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**STAR FEATURE**

## The making of Nigeria's first Islamic varsity



Pages 20 & 21

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The Speaker, House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari briefing State House journalists during his visit to Vice President Atiku Abubakar at the State House, Abuja ...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

## Saraki, Unongo, Kaita float new northern group

A coalition of politicians from the northern part of the country, cutting across various political parties, yesterday in Abuja, floated a partisan political pressure group to foster unity and defend the political interest of the north.

The group adopted the name, Northern Union (NU), after several others were suggested by members but voted against by the congress, with membership drawn from across the 19 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The new northern group was convened by northern politicians including, Dr Olusola Saraki, Alhaji Lawal Kaita, Wanteregh Paul Unongo and Alhaji Idris Koko among others, and was attended by notable names like

**By Hammeed M. Bello, Senior Political Reporter**

General Buba Marwa (rtd), Professor Ango Abdullahi, Dr Lema Jibril, Comrade Pascal Bafyau and Alhaji Sidi Ali among others.

The group rose with the resolve to "serve as a vehicle for the advancement of the political interest of the north at all times and at all levels," and said it will complement the efforts of existing organisations in a plural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious north.

One of the chief conveners, Dr Saraki, a chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and major stakeholder in Kwara state politics, during his opening remarks, berated the Arewa

*Contd. on Pg 2*

# Senate rejects confab

By Isa Sanusi, Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporters & Abdullahi Bego, Regional Editor (North East)

The Senate rose from a marathon session behind closed doors yesterday dissociating itself from the proposed national political reforms conference and turning down President Olusegun Obasanjo's N932 million budget to fund the confab.

The upper chamber said though the president has the

right to convene the conference, it was unnecessary to appropriate funds for the gathering.

Also yesterday, the Northern Senators Forum emerged from an emergency meeting kicking against the conference.

Announcing the decision of the Senate to journalists, chairman of the Senate committee on information, Senator Tawar Wada, said also that the upper chamber may insert some clauses in the 2005 appropriation Act prohibiting the president from using any funds to finance the conference.

The position of the Senate, he said, was that though the conference may be legal "not all legal things are necessary," and that the lawmakers had the powers to stop the use of public funds to finance unnecessary events.

After a very articulate deliberation of the whole issue, the Senate came with the resolution that as far as they are concerned, there is nothing that'll stop Mr

President convening a conference of eminent Nigerians and what have you. He is free as the number one citizen of this country as the head of the executive to gather people and gather opinions on how to properly run this government. Basically there's nothing wrong about this.

"But considering the constitutional and the legislative duties of the Senate, the Senate resolves that basically it has nothing to do with the conference. It's not associating itself with the conference and that being the case, the Senate also finds it unnecessary to appropriate money specifically to fund this conference," he said.

Asked whether the president would be allowed to use contingency or security funds to finance the conference, Wada said the Senate would not raise eye-brows if Obasanjo uses such monies for what they were meant for.

He, however, suggested

*Contd. on Pg 2*

### SOME STATE DELEGATES AT A GLANCE

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Akwa-Ibom State</b><br>Mr. Etim Inyang<br>Mrs. Helen Esuene<br>Dr. Asikpo Essien<br>Dr. Ekeng Anam-Ndu<br>Senator Akaninyene<br>Ukpana<br>Senator Emmanuel Essien<br>Ibok-Essien | <b>Benue State</b><br>Gen. Victor Malu (rtd)<br>Gen. Geoffrey Ejigah (rtd)<br>Steven Okor<br>Fred Orti<br>George Korgba<br>Jack Gyado                                   |
| <b>Anambra State</b><br>Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife<br>Mr. Zik Obi<br>Senator Mike Ajegbo<br>Mr. Gabriel Akweze<br>Chief Obi Ogene   | <b>Borno State</b><br>Alhaji Muhammadu Goni<br>Alhaji Baba Ahmed Jidda<br>Professor Nuru Alkali<br>Alhaji Mohammed Alibe<br>Alhaji Ibrahim Dancida<br>Alhaji Lawal Buba |
| <b>Academic Community</b><br>Professor Peter Okebukola<br>Professor Nimi Briggs<br>Prof. Cletus Nwazuruike<br>Dr. Nuru Yakubu   | <b>Civil Society</b><br>Professor Audu Idris<br>Malam Shehu Sani<br>Mr Idril Miliki Abdul   |

*Contd. on Pg 2*

## ...Court summons Obasanjo

A federal high court in Abuja yesterday granted leave to 57 members of the House of Representatives, to serve court summons on President Olusegun Obasanjo, through substituted means.

The law makers, led by Hon Victor Lar (ANPP-Plat-

eau), were in the court to challenge the constitutionality of the national political reform conference as constituted by the federal government.

Ruling on an ex-parte application filed by the plaintiffs, trial judge, Justice Binta Murtala-Nyako directed that the court summons on the President as well as other processes in the suit be delivered to the office of the Attorney General of the federation.

The court also ordered that the summons on the Senate President, Adolphus Wabara and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Bello Masari, be delivered to the office of the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Murtala-Nyako, however, refused to make any pronouncement on a motion by the plaintiffs seeking to restrain the National Assembly from deliberating on the Conference.

Counsel to the plaintiffs, Mr Yakubu Maikyau had requested that a date be fixed for the hearing of the injunctive motion.

The lawyer said President Obasanjo had written to the National Assembly requesting that discussions on the conference should hold before the middle of February and argued that "if no date is fixed for the hearing of this suit they may go ahead".

Murtala-Nyako told Maikyau to comply with her order on substituted service first before a date could be fixed for the hearing of the motion.

"In a sensitive case like this, one must be very careful, I cannot do anything on

*Contd. on Pg 2*

## AD caucus sues decampees

The Alliance for Democracy (AD) caucus in the House of Representatives has commenced a legal battle against three of its former members who defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The cases tagged suit numbers FHC/L/CS/1219/

**By Zainab Alimi, Reporter (Reps)**

2004; AD Vs Olufemi Olawale Animole and two others, FGC/L/CS/1220/2004; AD Vs. Olodotun Animashaun and two others, and FGC/L/CS/1221/2004; AD Vs Femi Obayomi Davies and two others have been filed in the

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# News

that the legislators would insert clauses in the 2005 budget to ban the use of any monies for the conference.

"If the president runs counter to the tenets of the 2005 budget, definitely he will receive a query for that... the budget may entail some specific clauses prohibiting Mr President from even using security funds to fund the conference. There may be some specific provisions prohibiting Mr President from even using contingency funds for that thing. If that one happens, the National Assembly will query Mr President on that," he said.

Wada said also that the Northern Senators had after an exhaustive debate, decided to concur with the position of the Senate.

Daily Trust gathered that during the Senate's executive session, senators had expressed concern about possible suspicious motives for convening the conference.

They also pointed out that the president has eno-

**Senate** *Contd. from Pg 1*  
ugh reports, like the Vision 2010 and others to implement, without necessarily convening a conference.

Some senators were concerned that a national conference now would mean passing a vote of no confidence on the National Assembly.

After a debate that tilted in favour of rejecting the conference, the Senate took a decision against the confab.

Meanwhile, as the clock ticks to wards the holding of the proposed national political reform conference organized by the federal government, indications have emerged that delegates from Borno state would anchor their positions at the conference from a 'wider context' along lines to be worked out by northern states possibly under the umbrella of the Arewa Consultative Forum.

The delegates will also put forward arguments for and on behalf of the people

of Borno state for the resuscitation of oil exploration in the Lake Chad basin, the revamping of the dormant Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA), the extension of a 330 KVA power supply line for industrial development, rehabilitation of roads and railway networks as well as the improvement of the security environment.

One of the delegates and a former Nigerian ambassador to Burkina Faso, Alhaji Ahmed Baba Jidda made this known to Daily Trust in a telephone interview, adding that delegates from Borno state will work closely with their counterparts from other northern states "to produce a blueprint like the South West has done to see what best we can achieve for the north, our respective states and the country in general".

Ambassador Baba Jidda, added that some of the issues that shall engage his attention and those of other delegates from Borno state include the issues that have for some time dominated national discourse such as "the issue of resource control, whether or not we should have state police, whether or not we should have a parliamentary system of government as against a presidential one, regional autonomy, constitutional immunity for governors, the vice president and president, etc".

Speaking specifically about the views that he will advance on these issues, Baba Jidda said, for instance, he will favour the retention of immunity for governors. "My reason is simple. It's expected that people who are responsible will be the ones that will become governors and unless you protect them, their political adversaries and enemies will unnecessarily divert their attention from doing their work through litigations etc", he said.

The former diplomat also said that he will voice strong reservations with regards to the issue of resource control, saying that since the country belongs to all Nigerians, the resources that abound must be to the benefit of all. "Every one of us contributes to the development of the country through the resources that God has endowed us. The question of someone saying that 'because we produce the oil, we must have all the money', does not arise", Baba Jidda said.

The delegate from Borno also said that he will kick against the idea of state police because by its nature, the concept of state police is so much open to abuse by authorities at the state level.

Also speaking with Daily Trust, former Borno state governor and a delegate to the conference from Borno state, Alhaji Mohammed Goni, said he will ask the delegation from his state to liaise with other northern states delegates to push for permanent solutions to the problem of desertification in the north but also in Borno state, in particular through the setting up of what he called 'national desert control commission' to be styled along the Oil Mineral Areas Producing Development Commission (OMPADEC).

Alhaji Mohammed Goni also said that the issue of oil exploration in the Lake Chad region as well as the need to dredge the River Niger to improve fishing and agricultural activities in the north would dominate his attention as well as those of other delegates from Borno state.

## First Bank gets CBN accent to takeover bank

From Bright Ewula,  
Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has given preliminary authorisation to First Bank of Nigeria Plc (FBN), to acquire a Nigerian bank, the bank's managing director/CEO, Mr Jacobs Ajekigbe has disclosed.

This disclosure which emerged on the occasion of FBN investors forum held at the Muson Centre, Onikan, Lagos, yesterday came up from the presentations by the bank's managing director and its chairman, Alhaji (Dr) Umaru Mutallab.

In a speech entitled "FBN's Strategic Responses," Mr Ajekigbe posited that First Bank has so far received mergers and acquisition proposals from 10 banks and have selected four banks as targets. He was however mute on the names of the banks concerned. It should be recalled that spec-

ulations linked IBTC, GTB etc to First Bank.

Out of the four, he said FBN has completed due diligence on two targets and obtained CBN's accent to acquire one bank, adding that the bank hopes to sign an MOU with some other banks in talks with the bank.

According to him, the banks criteria for selecting the M&A "candidates" essentially range from international reach, branch network and capacity in investment banking sector.

He further told the crowded hall full of the bank's stakeholders that the aim of FBN is to use the inorganic means to grow into a world class mega bank, saying that the aim is to achieve N1 trillion in asset base by 2008 from its current position of

N400 billion.

He also stressed that the bank is targeting N100 billion over the same period from their current position of about N40 billion, maintaining that in terms of branch network, the bank wants to reach 600 branches.

The managing director therefore pointed out that the bank may organise a right issue or public offer in order to raise funds to finance these growth initiatives.

"Other growth initiatives include provision of pension funds services, venture capital activities and profitable investments."

In his welcome address, the chairman of First Bank stated that although the economic environment is turbulent, effort must be made to ensure the bank remains number one in the industry.

## AD

*Contd. from Pg 1*  
matter its strength and power is allowed under the law to win or acquire more seats in parliament by means of any internal arrangement or "seduction of political flirts."

He stated further that following their decampment, the AD had served on the defendants, notices demanding that they vacate their seats with immediate effect, a demand which they chose to refuse or ignore.

The letter further reads in part: "convinced however that the bastion upon which our democracy is rested remains a strong and virile multi-party system and realizing the fact that democracy is all about choices and

federal high court, Lagos, according to a letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Aminu Bello Masari and signed by the AD leader, Wunmi Bewaji.

Joined as defendants in the suits are Messrs Dotun Animashaun, Olufemi Onimole, Femi Davies who are members of the House of Representatives representing Kosofe, Ifako/Ijaiye and Ojo federal constituencies of Lagos state respectively, the House of Representatives and the Speaker of the House as second and third defendants in each case respectively.

In the letter, dated February 3, 2005, the AD leader said that no political party, no

## Court

*Contd. from Pg 1*  
the motion until the defendants are served and put on notice," she said.

Murtala-Nyako adjourned the case to February 22 for mention.

The plaintiffs had approached the court contending that the selection of representatives to the conference and the reform agenda were a usurpation of the duties of the National Assembly as prescribed under Section 47 of the 1999 Constitution.

They posited that President Obasanjo has neither power under the constitution to constitute the conference nor to request the National

Assembly to appropriate money for the purpose.

The lawmakers seek eight declarative relief among which is a pronouncement that the president has no power to constitute the National Conference without an enabling Act of the National Assembly.

They also want the court to declare that the National Assembly has the exclusive power under the constitution to address the reforms set out for the conference.

They further sought an order declaring the conference null and void and thereafter, set it aside.

Consultative Forum (ACF) for its failure to take a proactive stand to champion the interest of the north politically, economically and socially.

A communiqué issued at the end of the NU meeting which held between 10.30 a.m. and about 6.00 p.m., said the group was aware of the existing divisions that have continued to weaken the foundations of the north as a region and as a political entity.

"Our people have therefore decided to forge a common spirit of unity, reconciliation and genuine brotherhood renaissance of our good old days," the group said.

In furtherance of the said objectives, the group resolved also to, among others, support the convening of the national conference on political reforms as a forum to bring about a new Nigeria that will guarantee equity, good governance and equal access to resources for even development.

It resolved also to affirm

## Saraki

*Contd. from Pg 1*  
its commitment to the oneness and indivisibility of Nigeria in equity and notice to its components, and said it recognised the weaknesses and expensive nature of presidential system of government for a developing country like Nigeria. It called on delegates to consider other viable democratic systems at the conference.

"Having closely examined the clamour by various political associations and geographical zones in the country, the NU wishes to unequivocally and categorically state that on the fundamental mutual principle of power shift between the north and south, it is now the turn of the north to produce the next president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"That we enjoin all northerners to brace-up and participate massively in the forthcoming national census so as to enhance our numerical strength in the country, especially in view of our

alternatives and not about a one-man show (as is being witnessed in Nigeria now), we decided to and have consequently commenced an epic legal battle against the above mentioned.

He stressed that section 65 (2b) of the 1999 constitution succinctly articulates the importance of multi-party democracy, stating that "a person shall be qualified for election under subsection (1) of this section if... he is a member of a political party and is sponsored by that party."

He opined that "democracy is not about all our political elites rushing like madmen into the party of the government of the day for contracts, money and largesse, leaving the masses of our people who voted them into office in a state of consternation and bewilderment."

He however counseled that the House maintain the status quo ante, pending the determination of the suits in spite of the flagrant attempt by the defendants to abuse the democratic process.

The petition, which was also copied to the deputy Speaker, all principal officers, members and management of the House of Representatives also had enclosed, copies of the processes in the case involving AD Vs Mohammed Musiliu Olatunde Obanikoro and two others in suit No. FHC/L/CS/1218/2004.

ding events," the group said and observed that the banking, energy and food policies of the Obasanjo government were "fundamentally defective" and called for their review to consider the interest of Nigerians.

Earlier, at the opening of the session, Dr Olusola Saraki had faulted the non-partisan posture of the ACF which he said has plunged the north into a politically and economically disadvantaged position in the country.

Saraki said he was one of the founding fathers of the ACF but was not comfortable with the non political posture of the forum, adding that there is nothing you can do in this country without politics. "If tomorrow, Arewa Consultative Forum says they are ready to play politics, we will emerge."

He said the essence was not to divide the ACF but to foster an all encompassing unity in diversity to enhance the development of the

## SOME STATE DELEGATES AT A GLANCE

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Prof. Omafume Onoge  
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Alhaji Magaji Mu'azu  
Professor Idris Mohammed  
Alhaji Abubakar Aliyu Deba  
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Mr. Nuhu Poloma

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Alhaji Sulaiman Bappa  
Engr. Habu Gumel  
Alhaji Aminu Ringim  
Alhaji Tijjani Inuwa Dutse  
Hajiya Fatima Mai Borno

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Ja'afaru Mekarfi  
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General Alwali Kazir (rtd)  
Alhaji Sidi Yakubu Karasuwa  
Gajibama Ahubakar  
Col. Mohammed Abdu (rtd)  
Alhaji Aji Baitu Gapchi

# News

## Yagba East council leader shot dead

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent (Lokoja)

There was pandemonium in Yagba East local government area of Kogi State last Friday, following the assassination of the council leader, Mr. Sunday Atte by unknown gunmen.

The council leader was shot on the head several times in his residence in Isanlu, the headquarter of Yagba East local government.

The deceased was rushed to Ilorin, the Kwara State capital where he later died.

The state's commissioner of police, Mr. Bamidele Thomas, who confirmed the assassination to *Daily Trust*, said the state police command has swung into action and will soon arrest those who carried out the dastardly act.

Meanwhile, the PDP elder's forum in the area has strongly condemned the killing of the council leader and called for a full scale investigation into the matter.

The leader of the forum who is also the director of administration of the party at the state level in an interview with newsmen in Lokoja, said the assassination of the council leader was shocking.

## ECOWAS court jurisdiction expanded - Donli

The president of the Community Court of Justice ECOWAS, Justice Henseine Donli, yesterday said that the jurisdiction of the court has been expanded for effective administration of justice within the sub-region.

Briefing the press in Abuja on supplementary protocol A/SP/1/01/05, amending the preamble and Articles 1, 2, 9, 22 and 30 of the ECOWAS protocol, Justice Donli said that the jurisdiction of the court has been expanded to include fundamental human rights among others.

She said that the decision to expand the scope of the court was reached during the just concluded twenty eight session of the authority of heads of states and governments of ECOWAS in Accra, Ghana.

According to her, the supplementary protocol has expanded the jurisdiction of the court and granted direct access to the court to private individuals in respect of certain causes of action.

She said that with this



Governor Bukola Saraki inspecting classrooms being renovated by the state government at the Government Secondary School, Ilorin, holding the microphone is the principal of the school, Alhaji Yahaya Oloriegbe while others watch.

## Threats will not deter me - NDLEA boss

The chairman of the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Alhaji Bello Lafiagi, has declared that he will not be deterred by any form of threat by anybody or group in the course of carrying out his mandate as the NDLEA boss.

Alhaji Lafiagi stated this yesterday when he paid a courtesy visit to the corporate headquarters of the Media Trust Limited, Publishers of *Daily* and *Weekly Trust* newspapers, in Abuja.

He said his experience and background in law enforcement have groomed him for the task of fighting hard drug production, consumption and trafficking in the country.

No country in the world, the NDLEA boss noted, is

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

free from drug problems, adding that there are three major drug problems, which he said are, that a country may either be a producer of hard drug, a consuming nation or a transit one, pointing out that some countries have the whole of these problems while others may have two and declared that Nigeria is a transit nation for cocaine and heroine.

"Our main problem in Nigeria and I believe in the African continent is the cannabis that is being planted here. We, as a nation don't consume or produce cocaine but traffic it because of the country's strategic location within the sub-region," Alhaji Lafiagi explained and stressed the need for strong collaboration between the agency and all stakeholders to ensure success in the global drug war.

He observed that there is a vicious circle between drug, terrorism and human trafficking just as he explained that the proceeds from drug could be used to fund human trafficking or fund other social vices, adding that crime problem is an international problem as every country is faced by one drug problem or the other.

While maintaining that the agency rehabilitates drug consumers at its rehabilitation centres across the country, Alhaji Lafiagi pointed out that the agency always en-



Alhaji Bello Lafiagi, NDLEA boss

## Abdulkadir Abacha still on EFCC's wanted list - Spokesman

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), has declared that Alhaji Abdulkadir Abacha, younger brother to the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha, is still at large and on its wanted list. The Commission had on September 7 last year declared Abdulkadir wanted over alleged conspiracy, theft, official corruption and money laundering.

The EFCC said then that the suspect, who was last seen around Area 11, Garki, Abuja may have gotten wind of its trail of him and gone into hiding.

When contacted over the search for the former head of state's younger brother at the Crimes Commission headquarters yesterday in Abuja, the head of media and publicity of the EFCC, Mr. Osita Nwajah, affirmed that, "we are still looking for Abdulkadir Abacha over the same charges we announced in our statement issued late last year".

Mr. Nwajah denied insinuations that the Abdulkadir may have "penetrated" into the commission, thereby making it drag its feet on the matter, saying "we crave the indulgence of all Nigerians and other nationals with useful information on how to get him and assure you the commission will act promptly to arrest and prosecute him".

Although the EFCC spokesman did not disclose details why Abdulkadir Abacha was declared wanted, a

## States, LGs donate N700m to Tsunami victims

All 36 states and 774 local government areas as well as the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory have collectively donated through their statutory allocations for January 2005, a total of \$5 million (about N700 million) to the tsunami disaster relief fund.

The chairman of the publicity sub-committee of the tsunami disaster relief committee, Governor Ibrahim Shekarau of Kano State, disclosed this while addressing newsmen in Abuja yesterday.

Governor Shekarau said apart from that, other donations have started coming in from various sectors. He said though the finance and resource committee is yet to compute the donations so far made as it was busy getting in touch with various stakeholders, substantial amount has been collected.

These include N10 million from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), N2 million from the Petroleum Equalisation Fund, N2 million from the Kano Emirates Council and N7.2 million from members of the House of Representatives.

In addition, he said all members of the committee have agreed to sacrifice all

By Austine Odo, Senior Labour Reporter

their honorariums and allowances while serving in the committee which sums up to about N3 million while the Nigeria Football Association (NFA), is to donate all gate takings from a series of friendly matches lined up for the purpose of assisting victims of the disaster.

He further pointed out that several media houses have agreed to carry out the committee's awareness campaigns at no cost, while translations of messages of appeal would be done in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba for dissemination in various localities to solicit donations.

## Senate moves to check VIP closures at Abuja airport

By Isa Sanusi, Senior Political Reporter

The Senate has moved to check VIP closures of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja describing it as inconvenient, time and resource wasting and fraught with aviation security risk to other flights while also moving to move the operations of the Nigerian Air Force planes from the airport to decongest and avert civilian/military air collision.

To this effect, the Senate has directed its committee on aviation to hold a public hearing on the matter, while the vice chairman of the committee, Senator Abu Ibrahim, told *Daily Trust* that the committee will summon the minister of aviation, Malam Isa Yuguda, Chief of Air staff, Air Marshall Jonah Wuyep, director general of state security and other stakeholders in the aviation regulatory sector.

The senate took this decision in the plenary yesterday following a motion moved by Senators Jibril Aminu and Umaru Dahiru, in which they cited the delay in landing and take off of aircrafts at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, due to VIP movement in respect of the recent African Union conference of heads of states and governments. They said the incident caused nightmare to passengers and operators.

"The most recent VIP closures represent great danger to public safety, leading to congestion of the airspace and increasing the danger of collision by hovering aircrafts and that too many aircrafts in the airspace stress the control tower staff and increase the chances of them making grave human errors with disastrous consequences.

The motion also sought that under no circumstances should any airport be closed for more than one hour without prior notice to incoming flights and the general public while also calling for the removal of all protocol activities from the airport to the city gate or the villa.

"It is inconceivable that any other country of the status of Nigeria will agree to close its premier airport, even for a while for reasons other than dire emergencies, like runway fires," the motion added.

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

source in the commission told *Daily Trust* that the suspect allegedly used his late elder brother's position as head of state to launder money totaling \$91,096,272.00 using five Swiss based accounts; another \$6.7 million after the death of General Sani Abacha; forged a letter purporting that he was exonerated by the Special Investigation Panel (SIP), under the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA), a letter which was presented in a statement of defence filed by his counsel at a court in Geneva, among other sundry charges.

According to the source, the \$91,096,272.00 was allegedly frozen by Swiss authorities from the following accounts of Alhaji Abdulkadir: \$8.7 million from Union Bancaire Privee Geneva, with Newland Overseas Limited as account name; \$15,381,991.00 from account number 2366915 credited to Genesis Holdings Limited in Banque Nationale De Paris Geneva; the sum of \$13,541,173.00 from account number 5641832 titled Mercury Aviation Services Limited in the same bank as the second one above; also, \$53,318,702.00 from account number 2353295, titled Newland Overseas Limited in the same bank as first above; and the sum of \$154,406.00 in account number 564088-8 titled Vectra Commodities Limited, also in Banque Nationale De Paris Geneva.

# News

## Ministry delays construction of erosion control in Benue—Contractor

Allegations of fraud on the floor of the Benue State House of Assembly Monday, restrained principal officials of the state's ministry of Water Resources and Environment when a Lagos based civil contractor, Andre Edwardo Industry Limited enumerated the reasons for delays on an erosion control contract awarded it in 2001.

The contractors who were invited for questioning on the floor of the House in Makurdi sequel to a 30 day notice served it for termination of the N6 million contract awarded for the construction of erosion control structures in Orokam in Ogba-dibbo local council on alleged delay in its execution, told members that the delay was actually the handiwork of officials of the

ministry.

In a five page submission to the House, the company's chairman, Chief Agbo J. said refusal to honour the demands for gratifications made by the ministry's supervisor one Engr. Efu, which provoked them to make allegation of delay and poor work as contained in the accusations tabled to the assembly.

The ministry's commissioner, Mr. Peter Sani Ochi-ejele, had appeared before the House to explain the delay in the execution of the various projects under it. The commissioner had alleged that the failure was due to the delay by the contractors, whom he said, did a poor and shoddy job which therefore attracted an on-going process of termination by the ministry.

But when the company's chairman was summoned to appear, the commissioner made a volte-face. Although he sent his permanent secretary, Mr. Tern a Ahua to represent him, Chief Agbo Madaki's explanation compelled the House to order the ministry to go back and sort it out with him and report to it (House) with the way forward in one week's time.

Further submissions on Chief Agbo's defence also showed that Andre Edwardo Industry Limited recorded a 60% completion rate on the project within two months of the contract award.

Three management staff have been appointed for the Nigeria Telecommunications (NITEL), as part of efforts to reposition the company following the termination of the contract management by Pentascope International.

The new appointees, in acting capacity are, Mr. Hassan Garba Yaradua, Chief Finance Officer, Engineer Emmanuel Adedayo Adekoya, Chief Technical Officer and Alhaji Shamsuna Ahmed, Head, Human Resources and Corporate Services.

A statement signed by the deputy general manager, corporate communication of NITEL, Mr Tayo Ekundayo, said that the appointment is with immediate effect.

According to the statement, the appointees were

## NITEL gets new management staff

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Labour Reporter

challenged by the federal government to put in their best to reposition the company in readiness for its eventual privatisation.

Until their appointments, Mr. Yar'adua, Engineer Adekokoya and Alhaji Ah-

med were the company's general manager, financial reporting, planning and facility management respectively.

## Obasanjo inspects Obajana cement industry today

Lokoja, the Kogi state capital is agog ahead of today's visit by president Olusegun Obasanjo to the state.

President Obasanjo is expected to stop-over in the state on his way to Abuja from Enugu where he went

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent Lokoja

on a state visit. While in Kogi state, the president is expected to inspect the progress of work at the multi-million naira Obajana cement industry in Obajana, Lokoja local government area of the state before leaving for Abuja.

Kogi state governor, Alhaji Ibrahim Idris, who disclosed the president's Obasanjo's visit to news while on a pre-inspect visit to the cement industry, said arrangements have been completed ahead of today's visit.

Receiving the governor at the industry the chairman and chief executive officer of Dangote said the Obajana cement company is expectedly the largest in Africa with over 5 million tonnes daily production capacity will start production before the end of the year.

When the company comes on streams he noted, would save Nigeria over seven hundred million pounds annually in foreign exchange if the federal government make true its decision to ban the importation of cement.



Senate President Adolphus Wabara briefing State House, Abuja journalists during his official visit ...yesterday. Pix: Joe Oroye.

## ASUU accuses minister of violating labour laws, takes FG to court

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) yesterday accused the minister of labour and productivity, Dr. Hassan M. Lawal, of violating labour laws and the constitution of the country, even as the union dragged the federal government to court over sundry issues.

President of ASUU, Dr. Abdullahi Sule Kano, who made the accusation in an interview with *Daily Trust* in Abuja, said as a custodian of labour laws in the country, the minister refused to refer the industrial arbitration panel award between ASUU and the federal government to the national industrial court (NIC) as required by the law.

"The labour laws of the land spells out clearly that if any party has a case that goes to the industrial arbitration panel (IAP), the minister of labour and productivity should refer the case to the National Industrial Court (NIC)

"ASUU objected to the ruling of IAP because the judgement was based on the laws that does not exist. And the minister refused to refer the case to the National Industrial Court," he said.

Dr. Kano also disclosed that the union has dragged the federal government to an Abuja High Court over it government's refusal to implement the 2001 agreement between the union and the federal government.

The ASUU president who told *Daily Trust* that the case will come up for hearing today at the high court, said that the union is also requesting the court to force the minister of labour and productivity to obey the laws of the land.

"ASUU and the federal government entered into an agreement in 2001 on the issue of funding Nigerian universities, rehabilitation and restoring them to the

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Labour Reporter

condition which they operate normally. Government has actually reneged on the implementation of the agreement.

"The government also unjustly dismissed our colleagues under the cover that they were on strike in that agreement there is a component of it that states clearly that nobody should be victimised. That has forced us to embark on a strike action.

"The minister of labour and productivity is not really concerned about the issues. We petitioned the Nigeria Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the National Judicial Commission and other legal luminaries who have advised the minister to respect the laws of the land but he refused.

## Why Nigerians must be productive—Minister

In order to build a strong economy that can compete globally, improve the lives of generations, Nigerians must raise to the challenge and be productive

By Hamisu Muhammed Reporter (Business)

especially in the agriculture and manufacturing sector. Commerce minister, Am-

bassador A.D. Idris Waziri, disclosed this yesterday in Abuja while receiving an award of the "most outstanding minister 2004" from the management of the

Xclusive magazine.

Waziri said as long as Nigerians will continue to depend on oil money and don't make any individual effort to start fighting poverty and created wealth, we will never move forward.

He said "it is only through agriculture and manufacturing that the country will have sustainable growth and development, stressing that "this country can not grow unless we go into manufacture like China, India, Europe and America.

"We are in the world of competition. We need to strive hard in order to be the African giant and the world in general. Nigeria is blessed with all we need. We are sitting on a gold mine. No part of the country is wasted," he explained.

He denied that Nigerians are lazy adding that they are the most hardworking individuals he has ever seen.

According to him, a single commodity in agriculture can sustain the economy, when attention is given. Cassava will generate over \$7 billion annually, he predicted.

## FG may revoke N300m Kano airport terminal project

From Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Aviation Correspondent (Lagos)

pany handling the project.

The abandoned project, according to the minister, was awarded to RCC in 2001 which the contractor was supposed to have completed in November 2004.

Reacting to the claim of the contractor that the project was abandoned due to lack of funds, the minister maintained that all the money due to the contractor has been paid to him stressing that an advance payment of N88 million for procurement of equipment has also been paid to the contractor.

His words: "there is evidence that every kobo has been paid to the contractor, the consultant is there, he is the one that prepared the certificate on behalf of the con-

tractor. The FAAN management has paid a total amount of N289 million, that is the figure on the consultant's valuation. There is no certificate that has not been paid.

"In fact he has taken an advance of close to N88 million to procure equipment, the equipment are not there, and we are asking him where is the money if you cannot provide the equipment but he is saying that they have the money in the project.

He feels that RCC's deliberately frustrating the project saying, "I personally feel very frustrated about the project. I think it is not the fault of the company but the fault of the managing director of RCC because in other projects, the company is doing well, but why not this project, may be he does not

want this project to be completed. That is my frustration."

The minister explained that he had earlier invited the chairman of RCC to the site for discussions but he refused to show up, adding that the chairman only sent his second in command who cannot take decisions.

Malam Yuguda has however directed that the chairman of the company be invited to Abuja on Tuesday (yesterday), along with the consultant, Ende Associates and FAAN's managing director, Mohammed Gambo Umar, to take a final decision.

The minister however warned that if the contractor fails to come to terms with what is required of him, the ministry may be forced to take a very harsh action against him.

# News

## National Confab....

## National Confab....

## National Confab...

### Union kicks against NLC participation

The National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) has kicked against the participation of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), in the proposed national dialogue scheduled to commence on February 15, 2005.

Delivering a speech at the official commissioning of the union's multimillion naira cyber café business centre at the Lagos, secretariat, the NUEE general secretary, Precious Kiri-Kalio, stated that labour has not prepared itself for the national dialogue and does not call for it.

According to him, the NLC should not have jumped into a national dialogue without a blue print on the benefits and likely impact of such a discussion to its members and the masses in general.

Speaking further, the NUEE scribe declared: 'Labour should have prepared for the dialogue before jumping into it, and once they have not prepared for it there is no need to go into the dialogue,' he said.

Justifying his position, described the leaders action enhance the government sponsored National dialogue as compromising the role of labour, which is suppose to be proactive.

On the commissioning of the multimillion naira cyber café business centre by its union, Dr. Kirikalio explained that the development is part of NUEE determination to

**From Samson Ojo, Correspondent (Lagos)**  
change the era of depending solely on government for job creation which is one of the main adopted investment plans to create about 500 jobs

According to him, the centre would provide more support service and fund in addition to the ever demanding need to link up to the world.



Azizat Yahaya, Justice Mustapha Akanbi and Amira Imam-Abdulrahim at the dedication of 'Nana Aishat Memorial School of Arabic and Islamic studies, Ilorin, Kwara State, recently

### Afenifere may not participate

By Abdulfatah Olajide Correspondent (Lagos)

There are growing indications that the Yoruba socio-political group, *Afenifere*, may not participate in the proposed national dialogue slated to begin next Tuesday.

Rising from an emergency meeting in Lagos yesterday, the group declared the proposed Confab as a "charade," saying that the manner in which delegates were selected for the confab was unacceptable to it.

*Afenifere's* administrative secretary, Yinka Odunakin who addressed newsmen at the end of the meeting stated that Nigerians should have been left to elect delegates to the confab rather than the government selecting them.

The *Afenifere* spokesman also noted that the absence of an enabling law to guide the confab was an indication that president Obasanjo did not want a genuine confab.

He lamented that eminent jurists like retired justice Bola Babalakin, Chukwudifu Oputa, and Adolphos Karibi-Whyte accepted to serve on the confab without an enabling law.

Odunakin remarked that the government did not take the plurality of the nation into cognizance while establishing structures for the confab, adding that the delegates selected so far were not truly representative of the nation's ethnic nationalities.

"*Afenifere* does not see any reason why Nigerians cannot elect their representatives to the confab. Are we at war. Even Iraq that is at war has just finished an election," he noted.

Odunakin explained that *Afenifere* was not a permanent rejectionist, adding that the group was amenable to negotiations based on principle.

## Furore over Jigawa delegates

More voices of discontent are emerging on the caliber of people nominated to represent Jigawa state at the proposed national conference on political reforms scheduled for this month in Abuja.

