

DAILY TRUST

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 VOL. 10 NO. 37 TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2005 DHUL HAJJ 1, 1425 A.H. N80

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STAR FEATURE

The sleeping dams of Katsina



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The Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola-led committee on Anambra State crisis yesterday met in Abuja to deliberate on how to expose the culprits with Chief Chris Uba in attendance.

Governor Chris Ngige was however absent, and sources said he would be invited separately by the committee at a later time to

avoid any clash between the opposing camps.

Chris Uba was accompanied by his faithfuls to the meeting while Governor Oyinlola, who is chairman of the panel of inquiry into the

political disturbances in Anambra State was accompanied by other committee members.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the PDP had risen from its meeting of

January 4 with a resolution to suspend the duo of Ngige and Uba for one month pending the report of the Oyinlola committee.

In his inaugural address, the chairman of the committee,

Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola said the committee would discharge its duties without fear or favour, and will not compromise on principles and standards.

"I wish to assure all

parties to this dispute that the conduct of our committee's business shall be guided by truth, honesty, objectivity and above all, the fear of God. We will endeavour to be impartial by strictly maintaining a neutral posture in the task assigned to our committee," he said.

While acknowledging that the crisis in Anambra

Contd. on Pg 2

ANAMBRA CRISIS

Uba meets Oyinlola c'ttee

AUDU OGBEH'S RESIGNATION

I resigned to save party —Ogbeh

The National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh yesterday confirmed his resignation saying however that it was to save the party from falling apart.

Chief Ogbeh also denied that that resignation was forced on him at gunpoint,

By Hammeed M. Bello Senior Political Reporter, Reps but that he resigned willingly in the interest of the party. "Let the party grow and assert itself and I want the party to move in harmony, not in disarray; that is my reason," Ogbeh said.

Ogbeh was reacting yesterday at his residence at Asokoro in Abuja while fielding questions from newsmen who trailed him over his purported resignation which was already making the rounds.

"I am just preparing for a more conducive resolution of whatever crisis exists in the

PDP," he said, adding that he did not regret serving as the chairman of the ruling party.

"I am happy and I thank all members of the party for their contribution and for their support, and I am happy I had a chance to play a part," he said.

According to Ogbeh, he has given a one month notice to the party via his letter addressed to the national secretary, Chief Vincent Ogbu-lafar, and that his resignation is with effect from February 28, after which he said "I will not be chairman anymore."

The following is part of the question and answer session between Ogbeh and the newsmen.

Question: Why the sudden change of mind to resign?

Ogbeh: It is not sudden. I have been thinking of it.

Question: But we are told you were forced to resign

under duress.

Ogbeh: No, No, it is not true. Forget it. I have been reflecting on how there would be peace in the party.

Question: Did you see yourself as constituting problems?

Ogbeh: No, no, I did not but maybe my ideas are constituting problems?

Question: Did you resign before the last NEC meeting?

Ogbeh: No, I didn't.

Question: But the story making the rounds now is that Audu Ogbeh resigned as party chairman under duress.

Ogbeh: No, no, that is not true, please, no, that is not

Contd. on Pg 2



The Governor of Ogun State and chairman of the PDP Panel of Inquiry into the political disturbances in Anambra State, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola (left), and other members of the panel, Ibrahim Shama (middle) and Barrister Samson Ekhuba (right), during the committee press conference on the opening of the inquiry of the panel held in Abuja —yesterday. Pic: Felix Ogbilinde.

How he resigned

Fresh facts emerged yesterday indicating that the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh might have been forced to resign by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The chairman, dependable sources said, was under duress when he wrote a handwritten letter resigning from his position with effect from February 28, and addressed same to the party's national secretary, Prince Vincent Ogbu-lafar.

Prior to his resignation in the early hours of Sunday, Ogbeh had been involved in vitriolic altercations with the president over the lingering political crises in Anambra state.

Daily Trust gathered that shortly before last week's meeting of the party's National Executive Committee (NEC), Ogbeh had reached an understanding with the president to resign volu-

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter

ntarily. But on Saturday night, Obasanjo was said to have barged into Ogbeh's residence querying why he did not resign as earlier promised.

The chairman, sources said, answered that he was still consulting. Obasanjo reportedly stormed out.

Contd. on Pg 2

Reps react to resignation

Several reactions have trailed the resignation of the national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh with some members of the House of Representatives describing the development as "a good omen" for democracy.

By Zainab Alliml, Political Reporter, Reps

Asked to comment on the issue yesterday at the National Assembly complex, Mr Mao Chusunwa representing Arochuku/Ohafia Federal Constituency of Abia State, who is also a PDP

Rep, said that it means democracy has come to take root in the country.

"I am just hearing this from you. If he (Ogbeh) has good reason to resign, I don't see anything wrong in it. It is a good omen that someone should resign voluntarily. It shows that democracy has

come to take root in the country and this should be a turning point for the party," he said.

In his reaction, Mr John Halims Agoda, also PDP representative from Delta State said that it was normal for people to take up posi-

Contd. on Pg 2



Chief Audu Ogbeh

News

Hajj: Kwara concludes airlift

● Niger airlifts first batch ● Borno makes progress

From Abulrazaq Adebayo, in Ilorin, Kashim Sule, in Minna & Isa Umar Gusau, in Maiduguri

The airlift of pilgrims to the Holy land from Ilorin zone was concluded yesterday though a pilgrim missed the last flight having forgotten his passport at home.

Last batch of 199 pilgrims from Kwara State including the zonal coordinator, Alhaji Aliyu Olarongbe and officials of the State Pilgrims Welfare Board flew out of the Ilorin International Airport at 11 am after four days delay caused by foggy weather.

An intending pilgrim, Malan Alasiki who spoke to *Daily Trust* before departure thanked God for the improved weather which paved way for their trip to the Holy land.

Airport Manager, Alhaji Garba Ringim described the conclusion of the 13 days outbound (airlift) exercise to Jeddah as very successful irrespective of the delay cause by bad weather because no ugly incident was recorded throughout the period.

While thanking God, Alhaji Ringim attributed the success recorded to the so-called cooperation of the agencies involved in the exercise and the state pilgrims board officials.

The airport manager said with the facilities put in place at the Ilorin International Airport, take off and landing of bigger aircraft could not constitute any problem.

Relations of pilgrims who had stayed with them in the cold weather for the four days delay went home with joy after the take off of the aircraft praying of their safe return from the Holy land.

488 pilgrims representing the first batch from Niger State have departed

Reps Contd. from Pg 1

and leave it with time, adding that the resignation of the national chairman is a normal thing.

Said he: "If he (Ogbeh) was forced to leave office, it is a different thing, but from what you have told me, it is a normal thing. There's always a time to take up position, and a time to leave it. I believe this can be seen as part of his effort, I wish him well and hope he'll remain a member of the party."

Similarly, Mr Chinyerem Machebuh from Abia State said that there is supposed to be a mutual confidence between the president and the party chairman, "but if such relationship no longer exists, then one of the two people have to give way."

Adding that the chairman's resignation is a welcome development and not necessarily a bad thing, Mr Machebuh opined further that if Ogbeh resigned as a result of his problem as the

catalyst to a possible extraordinary consideration that the state's pilgrims airliners (IRS) may accord to the state to make speedy airlifting of over 2,000 pilgrims waiting to be airlifted.

He said, during the visit, Senator Mantu, would be at the Hajj camp so as to interact with pilgrims while assurance would be made regarding the airlifting of Nigerian pilgrims for the 2005 hajj exercise.

The executive secretary, confirmed that an IRS airline had airlifted 291 pilgrims from Borno at about 6.20 am yesterday, bringing a total of those already in Saudi Arabia from the state to 462 out of over 3,000 pilgrims.

At the airport to bid the pilgrims good-bye on Sunday night was the deputy governor of the state, Dr Shem Nuhu Zagbeyi, the secretary to the state government, Comrade Adams Erena and the commissioner of transport, Alhaji Aliyu Datijo.

The aircraft which belonged to the Eagle Airline were said to have been leased by the IRS airline from the former.

According to an IRS official, Alhaji Idris Sami Bida, who spoke to journalists at the departure time said the aircraft, would come back at 1:00 pm in the day to air lift another set of pilgrims.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ibrahim Mantu, who is this year's National Amirul Hajj, is expected to arrive Borno State today for assessment of Hajj operations, even as airlifting of pilgrims continues.

According to the executive secretary, Borno State Pilgrims Welfare Board, Alhaji Kalli Imam, Senator Mantu will be in Maiduguri at about 10.00 am this morning.

Speaking during an exclusive interview with *Daily Trust* yesterday in Maiduguri, Alhaji Inam said the visit of the National Amirul Hajj will not only boost the morale of pilgrims but would also be a

Meanwhile as at the time of filing this report, officials of the state's pilgrims board, were putting all hands on deck to ensure the sorting out of passports and visa, while the state's Amirul Hajj, Adamu Shaitimu Dabali, was having meetings with other members of his team to strategic ways of ensuring a hitch-free hajj operation.

Daily Trust gathered from the state's Amirul Hajj, that another aircraft was being expected yesterday to air lift additional pilgrims.

Dibal said he was optimistic that all the state's pilgrims would be airlifted by IRS especially as Yobe State pilgrims had been handed over to Kabo Airline.

EFCC confirms probe of ex-UBA chairman

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), is currently investigating the immediate past chairman of United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, Mr Hakeem Belo-Osagie over alleged siphoning of huge sums of money from the bank's branch in New York to its subsidiary in Nigeria, where the ex-bank chief is believed to have substantial interest.

A national newspaper (*Daily Independent*) reported, yesterday, that the EFCC may arrest Mr. Belo-Osagie over alleged diversion of government revenue running into millions of dollars during his stewardship of the bank.

An impeccable source in the financial crimes commission who confirmed the probe to *Daily Trust*, yesterday said however, that the questioning of the ex-UBA boss "is in connection with the diversion of government revenue, foreign exchange malpractices and siphoning of huge sums from the bank's (UBA's) New York branch to its subsidiary where he is said to have substantial stake".

According to the *Daily Trust* source, who would not wish to let out details for fear that "it may affect on-going investigations", Mr. Hakeem Belo-Osagie had been invited for questioning late last year in connection with the probe, "and he may still be invited whenever the need arises".

The source who preferred anonymity, disclosed further that many other officials of the bank, especially the

subsidiary to which the huge sums were allegedly siphoned were questioned "within the three months or so that the investigations began, and our team of investigators have gotten very useful information from these people, just as investigation continues".

The source said: "Like I told you earlier, we don't want to make fall disclosures in order not to jeopardise the on-going efforts by our team of investigators, but we'll let out the detailed amount involved and all key actors at the appropriate time".

The *Daily Independent* said in its report yesterday that Mr. Belo-Osagie's travel documents may have been seized over the probe which it said involved money laundering in the bank during his stewardship, and that the team of auditors who audited the accounts of a Lagos-based company (names withheld), allegedly belonging to the former UBA boss was detained for the better part of last week, and released at about 9.30 p.m. on Friday.

The news report said further that the EFCC had, in a letter dated November 1, 2004, written to the auditing firm, which is also based in Lagos, solicited its co-operation, "as the commission is investigating a case of alleged conspiracy, stealing, criminal diversion of federal government revenue and foreign exchange malpractices perpetrated by the management of UBA Plc and Zamora Ltd".

EFCC detectives, the newspaper report said further, allegedly uncovered a \$127 million scam in the course of the probe, and that UBA was indicted of diverting federal tax and stamp duties worth over N2 billion meant for the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

Efforts to get official reactions to the allegations from officials of UBA Plc, yesterday, failed, as the office line of the bank's head of Corporate Affairs, Mrs. Funmi Olayinka continued to ring without response, while her mobile phone was switched off, up to press time.



Nuhu Ribadu

Party Contd. from Pg 1

in town right now.

Question: Is it true you are under house arrest?

Ogbeh: I am not, I'm not, gentlemen that's all.

Question: Does your resignation affect your position as special adviser to the president on agriculture?

Ogbeh: That is a secondary issue. We will think of that later.

Question: Did you resign out of fear or for safe landing, or fear?

Ogbeh: No way, NEC will set up a committee to check its account because those who have been speaking do not know how party funds are managed and have gone to the press many of them have participated in programmes which consumed a lot of money. But they have spoken. We will speak.

Question: So who succeeds you now?

Ogbeh: I don't know. The deputy chairman (North) is supposed to act when the chairman's not around later the party will decide on what it wants.

Question: Who is in custody of the resignation letter?

Ogbeh: It is going to the party secretary but he is not

Question: After three years on the saddle, what is your experience?

Ogbeh: No regrets. I am happy. Maybe I am too much of an idealist.

Question: Do you fear the party can come apart with your sudden resignation?

Ogbeh: I don't think so. I think the party will get along, and I am still a party member.

