

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

GULF  NEWS

IRAQ INVASION: 4th ANNIVERSARY

WAR OF ERROR

IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THIS DAY IN 2003, ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE ON IRAQ ... THE REST IS HISTORY

IRAQI DEATHS

65,000

US MILITARY DEATHS

3,220

IRAQI REFUGEES AND DISPLACED

3.7m

IRAQIS WANT US TO STAY

18%

NUMBER OF WMDs FOUND

0



**WAS IT SADDAM, DEMOCRACY,
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION
OR SOMETHING ELSE?**

Four years on, Iraq as we knew it is virtually no more. The country is torn along sectarian and ethnic lines and on the verge of collapse. Dozens of innocent lives are wasted every day. A poll, released globally yesterday, showed only 18 per cent of Iraqis have confidence in the American-led forces and most think the presence of foreign forces is making security worse. Hundreds of thousands, mostly the educated and the potential assets — the backbone of any potential reconstruction, have fled the country, which has become a haven for terrorists and slave-labor mills. Foreign powers still score on Iraq's oil making it impossible for the government to restore stability. It all began on that fateful day four years ago, when US President George Bush gave the order to invade Iraq, overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime, and install a democratic government. It turned out to be a bloody war of error...

See also Pages 12,13,14

Editorial comment: US nightmare still haunts Iraq — Page 8
Opinion: Can the US justify its errors and its Iraq — Page 8
Photo: war and democracy — Page 25



Category: News Design/Pages
Sub-category: A-Section/Broadsheet

10 Opinion

Salik won't be an all clear sign for drivers

Majority of the UAE residents think the toll system will significantly affect the cost of living in the country

By MANAL ALFAHRANI
Staff Writer

In Arabic, Salik means clear so a Salik road is a road clear of traffic. But for most UAE residents, this will not be the case when the new road toll system, dubbed too early by a majority vote, is introduced on Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Rashid roads next month. Instead, roads will suffer from increased congestion. Emirates road will be most affected in terms of increased traffic followed by Al Maktoum Bridge and Al Khail road. The public's estimation of traffic congestion reduction with the introduction of Salik is 25.72 per cent, which is remarkably close to Dubai's government's announced estimate.

That is the main conclusion from the latest Gulf News survey whereby 680 UAE residents answered questions on the new road toll system. Of those polled, 47 were Emiratis, 80 were other Arabs, 98 were Westerners and 409 were Asians.

In general, there is a high level of awareness of Salik with a total of 95 per cent of UAE residents saying they're either very aware or slightly aware of details. Bearing that in mind, 17 per cent of Emiratis say they're not aware of anything about Salik.

How do UAE residents feel about Salik? To begin with, only 4 out of 10 are in favour of road tolls as a general concept and even less respondents (3 in 10) are in favour of the new Salik road toll system being introduced in Dubai. Instead, 66 per cent show disagreement with the new system. Non-Emiratis and Asians are the most vocal against it, followed by Westerners (nearly 6 in 10) and Emiratis (nearly 5 in 10). Also, there is a pattern in response when it comes to age; the older the respondent, the more likely he/she agrees with the new toll system.

Interestingly, 66 per cent don't believe the Salik system should be rolled out to other emirates in the UAE. This is the case especially amongst Asians with 7 out of 10 showing opposition to such a proposal. The remaining respondents mainly choose Sharjah as an emirate that should follow in the footsteps of Dubai and introduce a road toll system.

We asked our respondents which roads in Dubai they think will experience increased traffic once the new road toll system gets implemented. Unsurprisingly, 7 out of 10 said Emirates Road. Here is a list of other roads that are expected to be the most congested (from most to least): Maktoum Bridge, Al Khail Road, Business Bay, Al Wasl Road, Jumeirah, Beach Road and Al Safouh Road.

There are a few optimists amongst UAE residents who feel some benefits are expected from the new toll system (although nearly 3 in 10 feel the system will not have any advantages). The expected benefits range from reduction in traffic congestion (30 per cent), providing speedy access during emergency situations (29 per cent) to a reduction in pollution (21 per cent).