A former police commissioner from Jigawa state, Alhaji Ibrahim Babankona, said he is disappointed with the calibre of people who made the list of the Jigawa delegates, saying there are better qualified people who have the experience and capability to represent the state than those named. He cited the example of the only woman delegate who is also the commissioner of women affairs who he said will not be able to match people like Professor Awwalu Yadudu from Kano, Damcida or Ango Abdullahi when it come to contributing meaningfully to the national conference.

Alhaji Ibrahim, who was the sole representative of Jigawa state to the 1995

**From Musa Umar Kazaure Bureau Chief (Kano)**

construction review Conference, said Jigawa has people like Bashir Dalhatu, a seasoned lawyer and former minister, Bilyaminu Usman, former minister of education, Dr. Baita Yusuf, Ahmed Hassan, Hassan Hadejia, Shu'aibu Kazaure, Muhammadu Inuwa Ringim, Muhammed Ibrahim and many capable and worthy sons of Jigawa who could give the state adequate and competent representation at the conference.

Also contributing to the debate, Alhaji Faruk Adamu, member of house of Representative, representing Birnin Kudu said the list represented the irresponsible attitude of the government in Jigawa to issues that affect the state in general. He stated that though he is not against women representation but instead of the female inexperienced women nominated, why not her father AVM Hamza

Abdullahi. He noted that apart from one or two people in the Jigawa list, the rest are going to be on-lookers at the conference and will not contribute anything.

One of the Jigawa elders' resident is Kano, Alhaji Ahmed Hassan, said though he does not quarrel with the list of representation, but he felt disappointed that there was no consultations with other stakeholders in the Jigawa project, adding that the government would have gotten a lot of input from the indigenes of the state before the final list. He also faulted the lopsidedness of the selection which he said showed that some senatorial districts were cheated and not adequately represented.

He cited the example of the governor's senatorial district where he picked three representatives while giving only one to southern senatorial district comprising Dutse, Birnin-Kudu and Gwaram, which he said has more wards than the other,

Alhaji Ahmed Hassan said people like Alhaji Inuwa Dutse and his colleagues who served the nation and state in various capacities should have been on the list of Jigawa delegates. He added "the people needed for such a conference are those seasoned in life itself, people who have seen it all, who have contributed selflessly to the progress of the nation, state and their community. These are the people needed such a forum."

Defending the state governor's nomination, Alhaji Alili Galadima, the chairman of the state Independent Electoral Commission said those criticizing the list of Jigawa delegates are those interested in forwarding their selfish interest at the conference and not the interest of the commoners in Jigawa. He added that the new faces in the delegation are the true representation which was reflected in the current list submitted.

## Muslim delegates should not canvass ethnic agenda - Prof. Abdulkareem

An Islamic scholar, Professor Hussein Akande Abdulkareem, has warned muslim delegates to the forthcoming national dialogue not to canvass ethnic or regional.

Rather, Professor Abdulkareem would want muslim delegates to use the forum to advance and defend the cause of islam which, according to him, non-muslims are bent on attacking at the confab.

Professor Abdulkareem who is the head of the department of medical biochemistry at the Lagos State University College of Medicine was speaking at the launching of the "selected judgments at the Lagos state independent Shariah Panel" published by the state chapter of the Supreme Council for Shariah in Nigeria (SCSN).

According to the Islamic scholar, if Muslim

**By Abdulfatah Olajide, Correspondent (Lagos)**

delegates pursue an ethnic agenda at the confab, ethnicity would be used by non-Muslims to divide their rank with a view to defeat them.

He noted that muslims

have been canvassing the ethnic agenda to the detriment of Islam for too long, adding that such attitude should stop forthwith.

He remarked that despite being the majority in the country, Muslims

were the poorest due to their inability to stand up for Islam in the socio-political terrain.

Professor Abdulkareem emphasized the need for muslims in all parts of the country to have a common position at the confab.

## Southern Kaduna youths disown nominee

One of the delegates inaugurated on Monday by Governor Ahmed Muhammad Makarfi of Kaduna state to the proposed national dialogue, Dr. Christopher Abashiya has been disowned by the Youth Forum of Southern Kaduna People's Union (SOKAPU).

In a letter of protest sent to Governor Makarfi, signed by Mr. Samuel Audu of Kauru Local Government and ten others, SOKAPU declared that Dr. Abashiya cannot represent Southern Kaduna people, saying that

**From Aliyu Haruna Correspondent (Kaduna)**

he is not a Southern Kaduna indigene.

According to the letter, Dr. Aboshiya claimed that he is Hausa-Fulani from Katsina, adding that if that is the case, why should he be nominated to represent the Southern Kaduna people.

The statement declared that there are many indigenes who could represent them, pointing out that Dr. Abashiya has never done anything to Southern Kaduna neither has he

contributed to the development of the state in general.

SOKAPU challenged Dr. Aboshiya to prove the assistance he rendered to any indigene of the Southern Kaduna or his contributions to the state in general.

The statement said that if the governor want a meaningful representation for southern Kaduna people and feels he should come from Jaba, Dr. Audu Kwasan Ahoshiya (The Wazirin Jabo) who is a true Jaba man and awarded of on officer of the Order of the Niger.

## Bello Kirfi leads Bauchi delegates

Alhaji Bello Kirfi, Wazirin Bauchi and former minister of special duties in the Obasanjo's first term, has been named by the Bauchi state government as leader to the national political reform conference to hold in Abuja this month.

Alhaji Kirfi, a member of the People's Democratic Party Board of Trustees, was also a former Minister of State for Education in the Second Republic.

The Bauchi state government in a statement signed by Alhaji Mohammed Nadada secretary to the state government also named another member of PDP board of trustees, Alhaji Kautaha Aliyu, as well as presidential adviser on drugs and narcotics, Dr. Ibrahim Yakubu Lame.

Others included former Nigerian Ambassador to Kuwait, and Sierra Leone Alhaji Mohammed and Mohammed Chadi Abubakar, who was also a one time secretary to the Bauchi state government.

Also, Barrister Habibu Aliyu, the current commissioner of justice is among the delegates.

**From Tashikalma Hallah, Correspondent (Bauchi)**

Alhaji Nadada Umar in the statement explained that the Bauchi state government arrived at the list after extensive consultations, meetings and discussions with various interest group within the state.

The secretary to the state government also explained the state governor, Alhajio Ahmadu Adamu Mua'zu his sanctioned the nomination as the representatives of the state as they are distinguished statesmen to represent the state.



Gov. Ahmadu A. Muazu

# Soliloquy

WITH  
A. B. Ahmed  
dahmedia@canada.com

## Opinion

### In defence of scoundrels

To read me or hear me talk, you would never believe that I have had the unpleasant responsibility of defending cowards, crooks and scoundrels in my life before, would you? And yet many more times than I can count or even honestly recall it has been my misfortune to defend scoundrels, deliberately and in cold blood. Truth is that in my own way of seeing life, the immediate circumstances of any given case quite often dictate that you do not have to like a person in order to defend him or her against unfair or unjust treatment. In my own experience of this life, and based on the principles by which I have chosen to live, it is the circumstance or background of any given case, not the person(s) involved, which determines on which side of it I jump into the fray, to support one side or the other in the given dispute. Let me give you one or two examples, to illustrate this weakness of mine, which has sadly led me into more trouble than I have ever wanted or bargained for throughout this my wretched life.

It was back in 1976; the year General Murtala Muhammed was assassinated in Lagos and his deputy as military head of state, this same General (now Chief) Olusegun Obasanjo, was literally dragged forcibly, much against his personal wish and desire, to replace the slain head of state. All the circumstances which surrounded the abortive coup d'etat of Lt. Col. Bukar Suka Dimka and his fellow assassins like Sergeant Clement Yildar (the one who got clean away, you remember?) pointed incontrovertibly to the fact of Obasanjo's extreme physical terror of both the coup-makers and even more starkly at his extreme fear of succeeding his slain leader, after the treason attempt had been successfully squashed by real men and soldiers like T.Y. Danjuma and Ibrahim Babangida, while OBJ took trembling refuge for dear life in the late S.B. Bakare's mansion on the former Queen's Drive in Ikoyi.

After they finally succeeded in convincing the weak-kneed Obasanjo to bear the burden which fate and the nation's history had placed squarely on him and himself alone, it was not a matter for great surprise that almost all Nigerians, but especially northerners, regarded the man as the very antithesis of popular conceptions about both personal and military courage and daring-do. We all swallowed the bad medicine of having him as our leader because it was the best thing to live with, for the sake of plain national unity,

balance and cohesion. None of us held him in high regard, whether as a man of proven personal courage or a leader fit to be proud of, however. Nobody can challenge the veracity of my story so far, because it is a matter of simple documented Nigerian history.

Up North, no public building was ready to put up the official portrait of OBJ as incumbent head of state, several months after he assumed office in that capacity. All public buildings still carried the official portrait of the dead Murtala Muhammed, in defiant violation of all known norms of official policy and protocol; and Radio Kaduna as well as Radio Kaduna Television (RKTv) were having a field day and plenty of fun deliberately mispronouncing his name [Ubanshegu and so on] in their daily newscasts. The situation became far too farcical and unfair for a man like me to swallow without jumping to this poor, unwanted and unloved underdog's staunch defense.

When it continued unchanged for more than six months, I wrote an irate letter to the editor of the *New Nigerian*, protesting this unforgiving spirit of the North, and urging the leaders of my region to please play fair and respect the feelings and dignity of a man whom, after all, they had practically forced into occupying a red-hot seat, much against his loudly expressed wish and desire. Raw guts and sheer physical courage, I argued, were rare gifts of God; and if a man hasn't got them he just hasn't got them. In the case of our then head of state, I pointed out, he just happened to be a man who valued personal safety far above the call to national duty and patriotism. And having forced him into the mortification of having to confess this weakness practically in full public glare, we had no justification to ask him for more than nature endowed him with.

In less than a month after that newspaper carried my letter (I was still a mere Part II student of economics in ABU at that time, remember), all public offices in northern Nigerian were bearing the portrait of Obasanjo as incumbent Nigerian military head of state. As far as I was concerned, my action that time was not dictated by my love or respect for OBJ as a person but the prodding of my conscience as to what was fair and proper. It was the first time in my life to have publicly stood up for fairness and the underdog in any given matter, and until my dying day, I will have no reason to regret it, even if OBJ were to turn out to be an even more incompetent leader and a worse scoundrel than he is now in my own

personal reckoning.

In between 1977 and today, I have had many more occasions to defend and uphold the legitimacy of the man's leadership, both under my own name and in many unsigned editorial comments and non-personal columns, from the debacle of the Ali Must Go wahala of 1978 to the more recent threats of impeachment by the National Assembly in this ongoing republic, and his decision to offer refuge to Liberia's Charles Taylor. But I only mention these examples today in response to Obasanjo's sanctimonious prayer in a recent public speech for God to open the eyes of those of us who never "see anything good in their own country", in order to tell him that he is definitely not our idea of what the Nigerian state is, let alone arrogate unto himself the impossible honour of equating criticism of his style of governance with criticism of our nation. We, who criticise him, do so only in as far as his actions and utterances impact on the happiness and well-being of our people. We criticise his public person, not his private persona. When he talked himself into jail, as many of us have also done in the past, in defense of our perception of the public good, we did not even speak about him, let alone criticise him, since his languishing in prison cells had no impact whatsoever on the public good. Instead, we criticised Abacha and Abdulsalami and whoever was in power during his absence. That is the way life is.

As far as we are concerned, he is merely one in a long line of leaders whom we have criticised or defended or praised, as circumstances demanded. And the sooner he learns to accept this as a fact [instead of stubbornly clinging to his notorious I-Know-It-All post-detention fantasies of 1999 to date], the better it will be for him and our entire nation. Let him keep his delusions of being hand-picked by God strictly to himself. Who ever told him that becoming president [even for the millionth time] automatically confers upon him the toga of being Nigeria's wisest or best leader? His spin doctors and obsequious courtiers in Aso Rock?

Well, for the information of all of them combined, this nation called Nigeria needs dissenting views and voices for its success and progress just as much as it needs self-proclaimed infallible leaders who were in jail only yesterday, are here today, and must irreversibly be gone by tomorrow. Let all of us stop over-rating our own importance to Nigeria. Nobody; absolutely nobody can claim a monopoly of wisdom or any imaginary esoteric skills beyond what history and the people adjudge the person to merit in the books of time.

### Agenda for Nyame's Taraba

By Mike Magaji

I feel quite disturbed that in the recent political history of Taraba State I don't recall any visit by President Obasanjo to commission any major project(s) which can be called landmark achievements in the State.

With a population of less than 2 million people and an average monthly FAC allocation of N1 billion, I believe a lot more can be done to improve the living conditions of the people by way of infrastructural development and capacity building which the State dearly needs.

In fairness to the Government of the day I do concede the fact that inter-ethnic conflicts in the first term of this administration impeded a good number of development initiatives. But suffice to say that conflict has permeated other States in the country without necessarily slowing development as has been the case in Taraba. Taraba must therefore pick the pieces and move on. She must put that sad era behind her, grow beyond this limitation and work assiduously to realise growth and development. I propose a consideration of certain initiatives to achieve this.

Firstly, and as a matter of urgency, Taraba must identify where its core resource potential lies and how best to harness it for the purpose of adding value to the people and supporting its overall development. We know for example that Jigawa has shown strong commitment to lead the way in ICT for its people following the Bangladesh/India Model. Our brothers in Cross River have signed up Julius Berger to build what will be the hottest tourism spot in West Africa and maybe Africa, by the name "Tinapa." Our neighbours in Bauchi have distinguished themselves in the area of providing first class infrastructure for their urban and rural populace. Taraba must identify and actualize its vision by clearly stating what resource potential it intends to project for the overall benefit of its people. And indeed pursue this in word and deed. I know for sure there is strong potential for developing the agro-allied sector where Taraba can produce a wide range of top quality commodities for the local and international market. But this must be well coordinated such that the Government acts as enabler to support local farmers beyond just subsistence production. It's not enough to buy and distribute tractors while farmers complain about the non-availability of high quality hybrid seeds or extension support services to maximize yield and harvest for the farmers. The temperate Mambilla Plateau, among others, provides an excellent medium to realize this fortune for the State. This initiative must be monitored and controlled with detailed performance metrics to measure the programme's success or failure at any given time. Given our proximity to

Cameroun an Export Processing Zone can be created to promote trade and tourism between both partners as currently exists between Borno/Chad and Jigawa/Niger.

Secondly, it is important to note that Taraba is home to several solid minerals. The "Mambilla Sapphire" remains one of the best quality sapphire gemstones available anywhere in the world. This resource remains largely untapped. To harness same, the State should work at promoting and supporting formal Mining cooperatives in conjunction with local and foreign investors to tap into this resource and externalize earnings. With the state Investment company as enabler, Taraba and the nation will benefit immensely from this non-oil export by way of earnings and employment generation.

Thirdly, Taraba is rich in human potential but has been lagging behind in providing infrastructure to develop same. Our indigenes populate neighbouring State and Federal Universities in Maiduguri, Yola, Bauchi, Makurdi and Jos for lack of a local alternative. This experience has proved expensive to Taraba indigenes, who have to travel long distances when a local source could provide the solution. Given the need to build and accelerate the development of our human resource base, Taraba is long overdue for her own State University. The College of Education in Jalingo is inadequate to fully actualize training of the manpower resource. Its infrastructure is also in poor state and should be upgraded to a State University as soon as possible. It is also noteworthy that several indigenes today send their wards to secondary schools in Jos, Abuja and beyond, because Jalingo does not have quality secondary institutions. This is a sad commentary on what the education sector offers in Taraba. It also goes to show why enrollment and performance in JAMB exams is poor in the State.

To assist capacity building, the State should also consider putting together a "skill or resource inventory" of all its indigenes for the purpose of ascertaining quantity and quality of manpower available. The "big picture" will enable her deploy skilled indigenes for appointments in Local, Federal and International institutions. Conversely, it will also show the skill/manpower gaps in various sectors and provide useful information as to the way forward in filling these gaps. A wider spread and exposure of indigenes to various positions of authority within and outside the State will lead to greater visibility and empowerment.

Fourthly, I do also believe there are major challenges at strengthening Inter-Governmental relationships between the State and other strategic development

Government and Multilateral institutions for the purpose of implementing and accelerating development efforts. Outside the health projects, I don't recall Taraba advertised or presented as a target beneficiary for any major World Bank development assistance project in recent times. Ditto for activities supported by UNICEF / USAID / DFID and other multilateral development institutions. The State must develop and leverage on a healthy relationship with these partners to access funding for the promotion of developmental activities across education, health, environment, agriculture, commerce and industry.

Fifthly, there is the urgent need to integrate and position Taraba on the National and International economic radar. I join several others before me in calling for the hosting of an Investment Promotion and Economic Summit for the State in Jalingo. The summit should be targeted at attracting more public-private participation in the local economy. Indigenes resident in the State and the diaspora across various disciplines should be invited to actively participate in the program. I am aware this event has been postponed twice. The initiative must be revisited urgently. From the hydro-power potentials through the agro allied sector to Solid Minerals, Taraba has a lot to offer potential investors. The State must implement investor-friendly policies that will attract and retain investors with the commensurate returns guaranteed. This potential must be articulated through a deliberate media campaign in print and electronic form. Taraba is visibly absent in the national print and electronic media. This is an area which needs mega improvement.

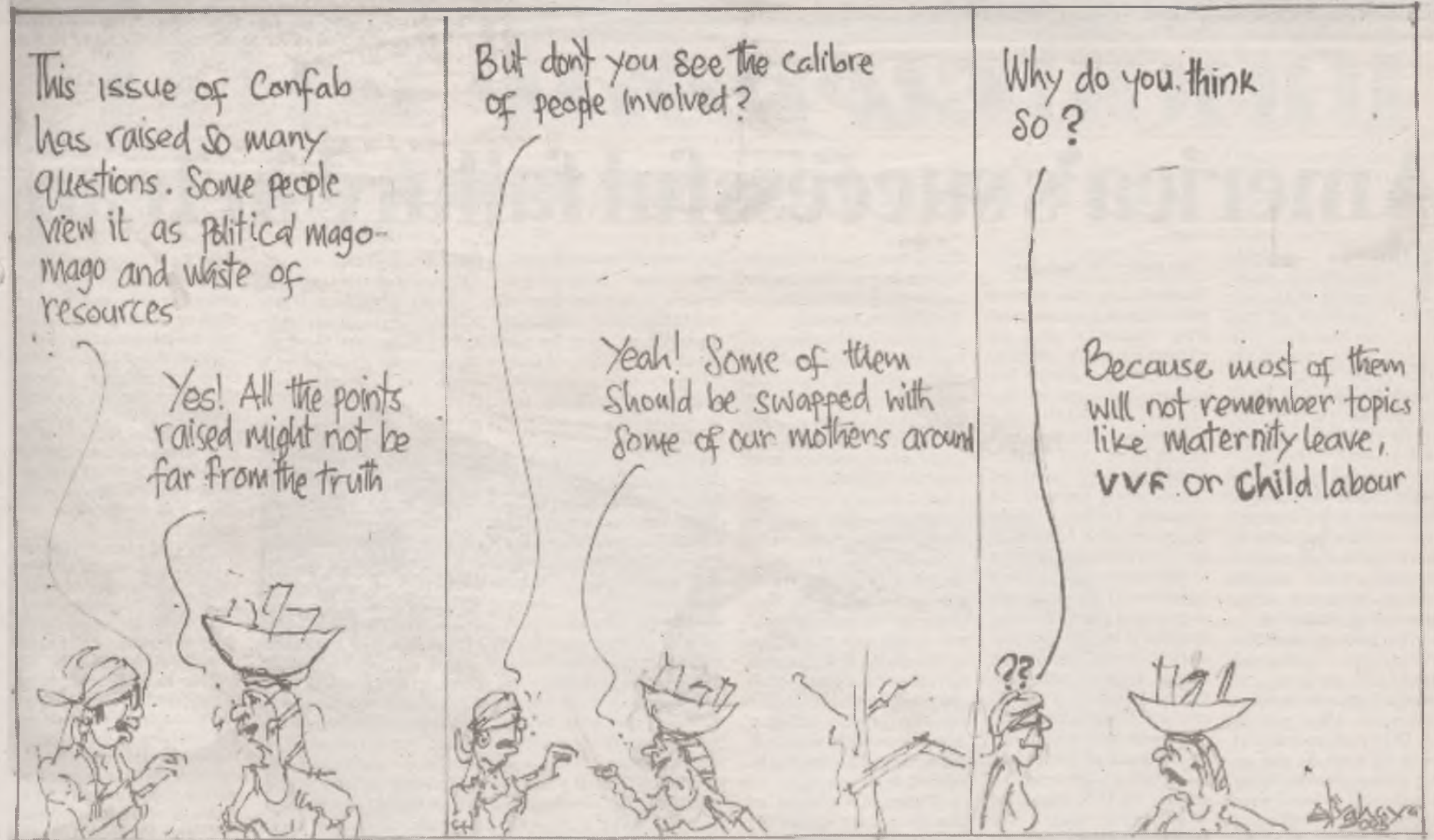
Youth empowerment via micro-credit, skill acquisition, learning and mentoring programmes should also be considered as an integral part of this initiative.

I also propose that in line with the transparency and accountability position of this administration, that the State publish half yearly accounts in the local newspapers as an expression of its commitment to transparency and accountability. This will put paid to any doubt about Government's commitment to same. Several other States are currently doing this. Taraba should be no exception.

Its bad enough that by default we were born into an underdeveloped environment. It will be even worse if we don't work hard and fast to move away from this condition. The aforementioned initiatives must be driven and supported by the Government. It must promote merit participation and de-emphasise ethno-religious sentiments so that all indigenes feel as a part of the whole.

Through concerted efforts we will join the league of winning States, and when we do, we can then call for an official Presidential visit to commission development projects.

Magaji writes from



## YOUR LETTERS

### Protest and demand for retraction

My attention has been drawn to a publication in which your Reporter, Hir Joseph fabricated a story about me. At no time did I ever say: "This followed a call by a National Officer of the party, the Benue born Dr. Godwin Dabo' Adzuana that the PDM leader and Vice President, Atiku Abubakar loyalist and his wife be punished for supporting the ouster of Chief Audu Ogbah, as the party National Chairman".

I have a tape recording of the interview. At no time during the interview which was attended by six media houses did I ask for the suspension of Chief Abu Shuluwa or his wife from the party.

**What I said is this:**  
"I condemn what Chief Shuluwa, who is an elder of the party and a man who has access to Governor Akume said about the PDP recently. His wife is also a Commissioner in the Akume administration."

He therefore has unlimited access to Governor Akume. He should not have therefore gone to the Press to talk about what he considers wrong with the Party (PDP) in Benue state. He has no right to openly criticize the Party or its government. This is because his wife is a part of the Akume administration. Chief Abu King Shuluwa himself was a

Federal Commissioner until recently. So, he therefore has a moral responsibility not to openly criticize the Party or its Government policies. Abu should apologize for the party in Benue state for his open criticism. If he fails then appropriate disciplinary procedure may be initiated against him."

At no stage did I use the word "suspension" from the party as stated by your Reporter. I also did not include Chief Mrs. Shuluwa in the request for an apology from Chief Shuluwa.

This is because the wife did not criticize the party or say the party was weak as a result of the lack of substantive officers. I was therefore shocked to read such a false statement attributed to me in your publication. Your newspaper also gave the totally unjustified impression the alleged plan to suspend him was as a "result of my request".

This is the third time this young Reporter (Hir Joseph) is lying about me. I shall be grateful if you kindly correct the false impression that I had called for the suspension of Chief and Chief Mrs. Shuluwa from the PDP, because of Chief Shuluwa's position on the Audu Ggbah controversy.

The point is that, the PDP in Benue State decided on January 1, 2005 to support Chief Ogbah in his

confrontation with the President. In addressing the Press in Abuja on January 3, 2005 I did point this out.

I have an accurate record of our conversation with your Reporter. I demand a retraction/correction because the story is false and malicious. When I called, Mr. Hir Joseph to protest about his false story, he told me he had filed a four page report of our interview and did not

### Re: Plateau civil groups call for probe of Alli's tenure

My attention has been drawn to your publication on the first page of your News paper of Friday, 28th January, 2005 on the above subject, purported to have been signed by one Joseph Songosonya as Chairman and one Steve Aluko-Daniel as Secretary on behalf of other coalition groups of Human Rights in Plateau State.

In the alleged publication, it was claimed that while Major General Chris Alii (Rtd) former Administrator of Plateau state had announced that the reconstruction of Jos burnt Main Market will gulp N4 billion, I signed a document putting the cost of the project at N7 billion.

Let me state unequivocally clear that the information is not only false, but embarrassing and aimed at causing disaffection among the good people of

include the above false statement.

From his denial it is obvious that somebody fabricated that portion of the interview.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the PDP in Benue State, Chief King Shuluwa and his wife for their information.

**Dr. Akpenlamen G. Dabo' Adzuana, Assistant National Auditor.**

Plateau state.

It is also a calculated attempt by the writers to derailed the reconstruction of the market.

For the records, the agreement entered between the Government of Plateau State and the Developer, MD Project Associates Limited was N3,143,448,175.19 only as contained in Article II of the agreement.

It is therefore strongly advised that in making claims of such nature, proper and authentic information should be gathered to avoid embarrassing and misleading people on pages of newspapers, please.

**John G. Gobak Secretary to the State Government**

Daily Trust did not make any claims but merely reported what members of the coalition of Human Rights Groups in Plateau told the press. -Editor

### Confab: Still on Zamfara nominees

Please allow me space in your widely read newspaper to send this open letter to the Governor of Zamfara state, Alhaji Ahmed Sani.

Your Excellency, I saw the list of Zamfara state nominees to the forth coming National Political Reform conference and hasten to say that I am greatly disappointed by the nominations.

From all intent and purposes, and with the exception of Alhaji Yahaya Abdulkarim, the rest of the nominees are your hand picked candidates because of your political agenda and which I consider myopic. Considering that the National political reform conference is about Nigeria, to which, of course Zamfara belongs and not selfish interest of an individual;

Your Excellency, if one compares your nominees to nominees of other states, it will be observed that you do not take the conference seriously.

Compare your nominees to say the nominees of Kaduna and Katsina states which have names like Alhaji Umaru Dikko, Dr Chris Abashiya, Alhaji Ibrahim Coomasie, Alhaji Saidu

Barda and Alhaji Garba Ja Abdukadir.

Or compare your list with that of states created at the same time with Zamfara, Gombe state for instance, has Senator Uba Ahmed, Nuhu Poloma as members.

Your Excellency, how old is Nasiru Khalifa, Takori and Malami Yandoto? And what level of exposure and experience do they have, to enable them face squarely the imposing postures of these men and women of caliber representing other states?

Your Excellency, I beg you in the name of Allah the most merciful to have a second look at this aspect of representation critically and make amends by nominating seasoned technocrats and politicians to represent us. By so doing, posterity will judge you for putting the interest of Zamfara state over and above personal interest.

If however, you are beclouded by self serving agenda and allow these nominees represent us, history will definitely judge you as "the man who came, saw and squandered a political opportunity".

**Tukur Sarkin Burmi, AZ 211, Corner Shop Area 3, Garki Abuja.**

Reactions to articles published in this paper may be directed to the editor via the email address: [editor@dailytrust.com](mailto:editor@dailytrust.com)

# Opinion

## America's successful failure in Iraq

The Bush Administration, under the guise of the so-called "coalition of the willing" invaded Iraq over one year ago ostensibly for three main reasons: to destroy Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD); to extend its fight against international 'Islamic' terrorism; and to effect a regime change: replacing a vile dictator with a western-style liberal democratic government in the heart of a troubled, oil-rich and, in Western eyes at least, retrogressive middle east.

From the very outset few governments believed America's motives, as evidenced from the fact that Washington never got the full D.N endorsement it sought to wage its war on Iraq; among countries lining up to oppose its move were some of America's traditional allies. Even within the nations coaxed and coerced into supporting the American action, the majority of the populace disagreed with their governments: only the citizens of the U.S, still reeling from the shock of the September 11 attacks, and those of Israel, habitual supporters of any anti Arab move, gave their full support.

Yet, whatever the Americans and their Israeli allies will like to believe, Washington's excuse for invading Iraq had never really stood to dispassionate scrutiny. Subsequent events in occupied Iraq, as the world is now witnessing, simply provide further proof of this fact which had been apparent to all but the most unflinching American apologist.

The issue of WMD was the most hyped topic in the

By Engr. S. U. Abdullahi

West during the period preceding the invasion of Iraq. America and its transatlantic ally, Britain, made much about the potential danger of, the fusion of WMD and international terrorism, in a generalised and rather nebulous way, without convincingly proving the existence of either, let alone the combination of both, in Iraq. Iraq had been subjected to the most rigorous and intrusive search for WMD over several years following its defeat in the 2nd Gulf War of 1991. All its known stock of such weapons, along with the infrastructure for its production, was supposed to have been destroyed then.

For much of that period, inspectors would enter the country on U.N. mandated missions to search for remnants of banned weapons systems, and then leave - or be kicked out by Saddam - with the issue in the end remaining unresolved one way or another. There were complaints from the inspectors about access being denied to some sites - like Saddam's Presidential Palaces - but at no time did any group reported the presence of WMD in those sites they were allowed to inspect. A sort of stalemate settled over the whole issue; with Saddam insisting on the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iraq, and some members of the U.N., led by the U.S. and Britain, vehemently opposing any such move until Iraq was declared in full compliance with the relevant U.N. resolutions. There matters would probably have rested indefinitely but for the

fateful emergence of George W. Bush and the tragic occurrence of the September 11 attacks on America.

International scrutiny of Iraq became particularly severe after September 11 and America's subsequent declaration of war against international terrorism and states which sponsor it. It was the historic moment when America demanded countries to make a critical choice: "you are either with us or with the terrorists", declared President Bush, never at his best on the finer points of diplomacy. While nations fell over themselves to be with the U.S., Saddam never even bothered to commiserate with President Bush over the attacks, though it probably would not have changed his fate had he deigned to do so.

Riding on a wave of popular outrage against the devastation of September 11, the Bush Administration quickly laid the ground rules for going after its enemies. In addition to the with-us-or-against-us declaration, the Administration unfolded a new policy towards global security: America now vests on itself the right to preemptively attack its enemies once it has determined that a credible basis exists that those enemies pose an imminent threat to its security. This marked a new and dangerous turning point in international relations, and of course spelt trouble for those America paints as 'bad guys' - especially the countries President Bush had singled out as forming the "axis of evil": Iraq, Iran,

Syria and North Korea. A cowed international community could only watch

helplessly as the world's only remaining Superpower became judge and jury in international conflict resolution, usurping the role of the only legitimate international body empowered to do so: the United Nations.

To be fair, even before President Bush appeared on the scene American Administrations were never really impressed with the United Nations. The average American had always viewed the august body with suspicion, and been accustomed to looking down on it as an aggregation of irritating, mainly Third World, fiefdoms masquerading as sovereign nations, with an inefficient, perhaps corrupt, bureaucracy. Ostensibly for this very reason Washington is routinely several years in arrears over the payments of its dues to the U.N, with Congress considering the expenditure as a waste of American taxpayers' money.

Under the circumstances, it therefore required no act of political genius for President Bush to persuade Congress to support a unilateralist approach to his post September 11 endeavours. But because even Bush needed to give his actions a veneer of international respectability, if not legitimacy, he went through the motions of seeking a U.N mandate. He was in fact reluctantly brought around to this point of view principally through the efforts of his ally across the Atlantic, Prime Minister Tony Blair who, with mixed results, had in the same breath been lending his considerable intellectual and moral weight to persuade the world that

their chosen course was the right and inevitable one.

Thus President Bush reluctantly took his case against Iraq to the U.N, which then gave the go ahead for a tough and final inspection regime in Iraq, one that provided the inspectors a free and unconditional access to all suspected sites in that country. This time around the inspectors were to verify written weapons status claims submitted by Iraq to the U.N., literally at the point of American guns. It was supposed to be a last chance given to Iraq to come clean about its weapons systems; any major discrepancies discovered between its submitted claims and the inspectors reports were to lead to a second U.N. resolution automatically authorising military action against Iraq. At least that was the understanding of most members of the international community, but the U.S. felt that the first resolution gave it all it needed by way of a mandate to use force against Iraq should the inspectors' report warranted it.

Reading the U.S - mood correctly, Saddam Hussein acquiesced to the mission and welcomed the Hans Blix-led inspectors to Iraq. While the world held its collective breath, and under persistent pressure from the U.S., the team went through Iraq with a fine tooth comb, and periodically reported back to the U.N with ambivalent interim reports - reports delicately drafted not to disapprove a belligerent U.S. looking for a "smoking gun", while at the same time trying to reflect the actual situation on the ground which was that no illegal guns existed,

smoking or otherwise. In the end Hans Blix never got the chance to complete his mission. Having concluded that the inspections will not come up with the outcome he desired, President Bush now shed all pretences at peaceful resolution of the conflict and ordered the inspectors out of Iraq, giving Saddam Hussein and his family 48 hrs to leave or face the consequences: in effect a short ultimatum for war.

Well of course Saddam was never going to simply vacate his country of birth under threat from an external force, even assuming there was a nation on Earth courageous enough to receive him. The rest was history: the U.S., with Britain and a couple of members of the "coalition of the willing" in tow, invaded Iraq, in surely one of the most asymmetrical wars in living memory. In a matter of weeks, it came to an end, and President Bush gleefully declared that all major combat operations of the war were over, and that the U.S. and - he added almost as an afterthought - its coalition partners had prevailed. In retrospect this proclamation was, to say the least, a tad premature; for major combat operations in Iraq were in fact just beginning.

Much like Chamberlain in 1938 when he made his famous gaffe over his agreement with Hitler, proclaiming to have secured "peace with honour" and "peace for our time", and then immediately being forced to swallow his words by the Nazi dictator, President Bush is bound to be haunted by his hollow victory cry for the rest of his life.

Engr. S. U. Abdullahi  
NNDC Qtrs, Kundila Kano.  
To be Continued

## Elite power theory and Jigawa politics

The crux of the elite theory is that all societies are divided in to two-the privileged few who govern and the masses who are governed.

The elites have the political power which the masses have no direct access to the elites, who are educated, engineer policy direction of the socio-economic and political affairs of the society. S.F. Nadel defines the elites as an aggregate of people with distinct characteristics, a position of high status, some degree of corporate group character as well as exclusive awareness of their prominent position as the consequence which they share by right recognition of their general superiority by the society, its influence on the people being that of a model acceptable and recommended, worth following".

By Ahmadu A. Is'haq

Basically, the two divisions in the elites class take a pyramidal form. There are those at the top who exercise power in the different sectors of the society, while some take important decisions on different issues. The features of the elites theory are identifiable.

It is a corporate organized minority obeying a single impulse which becomes irresistible against the masses. But the elites may not necessarily be exploiters or oppressors of the masses.

