows and women turned out in large numbers in the first free parliamentary election post-revolution, outnumbering men.

The result of the vote however was a shocking disappointment for Egypt's women.

"Only nine women were voted in because the electoral system in Egypt is not women-friendly; it does not aim to integrate women," said Nehad Abu Qomsan, chairperson of the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights.

Participants attributed the low representation of women in the now-dissolved parliament to their having been placed at the bottom of electoral lists and to the abolishment of a Mubarak-era quota reserving 64 seats for women.

"Political parties did not include enough women on their electoral lists," explained Dr Hoda Badran, head of the National Women's Union.

"Our electoral law stipulated that the lists must include at least one woman but did not specify where the women should be placed on the list. Most parties put women at the bottom of their lists which reduced their chances of being elected," she added.

Unlike Egyptian women, women in Tunisia and Libya fared better, thanks to their female-friendly electoral systems. Ahead of the October 2011 Constituent Assembly elections in Tunisia, the transitional authorities there passed a law stipulating that candidates lists must include alternating male and female candidates. This gave women equal opportunity to participate in

drafting the constitution; a move that experts said would ensure the safeguarding of women's rights.

"Not only do women make up 27% of Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly but 59 women also won seats in the 217 seat parliament," noted Kalthoum Badr el Deen, a member of the Tunisian Constituent Assembly.

The number of women lawmakers increased after several male MPs left parliament to take up positions in the government and were replaced by women.

Unlike Egypt and Tunisia where Islamist parties won the majority of the votes, Libya's first post-Gaddafi parliamentary election brought an assembly composed largely of an alliance of liberal parties. "This was a great victory for Libya but the even bigger victory was the inclusion of women," said Zahia Farrag Attia, a Libyan candidate who had run as an independent in the legislative election in her country.

Libyan women won 33 seats in the parliamentary election; 32 of them through party lists and just one independent (out of 84 who ran as independents). "Women who ran as party candidates benefitted from the support and resources of their parties. They had a higher chance of winning because women were included in party lists in alternating slots, both horizontally and vertically," Attia said.

She and other participants said

women were held back by the patriarchal, conservative culture in their societies where women are often treated as "second class citizens".

"It is not just men that are not supportive of women, women voters too are not supportive of women candidates; regardless of their level of education," complained Mai Shalkamy who ran as an independent in Egypt's parliamentary election but did not win.

Experts said patriarchal societies need to introduce special measures to ensure more adequate representation of women but what's more important, they said, is the choice of electoral system.

"Tunisia had a proportional representation system which allowed more women to get elected. Egypt did not introduce any special measures and so the results were disastrous for women. Majoritarian systems are not as women-friendly as proportional representation systems," said Carlos Valenzuela, UNDP's senior electoral expert for the region.

Meanwhile amendments to the electoral law (proposed by a group of politicians and legislative experts earlier this week) have been sent to the Shura Council for final discussion and approval ahead of parliamentary elections slated for late February. The draft stipulates that party-based lists must include at least one woman candidate who must be placed in the top half of



SHAHIRA AMIN

the list. The poll will be held under a mixed system in which two-thirds of the seats are to be contested by party candidates while a third of them will go to independents.

Politicians have criticised the amendments saying they are superficial and fall short of the aspirations of political forces. The critics complain the changes do not guarantee judicial supervision of the elections and are designed to marginalise the opposition. They also do not guarantee equal representation for Coptic Christians who make up an estimated 12% of the population, they say. Pope Tawadros II had earlier called for the allocation of constituencies for Christians to allow them greater representation in parliament. Amr Moussa, former presidential candidate and member of the opposition National Salvation Front (NSF), said the NSF proposals to criminalise