The disadvantages of the new toll system include: increasing congestion on alternative routes, increasing accidents on alternative routes, an adverse effect on businesses along the toll routes, and the fact that bikes, which help reduce traffic congestion, are also subject to toll.

Overall however, despite some reservations, the public's estimation of traffic congestion reduction with the introduction of Salik is 25.72 per cent, which is remarkably close to Dubai government's announced estimate.

Our respondents' main concern is that the introduction of the road toll is "way too early". A closer look though reveals that Emiratis feel differently from other nationalities (Westerners, Asians, and other Arabs). That is, the number of respondents coming from other nationalities (Westerners, Asians, and other Arabs) is double that of Emiratis who feel the toll system is being introduced ahead of its time (an average of 57 per cent vs. 28 per cent).

For those who criticise Salik (56 per cent of our respondents), there is a strong feeling amongst them that there is no viable alternative transport system outside of the main highway. Nine out of 10 respondents say Salik is being introduced too early and claim the metro-rail should be in operation first. Other problems for the majority of UAE residents include the absence of a fully functional public transport road network (75 per cent), not having enough alternative routes in place (73 per cent) or public buses (66 per cent). The majority also feel that the toll system should have been held back until the proposed alternative routes are ready.

The overwhelming majority of Dubai residents say the tolls should only operate during peak hours and not throughout the day. Moreover, there should be a flat rate allowing multiple entries either daily, monthly or biannually.

The introduction of a toll system have an affect on the use of taxis across the country? Around 4 out of 10 residents say they

will rely less on taxis in the future as the cost of tolls is expected to increase the cost of fares generally. This is especially the case amongst Asians with 5 in 10 saying they will rely less on taxis. In contrast, 36 per cent of Westerners say toll charges will not decrease their use of taxis and they will continue to use the toll route.

The majority of our respondents think the toll system will significantly affect the cost of living in the UAE. It is therefore expected that when it comes to the issue of reimbursement, UAE residents across nationalities and salary brackets feel employers should reimburse em-

ployees for toll charges accrued in the course of their job.

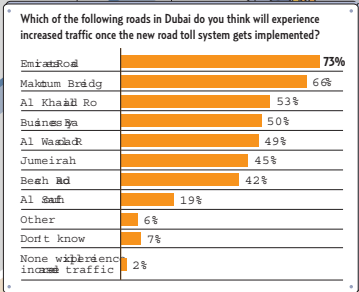
According to our respondents, the new system will have the following effects:

- Five out of 10 respondents feel they will travel to Sharjah (from Dubai) less frequently
- Six out of 10 respondents will visit businesses that require them to pass through the toll less often
- An overwhelming 8 out of 10 respondents will travel the same amount but will use different routes
- Nearly 4 out of 10 respondents will contemplate moving residential location to avoid the toll and
- Worryingly for the Mall of the Emirates, 71 per cent of UAE residents say they will visit the mall less frequently than they have in the past.

Should the toll system prove ineffective in easing traffic, our respondents are split on what should be the next step while many feel the toll system should be kept provided good public transport is introduced, around one third feel the system should be cancelled altogether.

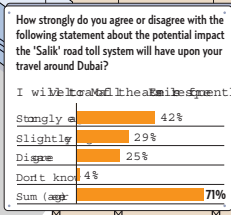
Do you think the toll system will significantly affect the cost of living in the UAE?

	Total	Emirat	Other Arab	Western	Asian
Yes it will	178	66	81	63	81
No, it will not	50	13	14	28	14
Don't know	6	21	5	9	5



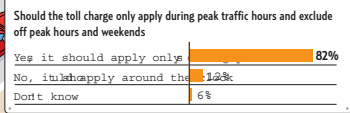
If the toll system proves ineffective in easing traffic, what should be the next step?