At times, membership of the elites is restricted to all except top corporate financial individuals - the military, civilians and government leaders. Occasionally, ambitious and talented individuals from the masses are admitted or co-opted.

They play a fundamental role in the society, monopolize power and enjoy

its benefits because of their control over the vital resources like power, wealth, education, prestige, status and skills.

The elite opinion about fundamental norms underlying the social system, the stability and even its survival depends in their consensus.

This does not mean the elites members don't, disagree or compete with each other. But it takes place within a narrow range and they must agree on matters than disagree.

They do not prevent the lower class from rising to the top. Social mobility of the non elite is accepted as essential for their system. By this strategy, they prevent a revolutionary change.

Finally, the elites assume that the masses are generally passive, apathetic and ill-informed, thus, mass sentiments are manipulated

by them while the masses influence values.

The elites factor become applicable here in the sense that, the problems in Jigawa state 'rightly' or 'wrongly' were a elite's ones... Sentiments apart, Jigawa state today is among, if not the only state that urgently needs a transition from vagrant political' ideas to a purposeful one, in the greatest interest of a majority of its people on the same wave length with its counterpart states of the Federation especially, Enugu, Bauchi and Sokoto states. And may be to some extent Gombe state.

That is why the so called politics of emirate in Jigawa remains to be a major stumbling block, thus can be said to be (if tackled) dual point of a transitional, united, prosperous and peaceful Jigawa state. I have to add that time is fast going against

a state of 14 years old, and with 6 years out of the 8 years in a 2-political dispensation being spent. 2007 from now is a little bit timely for new plans and ideas that will give the state are better focus. The people of Jigawa state as wrongly speculated to have been condemning the existing programmes and projects of the State Government this is not true but, are saying, "with the little that has been achieved, the governor should change focus to other areas' such as 'adequate' provisions of health services, good roads, housing projects (starting from the State Capital to the five major cities and down), agriculture which reflects the realities of the life of the people of Jigawa state (a farming land), just like President Obasanjo has shrewdly advised the governor during his last visit to the state.

Finally, I call on all-the people of Jigawa state especially, the elites within or outside the State. Whether you are from Hadeja or Kazaure; Dutse, Ringim or Gumel emirates, we should all consider our selves as one when it comes to issues bordering on politics and development of our dear State. Jigawa is our only State to which we owe a lot; matters, bordering the state remains paramount to each and everyone irrespect of his 'class' or 'emirate' that is the major source of our difference... so lets fight the politics of emirates together forever.

And champion a better focus in good faith, for developing Jigawa, by Turaki government, for posterity and history.

Ahmadu A. Is'haq No. 2  
Ado Gwaram road Farm  
Centre R.L.A.P.O. Box 2446,  
FCT

# Trust International

## US-European rift over Iran

By Ulrich Rippert

Just a few days after her confirmation as the new US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice began a whirlwind tour of Europe within one week; she is visiting London, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Warsaw, Rome and Ankara, while she has also met the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov. She has also included stops in Tel Aviv and in the Palestinian areas.

While many commentators describe the trip as a "charm offensive," and refer to a relaxation of tensions in transatlantic relationships, the opposite is the case. Behind the exchange of diplomatic niceties, conflicting interests and opinions are being fought out, most central among them the question of Iran.

After veteran American journalist Seymour Hersh exposed US war preparations against Iran, followed by bellicose comments by various US representatives, there is little doubt among European politicians that Washington has begun serious preparations for a military offensive against Teheran. This is a goal that is decisively rejected, not only by Berlin and Paris, but also London.

The German news-magazine *Der Spiegel* ran the headline on its front cover last week, "USA against Iran, the next war?" Threats made by US president George W. Bush against Iran in his state of the nation address dominated the headlines of reports on the speech in the German and French press, indicating widespread fear that Washington could take the same approach to Iran as it did toward Iraq.

In London, the first stop of her European trip, the US secretary of state again attacked the Iranian government. She accused it of lacking democratic legitimacy, of supporting international terrorism and of failing to respect human rights. Questioned by a journalist on whether she could imagine an attack on Iran during the Bush administration's second four-year term, Rice said only that such an attack was "at this time not on the agenda."

The divisions between Europe and the US over military action against Iran are even deeper than their differences over the Iraq war, which has already led to a profound transatlantic crisis and splits across Europe.

Not only Germany and France, but also Britain has vital economic and political interests in Iran. A 30-member-strong delegation

of British businessmen travelled to Iran just a few days after agreement was reached last November over the Iranian atomic program between three European Union states and the Teheran government. According to the German

region to an even greater extent than the Iraq war.

Even before her trip, Secretary of State Rice had made clear that she expects Europe to directly participate in the US occupation of Iraq—a course which is ruled out by Germany and France. In

of the European governments reject a renewed military adventure in the Middle East, they are not ready to openly oppose the US government and its secretary of state. No one in official circles in Berlin or Paris—not to speak of London—dares to

in Europe have done exactly the opposite.

Following pressure from the US government, the management of Germany's Krupp AG decided to redeem a part of Iranian shares in the company in order to limit Iranian influence in the

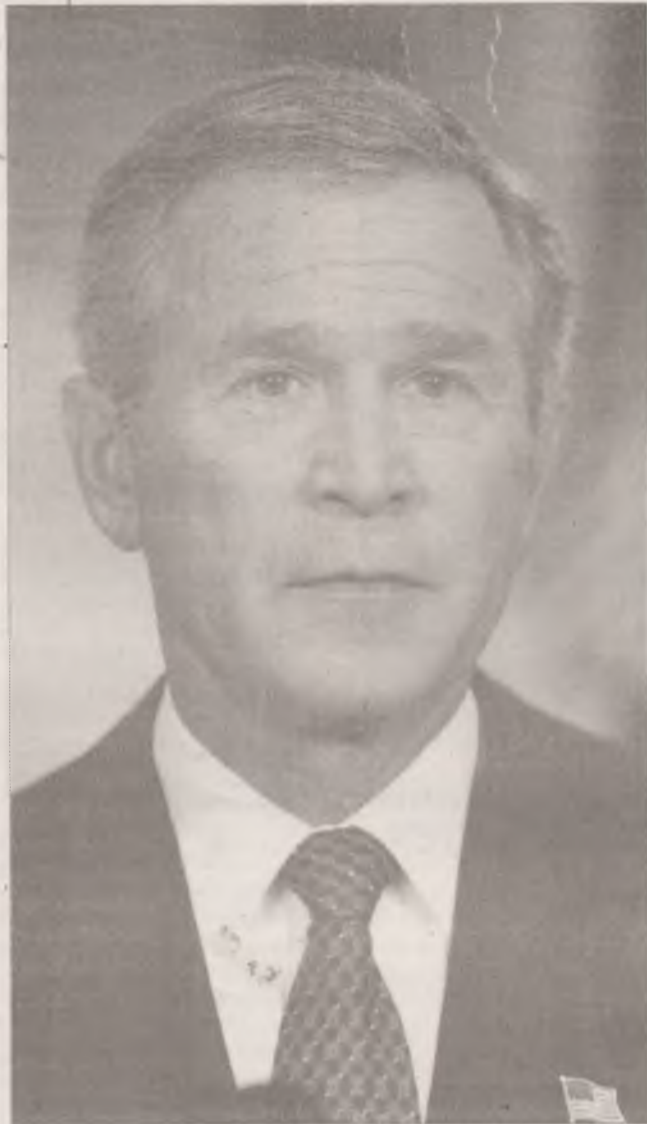
German counterpart, Peter Struck (SPD), stated his conviction the case will not even reach the stage of a preliminary investigation. Struck urged Rumsfeld to reverse his decision not to participate next week at the Munich security conference.

German Interior Minister Otto Schily (SPD) was even clearer following an unscheduled discussion with President Bush during a visit to the US last week. Schily explained afterwards: "That is an honour, which is not given to every interior minister." Press reports subsequently revealed that Schily had assured Bush that Germany would provide development aid for Iraq.

This cowardly attitude towards Washington is rooted, above all, in fears on the part of European governments that a consistent uncovering and struggle against US war plans could unleash a powerful popular response. They can clearly recall the worldwide mass demonstrations against the Iraq war two years ago, in which several millions took part, and are keen to avoid a repetition.

European political circles fear that mass protests against war could also take up social questions and turn against governments at home. It is no coincidence that Otto Schily has stressed his personal friendship with the former US attorney general, John Ashcroft. Schily is most impressed by the ruthless law-and-order policies employed by the US government against its own population.

At the same time, Germany and every other European government pursue their own imperialist goals, which they seek to conceal from the mass of the population with the same outpourings and appeals on behalf of democracy and liberty which are so characteristic



US President, George Bush

Heinrich Böll institute, which has close links to the German Green Party, the British trade and industry minister, Patricia Hewitt, stressed that trade relations between both countries had grown continuously over the past five years and would have great importance for both sides. Her ministry smoothed the way for approximately 100 enterprises to operate in Iran in the past year alone.

According to the institute's report, exports by European Union states to Iran grew by 25 percent last year in comparison to 2003. Teheran's most important European business partners are Germany, Italy and France. At the same time, Iran plays an important role in assuring the energy supplies of many European countries.

European governments are not merely concerned about their economic interests. They are afraid that a military strike against Teheran will politically destabilise the entire

addition, she demanded that the European Union drop its plans to waive the current weapons embargo against China. For their part, the Europeans have called upon Washington to commit itself to a diplomatic solution of the Iran crisis instead of sabre rattling. Behind a multitude of diplomatic initiatives both sides remain firm in their respective positions.

From the standpoint of the geo-strategic interests of the US and its attempt to establish unrestricted control over energy resources in the Middle East and Caspian region, Washington has had Iran in its sights for some time. The country borders directly on the Caspian basin and offers the possibility of transporting oil and gas reserves from the region via a modern pipeline system to the world market. The Bush government already has a military presence in three neighbouring countries—Turkey, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Although the majority



French President, Jacques Chirac

confront the Bush government and its former national security advisor over the war in Iraq, which blatantly contravenes international law, or over the series of subsequent war crimes.

Instead of bluntly explaining to Rice that the European Union is no longer prepared to tolerate the open and disguised

enterprise. The British energy giant Shell, which together with the Spanish Repsol YPF had finalised a comprehensive natural gas agreement with Iran last summer, has put its production plans "provisionally" on ice.

On a political level, the European Union also seeks to make the best of a bad deal. Following the lodging

***"Although the majority of the European governments reject a renewed military adventure in the Middle East, they are not ready to openly oppose the US government and its secretary of state. No one in official circles in Berlin or Paris—not to speak of London—dares to confront the Bush government and its former national security advisor over the war in Iraq, which blatantly contravenes international law, or over the series of subsequent war crimes."***

threats of war and that any further military adventure, whether against Iran or another country, will be met with an immediate blockade of US military bases on European soil and further sanctions, political circles

of a legal case against US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld on charges of war crimes by a Berlin-based attorney's office in the name of an American human rights organisation, Rumsfeld's

of the current US government. Under these conditions the conflicts between the great powers are intensifying in a form that recalls the darkest days before the beginning of the First World War.

WSWS

# Trust International

## Israel, Palestine vow to end violence

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas declared yesterday that their people would stop all military or violent activity, pledging to break the four-year cycle of bloodshed and get peace talks back on track.

With the flags of their countries whipping in the wind, Sharon and Abbas met face-to-face at a Mideast summit Tuesday. Afterward, Abbas said: "We have agreed on halting all violent actions against Palestinians and Israelis wherever they are."

"Today, in my meeting with chairman Abbas, we agreed that all Palestinians will stop all acts of violence against all Israelis everywhere, and, at the same time, Israel will cease all its military activity against all Palestinians everywhere," he said.

Abbas said it was time for the Palestinian people to regain their freedom.

"A new opportunity for peace is born today in the city of peace. Let's pledge to protect it," Abbas said, referring to the nickname of Sharm el-Sheik earned through past peace summits.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who summoned the two leaders and has been a key mediator throughout the process, said both sides showed a serious desire to "work together truly and sincerely."

"The challenges today are large and deep, but the mission is not impossible. If the road is long, we today took the first step," Mubarak said.

"The Palestinian and Israeli peoples equally deserve a secure life for the coming generations to enjoy, based on justice, international principles and good neighbourliness," the Egyptian president added in a speech he said he was delivering on behalf of himself and Jordan's King Abdullah II.

Mubarak also said there was now fresh hope for the Syrian-Lebanese peace track. Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations have been frozen since early 2000.

"Our goal is lasting peace in the Middle East, therefore, our movement will be followed by other moves to revive both the Syrian and Lebanese tracks," he said.

In Jerusalem, a senior Israeli official said that Sharon had invited Abbas to his ranch in southern Israel, and the Palestinian leader accepted, a senior Israeli official said.

Israeli Foreign Ministry official Gideon Meir did not say when the next Sharon-Abbas meeting would take place.



Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Leader

## Shia hold lead in Iraqi election

Further partial results from Iraq's landmark election show Shia parties strengthening their lead.

The Shia United Iraqi Alliance list so far has more than twice the votes of the second-placed Kurdish alliance.

The Shia alliance has even taken a surprise lead in the province of Salaheddin, which includes the majority Sunni cities of Samarra and Tikrit.

Meanwhile, officials have confirmed irregularities in Mosul, saying more than 15,000 people were denied a vote.

Commission official Izzedine al-Mahmoudi said some people in the northern city and surrounding province were unable to cast ballots because voting materials ran out and election staff failed to turn up.

Some polling stations were also raided by gunmen, he said.

The electoral commission says it has received more than 100 complaints of irregularities, and has formed an independent team of three lawyers to investigate.

The election commission announced partial results from 13 of the country's 18 provinces on Monday.

They showed that the United Iraqi Alliance had about 2.3 million votes, with a coalition of

Iraq's two main Kurdish parties winning around 1.1 million.

The secular bloc led by interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi had about 620,000.

The commission said the results might not reflect the final picture.

Most of the results come from the Kurdish-ruled northern provinces or the southern, mainly Shia areas.

Many Sunni areas still have not reported results, but partial figures from Salaheddin suggested many Sunnis boycotted the poll, as urged by their leaders.

The United Iraqi Alliance is leading in Salaheddin with 27,645 votes.

The Kurdish Alliance had 18,791 votes, with the party headed by Iraq's Sunni President, Ghazi Yawer, third on 15,832.

Despite the expected victory by the Shia alliance, US Vice-President Dick Cheney has brushed aside concerns that Iraq would become an Iranian-styled theocracy.

"They will do it in accordance with their culture and their history and their beliefs, and whatever role they decide they want to have for religion in their society. And that's how it should be," he said on Sunday.

## Saudi confab focusses on terrorism

A counter-terrorism conference organised by the Saudi government, which has been battling Islamist activist, held workshops focusing on finding ways to combat terrorism rather than seeking to define it.

"We have intentionally decided to avoid topics that jeopardised previous conferences like this one," Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told a press conference in response to a question about the concept of terrorism.

Participants agreed that "terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon that goes beyond the boundaries of states, as well as beliefs, nationalities and races," he said.

Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz opened the four-day conference Saturday with a call for the establishment of an international centre to combat

and pre-empt terrorism.

One workshop which dealt with the "origins, culture, and ideology of terrorism" concluded that "terrorism cannot be linked to a particular religion, race, nationality or geographic region," said conference spokesman Brigadier Mansur al-Turki.

"It cautioned against any attempt to link terrorism with any religion," he added.

Prince Saud said the four workshops had reached 55 recommendations which have been put forward to the general assembly and would be announced in a closing communique.

One of the recommendations is to create a fund from seized terror money to help victims of violence, according to a senior participant.

"If there is money seized from terrorists, we will have the opportunity to help the victims of terror activities," Koenraad Dassen, the Belgian head of a workshop dealing with the relationship between terrorism and money laundering, told reporters.

No details about the international body that would be in charge of establishing and running the proposed fund were released.

The Saudi chief diplomat had told the press Sunday that delegates "agreed that any counter-terrorism attempt will fall short unless it is part of a collective effort on the part of the international community."

"They also called for an international strategy to combat terror through a unified and comprehensive system for exchanging information," he said.

## ... Group claims killing of Italian journalists

A Web posting in the name of a activist group in Iraq claimed yesterday to have executed an Italian female journalist, but there was no way to determine the report's credibility.

The posting was signed by a different group than the one that had earlier claimed to have kidnapped Giuliana Sgrena. Both statements were posted on a Web site used as a clearing house for militants.

The Jihad Organization had earlier claimed responsibility for Friday's kidnapping of Sgrena, 56, but Tuesday's statement was

signed by the Mujahedeen Brigade in Iraq.

"Your brothers in the Mujahedeen (holy fighters) Brigade have executed the Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena after making sure that she has spied on the mujahedeen for the American Crusade troops," said the statement.

It said the killing was a message to the American government "that this would be the destiny of agents and spies." It was also warning to Italy against continuing with America in its war on Iraq and a message to the holy fighters to "carry on that path until the

liberation of the last spot from Muslim land, and know that the occupation of Iraq is the beginning of the end of America, God willing."

In Rome, the Foreign Ministry declined to comment on the new claim but pointed out that the ministry has generally had doubts on claims appearing on these militant Web sites.

Sgrena a reporter for the communist daily Il Manifesto, was kidnapped Friday by gunmen who blocked her car outside Baghdad University. An earlier posting by the Jihad Organization gave Italy 72 hours to withdraw its troops from Iraq.

## Odd World

### Man steals good samaritan's car

A Naugatuck man who tried to help out at a highway accident scene ended up a victim when one of the people involved in the accident, made off with his car.

Larry Valletta had pulled over on Route 8 north early Sunday after spotting two cars that had been involved in an accident. One car was flipped over.

Valletta said he called state police and went to check on the people. The two men in the flipped over car got out. One man was helping an injured man to the side of the road.

When Valletta went to check on the people in the other damaged car, a man who had been in the flipped over car had made off in his car.

"It didn't even dawn on me. I would have never second guessed that someone was going to hop in my car and take off with it," Valletta said.

### Four year-old boy drives mother's car

A boy drove his mother's car to a video store in the middle of the night, police said — and he's all of 4 years old.

Even though he was unable to reach the accelerator, the boy managed to put the car in gear and the idling engine provided enough power to take him slowly to the store, a quarter-mile from his home, about 1:30 a.m. Friday, Police Chief Doug Heugel said. Finding the store closed, the youngster began a slow trip home.

Weaving and with its headlights off, the car got the attention of police Sgt. Jay Osga, who initially thought he was following a driverless car that had taken off after being left running at a gas pump.

The car turned into the boy's apartment complex and struck two parked cars, then backed up and struck Osga's police car. That's when Osga discovered the boy inside.

"He knew how to go from forward to reverse," Osga said Monday. "The mother said she taught him how to drive by letting him sit on her lap and steer."

No charges will be filed against the boy or his mother, Heugel said.

"He's 4 years old. His mom didn't even know he was up," Heugel told The Grand Rapids Press. "I don't think he even realizes what he did."

### Britons want new deadly sins

The Seven Deadly Sins — anger, gluttony, sloth, envy, pride, lust and greed — are out of date and should include cruelty, adultery and bigotry, the results of an opinion poll suggest.

Greed is the only one of the seven that should remain a sin in today's Britain, according to the poll by the MORI organisation for BBC television's "Heaven and Earth" programme.

Cruelty was ranked the worst sin by 39 percent of respondents, followed by adultery (11 percent), bigotry (eight percent), dishonesty (seven percent), hypocrisy (six percent), greed (six percent) and selfishness (five percent).

"Attitudes towards sin have changed. We're less concerned with the seven deadly sins and more concerned with actions that hurt others," said Ross Kelly, presenter of "Heaven and Earth", a religion and ethics programme.

Of the 1,001 adults interviewed, only nine percent said they had not committed any of the sins.

Seventy-nine percent said they were guilty of anger — while 41 percent of men and 26 percent of women said lust was the sin they "most enjoy committing".

### Music industry sues 83-year-old dead woman

Gertrude Walton was recently targeted by the recording industry in a lawsuit that accused her of illegally trading music over the Internet. But Walton died in December after a long illness, and according to her daughter, the 83-year-old hated computers.

More than a month after Walton was buried in Beckley, a group of record companies named her as the sole defendant in a federal lawsuit, claiming she made more than 700 pop, rock and rap songs available for free on the Internet under the screen name "smittenedkitten."

Walton's daughter, Robin Chianumba, lived with her mother for the last 17 years and said her mother objected to having a computer in the house.

"My mother was computer illiterate. She hated a computer," Chianumba said. "My mother wouldn't know how to turn on a computer."

Chianumba said she faxed a copy of her mother's death certificate to record company officials several days before the lawsuit was filed, in response to a letter from the company regarding the upcoming legal filing.

"I believe that if music companies are going to set examples they need to do it to appropriate people and not dead people," Chianumba said. "I am pretty sure she is not going to leave Greenwood Memorial Park (where she is buried) to attend the hearing."

A Recording Industry Association of America spokesman said Thursday that Walton was likely not the smittenedkitten it is searching for.

"Our evidence gathering and our subsequent legal actions all were initiated weeks and even months ago," said RIAA spokesman Jonathan Lamy. "We will now, of course, obviously

# Trust International

## Iran celebrates Islamic revolution

The Islamic republic of Iran is today celebrating its national day and 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Islamic revolution which saw the collapse of royal rule which ushered in the Islamic state of Iran.

In a press conference, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Nigeria Javad Torkabadi, said the revolution changed the outlook of the country and that over the years his country has built internal stability, strong defence and important roles in the international scene.

He said the strategic position of Iran in the Persian Gulf, Middle East, inside central Asia and besides Europe has given Iran opportunities and abilities to play important role in the international scene.

"We can evaluate our action in all sense as successful. We have built a lot of cooperation, a lot of friendship and had played important role in applying equality and justice in the world," he said.

He said the victory of the Islamic revolution signalled the will of Iranians against American hegemony in his country and an end to American influence accusing the US of trying to disrupt the tranquility of Iran, adding "the US supported Saddam by waging war against Iran and by putting sanctions against Iran in the international scene"

The Iranian ambassador stated that Iranians are dedicated to democracy and revealed that in the past 26 years, Iran has held 25 major elections: seven presidential elections, seven national assembly elections and other elections.

He said that the elections were free and fair with the full participation of Iranians.

"We believe that this is our right, we want to build our abilities, our independence, and we want to build our capabilities with our own hands. This includes generating nuclear power," he added.

The ambassador stated further that the US claims against Iran were not correct and assured that Iran has not supported terrorism against any country.

He revealed that Iran will follow measures in using nuclear energy safely for civilian use and not for weapons as the US speculates.

He disclosed that the trade figures between Nigeria-Iran are low but expressed hope for future relationship in electricity and manufacturing.

He lauded Nigerian-Iranian

By Elkanah Chawai  
Reporter (Foreign)

relationship which he said climaxed with the visit of the Iranian President, Muhammed Khatami, to Nigeria, and the establishment of a Nigerian-Iranian Joint Commission which had its first sitting in March, 2004.

The ambassador revealed further that the commission headed by the foreign ministers of both countries, will have its second meeting in Tehran in March. He said the meeting will forge more cooperation in all aspects.

The Islamic revolution which took place in February 1979 saw the collapse of 2500 years of royal rule over Iran through the Iranian revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini which resulted in the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan

## Annan recommends 10,000 troops for Sudan

The UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has recommended the deployment of a peace support operation in Sudan, consisting of 10,130 troops and 755 civilian police. The recommendation was made in a report to the Security Council.

Warning that complex long-term tasks lay ahead, Annan said "assisting the Sudanese parties in overcoming their differences during peace implementation will require time and patience, as well as considerable resources and perseverance".

His report to the council was released on February 4. It followed the signing on 9 January of a comprehensive peace agreement to end the 21-year civil war between the Sudanese government and the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

The peace support mission was requested by the Sudanese parties to assist them with the numerous challenges they face, ranging from the establishment and transformation of political and civil institutions to the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of large numbers of combatants.

Introducing the report to the Security Council on February 4, Jan Pronk, special Representative of the UN

Secretary-General for Sudan, warned that failure to resolve the conflicts in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan would adversely affect any peace support operation limited to south Sudan.

Underscoring the risk of a return of violence in South Sudan if the causes of the conflict were not addressed, Pronk said it would not be enough to monitor the ceasefire and help avoid breaches of the peace agreement.

"To support the peace process and render peace sustainable, it will also be necessary to help eliminate possible reasons for the parties to the agreement to return to violence and to remove the incentive for others in the Sudan to use force in seeking a solution to their problems."

Infrastructure reconstruction, recovery of productive capacity, rehabilitation of social structures, reconciliation between former opponents, poverty reduction and the reassurance that the population's basic needs would be met from now on all parts of a comprehensive approach, Pronk explained.

Annan's report noted that "in a country, the size of western Europe poor communications, few hardened roads or runways and an inoperable railway system," the challenges of operating a mission would be formidable.

The May to November rainy season and the presence of landmines and unexploded ordinance would further complicate the UN operations, while there was a considerable risk those criminal elements "may seek to target the United Nations for theft or other destabilising activity," Annan added.

The peace agreement envisages a government of national unity based in the capital, Khartoum, with a decentralised system of administration. The SPLM/A is to set up a separate semi-autonomous administration in would help the parties with the repatriation of refugees, Annan noted that substantial aid was required to resettle refugees and internally displaced populations. Between 500,000 and 1.2 million displaced people expected to return to their homes this year alone, the report said.

## Togo bans rallies as tension rises

Togo has banned public rallies after decreeing two months of national mourning for President Gnassingbe Eyadema, who died on Saturday.

The opposition has called for a two-day strike to protest his son, Faure's appointment to replace him after the constitution was hastily amended.

Police in the capital Lome, broke up a demonstration as he was being sworn in.

The African Union has threatened to impose sanctions on Togo, describing the succession as a military coup.

ECOWAS, the west African group, will meet in emergency session today to discuss the situation.

Its Chairman, Mamadou Tandja, told the BBC that the events in Togo had brought "shame to Africa".

Yawovi Agboyibo, the head of the Action Committee for Renewal, and opposition colleagues have called for a two-day stay-at-home protest beginning yesterday under the slogan "Togo, Dead Country".

Why had a set of fundamental rules that governs the rule of democracy changed.

He said he expected support for the protest despite the ban on rallies.

MPs passed a constitutional amendment

the day after Gnassingbe Eyadema's death which allowed his son to serve out his father's term as president - until June 2008.

Faure Gnassingbe had already been installed as

President by the military.

The African Union has said the absence of a democratic transition in Togo is a threat to peace and western diplomats in Lome boycotted the inauguration on Monday.

## Somali cabinet visits Somalia over relocation

The Somali cabinet has decided to travel to various regions of Somalia to see where to relocate the interim government currently operating from Nairobi, Kenya, a spokesman said.

The cabinet has also approved the deployment of 5,000 to 7,000 foreign troops to help restore law and order in the country, the Director of Communications in the Prime Minister's Office, Hussein Jabiri, told IRIN on Monday.

"The entire cabinet will go within the next two to three days, and spend five days in the country," Jabiri said. "Upon their return they will recommend the most suitable place for the government to relocate to."

The decision to travel to Somalia, taken on Monday, is the latest indicator that momentum has been building for the Kenya-based Somali government to return home. On Sunday, 50 of the 275 members of Somalia's parliament left Nairobi for the capital, Mogadishu, to join another 30 who arrived in the city on February 3, sources said on Monday.

The second group of

parliamentarians, led by the Speaker, Sharif Hassan Shaykh Aden, included some cabinet ministers. They received a rousing welcome from the public and a show of support from militiamen allied to the country's faction leaders, according to eyewitnesses.

The Minister of state for Parliamentary Relations, Abdirahman Aden Ibbi, who was at the airstrip in southern Mogadishu, told IRIN on Monday that the reception was "unbelievable" with "thousands of people" lining up along the 10 km stretch between the airstrip and the parliamentarians' hotel.

"The emotional welcome is an indication of how much Somalis are longing for a working government," he said.

The parliamentarians' trip to Mogadishu is also part of preparations for the return of the government to Somalia. The delegation included Muhammad Qanyare Afrah, a former Mogadishu-based faction leader, and the current minister of national security.

The MPs held discussions with the leaders of Mogadishu's business community and were expected to meet Islamic scholars and civil society groups later on Monday.

The decision to accept foreign troops was endorsed by 64 out of the 73 ministers present. The matter now goes to parliament for final approval. Those opposed to the idea of foreign troops include Mogadishu-based faction leaders, Usman Atto and Muse Sudi Yalahow, a source told IRIN.

The Somali transitional government had, in January, formed three teams comprising cabinet ministers to begin arrangements for relocation.

Since its appointment late last year, the new government, which includes several faction leaders, had not been able to relocate from Nairobi, citing security considerations. However, it has come under increasing pressure from the Kenyan government and western diplomats to move to Mogadishu.

Somalia's transitional federal parliament elected Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed as president on 10 October 2004, culminating a two-year reconciliation conference sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. He later appointed a prime minister who in turn named the cabinet.

## Kenya's top anti-graft official resigns

The man in charge of Kenya's fight against corruption has resigned just a few days after the government was accused of "massive looting".

The Veteran Anti-Corruption Campaigner, John Githongo, said he "was no longer able to continue serving the government" but did not give any further explanation.

President Mwai Kibaki was elected in 2002 on a pledge to

clean up Kenya.

Shortly afterwards, he appointed Mr Githongo, a former head of the Kenyan branch of Transparency International.

He had spent years leading the campaign against the corruption under the former president, Daniel Arab Moi.

He resigned as the first-ever permanent secretary in the office of the president in charge of governance and ethics.

lost \$1bn in corruption over the past three years and are threatening to cut aid once more.

## 'Ugandan peace process back on course'

The announcement by the Ugandan government of a new limited ceasefire has put the protracted peace process in northern Uganda back on course, Chief Mediator Betty Bigombe and a key government minister, said on Monday.

The government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) could sign a truce soon, Bigombe and the Internal

Affairs Minister, Ruhakana Rugunda said.

The war in northern Uganda has been going on for 18 years, claiming thousands of lives and forcing at least 1.6 million people to flee their homes. Negotiations that had been expected to end the conflict were aborted in late December 2004, but on 3rd February, the government said it would halt military operations

against the LRA for 18 days on condition that they confined themselves to a designated area as efforts to revive the peace talks continue.

The truce took effect on Friday morning within a 45 sq.km zone in the neighbouring districts of Gulu and Kitgum.

Bigombe said the peace process had been energised by the ceasefire announcement and both sides were getting back to serious business.

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# Business Trust

## Today's flight schedule

### Albarka Air

Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja	06:50
Abuja - Maid.	17:00

Lagos - Yola	1:00p.m.
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00p.m.

### Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.

### IRS Airlines

CBQ - Abuja	8:00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - CBQ	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.

### EAS Airlines

Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30p.m.

### Dasab Airlines

Auja - Lagos	8:30am.
Lagos - PHC	10:30am.
PHC - Lagos	12:30am.
Lagos - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.

### ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja	7:15a.m.
	12:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15am.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20am.
P/H - Lagos	9:45am.
Lagos - Sokoto	8:55am
Sokoto - Lagos	11:55am

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

## Blair shuns

### aviation tax idea

British Prime Minister, Tony Blair yesterday virtually dismissed calls for taxes on aviation fuel to help prevent global warming.

Blair suggested the move—also being proposed by members of the European Union to finance development aid—could harm his chances in an expected May election.

A tax on aviation fuel would push up the cost of flights.

"I do not think you are going to have any political consensus saying we are going to slap some huge tax on people for cheap air travel," Blair told a parliamentary committee.

"Hands up around this table: how many politicians facing, let's say or not say, a potential election at some point in time in the not-too-distant future would vote to end cheap air travel?" he asked the cross-party committee of lawmakers.

Blair was answering questions about an aviation fuel tax to help combat climate change. He was not quizzed about a similar proposal to tax aviation to fund the fight against poverty.

At a G7 meeting last weekend, most European Union finance ministers supported a tax on kerosene, the high-powered fuel used by aircraft.

But German finance officials said the plan earned a cool response from the United Kingdom, which says it already has high energy taxes. Washington opposes taxes on aviation fuel.

Blair has put climate change and African poverty at the heart of Britain's presidency of the G8, to be showcased at a summit in July, but the election is expected to precede that. Opinion polls put Blair on track to win a third term.

The idea of an aviation tax, long pressed by environmentalists and Germany's Green Party, moved to the forefront of the international agenda last week when Germany and France joined up to support it.



A sample of Boeing 717 whose shut-down affected the aircraft company's profits last year. Boeing expects its commercial unit to recover this year.

## FG lauds contractors over airport terminal

The managing director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Muhammad Gambo Umar has expressed satisfaction with the rate of work at the N4.5 billion reconstruction of the burnt Lagos domestic terminal project.

Gambo who made an unscheduled tour of the site however charged the contractor handling the project, Stabilini Vision, to make sure that the project meets the December 2005 deadline.

It was gathered that President Obasanjo had signified his desire to commission the new terminal in December this year.

The FAAN boss also urged the contractor to always carry all the aviation parastatals along in the entire project so that they could offer professional advice on ways to make the terminal building passenger friendly.

He said that on completion, the terminal will bring best value for money to all service beneficiaries adding that it is the aim of government to use the

From Shakirat Abdulmajed, Correspondent (Lagos)

terminal to attract economic benefit to the country.

Gambo hinted further that a hotel is expected to be constructed in side the terminal which is expected to be ready by December, 2005 while the car park is expected to be completed by April 2005.

The chairman of Stabilini Vision, Wale Babalakin (SAN), while conducting the FAAN boss round the expansive site, said when completed, the terminal building will comfortably sit 6,000 people.

According to him, the firm and its architects took into cognisance the need by the federal ministry of aviation to make Murtala Muhammad Airport, Lagos a hub of the African region.

The four-floor terminal which will be highly computerised when completed would also have underground routes for bulk delivery.

The entrance to the palace is from the round

about, at the peak, the terminal will sit 6,000 people, we took into cognisance, the need to make Lagos, a hub, immediately the plane lands, it will send signals automatically to the court room, and the entire car park is computerised." Said Babalakin.

Babalakin explained further that a substantial amount has been spent on the site which is nearly completion.

It would be recalled that the old terminal was gutted by fire in May 10, 2000. The federal government awarded its reconstruction to Royal Sanderton in May 2001 on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) for 10 years.

However, the contract was revokek when the

contractor failed to meet the deadline given to it by the government.

The contract was re-awarded to Stabilini Vision on BOT, the contract is to gulp the sum of N4.5 billion while the contractor is expected to manage the terminal for a period of 25 years' before it is handed over to the government.

Other contracts being executed by the ministry of aviation include the resurfacing of Murtala Muhammad International Airport, Lagos, runway, new domestic terminal building at Malam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano and the reconstruction of terminal building at Sam Mbakwe Airport Owerri.

## Aviation safety, security summit holds in Abuja

The chairman, House Committee on Aviation, Hon. (Dr.) Martins Oke has said that the committee will hold its summit on aviation safety and security in Nigeria at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2005.