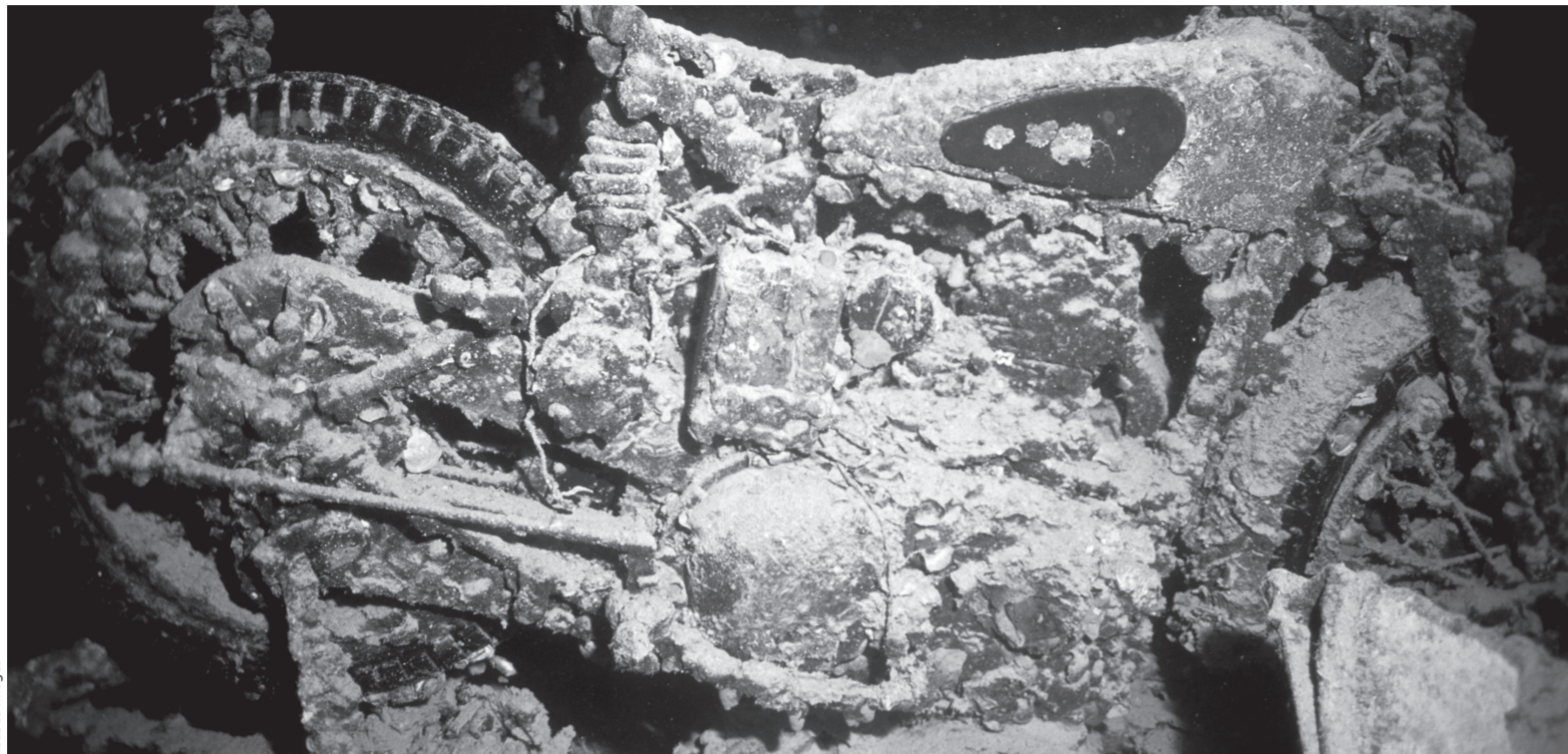
the use of places of worship in electoral campaigns and set a financial ceiling for campaigners had been ignored. He added that the NSF had requested the adoption of an open-list proportional representation system instead of the current mixed system stipulated by the draft law.

"It is crucial that women are allowed access to a reasonable percentage of seats," insisted Hoda Badran, adding that members of her NGO would do all they can to support women in the upcoming poll; especially independent candidates. "While we do not support the candidates financially, we organise gatherings to allow voters to meet the candidates, print leaflets and advise women to vote for the women candidates. We also urge political parties to put more women on their lists."

She and the other participants agreed that there can be no progress if women, who make up half of society, are left out of the political process.

"Supporting women in decision-making results in social policies that respond to the needs of women and their families. It also helps change society's attitudes towards women," said Maya Morsy. "Change begins with us."

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Motorcycle on the Thistlegorm

## The wonderful wrecks of the Red Sea

By Darja Tjioe

The Red Sea is considered one of the best places in the world to go diving, due to the large coral reefs and variety of colourful fish. But the Red Sea offers more than sea-life; diving enthusiasts from all over the world come to dive on the famous wrecks of the Red Sea.