	Total	Emirat	Other Arab	Western	Asian
Keeping the toll system public transport	37	23	33	43	37
Cancelling the system	31	13	29	26	35
Keeping the toll system but reducing the number of roads	15	9	18	11	16
Introducing a toll on other roads	7	21	4	5	6
Ensuring that alternative routes are ready	4	13	5	7	2
Increasing the fee	2	4	6	3	1
Don't know	5	17	6	5	3



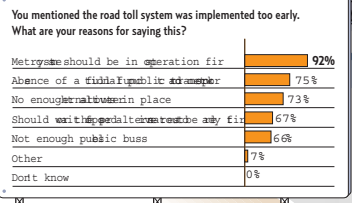
Do you think the introduction of the road toll system is...

	Total	Emirat	Other Arab	Western	Asian
Long overdue	10	15	15	10	8
Introduced about the right time	10	15	12	14	14
Way too early	56	28	49	54	60
Don't know	19	28	21	23	17



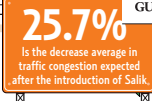
Toll charges will affect taxi fares which you will pay as a customer. What effect will this have on how you use taxis?

I will use taxis	44	23	44	14	53
I will use taxis if taxis are not available	20	32	15	29	18
I will use taxis if taxis are not available and I have no other choice	15	13	15	36	11
Don't know	20	32	26	21	18



How aware are you of the proposed road toll system in Dubai called 'Salik'?

	Total	Emirat	Other Arab	Western	Asian
Very aware - I know details	45	30	34	47	48
Slightly aware - I know the name but not details	47	56	56	51	49
Not aware - I do not know about it	5	17	9	1	3
Don't know	1	6	1	1	0



Should a road toll system be introduced in any of the following Emirates?

Sharjah	20%
Abu Dhabi	9%
Ajman	3%
Fujairah	2%
Ras Al Khaimah	2%
Umm Al Quain	2%
Don't know	11%
Road tolls should not be introduced in other Emirates	66%

10 Opinion

By ROBERT DITCHAM
Staff Reporter

UAE residents are reaching breaking point over the country's mounting rents. In an effort to cut costs, people are moving to cheaper homes, sending their family home or changing their lifestyle. Some have even considered turning their backs on the UAE.

Almost a third of respondents to a survey on UAE accommodation said rent increases have forced them to move out of their home in the past 12 months, while two thirds said the general cost of living has made them consider abandoning the country altogether.

Responding to a YouGov survey commissioned by Gulf News, 64 per cent of Asians said they have considered leaving for good, compared to 70 per cent of Arab expats and 74 per cent of Westerners.

Even a quarter of Emirati respondents said they have thought about turning their back on the UAE and 30 per cent said they have been forced to move house within the country in the past 12 months.

The overall response suggests that unless the inflated cost of UAE living is addressed, an exodus is a worse case, but realistic, scenario.

The YouGov survey was based on 518 respondents with a representative sample from each nationality grouping, 59 per cent living in Dubai, 20 per cent in Sharjah and 14 per cent in Abu Dhabi.

The figures show that rent is by far the primary cause of residents' concerns. 70 per cent of those renting said they have contemplated leaving, compared to 43 per cent of home owners. When asked whether increasing rents have led them to this view, as opposed to price inflation of other living costs, more than half of all respondents said yes.

Almost one in five said they have moved to another emirate, a figure which suggests some success in northern emirates' efforts to bill themselves as a cheap alternative to Dubai.

Although some residents will go as far as moving house or leaving the UAE, most will try to adapt their lifestyle to accommodate the cost of renting accommodation. Asked what options they would seek if rent becomes too much to bear, a third said they would move to a smaller home. The response indicates strong demand for low-cost studios and one- or two-bedroom flats — an undersupplied sector of the housing market which real estate developers are only now beginning to turn to.

Around a third of all respondents said they would consider moving out of city centres, 20 per cent said they would cut expenditure on other things and 20 per cent said they would share with other people.

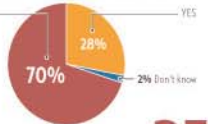
The statistic reveals that some people who arrived in the UAE expecting to live a high standard of life in good quality city accommodation are being disappointed.