Question: The non-resolution of Anambra crisis should be one of your regrets.

Ogbeh: At least we're on our way now, something is going on.

The national publicity secretary of the PDP, Barrister Venustus Ikem who *Daily Trust* contacted yesterday for the party's standpoint said they were not aware of the resignation.

The resignation of Ogbeh might not be unconnected with his letter to President Obasanjo in which he expressed concern over the socio-political anomalies in the country which need to be tackled head on to save the country from drifting to anarchy.

President Obasanjo had replied Ogbeh in which he apparently took exception to the letter by Ogbeh.

How Contd. from Pg 1

At 7.00 am on Sunday, Ogbeh was summoned to the presidential villa, where Obasanjo handed him a sheet of paper and asked him to write the resignation.

The chairman, *Daily Trust* further gathered, told a group of his supporters at a meeting Sunday night that he was so threatened that he became concerned for his life, the future of the party and democracy in Nigeria, and therefore wrote the resignation letter as directed.

Meanwhile the group of 16 PDP NEC members who early last week levelled allegations of financial impropriety against Ogbeh has insisted that the charges remain despite the chairman's resignation.

A statement yesterday in Abuja, signed by four PDP NEC ex-officio members—Alhaji Ahmed Gusau (North east), Dr. C. N. Obiolsa (Southwest) Chief Olusola Okunola and Deacon Elijah Afolabi—said the allegations against Ogbeh were backed by documentary evidence and must therefore be probed by the relevant authorities.

The statement, titled: 'PDP national treasurer and PDP accounts', was a response to an earlier publication by the party's national treasurer, Alhaji Umaru Kareto Lawan, debunking the

allegations against Ogbeh. It reads in part: "We want to put it on good authority that the allegations levelled against him are inconceivable and are incontrovertible."

"The only reason why the NEC did not look into them at the last meeting was because of the intervention of Mr. President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo."

His intervention was however, not to be mistaken as the end of the matter as the issues concerned are fundamental questions of accountability which is the cornerstone of the policy of the PDP established government and the NEC which exercises its powers at the appropriate time to investigate these matters.

"Furthermore, the criminal contents of the allegations are those that fall within the competence of established federal agencies and such agencies have been appropriately availed of the copies of our petition in order to take necessary action."

The aggrieved PDP leaders, however, welcomed Ogbeh's resignation "as a mark of courage and honour. We will advise people like Umaru Kareto to do same as no amount of distortion of facts or propaganda will save people like him from PDP's NEC investigation."

Uba Contd. from Pg 1

State deserves to be regarded as a common problem that must be resolved in the interest of peace and progress of our country as well as the sustainable growth of our nascent democracy, Governor Oyindiolu also added that the committee was mindful of the expectations of Nigerians and will not let them down.

"We cannot afford to let our party and the nation down," he said, and appealed to Nigerians, particularly,

those who would be approached before it to submit memoranda to cooperate with the committee to make its task acceptable and popular.

The meeting, however, turned down attempts by newsmen to ask questions for clarification.

Shortly after the press briefing, Chief Chris Uba, leading his team headed to meet with the committee members holding a paper believed to be his memorandum to the committee.

News

Trust dialogue holds Thursday

The second Annual National Dialogue organised by Media Trust Limited (publishers of *Daily Trust* and *Weekly Trust* newspapers) is scheduled to hold on Thursday, January 13 2004 at the Ladi Kwali Hall of the Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers.

With the theme, "Reforming Nigeria, which model?" the forum is aimed at creating opportunity for Nigerians to contribute debate on the on-going reforms taking place in various sectors of the Nigerian economy.

The forum which will be chaired by former head of State and Economics guru, Chief (Dr.) Ernest Shonkan GCFR will feature renowned economists and other stakeholders within and outside government. The Vice President Aliko Abubakar will be special Guest of Honour.

Speakers include, former Chairman, National Eco-

nomics Intelligence Committee (NEIC), Professor Mike Kwanashie and national commentator, Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, DGM, Risk management department of United Bank for Africa (UBA) among others.

Other invited guests include, the Senate President, Chief Adolphus Wabara, Speaker Aminu Bello Masari, state governors, members of the National Assembly, Chief Executives of government agencies, Chief Executives of Media Houses as well as stakeholders in the economic sector. The occasion will also feature the presentation of the book, "Discharging a Burden," a compilation of proceedings of the 1st National Trust Dialogue held on January 15, 2004 with the theme, "The Nigerian Questions: The Way Forward." The general public is therefore invited to the occasion.

The Annual Trust Dia-

logue was introduced last year as part of Media Trust contribution to the debate on pressing issues of national interest.

Nigeria produced 2.46m BPD of crude in Nov 2004 — CBN

Nigeria produced a daily average of 2.46 million barrels of crude oil including natural gas and condensates in November last year.

The CBN Monthly Report for November 2004 released

in Lagos at the weekend, said that the figure contrasted

with the 2.91 million barrels produced daily in October. "Crude oil export was estimated at 2.01 million barrels per day or 60.30 millions for the month, compared with 1.95 million barrels per day in October 2004," it said.

The CBN said that about 12.60 million barrels of crude oil were allocated to local refineries for domestic consumption during the month.

It reported that the average price of Nigeria's reference crude, the Bonny Light, was \$42.89 a barrel during the month, indicating a decline of \$7.49 a barrel or 14.9 per cent from the level in October.

The apex bank attributed the decline in the price to increased supply of crude oil from OPEC and non-OPEC countries during the month.



L/R: President Olusegun Obasanjo worshipping with the minister of state defence Dr. Rowland Oronjejobor, Chief Adolphus Wabara, senate president, his wife and the secretary in the government of the federation, Chief Uto Ekaete during the Armed Forces remembrance day special service held at the ECWA Church in Abuja, recently. **Pic: Joe Oroya**

Buhari files appeal against 2003 election verdict

All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) presidential candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari yesterday filed a notice of appeal on the judgement delivered by the court of appeal on the 2003 presidential elections at the supreme court in Abuja.

Fire guts Ajaokuta steel company

From Ahmed Tahir Ajobe, Correspondent Lokoja

What ought to have been a national tragedy was on Sunday averted when a combined team of fire service personnel from Abuja, Minna and that of Kogi state fought and contained an early morning fire which threatened to raze the multi-billion naira Ajaokuta Steel Company.

Though the fire service men from Abuja and Minna who were drafted in following a distress call by Governor Ibrahim Idris of Kogi state for assistance to save the company fought hard to quell the smouldering fire, it could not help the storage store which was gutted in the inferno.

The source who spoke to *Daily Trust* on condition of anonymity said the company will continue to be under threat from fire unless the new management, the ISPAT group realised the need to clear the over grown weed which has taken over the entire premises of the factory.

Meanwhile, the workers of the company yesterday protested the sacking of the 1,517 staff of the company by the new management without the payment of their severance package.

By Zainab Aliimi, Political Reporter (Reps)

The notice of appeal, filed by General Buhari's counsel, Chief Mike Ahamba (SAN), are seeking the apex court to allow the appeal, to set aside the majority judgement of the lower court dismissing the petition and to uphold the dissentiate judgement of Justice Nsofor JCA.

Other reliefs sought by Gen. Buhari include that the court allow the petition on all grounds and consequentially disqualify President Olusegun Obasanjo and vice-president Atiku Abubakar under section 129 of the electoral act.

The appellants are also seeking an order by the apex court to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct a fresh election within one month from the date of judgement of the appeal.

The relief sought in the notice of appeal reads in part; "in the event of disqualifying the first and second respondents either under ground 9 C of the petition and/or consequentially under section 129 of the Electoral Act, to order the third respondent (INEC) to conduct a fresh election between the remaining candidates in the election."

The appellants also seek that in the event that the appeal succeeds, with or without the disqualification of the first and second respondents, an order of the court "to order that the president of the senate acts as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria during the period between the judgement and the fresh election."

A date is yet to be taken for the hearing of the appeal.

Nzeribe denies allegations over state of emergency in Anambra

Controversial politician, Senator Arthur Nzeribe yesterday denied allegations that he was being sponsored by Aso Rock to canvass for the declaration of a state of emergency in Anambra state. The lawmaker said he was acting out of personal conviction.

Nzeribe has been consistently campaigning for the proclamation of emergency rule in Anambra as a panacea to the seemingly intractable political crisis rocking

By Habeeb I. Pindiga, Political Reporter (senate)

the state. He had written to his colleagues last week, urging them to support the crusade. Fielding questions from senate correspondents yesterday, the maverick politician said he was convinced that emergency rule was the best option for Anambra, since all other approaches in the past had proven ineffective.

Asked whether he was

being sponsored by the presidency to champion the cause, Nzeribe said "no, it comes from me and not from anybody. I'm acting out of personal conviction".

Reminded that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had set up a committee to address the Anambra imbroglio, the senator asked "since it (the crisis) started, has it been solved?"

He however, said he would go along with the party's wish.

Poor leadership obstacle to foreign policy-Maitama Sule

The former Nigerian permanent representative to the United Nations (UN), Dr. Yusuf Maitama Sule (Dan Masanin Kano) has said that Nigeria cannot be relevant in pursuance of its foreign policies in the global world without effective leadership in the country.

Dr. Maitama Sule stated this over the weekend at an annual symposium organised by the Association of International Relations students Kaduna Polytechnic.

According to him, even after the civil war Nigeria had not been in peace and stability due to ineffective leadership, adding that this can only change if we have good leaders with sense of sincerity and fairness.

He also said that Nigeria would be a powerful country in the world in order to pursue her foreign policy if there is relative peace and stability of at least 15 to 20 years.

He urged Nigerians not to rely on the glory of their past leaders but rather on their present pointing out that Nigerian can do it if the youth

From Aliyu Haruna, Correspondent, Kaduna

are determined, as the future of the country depends on the youths.

On the political system that operates in Africa, the

former Nigerian UN scribe said that Africans have to develop a system that is purely African which can solve the problem of the country in order to be relevant in the world.

Strike: Obasanjo orders payment of doctors' salaries

President of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Dr. Wole Atoyebi yesterday disclosed that President Olusegun Obasanjo has directed that efforts be made to release money for the shortfall in the payment of salaries for medical doctors.

Dr. Atoyebi disclosed this at a briefing with the House committee on health and pressmen at the National Assembly, Abuja, just as he gave assurance that an end is in sight in the face-off between them (Doctors) and the federal government.

He said that once the appropriate letter from the executive arm of government in line with the president's directive is obtained by the association, efforts will be made to address the resident doc-

tors with a view to calling off the on-going strike.

Reiterating that the association's grievances bordered on the work done by doctor's in the country and not new issues, Dr. Atoyebi expressed optimism that the executive will show commitment to the issue by issuing the letter being awaited by the association without delay.

"Although we do not want this strike to continue, we want to ensure that we fine-tune the process. I am under pressure to call of this strike in as much as our hospitals remain closed for so long and Nigerians suffer. We are under pressure as physicians concerned about the sufferings of our people, and not under pressure from any body or individual," he posited.

National dialogue, a farce-AD

From Mohammed Shesanya, Judicial Correspondent (Lagos)

An Alliance for Democracy (AD) Chief, Elder Bankole Oluwajana has taken a swipe at the proposed national dialogue of the federal government saying it is a farce which would deepen the multi-faceted crisis in the country.

Elder Bankola who spoke with our correspondent in Lagos said what President Olusegun Obasanjo had demonstrate over the recent constitution of the eight-man committee of the dialogue is an israelite journey from the yearnings and desire of Nigerians for sovereign national conference.

According to him, it is only through convocation of the sovereign national conference that could rest the country from the wreckage imposed on it by short sighted leaders.

Any system put in place that does not take Ogunsanle of that will certainly not ensure peace.

We are talking about sovereign national conference because we need to sit down and proffer lasting panaceas to the emerging national question militating against our domestic economy", he added.

The AD chief, who further asserted that those people who fashioned out the committee never believed in its veracity also posited that the development is a reflex that the ruling Peoples Democratic Party is bereft of positive ideas that can take the nation to the promised land.

News

FERMA begins road repairs

The Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) last week brought back its equipment to the roads to backfill areas excavated several months ago.

The Benue State chapter of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Petroleum Tanker Drivers and members of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) as well as other affiliated unions in the state early last week staged a protest against actions of the road maintenance agency, accusing it of turning Benue

in Benue

From Hlr Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

roads into death traps. The protesters, who demanded prompt response from FERMA by way of returning its equipment to site to complete the work started early last year, complained that the agency had excavated large holes along various roads and left them without backfilling. This, the protesters who were led by NLC's Comrade Boga Abdal

and a tanker driver, Musa Oloja, particularly mentioned the Makurdi-Enugu expressway on which ghastly accidents involving a petrol tanker and other vehicles occurred while attempting to dodge the excavated areas.

