

## 400 EMPLOYEES OF SHUTDOWN DAILIES FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Abu Dhabi/Dubai: A total of 400 employees on three tabloid newspapers of a Dubai-based media group were caught by surprise on Sunday when they were informed through a memo that the company had stopped functioning as of April 22.



The three newspapers are Urdu Express (morning daily), Arabiya (Malayalam afternoon tabloid) and Emirates Evening Post (English afternoon tabloid), which was launched three years ago.



The publisher, Press Centre and Art Production, posted a notice saying that the National Media Council in a letter dated February 14 instructed the company to stop printing and publishing its newspapers.

The council, a source told *Gulf News*, has given a three-month grace period ending in mid-May to all media firms to adjust their legal status according to the Federal Law on Press and Publications, No. 15 of 1980.

"The national media policy respects the freedom of expression, and out of its wish to have work organised in accordance with the existing laws, all bodies working in the media field in the country should abide by the law." Employees of the three newspapers said they were taken aback by the news.

They said the company had given them three options. They could either go on a long leave, resign or take a re-release.

Source: GULF NEWS

## RIGHTS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS DISCUSSED

RIYADH, 4 May 2007 — The issue concerning the rights of Saudi women journalists dominated the Second Women's Media Forum that ended here yesterday.

The forum, "Media Vision for Economic Horizons," decided that a letter drafted by journalists and media representatives would be handed to Princess Adela bint Abdullah, the patron of the forum, which she would give to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah seeking his help to end injustice and solve the problems of women journalists. The letter would document all the problems they face in their profession.

"The forum comes after the huge success of the previous one that took the first step in holding a progressive media dialogue," said Princess Adela.

Journalists and media representatives from inside and outside the Kingdom attended the forum. Attendance with more than 200 women was comparatively less than last year's forum.

Princess Adela commended Saudi women journalists for highlighting the role of Saudi women in economic development. "Women contribute a lot to the economic development," she said. "We appreciate the efforts of women journalists in projecting Saudi women's role in economic development, I wish that this forum would work to resolve the problems and issues facing them."

The session yesterday began with a paper presented by Suzan Al-Qulini, head of the media college at Ein Shams University and a media consultant in Egypt.

Her paper discussed the Arab media's role within the political, economic and cultural spheres. She mentioned the kinds of censorship the media face and their negative effects.

She stressed the need to reconsider the role played by the Arab media and the importance of merging with the technocommunity in order to access all the technical and scientific achievements of the modern age.

Ali Al-Eliayni, another speaker, discussed the advertisement industry and its positive and negative effects on the Arab and Saudi media. He said that the size of the advertisement market points to the increasing size of the media. He also criticized its social role.

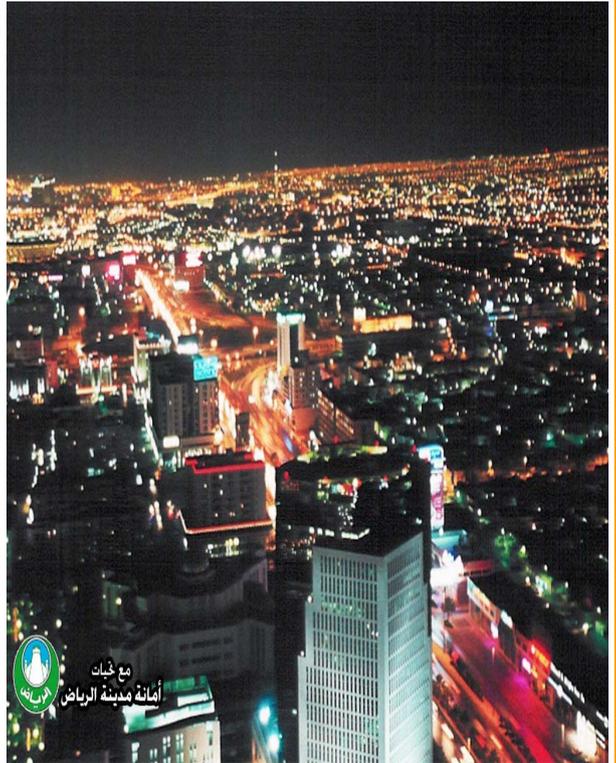
Sabriya Jawhar, the head of the women's department at the Saudi Gazette, presented a paper discussing the rights of women journalists in media establishments.

She spoke about the women journalists' situation at their workplace and the problems they face: working without any privileges or rights, poor salaries and lack of financial acknowledgement of their work. She also highlighted cases of women working without contracts, facing humiliation and risks of losing jobs.

Her paper also discussed the issue of women working as full-time journalists for many years, covering events with their personal expenses without getting any reimbursements.

Maha Akeel, the managing editor of the OIC's magazine, The Journal, who also writes for Arab News, presented a paper on the obstacles in specialized media and journalism. She raised the issue of segregation against women journalists and how it negatively affects the image of the society. She called for setting up a journalism college for women and launching training courses and programs in media institutions.

Other papers presented discussed several other topics, such as the shortage of specialized financial journalists, women in TV and radio, the reinforcement of women's investment opportunities, training and professionalism of Saudi women media representatives and journalists, and media ethics.



During the question-answer session, many journalists attending the forum spoke of their problems and experiences in the profession.

F. Al-Onzi, a journalist in a public radio in Riyadh spoke about her dilemma: 16 years of working for national radio without any social security despite the fact that she is a divorcee and responsible for feeding five kids. Her case included salary delays for more than six months. She said that a journalist's ignorance of her rights was another factor that goes to her detriment.

On Wednesday, the first day of the event, Nadiah Al-Juery, a Reuters reporter in Egypt discussed "Financial Journalism Skills" with a group of reporters and women activists focussing on the principles of financial news reporting.

Al-Juery gave tips regarding financial news reporting and added that while woman are not so prominent in financial print journalism they still play a significant role in broadcast financial journalism.

Al-Juery also criticized some reporters for not verifying information provided by their sources and for allowing themselves to be a means of promoting some people at the expense of objectivity.

Etedal Al-Majbary, who represented a training and research center in Tunisia, presented a paper entitled "Gender and Media Integration" that discussed issues relating to women participating in all media sectors including politics, economy and sport.

The paper further mentioned how the media should make use of the potential of women to express women issues, which would aid in the development of women.

**Source : ARAB NEWS**

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