For those with large families, the cost of rent can be much more than just a financial burden. The survey revealed that some families are being broken up as a result of rent increases. 15 per cent of all re-

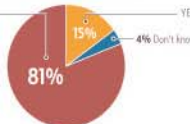
Rents deliver a KNOCKOUT BLOW

An exodus is a worse case, but realistic, scenario

Have you been forced to move out of your home in the UAE because of a rent increase in the past 12 months? YES: 28%, NO: 70%, Don't know: 2%



Have you been forced to opt for sending your family to another country because of rent increase? YES: 15%, NO: 81%, Don't know: 4%

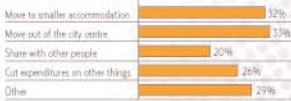


25% OF MONTHLY INCOME PAID ON RENT
66% HAVE CONSIDERED LEAVING UAE DUE TO INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING



GULF NEWS
YouGov
SHEAR

What options would you seek if your rent becomes too expensive?



Have you considered leaving the UAE because of rent increase?

	Total	Emirati	Other Arabs	Westerners	Asians	Others
Yes	57	22	58	58	61	61
No	37	69	38	41	31	29
Don't know	6	8	4	1	8	10

Since their introduction, rent caps have been applied by all seven emirates. Do you feel they have been:



What do you think is a reasonable rent cap percentage?

0% (floor)	Total	Emirati	Other Arabs	Westerners	Asians	Others
0%	30	14	28	15	20	25
5%	42	22	35	52	46	35
7%	11	6	9	11	13	9
10%	8	6	9	14	5	8
15%	3	11	3	1	2	2
20%	1	8	1	1	0	0
25%	0	0	0	0	0	0
More than 25%	2	11	3	0	1	1
Don't know	13	22	11	5	12	20

Do you think rents in 2008 will:



spondents said they have been forced to send their family back to their home country. Cases of split families were more frequent among Asian respondents (23 per cent) than Westerners (3 per cent), Emiratis (4 per cent) and other Arabs (4 per cent).

A break-down of residents' monthly expenses reveals the extent of the rental burden. A staggering one in every five respondents pays more than half of their monthly income on rent. Expat Arabs (19 per cent) and Asians (14 per cent) are the most likely nationalities to do this.

One of the main options to paying high rents is to buy property. The survey reveals that this is one of the key drivers in encouraging people to buy with one in four saying they have bought to avoid renting — good news for the mortgage market.

Emiratis are the most likely to do so, perhaps indicating that they are in the best position to buy.

In terms of property ownership, close to nine in ten respondents rent their home and of those who own, 57 per cent own outright while the remaining 47 per cent have a loan/mortgage against it.

Rental inflation

To combat UAE rental inflation, all seven emirates have introduced caps on rent increases for renewed tenancies. According to the results of the YouGov survey, residents have mixed feelings on the move's effectiveness. Only 9 per cent considered the move slightly effective and 41 per cent viewed them as slightly or very ineffective. The mole rent cap recommended is 5 per cent per year.

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Despite governmental intervention in the rental market, three quarters of respondents called on it to play a stronger role in controlling rate increases. Unsurprisingly, 80 per cent of those renting were in favour of stronger government intervention, compared to just 57 per cent of those who own (and perhaps rent out) property — a sign that landlords prefer rental rates to be dictated by market forces.

Looking ahead to next year, the outlook is grim among residents. More than eight in ten think rents will increase in 2008, with only four per cent expecting them to fall. Views are mixed among nationalities. Only 38 per cent of Emiratis expect a rent hike, compared to 95 per cent of Westerners, 78 per cent of Asians and 77 per cent of Arab expats. The situation portrayed by the YouGov survey will not come as a surprise to the UAE population, but we now have the figures to support people's concerns. Residents are awaiting the country's response.

Key to residents' doubts over caps could be a tendency among landlords to evict tenants whose contracts are up for renewal, allowing the landlord to negotiate a rent with a new tenant, which would not be restricted by the cap — a trend which the UAE is tackling.

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RAMACHANDRA BABUE/Gulf News

THE INSIDER

Jeff Bewkes' time as chief executive of Time Warner will not only be about deconstruction but reinvention, through organic growth and sizeable acquisitions

Jeff Bewkes secured one of the sexiest jobs in business. On January 1, he will become chief executive of Time Warner, a huge media company which owns Warner Bros, Hollywood's biggest film studio; HBO, the maker of America's best television programmes; Time Inc, the publisher of iconic magazines such as Sports Illustrated; and CNN, an international television-news channel.