In a civil reaction therefore, the agency last Friday commenced back filling and general rehabilitation of the expressway with several kilometres covered by Saturday.

Daily Trust observed that the commencement of work has so far seen backfilling of excavated areas from Makurdi to as far as Alade, spanning over 50 kilometres.

Contacted for comments, the FERMA Chief Maintenance Engineer, O.Ojinnu, said they had long explained to the police and the state's House of Assembly that the spate of accidents complained of by protesters is not as a result of their (FERMA) doing, but the recklessness of tanker drivers.

"They are simply reckless and that's the cause of the accidents they were protesting. It is not whether FERMA excavated the roads or not," said Engineer Ojinnu, who added that his report also stated the reason for the delay on the job.

Daura incommunicado, businessman sues for exchange transfer

As a result of the non-availability of telecommunication services to about six local governments within the Daura Emirate and environs, the Nigerian Telecommunications Services Limited (NITEL) has been called upon to transfer Daura exchange services from Jigawa to Katsina State.

A businessman and former local government chairman of Daura local government, Alhaji Kabir Musa Royal who made the appeal during a visit to Daily Trust office in Katsina, said lack of communication affects many businesses in the area as people were forced to either travel to Katsina or Kano to make business or personal calls.

The businessman estimated that an average of twenty people travel daily out of the area to make phone calls.

He said only the transfer of the Daura Exchange from Dutsin Jigawa State to Katsina territory would correct all the exchange problems because of its proximity to only some as opposed to over 200 kilometres distance in Dutsin.

In the same vein, the businessman enjoined the mobile service providers to consider immediate exten-

From Lawal Ibrahim,
Correspondent, (Katsina)

sion of their services to Daura because, according to him, the GSM service providers stand a greater patronage as a result of numerous businesses and economic activities being undertaken by people of the area with many outside or global communities within the country.

FG condoles Katsina over Wada Nas' death

The federal government over the weekend condoned the Katsina State government over the death of the former Special Duties Minister, Alhaji Wada Nas.

A delegation led by the Minister of Industries, Alhaji Magaji Mohammed, and the Presidential Adviser on Non-Party Relations, Alhaji Lawal Batagarawa (on behalf of President Olusegun Obasanjo), described the late Alhaji Wada Nas as an illustrious son who contributed to the development of the country.

President Obasanjo had in a letter presented to Governor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua further described him (Nas) as a patriot, upright and gallant politician who spent his life in the service of humanity.

It said Alhaji Wada was a great Nigerian patriot and selfless person who held strong views for the progress of his country.

Receiving the letter on behalf of government and people of Katsina State, Governor Umaru Musa Yar'Adua thanked the president for the condolence message.

Yar'Adua, who reviewed the contributions made by the late politician further commended the federal government for the concern shown to the people and government of Katsina

From Lawal Ibrahim,
Correspondent (Katsina)

State, saying the condolence has clearly shown the esteem and the high regards the president has for the good people of the state.



The Chairman, House Committee on Education, Honourable Garba Matusu (left), discussing with the Registrar, JAMB, Professor Ahmed Bello Salisu (right), during the presentation ceremony of Licences to Private Universities held in Abuja, recently.

By Kennedy Egbosode

Virgin Nigeria: Nigeria to save N262b annually — Minister

Nigeria's new national carrier, Virgin Nigeria, will save the country two billion dollars (about N262 billion) annually from capital flight, says Aviation Minister Isa Yuguda.

"We are going to reap a lot of benefits from the new national airline when it begins operations, as our people will be able to travel with it and save the country vast foreign exchange," Yuguda said in Abuja today.

The new carrier, he said, would help to check capital flight by operating domestic, regional and intercontinental routes.

"The establishment of a viable flag carrier remains the only option for reduction of

capital flight and when Virgin Nigeria fully takes off, the country will be saving a lot of money hitherto spent on foreign airlines," he noted.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the new airline has the UK-based private airline, Virgin Atlantic with 49 per cent equity shares, as the major shareholder, while Nigerian investors are expected to take up the remaining 51 per cent.

It is scheduled to commence operations in the first quarter of the year with domestic, regional and intercontinental services.

The minister, who spoke to NAN against the backdrop of criticisms trailing its establishment, disclosed that the

Initial Public Offer (IPO) for the airline would soon be made public for subscription.

"So, I am calling on interested Nigerian companies and individuals to acquire shares in Virgin Nigeria to reap their investment because the new airline has great prospects," Yuguda said.

According to him, "with an initial investment of 50 million dollars and incremental working capital facilities, the benefits derivable from the investment in the company is quite tremendous".

He also said that the federal government did not invest any money in the Virgin Nigeria, because "it is a complete private sector driven company".

He invited indigenous airline operators to take a stake in Virgin Nigeria to boost their businesses and attract more foreign investments into the nation's economy.

The aviation minister also invited Nigerians to give the new airline the fullest support and cooperation to propel the country to higher heights.

"It is my prayer that this airline will grow and serve as a fine example of a private sector initiative where government once dabbled into," he added.

NAN recalls that on Sept. 28, last year, Nigerian officials and that of Virgin Atlantic signed a Memorandum of Mutual Understanding (MEMU) to formalise the establishment of the new flag carrier.

NAN reports that the federal government had recently reserved five destinations for Virgin Nigeria.

These are Dulais, Jeddah, Johannesburg, London and New York.

The decision, according to government sources, was premised on the need to restore the confidence to prospective shareholders and also give the new airline room to grow and compete with other foreign carriers.

Four heads of state for Argungu festival — Aliero

Four African heads of state are expected to grace this year's Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival scheduled for March 17. Governor Adamu Aliero told newsmen in Birnin Kebbi at the weekend that President

Olusegun Obasanjo had informed him that two of the four heads of state had accepted in writing to come for the festival.

He said their visit would be a fulfillment of Obasanjo's pledge during the closing ceremony of

the last year's festival to invite some African heads of state to the fair as a way of boosting tourism in the country.

He said the state government was not sparing effort toward ensuring that befitting accommodation was made available to the visiting heads of state during the grand finale of the three-day show.

Aliero also disclosed that authorities of BMW and Mercedes Benz had indicated their interest in the motor rally, while that of Peugeot had also shown interest.

According to him, between 300 and 400 vehicles will be used in the motor rally and import duty on them have been waived by the president.

He implored local entrepreneurs to invest in the construction of hotels to provide accommodation to guests during the festival.

NPC pledges acceptable 2005 census

National Population Commission (NPC) is set to give Nigerians an acceptable 2005 head count, says Alhaji Yarima Giade, the NPC Commissioner for Bauchi State.

Giade told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Bauchi at the weekend that "unlike in the past, a tamper-proof scientific approach is being adopted for the exercise".

According to him, data collected from each enumeration area will be processed and transferred to the local government headquarters, where they will be entered into a computer for safe-keeping.

He also noted that all the 774 local government areas would be provided with computers, from which data would be assembled for onward transmission to state headquarters.

"From there, a single document will be produced and sent to the zonal centres to be further checked and then sent to the national pool."

Giade explained that "the exact position of each enumeration area on the world map will be ascertained and placed on the Internet to provide easy reference in case of any doubt".



Governor Yar'Adua

News

Briefs

Cleric

As events unfold to perfect the year 2005, a Calabar-based cleric and founder of the Christian Central Chapel (CCC) Evangelist (Dr) Emmah Isong has predicted that except prayers are offered to reverse certain uneventful situations, the nations political process will be wobbling and fumbling certain aspects.

Evangelist Isong who made his prediction for the year during an interview with news men stated that his many predictions for the previous years have all come to pass including his prediction of the death of a popular politician and minister which manifested in the death of former sports minister.

Unknown patient

The National Hospital Abuja has announced that a middle aged man, light complexioned and of average height was brought to the hospital by members of Federal Road Safety Corps on January 3, 2005 at 12:20pm.

The man it said sustained injuries on the head, back and leg and responds to questions incoherently.

It added that any member of the public whose male relation has been missing recently should please check the male surgical ward of the hospital for identification and possibly family care to the patient.

NOA

The National Orientation Agency (NOA) chapter of the Amalgamated union of public corporation, Civil Service, Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) has commended the director-general, Alhaji Idi Mohammed Faruk, for his unique support for the staff.

The chairman of the chapter, Mr. Stephen Mbom who spoke at the end of the year party of the union in Abuja said the high level of performance exhibited by staff during the year was as a result of the able leadership of the director-general.

The legislator representing Numan in Adamawa House of Assembly, Mr Gusadi Ahilaga, has escaped death, after receiving machete cuts from his kinsmen.

He was attacked last Friday by youths loyal to the deposed Chief of Numan, Mr Freddy Bongo.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt that the youth had listed their kinsmen in the service of Adamawa Government as targets for attack for their role in deposing the Chief.

The youth also accused them of influencing the appointment of former Commissioner for Information, Mr Asaph Zadok, as the new

Nigeria, Canada sign N2.6b MOU

Nigeria and Canada yesterday in Abuja signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) valued at N2.6 billion.

The MOU's are for the development of some projects in the country with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The Economic Adviser to the president Prof. Ode Ojowu signed the MOU's on behalf of the country while the Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria David Angell signed for the Canadian government.

The Head of the Canadian International Development Agency Andrew Spezowka witnessed the ceremony.

The News of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the first MOU for which CIDA is committing N2.1 billion is for the development of the School of Health Technology in Calabar, Cross River, and Primary Health Care project in Bauchi.

This project, according to Angell, is intended to strengthen the capacity of lecturers to provide effective pre-service and continuing education for the School of Health Technology and the Primary Health Care project in Bauchi.

The second MOU, for which CIDA is expected to commit N516 million, is to expand and upgrade "CIDA

Yaradua warns LGs over misappropriation of funds

Governor Umaru Musa Yar'adua of Katsina State has pledged to deal with any local government chairman found misappropriating or mismanaging local government resources in the state just as he declared a sum of 7.3 billion meant for the 34 local governments through the state/local government joint account system.

In an address after the swearing-in of the 28 local governments council chairmen in the state at Katsina motel conference hall, Yar'adua disclosed that his administration will not hesitate to take decisive disciplinary action against any one found to have mismanaged public resources in line with the government policy of transparency and accountability in the management of

Youths attack legislator

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Muslims decry delay in setting up Pilgrims Board

Muslims in Anambra State have decried the delay by the state government to inaugurate its pilgrim's welfare board.

Alhaji Dauda Ajagu, Vice-President of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, Anambra chapter, said the absence of the board had caused hardship to intending pilgrims in the last five years.

He told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Onitsha yesterday that in the past five years, successive governments had failed to set up the board.

Ajagu observed that their Christians counterparts had their welfare board, stressing that the situation was a mark of discrimination.

He disclosed that the Muslim hierarchy in Anambra had several meetings with the relevant state government officials in Awka

pleaded anonymity, confirmed the incident.

"Only the Commissioner of Police is authorised to officially comment on the Numan issues," the source said.

Numan had witnessed two ethnic and religious conflicts, which claimed hundreds of lives and properties worth millions of Naira.

The former Chief, Bongo, was deposed and banished to Bali in Taraba State for his alleged role in the conflict.

Adamawa Government appointed its Commissioner for Information, Zadok, as the new traditional ruler and up graded two others from second class to first class chiefs.

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Ajagu observed that their Christians counterparts had their welfare board, stressing that the situation was a mark of discrimination.

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over the matter but nothing had been done.

According to him, Muslims in the state had, from time to time, organized prayers and fasting for the survival and success of the present administration "but sadly enough" they had not found favour with the government.

He said the situation was capable of thwarting the confidence reposed on Governor Chris Ngige's administration, which is generally perceived as corrective regime.

Dismissed ECOWAS director receives fair hearing -official

ECOWAS has reacted to allegations that its dismissed Director of Administration, Mrs Tokunbo Lijadu-Oyemade, was denied fair hearing.

Lijadu-Oyemade lost her job last August over what the sub-regional body described as "gross indiscipline."

Nigeria's Ministry for Co-operation and Integration in Africa has since petitioned the ECOWAS council seeking her reinstatement as they alleged that she was only victimised for insisting on due processes.

But a top ECOWAS source who preferred anonymity told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that the sacked director received fair hearing and even appeared before a disciplinary panel with her lawyer.

The source denied claims that Lijadu-Oyemade was promptly suspended from office to deny her fair hearing, saying that all staff connected with the said offence were suspended to avoid interference.

"Those suspended were directed to remain in their last known addresses to be served

appearance notices, but it was almost impossible to serve the former director as she disappeared from her last known address," the source alleged.

The source also dismissed claims that members of the disciplinary panel were Lijadu-Oyemade's juniors.

"The disciplinary panel is made up of representatives from offices and anyone so appointed represents the office. The officer's rank is immaterial," he said.