Many wreck divers spent their childhood reading books filled with adventures in faraway places and dreaming of being part of that excitement. I was no different and among the many comic books I devoured on rainy afternoons, there is one Tintin I remember particularly well: Red Rackham's Treasure. There was a lot going on in this story but mainly there was diving, shipwrecks, treasure hunting and a sub-marine in the shape of a shark.

The very first time I was under water and saw a massive dark blue silhouette slowly taking form in front of me, for an instant I remembered those rainy afternoons and realised a dream had just come true.

The Red Sea is literally littered with shipwrecks. The combination of it being a major shipping route between Europe, Africa and the East and the numerous reefs along the way make it a dangerous sea to travel. Given that these days even fully equipped cruise ships have trouble avoiding islands, it is easy to imagine that with less sophisticated navigation tools accidents happened regularly in the distant and not so distant past on hidden reefs. The waters of the Red Sea truly are treacherous; sailing out of the Gulf of Aqaba into the Strait of Tiran, a cluster of reefs is waiting right there for the unsuspecting captain and many ships have run aground right there. Coming from Suez is not much different; the huge reef of Abu Nahas lies right in the middle of the route towards the south. Many of the reefs in the Red Sea are up to a metre below the surface, and especially when the weather is quiet and the sea is calm it is next to impossible to see the coral, until it is too late.

### The Carnatic

From the coastal towns of Hurghada and El Gouna daily diving trips are organised to Sha'ab Abu Nahas, referred to in dive briefings as the reef of copper (*nahas*) or bad luck (*nahs*), since the Arabic words so phonetically similar. Both translations work well and add to the mystery surrounding wreck diving. Five wrecks are known to lie at Abu Nahas, although there is speculation that there are many more. Maybe even up to nine shipwrecks in total, although only four are well known and accessible to all levels of divers. The four wrecks that are visited most are the Carnatic, the Ghiannis D, the "lentil wreck" and the "tile wreck". The last two wrecks go by these cryptic names, as there is still some discussion about the correct identity of the ships.

The wrecks are positioned in a neat row on the northern side of the reef, almost as if someone laid them out on purpose to give easy access for divers. And it does not stop there, the

depth range in which the wrecks lie, between three and 30 metres, is ideal for all levels of divers. Only the weather can possibly ruin the trip, when high waves make entering and exiting the water difficult and sometimes even dangerous; but some diving centres circumvent this by anchoring behind the reef and using a zodiac to drop the divers on the wrecks.

The Carnatic is the oldest wreck on the reef of Abu Nahas. It was a mixed-propulsion, two-mast steam ship, carrying passengers as well as a cargo of whiskey and soda, and a huge amount of gold. It ran aground on 13 September 1869, most probably due to a navigational error. On the captain's order the passengers and crew stayed onboard for a day and a night, waiting for rescue, but instead the ship broke in half and slid off the reef, taking 31 people with her. The remaining crew and passengers made it to nearby Shadwan Island and were rescued from there.

The ship now lies on the seabed next to the reef at a maximum depth of 28 metres. A week after the ship sank one of the first recorded salvaging operations was performed by helmet divers to recover the gold. Even though a few divers hope they may have missed some of it, it looks like they got it all. Today, only the steel carcass and some empty, broken soda bottles remain. After spending more than a century under water, the ship is encrusted with hard and soft corals

and teeming with all sorts of marine life. Not only is this wreck beautiful, it gives a sense of going back in time, like looking through a window into another era. The soft corals growing all over the wreck and the shafts of sunlight through the portholes create a mystical lightshow and make the Carnatic one of the most photogenic wrecks in the area.

### The Thistlegorm

A little further to the north, close to Sha'ab Ali in the Strait of Gobal, lies the Thistlegorm. This ship is truly the stuff of history. It was a British supply ship for the army during the second world war and was sunk by the German air force on 6 October 1941. It is now lying upright at a depth of 30 metres. Most of the cargo is still untouched and during a dive you can see Bedford trucks, BSA motorcycles, Bren guns and ammunition, Wellington boots and two locomotives.

The world was introduced to this wreck in the documentary *The Silent World* by Jacques Cousteau, in which he tells the story of how he discovered the wreck in 1953 and shows him diving on the wreck for the very first time and securing the ship's bell. After the discovery by Cousteau the precise location of the Thistlegorm was lost, and people only really started diving it again in the early 1990s, with the arrival of the first diving tourists to Sharm El Sheikh.

