

INTERNATIONAL

Prince marries waitress in Norway

BY DOUG MELLGREN
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OSLO, Norway — A single mother and former waitress became Norway's future queen Saturday, marrying Crown Prince Haakon in a fairy-tale wedding that drew thousands of flag-waving well-wishers into Oslo's streets.

Haakon and Mette-Marit Tjessem Hoiby, both 28, exchanged vows at Oslo Cathedral before hundreds of friends and relatives, including many European royals.

Hoiby's 4-year-old son, Marius, served as a page and Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden read a poem during the nuptials.

After the hour-long Lutheran ceremony, Haakon — dressed in a military uniform adorned with a wide red sash — kissed

his bride as they happily left the cathedral to the crowd's cheers.

"This is great for the monarchy," said Oeyvind Stensbi, one of tens of thousands who lined the streets to welcome the new crown princess and to celebrate Norway's first royal wedding since Haakon's parents, King Harald V and Queen Sonja, married in 1968.

Nearly a quarter of Oslo's population is estimated to have turned out for the wedding celebrations.

The event had a Cinderella quality: Hoiby, a one-time waitress from the southern town of Kristiansand, will become queen when Haakon ascends to Norway's throne.

"Sometimes I wake up and wonder where I am," Hoiby said earlier this week. Norwegians have been warming to the

idea of Hoiby as their future queen after months of speculation about her past. Hoiby has admitted to moving in circles where narcotics were common; Marius' father was convicted of drug possession.

But Hoiby disarmed journalists and impressed her future subjects when — fighting back tears at a news conference earlier this week — she apologized for her wild youth.

Although she did not say whether she had used illegal drugs in her younger days, she made it clear that she does not approve of drug abuse.

"Some people were skeptical about Mette-Marit but it was the same when the King married Sonja in 1968," said Heine Larsen, a 24-year-old student who came to watch the wedding procession. "I think it is wonderful."



AP Photo/Dave Caulkin

ROYAL KISS: Norway's Crown Prince Haakon and his bride Crown Princess Mette-Marit, kiss on the balcony of the Royal Palace in Oslo after their wedding ceremony Saturday.

Nepal's government imposes drinking age, bans alcohol ads

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Bowing to pressure from Maoist leaders, Nepal on Saturday toughened laws governing the use of alcohol — establishing the legal drinking age at 24, restricting sales and banning advertisements.

No special permits are required to sell alcohol in Nepal, but the government said as of Oct. 1, sales will be limited to a few stores and only for three hours a day.

The government also will ban alcohol advertisements on television, radio, newspapers and in public places, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. Selling alcohol within 980 feet of a religious place or a school will be prohibited.

The decision was made after a meeting

Saturday between the Interior Security Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka and members of the All Nepal Women's Association-Revolutionary.

The association, affiliated with Nepal's Maoist guerrillas, have been demanding a complete ban of alcohol in the country and have been negotiating with the government for the past two weeks.

Business organizations have expressed fears that restricting alcohol sales could hamper the national economy.

Under the new regulations, alcohol sales also will be banned during the first two days of the month and the last two weekends, according to the Nepalese calendar, and sellers must be over 21 years of age.

Saudis working to fill factory jobs

By NEIL MacFARQUHAR
c.2001 New York Times News Service

JIDDA, Saudi Arabia — To coax skittish young Saudis into working on an assembly line churning out 300,000 packages of cookies a day, the managers at the National Biscuits & Confectionery Co. have learned to maintain a certain degree of flexibility — and patience.

One Saudi man objected to wearing overalls, embarrassed when acquaintances rolled down their car windows and joked that he should avoid police patrols looking for illegal immigrants. Another disliked the job title of laborer assigned to the roughly \$6,004 per year entry job, wanting to tell his new bride he was a technician. A third insisted that he belonged in management, not production.

"A Saudi who is working on our factory floor came and said, 'Why can't I become a supervisor? I graduated from college, and I have a diploma, and I am working among all these people from Nepal and Bangladesh and India,'" said William Menzies, the New Zealander running the factory. "That is a case of false expectations."

It is an affliction that permeates Saudi society, rooted in the impression that a country with seemingly bottomless oil reserves would always be rich. But the relaxed life is slowly vanishing. Saudi Arabia faces problems more typical of any other developing country, and young Saudis are confronting the fact that they will have to work at real jobs — if they can find them.

It is a rocky transition for a country where the generation that came of age in the 1980s lived as if they had won the lottery. They garnered monthly stipends from the

government for enrolling in college, and upon graduation were guaranteed a spot on the public payroll with hefty wages and a 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. work day — basically a license to sit at home and do nothing.

"There is an Arabic word, itikali, when you always want someone else to do something for you," said Prince Abdullah bin Faisal, 51, a nephew of the king and chairman of the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority. "Like now, some Saudis don't want to take work. They became lazy, spoiled."

Saudi Arabia has managed to lift virtually everyone out of poverty. But today, even with lofty oil prices, the petrodollars do not stretch as far, not least because they are being spread among more Saudi citizens.

A baby boom generation spawned by 1970s oil wealth is wading into a job market that can only generate one job for every two men. Prospects may only get worse considering that half the 14 million Saudis are under 18.

The tradition of ruling princes spending the country out of any problem no longer functions smoothly. But there is no clear vision of what can replace it.

As a result, the kingdom is an anxious country unsure how to open itself to the world at large, especially the West. Suddenly, it must find ways to relax its rigid ways in order to make the economy grow. It needs jobs for a new generation whose parents napped contentedly beside the public trough. It needs to refurbish its once awe-inspiring infrastructure of roaring airport terminals, freeways and phone booths pitched in the middle of the desert. It needs power and water to reduce rolling blackouts and water rationing.

Georgia may lose bank aid

BY DOUGLAS FRANTZ
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BAKU, Azerbaijan — The World Bank has warned Georgia that it will lose all financial assistance if it does not negotiate higher tariffs on a proposed gas pipeline from the Caspian through Georgia to Turkey.

The threat was made in a letter to President Eduard A. Shevardnadze of Georgia, which depends heavily on foreign assistance, from a senior official of the World Bank. The bank sent the sharply worded letter after it appeared that Shevardnadze was ignoring advice from bank officials that he seek higher fees.

"This failure to heed the advice that has been provided will also call into question the justification for future support to Georgia from institutions such as the World Bank," Judy M. O'Connor, the bank's director for Georgia, wrote in the letter.