The source also confirmed claims that the former director was the most senior ranking Nigerian in the ECOWAS headquarters.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public that the documents covering Plots No. 411 and Adjoin Plot 412, situated at Wuse II District Abuja, and falls on sheet 334/1002/SW1 and the Area covered 1579.935 square metres Demarcated with the following property beacons PB1867, PB1863, PB1864, PB1865 and PB1866. Bearing the name Mr. Joseph Mangtup Din are missing.

If found, please return to the nearest Police station or the below Address Mr. Joseph Mangtup Din, No. 1 Wuse Close GRA, Jos, Plateau State.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly HELEN N. CHUKWU, now wish to be called MRS HELEN M. IROH. All former documents remain valid. Public to note.



From left to right, Brig-General Garba Mohammed (rtd) the president of Northern old students association Hajjya Maimuna Lata Tumbal, Engg. B.K. Mohammed, Hajjya Hallimatu Sadiya Abu, during their visit to Media Trust, Kaduna office, recently.

MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY

temphist@yahoo.com

And the president blinked!

I was Dean Rusk, Secretary of State under the charismatic President John F. Kennedy at the time of the Cuban Missiles crisis in 1962, who enriched us with the famous line: "We were standing eye ball to eye ball and the other guy just blinked!" The crisis had reached a crescendo precipitating the American Naval blockade of the island and subsequently the botched Bay of Pigs invasion planned by the CIA to overthrow Fidel Castro. It was the closest the world ever came to full-blown nuclear warfare between the then Soviet Union led by the flamboyant and equally gregarious Nikita Khrushchev and the United States under the presidency of the youthful and charismatic Kennedy. As the Soviet ships steamed towards Cuba the world held its breath mindful of the ultimate consequences of a possible outbreak nuclear war, but at the end of the day the USSR backed down prompting Rusk to utter his now famous quote. It was a true test of nerve between the super powers but at the end of the world and indeed humanity sighed with relief at the peaceful outcome.

A few weeks ago Nigerians also work up to be confronted by a missile crisis of a different sort, only this time, the projectiles had no nuclear warheads but came in the form of the venomous letters and verbal exchanges between the president renegades for his short time, and Audu Ogburn his party chairman. To say that the president was infuriated by Ogburn's letter will be an understatement. True to his vindictive nature, he immediately went for the chairman's jugular, using all the resources at his disposal. First, his yes-men and fixers within the PDP roundly insulted Ogburn to set the stage for his removal from office. Second, not a few members of its National Working Committee suddenly cleared the logs from their eyes and realized that the man was not only a frequent violator of the party's constitution, but also imprudent in the handling of its finances. They then invited the EFCC to apply the *Coup-de-grace*. It was all so laughable and easily predictable. It happened to both Na'abba and Okadigbo before Ogburn only this time, the EFCC replaced the ICPC as the ideal weapon of choice.

Although Na'abba craftily avoided impeachment and humiliation, the 'system' still ensured he never returned to trouble the president's sleep again in his second term. In Na'abba's place, we ended up with a certain sleepy-eyed Aminu Masari who often appeared bored and uninterested by all the fuss around him. As for Okadigbo, well, he simply died a 'natural' death aided by a few puffs of gaseous substances he 'accidentally' inhaled not too far away from where Tafa Balogun's Storm Troopers were deployed to keep the peace at a rally in Kano. For his intransigence and insistence on the principle of separation of powers and bravado over the sanctity of Senate's mandate, he ended up with Wabara who was not even on the ballot in his constituency. How pitiful!

Well, before I digress, that was the situation leading to last week's meeting of the PDP's National Executive Committee.

The president's men were given quality time by state media to prepare the grounds for Ogburn's virtual disbarment and even arrest. The paid columnists were in their full element and truly carried their pay.

Before the event we were gleefully told that president was to throw down the gauntlet at his party men and force a straight choice between himself and the Chairman. It was to be the night of the long knives. Ogburn's fate appeared sealed, but then suddenly the president not only blinked, he uncharacteristically backed down! Not a few people were amazed at the turn of events but I wasn't. Yes, the Vice President might have presided over the meeting and Chairman's neck while some Governors were told, even threatened to embarrass the president openly by defying him over the matter. But to me, he had no other option open to him. In my opinion he badly miscalculated in his judgement of the public mood and indeed the apprehension of others within the party. He forgot that the patience of Nigerians was stretched to the limit by the Chairman's and indeed his handling and management of the entire polity. He forgot that Nigerians are a lot wiser than in 2003 than in 1999 when he endlessly sparred with Okadigbo and Na'abba. Then, a great majority believed the nonsense about his learning process as an excuse for his failures, and gave him the benefit of the doubt. But more important, he had become a liability to his party without even realizing it!

They perceived from his handling of the episodes involving Salisu Bahari and erstwhile strongman of the Ministry of Defence during his first term that the president had nothing in common with justice or even fair play. The unprecedented frauds involving the electoral act and the 4/19 elections coupled with and despicable events in Anambra state further convinced them that the man cannot be trusted. They know from what transpired at Odi and Zaki-Biam that it is merely a dictator in civilian garb. They are conscious from his handling of the economy and lack of attention to their basic social needs that this quite easily, must be the most inept administration in the history of the nation. As I write, the morgues in Abuja are overflowing with dead bodies because the doctor's strike is still in force. Surely, these home truths would have been brought home to the president during his nocturnal meetings and consultations with the party hierarchy. Indeed a rancorous ending to the crises would have further inflamed the polity and jeopardized their stolen mandate. This much was evident from the initial missile Ogburn fired at the president, which ignited the sword-diffair. In spite of himself, this truism obviously registered with the president. We are all being taken for a ride.

To that extent therefore, the 'peaceful' ending to the feud between the president and his chairman only serves to bide time before the impending doom. I won't even dwell too much on the decisions taken on the Uba and Nggie imbroglio because it was comical and diversionary to say the least.

The one-month suspension of the two mutual felons from the party insults our intelligence and will serve little purpose, and if the police are fully conscious of their constitutional responsibilities to the Nigerian state if not the ordinary tax payer, they would not have waited for orders from the PDP before hauling both men before the law. No, I submit that the bizarre ending to the dispute was the only option left open to the president and the party in a nation already wary of their endless shenanigans. A different ending would have further alienated an administration already reeling from the negative effects of a questionable mandate.

We were gleefully told that in the new spirit of debate the president visited the Ogburn at home after the meeting and had a sumptuous meal of pounded yam. Well, pounded yam can be delicious especially when accompanied by the right vegetable soup. But if I were PDP Chairman, I will be very wary of the gesture. In the heat of his face-off with the then Senate president Chuba Okadigbo, the president not only wind and dined with him at the special dedication of his official residence, he even danced with his wife in supposed truce! Unknown to the man, the theatrics were all a photo trick and part of a grand strategy. Okadigbo made the fatal error in thinking he was in league with principled men and women of unquestionable character and integrity. Sadly, at the crucial moment when he needed the support of the likes of Mantu and Florence Ita-Giwa whom he wrongly assumed to be his pillars of strength, they simply vanished from his corner without a trace. The lettered man took the president's knockout blow flush on the jaw and never recovered until he died. He may have been a Professor of political science, but this time he was caught unawares by the latest trend in political bankruptcy and schism. The greatest beneficiaries apart from the president, was the Ghana-Must-Go industry which reaped bountifully from the unexpected dividends of democracy.

The rest, as we know, is now history. Mantu was shortly thereafter rewarded with the post of Deputy Senate presidency for his treachery, while Ita-Giwa is now the president's Special Adviser on Nation Assembly Affairs! Who said the president lacked consistency? For someone who was in the tick of the action at the time dozens of stuffed Ghana-Must-Go criss-crossed the assembly complex like bicycles through Zangnanen Square, it is not surprising that with Ita-Giwa as his main liaison with the National Assembly, the place is now a haven of peace where acquiescence to the president's whims and caprices is the beginning of wisdom or even livelihood. Not even the slapping extravaganzas could shatter the new spirit of camaraderie in its ranks. My only fear for Ogburn at this present time is when I look around him I see flip-flops and a potential *Brutus* like Godwin Daboh in his corner. He may have only ten months to sit out his tenure, but if he relies on such characters for his political survival, then he may as well start looking for a new viceroy. But whatever the case Nigerians are ultimately the greatest losers from the imbroglio. Having barely survived removal and disgrace, the president surely now has him firmly tucked under his armpit.

Still, in the end, the entire episode was yet another family affair, just like the Mafia!

Opinion

Letters and a President's Burden

By Ahmed B. Sa'ad

In the few weeks preceding the New Year, pages of newspapers were awash with reports of candid opinions of people that mattered within and outside the political class, expressing pungent concerns about the tottering of the nation's ship of state towards a brink of collapse. Truth indeed is a burden in the sour art of leadership, where it is supposed to be the spirit of the social covenant between government and the governed.

A long list here would be needless. A few that would however quickly come to mind are Chief Audu Ogburn's letter to President Olusegun Obasanjo and the 'rapid response' from His Excellency, both of which I expect the parties concerned to regard their leakage to the press as most unfortunate. In separate occasions, there were words of wisdom concerning the state of the nation from former President Shehu Shagari, Prof. Wole Soyinka, Chief Emeka Anyaoku and Alh. Lawal Kaita. Newspaper editorials and highly respected columnists also voiced out the heat prevalent in the polity and fears of imminent explosion.

For the records, Okey Ndiibe's serial open letter to Mr. President and Reuben Abati's satiric dialogue of *The Guardian* 23rd and 24th December 2004 respectively were particularly instructive.

All of them had one thing in common: Bitter pills of truth. But in its usual tradition of either feigning deafness or hunt irrationality in response, government has maintained *I dey kampa* attitude to the loud public outcry, carrying on as if all is well while it is not. In the apt words of Professor Soyinka, *wonfi ete s'ile, won 'n pa tapu tapu* (They ignore the leprosy and continue to massage the ringworm).

Be that as it may, the persistent clamour is gradually becoming deafening: that the nation's democratic architecture is weak and sick; that there is a lot of fraud, pretence and insincerity in public offices and political institutions and in the hearts of men occupying them; that the political class has finally presented a score card of failure and has arrogantly remained defiant in not returning to the path of honour that something urgent needs to be done in reviewing the terms of the 'fire brigade' democratic project entered into in 1999

and heinously consolidated in 2003, in order to prepare a smooth platform for a genuine democracy, come 2007.

Nigerians at home and abroad know too well that the anxiety to move forward from a pariah state to pre-1999 to a new order of democracy was an opportunity that could not be missed to return the country into the comity of nations. It was therefore easy to accommodate the immediately concocted, makeshift peripheral structures of political compromise that will usher in democracy at all cost. Having been 'invited' from jail to rule, President Obasanjo's popularity and acceptance could not have been tested at the polls after all, hence he became a circumstantial beneficiary of a struggle that cost many people including Chief M.K.O. Abiola, his kinsman their lives.

Obasanjo is indeed a fortunate man of destiny, the least partaker in a struggle but the last man standing in wait to benefit from it. The assassination of General Murtala Muhammed in 1976 saw him waiting to take over the reins of power unprepared, unexpected in similar circumstance with his second coming as the anointed and chosen one in 1999.

It is by no means surprising that though he had a record of enthroning democracy in 1979 by handing over power to Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Obasanjo is yet to earn the rare qualities of a democrat. In fact, he is not a politician. I recall one public commentary that amusingly stated that in a civilised nation, the calibre of Obasanjo's persona would hardly have won a keenly, fairly contested election at ward level. Here is someone who at the inauguration of his many appointed advisers told them to their faces that they may only proffer advice, but he is not under obligation to work with whatsoever was advised. Here is someone who publicly referred to his reply to a letter by his party chairman borne out of rational concern, as a '1-1 draw'.

Time and time again, Obasanjo, in his revered office, has brought his weakness in temperament and innate idiosyncrasies to the fore of public conduct, while basking in the temerity of self-acclaimed moralist positions that defy counsel and forbid contrary input or opinion.

In spite of the seeming aporia in the unfolding ugly

scenario, too many truths are being told, foremost of which is the now established fact that the ruling PDP merely used the machinery of state via incumbency to consolidate a hold on its criminally possessed mandate for a second time in April 2003.

It has become clearer that the truth about Chibua Achebe's assertion on the Anambra political crises and the federal government's ignoble role which the respected scholar held as part of reasons for refusing the offer of the CFR has finally been vindicated. Thanks to a court of law, it has also been proven that the 2003 election results of the president's home state, Ogun, which to most Nigerians is a unit sample of the entire-Criminal 'acrobat' called election, was a massive fraud.

Gladly, if that is the only victory that has come Bahari's way in his near elusive, endless search for redress, then it has been a worthwhile sojourn after all. Again, if the correspondence between the PDP Chairman and Mr. President, as well as the confessions of Chris Ubah on his 'fair war' role in the Anambra imbroglio all amount to indictment of all parties and actors in the saga, it then logically justifies the mass hue and cry of criticism that has trailed the PDP-led government thus far.