The summit, which will particularly feature presentations by renowned experts and resource persons in the aviation industry according to Hon. Oke, is expected to be declared open by the Speaker, House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari.

Hon. Oke said that the summit was necessary to put Nigeria in the right stead of aviation nations adding that the Nigerian aviation status leave more to be desired, with its obsolete laws and operational standards.

"The Nigerian aviation industry is the most regulated

By Zainab Alimi, Political Reporter

in Africa. We spend N2 billion annually on our total radar coverage, making a total of N10 billion spread over five years," he said.

He further disclosed that Nigeria is presently on category two in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) which regulates the industry, hence the need for the summit, adding however, that a bill on autonomy of the civil aviation industry has passed its first reading in the House of Representatives.

While calling for full attendance by all stakeholders in the industry, Hon. Oke refuted claims that the industry was for elites alone, saying that every nation has, and needs the aviation industry as it concerns everybody's day-to-day endeavour.



Minister of aviation, Malam Isa Yuguda (r) and the permanent secretary in the ministry, Mr. Tommy Oyelade during the 2004 ministerial press briefing by Yuguda in Abuja. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

# Business Trust

## Nigeria, France to improve investment opportunities

Nigeria and France have reached agreement on modalities for investment in both countries.

The disclosure was made by the minister of state for Internal Affairs, Malam Saidu Balarabe Samaila when the French Ambassador to Nigeria, Messr Yves Jaudeul paid him a working visit in Abuja.

Malam Samaila expressed federal government's gratitude to the government and people of France for their continued interest to invest in Nigeria, adding that the

relationship will be sustained through the NEPAD programme.

The Minister thanked the french government for expending \$1 million for facilities in its Lagos Office to facilitate the processing and issuance of visas to Nigerians.

Malam Samaila also thanked the French government for opening a visa office in Abuja to reduce the stress and financial burden of Nigerians applying for French visa by going to Lagos.

He advised that more

facilities be provided in the Abuja Visa office for more people to benefit.

The Minister assured that the Federal government will continue to provide the necessary infrastructural facilities to improve on the business environment and protect the lives of expatriates in the country.

Speaking earlier, the French Ambassador to Nigeria, Messr Yves Jaudeul said that the purpose of his visit was to seek for the cooperation of the federal government on how citizens of France and Nigeria could move freely for investment and other purposes. He said that the cordial relationship existing between Nigeria and France should be sustained.

Mr. Jaudeul said that the French government has a lot of investment in Nigeria and that it is ready to invest more in the country.

Mr. Jaudeul apologised on behalf of the French government, for some difficulties Nigerians go through in trying to obtain the French visa.



Chairman honorary presidential council on investment, Baroness Lynda Chalker(l), managing director, British American Tobacco Nigeria,(BAT), Mr. Richard Hodgson (m) and Commonwealth Business Council director, Mr. Steve Godfrey during the Nigeria Investment Forum and the launch of the BAT 2004 social report, held in Abuja ...recently

## Communication Trends signs on XL Mgt Services

Foremost cable and satellite television broadcasting company, Communications Trends Limited (CTL) has engaged the services of XL Management Services Limited to midwife the company's planned expansion and transformation into a new world class terrestrial transmission and digital satellite TV broadcasting company.

Under the arrangement, XL Management Services would redefine the CTL business strategy and align company resources and processes to its strategic vision of being the leading digital satellite television services provider in Nigeria.

Speaking at the signing ceremony in Port Harcourt, the chairman/CEO CTL, Engineer Uzor Udemba said the choice of XL was based on "their excellent track record of managing the Standard Trust Bank Plc brand," adding that having worked with STB and other brands, he was convinced that XL will assist CTL to lay a clear foundation for a structured and professionally managed institution.

A statement from the company said, explaining the nature of the partnership arrangement to top management staff of CTL, the MD/CEO, XL, Mr. Charles Nwodo (Jnr.) said his company will in the next 24 months help CTL implement an appropriate business strategy and set up requisite structures to support the strategy, just as it will map out a brand architecture for the growth and development of the CTL brand using appropriate brand development and marketing communications strategies.

Communications Trends Limited provides affordable Direct-to-Home (DTH) Television Broadcasting under the brand name "Trend TV".

DTH Satellite Television service is one in which a large number of channels are digitally compressed, encrypted and beamed from high power satellites. Such programmes can be directly received at homes with the use of small receiver dish antennae and decoders.

## Obasanjo, Akume laud Olam's agric transformation efforts

President Olusegun Obasanjo and Benue State governor, Mr. George Akume, at the weekend, jointly lauded the effort of Olam Nigeria Limited, a leading developer and processor of agricultural produce in the country, for embracing and participating in the on-going agricultural renovation and transformation being initiated by the present administration.

The duo who spoke as guest and host respectively at the agriculture transformation day and official re-opening ceremony of the agric millers, acquired by Olam for rice and sesame (Bennisseed) processing in Makurdi the Benue Sate Capital, said they will provide the embalmment including infrastructure to support the multi-national agro firm.

President Obasanjo's address which was read by the state governor at agro millers factory, venue of the one day event, said the development and processing of agricultural produce is key to the country's economy and assured of his administration's support for Olam Nig. Ltd to develop the two target crops to reach national self-sufficient levels as well as improve the standard for both domestic and export markets.

Mr. Akume who officially

From Hir Jopseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

commissioned the re-opening of the factory for products said the mill fits into his administration's industrial package for food security and enhancement of affairs towards eradicating rural poverty, adding that the reactivation of the company by Olam Nig. Ltd. Would encourage farms to produce

more rice as there would be a stable and lucratic market for them.

Earlier, the managing director of Olam Mr. Sil Vasen who welcomed guests at the event, said the company acquired Agro millers a s part of its efforts to reform Nigeria on the world map of agriculture as the processing of local rice would ginger farmers into improved production.

## SMEDAN boss commends Bauchi varsity's business initiatives

The director-general of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria [SMEDAN], Mrs. Modupe Adelaja, has commended the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University [ATBU] Bauchi, for its entrepreneurial initiatives, particularly the establishment of ATBU Trust and Investment Limited.

Receiving a delegation from the University led by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Garba Aliyu Babaji, who paid her a courtesy visit in Abuja on Thursday, Mrs. Adelaja also praised the University for its strides in industrial and technological development. "We are happy that A. TBU runs a technological outfit. A nation that cannot develop its own technology cannot grow", she said. While noting that Bauchi State is endowed with abundant natural and agricultural potentials, she

advised that innovations and inventions developed by the University should suit agro-processing needs of the state.

Describing Universities, Polytechnics and other educational institutions as SMEDAN's strategic partners in the area of research and information dissemination, Adelaja stressed that the collaboration between both sides would accelerate the development process. "This visit is the beginning of a close. Working relationship between the two sides. We want to have a strong relationship with ATBU", she added.

Adelaja called on the authorities of the University to include Entrepreneurial Development Studies in the curriculum. She informed the delegation that SMEDAN would open Outreach Offices within the nation's universities to facilitate

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru Correspondent (Kano)

appointed executive secretary of the Nigerian Shippers Council, Captain Adamu A. Biu gave the indication in Kano.

Captain Adamu, who was speaking at an interactive session with shippers associations in the state as part of his familiarisation visits to north-west conceded that, timely strategies were unveiled with a view to completing the export zones and container depots due to their impact to the economic development of the country.

He pointed out that apparently realising the role played by shippers for the general overhaul of the nations economy, the

Nigerian shippers council will not hesitate to employ appropriate strategies to do away with predicaments that may threaten the bustiness.

The shippers council scribe conceded that, overwhelming support from the shippers association is the only panacea for the eradication of their problems.

Captain Biu argued that the council will not be aware of the grievances militating against the proper activities of the shippers unless they reported same to it, stating however that, they should not hesitate to raise alarm.

He pledged to adopt transparency open door policy and fair play in the course of the councils activities, saying however that, such goals could be championed through active participation of the shippers association in decision-making.

Speaking, the Kano and Jigawa states president of the shippers association, Alhaji Ahmed Rabi'u traced the history of the association as far back as 1987.

He said the rationale behind the formation of the association was in response to the series of problems that befell shippers during cargo clearance at Lagos seaports and that operations of the inland container depots were grossly inefficient and very costly.



Capt. Adamu Audu Biu

# Business Trust

## Why our merger with GTB failed-Inland Bank spokesman

Inland Bank (Nigeria) Plc had late last year signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for a merger with Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) Plc, under the present recapitalisation and consolidation dispensation. However, late last month, the planned merger collapsed, and Inland Bank plans an extra-ordinary general meeting.

Against this backdrop, our Group Business Editor, Ahmed I Shekarau tried to find out from the bank's head of corporate affairs, Nosa Igbinadolor, why the merger bid failed, how shareholders of Inland Bank respond to the failed talks, and the way forward for the bank. Excerpts:

**Q: Inland Bank signed an MOU for a merger with Guarantee Trust Bank some few months after-wards, the merger bid collapsed. What went wrong?**

**A:** Well, thank you, you're right, we did signed an MOU, on the possibility of a merger with GTB. And in the process we did due diligence on them and they did the same thing on us. At a point, if you remember very well, at our last annual general meeting (AGM) our shareholders gave the management the go ahead on the possibility of merging with any bank.

At a point the shareholders also said, right now we have a capital base of N8billion. Why don't we increase it to N15billion. Then after we increase that we can merge with GTB.

That was accepted by management, but when that

was made known to GTB they refused. They said that there was no need for that. That both sides current capital base will be enough to carry us above the required share capital after our merger.

But our shareholders insisted that we should increase our share capital to N15billion for a couple of reasons.

One, it will give our shareholders access significant stake in the emerging bank after we merge secondly, to protect the staff of Inland Bank when we eventually merge.

These proposals were unacceptable to GTB. And so it was agreed by both sides to defer talks until such a time when an acceptable agreement will be reached. So, now talks have been suspended.

**Q: So as it is now you mean the merger process has not collapsed completely?**

**A:** What was agreed was that let's suspended the merger. But we are going ahead with our plan to raise our share capital as mandated by our shareholders.

**Q: Are you now floating a rights issue or doing a public offer to raise the share capital?**

**A:** We'll be having an extra-ordinary general meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> (of February). And that's where the shareholders will decide on what to do. There are many routes to take. We may start with the rights issue, there could be a



Alhaji Zannah Lamba Inland Bank MD

public offer, there could be a placement etc.

**Q: In the event that the merger bid between GTB and Inland Bank fails completely, what are your bank's plans?**

**A:** Well, like I told you our shareholders have already made a proposal, and management has put it across to GTB very clearly. And since that remains unacceptable to GTB, we are determined to meet the deadline of December 31, 2005 even if we are going to do it alone. And that's why we're doing the EGM. So once the EGM takes place, once we've been able to raise that N15billion, and we're very confident we'll raise that, there are many options available to us. We could merge with other banks.

We could acquire some or even be acquired. We received so many letters from banks requesting to merge with us. Also, we received a couple of letters asking to be acquired.

We are going to take the options that would be best for the banking-its shareholders

and staff.

We are pretty confidence that once the shareholders give us their nod we could beat the December 31, 2005 deadline. You could see that our stocks are even appreciating on the stock market inspite of the problem with our merger with GTB.

**Q: Inland Bank was in merger talks with some perceived like-minded banks whose predominant shareholders are from the North. Why did you sign an MOU with GTB instead?**

**A:** We are very proud of where we are coming from. We are very proud of the region where we have comparative advantage. But we take strong exception to being branched a sectional bank. We have 46 branches spread across the country. We operate in each regions of the country. Yes we were in talks like I said we recieved so may offers. And we also made some offers. The end result is to find acceptable results to our shareholders.

Management might have thought that the option you are talking about may not be the best for the bank. And that's why discussing the possibility of merger with GTB came. Unfortunately, we are confident that despite this seeming set back we're going to make it.

**Q: Can you respond to some of the speculations that in the process of this due diligence, the GTB discovered Inland Bank was not worth what was initially thought?**

**A:** That is most laughable because I read the story in one of the papers where it said in the course of due diligence GTB made some sparking revelations, according to the paper. One of the most laughable thing the paper said was that we do our accounting operations manually. I mean this is the most ferocious statement I've ever heard in my life because we are very proud of our investment in IT.

I think I can stand and be at my chest and say Inland Bank is one of the few Banks in this country that has invested heavily in IT. Our entire operations are on line real time 24 hours.

While some banks still use dialogue terminology, we use V-sat. You can transfer your money here and within seconds the operations will be registered in other branches across the country. I think there are very few banks that can compete with us in terms of IT infrastructure. I'm sure our clients, customers and those who have done business with us, will find that report or

story strange when they read it.

**Q: How much do you hope to raise when you eventually go for rights issues, compared to what you have as shareholders funds. What will you come out with?**

**A:** Like I said earlier now we have a capital base of N8billion. What the shareholders have agreed on, is to increase this to N15billion. So what we intend to raise now as about N7billion.

**Q: How true is the report that supervisory authorities in the banking industry are threatening to sanction both Inland Bank and GTB over this failed merger?**

**A:** No, I'm not aware of that so it seems that is false. What I am aware of is that the supervisory authorities were a little bit disappointed by the report that came out in *Thisday* newspaper on the failed merger and we did respond. We gave our own side of the story and we also requested that we stop any media speculations and we are going to take up the issue there. But in respect of sanctions, I'm not aware of that.

## SMEs groans under N25bn banks recapitalisation

The managing director of FAN Milk Plc, Mr. Kim Rasmussen has attributed the slow growth experienced by the small scale industries in the country to the N25billion new minimum capital base requirement for banks.

According to him, the order of the central banks of Nigeria has forced many banks in the country to be mopping up huge amounts of money in order to meet the December 2005 deadline for recapitalisation.

Rasmussen who made the observation recently in Lagos during the fan milk annual agents awards noted further that the customers purchasing power has been shifted to the fast growing GSM business to the detriment of the food and beverages business.

He added that the purchase of telephone lines and recharge cards has higher prior than eating and drinking which he said has affected all companies and distribution in the food and beverages business.

Rasmussen, however, charged customers and distributors to consider the negative factors as challenges while assuring that the company was ready to listen and

Shakirat Abdulmajeed, Correspondent (Lagos)

respond to its customers' needs.

He however warned distributors of FAN Milk to stick to the official retail price of products stressing those higher prices than the official price are not acceptable.

His words: "the present official retail price of super yogo is N45, but it is a well known fact that the product is sold at no less than N50. This is not acceptable, you either stick to the offi-

others

## FCMB to raise N14.9bn from capital market

The First City Monument Bank (FCMB) has concluded arrangement to raise over N14.9billion from the capital markets.

According to the chairman for the First City Group, Otumba Micheal Balogun the move to raise the funds apart from being a bid to meet the N25billion capital base will also enable the bank meet its strategic targets.

He said the process of the initial public offer will enable the bank expand its branch network, upgrade its

retail price or the company may be forced to change the price to N50.

In all a total of 300 outstanding customers, agents were honoured by FAN Milk Plc for their loyalty and patronage in year 2004.

Items doled out by the company included two 7.5 kva generating sets, 16 deep freezers, 53 double freezers fridge, 27 table fridge, 61 standing fridge and other items such as standing fans and television sets.

FAN milk is the manufacturer of Fan Yougot, Superyogo, Tampico and fine ice-among others

## From Bright Ewulu, Deputy Business Editor (Lagos)

IT infrastructure and implement boarding activities post consolidation.

He revealed that 18.95per cent of the offer proceed would be employed for branch expansion, 12.5per cent for IT infrastructure and 13.75per cent for branching activities.

The issuing houses for the 4billion ordinary shares of 50kobo each at N4per share include FCMB capital markets limited and stanbic bank Nigeria.



## CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA TENDER NOTICE

### NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria that 91-day Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills amounting to N45,000,000,000 will be issued by an auction-based system on Thursday, 17/02/2005.

Interested Authorized Dealers (Commercial/Merchant Banks, Designated Discount Houses and Brokers) are invited to submit tenders to reach the Issues Office, Central Bank of Nigeria, Lagos, not later than 1.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 15/02/2005.

Each tender must be in multiple of N1,000 subject to a minimum of N1 0,000 per tender. Authorized Dealers are allowed to submit multiple bids and quote multiple rates. A tender may be for own account of Authorized Dealers or made on behalf of interested members of the public, who are advised to apply to their banks or Brokers for the Bills.

Tenders for the Bills should be submitted on the prescribed printed forms in duplicate and in sealed envelopes clearly marked "TENDER FOR BILLS". The result of the tender will be announced before the close of business on Wednesday, 16/02/2005 The Bank reserves the right to reject any tender in part or in full.

Allotment letters will be issued to successful tenderers on Thursday, 17/02/2005. Payment in full for the amount of the accepted tenders must be made to the Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 1.30 p.m. on the issue date 17/02/2005. This will normally be effected by direct debit to the accounts of the affected Authorized Dealers which should ensure that their accounts with the Bank are adequately funded for this purpose.

ISSUES OFFICE  
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA  
TINUBU SQUARE  
LAGOS

# Business Trust

## 1ST-TIER SECURITIES

## THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
CUTIX PLC	3	1.36	56,000	76,160.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>56,000</b>	<b>76,160.00</b>
<b>AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED</b>				
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	1	0.78	100	78.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	11	16.06	55,802	913,113.68
PRESCO PLC.	12	11.50	26,927	316,364.60
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>82,829</b>	<b>1,229,556.28</b>
<b>AUTOMOBILE &amp; TYRE</b>				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	25	1.95	364,107	722,252.86
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	2	7.22	1,479	10,678.38
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>-365,586</b>	<b>732,931.24</b>
<b>BANKING</b>				
ACCESS BANK PLC	20	3.42	148,815	508,947.30
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	25	6.63	119,996	795,573.48
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	2	0.73	50,000	36,500.00
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	1	2.26	3,291	7,437.66
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	656	23.85	1,695,108	40,477,085.66
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	27	1.42	842,707	1,199,417.06
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	321	11.02	7,091,981	77,889,050.25
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	3	0.78	290,000	226,200.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	56	0.60	9,879,900	5,722,977.00
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	13	1.41	1,280,000	1,754,868.11
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	7	7.81	82,834	646,933.54
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	18	0.66	280,336	186,796.76
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	15	1.21	397,500	495,937.80
NAL BANK PLC.	2	2.80	1,550	4,340.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	2	6.30	8,240,000	51,912,000.00
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	15	1.41	846,255	1,191,332.85
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	21	7.41	156,800	1,161,888.00
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	31	1.77	1,619,194	2,778,179.80
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	88	10.00	925,752	9,257,520.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	475	19.98	2,413,690	49,110,205.53
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	3	0.85	25,000	21,250.00
WEMA BANK PLC.	13	3.93	105,888	416,139.84
ZENITH BANK PLC	410	13.45	7,374,445	97,226,406.98
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>2,224</b>		<b>43,871,042</b>	<b>343,026,987.62</b>
<b>BREWERIES</b>				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	168	100.99	297,628	29,821,303.36
INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	1	0.90	250	225.00
JOS INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	2	3.80	10,000	38,000.00
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	551	35.98	1,714,599	60,857,545.23
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>722</b>		<b>2,022,477</b>	<b>90,717,073.59</b>
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	112	23.35	769,113	18,112,058.36
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	5	4.73	43,500	209,715.00
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	19	7.05	86,969	609,588.08
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	35	11.11	111,074	1,262,702.66
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>171</b>		<b>1,010,656</b>	<b>20,194,064.10</b>
<b>CHEMICAL &amp; PAINTS</b>				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	25	4.94	195,400	970,760.00
CAP PLC.	7	6.98	19,108	131,589.20
D. N. MEYER PLC.	7	5.40	29,440	157,000.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	5	4.20	75,647	317,717.40
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>44</b>		<b>319,595</b>	<b>1,577,066.60</b>
<b>COMPUTER &amp; OFFICE EQUIPMENT</b>				
NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	3	1.30	1,229	1,597.70
THOMAS WYATT NIGERIA PLC.	2	0.38	25,450	9,671.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>26,679</b>	<b>11,268.70</b>
<b>CONGLOMERATES</b>				
A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC.	6	1.04	120,000	124,800.00
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	15	5.04	22,840	115,202.00
CHELLARAMS PLC.	1	1.71	1,111	1,899.81
JOHN HOLT PLC.	7	0.89	8,652	7,356.88
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	277	16.53	2,307,895	38,746,255.09
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	98	13.69	2,409,471	31,482,237.97
U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC.	97	14.17	341,453	4,838,389.01
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	5	1.05	75,078	78,831.90
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>506</b>		<b>5,286,500</b>	<b>75,394,972.66</b>
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>				
COSTAIN (W.A.) PLC.	4	0.94	765	719.10
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	5	14.20	7,363	104,554.60
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>8,128</b>	<b>105,273.70</b>
<b>ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY</b>				
NIGERIAN WIRE AND CABLE PLC.	3	0.90	5,217	4,695.30
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>5,217</b>	<b>4,695.30</b>
<b>FOOD/BEVERAGES &amp; TOBACCO</b>				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	27	24.00	104,631	2,509,466.05
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	198	55.93	342,091	19,268,994.70
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	41	16.61	176,256	2,927,612.16
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	83	50.80	200,880	10,258,587.74
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	102	147.40	160,713	23,656,596.96
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>451</b>		<b>984,571</b>	<b>58,621,257.61</b>
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>				
CHRISTLIEB PLC.	3	0.56	10,333	5,851.48
EKOCORP PLC.	3	0.87	85,000	73,950.00
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	31	3.28	318,363	1,045,520.14
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	8	5.20	122,380	625,638.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	3	1.13	5,000	5,600.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	46	3.99	532,972	2,084,291.65
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	43	8.80		552,646
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>137</b>		<b>1,626,694</b>	<b>8,749,343.35</b>
<b>INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS</b>				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	8	1.00	209,232	209,232.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	2	2.82	3,000	8,460.00
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	52	3.50	85,763	3,003,194.79
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>62</b>		<b>1,069,995</b>	<b>3,220,886.79</b>
<b>INSURANCE</b>				
ACEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC	3	0.60	24,000	14,400.00
AHICO INSURANCE PLC.	2	2.11	9,330	20,027.80
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	9	1.46	269,928	404,808.00
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	7	1.10	175,020	191,421.80
LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	2	1.84	15,500	28,520.00
N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC.	2	0.86	80,000	68,800.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	19	3.12	298,333	947,932.33
PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC.	1	1.97	20,000	39,400.00
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	4	3.72	45,000	167,400.00
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	3	1.45	37,723	54,698.35
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	13	1.15	253,690	292,163.78
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	10	2.64	200,903	534,717.98
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>1,429,427</b>	<b>2,764,290.04</b>
<b>MANAGED FUNDS</b>				
C & I LEASING PLC.	13	1.55	867,893	1,421,305.36
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>867,893</b>	<b>1,421,305.36</b>
<b>PACKAGING</b>				
AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC.	3	1.15	15,000	17,280.00
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	4	1.46	13,743	20,064.78
POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC.	9	0.88	115,635	99,169.40
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>144,378</b>	<b>136,514.18</b>
<b>PETROLEUM(MARKETING)</b>				
AFROIL PLC.	11	0.78	193,454	145,950.42
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	132	65.00	274,908	17,898,352.35
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	14	2.04	275,036	561,073.44
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	73	182.23	99,087	18,127,737.89
CONOIL PLC.	73	123.60	54,892	6,842,461.15
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	38	164.00	52,902	8,621,427.64
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	36	179.85	34,954	6,246,749.30
OANDO PLC.	230	89.99	230,064	20,837,904.57
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>607</b>		<b>1,215,297</b>	<b>79,281,656.76</b>
<b>PRINTING &amp; PUBLISHING</b>				
UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC.	2	1.80	3,100	5,580.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>3,100</b>	<b>5,580.00</b>
<b>REAL ESTATE</b>				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	42	8.80	511,740	4,628,162.60
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>511,740</b>	<b>4,628,162.60</b>
<b>TEXTILES</b>				
AFPRINT NIGERIA PLC.	2	0.46	30,000	13,800.00
UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC.	4	2.66	15,000	41,460.00
<b>Sector Totals</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>45,000</b>	<b>55,260.00</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>		<b>5,149</b>	<b>60,952,804</b>	<b>691,954,306.48</b>

### TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
TIB	1,619,194.00	2,778,179.80	31
FIRSTBANK	1,695,108.00	40,477,085.66	656
NB	1,714,599.00	60,857,545.23	551
LEVROS	2,307,895.00	38,746,255.09	277
PZ	2,409,471.00	31,482,237.97	98
UBN	2,413,690.00	49,110,205.53	475
GUARANTY	7,091,981.00	77,889,050.25	321
ZENITHBANK	7,374,445.00	97,226,406.98	410
OCEANIC	8,240,000.00	51,912,000.00	2
IMB	9,879,900.00	5,722,977.00	56

### TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
NB	34.49	35.98	+1.49
GUINNESS	99.95	100.99	+1.04
TEXACO	163.00	164.00	+1.00
TOTAL	179.00	179.85	+0.85
ZENITHBANK	12.81	13.45	+0.64
NESTLE	146.98	147.40	+0.42
PZ	13.35	13.69	+0.34
CAP	6.65	6.98	+0.33

### TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAY'SCLOSE	CHANGE
NOLCHEM	125.00	123.60	-1.40
NBC	52.00	50.80	-1.20
LEVROS	17.39	16.53	-0.86
CADBURY	56.49	55.93	-0.56
WAPCO	11.64	11.11	-0.53
OKOMUOIL	16.52	16.06	-0.46
UBN	20.35	19.98	-0.37
PRESCO	11.80	11.50	-0.30

## Oil prices fall to one-month low

US oil prices fell to a one-month low below \$45 a barrel yesterday, under pressure from signs OPEC would not cut production until its March meeting and on forecasts of rising US crude stockpiles.

US crude oil futures eased 30 cents to \$44.98 a barrel, just off a session low of \$44.78, the lowest level since Jan. 7. In London, Brent fell 29 cents to \$42.75.

US prices fell around \$1.20 on Monday, extending two-week losses to more than nine percent as winter supply fears faded and OPEC looked set to defer any output cuts.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries(OPEC) at its meeting on Jan. 30 left output unchanged, but warned it could hold a teleconference to cut production ahead of its March 16 gathering in Iran.

Ministers from Algeria and Kuwait said at the weekend they saw no need for any interim discussion.

And yesterday, top exporter Saudi Arabia vowed to keep pumping at nine million barrels per day (bpd) until further notice to ensure sufficient supply to global oil markets.

"Let me confirm that Saudi Arabia's production of crude oil today is nine million and will continue at nine million until other decisions are made ... either to increase or decrease production," said Saudi oil minister Ali al-Naimi.

Deborah White, senior economist at SG Commodities, said prices could rally again if OPEC changed its stance or if this week's inventory data to be published on Wednesday in the United States sprang a surprise.

US crude oil stockpiles were expected to have risen by 1.1 million barrels last week, a preliminary Reuters poll found, helping to maintain the previous week's nine percent surplus compared to year-ago figures.

Prices also came under pressure from Chinese data showing crude oil imports fell by 24.1 percent in January from the same month last year, the first month since June 2002 to show a year-on-year decline.

China's oil imports leapt 35 percent last year, driven by an industrial boom and nationwide power crunch, but analysts have said more use of coal and gas would slow import growth this year.

## Bumper oil prices lift BP profits

BP said its results were strong both operationally and financially. Oil giant BP has announced a 26% rise in annual profits to \$16.2bn (£8.7bn) on the back of record oil prices.

BP chief executive Lord Browne said the results were strong "both operationally and financially".

Last week, rival Shell reported an annual profit of \$17.5bn - a record profit for a UK-listed company.

# THE ARTS

## Anthology planned to honour late Saro-Wiwa

An anthology of a hundred poems is to be published by a United Kingdom-based publishing house to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the execution of the late writer and environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa. Flipped Eye Publishing, the company planning the anthology, released this information recently.

The book is to be edited by Nii Ayikwei-Parkes, an editor at Flipped Eye Publishing and Kadija Sesay, a staff of *Sable Magazine*. The Malawian

By Crispin Oduobuk,  
Group Literary Editor

poet-Jack Mapanje will serve as an adviser on the project while the late Saro-Wiwa's son, Ken Wiwa, is expected to contribute the foreword.

According to *African Review of Books*, Flipped Eye Publishing has issued a call for poems covering the following themes: "The legacy of Ken Saro-Wiwa; freedom of expression; resistance; imprisonment; non-violence; political oppression; leadership; social and ecological justice; minority rights; exile/

displacement/refugees; war, peace, poverty, justice; the death penalty; pollution; climate change; the right to appropriate/sustainable development; power (and the abuse thereof); capitalism and corporations."

The publishing house is asking that "Submissions, in the body of an email, and no more than three poems [should] be sent to [kensarowiwa@flippedeye.net](mailto:kensarowiwa@flippedeye.net)." A caveat however advises that, "No payment will be made for those poems included in the anthology and all royalties from the sale



The late Ken Saro-Wiwa

of books will go to The Ken Saro-Wiwa Foundation."

Meanwhile, to make possible the anthology's 10<sup>th</sup> November 2005 proposed launch date—which is aimed to coincide with the day Saro-Wiwa was hanged—the submission deadline is set for the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2005.

Besides his literary endeavours, the late Saro-Wiwa earned fame for his work in highlighting the damage oil exploration and

drilling had done to the environment of the Niger Delta. It will be recalled that he was hanged in Port Harcourt prison on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1995 by the late General Sani Abacha-led military government in spite of international appeals for mercy. The late Saro-Wiwa was executed along with eight others after being found guilty of involvement in four murders. The action led to Nigeria being expelled from the Commonwealth group.

## Ngugi's new novel out in Gikuyu

Despite his troubles, world-famous Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o has launched a new book. His latest novel, *Murogi wa Kagogo*, (*Wizard of the Crow*) was launched in Kenya, but readers not fluent in Gikuyu will have to wait a while to get their hands on the Kenyan writer's 1,000 page novel, published in four volumes.

Ngugi has been working on this book since 1997. It is his first novel since 1986. The first volume was launched in August 2004 in Nairobi. The English translation was expected in late 2004, but has been postponed to 2006 by Ngugi's US publishers Pantheon.

The Gikuyu version is being published in the four individual volumes which make up the entire book. The first volume runs to 300 pages. Pantheon is to publish the entire book, all four volumes, at once, hence the wait.

The *East African*, a newspaper based in Nairobi, reports that Murogi wa Kagogo gives a surgical examination of the cult of dictatorship in Africa and the rest of the world. It is set in an imaginary country called Aburiria which is under the leadership of his excellency President the Second.

It will be recalled that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2004 Ngugi and his wife were attacked in a flat in Nairobi on their return to Kenya after 22 years in political exile. Some suspects arrested in connection with the assault are currently undergoing trial in Nairobi.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (formerly James Ngugi and known generally as Ngugi) is Kenya's most famous writer. He was born in, Kenya in 1938. He studied at Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda in 1959-1964. After earning a B.A. in English he worked as a journalist for Nairobi's *Daily Nation* for half a year before leaving to continue his studies in literature at the University of Leeds in

## Baghdad's blast wall art

By Roger Hearing in  
Baghdad

Art finds a place amid a scarred city's sandbags and concrete

In a dull Baghdad world of concrete and razor-wire, chicanes and blast barriers, a little colour has just re-appeared.

Every official building or media base these days has a frontage of four-metre (13ft) high concrete walls to protect against bombs and mortars, but Iraqis have begun to see the grey expanse as a public canvas.

There is of course graffiti, but mostly great swirling apolitical exuberance—everything from retro-Chagall to prog-rock album-cover teenage fantasies.

Outside the French embassy, just two doors down from the BBC bureau, there is a profusion of images—wild horses, flying carpets, impossible towers and minarets, as well as a simple scene of an Iraqi farmer in a tractor coming back to his wife and children at the close of the day.

On almost every section there is a dove—the symbol of a peace Iraqis do not yet know.

Academic approach

The Reuters news agency's building has a pattern of flowers and Iraqi flags, and next door has some attempts at what seems to be vaguely-remembered Picassos.

And the BBC's house? Well I have to say, it is impressive.

A professor of fine art was called in, I was told, and he produced, over many weeks, an elaborate tribute to the



The BBC office in Baghdad boasts a mural conceived and executed by a fine arts professor, evoking Iraqi history.



The themes are in sharp contrast to the concrete-and-barbed-wire landscape they decorate.

ancient history of his people across the fortifications of our building.

Angular, bearded Assyrian heads mingle with Sumerian ziggurats, Babylonian chariots and visions of rulers and wars long past—perhaps an aide-memoire that this country has been through difficult times

Elsewhere in the city, security means glimpses of the art generally have to be snatched through curtained windows of our minivan—but the pattern of current popular expression all over Baghdad seems to be much the same—history or fantasy.

Saddam's many guises

As long as I have been coming here, there has been



Fantasy images are popular with a profusion of doves symbolising a peace that eludes Iraq today.



Mosques and churches vie for space in this invocation of religious tolerance and inclusion.

plenty of public art. In the past, however, there was one subject—Saddam Hussein.

Saddam in many guises—as Western playboy, as Arab sheikh, even on one occasion as a Kremlin communist complete with fur hat, but always Saddam, displayed on huge hoardings around the city squares.

And always depicted in

the heroic socialist-realist style dictators seem to favour.

They have all gone of course, and with them any feeling of artistic restriction, apparently.

All is possible now it seems—even if the blast walls that have become the artists' gallery are things most Iraqis would sooner be without.

Courtesy bbcnews.com

## THE ARTS THE ARTS THE ARTS



A collection of ancient stamps originating from the colonial days of Northern Nigeria...courtesy emegwali.com

## Okonkwo Complex in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

By Deji Toyé

Psychoanalysts have often hinted at it, but they may someday have to carry out a more detailed study into the nature of generational rebellion—that phenomenon that compels a generation to reject those of the values of the immediately preceding one that the latter holds dear.

In Marketing Communications, experts, especially positioning champions such as Al Ries and Jack Trout, have already identified the phenomenon as particularly useful in cross-generational repositioning of products. In the literary world, we may here refer to Harry Garuba's statement that, "younger writers in every literary tradition attempt to create a space for themselves by fostering different orientation of consciousness which will focus attention on their works."

In private life, it would appear that this phenomenon is generally repressed, but could be thrown up by the perceived failure of the one generation by the next, which drives the latter to consciously reject or struggle to reject those values of the older generation which it considers responsible for that failure. Such conscious effort may sometimes attain maniacal proportions, thus calling into service closer study by legates of Sigmund Freud's discipline. And if the precedent of the nomenclature of another phenomenon, the Oedipus Complex is to be followed, the phenomenon may be referred to as the Okonkwo Complex, taking its name from that of the hero of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart (TFA)*. To this writer, it is in the theme of the struggle of Okonkwo to rise above the failure of his father and the compulsive manner in which he prosecutes it that the tragedy of *TFA* could be more properly founded, rather than the accompanying, but well-sung, theme of culture conflict.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus (Purple)* appears to draw so heavily from that psychological theme in the characterisation of Brother Eugene, the fundamentalist Catholic, 'blessed' materially well enough to prosecute the more ceremonial aspects of that religion, and father to Kambili, heroine-narrator of the novel. The above assertion may not pass without some argument, having regard to the tone of certain commentaries on the rather busy blurb of the 2004

Farafina paperback edition of the novel. A couple of the commentators refer to Brother Eugene as cruel and a couple others fit the tragedy into the narrow matrix of domestic violence. While not taking these as exhaustive comments of the character of Brother Eugene, the point is that generally, a more rounded, if not sympathetic evaluation of the character of Brother Eugene may never emerge if particular acts are cropped out of their psychological backdrop. If analysts tried to understand Okonkwo, not necessarily approving of him, Brother Eugene deserves no less.