But the new boss has more serious things to do than hobnob with the stars. "You think I'm hanging out with Russell Crowe," he jokes, "but usually I'm in a meeting with an electronics firm."

He needs to placate investors: Time Warner's shares have risen by only 13 per cent in the past five years and have dropped by a tenth in the past year. Bewkes is now widely expected to reshape Time Warner into a much smaller company by selling or spinning off some of its businesses.

At the moment, Time Warner conforms to the reigning orthodoxy in traditional media: that sheer size gives a company clout, and that owning distribution networks is vital to ensure that video content can always get to viewers.

As well as content, Time Warner owns a cable firm, which contributed 34 per cent of revenues in the most recent quarter. But cable requires huge capital investment, especially now that it has to compete with telecoms companies offering television services.

Under Time Warner's departing chief executive, Richard Parsons, the firm spun off 16 per cent of its cable division. Though Bewkes said little about his plans this week, the word at the company is that he will get rid of the other 84 per cent — and possibly other divisions too.

In some ways Bewkes is an unlikely

“I believe strongly in trial and error, and Time Warner needs to move faster, take more risk and change course more often.”

Jeff Bewkes
New chief executive of Time Warner

radical. He is a low-key insider with an excellent record, who has worked at Time Warner since 1986. For much of the time he worked on the business side of HBO, a group of pay-television services, before being made chief operating officer of Time Warner in 2006.

Careful planner

In recent times private-equity investors rather than seasoned TV executives have had the boldest ideas for traditional media — for example, Carl Icahn, a corporate raider, campaigned last year for Time Warner to break itself into four pieces. But Bewkes is known for being analytical and even cold-blooded in his approach to the media industry. It was he who pushed to sell Warner Music, the company's legendary recorded-music label, to a private-equity firm in 2003.

And after Time Warner's disastrous union in 2001 with AOL, an internet firm, he was one of the first executives to denounce the merger in internal meetings, according to people at the company.

As *Variety*, a trade publication, noted in October, Bewkes will in fact be the first real businessman to run Time Warner. Parsons' skills were mainly diplomatic, and his predecessors, Ger-

ald Levin and Steve Ross, were best known for dealmaking. Bewkes believes managers can be just as creative as writers and performers. "There's not much difference between the executives at Google and AOL and Yahoo!, and the television people designing new kinds of programmes," he says.

AOL is still a problem. Most of its revenues come from its internet-access business, which is in decline. In 2006, Bewkes changed AOL's strategy to concentrate on increasing its online-advertising revenue, which is now growing quickly. Many shareholders would nevertheless like him to get rid of AOL entirely, but insiders say he is more likely to sell just the access business.

A tougher decision will be whether to sell Time Inc. Unlike AOL's access side, or the cable division, Time Inc is a content business, and it sits at the heart of Time Warner's culture. But although there are synergies between print and other media, there are perhaps not enough to compensate for slowing growth as advertisers switch from print to the internet.

Journalists at Time Inc take comfort in the fact that Bewkes is "a content guy", but others think he may be more attached to television than print. Does a break-up make sense? "I be-

MONEY MATTERS

Bewkes to get a cool \$10.25m in 2008

He will get 950,000 share options and 250,000 stock units

BY ROBERT MACMILLAN

Jeff Bewkes, who is taking over as chief executive of Time Warner Inc, stands to earn as much as \$10.25 million in 2008, the media conglomerate said in a filing with US securities regulators. Bewkes is set to earn a minimum annual salary of \$1.75 million starting in 2008, when he will succeed Richard Parsons as CEO, according to the filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

That amount could increase to \$2 million if Bewkes becomes chairman as well. He also has an annual discretionary cash bonus with a target amount of \$8.5 million beginning in 2008, Time Warner said.

Parsons will get a minimum annual salary of \$1.5 million because he is remaining chairman of the board, with his new contract to expire on December 31, 2008.

He is eligible to receive a discretionary cash bonus with a target amount of \$2.9 million, and a long-term incentive compensation plan of stock options and restricted stock units with a target value of \$3.2 million, according to the filing.