The Thistlegorm is definitely the most famous wreck dive in Egypt,

and it is way up there on the list of 'must-dives' in the rest of the world. The size of the ship, together with the cargo, the accessibility and the marine life make for a spectacular couple trip, and it should be on every wreck aficionado's bucket list.

Unfortunately it is also a wreck on which you can really see the damage that is done by divers. One problem is people taking souvenirs with them, dramatically reducing one of the wreck's major points of interest: the cargo. A second problem is bad mooring practices. Some days up to 20 or 30 dive boats are tied off on the wreck, some of them tie their lines onto very breakable parts of the ship, which leads to the slow destruction of the integrity of the wreck.

It remains a great dive despite of this, and even dive guides that work in the Red Sea are captured by the magic of it. Each one of them has a story or a tall tale about their experiences on Thistlegorm; the first time they saw it, the first time they tied a rope off, the time they lost a diver (and found him again) or the time the current was sooooo strong. We all have a story, really! Try finding out the Thistlegorm story of your guide next time you spend some time on a dive boat and even if they are a little further from the truth than they should be, they most probably are very entertaining.

### The Rosalie Moller

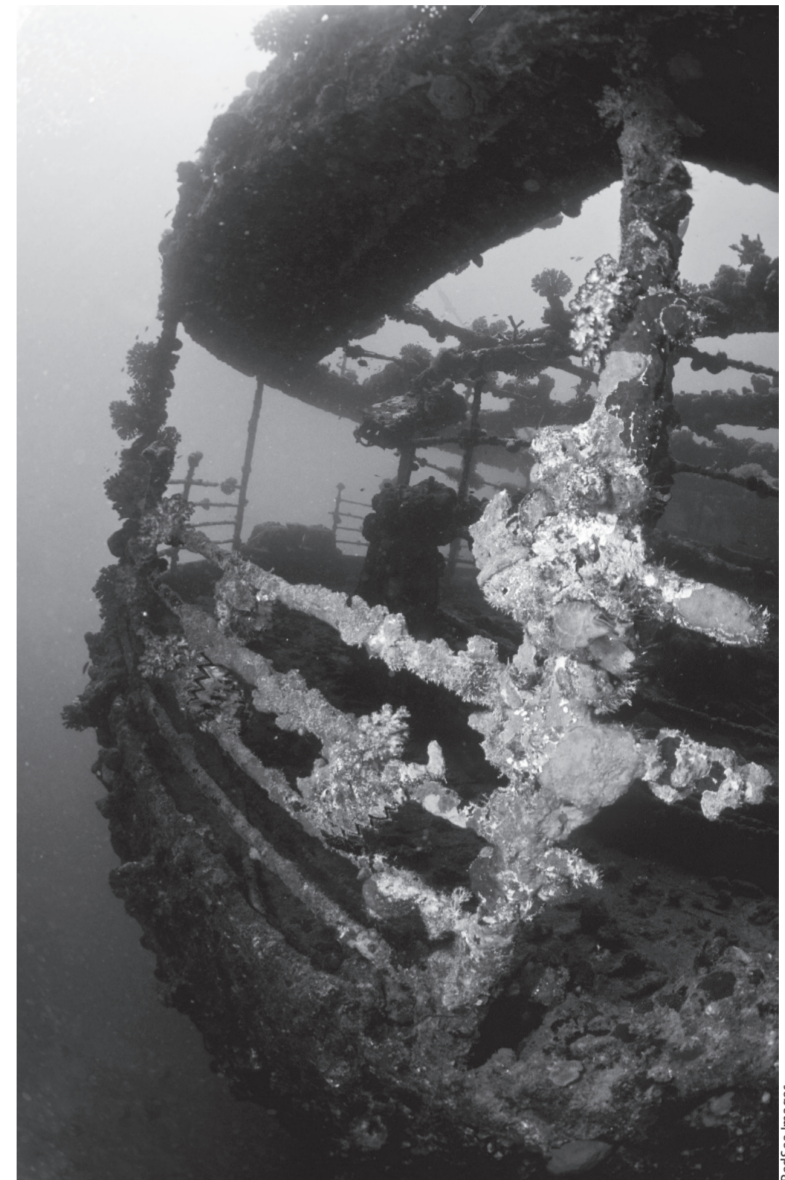
Also known as the sister ship of the Thistlegorm, the Rosalie Moller was sunk only two days later, on 8 October 1941. Once again a German aircraft bombed the ship and it sank almost instantly, leaving it standing upright on a muddy seabed between the islands of Gobal and Queisum. With surprisingly little damage from the explosion, it is possible to see the ship in its entirety.