As it appears, the 'enemy within', Chief Audu Ogburn has sheathed his sword, and the camp has remained one again in principled pretence. But he missed a better place in the nation's history at a time when there are few honourable men, who, in his shoes would have resigned in that circumstance. But people don't resign like that in this part of the world. 'Governor' Chris Nggie confirmed that recently. In any case, like the PDP and Audu Ogburn, Nggie, whether he survives the storm till 2007 or not would remain with the misery of truth's burden that he is sitting on a stolen stool.

Above all, whether Mr. President considers it honourable for himself, the Inspector-General of police, and the entire PDP leadership machinery of fmsd to honourably quit or not, he is left with a choice between two options: the burden of remaining with more open letters, of confessions, clamour for justice and bitter truths till 2007, or a greater burden, still a letter resign.

Ahmed B.S., a founding member of the Writers' Collective Forum writes from Abuja.



YOUR LETTERS

2007: Journalists beware

I was disappointed when *ThisDay* newspaper did an analysis of the presidential race with what I regarded as a bias for the position of the Igbo in the race. That analysis, from my reading of the situation, was meant to humiliate the Igbo race and lower the chances of the success for a campaign for a president of Igbo extraction.

The article was an analysis of those who were in the race and their chances. Three camps were identified: That of vice-president Atiku Abubakar; that of retired Brigadier General Buba Marwa; and that of the acclaimed evil genius and dictatorial military president, General Ibrahim Babangida.

To my surprise, I saw that the only man of Igbo extraction, who had worked assiduously towards it with the backing of a lot of Nigerians across all races, was lumped with Abubakar's team. By this, I am talking of the Governor of Abia state, Dr. Oji Uzor Kalu.

To say I am disappointed is to say the least. No matter what critics think, Kalu has indicated his interest in the presidential race and has been receiving support for his ambition, so why should he still be lumped with the vice president for the race?

Can a man who has been going round the country to discuss his ambition with his

next president of the country. Except of course we are being told, subtly, that we are not qualified to rule this country. And this I don't think should be the situation.

The media should create a level playing ground for all the candidates. The electorate should be left to choose whom they want out of the lot. But this should not be after putting some candidates in a disadvantaged position.

Ihenacho No. 38, Palm Avenue, Mushin, Lagos.

Re: Should Yar'Adua ride on?

Kindly oblige me a space in your esteemed publication to right the wrong impression that has been created by one Maigari Sani Majidadi, a contributor to your Letters column.

Writing under the caption 'Should Hon. Yar'Adua ride on', published in your December 7, 2004 edition, he insinuated that Hon. Yar'Adua commissioned one Hussaini Mohammed to 'fly the kite so that others will follow' and 'beg him' to run for an elective office in his Katsina Central Senatorial district.

Majidadi made other scathing and damaging remarks about Hon. Yar'Adua that I honestly believe should not be recalled here because they are a product of ignorance. But I want to

point out is that he has completely misinformed his readers on the earlier article written by Hussaini Mohammed.

In the first place, Hon. Yar'Adua has not met Mohammed more so, prior to the publication of the article and could therefore not have commissioned him to help to 'test his popularity' in his hometown. I know this because I happen to be acquainted with Hon. Yar'Adua and Mohammed himself.

I can confirm that on the day the article by Mohammed was published, Hon. Yar'Adua was taken aback on discovering the content firstly because he is working hard to ensure the smooth running of the office of his principal, the Honourable speaker of the House of

The media recently carried the news that Alhaji Ibrahim Amin Little has decamped to People Democratic Party (P.D.P). The news came as a great shock to many of us who are supporters and admirers of Ibrahim Little.

In the year 2003 and even before it, Alhaji Ibrahim Little happens to be not only a ANPP state Chairman in Kano but also the gubernatorial candidate of the party before some circumstances shove him aside and Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau replaced him and won the election as Kano state Governor. Though Alhaji Ibrahim Little decamped to P.R.P and

Ibrahim Little and P.D.P

contested as the party gubernatorial candidate.

The news about his decampment to P.D.P is very disturbing and uncalled for as it clearly portrays him as a floating politician, an opportunist and seem to lack proper knowledge of what party politics is all about. His decampment to P.R.P then could be excused as out of anger, frustration and disappointment as what happens that led to his losing out in power play.

What justifications and reasons does Alhaji Ibrahim Little has to join P.D.P whose antecedents for the more than five years in power had been continuous introducing policies that day after day increases sufferings and hardships to the Nigerian people.

The party whose trademark had been cycles of incensement in petroleum products, insecurity as never before in our history, corruption that led to a awards of international medals we can go on listing them. And also the P.D.P in Kano which had not known peace within itself and divided into sects led by different strange bed fellows.

Alhaji Ibrahim Little you had disappointed your supporters and admirers by joining the P.D.P. Also this

act if you are not cautious will led you to early political graveyard. If the penniless could outsmart you in power play and frustrate you out of ANPP, how can you contend with political giants in Kano P.D.P such as Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, Hon. Ghali Na'abba, Alhaji Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, Alhaji Aminu Wali and Alhaji Musa Gwadabe? How can you outsmart Alhaji Aminu Dabo, Hon. Ghali Na'abba, Senator Bello Hayatu Gwarzo, Dr. Yakubu DanHassan (when he returns to P.D.P) e.t.c in P.D.P gubernatorial primary if you still have the intention to contest for governorship under P.D.P in 2007? Which of the P.D.P sects will you squat with?

Alhaji Ibrahim Little, return to the first house you help to build and stop drifting further into political wilderness. Be on the positive side of history, politics is more than seeking platforms to contest for elective offices or to campaign for a presidential candidate who deep down in your heart you knows is unpopular in Kano and is unsaleable to any right minded person that hopes well for Nigeria and its people.

Shehu Mastapha Chaji P.O. Box 248 Gi'iyadi, Kano.

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

Opinion

This house has not fallen yet

The above title is a substantial modification of the title: *This House Has Fallen*, which is itself a borrowed title: *This House Has Fallen - Nigeria In Crisis* written by Karl Maier. It is a very powerful and sufficiently descriptive work on the travails of Nigeria. Muhammad Al-Ghazali (Daily Trust, Vol.17 December 14 2004) took the opportunity of revisiting the subject after the two farcical letters exchanged between Chief Adu Ogbek, the National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (end of protocol; no disrespect meant) who won the presidency on the platform of the PDP was exposed to public gaze, thanks to the revelations of the two apical chiefs. I agree with every word Karl Maier had written and substantially with everything Muhammad Al-Ghazali had written, except with Al-Ghazali's appreciation of Obasanjo's role in the present hold-up, certainly when he comes to say things like "...Ogbek deserves credit for openly breaking ranks with the President on the matter, or even going public with it" (Daily Trust, December 14, 2004; Tuesday Column).

On my part my heart literally jumped in joy, just like in the expectation of Al-Ghazali, that some of us still have some humour left in us to see a silver lining in every cloud, and cherish at God's mercies on matter how small. Contrary to what everybody has said about this tragicomic drama therefore, it is Obasanjo who is my hero; and indeed Adu Ogbek, the villain. Al-Ghazali had even hinted at it, when he wrote, in the sentence after his praise of Ogbek, "The trouble is, I wonder why he (Ogbek) had to wait so long to do so?"

That indeed is the point, though Ogbek also could be charged for more odious offences. For instance, for us Nigerians, this is the first time we are opportuned to have a glimpse of the workings at the highest seat of power in the country, from no other than the pens of the two most powerful people who are ruling us today. Apart from their quarrels, what do we learn from their two letters, so that for once we can use the knowledge so gained; take our lives in our own hands, and change Nigeria for the better since Nigerian leaders are incorrigible offenders?

In this respect, if you disregard the lack of decorum the two had exhibited as in view of the apicality of their

By Professor Kyari Tijani

positions, I find Obasanjo's letter to Adu Ogbek more detailed, more explicit, and more expressive of political economy of Nigeria. Obasanjo's letter is therefore, more valuable for our heuristic purpose. Apart from this, there is also basic difference between the characteristics of the two men, to be appreciated as useful for our purpose, at this point of reconstructing what Chief Chikelu (Minister of Information) and the media call "Project Nigeria". What do we learn from Adu Ogbek's letter? Nothing! It is just an accusation of Obasanjo that Obasanjo has failed as a president, and that Nigeria is drifting. We had known that at least since our Independence - some 44-years ago! It did not tell Obasanjo or we Nigerians what we should do to save the situation.

Obasanjo's missile against Adu Ogbek spoke of not only what he has been doing to save the situation but also revealed what he has failed to do so that we can take things up from there. Even from our distance, it is clear that Adu Ogbek, as National Chairman of the PDP the ruling party in Nigeria, is not doing what he should be doing. For instance, in Borno, my home state, which I know very well, the PDP is in complete shambles. Its party secretariat is completely emptied of its power as it is usurped by Abuja based politicians just because Adu Ogbek did not see it fit to support the party at its home base since the elections are now over, and pay time has come! Obasanjo on the other hand, is interacting with the governors and party chiefs country-wide, as can be seen in his Anambra, Plateau and Adamawa interventions, and especially, as also could be understood from the revelations of his letter to Adu Ogbek, that as he found he cannot do much in the Chris Ngige and Chris Uba encounter in Anambra, he decided to remain in his own turf, that is the administration of the nation. Even as he withdrew from the embriglio, you can see from his letter to Adu Ogbek that he is a much helpless and tormented man. As the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, you can also see the morality he wanted to bring upon governance, but without success when he says that he felt horrified when Chris Uba boldly looked Chris Ngige in the face, and he told Ngige, "you know you did not win the election, and Chris Ngige replied, "yes, I know I did not win", and Chris Uba came back further to say, "you don't know in detail

how it was done", to which Chris Ngige also answered "yes"! All a President can do was, as Obasanjo also told us to ask both Chris Uba and Chris Ngige to depart from his sight and never come to his residence again - which, I believe is *Aso Rock!*

All these are obvious signs of failure not only of Obasanjo, but of Nigerian democracy, if we realize that in every state of the Nigerian federation, there is a Chris Uba and a Chris Ngige. In some, only Chris Uba exists, as he is both the governor and the god's father! Anambra is lucky because "their" Chris Ngige refused to 'play ball' after Ngige was installed. Therefore, it is easy to believe that no PDP governor has won the 2003 elections. No PDP governor has tried to get out of the clutches of his own god-father as that could have been exhibited in the manner like Anambra's; and wholesale looting must be taking place, which "Lady" Esther Nnanadi Usman had long warned us of, but she was roundly condemned, and even threatened with court action by the injured governors, though none has come about. In fact, Lady Nnanadi is now vindicated by the infamous confession of Dariye who said after his travails "we are all living in glass houses"! What has Adu Ogbek done in all these respects? I do not doubt that as he sits behind his comfortable desk in the PDP national headquarters in Abuja, reports of all these reports were filtering in into his office!

In comparison, let us come back to study Obasanjo's travails, as he sits in his even more palatial State House. Of course, Obasanjo never got praise from anybody ever since he came into *Aso Rock* to rule us. Even myself, I am not praising him. I am just appreciating his position. All those attacking Obasanjo also know that Nigeria is such a rotten state. It was even admitted to, by one of the President's political advisers. This is not cynicism, but an appreciation of the enormous responsibility of Obasanjo and his team, that is cleaning the *Stinking Augean Stable* called Nigeria. This is not one man's job, and cannot be achieved in one hop. It is a collective job and it must be by "hop, step and jump"!

And this is what Obasanjo is attempting. It is regrettable that for this essential responsibility he found only six relatively young persons; the three ladies: Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (co-author of *NEEDS*); Mrs. Nnanadi Usman (of "governors are looters" fame); Oby

Ezekwestli ("Madam Due Process"); This is *The Due Process Team*; and Mal'am's Nasiru El-Rufai and Nuhu Ribadu (the "anti-corruption team"), with the slightly younger Charles Soludo holding the reins at the Central Bank. It is obvious that the rage against Obasanjo is due to the presence in government and the determination of these six people. It is the shame of our nation that in a country of 120 million people; a country, which worships gerontocracy and notorious for its sexist inclinations, Obasanjo can find only six relatively young persons; three of them women, for a long overdue service, which one of them, Nuhu Ribadu ("the jailer") described as nasty and dangerous job, but which somebody must! It is one of the things Obasanjo has to be credited for that this is the cause of the opprobrium against him, but he never backed down, nor ever reprimanded the team. It is instructive that the most generous praise he got from my reading of the Nigerian media, is Mal'am Kabir Yusuf's *Wrong step, Right direction*, and the opening sentence of his column is: "Our President is an instinctive miser" (Daily Trust, Vol.10 No.13, December 13, 2004). You may also need to know that Mal'am Kabir Yusuf and Ujudud Sheriff are about the most kindly allies of Obasanjo among the Northern press establishment. Just go back and read the *Daily Editorial* and *Columns of the Daily Trust*, and you will see what I mean! Again; it is not that I disagree with many of what the columnists are saying. I am simply saying that given our deep-seated social and political divisions; and our geographical and economic disparities nationwide, solving the problems of Nigeria cannot be in a single hop; and in one-fell-swoop. This is Obasanjo's approach. His imposing the discipline of *Due Process* to bring Nigeria out of corruption-induced decay, is also unexceptionable. How else can you do it? After all, *Due Process* this should be a routine state of affairs, as even the connotation suggests.

