Eight-yr-old Yemeni girl wins divorce
Sanaa: A Yemeni court has granted a
divorce to an eight-year-old girl whose
unemployed father forced her into an
arranged marriage.
"I am happy that I am divorced
now. I will be able to go back to
school," Nojud Mohammed Ali said,
after a public hearing in Sanaa's court of first instance.
Her former husband, 28-year-old
Faez Ali Thameur, said he married the child "with her consent and that of her parents" but that he did not object to her divorce petition.
In response to a question from
Judge Mohammed al-Qadhi, he ac-knowledged that the "marriage was consummated, but I did not beat her". Yemen, one of the world's poorest
countries, has no law governing the minimum age of marriage.

TAKING CHARGE

Nojud Mohammed Ali was a
second grader in primary
school when her unemployed
father forced her into an

arranged marriage two and a
half months ago. Nojud's
father maintains she had

consented to the wedding

Nojud was a second grader in pri-
mary school when the marriage took place two and a half months ago.
"They asked me to sign the mar-
riage contract and remain in my fa-ther's house until I was 18. But a week after signing, my father and my moth-er forced me to go live with him."

Nojud's father, Mohammad Ali Al-
Ahdal, said he had felt obliged to mar-ry off his daughter, an act he said she consented to.
He said he was frightened after his
oldest daughter had been kidnapped sev-eral years ago and later married to her abductor. He said the same man then kidnapped another of his daughters who was already married and had four chil-dren, resulting in him being jailed.
Dressed in traditional black, Nojud
said she would now go to live in the home of her maternal uncle and did not want to see her father.
The girl's lawyer, Shadha Nasser,
said Nojud's case was not unique. "I be-lieve there are thousands of similar cas-es," she said. Civil society groups were pressing parliament to set the minimum age for marriage at 18, she said.

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