This dive is a little different than the Thistlegorm. First of all the silty bottom in this area causes poorer visibility than usual in the Red Sea. The wreck lies a little deeper as well, with the stern at around 43 metres and the bow at 46 metres. The depth combined with the reduced visibility gives the dive the sense of gloom and doom that really works well for wreck diving.

For most of the year, the ship is covered in a thick blanket of glassfish, which are hunted by about 40 of probably the biggest lionfish known to man and a school of baby barracuda. In the darker corners of the wreck, massive potato cods are lurking and waiting for the exact right moment to scare the living daylights out of you, by suddenly appearing and disappearing in the gloom. On your way up from the dive, you may find yourself in the company of some overly friendly batfish.

### The Numedia

Now we make a big jump, over the islands of Gobal and Shadwan and continue south for a little while before suddenly almost bumping into two little islands in the middle of the sea. This is pretty much what happened to the Numedia. On 19 July 1901, just before dawn, she ran aground on the north point of Big Brother.



Rosalie Moller

To give an idea of the skill needed to complete this feat of navigation; the northern point of Big Brother is about 20 metres wide and there is a whole lot of empty sea all around. There was a much bigger chance of missing than hitting the reef but lucky for us the captain managed to, because the Numedia is a breathtaking wreck. It lies on the steep reef slope, starting at around 10 metres going all the way down to 80 metres. The side of the island where the Numedia lies is exposed to strong currents, which means that care should be taken when diving. It also means that there is prolific growth of colourful soft corals and an enormous variety of marine life. Around the wreck, there are good chances to see grey reef sharks, napoleons, groupers, thresher sharks and even hammerheads.

### The Salem Express

All the wrecks described so far have sunk with a minimal loss of life, and although every life lost at sea is one too many and should be mourned, things change when the loss of life becomes considerable, as is the case with the Salem Express.

On the night of 17 December 1991 the Salem Express was on her way back from Jeddah. On board were many pilgrims coming back from the Haj but exactly how many passengers and vehicles were on board that night is not really clear. There are many rumours that the ship was overloaded and that there were a lot more people onboard than registered. The weather was bad and in the dark, at an hour's distance from Safaga, where the ferry was heading, the Salem hit a reef. The collision tore open the hull and forced the bow door open, with catastrophic results. According to accounts it took less than 10 minutes for the ship to capsize and sink. There was no time to deploy the rescue boats and many people died that night.

Diving the Salem Express is not like diving any of the other wrecks. The tragedy that came to pass here is so present, so obvious, that you would have to be made of steel not to feel it. The suitcases strewn around the wreck are a painful reminder of the fate of their owners. Swimming through the restaurant, you can almost see them sitting there and hear their voices. In itself it is a beautiful dive, the wreck is practically intact and marine life is slowly starting to move into a new habitat.

There is some controversy concerning diving this wreck. Rumours were going around that people dived the wreck mere days after its sinking, to pillage the gold that people took with them on their pilgrimage. Another rumour held that the gold that was obtained this way was cursed and apparently businesses that were

financed with the recovered gold all came to an untimely end. The choice whether or not it is appropriate to dive this wreck is a choice that each diver should make for himself. And if we choose to dive it, I think we need to show respect towards the tragedy, the ship and the last passengers.

### Saving the wrecks

Shipwrecks are graves, they are museums, they are archaeological sites; they are so much more than just heaps of old rusty steel. Even if it is not actual gold coins in wooden pirate chests, the Red Sea wrecks are a treasure. And treasures are not to be thrown away or handled carelessly.

In 2006, HEPCA (the Hurghada Environment and Protection and Conservation Agency) launched a project called Saving the Red Sea Wrecks designed to save what is left of the most famous wrecks by decreasing damage done by destructive mooring practices and air pockets left by divers.

Many meetings were held, dive centres consulted, money was raised and sites were closed for maintenance. Around the Thistlegorm 32 moorings were installed to provide alternative attachment points for dive boats. Several strategically drilled holes were added to get rid of air pockets otherwise adding to the natural corrosion on a wreck.

It helped, a little, if only for the awareness it created among divers. Both professionals working in the Red Sea and the many visitors started to realise that what we have today, will not necessarily last until tomorrow, and there are a few things we can do to preserve this accidental heritage.

