

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

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Sunday: Sunny, breezy, high 43.
Sunday night, clear, lighter winds,
low 28. Monday, early sun, then
cloudy, high 43. Details, Page 39.

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'Here you don't know what will solve a problem. It's about looking for a key.'

Sheik Reda Shata, the imam of a thriving mosque in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn



James Estrin/The New York Times

A Muslim Leader in Brooklyn, Reconciling 2 Worlds

By ANDREA ELLIOTT

The imam begins his trek before dawn, his long robe billowing like a ghost through empty streets. In this dark, quiet hour, his thoughts sometimes drift back to the Egyptian farming village where he was born.

But as the sun rises over Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, Sheik Reda Shata's new world comes to life. The R train rattles beneath a littered stretch of sidewalk, where Mexican workers huddle in the cold. An electric Santa dances in a doughnut shop window. Neon signs beckon. Gypsy cabs blare their horns.

The imam slips into a plain brick building, nothing like the golden-domed mosque of his youth. He stops to pray, and then climbs the cracked linoleum steps to his cluttered of-

AN IMAM IN AMERICA

First of three articles:

Old Values in a New Land

ly puzzle Mr. Shata must solve as the imam of the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, a thriving New York mosque where several thousand Muslims worship.

To his congregants, Mr. Shata is far more than the leader of daily prayers and giver of the Friday sermon. Many of them now live in a land without their parents, who typically assist with finding a spouse. There are fewer uncles and cousins to help resolve per-

sonile Muslim tradition with American life. Little in his rural Egyptian upbringing or years of Islamic scholarship prepared him for the challenge of leading a mosque in America.

The job has worn him down and opened his mind. It has landed him, exhausted, in the hospital and earned him a following far beyond Brooklyn.

"America transformed me from a person of rigidity to flexibility," said Mr. Shata, speaking through an Arabic translator. "I went from a country where a sheik would speak and the people listened to one where the sheik talks and the people talk back."

This is the story of Mr. Shata's journey west: the making of an American imam.

Over the last half-century, the Muslim

As Crisis Brews, Iran Hits Bumps In Atomic Path

Technical Hitches Slow
Progress, Experts Say

By WILLIAM J. BROAD
and DAVID E. SANGER

When Iran defiantly cut the locks and seals on its nuclear enrichment plants in January and restarted its effort to manufacture atomic fuel, it forced the world to confront a momentous question: How long will it be before Tehran has the ability to produce a bomb that would alter the balance of power in the Middle East?

Iran's claims that it is racing forward with enrichment have created an air of crisis as the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency prepares to meet Monday in Vienna before the United Nations Security Council takes up the Iran file for possible penalties.

Yet behind the sense of immediate alarm lies a more complex picture of Iran's nuclear potential. Interviews with many of the world's leading nuclear analysts and a review of technical assessments show that Iran continues to wrestle with serious problems that have slowed its nuclear ambitions for more than two decades.

Obstacles, the experts say, remain at virtually every step on the atomic road. The most significant, they add, involve the two most technically challenging aspects of the process — converting uranium ore to a toxic gas and, especially, spinning that gas into enriched atomic fuel.

According to the analysts, the Iranians need to do repairs and build new machines at a prototype plant before they can begin enriching even modest quantities of uranium. And then, for a decade, they would have to mass produce 100 centrifuges a week to fill the cavernous industrial enrichment halls at Natanz. What is more, the gas meant to feed those machines is plagued by impurities.

The perception gap was underscored in February when Tehran issued a stark warning. By late this

BUSH RULES OUT A NUCLEAR DEAL WITH PAKISTANIS

CONTRAST TO INDIAN PACT

A Call for More Democracy
and a Frank Talk About
Fighting Terrorism

By ELISABETH BUMILLER
and CARLOTTA GALL

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, March 4 — President Bush made clear on Saturday that Pakistan should not expect a civilian nuclear agreement like the one with India soon, and he bluntly said the two rivals on the subcontinent cannot be compared to each other.

Mr. Bush said he and Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had discussed a civilian nuclear program for Pakistan during talks on Saturday morning.

"I explained that Pakistan and India are different countries with different needs and different histories," Mr. Bush said at a joint outdoor news conference with Mr. Musharraf on the grounds of the presidential palace, Aiwan-e-Sadr. "So as we proceed forward, our strategy will take in effect those well-known differences."

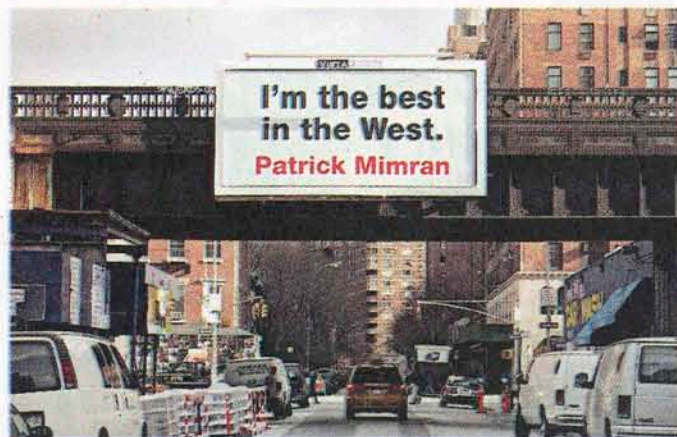
Before Mr. Bush's remarks, administration officials said General Musharraf had no chance of making such a deal when proliferation and terrorism remained concerns in Pakistan. But it was striking that the president spoke so directly as his host stood at his side.