Bewkes will receive a grant of 950,000 options for shares of Time Warner common stock, as well as 250,000 target performance stock units, the company said.

If Bewkes does not succeed Parsons as chairman by the beginning of 2009, he may elect to quit. He would receive two years' annual salary and cash bonus calculated as the average of the two highest bonuses paid while he was chief executive.

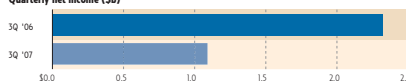
Time Warner's incoming chief financial officer, John Martin, will get a minimum annual salary of \$1 million, a cash bonus with a target amount of \$2 million and long-term incentive compensation with a target value of \$3 million.

—Reuters

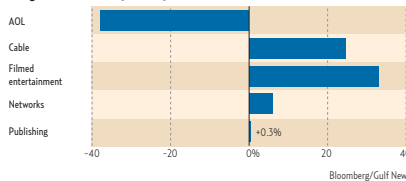
Falling profits

Time Warner's third-quarter net income dropped 53 per cent after asset sales lifted year-earlier results and AOL lost subscribers.

Quarterly net income (\$b)



Change in revenue from 3Q'06 to 3Q'07



Bloomberg/Gulf News

lieve strongly in trial and error, and Time Warner needs to move faster, take more risk and change course more often," says Bewkes. If he got rid of cable, AOL's access business and Time Inc, he would be left with two movie studios, some highly desirable cable channels and an online-advertising business. Together these units' revenues amount to a little over half of Time Warner's total.

Double-edged sword

The good news, says a rival media executive, is that Time Warner would be a cleaner company and its share price would go up; but "the bad news is that he's a much smaller company and potentially vulnerable to takeover". Strategically, divesting cable would be the most drastic move.

Time Warner would have to rely on the quality of its programming to get carriage on other firms' distribution systems, and might find it harder to launch new channels. That said, distribution systems are proliferating, so content should be able to stand on its own.

A shake-up will surely benefit Time

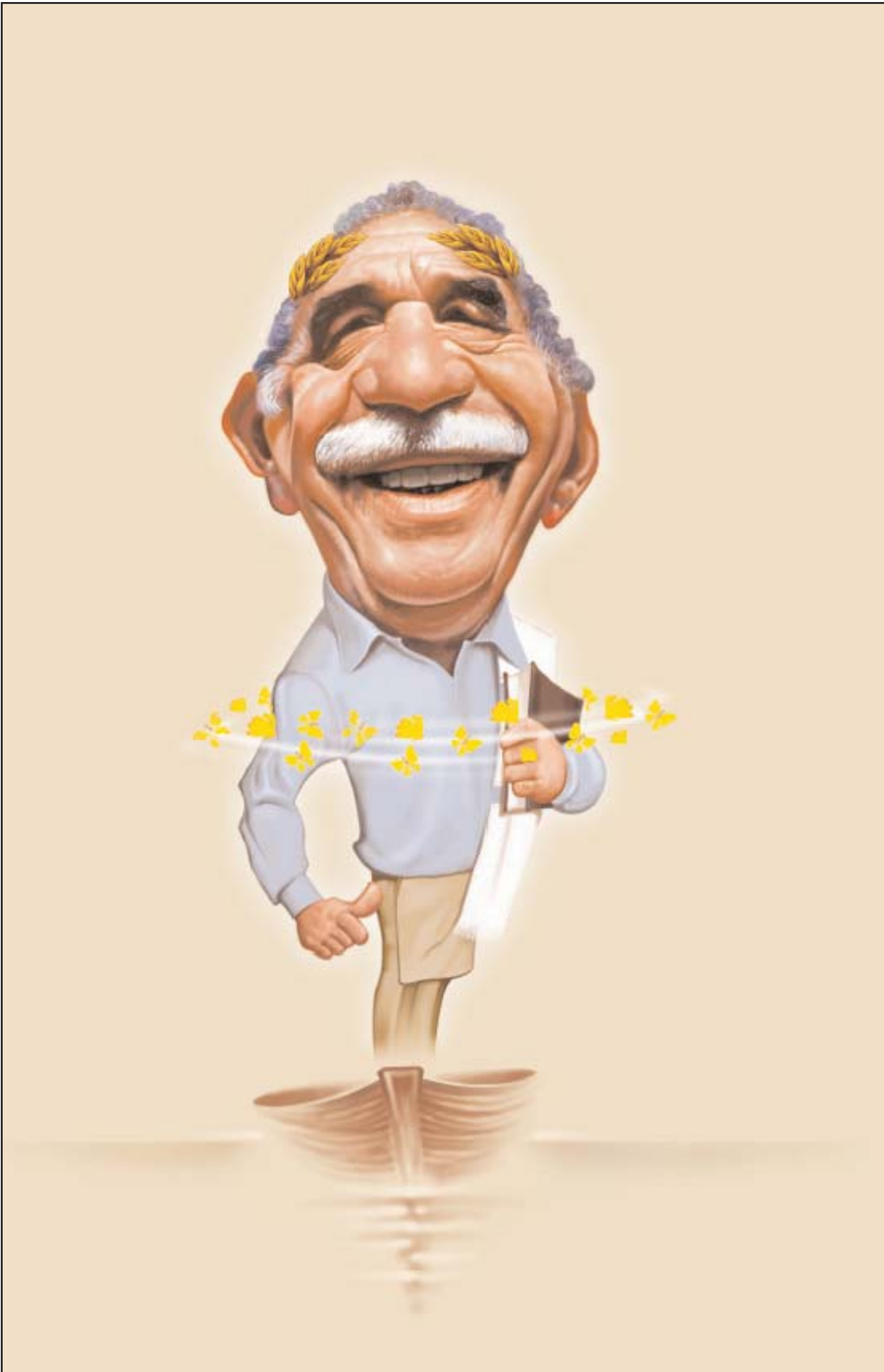
Warner. The more important question, however, is whether Bewkes has a longer-term vision for how the firm can thrive in the digital age.