Obasanjo himself has also his personal characteristics that must be observed along side with his controversial exchange of letters with chief Adu Ogbek. For a mode of governance that says, "Keep our Secret; Secret", Obasanjo's frequent public divulgence of what the government, especially the Civil Service, sees as its inner most secrets can only be welcomed. For instance,

Obasanjo was seen on the *National Television* complaining, "what can you do with a country where your policeman regularly rents his gun to armed robbers"! Certainly, as the President of the nation, and therefore *Number One Security Officer*, his is privy to all the secret information's of the country. He knows what he is talking about when he said what he said. But his open divulgence must have ranked as the most heinous crimes in public service practice. However, our ordinary Nigerians are better for it. We now know the level of depravity of our Police Force has sunk into, and the frustrations our President is suffering in tackling them. He failed, as he would. And now he is saying, "Over to you, citizens!" Nothing like that is even hinted at, in Adu Ogbek's letter; or his disposition.

However, Ogbek's letter, despite its opaqueness and lack of heuristic value, has given its author a better image, if we can learn anything from the public response. In the *The News* of 27th December 2004 Adu Ogbek is regarded as *A Good Man in A Wrong Party*, as the weekly magazine is accesses what it called the *Civil War* in POP. Adu Ogbek's description of being a "Good Man" is a moral construct. Good as this is, in Nigeria it seems we have now come to the stage when we must distinguish between Social Morality and Political Morality, even though both are subsumed in the term "good man". "Good man" as social morality concept would mean, to my mind just means "generally good" - you help the poor; you respect elders; you do not cheat; etc. Political morality on the other hand, means to me you are conscious and concerned with the "common good". If you take public office, you must be practically worshipping the "common good", in words and in deeds.

As regards the office of both the Chairman of the ruling party PDP, and that of the President of the Federal Republic, what we are talking about is political morality. However, as regards the President his function in the polity is administrative. As a federation, the Nigerian Constitution has restricted him to administrative matters. And I understand the governors are aware of this, and are taking full advantage of that - even to the extent of distorting the federal spirit, in its essence. President Obasanjo has no power to interfere with the political management of the states. From the content of Obasanjo's letter to Adu Ogbek, it is clear that Obasanjo is on his own part also aware of this restriction - and that is his frustration.

Also Obasanjo knows that Adu Ogbek has the right of intervention wherever the POP party exists, especially in matters of discipline. The dispute between Chris Uba and Chris Ngige is eminently one of discipline, and Obasanjo feels Chris Ngige is not being disciplined. Chris Uba's understanding of discipline is most heinous, as it is being said that it is his supporters who are wrecking Anambra state up because Ngige refused to be a good boy.

If Adu Ogbek has done anything to impose discipline on the Chris Ubas of this country, he has not told us in his letter to Obasanjo. He is also not asking Obasanjo to join him on the same mission. He is just accusing Obasanjo of not doing anything. It is the party chairman's responsibility to maintain party discipline, so that PDP governance has enabling environment to do its work well. Adu Ogbek is not doing anything in this direction. His party men are milling around PDP Government Houses and treating the states as conquest territories. Of course, the ANPP is not doing anything different. What democracy is this?

All these have come out from the Obasanjo/ Adu Ogbek encounter; and we now know it authoritatively! Now, this leaves the country in a quandary. We are ruled by two people at the highest point of national authority who both know that none of them is doing his job well; who both know that their party - or, any party for that matter, has won the last national election. So what is to be done? Neither a wholesale resignation or the resignation of the President will serve any purpose, because from the revelations in the two letters, not only free and fair election; but election itself is totally unfeasible in Nigeria. What will stop politicians to play the same drama all over again?

My conclusion is that as far as Nigeria is concerned, good leadership is not available and democracy is embargued. We have to do with the Obasanjo's of this world! That is why I find the anti-Obasanjo rage as both hypocritical and unhelpful. It just expresses the well-known Nigerian malady - the Bring Him Down Syndrome! And it is Adu Ogbek, not Obasanjo who should be told to sit up and do his job well. The moral for us Nigerians is that in future we should be more serious in choosing our leaders - if we will be allowed! If we will not be, we better think how we will be! Not just passing the buck!

Professor Tijani is of the Department of Public Administration, University of Maiduguri.

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| 1 | CAB Potiskum | 10 th –19 th Jan-05 | CAB Potiskum |
| 2 | F.C.E (T) Potiskum | 24 th –31 st Jan –05 | F.C.E (T) Potiskum |
| 3 | University of Maiduguri | 3 rd –11 th –Feb-05 | University of M/guri |
| 4 | Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri | 14 th –16 th –Feb-05 | Ramat Poly. M/guri |
| 5 | Kashim College Of Education M/guri | 17 th –Feb-2005 | Kashim Ibrahim Coll. |
| 6 | Moh'd Goni C.L & I.S M/guri | 18 th –Feb-2005 | Moh'd Goni Coll L.IS |
| 7 | Federal Polytechnic Damaturu | 21 st –23 rd –Feb-05 | Fed.Poly Damaturu |
| 8 | School of Nursing Damaturu | 24 th –Feb –2005 | Sch. of Nursing Dtr |
| 9 | College of Agric Gujiba | 25 th –26 th –Feb-05 | Coll.of Agric Gujiba |
| 10 | Atiku Abubakar C.L & I.S Guru | 28 th –Feb-2005 | Atiku A College of L.IS |
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| 12 | C.A.B.S Azare AD Rufai C.L & IS Misau | 7 th March –2005 | AT Azare |
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| 14 | University of Abuja , Kaduna Poly.& A.B.U Zaria | 10 th –11 th –March-05 | At Kaduna Poly |
| 15 | Fed.Coll of Education Lafia, University of Jos, A.T.B.U Bauchi Tatari Ali Poly Bauchi School of Veterinary Vom & School of Water Resource Jos | 14 th –15- March-05 | AT A.T.B.U Bauchi |
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AU summit opens in Gabon

African leaders, yesterday, opened the first summit of heads of state of the African Union's Peace and Security Council in Libreville, which is due to address some of the continent's most intractable conflicts with much emphasis on Cote d'Ivoire crisis.

South African President Thabo Mbeki has been mediating in peace talks in Ivory Coast but a pre-summit meeting with President Laurent Gbagbo was postponed. Mr. Mbeki will go to Ivory Coast after the summit on his third mission since the army attacked the rebel-held north.

The talks will look into how to calm worsening violence in Darfur after a UN warning last week.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned that a build up of weapons and an increase in fighting, including air attacks, had led to even more people being displaced and further difficulties for aid agencies.

The African Union is struggling to impose a ceasefire it brokered in peace talks between the Sudanese government and the Darfur rebels.

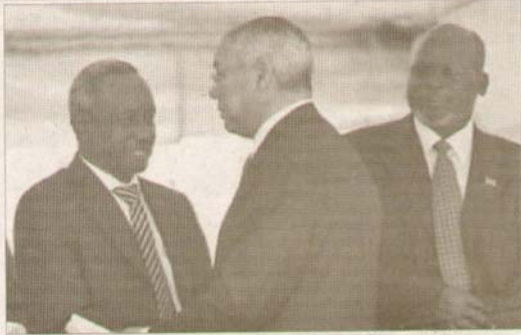
This summit will review the work of a joint commission which has been trying to encourage some level of order.

But the UN is becoming increasingly frustrated by the slowness of deploying AU troops in Darfur with only a quarter of the planned 4,000 strong force in place.

New deployments from Senegal and Nigeria will see 600 more troops with another 120 military observers.

But there are still questions about the AU's capacity to police what may be agreed in negotiations.

They are also expected to consider the continuing violence in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.



U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell (C) shakes hands with Sudan's First Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha (L) as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement leader John Garang (R) looks on after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Nairobi, Sunday.

Sudan celebrates peace deal

Thousands of Sudanese are to take part in rallies celebrating the historic signing of a peace accord between the government and southern rebels.

The deal was signed during a lavish ceremony attended by international dignitaries in Kenya on Sunday.

The biggest celebrations will hold in the capital, Khartoum, where many of the estimated four million refugees from the 20-year civil war live.

The deal opens up the possibility they can return to their homes in the south.

"If everything is going all right all the people will go back because they are displaced now around Khartoum. They are not workers, they are jobless," one man told the BBC.

"They have nothing so if the peace will be fought in the right way they will go back to the south Sudan and everything will be there."

Following Sunday's signing in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir said the deal would usher in new prosperity for the country.

"Peace is indeed going to bring our country abundance," he said in Nairobi.

Rebel leader John Garang told a cheering crowd that the peace deal would change Sudan "forever".

His words were translated into Arabic on Sudanese television.

Television and radio schedules were cleared to bring hours of live coverage of the signing ceremony.

The BBC's correspondent in Khartoum said the word on every southerner's lips now is implementation.

They are all too aware that previous agreements have been signed and failed.

Starting in July, the south will be autonomous for six years and will then vote in a referendum to decide whether to remain part of Sudan, or become independent.

Sudan's new oil wealth - currently producing about 320,000 barrels a day - is to be split equally between north and south.

It is hoped that this time, the involvement of the international community will help keep the peace agreement on track.

Egypt's Mubarak welcomes rivals for presidency

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has been in power since 1981, said he did not mind others seeking nomination for this year's presidential referendum but that the top job was tough and offered no private life.

Parliament has yet to choose the sole candidate allowed to run in the September referendum. But Mubarak is expected to be nominated again, despite reformers' calls for the government to amend the constitution and allow more than one candidate to run.

Three prominent intellectuals have announced their intention to run for the position in a symbolic challenge to Mubarak.

Asked about those seeking to run against him, 76-year-old Mubarak said:

"Let them go ahead, this is good. Democracy is like this. I hope that 100 nominate (themselves). Why will I get angry? I won't get angry."

The comments, originally made in a television interview, were carried in newspapers Sunday.

Although parliament has yet to decide, the semi-official *al-Ahram* newspaper has recently carried reports pre-judging the decision, either saying Mubarak will win the nomination or the referendum itself.

Sunday, *al-Ahram* reported that the Interior Ministry would start referendum preparations "after parliament finishes in May the nomination of President Mubarak for a new term."

Parliament is dominated by Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party.

Uganda gives AU condition on war

President Yoweri Museveni said the African Union (AU) can only intervene in the northern Uganda conflict if the current Ms. Betty Bigombe's peace mission brings the Lord's Resistance

Army and the government into dialogue has failed.

Museveni gave the condition while meeting AU's deputy chairman, Mr Patrick Mazimhaka, at his upcountry home at Rwakitura, Mbarara district.

The AU had sought to mediate in the 18-year old conflict between the government and the LRA led by Joseph Kony, Mr. Mazimhaka, Rwanda's former special envoy for the Great Lakes region brought the AU message to Museveni.

But a State House press release said, "President Museveni and the AU have agreed on a possible role for the organisation in resolution for the northern Uganda conflict but only if the ongoing Betty Bigombe mission fails".

Bigombe is a former minister in Museveni's government but now an employee of the World Bank. "Mr Mazimhaka accepted the President's recommendation to give the mediation effort of former minister Betty Bigombe up to mid February 2005 to see whether they will get the leaders of the LRA to end terrorism and come out of the bush" the statement added.

Museveni told Mazimhaka that Bigombe is best placed to persuade the LRA to accept peaceful settlement of the conflict because the group seems to trust her.

"He (Museveni) said that in the event that Betty Bigombe's peace mission fails then the Uganda government will take up the offer of the African Union to try alternative mediation" State House added.

The President said, "in such a case (AU's intervention), the African Union could hold negotiations at the headquarters in Addis Ababa". The President also briefed Mazimhaka on the UPDF's success in fighting the LRA to "a level where the capture of Kony and his deputies is the only remaining element".

...Powell demands progress on Darfur

After signing an accord that ends the long-running civil war in Sudan's south, the United States expects immediate progress on the crisis in the western region of Darfur, Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sunday.

He put Sudan's government on notice the prospect of good relations with the United States depends on halting the violence in Darfur.

"These new 'partners for peace' must work together immediately to end the violence and the atrocities that continue to occur in Darfur," Powell said.