Mr. Bush showed strong support for Mr. Musharraf's efforts in combating militants, even though Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks, and Mullah Muhammad Omar, the Taliban leader, are believed to still be hiding in Pakistan. Without being specific, General Musharraf himself made reference to "slippages" in the past.

Mr. Bush said, "Part of my mission today was to determine whether

CHELSEA

High in the Air, Artistic Manifestos



Photographs by Hiroko Masuike for The New York Times

Random observations about the art world that some might jot down on a Post-it.

"I'm the best in the West," reads the billboard facing the traffic on West 25th Street, hung on the rusted elevated tracks running along 10th Avenue. Underneath the bold black letters on a white background, at once a giant cookie fortune and greeting from above to Chelsea gallery visitors, there is a name printed in red: Patrick Mimran.

The same message is found on billboards on 24th and 26th Streets, always confronting the flow of oncoming cars, dealers, artists and curators.

Mr. Mimran, a silver-haired 50-year-old Frenchman with a penchant for ascots, lives in Switzerland, where he once owned a factory that made Lamborghinis, but spends several months of each year in New York. Although he is not a household art name of the

stature of a Chuck Close or Jeff Koons, he has nonetheless commanded the air space and attention of the New York art world.

He started by renting one billboard in Chelsea in 2001 to please himself and to implicitly make the point that artists shouldn't be the lackeys of institutions. Now he rents three, which change simultaneously each month but do not always all show the same message at the same time.

What others might jot down on a Post-it, Mr. Mimran makes big:

"Art is not where you think you are going to find it."

"Art is everywhere but not in everything."

"Intellectual revolution = retinal submission."

"No angst for art."

"Art cures only those that create it."

He has invited comments. "Patrick Mimran (212) 946-1348" was one of three phone numbers shown on three separate billboards. Each led to an answering machine with a recorded message saying, "Art is not where you think you are going to find it." Callers were invited to leave a recorded message offering their comments; many people took advantage of the offer. "I got a lot of feedback," Mr. Mimran said. "Most of them good, some of them very bad and some people who did not understand."

Some billboards would read like huge singles ads (Mr. Mimran is married), if one didn't know that "Laet-

itia," "Masha" and "Jessica" were his daughters.

Others seem to speak to jet-set meanderings. "Sorry I'm gambling in Monte Carlo." "Sorry I'm in India." "Sorry I'm in Gstaad." "Sorry I'm on a cruise."

Some of the signs seem addressed specifically to art dealers:

"Artists do not need dealers, they just need walls." "The best way to become a genius in art is to never listen to a dealer."

"To an art dealer 'good' means 'easy to sell.'" "Good taste is the opiate of the perceptive."

And one message seems aimed pointedly at New Yorkers: "Do people stand longer in front of a Picasso than in front of the window at Saks?"

LILY KOPPEL

NEW YORK UP CLOSE

For Their Ears Only

Jim Mason, a tall, soft-spoken computer programmer, visits the Science, Industry and Business Library branch of the New York Public Library, at 34th Street and Madison Avenue, five days a week.

On a recent Saturday, his visit included something a little weird — at least it would have looked weird to a passer-by. As he stood in front of the library's "business information wall," a display featuring 17 flat screens that seem to float against a backdrop of iridescent blue that constantly changes colors, then back to blue, he was listening to a reporter from CNN deliver a commentary about the management guru Jack Welch.

The room was utterly silent. And Mr. Mason was not wearing headphones. What he was doing was partaking of a new technology, called an audio spotlight, that is making inroads at a growing number of the city's libraries, stores and art galleries.

The audio spotlight is a directional speaker that functions a little like a flashlight; only those in its "sound envelope" hear its message. The device sends out sound waves, and it is as if your head has become the speaker.

"They're revolutionary," said Mr. Mason, pointing to the three 18-inch speaker discs above the news wall. "I hear the information I need without bothering anyone else with my noise, which is so unusual in New York, where we are always assaulted by sound."

The device, officially called the Audio Spotlight, was invented in the

late 1990's by Joseph Pompei, president of a company called Holosonics; at the same time, the American Technology Corporation invented a rival speaker called HyperSonic Sound.

Directional speakers produce ultrasound: sound waves with wavelengths of a fraction of an inch that travel through the air in a narrow, columnlike beam. The ultrasound in turn vibrates the air, literally like a speaker, creating audible sound, which has wavelengths ranging from about half an inch to more than 50 feet. If you stand in the path of the beam, you feel as if you are wearing headphones.

The PaceWildenstein Gallery on East 57th Street used the speakers for an exhibition that ended last month called "Constructing Realities: Photography, Film, Video and the Internet," with work by Diane Arbus and Andy Warhol, among others. Spotlight speakers are also used in cacophonous New York spaces like the Javits Convention Center, and the Peninsula New York hotel just bought several units for guest rooms.

Despite enthusiasm for the new technology, some students of communication suggest that it will further isolate people from one another. "Socially," said Mark Crispin Miller, a media critic who teaches at New York University, "there is very little difference between a multitude of people all having their own private aural experiences and a multitude of people stoned out of their gourds."

AILI MARY MCCONNON



Chester Higgins Jr./The New York Times

Listening in private, publicly, at the library.