*TFA* is a story in which, plagued by the shame of a poor background, for which a loafing father is perceptibly responsible, a man struggles 'by dint of hard work' to acquire strength (he is a champion wrestler), wealth (marrying many wives and fathering many children) and status (sitting in the highest council in the land), thus repudiating all that his father stands for—weakness, laziness and poverty. Yet his life continues to be haunted by the ghosts of the past and the need to repudiate them, something quite needless as it is established that the Igbo do not measure the worth of men by the weight of their fathers.

Also critics, among them G.D. Killam, Eustace Palmer and Kofi Awoonor, have agreed that Okonkwo's real flaw is not in espousing the above qualities, for they are qualities cherished by his society, but in failing to combine these more aggressive qualities with the more refining qualities no less valued by the same society. Such qualities include compromise, discretion and filial feelings. Thus he has to be upbraided on one occasion for the rude manner in which he dismissed the contribution of less well-off member of the community at a meeting, just as the community finds his disposition to his father rather curious.

Nothing accentuates the complex interrelation of values in the community, and Okonkwo's misapprehension of such complexity, as the incident of the ritual killing of Ikemefuna, his surrogate son, an incident in which he, like Brutus, strikes the fatal blow. In a subsequent discussion with Obierika, his friend, Okonkwo explains that he has to join in the killing as it was commanded by the gods. Obierika however makes it clear

that Okonkwo does not have to take part in the killing as the boy calls him father. To Obierika, Okonkwo has committed a great crime against the same gods by his lack of discretion in the matter, such crime as that for which a whole family could be wiped out. This incident, more than the chanced killing at a funeral ceremony, marks the turning point in the fate of



Cover of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Okonkwo. It is this lack of restraint that also marks his handling of the conflict situation with purveyors of the new religion, which sees to his eventual tragic end.

In *Purple*, also set in Eastern Nigeria, things have moved on since the days of Okonkwo in several respects. For one, the new religion that Okonkwo fought against has since gained ground, pushing the traditional faith to the fringe where it now survives as a phenomenon either only espoused by a few, such as Papa Nnukwu, despised by some, such as Brother Eugene, his son, or regarded like a touristic curio by many others, including Aunt Ifeoma.

In the novel, we encounter Brother Eugene, a millionaire industrialist, media proprietor and pious catholic who holds court in his Enugu home just as Okonkwo did in his homestead in Umuofia. Like Okonkwo, Brother Eugene rose from a poor background, also 'by dint of hard work', and the special grace of having served his house help to some catholic missionaries. He never fails to acknowledge that his chanced opportunity with the missionaries provided him with the opportunity to rise above the 'heathen' practices and poverty of his background and, for this, he continues to be grateful by his ultra-fidelity to the catholic religion.

No doubt, he must have also been an object of taunt while growing up, on account of his poor background, which perhaps has set him against his father for the rest of their lives (for even after his father, Papa Nnukwu dies, he continues to regard the old man with contempt), while he identifies with 'better' fathers such as Grandfather, his father-in-law. Unlike Papa Nnukwu, whom he never sees and whom he has to be compelled to allow his two children, Kambili and his brother, Jaja, see, albeit under strict instructions not to partake of any heathen meal with, or spend more than a few minutes with the old man, we are told that while Grandfather was alive, Brother Eugene visited him before anything else, anytime he went to the village and upon his death, a framed picture of the old man in his catholic knight uniform continues to adorn his dining room.

It is in the manner that Brother Eugene runs his home that the debilitating effect of his understanding of Roman Catholicism is played out. Driven by the unholy ghosts of his past, Brother Eugene seeks to enforce the religion in its 'purest' state, untainted by the diluting effect of the new expressiveness, exemplified by the visiting young Father Amadi, something that gives him discomfiture at the possible infiltration of the mannerisms of the pentecostal breed of Christianity into the papal faith. Beyond the classical liturgical hums, no song, especially in Igbo, is allowed to be sung at worship. The daily lives of the two children, Kambili and Jaja, have also been charted into strict schedules that revolve around mass, school and private study at home. What is left of what is called 'family time' comprises only meal time, a tense period in which the rest of the family talks only on invitation, that invitation being only to air commendations on whatever new cocktail has come out of one of the myriad beverage factories of Brother Eugene.

We are therefore painted the picture of a miserable family made up of a maniacally repressive father, a docile wife and essentially robotic children. Kambili is always figuring out how to say something that would please her father, or make her proud, in most cases, feeling her throat blocked by the bubble of speechlessness, and when somebody else says something that strikes 'the right cord', wishing she has said it.

(To be continued)

## Call for submissions

The *Trust* papers invite original submissions from all interested individuals in the following art fields: Short fiction, short non-fiction, short plays, poetry, 'texting' wordplay, song lyrics, rap lyrics, essays, reviews, commentaries, fine arts, photography and mixed media.

### General rules

Submissions required in this regard are works that fall within a fairly clear designation of 'art' and suitable for a mass circulating newspaper. We're more interested in *quality* than quantity. If it doesn't sparkle, if it doesn't resonate, if it doesn't breathe, if it's not thought-provoking, it's unlikely we'll use it.

As general interest newspapers, our titles will only publish material that is deemed suitable for the entire family. In essence, this means while we encourage as much creativity and diversity as possible in materials submitted for publication, we will not publish anything that might be considered detrimental to the public good or unfair to any person(s) or ideal(s). Also, we have no interest in publishing indecent work, or aiding 'attack' causes of any sort, regardless of their merits or the lack thereof.

For reasons of copyright violations, we cannot publish fan fiction or indeed any artwork derived from materials that are copyrighted. Though we may accept ingenious derivative work based on works that are in the public domain, what we ideally prefer is to have your all-new original work.

**Guidelines for short fiction, short non-fiction and short plays:** Whatever you're writing, it's your story—let it be original. Literary? Absurd? Indescribable? Well, it's your brew; serve it while it's hot. Or is it better cold? That's your call. Our angle is: if it's engaging, flows rationally, is self-contained and has minimal errors of lexis and structure, we're interested. Give us characters with life and—where necessary—exhibiting growth and you're in. But keep it under 1,000 words. You may submit accompanying artwork or photographs if available.

**Guidelines for poetry, 'texting' wordplay, song lyrics and rap lyrics:** It can't all be about love or even Cupid will get sick of it. And it's got to be decent else we'll hit 'Delete'. For poetry, please submit a maximum of 3 at a time, with none exceeding 40 lines. For 'texting' wordplay, send a maximum of 4 with a 160 word limit each. For song and rap lyrics, send a maximum of 2 of no more than 48 lines each. In all cases, the emphasis should be on freshness, uniqueness, striking imagery and 'showing' rather than 'telling'. Freestyle? Rhyming? Haiku, limerick or oral traditional? Whatever you choose is cool so long as you don't recycle Shakespeare or hit us on the head with 'isms' even a professor would not know the meaning of. Again, you may submit accompanying artwork or photographs if available.

**Guidelines for essays, reviews and commentaries:** The essays we seek are supposed to serve as resources for artists, artistes and enthusiasts of the arts. Please, bear in mind you're submitting to a newspaper not a university journal meant for exactly twenty seven eggheads—including the editorial team. We'll let you run up to a convenient 1,500 words so be sure to have a very good reason for

going over that figure. Accompanying artwork or photographs are welcome.

Reviews of works of art should begin with a brief description or synopsis of the work being reviewed. In all cases, please illuminate how the work succeeds or fails primarily from the angle of its rationality or lack thereof. Also, evaluate the coherent actualisation of the major character(s), if available or necessary. Finally, your critique should appraise the creative and functional interaction of the structure(s) of the genre used to present the work of art. This means, in written works for instance, explore originality in use of words and the efficacy of same. Please, reviews should not go beyond 1,500 words. As usual, accompanying artwork or photographs are welcome.

**Guidelines for fine arts and photography:** We seek pictures or scanned images of full-sized art (paintings, sculptures, etc), sketches, cartoons, digital art, photographs and any other artwork that can be visually presented on the pages of a newspaper. Pictures submitted should be imaginative, insightful and should capture some exciting feature like passion, surprise, a display of skill, etc. Please name the work and attach a brief citation.

**Guidelines for mixed media:** Kindly follow the individual requirements for any two or more art forms you wish to combine. The catch is to avoid tackiness and keep the result viable in newspaper terms.

### Mechanics

We prefer typed or computer-generated text. Please, do not send your original copy. We do not return submitted materials. Text should be typed or printed on one side of the paper only with a generous all-round margin. If submitting through electronic means (disks, email, etc), please send text files in .rtf format only. You may send your materials as attachments, but please, only in the required format. Electronic pictures should be in JPEG format only, saved at no less than 300 DPI.

Kindly send along some biographic info or simply send your CV. Tell us something about you, maybe your city, work, pet or any other interesting aspect of your life. You may send along a recent picture of yourself, if you want it published.

### The fine print

**This is not a competition. There are no prizes whatsoever to be won.** Contributors submit their materials purely of their own free will. Copyright of all works of art remain with their individual owners. Submission of material to the *Trust* papers does not guarantee publication in any of our titles, nor are we required to enter into any correspondence with anyone to explain our decisions. Furthermore, publication does not enjoin the *Trust* papers or any of our employees to make pecuniary or material recompense to writers thereafter. Again, submitted materials, whether used or not, cannot be returned.

### Addresses

Please address snail mail submissions to **Attn: Group Literary Editor, Daily Trust**, No. 22 Lusaka Street, Off Bissau Street, Wuse Zone 6, P.O. Box 6873, Wuse, Abuja. Send email submissions (with the word **SUBMISSION** as a kicker in the subject line) to [crispinoduobu@dailytrust.com](mailto:crispinoduobu@dailytrust.com)

# The making of Nigeria

It could have passed for an inter-religious gathering. The two dominant religions in Nigeria were ably represented. Adherents of both faiths sat in the crowded theatre, some singing, others chanting. Groups of young men and women dressed in colourful Christian robes gave the atmosphere a festive mood. Near the front row stood a detachment of palace guards, wearing resplendent red-on-white uniforms, giving the venue a royal presence. The air was saturated with Christians songs, occasionally punctuated with chants of *Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!* (God is great! God is great!).

It wasn't a Christian-Muslim dialogue. It was the presentation ceremony of licenses to new seven private universities, holding at the auditorium of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Abuja.

Among the the recipients of the licence was Nigeria's first Islamic university, the Katsina University. Others were Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo state; Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara state; Bingham University, New Karu, Nasarawa state; Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu state; CETEP University, Mowe, Ogun state; and Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun state.

While Katsina and Al-Hikma were established by two Islamic foundations, the five other universities were founded by different Christian groups. This obviously impressed the chairman of Katsina University board of trustees, Dr. Sani Lugga. In his acceptance speech on behalf of the university, Lugga said "The universities that were licensed today are owned and

being run by the two great religions of the world, Islam and Christianity. We hope our convocation today will mark the beginning of unity between the Muslims and the Christians of Nigeria." This elicited loud applause from the audience.

On his part, the chairman of the Ajayi Crowther University, responded to a call by the minister of education, Prof. Fabian Osuji, who asked the universities not to emphasise on profit. He said "we shall give the best without counting the cost."

The Federal Executive Council had on December 15, last year approved the establishment of these seven new universities, bringing the total private universities in the country to 15. This development also jerked up the number of Nigeria's universities to 65, serving a population of about 130 million people. The breakdown shows that besides the 15 private ones, the federal government has 26, states have 24.

Private universities first joined the nation's education system in 1999 with the licensing of three pioneer ones. Henceforth the system recorded a phenomenal growth. This latest crop of universities came with uniqueness—they have amongst them the pioneer Islamic university.

The Katsina University, located along Katsina-Funtua road about five kilometres from the Katsina city centre, is founded by the Katsina Islamic Foundation to help build a God-fearing society by siring mor-

By Habeeb Idris Pindiga  
(Political Reporter)

ally upright students. The foundation itself is different from other foundations, being the first to mobilise the Nigerian Muslims to build a private, community owned Islamic university.

According to a brief submitted to the NUC, the programme orientation of the university is science and technology. At maturity, the university is expected to have eight colleges, namely Natural and Applied Sciences, Social and Management Sciences, Humanities, Agriculture and Rural Development, Engineering and Technology, Environmental Sciences, Health sciences and Law. The colleges would come in phases. Phase one will comprise the Colleges of Natural and Applied Sciences, social and Management Sciences, and Humanities. Colleges of Agriculture and Rural Development and Engineering and Technology will be established in the second phase while the remaining three colleges will take off in phase three.

The university is to commence academic activities in September with 400 foundation undergraduate students in the take off colleges and a total student population of 7004 at ultimate development. Though the university is built on the foundation of Islam, admissions in to the institution will be open to all qualified candidates from Nigeria and other countries irrespective of tribe, religion and sex.

The journey that led to the take off of the Katsina University began in 1999 with the establishment of the foundation. Construction work at the university site commenced on November 10, 1999, followed by a fund raising launching on October 26, 2002. The sum of N527 million (about \$4million) was realised in cash and kind as well as pledges. Long after this, submissions were made to the NUC in accordance with the law. After due examination of the university project, the federal government gave seal for its establishment.

Lugga had this to say of the eventual approval granted: "We feel very delighted, we feel happy and we feel fulfilled. And in fact this university the first community-owned university in Nigeria. It's not owned by an individual or a company or the government, it's owned by the community—the Muslim community. We will in sha Allah try to live up to expectations, to graduate students who are not only conventionally educated but also Allah fearing so that we have a better society in Nigeria"

Asked how they would maintain standards of education in the increasingly competitive terrain, the chairman said: "Private schools in Nigeria and the world over have always been better than public schools, this is a fact. Even during colonial days, what they called missionary schools were much better (than public schools). So these private institutions will definitely complement government's efforts



Dr. Sani Abubakar Lugga (Wazirin Katsina) (right), receiving the licence for during the presentation ceremony of licence to private universities held in

and will be leading and we hope government universities will be following so that standards of education will be raised. In our own case being a community-owned university, we will ensure that our fees are not beyond the reach of the average Nigerian. We will do the best we can to ensure that qualified Nigerians irrespective of their backgrounds are admitted into the university."

Defending government's policy of allowing private universities to proliferate, Osuji said "Having regard to our population and size, Nigeria is one of the least served in Africa in terms of spaces available for university education and hence in the number of universities. The awareness that the world is moving at a fast pace in the direction of a knowledge-driven economy, where higher education, especially university education plays a crucial role, demands that we open up access for many of our citizens to take advantage of university education."

The minister was, however, not silent on the fears about private universities lowering standards as he directed the NUC to provide an agenda for quality assurance in the system. Osuji also urged the new institutions to run as fast as they can to meet up with the education world. "Here again it is important to stress that whereas we specify minimum standards for each programme,

there are no maximum standards. As far as quality is concerned you can strive for the skies." He added.

In his speech, the executive secretary of the NUC, Professor Peter Okebukola, also gave the rationale for the quantum leap in number of Nigerian universities. Nigeria, he said, needed "as many as between 80 and 100 (universities) before the end of the first decade of the this millennium" because of growing population and the envisaged number of potential students from the Universal Basic Education (UBE) pro-



Alhaji Chief Abdul-Rahim Jladimeji for Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin d



The Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji (right) in a warm handshake with the Executive Secretary NUC, Professor Peter Okebuola (left) during the presentation ceremony of Licences to Private Universities held in Abuja...recently

## Nigeria's first Islamic varsity



Katsina Private University from the Minister, Professor Fabian Osuji (left) Abuja...recently.



The chairman, House Committee on Education, Hon. Garba Matazu (left) discussing with the Registrar, JAMB, Professor Ahmed Bello Salim (right) at the occasion

gramme. He also allayed fears that government may hands off university education by approving more and more private universities. "Before the Obasanjo administration came on board, NUC had allocation of about N6 billion for disbursement to the federal university system since 1999, the annual figure has multiplied six-fold. Our records show that we now disburse about N36 billion every year." Thus, he contended, government would continue to pump in funds to the sector while simultaneously encour-

aging sustained private sector participation. Following the licensing of these universities, all eyes are now on them to prove their mettle. The Katsina University is expected to graduate its first set of students in the next four years if it commences intake from September this year as planned. The university is operating with a board of patrons under the headship of the emir of Katsina, Alhaji Muhammadu Kabir Usman. Members of the board are: the emir of Daura, Alhaji Muhammad Bashar;

former head of state, General Muhammadu Buhari; former Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Ibrahim Coomassie; Ambassador Zakari Ibrahim; and Governor Umaru Yar'Adua of Katsina state. It also has a board of trustees with Lugga as the chairman, while Alhaji Abdullahi Garba Aminci, Kadi Ibrahim Umar, Sheikh Suleiman Mai'adua, Alhaji Tukur Mani, Alhaji Bilya Sanda, Alhaji Garba Kankara and Alhaji Abba Jaye serve as members.



(The Asuwaju of Irele) (right) receiving the licence from the Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji (left) during the presentation ceremony in Abuja...recently. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje

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# PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

## World Wetlands day: Commemorating poverty and displacement

As the World marks the Wetlands Day on the 2nd of February communities in Nigeria marks the day in remembrance of poverty, squalor and environmental degradation.

The signing of the convention on wetlands which took place on the 2nd of February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea was primarily to undertake actions that aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar convention in particular.

Ever since, the day has been set aside to host activities that would improve the conditions of the areas through various efforts and in particular as special sites were designated to serve as Ramsar site in some selected countries of the world.

In Nigeria the Nguru-Marma channel was declared as a Ramsar site so as the area will be developed through the management of resource over harvesting and other institutional weaknesses found in the area. The entire idea of the founding fathers of these wetlands was to find ways of utilising the resources of the area as well as suggest ways of resource utilisation in accordance with the laid down Ramsar criteria.

According to the Ramsar web site information posted as part of this year celebrations, the Nigerian site at the Hadejia-Nguru wetland is so unique and of strategic significance for the sustainability of the people of the area. With about 50% of the 84,000Km<sup>2</sup> comprising of the wetlands, it supports a wide range of ecological, economic and hydrological resources which not only supports the livelihood of the people but also host the Biodiversity of the global significance.

Additionally the site is host to all known Sahelian and Sudanian life in the region apart from the host of migratory Palaearctic and afro tropical migratory birds and their rich biodiversity. This according to experts brings out the importance of the area in terms of the support it provided to the waterfowls which is an endemic subspecies of the tilapia cultural values as well as the it representative.

In terms of its biodiversity the area alone is host to over 275,000 birds according to a 1998 census, with additional diversity of plants and fish species as well as larger game animals, ostrich, wild boar, lion, hyena and numerous species of antelope most of whom have now disappeared. Other animals such as aquatic mammals, manatee and otter are also part of the extinguished species in the area.

In the areas of local animals such as cattle, goats

By Hassan A. Karofi,  
Correspondent Dutse

and sheep, these areas have a combined number of over 279m cattles, 80m goats and about 40m sheep according to an estimate carried out in 2001 in the area.

According to the Ramsar organisation, there are about 1021 sites worldwide covering about 74.8m ha which are caved out to serve as supporting places for various activities that would see to the conservation, protection and enhancement of the various biodiversity and improvement of the livelihood of the people living in the areas.

Although the Wetland areas are suppose to serve as a source of economic enhancement of the various communities inhabiting the areas, in Nigeria the reverse is the case as communities after communities narrated the horrible experience and socio-economic denials the present condition of the area brought to them.

However, as the day is celebrated in Nigeria on Tuesday 2nd of February 2005 communities only gathered to commemorate poverty, squalor and environmental degradation.

A visit to the area revealed a gradual deterioration, threats to both the site and the millions of communities living in the area and the larger Lake Chad basin.

Despite the attempts by several agencies such as the UNDP, RSBP, WWF and host of others live in the area is today destructive, difficult and unbearable.

According to the Ramsar officials the last 10 years have seen increase in activities by several organisations leading quite an amassment of knowledge on the anthropology of the inhabitants of the area. But despite its importance one quite fact is the rapid deterioration of the area largely due to poor policies on water management and agricultural usage by the three tiers of governments in the country.

An estimated 350,000 people are said to have been displaced from the area this year alone as a result of the massive floods that swept the area, apart from millions of naira worth of properties lost.

The celebration of the wetlands day was this year greeted by stories of despair, sorrow and remembrance of a future the communities are not aware of. Speakers after Speakers the story is that of a people failed by the inability of those they elected to come to their rescue.

According to the Dan Iyan Hadejia Alhaji Usman Abdulkadir Maidugu and leader of a powerful community pressure group in the Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands, the vast environmental

degradation that has today nearly displaced over 1 million inhabitants of the area began 55 years ago.

He told the gathering of hundreds of community leaders and NGOs around the Wetlands areas who came to Nguru at the instance of the Joint Wetlands livelihood project JEWEL an initiative of the Britain department for international development to mark the world Wetlands day that the receding rivers Hadejia and Kamadugu had for long served as sources of happiness and sorrow for the communities living in the areas.

He said with time a span of over 84, 000square kilometres was gradually being taken over by the trio disasters of typha grass, bodies of water and invading quela birds. 'I could remember how we have to swim through out of our towns to schools, markets or to even bury the deaths' He said

According to the Dan Iyan Hadejia until 1975 when the Audu Bako government of Kano state in conjunction with the federal government constructed the Bagauda, Challawa and Hadejia Jama'are rivers before the menace stops.

But several years later he further revealed the menace came back with even greater consequences as hundreds of communities now live in fear of either being washed away by flood, displaced by typha grass or invading quela birds.

Alhaji Usman therefore challenged communities to press on their elected representatives to find a way out from the present destructions being faced by the communities.

In his welcome address at the occasion the chairman of Nguru local government Alhaji Abdullahi Sarki said flood plains in the area have brought about serious damage to communities inhabiting the area, but government he revealed has in the last 13 months done a lot to assist in the areas of ensuring water management for the betterment of the people.

To his royal highness the emir of Nguru who was represented at the occasion by the Walin Nguru Alhaji Abdullahi Zannah said he is prepared to go along with his people to any place in order to find a lasting solution to the destructive cases of environmental calamities bedevilling the people of the area, even as he called the federal, state and local governments to come to the rescue of the area.

'Although I have personally met with federal government officials, senators and other stakeholders in order to find out a lasting solution to this menace yet the calamities continues, I will only like to

add that we need prayers to come out from this serious environmental calamity that is today threatening our existence' He added.

Other speakers who talked at the occasion includes chairman of the community intervention groups Alhaji Musa Bulama who revealed that through a collaborative efforts between the communities and the JEWEL project a lot of interventions were taken in

the area in farming, fishing, livestock and wild produce was more than anywhere in the country.

But recent events in the area shows that as a result of serious blockages of three of the four major river channels emanating from the river Hadejia which flows through to the Wetlands have been responsible for most the menaces bedevilling the area.

These blockages resulted to floating grasses, typha grass and siltation which

After a series of discussions at the venue of the celebration, communities decided to elect representatives from each of the groups of fishermen, farmers, shepherds and all other stakeholders so as to enable the communities henceforth take decisions on ways to carry the responsibility of seeing to the taking of actions by the governments both in the area and by the federal government itself, 30



One of the huts at the Gamas Village constructed for the All African Games, Abuja 2003.

the areas of channel clearance, workshops for stakeholders, meetings with NGOs and host others to see to any intervention that could assist the communities.

Investigations carried out by Daily Trust in the wetlands areas of Hadejia-Nguru revealed quite gory stories of denials, destructions and displacements.

For instances in the about 20 communities visited by our correspondent over 50 villages were confirmed to have been destroyed by floods, with over 350,000 people displaced and banished to other communities.

Schools were closed with over 150,000 students no more attending to classes, as they now resort to scaring quela birds from their family farmlands.

According to Bulama Kyari of Matafari village the communities in the area have lost over 90% of the entire farmlands in the area have been taken over by typha grass, bodies of water and encroaching menaces of potash etc.

Further investigations carried out from the office of the JEWEL communities of these areas were formally one of the most productive of the entire north western and eastern part of the country.

The waters of the area provides a seasonal flood whose intricate networks of smaller river channels forms an island like flood plains on their journeys down to lake Chad. It is estimated that the valuation of the natural resources being produced in

variably lead to the blockage of the fourth channel which hitherto have been serving as the flowing route of the water back into the Lake Chad.

With this blockage therefore, annual flooding to excess causes destruction of crops, properties, roads and at the same time serving as a good breeding ground for invading typha grass, quela birds and protruding bodies of potash that later lead to destructions of farmlands, grazing reserves, roads and fish ponds.

Furthermore Daily Trust gathered that the development of unfavourable upstream policies on water management over the 20 years in the area through the constructions of dams, irrigation channels and urban water supply projects which were poorly executed with operational limitations and absence of maintenance culture also contributed in the present degradation of the wetlands communities.

As a result of these, releases during dry seasons from the upstream became inevitable and unpredictably leading to inability to control any water movement down stream, these brought an unquantifiable cases of blockages that resulted into the condition of the over 8m inhabitants of the area.

It is with these present conditions of the people in the area that the communities gathered to celebrate the world wetland day in remembrance of this time of hostile environmental degradation that has become almost insurmountable.

representatives were therefore chosen to serve as mouth piece of the communities.

While the communities gathered to discuss the way out several other government officials who gathered to mark the day expressed the determination of their government to intervene to better the lives of the communities.

In an exclusive interview with our reporter the commissioner for engineering and infra-structures in Jigawa state Alhaji Aminu Yanleman said already the Jigawa state government has awarded contracts worth over N2 billion for the constructions of drainages, culverts and embankments along the Hadejia River to assist in solving the menace of flooding in the area.

Although all the various tiers of governments continue to explain their readiness for the implementation of policies towards ensuring the turning of the area's resources for the betterment, such promises continue to be a usual response without actions.

Investigations carried out by Daily Trust revealed that this year the federal government has budgeted N400m for the purchase of a grader that is expected to be used for the removal of the typha grass and the channelisation of water route in the area the hope of the people is that such a promise will not be like it predecessors.

# PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

## Urban Shelter builds 750 housing units

One of the leading indigenous properties development companies in Nigeria, Urban Shelter Limited, has embarked on the building of "Brick City" with 750 housing units.

The unity located at Kubwa along Abuja-Zuba expressway before Jibi resettlement camp is one of the latest properties handled by the company having carved a niche for itself in the last 14 years of its incorporation.

Urban Shelter Limited, a fully integrated property development and management company, registered to undertake the procurement and development of land within and outside Nigeria for commercial and residential purpose is a recipient of 2003 excellence award from NTA programme for exemplary contribution towards the development of housing industry in Nigeria.

The housing units which is designed to be completed in Red Burnt Bricks of the highest quality are in various categories ranging from two (2) bedroom now bungalow, semi-detached, three (3) and four (4) bedroom detached bungalow with five (5) bedroom maisonette.

Brick city is designed with the latest architectural master piece in mind. The infrastructure to be enjoyed by the prospective owners include quality asphalt

road network shopping complex, police post, walkways, steady power and water supply among other amenities.

Urban Shelter also made provision for recreational/green areas, filling station, hospital and full landscape with exotics flowers, shrubs and trees for the relaxation of the city's residents.

Alhaji Musa Dangoggo Aliyu, the managing director and Chief executive of the company, informed that prospective buyers can get any of the housing units through outright purchase that attract ten percent (10%) discount, mortgage financing and on instalmental payment.



Members of the National Youth Council of Nigeria conducting the monthly sanitation exercise...recently.

## NGO organises sanitation exercise

By Rabi Othman, (Intern)

The monthly environmental sanitation exercise for the year 2005 which was organised by Prince Musa Abutu the vice president/chairman North Central Zone of Nigeria, of the National Youth Council commenced on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2005 at the youth house of Ikot Ekpene close plot 768B at Area II Garki, Abuja.

Prince Abutu went on to tell Daily Trust that the exercise involves the six states which are Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the federal capital territory (FCT) simultaneously.

The National Youth Council of Nigeria is not working only on the monthly environmental sanitation but also on the fight against HIV/AIDS in Nigeria.

The activities of NYCN also include a seven-point programme of activities. Building bridges for peace, HIV/AIDS impact mitigation, environmental sanitation, cultural promotion, sports development, merit award and youth contact magazine.

Mr. Baba Sani of NYCN told our reporter that there is going to be merit award for man of the year, woman of the year, Yariman Matasa (Prince of the youths) and many others on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2005.



Col. Mande (Rtd)

## FG poised to tackle road infrastructure problem -Ogunlewe

By Olumide Bajulaiye  
Correspondent Lagos

Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe, Honourable Minister of Works, last week assured Niger Delta communities that the Federal Government was now well positioned to address the dearth of roads infrastructures in the region.

Ogunlewe gave the assurance while receiving a 7-member delegation of the Nembe Ibe Road Projects Group of Bayelsa State, which visited his office to thank the Minister for his prominent role in reviving, pressing for and getting budgetary allocation for four long-abandoned road projects in the State.

All the roads, according to Ogunlewe lead to and serve communities where important oil investments and facilities are located.

His words; "you are the goose that lays the golden egg. It is only just and reasonable that you are catered for, not trampled underfoot."

The Honourable Minister said that he was personally happy and believes that the

government and Mr. President were also happy that oil communities and their representatives were beginning to open up avenues and fora for dialogue with stakeholders in advancing the development aspirations of the region.

He added that there was no instance in which dialogue was not a superior option to violence that had hitherto been prevalent in the area.

He then urged the group and other similar opinion leaders to press home the need for youths and other interest groups in the zone to partner with government in addressing all issues of national public interest.

Ogunlewe stated further that all identified stakeholders, including Ministers, Senators, and members of the House of Representatives and other representatives of the zone at all levels of governance needed to be consulted on matters affecting

communities, so that together a common front and strategy for mediating such issues could be fashioned out.

Earlier, leader of the delegation Professor Kala-Joe said that "the fact that Dumez (Nigeria) Limited is being fingered for abandoning the construction of some of these roads after collecting millions of Dollars and Naira is further vindication that these roads are indeed old on-going projects."

Professor Kala-Joe informed the Minister that Shell Petroleum Development Company had already assigned the road and that the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) had completed environmental impact assessments of some of the roads.

He therefore expressed the confidence that the Ministry would make necessary amendments to the designs and award the projects for construction soon.

## FG ask Ikoyi tenants to vacate houses

Residents of the 1,105 Federal Government Housing Units in Ikoyi said on Monday that they have already received letters from the Ministry of Housing and urban Development to vacate their houses.

Some of the residents, who spoke on conditions of anonymity, told our correspondent that the ministry started distributing the letters of termination two weeks ago.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that that the residents now live in fears over the development.

Confirming the development in an interview with our correspondent, the Chairman of the Central Working Committee of all Federal Government Housing estates in Lagos, Mr. Paul Angya said the situation fell short of the agreement reached between the ministry and occupants of the houses when the plan to dispose off their residents was hatched two years ago.

He said the residents were assured that their interest would be considered first if they signified interest in buying the housing units where

they are currently residing. He cautioned the ministry against going ahead with the planned sale of their houses without considering the present occupants.

He said, "As I am talking to you now, those poor civil servants who are residing in those houses are already receiving letters of termination.

"Those houses have been bought through a secrete deal. Nobody knew this until they woke up one day and started receiving letters," He said.

He challenged the ministry to come up with details of the transactions as its officials allegedly have heavy interests in the properties.

"We want to know those who bought the houses and at what cost. We heard that officials of the ministry have heavy interests in the properties," Angya stated.

He threatened that the current residents of the affected houses would not vacate their apartments until government comes up with a transparent process of disposing the properties.

The properties included semi-detached duplexes with boys quarters; three-, four-, and five bedroom duplexes with boys quarters; one- and two bedroom bungalows with boys quarters as well as detached duplexes with boys quarters and two-, three- and four bedroom flats.

## Lekki residents scramble to pay levies

Officials of the New Towns Development Authority on Victoria Island have been playing hosts to prominent individuals and wealthy industrialists who besieged their offices daily to effect payment of their outstanding levies to avoid revocation of their allocations in Lekki and Ajah.

The Agency had published names of 2,256 land allottees who were yet to make full payment of their Capital Development levies on December 23 last year and asked defaulters to pay up within one month or forfeit their allocations.

Our Correspondent who visited the NTDA office on Monday however observed that two weeks after the expiration of the ultimatum, a lot of people were still making

frantic efforts to pay their money.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that the agency was yet to come up with definite pronouncement on the issue since its ultimatum expired two weeks ago.

A senior official of the agency told our correspondent on conditions of anonymity that notwithstanding the expiration of the grace period given the allottees to pay, "we are still collecting the money from those who were willing to pay."

He however said that the agency might come up with definite pronouncement on the fate of defaulters any moment from now.

The allocations were initially made in 1995 for Lekki Phase I, 1996 for Abijoh GRA

and 1998 for Lekki Phase II while Capital Development Levy was fixed at N1,000.00 per square metre.

The prices have however skyrocketed over the years as allottees of Lekki Phase I are now expected to pay N12,500 per square metre, Phase II, N6,700 per square metre and Abijoh GRA, N5,500 per square metre.

The NTDA management had argued that the publications of the names of defaulters was to ensure compliance with the payment by allottees so that government could carry out the provision of basic facilities into the schemes.

The agency had handed down series of warnings to the defaulters in the past, which were turned down but had vowed to make good its threat this time around.

# PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

## National Press Centre under reconstruction at

The National Press Centre, Abuja, is now under reconstruction at a cost N103 million.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt today in Abuja that the deplorable condition of the centre necessitated its current facelift.

The work is being handled by an indigenous construction company Paul B Nigeria Plc.

The Head of the centre, Mr Peter Dama, who confirmed the cost of reconstruction, said that the project was duly processed by the Budget and Price Intelligence Monitoring Unit (Due Process).

"We are embarking on total renovation and reconstruction to meet international standards," he added.

"As you all know ministerial press briefings have been held outside the

### N103m

centre because of its deplorable condition," Dama said.

Dama said that when completed the centre would be furnished with state of the art facilities as obtainable in advanced nations, adding that it would be standardised to host seminars and international conferences.

Dama, who said that the

N103 million covers the total renovation and furnishing of the centre, was optimistic that the work would be completed in two months.

He added that N25 per cent mobilisation fee would soon be paid to the contractors to enable them meet the March 2005 deadline.

NAN reports that the centre was constructed in 1999 by Rivers and Times an indigenous construction company.