"Not next month or in the interim period but right away, starting today," said the secretary, who signed on as a witness at the ceremony concluding an eight-year process to halt the war in the south.

The United States and other countries "expect the new partners to use all necessary means to stop the violence and we expect to see rapid negotiations on the crisis in Darfur," Powell said at the ceremony.

The completed peace deal laid out a lengthy process to merge the black African rebel movement that controls the south with the government in Khartoum in the north. During the war, more than 2 million or more people died.

Powell said peace in Sudan was a priority of the administration from its first days and that Bush "stayed

personally involved to ensure our efforts in Sudan had the administration's highest level attention."

Joining Powell at the ceremony was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, John Danforth. He was Bush's special envoy to the Sudan peace process.

After the signing, Powell offered hope for better relations with Sudan, which is on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. But he added, "Achieving this positive relationship will only be possible in the context of peace throughout the country."

Powell, in a television interview before the signing ceremony, was asked if he had any reason to believe that the genocide he said last fall was occurring had stopped.

"I have no basis to believe that, but I have no basis to make a fresh judgment now in the absence of my sending new teams in," he told "Fox News Sunday" from Nairobi.

"But certainly the attacks against people, the moving of people off their homelands, forcing them into camps, that is continuing. So the situation continues to be very, very grim, whether you decide if it is genocide or not," Powell said. "The issue is not what you call it. It is what is happening in the region."

He added, "We want that situation to end. The government has a responsibility, as do the rebels."

DR Congo abuse claims upheld - UN

A United Nations inquiry has found that UN peacekeepers working in DR Congo sexually abused girls as young as 13.

The report by the UN watchdog, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, investigated abuse allegations in the north-east Congolese town of Bunia.

The probe found a pattern of sexual exploitation of women and children, which it said was continuing.

Head of UN peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guehenno said he was outraged and angered by the abuse.

The report said many of the victims were under 18, with some as young as 13.

They were usually given food or small sums of money in return for sex.

The investigation looked at more than 70 allegations

against military and civilian UN personnel in Bunia.

It found seven cases against UN staff, all but one of them peacekeepers, involving sexual exploitation of under-age girls, were fully substantiated.

The report also said that while many of the girls could not identify the individual peacekeepers responsible, their reports of regular sexual contact were detailed and convincing.

The UN mission in Congo has also carried out its own investigations into allegations of abuse by both peacekeepers and civilian staff, and has sent home some soldiers.

Mr. Guehenno, the UN's under-secretary-general for peacekeeping, said the abuse destroyed the trust of local people in the UN mission.

"The rules of the UN are crystal clear. Any sex with under-18 years is against the UN rule and whenever we find that, this is just something that needs to be punished," he said.

The UN has jurisdiction over its own civilian staff but no power to punish peacekeepers.

It can only repatriate soldiers responsible and call for them to be brought to justice at home.

Investigations into the abuse in Congo has led to action being taken against two soldiers in one country and the imprisonment of a civilian UN staff member in France.

The UN is looking at ways to follow up whether governments actually take action against soldiers who are repatriated following allegations of misconduct.

Trust International

World expresses hope after Abbas victory

The international community expressed cautious optimism that the "historic" election of Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian president would lead to the creation of a viable state for his people and a lasting peace in the Middle East.

US President George W. Bush said he was "heartened" by strong turnout in Palestinian elections and promised to bolster peace efforts.

"Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza took a key step toward building a democratic future by choosing a new president in elections that observers describe as largely free and fair," the president said in a statement on Sunday.

"This is a historic day for the Palestinian people and for the people of the Middle East," he said.

In Israel, prime minister Ariel Sharon has been cautious not to be seen as endorsing Abbas, but lately he has said he believes the coming year will present "an opportunity for an historic breakthrough in relations between us and the Palestinians".

Israel warns Egypt on air space intrusion

Israel has asked Egypt to prevent its planes from entering Israeli air space near the southern port of Eilat, officials said, warning that if an attack is suspected, an intruding plane might be shot down.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the usual flight paths of Egyptian planes heading for Jordan cross near Eilat, but often the planes deviate from the route and enter Israeli air space.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington, Israel has been wary of a similar attack against one of its cities involving a plane crashing into a building, Eilat, a Red Sea resort, has a row of high-rise hotels.

The officials said Israel has scrambled jet interceptors and aimed Hawk anti-aircraft missiles at planes approaching Eilat. While Israel would not hesitate to shoot down a plane that appeared to be heading for an attack, they said, an innocent plane could also be mistakenly targeted.

The officials said Egypt has not responded to urgent Israeli messages, and the overflights continue. Egypt's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ahmed Izzat, said he had no knowledge of the Israeli request.

Eilat is Israel's southernmost tip, at a place where the borders of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia converge.

Israel Labour party leader Shimon Peres said: "Mr Abbas will be an uncompromising partner, but he is a wise man, experienced and moderate... He was chosen by the vast majority of Palestinians and we should give him the chance to succeed."

Russia welcomed the result of the election, saying that Palestinians had made a "clear choice in favour of a political resolution to its conflict with Israel."

An end to hostilities entailed "the end of the occupation of the Palestinian territories and the creation of an independent Palestinian state that lives in peace and agreement with Israel," foreign ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko said.

Russia is one of the members of the Middle East peace quartet that also includes the United States, the European Union and the United Nations, although Moscow's influence in the Middle East waned following the Soviet Union's collapse.

The quartet has made it clear it saw the election as an opportunity to move ahead with the road-map, drawn up by the quartet, which set a 2005 target date for Palestinian statehood but has made virtually no progress since its launch last year.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced on Sunday that his country would host a conference in London on March 1-2 that would focus on Palestinian security, and political and economic reforms.

"I think it's important that we make sure that the conference is about helping the Palestinians and supporting them in their preparation for a proper state," Blair said in a television interview on Sunday, but not giving any reaction to the vote which was then still in progress.

"I think that for the first

Afghan judge in custody over bomb attack

Afghan intelligence officials have arrested a supreme court judge for links to the deadly car-bombing of a US security contractor which killed at least nine people last year, a court official has said.

The arrest of the judge, identified as Naqibullah, comes a week after authorities announced the arrest of two al-Qaida operatives in connection with the bombing of the US firm DynCorp which trains the Afghan police force and provides President Hamid Karzai's personal bodyguard.

At least nine people, including three Americans, were killed in the 29 August car-bomb attack.

Naqibullah, who goes by one name, was arrested after intelligence agents questioned the two other suspects, Supreme Court spokesman Waheed Mujda said on Saturday.

"The two other suspects

time in a long time we've got a possibility of progress here," he said.

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who arrived in Ramallah on Monday as part of a one-week tour of the region, said the Palestinian people had voted with "good sense and reason" in Sunday's presidential elections.

He added that he hoped the vote would open a new chapter in the peace process.

"The people voted with good sense and reason and the new Palestinian leadership must now create the conditions to allow a Palestinian state to be created."

"This is true above all else for questions of security," he said.

Jordanian government spokeswoman Asma Khodr said efforts would be quickly put in place to implement the roadmap.

"Our position has always been one of support for all the Palestinian efforts," she said, adding that Jordan stood ready to assist Abbas and his new government in achieving peace.

Shootings claim Baghdad deputy police chief

The deputy police chief of Baghdad and his son, also a police officer, were shot dead yesterday, and a suicide car bomb detonated inside a police station courtyard, killing at least four policemen, the latest violence ahead of the country's landmark election.

Scores of police and regional government officials have been assassinated in recent months, part of the insurgents' campaign to try to instil fear ahead of the Jan. 30 vote and to hunt down people who are perceived as collaborators with the U.S.-led coalition. Last week, gunmen shot dead the governor of Baghdad, Ali al-Haidari, and



Mahmoud Abbas celebrates with supporters

Shootings claim Baghdad deputy police chief

Yesterday, Brig. Amer Ali Nayef and his son, Lt. Khalid Amer, were assassinated in Baghdad's south Dora district while traveling in a car on their way to work, said a spokesman for the interior ministry, Capt. Ahmed Ismail.

Gunmen sprayed machine-gun fire from two cars which were driving parallel with the police chief's vehicle before fleeing the scene of the attack close to his home, police said. The two were alone in their car.

In a separate attack yesterday, a suicide car bomb exploded in the courtyard of a police station in southern Baghdad, killing at least four policemen and injuring 10 others, police and witnesses said. A fake police car packed with explosives was used in

Four dead in Saudi police shootout

Four wanted insurgents have been killed in a shootout with security forces in a desert area in Saudi Arabia, a security source said.

"Four armed men wanted for security-related matters were killed in a shootout with security forces," the source said, adding that the gunfight erupted in a desert area between Al-Zilfi and Al-Qassim, about 200km northwest of Riyadh.

"There were a few minor injuries among security men," the source added, without giving further details.

Saudi security forces late last month killed a total of 10 insurgents, including two of the kingdom's most wanted men, in two days of clashes in Riyadh, the interior ministry said.

The clashes occurred both before and after two car bombings against security targets in the capital on 29 December.

The ministry identified the two most-wanted insurgents as Saudi nationals Sultan Hjad Saadun al-Utubi and Bandar Abd al-Rahman al-Dakhi.

Five bombers were also killed in the car bombings which targeted the interior ministry itself in the centre of Riyadh and a special security forces base in the eastern part of the capital.

Since May 2003, Saudi Arabia has been swept by a wave of violence which the interior ministry blames on the al-Qaida network of Saudi-born Osama bin Ladin.

More than 100 people have died and hundreds more wounded in the attacks, many of which have targeted foreigners.

Fresh fighting engulfs northern Pakistan

The violence was sparked following an attack on religious leader Ziauddin Rizvi in Gilgit, the main town in the mountainous region known as Northern Areas.

Skardu is the last major town on the way to K-2, the world's second-highest mountain, while Karimabad is the capital of scenic Hunza valley on the Karakorum Highway that goes up to China.

Rizvi was travelling in his car to a mosque in the centre of Gilgit, 240 km north of the capital Islamabad, when unidentified gunmen opened fire, critically injuring Rizvi and his three guards. Two of the guards later died.

Dr. Muhammad Yaqub at the government hospital in Gilgit said the death toll had risen to 14 from 11 in the violence on Saturday, after which a curfew was imposed in the town and the army was called in to control the mob.

The curfew was still in place on Sunday and residents said soldiers were patrolling the streets on vehicles with machine guns mounted on the top.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack on Rizvi but police suspected it was a sectarian incident.

Trust International

Tsunami: Fighting engulfs Indonesia, Sri Lanka

Regional conflicts are threatening to endanger relief efforts in Indonesia and Sri Lanka - the two Indian Ocean nations most affected by the tsunami.

In Indonesia's Aceh, isolated skirmishes have been reported between government forces and separatist rebels, ending an unofficial truce that has been in place since the tsunami struck on 26 December.

In Sri Lanka, the ethnic conflict came to the fore when the government in Colombo refused UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan permission on Saturday to visit disaster-hit areas in the north and east of the country controlled by the rebel Tamil Tigers.

Separatist rebels in Aceh have been fighting a low-level war against Indonesian troops for an independent homeland for more than 20 years.

The conflict, however, had temporarily ceased in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami.

But early on Sunday, suspected rebels fired shots at officers guarding the home of Aceh's deputy police chief, located near the United Nation's relief headquarters in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh.

More clashes have been reported in recent days. Marine Lieutenant Colonel Bambang Sus said Indonesian troops had on Wednesday ambushed a group of rebel fighters in the northern Aceh town of Seuradun, killing two in a one-hour gun battle near a refugee camp.

Another spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad Yani Basuki blamed the rebels for resuming hostilities and said military patrols had been increased.

Perilously close to the sea, Aceh accounted for a majority of Indonesia's 1,04,000 dead.

Like in Aceh, the conflict in Sri Lanka is also two decades old and has claimed thousands of lives.

Though united in grief by the tragedy, distrust still runs deep between the government in the south and the rebel LTTE in the north.

Mr. Annan toured parts of Sri Lanka's devastated coast, where more than 30,000 people died in December's tsunami.

Tensions between the rebels and the government are threatening to overshadow the aid effort.

"I am here on a humanitarian mission. I would like to visit all the areas, but as you know I am here as a guest of the government and they set the itinerary," Annan said.

A government spokesman gave his own rationale in not letting the UN secretary-general visit rebel territory.

"Annan hasn't gone to Ireland and met with the IRA, he hasn't gone to Spain and met with Basque rebels," he said. "There doesn't seem to have been a

group of breakaway rebels. The MILF is the largest Muslim rebel group in the Philippines, a mainly Roman Catholic country.

Talks between Muslim rebels and the Philippine government to end the 35-year separatist conflict are due to restart in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur in February.

The military said the group of MILF fighters had joined forces with a small group allegedly involved in kidnappings for ransom, and known as Abu Sofia, to avenge the killing of suspected kidnappers by soldiers last week.