If you are a wreck diving aficionado here is what you can do to preserve the past:

Refrain from dismantling wrecks (obviously dismantling and preservation are not compatible).

Take nothing. Even the bits that are not attached to the wreck, leave them where they are. That very cool Wellington boot that you took with you is now a pile of crumbled rubber in your garage, while on the Thistlegorm many divers could have enjoyed it.

If you absolutely have to tie onto a wreck use a rope, steel wire cuts through already corroding steel.

If you absolutely have to tie onto a wreck, avoid tying on to wobbly masts, anti-aircraft guns and the likes... surprisingly, they come off!

Most of all though, come to the Red Sea. Come and see these famous sites with your own eyes. Come and let your inner child experience the adventure that it has been dreaming of. Come and get your Thistlegorm dive stamped and signed off in your logbook. Do not take my word for it, come and see for yourself.



The Salem Express

# ART & CULTURE

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

## EVENTS

### MUSIC

#### High on Body Fat and Screwdriver

The comedy-duo of Marwan Iman and the multi-talented Safi, who write all of their hilarious lyrics will be performing at the Cairo Jazz Club followed by the funky Screwdriver. Reservations at the Cairo Jazz Club are recommended.  
Cairo Jazz Club  
197, 26 of July Street  
Zamalek, Cairo  
Tel: (02) 3345 9939  
10 January 10pm

#### Salalem

Enjoy your dose of Egyptian indie-pop with the very talented Salalem and their charismatic frontman Mohamed Jamal. Minimum charge is EGP 100.  
After Eight  
6 Kasr El Nil Street  
Downtown, Cairo  
Tel: 010 0339 8000  
10 January 9pm

### PERFORMANCE

#### Sufi Show

A Sufi tannoura show at Sufi- get it? The show will add to Sufi's intimate and mystical feel the founders were going for and attendance will require ordering at least one item.  
Sufi  
12 Sayed Bakry Street, Zamalek  
Tel: (02) 273 816 43  
10 January 8pm

#### TheSkyis256K

Fayek Helmi will be making his music, partly inspired by gameboys at Bikya Nasr City's quiet and intimate location. Attendance is free.  
Bikya Book Cafe  
23 Dr. Zaki Hassan street,  
Nasr City, Cairo  
Tel: (02) 240 466 88  
10 January 10pm

### EXHIBITION

#### Mashrou3 Hagar: Art Empowers!

Providing artists who have emerged on the changing scene with the means and expenses to express themselves and funded by the EU and our favourite Darb1718, the event will feature the work of artists we think you should see.  
Darb 17 18  
El Fustat  
Old Cairo, Cairo  
Tel: (02) 2361 0511  
10 January 11am

#### Flowers and Jewellery

A painter, a jewellery designer and a florist present their work in a collaborative exhibition by our favourite quirky gallery, Mashrabia. What more could you ask for?  
Mashrabia Gallery  
8 Champollion Street  
Downtown, Cairo  
Tel: 010 0170 4554  
10 January 11am

## Weather

Thursday, January 10

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Alexandria      | 14°C / 5°C  |
| Aswan           | 18°C / 8°C  |
| Cairo           | 14°C / 7°C  |
| Hurghada        | 20°C / 9°C  |
| Luxor           | 18°C / 7°C  |
| Sharm El-Sheikh | 21°C / 12°C |
| Suez            | 11°C / 2°C  |

## Subspace, replacing 'Habibi' in a new mainstream

By Omar El Adl

The music industry in Egypt may be in trouble. We have too much of what certain people call "Habibi" music; Egyptian pop peddled by the likes of Tamer Hosny, with little substance and an obsession with an elusive loved one.

Subspace is a new record label that hopes to change that. The label was founded by Ahmed Mehessen and Aly Samaha and is launching Neobyrd's new album *The King is Dead*.

Mehessen, better known to some as Teknyk, said: "The idea for Subspace was always in our minds. We wanted to start a record label



Neobyrd

because we saw that there was no alternative for independent and underground music. We want to provide a service that takes the artist from the pre-production process all the way to distributing their album. We take care of all of it.

"We want to eradicate the idea that an artist can be good enough for the Arab world or the Middle East but mediocre when it comes to the rest of the world. If you are mediocre there, you are mediocre everywhere. We want to replace this 'Habibi' pop with the underground genres that are not getting enough attention in Egypt. We want to create a new mainstream."