"His time as CEO will not only be about deconstruction but reinvention, through organic growth and sizeable acquisitions," says Peter Kreisky, a media consultant.

Some speculate that a slimmed-down Time Warner might buy NBC, a broadcast network, from General Electric. Others say Bewkes should focus on new media. Though it has snapped up a few smaller outfits, Time Warner missed the chance to buy big internet-advertising firms such as DoubleClick (bought by Google) and aQuantive (bought by Microsoft), says an investor whose firm owns a large chunk of the company.

Instead it spent \$20 billion buying back its shares, to little avail. Time Warner should now make internet acquisitions, he suggests. If Bewkes can get that side of things right, he may yet come to be known as the rebuilder of Time Warner, not just as a dismantler of other people's visions.

—The Economist



Category: Illustration
Sub-category: Single

ORDER 66

When Order 66 was activated, it meant every single clone trooper had to kill every member of the Jedi as they instantly became enemies of the rising new empire.



BIRTH OF A HOPE

After the fall of the Republic, all rebellious hope disappeared. The hunt by the Empire against all opposition just had begun. For that reason, newborn twins Leia and Luke were adopted by different families on different planets. Leia was taken in by Bail and Breha Organa on Alderaan while Luke was adopted by Owen and Beru Lars on Tatooine.

DUEL ON MUSTAFAR

Darth Sidious sent Anakin Skywalker to kill every Jedi alive, but Obi-Wan Kenobi was in time to face Anakin in a bloody duel on planet Mustafar. The winner of the fight was the master, Obi-Wan, who caused a great injury to his former apprentice. Anakin was severely mutilated and badly burnt but did not die, contrary to Kenobi's belief. Sidious rescued his new Sith apprentice and transformed him into a cyborg to save his life. Finally, Anakin becomes Darth Vader.



REPUBLIC'S FALL

The radical fall of the Republic continues. Yoda faces Darth Sidious in battle in Coruscant but cannot defeat him as they are equally matched. Meanwhile, the Jedi Temple is burned and many young Padawans were brutally killed.