## China to protect river ecosystem

China has given green light to an overall programme to protect the ecosystem in the areas cradling the country's major rivers, The China Daily reported today.

It quoted an official as saying that the programme has passed the examination of

the State Council, but official approval remains needed for it to take full effect.

Expected to take effect in the years ahead, the programme will focus efforts on grass growth by grazing limitation, wetlands protection, cloud seeding, and energy development in areas inhabited by 223,100 grazers.

Heavy investment will be poured to rehabilitate the fragile ecosystems of a State natural reserve that covers more than 40 per cent of the total fountainhead area of the three rivers of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang, or 152,300 square kilometres of land.

Officials and experts were confident that, by 2010, worsening ecosystems will be turned into a positive cycle and rehabilitation through controlling degradation of pastures and desertification will begin via the programme.

## FG grants bitumen

### exploration licence to Ogun

The federal government has granted Ogun State the license for bitumen exploration, the state governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, has said.

The governor stated this on Tuesday at the opening of the second economic summit of the state government, held at Gateway Hotel, Abeokuta.

He disclosed that the licence, which was granted about two weeks ago, would now afford the state the opportunity to explore its bitumen reserve, which accounted for about 70 per cent of the total deposit of solid minerals in the country.

"We are aware that we have bitumen in commercial quantity in Edo and Ondo states but Ogun has the largest deposit, which is about 70 per cent of what we have in the whole country," Daniel said.

The governor further disclosed that the state government now required experts that would facilitate the take-off of the Gateway Bitumen Company.

He explained that the company would be a private sector driven initiative, with the state controlling five per cent of the shares.

The large concentration of bitumen in the state, he said, was also a strong indication that oil would

equally be found in commercial quantity.

He gave the assurance that his administration would put all the necessary machinery in place to exploit the potential of oil producing state status for Ogun.

He highlighted the various investment opportunities in the state, especially in the agricultural sector, where the state government declared "cassava revolution" to boost its production.

## Abia lawmakers kick against illegal structures

Abia House of Assembly has tasked the state government "to summon the political will to check illegal structures in the state."

In a report, the House Committee on Lands, Survey and Urban Planning advised the executive "to empower the relevant agencies with equipment and resources to carry out the task."

The report, entitled "The indiscriminate erection of illegal structures prohibition bill," was presented by the committee chairman, Mr Chidiebere Nwoke.

It blamed the existence of illegal structures on

both "lack of political will to implement the relevant laws, and the lack of empowerment of implementing agencies through provision of resources and equipment."

The existing laws on the matter are the Town and Country Planning Laws Cap 126 Laws of Eastern Nigeria, and the State Edict No. 7 of 1999, which provide for the setting up of planning authorities.

In receiving the report, the speaker, Chief Stanley Ohajuruka, directed the acting clerk, Mr Orié Oji, to list it for debate at the next sitting.



Minister for works, Sen. Adeseye Ogunlewe, minister of state for works Alhaji Saleh Shehu, and chairman senate committee on works senator Idris Kuta, listening to an address by the former managing director of federal roads maintenance agency (FERMA) Engr. David Jime at the ministry's conference room...recently.

## FEC approves sanitation policy

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) in Abuja approved the National Environmental Sanitation Policy presented to it by the Federal Ministry of Environment.

It will now be presented to the National Assembly for passage. Briefing newsmen after today's FEC meeting presided by President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Minister of Environment, retired Col. Bala Mande, said the policy recognised the need for Nigerians to see the

importance of environmental sanitation.

Mande said the policy specified the roles of the various tiers of government in environmental sanitation, particularly the local government, which, he described, as the custodian of the people.

He said the policy would be private sector driven as its implementation would largely be carried out through private sector collaboration.

Giving an insight into the content of the policy, the minister said it would restore sanitary inspection of public places before the end of the year, if passed.

He said it also provided for an increase in the number of standard abattoirs in the country as well as liaison with the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to make potable water available to Nigerians.

The policy, he said, would

also curb the menace of animal rearing in urban areas as well as institute pest and vector control in the country.

On the menace of non bio-degradable wastes like cellophane, the minister said an inter-ministerial committee was already working out the modalities for an alternative packaging material to reduce their use.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Chief Chukwuemeka Chikelu, who co-ordinated the briefing, said that FEC also deliberated on the forthcoming AU meeting to be hosted by Nigeria.

Chikelu called on Nigerians to demonstrate their traditional hospitality to the whole lot of foreigners expected in the country for the meeting, which, he said, would be largest gathering of African leaders in recent times.

## MFCT to relocate Karmo residents

The minister of the FCT, Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai yesterday said the challenge facing his administration is finding an alternative place for the residents of Old Karmo whose structures are marked for demolition.

He made this statement while receiving the representatives of the community led by their chairman, Engr. Ejidike Chudi in his office.

At the meeting, the FCT minister directed the representative of the settlement to meet with the director of Engr. Jimmy Cheto to work out the date for the demolition so as to enable the residents to

By Ebenezer John Buoro  
(Intern)

move out their belongings before the contractor move to the site.

Mallam Nasir has also directed the representatives of the residents to try and convince the directors of Urban and Regional Planning, Engr. Anthony Ike and director of resettlement and compensation, Mr. Festus Esekhillé on their proposal as regards the alternative plots to be provided by the FCT administration.

Earlier Engr. Ejidike explained that there is need for communal initiative to be put in place to solve the problem of squatter settlement in the FCT.

## Jigawa builds new NYSC camp

Jigawa state government is set to construction an ultra-modern NYSC orientation camp, says information commissioner Abba Umar Kukuma.

The government had already approved funds for the project, he announced on Thursday in Dutse.

Kukuma said the project would involve the building of orientation and transit camps, both to be completed within nine months.

The commissioner lauded the corps members for contributing to the socio-economic development of Jigawa, noting that "your performance impacted positively on the state's rural development policy."

Kukuma noted, however, that "companies and financial institutions need to employ corps members, to complement government's drive towards poverty reduction in the country."

The NYSC has operated from a temporary orientation at Teachers College, Gumel, since the state was created 17 years ago.



**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT**  
**(FMENV)**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESMENT (EIA) OF THE  
PROPOSED QUARRY PROJECT FOR THE OBAJANA  
CEMENT COMPLEX BY DANGOTE NIGERIA LIMITED**

In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act No. 86 of 1992, which makes it Mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment of proposed projects, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the draft EIA Report submitted by Dangote Nigeria Limited.

**Project Description/Location**

The proposed project, located near Oyo-Iwa Village, will involve exploitation of abundant limestone deposit required for the Obajana Cement Factory located about 9 kilometres from the quarry.

**VENUES OF DISPLAY**

- i) Kogi State Ministry of Environment, Lokoja, Kogi
- ii) Lokoja Local Government Area Headquarters, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iii) Federal Ministry of Environment Office, Lokoja, Kogi State
- iv) FMENV Liaison Office, Games Village, Surulere, Lagos.
- v) FMENV Office, Plot 444, Aguiyi-Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja

**DURATION OF DISPLAY**

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> January-10<sup>th</sup> February, 2005

**Time:** 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m

**ALL COMMENTS SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT ON OR BEFORE 10TH FEBRUARY, 2005.**

SIGNED  
PERMANENT SECRETARY  
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER.

**PRINTERS OF REPUTE IN NIGERIA**

The printing industry in Nigeria has been providing monumental printing designs that projects the creativity of the industry thereby justifying its efforts in bringing out colourful and beautiful prints for the use of their various class of clients. Indeed, the last four decades has witnessed their astronomical development at improving the nation's economy.

In spite of their impacts and contributions to the economic development of the country, due to lack of adequate publicity, the activities of most printers are not known to majority of Nigerians.

Giving the appreciable efforts of the players in the industry both public and private, suppliers of printing machines and equipment, accessories, etc, and in spite of the harsh economic environment under which they operate, there is the need to appraise the contributions of the industry, X-raying its challenges as well as publicise their achievements and activities.

**Media Trust Limited**, the publishers of *Daily* and *Weekly Trust* Newspapers plans to feature some of the reputable and outstanding printing companies, manufacturers and suppliers of printing machines and accessories in a special project package. The date of publication is **Monday, February 14, 2005.**

For participation and further enquiries, please contact the **Special Projects Department** on any of the following nos: **08037038663, 08042145839, 08023762061, 08028494170** or **09-6720346, 5235787** extensions 124 or 117.



**UPPER NIGER RIVER BASIN  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Headquarters (Tudun Fulani) Km. 5 Minna-Zungeru Road  
P.M.B. 68, Minna, Niger State  
Tel: 066-222953, 223148, Fax: 066-223019, Telex: 72207  
Telegrams: NIGER BASIN MINNA

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA UPPER NIGER  
RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, MINNA.**  
**PRE-QUALIFICATION INVITATION FOR THE  
EXECUTION OF ECOLOGICAL PROJECT**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The National Committee on Ecological Problems (Ecological Fund Office) intends to execute ecological project in Kontagora, Niger State. The Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority with headquarters in Minna would act as the Executing Agency on behalf of the Ecological Fund Office-The Presidency. Under this arrangement, the Ecological Fund Office remains the sole Employer of both the contractors and consultants.

The Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority is therefore seeking contractors to pre-qualify for the execution of the following Ecological Project:

-Kontagora Gully Erosion Control Project

**2.0 PRE-QUALIFICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

To qualify for consideration, only qualified companies that have and can show evidence of the under listed can apply;

- a) Certificate of incorporation
- b) 3- years tax clearance
- c) VAT certificate
- d) Evidence of registration with Federal Ministry of Works or Federal Ministry of Water Resources.
- e) Evidence of registration with Upper Niger Basin Development Authority,
- f) A company brochure of the Company
  - \* Brief history of the company
  - \* Organisational Charts/staff disposition
  - \* List of projects handled by the company
  - \* List of equipment owned or to be hired or on lease to the company
  - \* Office/factory location
- g. Audited account for the last three years and name of bankers
- h. A reference letter from the company's bankers
- i. Payment of non-refundable application fee of N150,000.00

**3.0 SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATION**

All interested contractors are required to submit their pre-qualification application and all other documents marked "SECRET" at the right hand corner of the envelope and the specific projects chosen at the top left hand corner. All applications must reach the address below not later than two (2) weeks from the date of the advert.

**The Managing Director/Chief Executive  
Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority,  
KM 5, Tudun Fulani, Minna-Zungeru Road  
P.M.B. 68, Minna**

**4.0 RIGHTS**

The invitation to pre-qualify is NOT an invitation to tender. The full tendering processes will be provided to contractors that have been pre-qualified and found suitable for the work. The Upper Niger River Basin Development Authority shall not be bound to give any reason for any unsuccessful application, shall not defray any cost incurred and shall not refund fees paid for pre-qualification forms.

Signed  
**ENGR. SUNDAY EZEKIEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS)**  
**FOR: MANAGING DIRECTOR**

# ABUJA TRUST

Demolition.....Demolition.....Demolition

## Traders begin exodus from Bakassi Market

Traders at the Wuse (new) Market (also called Bakassi Market) located in the Central Business district of Abuja have started moving out their properties ahead of the ultimatum given them by the Federal Capital Development

By Maimuna Yusuf,  
Reporter, Abuja

Authority (FCDA), which expires next week, February 15.

Apart from the notice given them to relocate to Utako or Dei-dei markets, the traders have started remov-

ing their makeshift structures themselves to avoid a similar situation that befell their colleagues at the old Wuse Market.

According to some traders, there were no official notices given to them after the announcement a few months

ago over the radio that the market would be demolished.

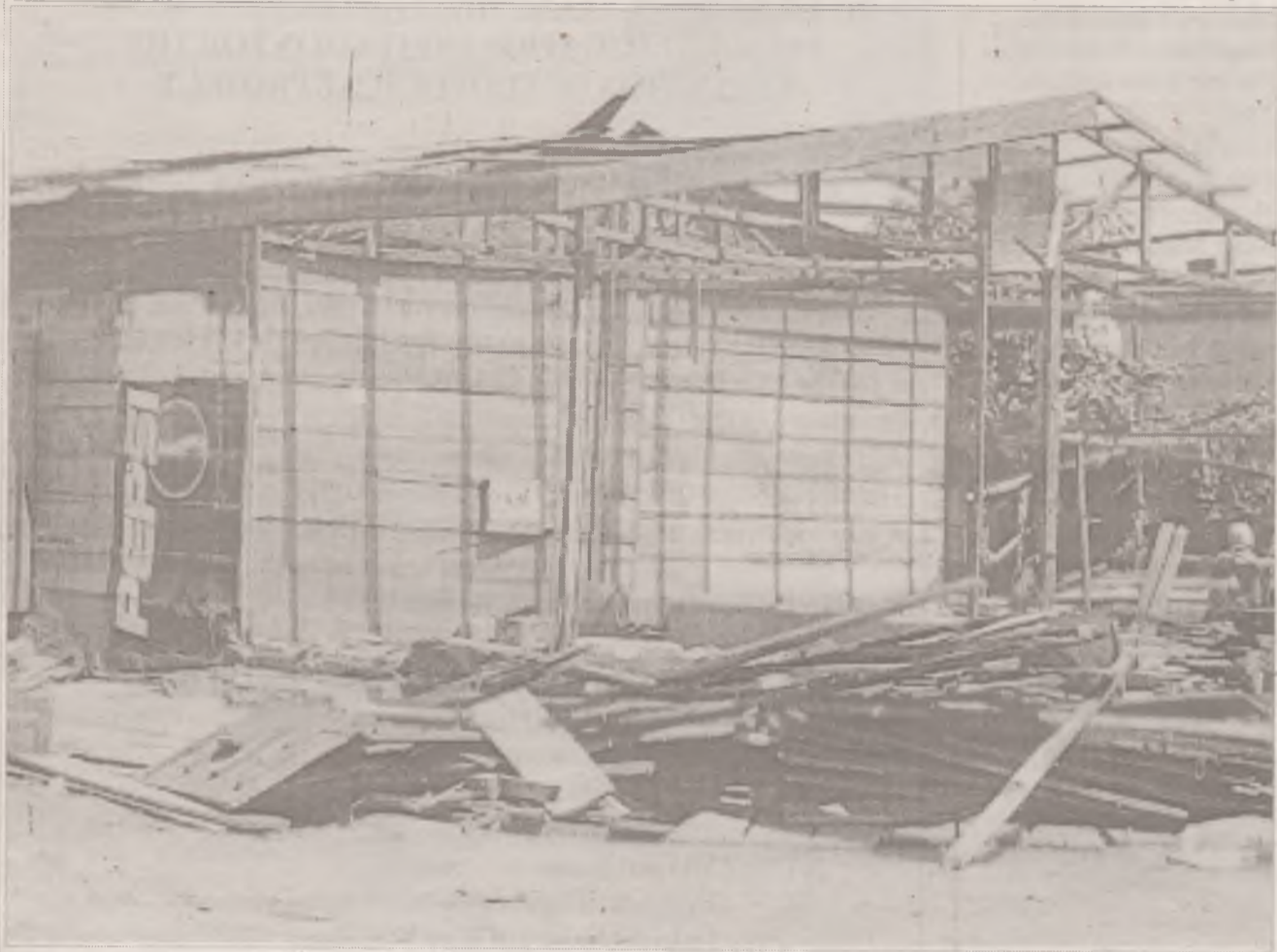
Abuja Trust observed some traders dismantling their wooden shops and transporting them out of the market. A trader at the market Mr. Kylas Adams said he has already secured a shop at

Utako market where the authorities have allocated him.

Mr. Adams expressed sympathy for most of his colleagues who he said are unable to pay for shops at the Utako Market because of their exorbitant prices, which range from 120 to 150 thousand naira. He said; "those that would be unable to get shop may have to move to

Dei-dei Market about 32km from the city, along Abuja-Kaduna Expressway.

Our correspondent observed that the market, which used to be very busy and rowdy with commercial activities, has become a ghost of its former self as traders were seen moving out with their wares and carpenters pulling down structures.



Traders of new Wuse market in Abuja moving out their wares and dismantling their stalls yesterday.

## el-Rufai apologises to residents traders

By Nasir Imam

The minister of the federal capital territory has apologised to the residents of the federal capital territory over the continued closure of the Wuse main market due to the on-going removal of illegal structures popularly called attachments.

Mallam el-Rufai made the appeal at the Wuse market while making an assessment tour of the work so far done in trying to get back the market to its original shape.

He expressed shock at the level of illegality displayed in the market saying the amount of illegality in terms of putting up of stores in ten times higher than the legally allocated stores.

The minister regretted that this has made shopping at the market a nightmare adding that the market was left at the mercy of fire in case there was any outbreak since it will be difficult for fire fighters to gain access to the stores.

The minister promised that the exercise will soon be concluded and it will bring sanity to the market and making shopping in Wuse market as convenient as it was planned to be with vehicles driving round and parking spaces available for those wishing to do so.

According to the minister, alternatives have already been

provided to move those affected by the demolition exercise to Gwarimpa and Utako markets.

Mallam el-Rufai wondered why people are afraid of relocating to these markets saying that it is only when people move to them that they can expect people to patronise them.

The FCT minister also clarified the reason behind demolishing the makeshift market springing up behind the Wuse market popularly called the hawkers market.

He said that the place was a temporary arrangement meant to gather all those that were moved out of the roads so as to give them time to reorganise before they were removed to a more permanent place.

The hawkers market, he explained was located beside the flood plain and if the people were not moved now, they would be displayed soon by the rains.

Malam el-Rufai had also hinted that shop owners at the Wuse new market have been given up to the end of the next week to vacate the market which will make way for the construction of mega mall at the site.

## Old Wuse market traders hopeful of compensation

As Wuse market remains closed thousands of traders who were affected by the ongoing demolition exercise were yesterday seen gathered along Herbert Macaulay Way waiting to see what will be the outcome of the situation that has lasted for five days.

Some of the traders said

they came out in order to find out from the FCDA whether some of them who legally obtained space from the FCDA would be given any concession or compensation for the demolition of their goods.

One of the sacked traders, one Mr. Babalolly claimed he has about five container-shops that were

demolished; he said authorities of the market have pleaded with the minister who he said has agreed to compensate traders who have their original documents of occupancy.

According to Babalolly only few people belong to this category while others spoken to by our correspon-

dent said they have shops in the market but are there to sympathise with their relatives who were affected.

Another eyewitness said about two traders fell down and collapsed yesterday and were rushed to the hospital.

However, the whole general atmosphere looked charged and tensed as people were seen in groups discussing on top of their voices.

panies expressing their interest to build the shopping mall after the demolition.

Also speaking, the director of Development Control, an arm of the FCDA, Mrs. Jumai Kwanashie, who said that FCDA pulled down some shops that were not originally part of the market, said the whole market will be jointly rehabilitated by the government and landowners after the cleanup exercise.

She said the Gwarimpa and Utako markets, which are virtually empty, will accommodate affected traders from the Wuse markets.

As at yesterday, movement of vehicles along Kashim Ibrahim Way, the major road leading to the market from Wuse II was still closed to traffic as police armoured vehicle was used to barricade it.

By Abdulwahab Deji  
Ajikobi (Stringer Abuja)

already earmarked for demolition.

Speaking on those officers who were allegedly involved in illegally allocating shops in the market, Mallam el-Rufai who said that the market has 1,800 shops which was increased to 13,000 via the connivance of some staff of the ministry without the knowledge and consent of FCT administration. According to el-Rufai "those officers will be investigated and those found wanting would be punished.

el-Rufai revealed that where Bakassi Market is located was meant for a central shopping mall and park. The minister further revealed that the ministry has proposals from some private com-

## ...re-opens Friday

Following the ongoing cleanup exercise in old Wuse Market after the demolition of illegal structures the FCT minister; Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai has said that the market will re-open on Friday.

Speaking to newsmen during his inspection visit to the market, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, who apologised to all residents as a result of any inconvenience the exercise may have caused them, said the MFCT is constrained by manpower and equipment even though they have been working ceaselessly since last Thursday when container-shops were demolished in the market.

The FCT minister said the demolition exercise, will next week, move to Bakassi Market (also known as New Market) and other areas that are

## ...sets up probe panel

date.

The minister also directed the Agric Department of his administration to relocate the food and livestock market at the old Wuse Market to Kado. He also mandated the parks and Garden Department to critically look into the issue of encroachment into the market by the Langfield Shopping Mall.

He explained that plans are on the way by his administration to construct a multi-level car park around the market.

Also in a chat with media men, the FCT director of Development Control, Mrs. Jummai Kwanashie, gave an assurance that the market will be given a face-lift after the cleanup exercise.

She described the cleanup exercise as very tasking as they have enlisted the services of some private companies in the exercise to be able to meet the deadline for the re-opening of the market.



Nasir el-Rufai, FCT minister

# KANO TRUST

## KNSG extends suspension of LG bosses

The hope of the suspended chairman of Ungogo local government area, Alhaji Muhammad Falalu Umar, and the vice chairman of Dawakin Kudu council, Alhaji Abdullahi Yala, all in Kano State to return to office after the expiration of their suspension, has been dashed just as the government extended the suspension for a two-month period.

It would be recalled that the Ungogo council chairman was suspended last year when he was found guilty of financial impropriety, the vice chairman of Dawakin Kudu suffered similar fate over alleged possession of substances suspected to be In-

From Mustapha Isah  
Kwara, Correspondent  
(Kano)

dian hemp.

A press statement signed by the press secretary to the secretary to the state government, Malam Kabiru Salisu Kofa, indicated that the resolution was based on the powers bestowed upon the state government by section 55(2) of the state local government law as amended in 2004.

According to the state, the upward review of the suspension was intended to give the state assembly and the committees set up to investigate the cases adequate time, so as to come out with fair and qualitative report.

## ...distributes improved groundnut, cottonseeds

Kano State government has distributed over 5,000 kilograms of improved varieties of groundnut and cottonseeds to seed growers for propagation.

The commissioner of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Alhaji Ahmad Garba Ririwai, said this was done in order to improve on the production of groundnuts and cottons in the state.

Alhaji Ahmad Garba Ririwai said these seeds would later be bought back

from by the government from the contract growers for its subsequent distribution.

He said Kano state was known for its massive production of both cotton and groundnut, which ceased to be due to some factors that could be redressed. He explained that unless importation is discouraged to favour domestic industries the country would continue to have problems.

By Ahmed Abubakar,  
Correspondent (Kano)



Kano Police Command smash an armed robbery syndicate, their loots and weapons recently in Kano.

## Gezawa LG tasks headmasters on mismanagement

Primary schools headmasters in Gezawa local government area have been warned to desist from misuse of teaching and learning materials under their supervision.

The council chairman, Abdullahi Tsarmiyar Kara, issued the warning while distributing exercise and textbooks to all the primary

schools in the area, vowing however that the council will not hesitate to take discipline defaulters.

He expressed dismay on the ugly trend of diverting teaching equipment meant for the use of pupils, urging perpetrators to change.

Alhaji Tsarmiyar Kara stated that any headmaster caught will be perceived as a

saboteur. The local government boss reminded the headmasters to realise that both the pupils and materials are under their control and care.

While commenting on the series of priority accorded education, he pointed out that incentives were imitated for the 300 primary school teachers in the area as a proactive strategy to redouble their performance for the general overhaul of education.

He added that several blocks of classrooms, boreholes were constructed in addition to the upgrading of junior secondary schools.

Alhaji Tsarmiyar Kara however pledged to unveiled fresh modalities for the development of education, just as he solicited the support of the people, saying the mandate is a collective responsibility.

In his remark, the education secretary of the area, Alhaji Sha'aibu Idris Zango applauded the council for its

intervention that salvaged the total collapse of education in the council.

He charged the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) to emulate the good gesture of the chairman through donating teaching materials for the schools.

## WRECA urged to complete Getso dam

By Aliyu Saleh Machika,  
Correspondent (Kano)

Water Resources and Engineering Construction Agency (WRECA) has been directed to complete the construction of Getso Dam before the beginning of next year's rainy season.

Kano State commissioner for water resources and rural development gave this directive in a statement through the public relation officer in the ministry.

The commissioner, Alhaji Salihu Sagir Takai, during an official visit to the project site has called on the contractors of the project before the rainy season begins.

According to him government is doing everything possible to make water available to all.

The commissioner said the ministry has made adequate arrangement towards funding of the project.

In his remarks, the managing director of WRECA, Alhaji Aminu Ibrahim Abbas, said already 90 percent of the work has been completed.

He described the project as a successful one, adding that all necessary arrangements have been made except the construction of the access road to the dam.

## Refuse disposal gulps N2m in Municipal

The sum of N2 million is being spent on refuse disposal by the Municipal local government council in Kano State, the chairman; Alhaji Maje Ahmed Gwangwazo dropped the hint.

He pointed out that the council resolve to spend the amount monthly with a view to having a clean and healthy environment in order to combat the spread of diseases.

The chairman, who frowned at the growing spate of indiscriminate refuse disposal by some residents, described the act as worrisome.

Alhaji Gwangwazo said apparently realising that state government alone could not clear the metropolis from refuse, the six local governments joined the membership of the state Refuse Management and Sanitation Board (REMAS-AB) in which they contrib-

uted funds for its activities.

The council boss explained that massive refuse and drainages clearing commended especially in areas where drainages were covered by refuse.

The resolution, he noted is imperative so as to clear waterways before the rainy season in order to halt possible floods.

According to Alhaji Gwangwazo, in a bid to ensure rapid and speedy execution

of the exercise, the council has converted one of its tractors to a refuse vehicle, adding however that additional ones will be launched for similar operation.

Other modalities to be unmasked to check indiscriminate of youths whose duty is to direct people to the appropriate dumping grounds, just as he warned people against the ugly trend, saying the erring ones will face the wrath of the law.

## TAKC releases names of Rumfa award recipients

Kano State citizens resident at Abuja under the umbrella of the Abuja Kano Community (TAKC), has released the list of recipients of its Muhammad Rumfa Development Award.

TAKC, a non-governmental organisation based in Abuja instituted the award last year for those who care for the human development of Kano citizens.

In his presentation of speech on the release of successful awardees for this second edition of MRAHD award held at Mambaye House, Kano, the chairman House committee on finance, Alhaji Farouk Lawan, who

represented the chairman of the screening committee, MRAHD, Alhaji Isyaku Umar Tofa, said that the award the recipients' contribution in areas of education, empowerment, exemplary leadership, philanthropy and mediation.

The recipients of the awards include; Sheik Naibi Sulaiman Wali and Dr Tijjani Ismail in the category of education, Hajiya Halima Uwani Yusuf and Alhaji Usman Sule Riruwai in the category of empowerment while late Malam Da'u Aliyu and Alhaji Kassim Umar Warure in the categories of exemplary leadership and philanthropy respectively.



Paralysed from neck to toe, Malam Dahiru Abubakar, an Islamic Scholar still teaches his students in Kazaure. Pix: Musa Kazaure.

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# EKO TRUST

## Lagos records first major rain fall

The first major rainfall in Lagos that lasted for over four hours last Sunday, has rendered hundreds of people homeless, even as the Lagos state government last week announced the commencement of clearing up of the primary and secondary canals.

Residents were seen scrambling to safety with their belongings, while some youths were busy clearing drains and gutters to reduce flooding of the area.

Some of the houses, which now have marks with yellow colour, have been vacated by residents for fear of possible collapse any moment from now.

The areas where the rain did havoc include Ijora Badiya in Amukoko, Agege parts of Surulere, Ikeja and Mafoluku in Oshodi.

Residents of these areas resorted to bailing water from their homes, while in other parts some youths were seen clearing drains and gutters to reduce flooding.

Mr. Peter Ojomo, who resides in Lawanson, told the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* that the rain created fear in the minds of residents as some resorted to prayers.

"Apart from the problem of flooding that have been reduced, the fact that landlords do not repair houses was the major problem including uncleared refuse in the area.

"Some of the heaps of refuse generated two Saturdays ago during the sanitation exercise have not been cleared and the rains washed them into the gutters," Ojomo said.

According to him, "the improper refuse management and the state of the canals

remain the real issues in our environment, now that the rains are here."

He appealed to the state government to clear the canals and gutters and to also empower the private refuse collectors in the state.

Also speaking, Mrs. Funke Ajumobi, a businesswoman who resides in Ikeja, told *NAN* that the rainfall has showed that nothing has changed in our environment, despite the huge finances spent in the past six years.

"I am surprised that our environment is still dirty, peoples' attitude to refuse has not changed, so many houses have been threatened because of flooding problems," she said.

Some of the canals like the Gbagada canal was filled to the brim setting panic among the residents living nearby.

The general manager of the Drainduck, Engr Hakeem Apatira, the agency that is saddled with the responsibility of clearing gutters and drains, told *NAN* that the flooding problem has been reduced by the ongoing clearing exercise of gutters and drains in the state.

"There was no flooding as such, as you can see, the flood is gone; what we have now is flash flooding that will clear in a matter of hours," he said.

On the rubbish washed into the drains, Apatira said that relevant agencies should ensure that refuse are cleared regularly.

He also said that Drainduck workers have formed six gangs to clear drains and gutters in the metropolis, while assuring that flooding will soon be a thing of the past.

Apatira appealed to residents to stop dumping refuse into the drains and gutters, as such practice will cause flooding.

## LAWMA clears refuse in Lagos metropolis

The Lagos state Waste Management Authority, (LAWMA) has been drafted by the state government to clear the metropolis of refuse, the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reports.

*NAN* reports that two weeks after the last sanitation exercise in Lagos, heaps of refuse are still visible in some parts of the state, while some of them have been washed back into the drains and gutters by the rains.

The general manager of LAWMA, Engr. Poopola Adesina told *NAN* at the weekend that the assistance usually given by the agency is at the instance of the state government.

"We are always willing to assist in clearing refuse, but collecting refuse in the metropolis is not our primary responsibility," he said.

He said the agency has constituted a task force to rid the state of the backlog of refuse generated from sanitation exercise.

Areas already covered by LAWMA include Mushin, Ajina, Odi, Olowo and Ojuwoye all in the outskirts of the metropolis.

Officials of the agency where seen clearing refuse in Mafoluku in Mushin and its environs.

Others include Orile, parts of surulere, and collection points on the Mainland.



In the centre is governor Bola Tinubu, commissioner for youths sports and social dev. Barrister Opeyemi Bamidele, Mr. Olufemi Pedro, Deputy Gov. and commissioner for works and infrastructure Engr. Rauf Aregbesola inspecting some of the skill acquisition equipment at Ita-Oko Island...recently.



An early morning accident along Igbehin-Adun street, Oshodi as a result of impatience on the part of the Okada rider...recently.



Eyo masquerades from Iya Olusi, the Gbobaniyi of Lagos at a recent event.



Lagosians gather at a recent event at Alausa secretariat, Ikeja.

Pix: Oladipupo Odunewu

# News

## Archbishop advises Christians about lent

The Catholic Archbishop of Jos Diocese, Ignatius Kaigama, has urged Christians to use the forthcoming lenten season to purge themselves of sins.

Kaigama, who stated this on Monday in Jos, while exchanging views with

newsmen, said the lenten season would start tomorrow.

The Archbishop said the period would afford all Christians the opportunity to reform themselves and move closer to God.

According to him, Christians should shun the habit of drunkenness,

prostitution, gambling and other forms of vices.

He urged them to intensify prayers, give alms and other forms of worship that would make God forgive their sins.

The Archbishop said the 40 day fasting was considered by Christians as the period of spiritual transformation.

Kaigama lamented that many Christians and Muslims had not been practising what God had directed them to do in the Holy books.

He said both Christians and Muslims were constantly constructing churches and mosques but had continued to commit sins.

"Many Christians and Muslims have been expending a lot of resources to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Mecca but after their return, they do not change their bad habit," the bishop added.

He, therefore, called on both Christians and Muslims to allow their religions to control them in order to shun corruption and other vices.

## Library is engine room of Judiciary- Judge

The National Judicial Institute (NJI) has said that the library constitutes the engine room for the administration of justice by the judiciary.

Mr Justice John Ajakaiye, the Institute's Administrator, made the view in Umuahia on Monday at the opening of the 2003 Biennial National Workshop for Judicial Librarians.

Ajakaiye said the institute prided itself on the standard nature of the library because of its pivotal role in the administration of justice.

Ajakaiye, a former Chief Judge of Ekiti, said the workshop became imperative to ensure constant reorientation and restructuring of judicial libraries and for prodding to meet the needs and challenges of the times.

"A well stocked library will be of no use without the librarian," he asserted, stressing that the library itself would not function without the librarians, who organise, monitor and replenish it.

He said the workshop would afford participants the opportunity to share ideas and make suggestions on how to solve the problems besetting various libraries in the judiciary.

The NJI administrator said he hoped the workshop would help transform libraries in the courts and make them to provide functional services to their clientele.

Declaring the workshop open, the Acting Governor of Abia, Dr Chima Nwafor, said the librarian had an important role to play in the development of the legal profession.

Nwafor said non availability of books had militated against the dispensation of justice, adding: "no nation can make meaningful progress in law without adequate reservoir of books and other materials."

He said the workshop was a challenge to the judicial officers to promote information preservation and retrieval process.

The acting governor commended the ingenuity and efforts of the country's lawyers, who had gone out of their ways to publish journals and law reports for the legal profession.

He, however, called on managers of the legal system to be conscious of their responsibilities to the people.

The acting governor stressed that "as judicial officers, you are expected to discharge your duties diligently and assiduously to the glory of God and mankind."

## Women charged on skills acquisition

Women in the country have been charged to make good use of the Skill Acquisition Centre in their local government areas to supplement their income.

National Coordinator of the Women Skills Acquisition Centre in the country, Mrs. Esther Mauzah, said in Calabar south local government during a visit to that councils centre that the centre was equipped with the capacity to train women on various skills and trades.

She added that these skills were capable of providing improved living conditions for the women as well as better the lot of their families especially mothers.

Mrs. Mauzah who was conducted round the centre by the wife of the Calabar south local government chairman, Mrs. Eme Ekefre, urged women to take advantage of the centre and train themselves.

Speaking also, the wife of the Chairman, Mrs. Ekefre, expressed appreciation with the national coordination of the Women Skills Acquisition Centre for the visit and said that the visit marks a turning point in the history of the council's administration as well as in the lives of the women of the

From Bassey Ita, Correspondent (Calabar)

area.

She also admonished the women to shun vices detrimental to their health and the health of others while adjourning them to come out for training programme at the skill acquisition centre which she said is free to all late one of trainees.

The national coordinator also paid a courtesy call on the council's Chairman, Mr. Bassey Nyong Ekefre in his office.

The Federal Operation Unit of the Nigeria Customs Service has impounded contrabands goods worth N3.89 million. The Comptroller in charge of the zone, Alh. Mahmood Aliyu, has disclosed.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday in Kano, Alhaji Aliyu said that the contraband goods were confiscated at 22 different locations between September 2004 to January 2005.

He further explained that valuables worth N26 million were seized in Kano, N20 million in Niger, N60 million in Kaduna, N35 million in Sokoto as well as N10

## Customs impound N3.89m contraband

By Yusha'u Adamu Ibrahim

million Kebbi State exercise.