Subspace believes that there is no platform for underground artists to reach mainstream audiences. "There is no record label that will take an artist all the way through the entire process. Underground musicians end up touring around Europe and booking a few gigs here and there. We want to change that."

The label currently has four other artists and *The King is Dead* is their first major release. "One thing we do here is focus on artist development. Before an artist can get to making music, they need to be prepared. It is like a training period,

you see where they are and prepare them mentally and artistically before they can release an album."

The Subspace studio reflects this mentality and was designed to get artists' creative juices flowing; the place immediately puts one at ease with its laid-back atmosphere.

Other artists include Malak El-Husseiny, who was a finalist in the

Sing Egyptian competition, and 13x26, a joint effort between Teknyk and Arkytekt. The fourth artist is yet to be announced.

El-Husseiny said: "They develop you mentally, it is a very emotional process. No other record label does that."

The release of Neobyrd's second album will be on 19 January at Old

Cairo's Darb 1718 and will feature international guest performances from Rachel Starr, Lebanon's Caesar K and Egyptian DJ and producer Hady Tarek.

Tickets for the event were made available yesterday on daren-deal.com and Virgin Megastores and sell for EGP 100.

## It does not rain, it pours



Donkey cart is unfused by the flooded street close to Maspero

Last night it started raining in Cairo, and mayhem ensued. Within minutes streets flood and traffic crawls over the muddy tarmac.

The flooding is due to the lack of sewers, the traffic jams are caused by everyone slowing down as soon as the first drops have fallen in the inexplicable Cairo traffic behaviour.

Traditional transport wins hands down in these circumstances, as shown in the image above.

## Coffee, Islamist-style

The news in the past week has been filled with stories about a coffee shop in Nasr City that specifically caters to an Islamist clientele. The coffee shop offers all the lattes, cappuccinos and other overpriced, popular, caffeinated hot drinks that all the other ubiquitous chains carry, but applies some rules that set it apart from your regular Road 9 roastery.

Women who are unaccompanied by men have a separate area of seating, while single men, married couples and families fill the rest of the space. It is unclear to me how the staff establishes if a couple is married and are allowed to sit together; do they ask for a marriage license while taking an order for shay-be-laban? And do they have female waitresses that work in the women's section? With a female shift manager, manager, all the way up the ladder of the company. On the other hand, maybe it is fair to expect that those who choose this coffee shop over one of the other copycat chains do so because of a principle that they are not likely to betray by lying about their marital status. Otherwise Starbucks and its bad coffee would do the trick.

The cafe offers free Wifi, so tablets, iPads and laptops abound, but plays no music, since some of the patrons consider music to be forbidden to the faithful. Another rule that immediately inspires questions: do the waiters lean, respectfully of course, over shoulders to see if illicit Youtube-checking is going on? What happens if that irritating tune that has been stuck in your head for three days makes you hum under your breath without noticing?

Contrary to what the all media attention might have you believe, the coffee shop is not new nor is it the first one of its kind, remember the female only ahwa? And let's not kid ourselves, many of the country's venues are effectively segregated in one way or another but the rules are understood rather than announced to the public at large.

The summer compounds in Sahel that fill up every year with the select few who can afford it and resort



ADEL HEINE

towns like El Gouna where the A-list have their second homes can only be entered through well guarded gates where security men will ask you your business before contemplating letting you in. White faces get easy access, I can tell you from experience, but Egyptians may have a harder time, depending on the car they drive. Anything down from a Beemer or one of those cool new Jeeps will result in endless questions, all designed to keep the riffraff out of the reality of the rich.

As a European I am invited to partake in the upper levels of society when it comes to parties and events; everyone likes to have a few token white people around it seems. The rigorous vetting process of "who is your father" and "what does your family do" that is applied to locals is completely disregarded when it comes to me; nobody cares as long as I know how to behave reasonably well and can handle the salad fork at a sit down dinner. There are still lines that cannot be crossed though; I am not supposed to marry a family member.

Exclusion and segregation exist in every society, be it on gender, religion or race. Differences and separations between those of different opinion is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as we are all free to make up our minds as to what it is we want.

Freedom breeds diversity, something the self proclaimed liberals of the country would do well to remember before they start protesting against the people who want to have their coffee, Islamist-style.

Drink and let drink I say, that is what freedom is all about.

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