THE JEDI

The Jedi Order are the guardians of peace and justice in the Galaxy. They are a selective group of galactic beings who serve, defend and protect the citizens of the Republic with their sense of duty and responsibility.

Honour is an important part of the Jedi lifestyle. The objective of Jedi philosophy is not only to obtain the maximum power of knowledge and skills, but to equate to all beings, sensible to the Force with the inner tools to avoid the temptation and influence of the dark side of themselves.

The Jedi Order was founded 25,000 years before the creation of the Galactic Empire. In the beginning, the Jedi were dedicated solely to a passive life. After some time, the Order began to have a more important role inside the Galactic Republic.

Padawans, or young Force students, are instructed to leave behind external loyalties. Even positive feelings, like love and affection, can prevent their mission in life.

A Jedi was only loyal to the Force, the High Jedi Council and itself, in that order, and the life of a Jedi was full of sacrifice. Every galactic being who showed aptitude for the Force was selected before his or her first birthday.

Among some of the most famous Jedi are Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Luke Skywalker, Qui-Gon Jinn, Ulic Qel-Droma, Lord Hoth and Anakin Skywalker.



STAR WARS
30
YEARS



A VALUABLE PRISONER

Darth Vader captures Leia Organa, unaware that they are father and daughter. Leia hides a secret message on R2D2 before being captured by the Imperial forces.



A NEW LIFE

The trouble magnet R2D2 made Luke Skywalker go in search of Obi-Wan Kenobi. Luke's life changed completely when he met Ben Kenobi. He later discovered his aunt and uncle had been killed by Imperial troops.



DESTINY ROLLING

R2D2 and C-3PO escape from the Death Star and land on Tatooine, where they are captured as prisoners.

Prefect or simple luck enables both droids to stay together and finally C-3PO convinced Luke Skywalker to buy the droid. The meeting of these three characters would change the destiny of the galaxy.



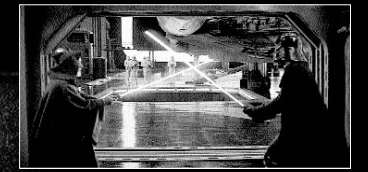
THE PATH OF A NEW JEDI

The message that Leia had hidden in R2D2's memory is finally delivered to Ben Kenobi, who then tells Luke Skywalker about the Force, the Jedi and a little bit about his father. Soon he gives Anakin's lightsabre to Luke and together they decide to travel to Alderaan, where they meet Han Solo and Chewbacca.



VADER'S REVENGE

One of Darth Vader's (Anakin Skywalker) greatest desires finally arrives on the first Death Star. He comes face-to-face with his former master Obi-Wan Kenobi to take revenge in a duel. Instead of dying, Obi-Wan finds a way to become one with the Force with Luke Skywalker as his witness. But at the time, Luke believed Obi-Wan had been killed by Darth Vader.



THE SITH

The Sith were powerful beings who controlled the Force for personal benefit and became the biggest enemies of the Jedi. They studied and developed the Dark Side of the Force as their primary source of wisdom and personal power.

Ironically, the Sith were born from the heart of the Jedi. In the first years of the foundation of the Order, a single Jedi began to think in a different way. This Jedi was Xendor, who saw the Force as a tool that could be used not just to help but to gain power. His ideas were considered dangerous and he was invited to reconsider, but he did not and was expelled.

A few of Xendor's followers were also expelled although others left on their own.

This era was called the First Great Schism and happened 24,900 years before the Battle of Yavin (BBY). The war between the two sides forced the followers of Xendor to take refuge in Korriban, where they interbred with the Sith natives on the planet to form the Sith Empire.

The Sith Empire expanded to many planets and soon their philosophy of conquest was become part of the galaxy's history. They believed conflict empowered both individuals and civilizations by forcing them to evolve. For them, only the strong would survive and live on to lead the Dark Side in the path to perfection.

Important Siths were Darth Bane, Lord Kaan, Darth Sidious, Exar Kun, Simus, Darth Maul, Ludo Kressh and Darth Vader.



Downloadable versions of the Star Wars features are available at www.gulfnews.com/starwars

Category: Miscellaneous
Sub-category: Non Breaking News