The comptroller in charge of Kano unit of the Federal Operation Unit zone "B" of the Nigeria Custom Service said that contraband impounded includes textiles materials, tobacco, vegetable oil, as well as tokumbo vehicles.

He pointed out that some of the goods were

condemned by the courts while others are still under the court custody.

Though he did not disclose the member of defendant arrest the comptroller said they were already been taken to court for prosecution.

Alhaji Aliyu who commanded the custom patrol team also urged them to intensify action in checking our smuggling all over the country.



Joshua Dariye, Governor of Plateau State (right) with the Gbong Gwon Jos, Da Victor Pam when members of the Berom elders council paid a thank you visit on the governor at Government House, Jos ...recently

## Census field workers use Donkeys, Boats, Camels in Borno

Field workers engaged in various activities towards the forthcoming 2005 census exercise have embarked upon the use of donkey, boats, camels and horses to have access to areas with difficult terrains in Borno State.

This was revealed by the state's Commissioner, National Population

From Isa Umar Gusau correspondent (Maiduguri)

Commission, Dr. Suleiman Bello, in an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust*, yesterday in Maiduguri, Borno State capital.

"I was surprised to see that apart from the assistance provided to our field workers by the state and the chairman, even the villagers and village

heads provided our census workers with donkeys, camels and horses which they rode to go to some difficult areas in Gudun Bale, Abadan LGA where even a 4-wheel drive cannot go," the commissioner narrated.

"In MOBBAR local government area, boats were hired and offered to our workers by the council chairman, which they used for the enumeration Area Demarcation exercise," Dr. Bello added.

He said such was necessary because in some parts of the state, field workers needed to pass across lakes to reach island settlements while some of areas were occupied by thick desert that could only be accessed by transport animals.

"So our men were instantly thought how to ride on camels, horses and donkeys to move in desert. Infact, they were even guided in some cases "the commissioner said.

Commenting on other questions, Dr. Suleiman Bello said he was optimistic that the forthcoming national political reforms conference would not in any way, affect the conduct of the upcoming census exercise.

## Due process, major threat to 2005 census - Commissioner

The due process system introduced by the federal government for scrutiny of contract awards and payments, has been identified as a serious problem facing the on-going activities towards the 2005 census exercise, slated for November this year.

The observation was made yesterday by the Borno State's Commissioner, National Population Commission, Dr. Suleiman Bello in an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust*, in Maiduguri, Borno State capital.

"All the demands made for the census exercise hardly take Mr. President more than two days for his approval. But the problem is with the delay caused by the due process. We are faced with problems of fund, non availability of technical materials, vehicles etc. because contractors are yet to scale through the due process systems" the commissioner stated.

Adding, he said, that some materials required for phase II of the Enumeration Area Demarcation which began in August and ended in

September last year, were supplied this February this, while some of the materials were yet to be received.

The Enumeration Area Demarcation exercise. At the phase I, we took one local government in each geopolitical zone for the EAD. At phase II we took one local government area, from each state.

He said that while the commission was already at the phase III, the materials for the exercise which was to commence on the February 10, this year were yet to be supplied, because of the due process system.

# News

## Security Breach: Mustapha insists on documents

Former Chief Security Officers to late general Sani Abacha, Major Hamza Al-Mustapha, has again insisted on the production of documents statements of those arrested along side him which he said is in the custody of special Investigation Tribunal which tried him in the wake up allegation of security breaches trial again him.

Al-Mustapha on March 30 last year conducted from Kirikiri Prison in Lagos and was arraigned alongside Onwuchekwa Okorie and Mr. Jos Muhammadu Adeka before justice Dan Abute of the Federal High Court on October 21 on two count charge of conspiracy and treason.

He has since prayed the

From Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

court to order the production of such documents as same contained facts that there are no prima facie case against him.

Only last week prosecution counsel, Lateef Fagbeno (SAN) said in his continuation of reply to Al-Mustapha's counsel that the demand for the document is ill-timed, nebulous adding that contrary to the submission of his lawyer, the former Chief security officer did not request for prove of evidence now crying wolf over it.

But while replying on point of law on Monday barrister Olalekan Ojo, Al-Mustapha lawyers disagreed that the statements docu-

ments being requested for ill-timed and unethical.

According to him, the accused person security breach: Al-Mustapha insists, should be guaranteed access to requisite documents in this stage before proceeding to trial.

He urged the court to prevail on the prosecution to make available the document as he is battle ready to ensure accelerated trial in the matter.

Meanwhile, the court his fixed February 28 and March of this year for continuation of Al-Mustapha's reply on point of law.

## MCN urges FG to declare public holiday for Islamic New Year celebration

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent (Kaduna)

As Muslims all over the world prepare to mark the Islamic New Year "1426 A. H. hijrah, the Muslim Council of Nigeria (MCN), has called on the federal government to give proper recognition and declare a public holiday for this significant celebration.

According to a statement made available to *Daily Trust* in Kaduna, signed by Mallam Muhammad Jamiu Aliyu, secretary general of the council said that the hijrah signifies the end of the period of hostility, persecution and rejection of Muslim and commencement of the growth and spread of Islam, which makes it worthy of celebration.

The council disclosed

that hijrah has brought about spread of Islamic knowledge and end to tribal warfare which dominated the cities before Hijrah to Medina, which brought about Islamic laws and orderliness proclaimed for the land.

The statement declared that the hijrah is significant because of the after effect with the spread of Islamic knowledge.

The statement also said that Yarima is a man of great personality, talent and great endowment whose political sagacity is not in doubt

which is a clear indication that he is an asset and obviously the best material that Nigeria needs in 2007.

The statement also described him as a highly detribalised Nigeria, which largely accepted, loved and cherished across the nooks and crannies of Nigerian and beyond.

The statement said that the chance of Yarima is invariably moons of emancipating the masses from the rot of the past, and lift them up to the standards of existence befitting all human beings in modern world.

## Confab: Gani Adams warns South-West govts over Yoruba agenda

Factional Leader of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) Gani Adams, has warned south west governors against

From Samson Ojo, correspondent (Lagos)

tampering with the final document of the Yoruba agenda at the forthcoming National Political reform conference being organised by the Federal Government.

Addressing a press briefing in Lagos, the OPC leader, warned that should the south-west governors try to tamper with the Yoruba Agenda submitted to it for approval, the OPC will withdraw its support for the National Dialogue, as such an attempt would be inimical to Yoruba interest in the proposed confab.

Adams was particularly furious about claims recently made by the Ekiti state governor, Ayodele Fayose that the South West governors may likely make some adjustments to the Yoruba agenda, submitted.

According to him, the OPC was innitially in support of the proposed confab, but with the recent development it has began to lose confidence in the National Confab said he, "OPC would not accept any attempt to mortgage the interest of the Yoruba, if the south west governors try to play any game on the Yoruba agenda submitted to it for ratification we will resist the move," he said.

On the controversy trailing the Yoruba agenda in the confab, Adams condemned publications of the position of the ethnic nationality in some national dailies saying such would amount to bad strategy.

The OPC factional leader, debunked allegation that the Yoruba were angling to capture power through another means.

## Chad republic begins voters registration in Nigeria

From Isa Umar Gusau, correspondent (Maiduguri)

The Republic of Chad has commenced the registration of Chadian voters living in Nigeria ahead of the country's elections.

According to a letter with reference no 010/CT/M 2005, addressed to Borno state governor Senator, Ali Sheriff, by the consulate general of the Republic of Chad in Maiduguri, the letter stated that the voter registration was to commence Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> and end after two weeks, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2005.

"The consulate-general of the Republic of Chad in Maiduguri has the honour to inform the executive governor of Borno state that registration exercise of Chadian Nationals living in Borno state would be carried out from 7<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February, 2005" the letter said.

The letter appeals to the state government to facilitate co-operation between Chad Republic and authorities to ensure the success of the voters registration exercise.

Thousands of Chadians according to *Daily Trust* findings reside in Borno state, Nigeria, especially as the state shares common boarder with the Chad Republic.



From left to right: General secretary of NULGE, Comrade A. A. Salam (Baraden Paiko), sub-regional chairperson of PSI, Brother N. Nkakatisi, NLC general secretary, Comrade John Odah and Brother Suleiman of Sereleon singing solidarity song at a conference in Abuja...recently.

## NUPTE lauds FG over pentascope contract termination

From Samson Ojo, correspondent (Lagos)

National Union of Postal and Telecommunication Employees (NUPTE) has lauded the Federal Government for terminating the pentascope contract with NITEL for its incompetence.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* in an interview in his office, the NUPTE General Secretary Comrade Jeje Odeajo, stated that the termination of the pentascope contract was a welcome development because according to him, in the first instance the contract was awarded in fraudulent circumstances.

The NUPTE scribe argued that the termination of the pentascope contract would help to restore sanity to the system, if government puts it out together.

According to him, the workers had kicked against the award of the contract to pentascope from its inception because the organisation lacked the necessary competence to manage the outfit.

"We were opposed to the contract right from the beginning, but government insisted.

Now after several months, the firm has done nothing tangible to improve the efficiency of NITEL what

was obvious was that pentascope lacked both technical and material resources to manage such a big organisation. This is why we are in support of the sack," he stated.

Buttressing his union position, the NUPTE scribe insisted that NITEL gained nothing from pentascope

management and that the termination of the contract only vindicated the workers' earlier stand that, only government for now could effectively manage the firm.

It would be recalled that the federal government last week terminated the three year management contract with the dutch firm with immediate effect.

## Agric minister says Nigeria now self-sufficient in vegetable oil

By Hassan Idris, Senior reporter (Agriculture)

The minister of agriculture and rural development Malam Adamu Bello, has said that the ban on the importation of vegetable oil by the federal government (FG) has made the country self sufficient in the product.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Mallam Bello said the ban had made more Nigerian farmers to go into oil palm production.

He said that there had been no reports of shortage of the product or its raw

materials since the ban, meaning that the country had been able to sustain it.

The minister said that President Olusegun Obasanjo inspired the new direction when he realised that the country that spent 43 million dollars to import vegetable oil in one year, had become better for it.

He said that what irked the president was that most of the vegetable oil was imported from Malaysia, a country that learnt the

technique of oil palm production from Nigeria.

He pointed out that the project to increase oil palm production ran into an initial hitch over the high interest rate charged by banks on loans, explaining however, that the problem was overcome by reducing the interest rate for oil palm farmers.

He said that this was done to encourage them because of the long maturity period required for oil palm production.

# News

## Anambra crisis: CRW drags AGF to court

A legal battle between Citizens Rights Watch (CRW) and the attorney general of the Federation (AG-F) over the Anambra State crisis has commenced at the Federal

**From Adelanwa Bamgboye Correspondent (Lagos)**

High Court, Lagos.

The suit was filed by Lagos Lawyer Barrister George

Opara following the expiration of the 7-day ultimatum given to the AG-F to prosecute Chris Uba over the crisis in Anambra state.

Specifying, Barrister Gabriel Ojumah, president

CRW and others are praying the court for an order to *mandamus* asking the AG-F to prosecute Chris Uba over the crisis in Anambra state or in the alternative give CRW the licence or fiat to prosecute him (Chris Uba).

It would be recalled that CRW group had earlier hinted that it has assembled over twenty-eight lawyers across the country to carry out the legal battle saying that since Chris Uba had confessed that Anambra state gubernatorial election held April 19<sup>th</sup> 2003 was rigged, then an offence

has been committed against the state.

But the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has insisted that the Anambra crisis was a family matter to be resolved within the party.

Although the suit was filed at the Federal High Court Lagos last Tuesday, as at the time of filling in this report, the case was yet to be assigned to any judge.

Since inception three years ago, CRW has been the watch dog of the people especially the poor masses of this nation, it has unequivocally

condemned maladministration and taken practical steps to ensuring that maladministration vices are addressed.

Some of the aims of the group include to promote democracy in Nigeria, ensure the practice of rule of law-in Nigeria as well as ensuring that the citizens enjoy the dividends of democracy.

Others are to protect the rights of the citizens and to ensure that those in position of authority act according to the laws of the land.

## National confab: Muslims urged to defend shariah

Muslims in the country have been urged to use the forthcoming national dialogue to ensure that their right to have the shariah legal system is effectively canvassed and defended.

**From Zakariyya Adaramola, Correspondent (Lagos)**

that do not take cognizance of the spiritual aspiration of Muslims.

Dr. Datti Ahmed, who was represented by Barrister Naafiu Baba Ahmed, advised Islamic clerics in Lagos to enlighten the muslim ummah in the state in such a way as to bring their numerical strength to bear through public advocacy in getting the state's assembly to enact appropriate enabling laws and judicial

machinery to support its implementation as a constitutional right.

This, he revealed, is the biggest challenge to the Muslims, not only in Lagos but in all the states of the federation. "The biggest challenges to the ummah today is to ensure internal cohesion and mobilisation of its members to bring its numerical strength and superior moral values to bear on national policies and even politics with a view to establishing a balanced system of social justice, equality and safeguard its community's liberty, lives and property.

Making the earnest call to Muslims at the weekend during the launching of "selected judgement of the Lagos State Independent Shariah Panel" Dr. Ibrahim Datti Ahmed said Muslims should bring their numerical strength to bear to canvass for and defend implementation of shariah as a constitutional right.

"The opportunity immediately available, which is the forthcoming national dialogue, should also be used to ensure that the right of Muslims to have the shariah system effectively canvassed and defended," said Dr Datti Ahmed.

The national president of SCSN said this is important in view of the attempt to secularities of affairs through ungodly atheistic legislation

## 4,800 pilgrims return through Sokoto Airport

No fewer than 4,800 pilgrims have so far returned to the country, through the Sultan Abubakar III International Airport, Sokoto. A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Correspondent in Sokoto reported that the pilgrims from Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states returned to Nigeria in

10 in-bound flights. NAN learnt that a rotation arrangement in which each of the three states would have two flights per round was being used.

The same arrangement was also used during the out-bound flights that transported the pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. Already, Sokoto and Zamfara states have had four flights each while Kebbi had two.

NAN further reported that more than 11,000 pilgrims from the three states performed the 2004 Hajj to the Holy Land. The pilgrims were transported to Saudi Arabia in 22 out-bound flights, hence, the same number of in-bound flights were expected to bring them back.

NAN recalled that the ongoing in-bound flights of pilgrims through the Sokoto Airport started on Thursday, the 27 of last month.

## 10% cassava content in bread an opportunity for Nigerians — FG

The federal government says the planned 10 per cent cassava content in bread production will open a window of opportunity for Nigerians to tap. Mrs Oluwatoyin Adetunji, the Special Assistant to the President on Food Security, stated this in Abakaliki on Monday at a workshop on production and packaging of high quality cassava by farmers and producers.

"With this singular policy, farmers will no longer experience the seasonal glut in cassava market, while the huge import bill on wheat will be reduced," she said.

The special assistant, who put the expected demand for cassava flour at 200,000 metric tonnes per annum, said small-scale farmers and producers would be carried along.

She noted that for the programme to succeed, there must be "co-operation at all levels of government, a good business networking among farmers and processors, flour millers, bakers and other relevant agencies".

Ebonyi Gov. Sam Egwu, represented by Commissioner for Agriculture, Chief Sylvester Nwambe, said N10 million had been released to the state Agricultural Devel-

opment Programme (ADP) as part payment for the state's participation in the preemptive management of cassava mosaic disease.

He said the state gave prior attention to food production and had raised a committee on increased food production. Nwambe said the committee had identified cassava, rice and oil palm as crops to promote.

## Coy recalls 15 sacked workers

Zaria Industries Ltd has recalled 15 of its 16 former workers who were initially dismissed for various offences. Mr Abdulganiyu Koledoye, the firm's managing consultant, said at the weekend in Kaduna that "only one ex-worker, Mr Godwin Makun, was summarily dismissed for failure to attend work in excess of five months".

"Ten of the affected workers had their appointments terminated with full benefits," he said, "while three were called back to their duties and two were placed on redundancies".

Koledoye explained that "the decision of the company to show mercy followed the

intervention of well-meaning Nigerians, including the National Union of Textile and Garment Workers of Nigeria, as well as the Zaria People's Forum".

Allegations that the company had refused to pay the terminal benefits of retired workers were false, he stressed.

According to him, "Zaria Industries Ltd will continue to remain a responsible corporate body, engaged in positive activities to ensure its survival and continuity".

Last August, some staff of the firm were sanctioned by the management for various offences, including industrial sabotage and abandonment of duties.

## 25-year-old pottery closes down for lack of patronage

The management of a 21-year-old indigenous pottery in Makurdi has announced the temporary closure of the company. The Managing Director of Dajo Pottery, Mr Levi Yakubu, who conducted newsmen round the ceramics factory, said all the 30 workers had been forced to proceed on three months' leave.

He cited harsh production environment and poor patronage as the major reasons that necessitated the suspension of production.

According to Yakubu, frequent power outages and the

high cost of diesel and kerosene for powering specially-designed machines, are threatening to throw the company out of business. He also lamented that the company, which produces high-quality ceramics, including souvenirs, was receiving higher patronage from foreigners than from Nigerians.

"Patronage from Nigerians is low as they prefer to buy expensive but low-grade ceramic souvenirs from abroad than the cheap world-class products available here," he stated.


Yakubu, who said he

started the business in 1984 with a N25,000 loan from NDE, added that the company was capable of meeting the ceramic products needs of Nigerians.

NAN reports that Yakubu's efforts at local production of ceramics earned him a National Honours Award (MON) in 2000.

Last year, he was also conferred with National Productivity Order of Merit Award by President Olusegun Obasanjo. He said he planned to create awareness in Nigeria on the quality of the company's products by organising an international exhibition.

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# Inside Politics

## G-34 resurrection: What went wrong?

The media has recently been awash with the planned resurrection of the once active political pressure group, the G-34 presumably to wrest control of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) from the tight grip of President Olusegun Obasanjo ahead of 2007. The president, advocates of the G-34 suggested, has become so dictatorial and domineering especially in the control of the machinery of the PDP and needed to be stripped of that awesome control of the party.

Soon after the screaming headlines about the suspected resurrection of the G-34, there has been a deafening silence on what was thought to be a major political offensive. This has suggested that the whole media hype about the rebirth of the G-34 was a fluke after all, and not a product of any orchestrated design, otherwise, it should not have dissolved into thin air the way it did.

Conversely however, politicians are believed to be schemers and they use the technique of disinformation to make their real intention vague to be able to give a surprise attack that can defy remedy. To this end, the G-34 might be perfecting plans in stealth. This theory was given credence by a member of the organising committee for the botched G-34 meeting who spoke in confidence. According to the source, all those who expect to track down G-34 at a meeting will certainly not succeed. This, he said, was because the group was making confidential consultations and *subterranean manoeuvres* to achieve its aim. This somehow suggests that politics is

By Hammeed M. Bello,  
Senior Political Reporter

akin to guerrilla warfare whereby politicians remain less conspicuous but can wreck large-scale havoc against their opponents.

The proponents of the G-34, most of whom are major stakeholders in the PDP were apparently worried about the many crisis rocking the party and the alleged manipulations and hijacking of the party apparatus by President Obasanjo and his loyalists to perpetrate alleged selfish and hidden agenda. By their antecedents in 1997, the G-34 was a group of staunch and dogged fighters who tirelessly fought the self-succession bid of former head of state, the late General Sani Abacha. This is why the public was curious when the group recently announced its reawakening, although many of the pioneer members had either denied knowledge of the meeting or said they were not invited. Some of those who spoke in this regard included a member of the PDP board of trustees, and chairman, committee for the reform of the party, Alhaji Iron Dan Musa, the chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) Chief Sunday Awoniyi among other funding members of the G-34.

It was gathered that the failure of the group to reassemble was due to the intervention of the federal government which threw spanners in their works to disintegrate their cohesion and make it impossible for them to meet as planned.

It was largely a problem of poor strategy coupled with hypocrisy among some members of the group who dumped the plan and instead



President Obasanjo

sold out in the last minute.

It was alleged that the federal government identified the key figures; especially those entrusted with the convening of the meeting and infiltrated their camp by breaking their ranks and even allegedly dangling carrots to seduce them. It was alleged also that Chief Solomon Lar, former PDP board of trustees chairman was named as the convener of the G-34 meeting but that the plan of the organising committee leaked out and their ranks were consequently broken.



Alhaji Atiku Abubakar

was against their earlier commitment to the cause of Atiku's 2007 presidential ambition.

Among such governors were Delta State governor, James Ibori, his Edo State counterpart, Lucky Igbinedion and Donald Duke, Cross Rivers State governor. They were said to have visited Governor Ahmed Makarfi of Kaduna State recently to smoothen rough edges on the plan which was suspected to have had the blessing of President Obasanjo. Under the arrangement, Governor

Makarfi is said to have been tipped as vice presidential candidate.

Despite the denial by the South-South governors that their visit to Kaduna did not have any political undertone, it must not be waived away. This is because, in politics, it is said, there is no permanent friend; that the only thing permanent is interest, and once interest begins to differ; the bond of political friendship becomes suspect, and consequently porous.

Whether the G-34 is dead and buried, or is incubating, one thing that is apparent is that President Obasanjo perhaps has absolute control of the machinery of the party as alleged by the G-34 crusaders, and will decide who heads the party, including who succeeds him in 2007. But there feelings that the mass defections of other party members into PDP is for strategic reasons. It is to culminate in the emergence of huge bloc out of the party to pose an unbeatable challenge that will make the PDP a toothless bulldog.

Governors of the South-South, South West and their counterparts in the north are said to be behind this move, and they are of the belief that the PDP as is currently being run is antithetical to their interests.

***"It was gathered that the failure of the group to reassemble was due to the intervention of the federal government which threw spanners in their works to disintegrate their cohesion and make it impossible for them to meet as planned. It was largely a problem of poor strategy coupled with hypocrisy among some members of the group who dumped the plan and instead sold out in the last minute. It was alleged that the federal government identified the key figures; especially those entrusted with the convening of the meeting and infiltrated their camp by breaking their ranks and even allegedly dangling carrots to seduce them. It was alleged also that Chief Solomon Lar, former PDP board of trustees chairman was named as the convener of the G-34 meeting but that the plan of the organising committee leaked out and their ranks were consequently broken. Despite the counter attack against the G-34 initiative, the end might not have come for the group yet because politicians are not predictable, especially when interests are threatened."***

# Inside Politics

## 2007: Marwa denies working for IBB, Atiku

By Godwin Tyonogo,  
Freelancer, Abuja

Former military administrator of Borno and Lagos states, Gen. Buba Marwa (rt) has debunked speculations making the rounds that his campaigning for a presidential ticket come 2007 was a mere rose as he is alleged to be fronting for one of two equally visible presidential hopefuls.

There have been persistent allegations that the retired general was either working for Gen. Ibrahim Babangida or the vice president Atiku Abubakar.

But in yet another refutation in his residence in Abuja when the North Central Youth Vanguard (NOCEYVA) paid him a solidarity visit to register their support for his political projects, the former MILAD stated that he was not fronting for anybody but himself noting that "leadership is from

God and only God can chose who should rule his people".

To put all these speculations to rest for good, Marwa would that he made soon address the nation to unfold his political programmes towards ensuring his success in 2007.

He further advised those who "chose to embark on cheap black mail" by saying that he is working for some people's interest other than his, to engage on advanced and matured means of politicking.

He disclosed that the youths, women and the poor which he targets as the fulcrum of his support for his quest to rule the country in 2007, must be given the opportunity to exercise their franchise without fear of victimizations.

He challenged the NOCEYVA to see his political ambition as their personal one to ensure that the campaign comes a reality.



Members, House of Representatives (R-L) Hon. Kurfi Isaq Idris (L) Hon. Almajir Geidan (M) and Hon. Hafisu Gambo at the National Assembly Abuja...yesterday  
Pix: Felix Onigbinde



Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa

## Political class tasked on one party state

From Sani Babadoko,  
Bureau Chief Kaduna

A chieftain of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Kaduna North local government, Alhaji Halilu Musa has called on the political class to arrest the drift towards a one party state in Nigeria.

HE told *Daily Trust* that Nigeria could not achieve a sustainable democracy if the drift to one party state as seen by the desire of prominent politicians to join the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is not halted.

Alhaji Halilu criticised politicians who jumped to the PDP in order secure political offices even as he advised former president Ibrahim Babangida to pitched his lamp with the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) and General Muhammadu Buhari (rt) to team up with the Peoples Salvation Party (PSP).

"Buhari and Babangida are all heavy weight politicians and I urge them to demonstrate this by revitalizing the smaller parties since they have followers across the country, urging that the trend towards a one party state must be arrested".

Alhaji Halilu dismissed the forth coming National Political Reform Conference as a jamboree which is bound to end in bitter acrimony because every ethnic nationality has adopted an entrenched position and that the hapless condition the Obasanjo administration has driven Nigerians do not allow for compromises.

"Today the north is quarrelling with the south over the next president, the far north is quarrelling with the middle-belt and there is tension everywhere, so the conference will lead to any meaningful objective" he added.

The ANPP chieftain called on the federal government to improve the security situation in the country by giving it priority in the national budget, as well the establishment of a truly independent electoral body by transferring the funding of the Independent National Electoral Commission (NEC) to the judiciary.

## ANPP chieftains' supporters decamp to PDP Kwara

A group chieftains of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and their followers from Baruteen local government area of Kwara state have decamped to the People Democratic Party.

Professor Halidu Abubakar, former ANPP Kwara North senatorial aspirant led the big wigs which included a former secretary to the state government under Mohammed Lawal's administration, Alhaji Umar Abubakar to decamp to the PDP.

Speaking with newsmen, Professor Halidu said they resolved to decamp following the award of contract for the Oyo state boundary-Kosobosu-Chikanda international road which cheques were released to the two construction companies Monday and other populist programmes of the Dr. Saraki's administration noting that road construction was important to the people as it would facilitate speedy development of rural areas.

Professor Halidu lauded the dynamism and focus of the Saraki administration which he said was characterised by proper articulation of people oriented policies and programmes, adding that "the fight against poverty, unemployment, inequality and social justice is like kicking out poio from the country".

Other decampers who constituted apart of the pillar of former Mohammed Lawal's administration in the Kwara North senatorial district included Umar Guru, ex-special Adviser to Lawal and Sise Salihu, chairman ANPP, Baruteen local government

From Andulrazaq Adebayo,  
Correspondent, (Ilorin)

area among others.

Reacting, governor Bukola Saraki said "what we saw today (decampment) is one of the things that encourages one because you saw the caliber of the decampers, ward chairman of ANPP and former SSG of the previous government".



Governors Peter Odili of Rivers state and Bola Tinubu of Lagos state sharing a moment together during a public function in Lagos

## Rep tasks youths on leadership

By Abdu Labaran,  
Group Political Editor

Apparently unimpressed by the leadership style of the elders, a member of the House of Representatives from Katsina State, Hon. Lawal Garba has challenged Nigerian youths to wrest the mantle of leadership so as to save the country from imminent collapse.

Making the call over the weekend during a tour of his Daura/Maiadua/Sandamu Federal constituency, Hon. Garba accused elders of failing the nation by not keeping

faith with their covenant with the people as, according to him, instead of serving the people, they have become the masters of the people appropriating to themselves all that belong to all.

"The time has now come for the youths to stand up and be counted. It is up to the youths to wrest the mantle of leadership and rescue this country from the comatose situation we are in since the elders appear too busy helping themselves from the national treasury and squandering the rest of the nation's wealth on vain glorious ventures.

"The future of this country depends very much on how the youths respond to the call for service to our mother land because both age, number and energy are on their side," he stated lamenting that for all the benefits Nigerians derive from our five years of democracy, the country may as well have remained under the grip of a totalitarian dictatorship.

The federal lawmaker, who visited two wards in each of three local government areas in his constituency, asserted that only General Mohammed Buhari (rt) had continued to identify with the yearning and aspiration of the average Nigerian whose suffering "under this so called democracy

seems to be on the increase daily."

According to him, the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) under the guidance of General Buhari, its Presidential flag bearer, remains to party to rescue the country from its present dire straits calling on "all Nigerians to remain steadfast in support of ANPP and Buhari no matter the provocation they are subjected to."

Hon. Garba explained that the purpose of the constituency tour was to enable him keep in touch with the people so as to remain current with what is happening, exchange ideas with the people, supervise on-going development projects being undertaken by him and to explain legislative work, current national issues and the general state of the nation to his constituents.

The lawmaker assured his constituents that he would continue to use both his resources and energy to execute projects and programmes that would improve their wellbeing listing such projects to include building of classrooms, culverts, drainage, boreholes, repair and renovation of mosques and assisting students in both primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

## Group reaffirms support for Yarima

From Aliyu Haruna,  
Correspondent Kaduna

The Yarima Solidarity Association (YSA), a group championing the campaign for the speculated presidential conspiracy of Governor Ahmed Sani of Zamfara state has reaffirmed its support for the aspiration of the governor vowing to leave no stone unturned to persuade him to take the 2007 challenge.

In a statement signed by its National President, Ashiru Muhammed Usman, YSA expressed its determination to reach every part of the country to canvass support to persuade the Zamfara governor to contest the 2007 presidential election.

The statement said that Yarima's choice was influenced by his outstanding achievement which have impacted positively on the life of the people of Zamfara state and the country at large.

YSA added that his open door policy coupled with his civilian political background made his choice obvious in 2007 presidential election.



Hon. Lawal Garba

# Sports

## French hopes lie with Trezeguet, Henry

Coach Raymond Domenech hopes the return of striker David Trezeguet will give France their first home victory under him when they take on Sweden on Wednesday.

Trezeguet, who has not played for France since June because of injuries, will partner Arsenal's Thierry Henry in the friendly international in Paris.

"They are France's best two strikers," Domenech said. "My job is to help them feel at ease when they play together. From there, it's up to them."

"We showed some great determination against Poland (in November) but it's true that we still have some trouble finding the net."

The French are unbeaten

since losing 1-0 to Greece in the Euro 2004 quarter-finals last June yet they have looked anything but impressive over the last six months.

Their two away victories against the Faroe Islands and Cyprus World Cup qualifiers have been overshadowed by four consecutive draws, three of which were goalless, on home soil.

"We badly need a match

that will set us off," said midfielder Benoit Pedretti. "I hope Wednesday's tie against Sweden will be the one."

"We are capable of producing some good soccer and we know it," he said.

Domenech has consistently asked for patience since taking over from Jacques Santini in July saying that building a team after the

international retirement of Zinedine Zidane and defenders Lilian Thuram and Bixente Lizarazu would take time.

"All good things come to those who learned to wait. We are playing much better on every outing," Domenech said. "Our good work will pay off."

Sweden look like providing the challenge France need before they resume their World Cup qualifying campaign next month against Switzerland and Israel.

The Swedes reached the last eight at Euro 2004, bowing out 5-4 on penalties to the Netherlands, and they have only lost once, to Croatia, since then.

Juventus striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic pulled out of the Sweden squad with a back injury on Monday.

"We are physically ready

and we have an extra motivation as we are going to face the former world champion coach Lars Lagerback."

"I have the feeling that we are as strong as we were in Portugal last year."

The last match between the two countries was a dull goalless draw in Stockholm in April 1998. Sweden have not beaten France on home soil since 1952.

### Probable teams:

**France:** 23-Gregory Coupet; 2-Jonathan Zebina, 17-Sebastien Squillaci, 19-Gael Givet, 5-William Gallas; 4-Patrick Vieira, 18-Benoit Pedretti, 6-Camel Meriem, 8-Ludovic Giuly; 12-Thierry Henry, 20-David Trezeguet

**Sweden:** 1-Magnus Hedman; 2-Mikael Nilsson, 4-Teddy Lukic, 5-Alexander Ostlund, 3-Olof Mellberg; 6-Anders Aanderson, 8-Pontus Farnerud, 7-Fredrik Ljungberg, 9-Christian Wilhelmsson, 10-Marcus Allback, 11-Markus Rosenberg

**Referee:** Julian Rodriguez Santiago (Spain).

## Wright-Phillips keen to play anywhere

Winger Shaun Wright-Phillips is willing to play anywhere for England in his bid to reach the 2006 World Cup finals.

The exciting 23-year-old is set to play out of position in Wednesday's friendly against the Netherlands at Villa Park because captain David Beckham's place on the right is virtually guaranteed.

"I just like to cause problems for defenders," Wright-Phillips told reporters

### ... for World Cup dream

at England's training base on Monday.

"It doesn't matter to me which side I'm on, if it's the left, then so be it."

"I'm just glad to be named in the squad and to pull on the shirt is another big step for me...Everybody knows what a player and what a person David Beckham is. I'm learning from him every day."

Wright-Phillips, who

marked his debut in a friendly against Ukraine last year with a fine goal, could well get his fourth England cap on the left side of midfield or up front in an attacking trio with Michael Owen and Wayne Rooney.

In either role, the aim will be to stake his claim to a place in next month's World Cup qualifying double-header against Northern Ireland and Azerbaijan for the Group Six leaders.

From there, the aim will be to eclipse his stepfather, ex-Arsenal striker Ian Wright, by reaching the World Cup finals.

"It's one of my dreams," he said. "I've always watched them as a kid and I've always wanted to be able to say one day that I've played there — and hopefully even win it. It means the world to me."

His stepfather was not so fortunate, an injury putting him out of the running for France 98.

"I'd like to go a step further and do it," said Wright-Phillips. "And he's said he would like me to go that step further and to be in the squad and to go places with England."

Another player inspired by Wright's stepfather, Crystal Palace striker and Arsenal fan Andy Johnson, is hoping to make his England debut on Wednesday.

Though his promoted

club are fighting to avoid the drop, Johnson has scored 15 league goals this season and won a deserved call-up from Sven-Goran Eriksson.

"It's hard to believe, coming from the first division and playing for a team that's so low in the Premiership it's in a relegation battle," Johnson told reporters.

His call-up is the high point in a career which looked to be spiralling downwards in 2002 when he was off-loaded by Birmingham City as a makeweight in a deal that took Clinton Morrison from south London to the Midlands.

"It was a massive turning point in my career. It was either make or break," Johnson recalled.

Johnson blossomed under former City boss Trevor Francis and his goals helped propel Palace into the top-flight last season under Iain Dowie. His reward is a chance at international level.

"I feel like I'm top of the world," he said. "I came to the Premier League and thought it would be nice to score 10 goals. I've scored 15 and now I want more. And now that I've been here, I want more."

"I'm not just here for the ride. I mean business...it's a new challenge, just like in the Premier League when everyone thought I wouldn't score goals. And I like to think I've proved them wrong now."



Wright-Phillips



Trezeguet

## Money can't buy Gerrard, say Liverpool

Steven Gerrard will not be sold against his will even if Liverpool are offered 50 million pounds (\$93.51 million) for him, the Premier League club's chief executive Rick Parry said on Monday.

Chelsea and Real Madrid, the two biggest spending clubs in world football, have been linked with bids for the inspirational England midfielder but Parry said Liverpool were still hoping to build a team around him.

"Steven is above money," Parry told BBC radio. "He is the future of Liverpool."

"It doesn't matter if it's 30, 40 or 50 million pounds, we will not accept offers. But we are also realistic enough to know we can't keep Steven against his will."

Parry said Liverpool had told Chelsea Gerrard was not for sale last year and also turned down a Real Madrid request for an option on the 24-year-old during negotiations for the purchase of striker Fernando Morientes last month.

"They were looking for ways of saying they got more out of the deal for Fernando Morientes, but the response to Real Madrid was the same — Steven is not for sale," Parry added.

A product of the Liverpool youth system, Gerrard signed his current four-year contract in November 2003. He has, however, expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of success at the club and said last month he would consider his future at the end of the

season.

Liverpool lie fifth in the Premier League, 22 points behind leaders Chelsea.

"We have re-affirmed recently to Steven that we are trying to build a team around him," said Parry. "We crave success as much as he does. We know he's ambitious and nobody can argue with that."

"I think Steven would dearly love to win things with Liverpool more than he'd like to do anything else."

"We all want to see progress by next season. He's not alone in that. There are a lot of other players who feel the same, so we all have a common aim."

"Our position is we want Steven to stay, but we are also realistic enough and have enough respect for Steven —

and he has enough respect for us — to know that it is his decision that will be crucial."

"You are not going to keep a player like Steven against his will. That just doesn't work, but any idea we are going to accept offers for Steven and then tell him 'by the way we've decided to sell you' is not on the agenda. You can forget that."

Parry dismissed reports that Gerrard's departure to Roman Abramovich-funded Chelsea was already agreed, but said the clubs had discussed the player.

"There have been a lot of open secrets about Steven, most of which have been complete myths," he said. "It is suggested we had a deal tied up last summer. We didn't have an offer last summer."

## Chelsea's Robben out for up to two months

Chelsea's Arjen Robben has broken two metatarsal bones in his foot and will be out for up to two months, the Dutch winger said on Tuesday.

An MRI scan on Monday revealed that the damage sustained early in the league leaders' 1-0 victory at Blackburn Rovers last week was more serious than first thought.

"Six weeks is the average time to heal this injury and then I need a few more weeks to be completely fit again," Robben told Dutch newspaper Algemeen Dagblad.

"I had the feeling directly that it was a serious injury but because of the swelling it was impossible to make a final diagnose."

"It felt different then last summer when I had the same injury on my other foot."

"Then I could walk already after three days but I stayed sidelined for a long period. I hope that it will take me now six to eight weeks."

Robben will miss Chelsea's Champions League last 16 games against Barcelona and the League Cup final against Liverpool.

# Sports

## Giggs against proposed Glazer bid

Ryan Giggs has come out in opposition against the proposed takeover of Manchester United, by American billionaire Malcolm Glazer. Glazer owns 28.1% of the Old Trafford club and has submitted a third bid to buy the club in the long-running saga.

"The general feeling is that the club is in good hands. This club cannot get any better than it is at the moment," Giggs told the Daily Mail. "We sympathise with the fans. Of course we do." He added: "Nothing needs to change. We hope that continues."

"As far as the fans are concerned, the team and the club and the way the whole thing is being run at the moment shows that there is nothing wrong at all."

Giggs comments come a day after Rio Ferdinand had said he is unsure of Glazer's motives.

"A lot of people want the club's interest to be with people who have grown up with the club and have got its interests at heart," said Ferdinand.

"No-one knows what this guy will be bringing to the table."

The central defender added on BBC Radio Five Live: "We will have to wait and see what Glazer comes with."

"I would like to see the situation resolved either way."

"I think people are getting bored with him coming in and out of the news with new proposals."

"The other stuff off the pitch takes the shine off what is going on the pitch."

United have issued a statement to the stock

exchange which read: "The board has noted the recent press speculation on this subject."

"The board can confirm that it has now received a detailed proposal subject to various pre-conditions which may form the basis of an offer for Manchester United from Glazer."

"A further announcement will be made in due course."

Glazer's previous bids for the club, which United supporters opposed, were rejected by the board because of the high level of debt they would incur.

But it is believed that Glazer has substantially reduced the borrowing required for his latest move.

He will still need the approval of major shareholders John Magnier and JP McManus, who own 28.9% of the club to succeed.

But the Irish duo have cut off talks with Glazer over the proposed sale of their stake, while fans remain opposed to his involvement.



Giggs... he opposes the proposed take over of his club by Malcolm Glazer

### MAN UTD TAKEOVER TRAIL



### MAN. UTD./GLAZER STORYLINE

1. Sep 26 '03: Glazer declares 3.17% stake.
2. Nov 28 '03: He spends £30m to build stake to 14.31%.
3. Feb 16 '04: Glazer 'considering' a bid.
4. October 4 '04: Man Utd confirm 'preliminary approach': New offer period starts.
5. November 12 '04: Glazer (who by then owned 28.11%) removes 3 directors; his bank and PRs resign.
6. February '05: Bid speculation, followed by detailed proposals from Glazer

## Shares rise on new Man Utd offer

Shares in Manchester United closed up 4.75% on Monday following a new offer from US tycoon Malcolm Glazer.

The board of the football club is expected to meet early this week to discuss the latest proposal, which values the club at £800m (\$1.5bn).

Manchester United revealed on Sunday that it had received a detailed proposal from Mr Glazer, which looks set to receive more serious scrutiny.

The club has previously rejected Mr Glazer's approaches out of hand.

But a senior source at the club told the BBC: "This time it's different."

Supporters' group Shareholders United, however, urged the club to reject the new deal.

A spokesman for the Shareholders United said: "I can't see any difference (compared to Mr Glazer's previous proposals) other than £200m less debt."

"He isn't bringing any money into the club; he'll use our money to buy it."

Mr Glazer's latest move is being led by Mr Glazer's two sons, Avi and Joel, according

to the Financial Times. A proposal was received by David Gill, United's chief executive, at the end of last week, pitched at about 300p a share.

David Cummings, head of UK equities for Standard Life Investments, said he believed a "well funded" 300p a share bid would be enough for Mr Glazer to take control of the club.

"I do not think there is anything that Manchester United fans can do about it," he told the BBC. "They can complain about it but it is curtains for them. They may

not want him but they are going to get him."

The US tycoon, who has been wooing the club for the last 12 months, has approached the United board with "detailed proposals", it has confirmed.

Mr Glazer, who owns the Tampa Bay Buccaneers team, hopes this will lead to a formal bid being accepted.

He is believed to have increased the amount of equity in the new proposal, though it is not clear by how much.

For his proposal to succeed, he needs the support of United's largest shareholders, the Irish horseracing tycoons JP McManus and John Magnier. They own 29% of United

through their Cubic Expression investment vehicle. Mr Glazer and his family hold a stake of 28.1%. But it is not yet known whether Mr McManus and Mr Magnier would support a Glazer bid.

NM Rothschild, the investment bank, is advising Mr Glazer, according to the Financial Times. His previous adviser, JPMorgan, quit last year when Mr Glazer went ahead and voted against the appointment of three United directors to the board, against its advice.

But the FT said it thought JP Morgan may still have had some role in financing Mr Glazer's latest financial proposal.

## Euro giants catch winter chill

Mighty Juventus and Barcelona crashed to shock defeats to blow the Italian and Spanish league title races wide open while Paris Saint Germain were sent hurtling closer to the drop zone in France.

Juventus coach Fabio Capello said his team were suffering from an identity crisis after they lost 1-0 away to Palermo.

It was their second league defeat in four days and allowed defending champions AC Milan to close the gap to just two points when they beat Lazio 2-1.

"We are not ourselves anymore, we've lost a little something," said Capello after his side were edged out in Sicily by Franco Brienza's superb strike.

"We need to take a good

look at ourselves and talk about it, not lose our heads. We've lost two games in a row, but fortunately we still have an advantage."

Juve's dip in form has been in tandem with the absence through injury of playmaker Pavel Nedved who is likely to be out for another week with a knee injury.

Hernan Crespo scored the winner for AC Milan against his old club in the dying moments.

With the match heading for a draw, Kaka's shot came back off the post and Crespo was on hand to tap home the rebound.

Massimo Oddo's penalty had given Lazio a second-half lead before Andriy Shevchenko's superb 25-yard free-kick levelled the score 18 minutes from time.

With 15 games left to play, Juventus have 50 points and reigning champions Milan have 48, eight more than Udinese who won 1-0 at struggling Brescia.

In Spain, Barcelona's majestic glide to the title hit the rocks with a 2-0 defeat at home to Atletico Madrid, with both goals coming from Fernando Torres.

The defeat was Barcelona's first in their Nou Camp stronghold for nearly 13 months.

Torres' opener came after just 37 seconds and his second four minutes into injury time at the end of the match when the striker scored from the penalty spot after he had been brought down by Barca keeper Victor Valdes.

Barca have 51 points from their 22 games but their lead was reduced to four points

after their second-placed bitter rivals Real Madrid romped to a 4-0 victory over Espanyol on Saturday.

Two of the goals came from captain Raul Gonzalez, while Thomas Gravesen and Zinedine Zidane grabbed the others.

"We are now in the fast lane with our winning streak. This was an important victory over a direct rival and we've kept up with Barcelona," said Raul.

Guerrero, 20, won a penalty kick which Dutch international Roy Makaay converted on the stroke of half-time and then netted himself after 68 minutes.

Second-placed Schalke 04 needed a last minute equaliser from Brazilian Ailton to net a 2-2 draw at bottom side Hansa Rostock.



Glazer



**NIGERIAN AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**MURTALA MUHAMMAD AIRPORT**

**P. M. B. 21084, IKEJA - LAGOS, NIGERIA**

**INVITATION FOR PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION OF NAVIGATION AIDS.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), in continuation of its effort to upgrade air navigation safety facilities in our airports to meet international standards, is embarking on provision of new Navigation Aids (NavAids) for Yola and Ibadan Airports.

The Agency hereby invites reputable contractors to pre-qualify for bidding for the supply of Air Navigation Aids for installation in Yola and Ibadan Airports.

**SCOPE OF WORK**

The scope of the project is as follows,

- Procurement and delivery of complete, 1:1 Redundant, VOR/DME system for Yola Airport complying and spare parts.
- Procurement and delivery of complete, 1:1 Redundant, Instrument Landing system (ILS) for Ibadan Airport complying with ICAO specifications in Annex 10, and suitable for category II Precision Landing, with all installation and accessories and spare parts.

Details of the project mission objectives and scope are to be found in the tender documents.

**PRE-QUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS**

Interested reputable aviation systems manufacturers, or their accredited representatives, should submit the following pre-qualification documents:

1. Certificate of Incorporation
2. Company profile/Brochures, to include the company's product and detailed CV of members of the board of directors.
3. Evidence of Registration with NAMA
4. Evidence of Company Income Tax Payments, if operating in Nigeria.
5. Evidence of alliance with the aviation system manufacture, in the case of agents.
6. Evidence of previous performance in aviation environments in Nigeria or else Where, and ability to provide a full range of technical support.
7. Bank reference from reputable bank(s)

Payment of pre-qualification fees shall be by bank draft or certified cheques made payable to Nigerian Airspace Management Agency, Lagos.

Bid documents can be collected only after successful pre-qualification.

Only pre-qualified bidders shall be notified.

**SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

The prequalification document should be sealed and marked "PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR NAMA NAVIID PROJECT 2005" and delivered by hand or courier not later than two weeks from the date of this advert, to the following address:

The company secretary/Legal adviser,  
Nigerian Airspace Management Agency,  
NAMA Headquarters,  
Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria.

Please, note that this is not an invitation to tender. Full tendering procedure is contained in the bid documents to be provided to contractors who may be successfully pre-qualified.

This advertisement shall not be construed to imply a commitment of any sort, on the part of the Agency. The Agency shall not entertain any pleas or claims in respect of this exercise.

**Trust Classified**

**OPPORTUNITY FOR A SUPERITENDANT PHARMACIST FOR IMMEDIATE EMPLOYMENT**

**LOCATION:** Karu, Abuja  
**QUALIFICATION, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS**  
B. Pharm. With not less than 1 year experience  
Experience in running a successful retail outlet for a minimum of 1 year can be added advantage but not necessarily a pre-condition  
23- 35 years of age  
Performance driven individual  
Self-starter with good problem solving and confident mindset  
Unquestionable integrity, self motivated and natural flair for customer service  
Computer literacy (MS Excel and Word) desirable but not compulsory  
Capacity and disposition to learn

**REMUNERATIONS:**  
Remuneration attached to this position are very attractive and offers a lot of opportunity for personal development. Applicants should submit handwritten applications together with an explicit but concise C.V. and photocopies of credentials, inclusive of birth certificate within 2 weeks of this publication to:  
**The Advertiser,**  
P.O. Box 3299  
Garki- Abuja

**LOSS OF DOCUMENT**

The general public is hereby informed that the document Conveyance of Provisional approval of a Customary Right of Occupancy in respect of **Plot No. XK 169 and XK170 measuring about 600m<sup>2</sup> at Apo Extension layout Abuja**, a piece of land measuring **27.8 hectares at Ado Karu Estate Abuja** got missing. If found please contact **HARUNA MADU GADZAMA** of Plot 251B, Ubiaja Crescent, Garki II, Abuja or the nearest Police station

Signed  
**Haruna Madu Gadzama**

**LOSS OF DOCUMENT**

The general public is hereby informed that the Original Land document belonging to **BINTA BABAKEKE ENTERPRISES NIGERIA LIMITED** has been declared missing. With Right of Occupancy of **plot 1635 Katampe (B7) FCT, Abuja**. Whoever transacts business with the said document does that at his/her own risk.

Signed  
**HAJIYA BINTA EUNTUA**

**SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AID CAMPAIGN**

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Organisation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, No. 1 of 1990.

- The Trustees are:
1. Engr. Theophilus Onyekwere Ubani
  2. Barr. (Mrs.) Joy Iheoma Ogbonnaya
  3. Mr. Onyukwu Onyukwu
  4. Arc. Okey Nduka
  5. Dr. Bonaventure Ogugua Onodu
  6. Mrs. Joy Nwankwo
  7. Barr. (Mrs.) Nkechi Egemba
  8. Mrs. Edith Nwosu

Any objection to this Registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5, P.M.B. 198, Garki, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed  
**AMUGO IJEOMA, Esq.**  
Plot 438, Zungeru Close, Area 3 Garki-Abuja

**LIFE GATE FOUNDATION**

The general public is hereby informed that the above named Organisation has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, No. 1 of 1990.

- The Trustees are:
1. Pastor Temidayo Olutayo (President)
  2. Pastor Tosin Ajolore
  3. Mrs. Amaka Obiajunwa
  4. Miss Hilda Iyabode Oduwole
  5. Mr. Patrick Osemeke
  6. Mr. Moses Olusoji Danlami
  7. Miss Bunmi Skelly Opajobi
  8. Mr. Godwill Maduka
  9. Mr. Olarewaju Kazeem

Any objection to this Registration should be forwarded to the Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Wuse Zone 5, P.M.B. 198, Garki, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed  
**Secretary**

**Change of Names**

I, formerly known as **ODII ELIZABETH NKECHI**, now wish to be known as **ODII ELIZABETH OLUFUMILAYO**. Public to note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS AISHATU MAMZA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS AISHATU MAINA GADZAMA**. All former documents remain valid. FRSC and general public please take note.

I, formerly known as **MRS P.A. AWANLE**, now wish to be known as **MISS UMOLE PAULINA**. Former documents remain valid. National Universities Commission Abuja and general public to note.

I, formerly known as **MOHAMMED GARBA**, now wish to be identified as **MOHAMMED RAIYANU GARBA**. All former documents remain valid. ABU Zaria Post-graduate School and the public to note.

I, formerly known as **HAJARA AUDI**, now wish to be called **HAJARA MOH'D MIJINYAWA**. All former documents remain valid. State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and general public to note.

I, formerly known as **HARUNA MOHAMMA D**, henceforth wish to be known as **ABUBAKAR YAWALE MUHAMMAD**. Former documents remain valid. Secondary Education Board and general public to note.

I, formerly known as **HAUWA ADAMU**, now wish to be known and called **MRS HAUWA INUWA ABDULLAHI**. All former documents remain valid. General public to note.

Formerly **JOYCE MAIMUNA EMMANUEL**, now wish to be called **MRS. JOYCE HUSSAINI JAMES**. All former documents remain valid. General Public to take note.

# Sports

## Former NRA boss, Yabilsu, is dead

The immediate past President of the Nigerian Referee Association (NRA), Col. Joso Dogo

By Patrick Andrew, Senior Sports Reporter  
Yabilsu is dead.  
Col. Yabilsu, who was a student at the National War Col-



Col. Yabilsu

lege, died yesterday at the National Hospital, Abuja after being in coma for some 48 hours.

The former second vice chairman of the NFA board had a ghastly motor accident near the National Stadium, Abuja at about 2.03am Monday morning and was discovered some 30 minutes later. He was rushed to the National Hospital where he was placed under intensive care.

Trustsports learnt that later Yabilsu who sustained several injuries was to be operated upon yesterday.

Yabilsu had the accident, according to sources, while returning from attending the meeting of the NRA seminar for referees on Sunday. The

meeting was held at the Valencia Hotel.

The former referees boss relinquished his post following the election of Dr. Sam Sam Jaja last September. He also vacated his seat in the NFA board after his promotion to the rank of Colonel.

The death has stalled further sitting of the three-man panel instituted to investigate allegations against suspended NFA management.

A member of the panel Dr. Jaja his successor in the NRA stool was called upon by the authorities of the National Hospital to come to sign some documents before the corpse could be deposited at the mortuary yesterday.

The sudden death of Yabilsu has equally put paid to the panel's desire to have him testify tomorrow on the alleged indictment of the NFA management.

Yabilsu had led the audit report panel set up by the NFA to investigate the finances accruing to the football house and how they were expended.

Yabilsu took eight months to finish the assignment which was not only said to be thorough out seriously indicted the NFA management for impropriety and administrative ineptitude.

It was the report which was consigned to the Sports Ministry that gave fillip to the minister, Col. Musa Mohammed to initiate the process to reform the NFA.

## Flying Eagles stars head for Sweden

Flying Eagles revelation at the just concluded African Youth Championship, Solo-mon David Abwo and utility defender, Adedeji Adeyinka are due for trials at Swedish club Gif Sundsvall FC.

The players' Manager, Patrick Adjekughele told KICK OFF at the weekend that the two players who were outstanding at the AYC were due for Sweden this week.

"Solomon David and Adedeji Adeyinka will be travelling to Sweden this week for trials at Gif Sundsvall FC," Adjekughele disclosed to KICK OFF.

"I can confirm to you that all arrangements have been concluded for this trip and the Swedish club are eager to have the players in their team based on their performance at the Benin 2005 AYC," the player agent said on Sunday.

ZE Sports Management Company, the parent company of AS Racines FC, is the people packaging Adeyinka and Solomon's trip to Sweden. You can now see that the reports published by some dailies that Adedeji Adeyinka is claiming to be a

Pepsi Academy player is not true, unfounded and baseless," Adjekughele said.

"The boys are needed at Gif Sundsvall FC to help the club boost their chances of playing in the UEFA Cup at the end of the season because the club is well placed on the Swedish First Division League table now and the team is poised to win at least a UEFA Cup ticket at the end of the Swedish league," he explained.

## Kwara Utd, Nationale clash in league opener

Kwara United of Ilorin will lock horns with Iwuanyanwu Nationale of Owerri in the star match of the Nigeria Football League which kicks off on the 12th of February 2005, according to fixtures released by the League Management Committee.

In other fixtures, Lobi Stars of Makurdi will be home to Elkanemi of Maiduguri while Dolphin do battle with Insurance of Benin at the Liberation Stadium, Port Harcourt.

However, the fixture will be postponed as Dolphin will be away to Renacimiento in the CAF Champions League preliminary round.

Rangers International of Enugu travel to Aba as guests of Gabros of Nnewi while Gombe United squares up against Wikki Tourists.

Niger Tornadoes will host Enyimba in Minna while it will be a battle of new comers as Sharks visit Gusau for a date against Zamfara United.

Nasarawa United of Lafia might field Daniel Amokachi as they take on Shooting Stars in Ibadan while NPA of Lagos hosts Kano Pillars.

In Abeokuta, it will be the first derby of the 2005 season as Julius Berger hosts Gateway.

## IMC to spend N143m on league

The semi-autonomous Premier and Professional League will gulp N143m, this season.

Besides, any club banned for crowd violence at its venue will pay a fine of N1million before the ban could be lifted.

Chairman of the Interim Management Committee (IMC) of the league board, Chief Oyuki Obaseki

disclosed yesterday while declaring open the pre-season seminar on security and administration.

Obaseki, who said the IMC, is yet to receive a dime from the N50m grant from government would spend N3.4million weekly on the league.

He said the total amount would cover administrative expenses and indemnities of

referees and match commissioners through the season.

Trustsports recalls that the Nigeria Football League assume payment of indemnities of referee and match commissioners to curb incidences of having them compromised by clubs.

Chief Obaseki further said apart from paying the match officials, sterner measures will be taken against clubs found

wanting in providing security for match officials.

"Specifically such venues will be banned and once banned they will remained so. Even if they are unbanned will have to pay N1m to regain the use of its venue.

"This is to show that the NFL will not gloss over incidences of crowd violence against any team, referees or any of our officials for that

matter," he said, stressing that all clubs owners have resolved to instill these measure to guarantee security to referees and everyone.

Meanwhile, referee Francis Kreki, who officiated the Mighty Jets, Wikki Tourists play-off in Kaduna which ended abruptly has been banned for a season.

Obaseki announced yesterday while reiterating the stance of the NFL on poor officiating.

"We have resolved that any referee or assistant referees found wanting will be banned for the season. For a start we have banned the referee that refer the Jets, Wikki match that ended inclusive in Kaduna during the play-offs".

## Lobi gear up for new season

Lobi Stars FC of Makurdi ended its ten-day intensive pre-season training in Kaduna on a bright note with victory over co-Premier League side, Kano Pillars FC.

The friendly match, last of the four matches lined up by the Benue team to assess their new players ended controversially.

The Akume boys, who won two of the three matches played earlier, showed a glimpse of what they have in store for the new season as they subdued the gallant Kano team before the game was ended abruptly when fans encroached the pitch.

Lobi officials, however, told Trustsports that they are set for the coming season, adding that their target of a continental ticket is achievable considering the performance of the players.

Lobi's new technical adviser, Tunde Disu said he is satisfied with the performance of his team in the four warm-up matches.

"I'm satisfied with the performance of my boys both the old players and the new players.

"With this team we can achieve our target of continental tickets at the end of the

By Abdulraheem Aodu, Sports Reporter

season, though that does not mean that we will not attempt the Premier League title," he said.

Lobi Stars chairman, Dominic Torfa agreed with his technical adviser that the

team will make good impact in the domestic championship.

"We are ready for the new season. Our 40-man squad is capable of achieving our objective of a CAF Cup ticket. From the way the boys have played in the pre-season matches and what they have

shown in training, they will go all the way against any opposition," the former Super Eagles striker said.

Lobi defeated Shark of Port Harcourt and Ranchers Bees of Kaduna before playing a 2-2 draw against Kaduna United.

## Ikhana predicts tough times for Kwara Utd

Kwara United Face Iwuanyanwu in what has been billed the star match of the opening day of the 2005 Nigeria Premier League season, but Coach Kadiri Ikhana is making no bones about the fact that his team will be in for some hard times.

"I will be very frank with you, I don't have a team yet," Ikhana told KICK OFF.

"It is going to be a very difficult time for the next six weeks for us. But after that, I expect us to pick up."

As a result, Ikhana said fans should not expect to see good football from his team in that period and warned the home fans to expect some difficult times.

"We are going to be playing very tactically for a start. So fans should not expect to see good football for now. What we will be doing is just play efficient football to get

three points. Psychologically, the boys are ready to play the way I want them to."

And he admits that he

does not expect to be getting hugs and kisses. "I know I am going to have problems in my home matches because of

that, but I just want the fans to be patient with us. The league is a long road and the end will justify the means."



Brazilian player, Ronaldinho, right, helps his teammate Cafu stretch during a training session at Hong Kong Stadium, yesterday. Brazil will have a friendly match with Hong Kong today.

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# DAILY TRUST

WEDNESDAY COLUMN

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

## EDITORIAL

### Nigeria's debt trap (II)

The management of Nigeria's debt is no doubt problematic in view of the fact that those creditor nations and institutions have been deeply involved in the management of the national economy on a daily basis. This completely eliminates any traces of economic independence claimed by the state and its economic policy think tank.

What is now the rule is that there is the perpetuation of structural functional economic thinkers in government who seem to have their allegiance to international finance capital as against their nations. Little wonder it is that failure has since become the hallmark of all attempts at economic reforms of government from 1999 to date.

We wonder how a government that is desperately calling for debt cancellation would continue to seek and take more loans from these international syndicates that have all along been responsible for the poor state of the economy and refused it any latitude to either stabilize or grow. The recent announcement by the Honorable Minister of Finance that the government has taken another loan of about \$260 million is to say the least very unfortunate and ill advised.

This is followed by another African Development Bank loan of about N330 million taken by the federal government in the midst of calls by the Finance Minister for the cancellation or pardon of Nigeria's foreign loans. This situation looks rather contradictory and at cross purposes with the nation's national realities.

The government's strategy of settlement of this international debt through multilateral agencies who, in the first place were not part of the negotiations when these loans were taken, calls for urgent reappraisal. It is saddening to note further the role being played especially by the IMF/World Bank in the determination of how Nigeria pays its debt to its creditors in view of the fact that only about 7% of this debt comes from the two institutions.

It is strongly recommended that the debt question as part of the national economic reform agenda must constitute part of the agenda of the National Political Reform Conference coming up soon. This we believe will afford Nigerians the opportunity to deliberate and discuss on the lingering debt crisis and the declining state of the national economy which by and large is attributable to poor brinkmanship.

There is certainly no sensible relationship between the claims by the Debt Management Office (DMO) that about N1.2 trillion is needed to pay loans in 2005 with Minister Okonja Iweala's ecstasy over the \$260 million and N330 million loan recently borrowed from the World Bank and the ADB. This looks more like a voodoo economics which is partly responsible for the nation's debt crisis and the poor state of Nigeria's economy.

Government is advised to begin a rethink by way of critically reassessing the truthfulness or otherwise of the nation's debt in relation to terms of payment. It is time that a more radical approach to loan repayment is adopted rather than this unending call for cancellation which does not make any meaning to both the creditors and vast majority of the Nigerian people.

Clearly, it is shown that the creditors are not willing to oblige this Nigerian request due to many reasons that are very clear. They are not prepared to forgive the loans of a nation whose nationals have stashed in foreign Bank accounts more than ten times the total money owed. Again, over 90% of the owners of these stashed funds are men that have served in government.

A nation where wastages and leakages in the economy seem uncontrollable in practice despite claims for probity and anti-corruption crusade does not qualify to be forgiven. That is why Nigeria is not part of the forty nations, mostly in Africa, whose debts are to be forgiven.

The earlier the state realizes this fact the better for it and all of us. We advise that government should begin to think of employing more radical and practical measures in addressing this apparent debt trap that has refused the economy the necessary motion that is required to grow. No doubt the Nigeria's debt crisis is alarming and calls for urgent attention. More practical measures are required in the name of the people and the nation.

## Due process? What due process?

By Mohammed Haruna

She came unannounced into the Ladi Kwali Conference Hall of the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, where the Media Trust Limited, publishers of the *Daily Trust* and *Weekly Trust*, hosted its Second Annual National Dialogue on January 13. Myself and Mr. Peter Ajayi, at various times managing director of the *Herald* and the *Sketch* in their heydays, were sitting at the back of the hall, when I noticed her sitting alone, also at the back of the hall, listening attentively as her charge, the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), otherwise known as "Due Process", came in for repeated bashing, first, from Professor Sam Aluko, one of the three lead speakers on the occasion, and second, from Chief S.B. Awoniyi, a former federal super permanent secretary and now chairman of the Arewa Consultative Forum. I am, of course, talking about Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on "Due Process". Ezekwesili has since become famous as "Madam Due Process".

For both Aluko and Awoniyi, Ezekwesili's BMPIU couldn't have been more calculated to abet corruption and waste rather than eliminate or reduce the twin evils. This, both said, was simply because a monopoly over anything is an irresistible temptation to abuse. And in the last four years the BMPIU had been given the monopoly to certify each and every federal government contract, beyond a certain amount, before it is approved for execution and payment.

Ezekwesili must have felt unhappy with the criticisms from Aluko and Awoniyi, for, only a couple of days or so after they spoke, she seized the opportunity of a media dinner at Rock View Hotel, Abuja, to reply, not only to the two gentlemen, but all other critics of "Due Process". Aluko and Awoniyi would not be the first to criticize BMPIU. Among federal civil servants, the unit has become very unpopular because they see it as usurping their jobs of executing federal government projects. The unit is also no more popular with the federal legislators, many of who see it as a bottleneck in the release of their financial appropriations. One senator, Yushau Anka, the senate minority whip, went as far as to declare it as "illegal and unconstitutional".

"Due process", he said in reaction to President Obasanjo's 2005 budget speech in which the president extolled the virtues of BUPIU, "is not saving money, but wasting money. We are being pound foolish and penny wise... Due process has become another conduit for corruption and the practice of nepotism. Contractors complain of greasing palms of officials before contracts are awarded. Contractors qualified by due process come from one section of the country which is contrary to the federal character principle". (*Daily Trust*, October 18, 2004).

Anka's comments obviously add a regional or ethnic dimension to the widespread criticisms of BMPIU. The news report did not say whether the senator gave any facts and figures to prove his charge. But whether he did or not and whether his facts and figures were accurate or not, there is little doubt that the BMPIU itself is hardly anywhere as popular as its boss has become famous.

It is, of course, not as if the BMPIU is universally despised. Far from it. For instance only the other day, the *Nigerian Tribune* which has lately been highly critical of the president and his economic reforms, wrote an editorial in praise of the unit. The occasion was the news that six states, Bauchi, Benue, Cross-River, Edo, Kebbi and Kwara, have indicated interest in creating similar units for their administrations. The states had reportedly contacted Ezekwesili's BMPIU for advice.

"The coming into being of the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) in the presidency", said the *Tribune* (January 18, 2005), "would appear to be addressing the issue of preventing corruption and other sharp practices in the public procurement and tendering process in the public service".

For this reason, the paper said, it was unfortunate that "due process" has been restricted to the central government. "It is therefore cheery news" it said, "that some states are beginning to wake up from their protracted lethargy to embrace due process. It is also gratifying that these states are, apparently, endorsing the activities of the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit at a time when the latter is a subject of scathing criticisms and strident calls for its scraping by those whose avenues for sleazy practices are being shut".

Even then Ezekwesili was apparently not going to rely on only sympathetic voices like that of the *Tribune* to defend her case. As I said a little while ago, she seized the opportunity of a media dinner a few days after Aluko and Awoniyi spoke against her unit, to defend herself and the unit.

Contrary to claims that it is mired in corruption and has caused long delays in budget implementation, she said, last year alone the unit certified projects worth 290 billion Naira, representing 80 percent of the total 349 billion Naira capital budget for the year. Reports of her self-defence did not show whether she said anything about the performance of her unit in the first four full years of the Obasanjo administration, but even

she would be hard put to defend its record during the period.

In defending her unit, Ezekwesili claimed that as a result of its activities, today Nigerians get 80-85 Kobo value for every Naira the government spends on their behalf, compared to 45 Kobo they used to get before its creation. I am not a statistician, or a chartered accountant like Ezekwesili, or an economist, but you do not need to be any of these to assess the accuracy of her claims, provided you know the variables and the formula she used to arrive at her figures.

I do not know what variables and what formula "Madam Due Process" used to make her claims about the impact of BMPIU in the last five odd years. But no one needs to know her variables and formulation to reach the conclusion that her claims do not square with the facts on the ground. As the dog said when told there was a feast going on at its residence, "one would have to partake of the feast to believe it". If indeed Nigerians have been deriving 80 percent value for the money spent on their behalf since the creation of BMPIU, they are yet to see or feel it.

On the contrary, the quality of their lives has never taken the kind of plunge it has in the last five odd years. And the evidence is there not just in the statistics of multi-national organizations like the World Bank and the UNDP - statistics whose credibility President Obasanjo has questioned when he said not too long ago Nigerians are not poor - but in statistics from federal government's own documents, notably those of the Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, NEEDS, which the president himself launched on March 15, last year. For example, according to NEEDS, seven in every 10 Nigerians now live on less than one dollar or 140 Naira a day. If Nigerians got value for all the over three trillion Naira the federal government has spent on their behalf in the last five years, they would not have had to rely on less than one dollar a day to sustain their lives, something which, needless to say, is an impossibility.

And it is not just official documents that belie the claims that Nigerians are getting value for their money since the creation of BMPIU. Every government official, except the president, often quotes similar statistics when they get an opportunity to do so. For example, only the other day the Minister of Finance, no less, published an article in *The Guardian* of London (January 31), in which she painted a very dismal picture of Nigeria in an attempt to convince our Western creditors to cancel our debts. "The fact", the minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said, "is that Nigeria is very poor. Seventy four million Nigerians live on \$1 a day or less. Nigeria's income per head is \$300, compared with an average of \$450 in 'low income countries'; life expectancy is 47 years compared with 58. About the world, 10 million children die before the age of five; one million of them are Nigerian".

This is hardly the picture of a country whose enormous income in the last five years had been spent wisely and efficiently. And, again, it is not only official documents and government officials that provide evidence that contradict Ezekwesili's claims of value for money. The evidence is there in the clouds of financial scandal that has hanged over several major federal government projects like the Abuja National Stadium, the COJA games, the CHOGM and the establishment of new FRCN FM stations as well as new NTA stations. Some of these projects, especially those in which the president seem to have a personal interest, were never subjected to limited tender procedure, never mind open tender.

All this, however, is besides the point, which is that concentrating the powers of ensuring compliance with due process in one office is self-defeating, no matter the integrity of those in charge. This is for the simple reason that even the most honest person has his limitations.

In defending herself and her unit, Ezekwesili said an executive bill is already before the National Assembly for the transformation of her unit into a Federal Bureau of Public Procurement under a National Council on Public Procurement. The council will comprise nine members with the president as the chair.

The National Assembly should reject the bill outright. This is the dictate of the facts on the ground regarding the value of the BMPIU, whatever claims to the contrary its supporters make. More importantly, it is also the dictate of the principle that the monopoly of power corrupts absolutely.

As Chief Awoniyi said at the *Trust* dialogue, the problem of inefficiency and corruption in the implementation of projects has never been the inadequacy of rules, but the lack of will to punish those who break them. This was pretty evident from the government's sacking of the Auditor-General of the Federation who blew the whistle against massive government fraud about two years ago, instead of rewarding him. Apart from this lack of will to punish those who break the rules, there is also the job insecurity that the somewhat arbitrary civil service purge of 1975 and all subsequent ones have engendered.

The solution to the problem of budget implementation therefore lies in political leaders having the will to punish wrong and reward right and in building back security in to the system. Certainly it does not lie in concentrating the powers to certify all contracts into one institution.