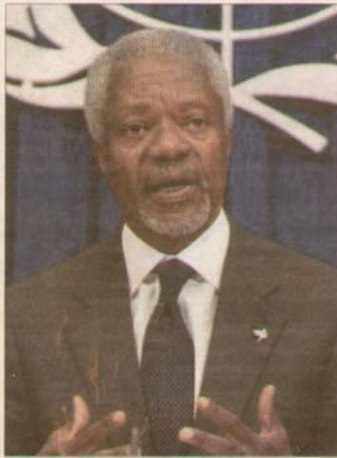
Security forces said the leader of the Abu Sofia group, who was killed in last week's attack, is the brother of an MILF commander.

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UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan

Irish PM shuns IRA denials of bank robbery

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern dismissed denials by Sinn Fein and its Irish Republican Army military wing of IRA involvement in a massive pre-Christmas bank heist in Belfast.

"This was an IRA job. This was a provisional IRA job. This was a job that would have been known to the leadership. This was a job that would have been known to the political leadership," he told RTE state radio on Sunday.

The December 20 robbery of the Northern Bank netted 26.5 million pounds (50 million dollars, 38 million euros).

Last week, Northern Ireland's top police officer, Chief Constable Hugh Orde, said he believed the IRA was responsible.

Ahern said he had no reason to doubt Orde's assessment.

Ahern said efforts to find a settlement in Northern Ireland had to continue.

"We have to, but it (the bank raid) doesn't make life easier. We all have to be big enough to keep the peace process going forward."

"Going back to where we were in the past and leaving that drift and creating the kind of problems of the past would be the wrong thing to do."

The two governments had sought assurances on the IRA abandoning criminality in last year's talks but it was not possible for the Sinn Fein leadership to agree with that.

"So therefore, as one of my colleagues said in those negotiations, if they can't agree, why is it they cannot agree? And of course that leads to the inevitability of the question is the reason because they knew these kind of events were going on."

However, Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness MP said Mr Orde's comments were "nothing more than politically-biased allegations".

"This is more to do with halting the process of change which Sinn Fein has been driving forward than with anything that happened at the Northern Bank," he said.

After consultations with his own security forces in the Republic, talks with British Prime Minister Tony Blair this week-end other "fairly extensive" information, he believed members of the outlawed IRA were responsible.

He dismissed Sinn Fein complaints that Orde had not produced evidence to back up his claim.

"Everybody knows that in an investigation, the chief constable doesn't start putting out the evidence day-by-day. What kind of idiots are people taking us for?"

"I am upset, quite frankly, that in the period when we were in intense talks trying to get a comprehensive agreement, that my information is now that people in very senior positions would have known what was going on."

Odd World

Cabin Crews wage 'snack strike' protest

Passengers on Alitalia's European flight were left hungry on Friday as cabin crew refused to serve meals and drinks in a "snack strike" to protest new working conditions at the Italian carrier.

The novel industrial action is a pale shadow of the all-out strikes which brought the airline to a standstill on occasion last year, but it has infuriated the management which is trying to drag the state-controlled company into profit. Passenger national and European flights were to be deprived of most in-flight services between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., a union representative said. Long-haul flights were unaffected.

"This is an unusual way to get the attention of Alitalia which won't mean big problems for passengers," he said.

Alitalia has threatened employees with legal action if they participate in the action, saying the protest is illegal as it comes during the peak Christmas period during which strikes are outlawed.

But unions were unrepentant and said they could stage more serious strikes if their grievances are not addressed. The company hoped it had put an end to a lengthy and damaging period of industrial unrest last October when it finally agreed with unions a sweeping restructuring plan aimed at pulling Alitalia back from the brink of bankruptcy.

That plan will shed 3,700 jobs, around a sixth of the payroll, split the firm into a flying and a services division and inject up to 1.2 billion euros in a capital increase, reducing the state's holding to 49 percent from today's 62 percent.

It includes tougher working conditions that affect shift practices and other things which have made many employees unhappy. Transport minister Pietro Lanardì is due to visit the European Union Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot in Brussels next Wednesday amid speculation that the EU will launch an in-depth probe to see if the plan contains illegal state aid.

The EU executive body could outlaw parts of the plan if it deems they break rules aimed at promoting competition by banning state aid to airlines.

Man sentenced to prison for going to prison

A 49-year-old Dane was sentenced to two months' behind bars for taking a friend's place in prison for a day, judicial sources said.

Per Thorbjørn Lonka appeared at a Copenhagen prison on August 28 and falsely presented himself as his friend who was supposed to be jailed. Guards never asked Lonka to show his identity papers, and he was imprisoned. But on the second day of his detention, he told guards that he was not the "real" prisoner.

"I wanted to stage a gimmick to prove that you can with impunity stay out of prison as long as you're rich and can pay someone else to serve your sentence for you," he told the court in Gentofte, near the Danish capital. Lonka was not paid by his friend, his lawyer Merete Singsom stressed, adding that she had appealed the conviction.

The practice of convicts paying others to serve their sentences for them is surprisingly widespread in Denmark. Last year, Justice Minister Lene Espersen took measures to prevent the practice.

In January 2004, Danish tabloid Ekstra Bladet revealed that around 100 convicts every year pay other people up to 1,000 kroner (135 euros) a day to serve their time. The practice is common for sentences of up to several months for crimes such as drunk driving, theft, assault and robbery, when those convicted remain free until they are summoned to appear at a detention centre.

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Tortoise adopts Hippo at Kenyan Sanctuary

A 120-year-old giant tortoise living in a Kenyan sanctuary has become inseparable from a baby hippo rescued by game wardens, officials said on Thursday.

The year-old hippo calf christened Owen was rescued last month, suffering from dehydration after being separated from his herd in a river that drains into the Indian Ocean.

"When we released Owen into the enclosure, he lumbered to the tortoise which has a dark grey color similar to grown up hippos," Sabine Baer, rehabilitation and ecosystems manager at the park, told Reuters. She said the hippo's chances of survival in another herd were very slim, predicting that a dominant male would have killed him. However, Owen's relationship with the Aldabran tortoise named Mzee, Swahili for old man, may end soon. The sanctuary plans to place Owen with Cleo, a lonely female hippo.

Man stabs best friend over sister

A British man was jailed on Friday for repeatedly stabbing a long lost best friend he had traced via the popular "Friends Reunited" Web site, and the victim says he still wants to be buddies. Brendan Walsh, 27, nearly killed Noel Duff when he stabbed him seven times in a drunken rage because he mistakenly believed his friend had attacked his sister, Karen, whom Duff had started dating.

However, Walsh immediately became full of remorse, called an ambulance and Duff was rushed to a hospital where doctors said it was a miracle he had survived a stab wound to the heart. Walsh, who was sentenced to three years in jail by London's Old Bailey after pleading guilty to wounding with intent, had been a close friend with Duff at school and had met up with him again via the Web site, later introducing him to his sister.

"The victim is no longer angry at you and the remarkable fact is that (he) even gave evidence on your behalf and said he would like to be friends with you again," Judge David Paget told Walsh, who was cleared of attempted murder. "Even the victim later remarked 'I can't believe a stupid fight came to this'."

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Zakari Ibrahim

Sani Dauda

Nuhu Yada

Ahmad S. Misyaki

Usuru A. Soro

Ibrahim M. Mharki

Franco Lawal

Saleman Mhphah

Deji Oshodi
Managing Director

Directors

Exceptional Performance...

earns investor confidence and customer loyalty



Muhammad Jimoh, Chairman

When the Bank commenced operations in June, 2001 we made a promise to offer efficient and exceptional services that will delight our valued customers.

In barely three years of our business activities, our vision has translated into excellent performance that has continued to earn for the Bank the confidence and loyalty of our investors, customers and other stakeholders.

Take a look at our comparative financial performance highlights as at **30th April, 2003 and 2004**

As a promising bank with great potentials for uncommon accomplishments, we have identified and set out to explore the great opportunities inherent in the growth sectors of the economy such as Oil & Gas, Telecoms and IT, Real Estate, Manufacturing, Construction, Power and Steel, Capital Markets and Off-Shore Branch Network. We are confident that, in the years to come, our strong business focus and management strategies will lead us to the pinnacle of growth.

| Performance Indices | % Growth | 2004 ₦,000 | 2003 ₦,000 |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Gross Earnings | 61.98 | 1,853,789 | 1,144,449 |
| Profit/(Loss) Before Taxation | 191.19 | 441,301 | 151,552 |
| Profit/(Loss) After Taxation | 137.37 | 343,129 | 144,552 |
| Deposit Liabilities | 50.23 | 8,565,242 | 5,701,230 |
| Loans and Advances | 45.67 | 2,848,010 | 1,955,110 |
| Total Assets | 43.47 | 11,560,124 | 8,057,401 |
| Earnings Per Share | 142.86 | 0.34k | 0.14k |

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NUB International Bank Limited
...we never stop serving you

Head Office: Plot 554, Akoka Road, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel: 01-2701495-9
Head Office Annex: Plot 273A, Akoka Road, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel: 01-2701495-9

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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
Abuja - PHC 9:00a.m.
PHC - Abuja 11:00a.m.
Lagos - Yola 1:00 p.m.
Abuja - Yola 14:30
Yola - Abuja 15:30
Yola - Lagos 4:00 p.m.

Chanchangi Airlines

Lagos - Abuja 8:15a.m.
11:00a.m.
12:10p.m.
4:45p.m.

Kaduna - Lagos 8:30a.m.
PH - 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 - Abuja 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 8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC 10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos 12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano 2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos 4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja 6:30p.m.

ADC Airline

Lagos - Abuja 7:15 a.m.
12:45 p.m.
8:55 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos 8:55 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar 11:15 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos 7:20 a.m.
PH - Lagos 9:45 a.m.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

Central bankers, joined by commercial counterparts and financial regulators from around the globe, on Sunday discussed ways to ensure smooth economic growth amid worries over widening United States' deficits.

The two-day meeting, held at the Bank for International Settlements, examines co-operation among bankers and watchdogs as cross-border ties strengthen, meaning that sparks in one corner of the globe could provoke fire in another.

"The first topic was the world economy and its implications for financial institutions," Hirofumi Gomi, head of Japan's watchdog Financial Services Agency, told reporters.

According to Reuters, for the global economy, signs are emerging that the expansion is losing steam after a robust 2004. Japan's recovery is looking shaky, Britain is slowing and domestic

Niger farmers access N107m credit from CBN

From Kashim Sule, Stringer, Minna

The Minna branch of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had guaranteed a total of 1,828 loans valued at N107.42m under Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme to farmers in the year 2004.

Announcing the disbursement at the end of the year dinner at clearing house committee at Shiroro Hotel, Minna, the branched controller, Alhaji M.A.K Dala said it represent an increase of 127percent in volume and 105percent in value above the year 2003.

The branched controller stated that factors responsible for this favourable financial deal were due to the dedication of the Minna clearing zone to duty.

Dala further disclosed that in year 2004, a total of 100,872 instruments valued at N65.93billion were cleared compared to 88,044 instruments valued at 51.67-billion cleared in the year 2003.

Again, the controller attributed this development to the peaceful and enabling economic climate in the state which has attracted more branches in the state.

Later, announcing the best performing bank in the areas of development finance responsible for facilitating agric loan to farmers (DFO) and currency processing unit responsible for processing deposits by the banks, the Union Bank of Minna emerged best, while the Bank of the North came second, while Zenith International Bank plc emerged third.

Central bankers review World economy

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For three weeks is being attended by key officials involved with trade negotiations in Ghana, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

"It is being organised with all the support of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)."

Nigeria, with 22 officials has the highest number of participants in the programme which is intended to build capacity within the region in trade negotiations.

Commercial bankers, who join the closed-door G10 meeting once a year, are expected to discuss barriers to consolidation and economic risks, one participant said.

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How interest-rate policy can control inflation

-Euro Bank's chief economist

Chief Economist of the European Central Bank, Otmar Issing, stated on Sunday that interest-rate policy can only control inflation in the "medium to longer term," and that consistent policy was needed to establish credibility.

Speaking to the annual meeting of the Allied Social Science Associations, Issing said it was important for a central bank to offer enough information about its policy-making process to give some element of predictability about its likely actions.

"If a central bank is reliable in this sense, it is much easier for it to gain credibility and win the trust of the public and the markets alike," said Issing, who was chairing a panel discussion about central bank communication.

"In this regard, all efforts must focus on anchoring inflation expectations at a level that is in line with a mandate and, where appropriate, with price stability or an inflation target," he said, adding that "as far as steering medium to longer term

expectations is considered, credibility is essential." Issing said a central bank also must explain the limits of its mandate, noting "monetary policy can control inflation only in the medium to longer term," and it is important that the public knows it cannot control short-term inflation risks.

Reuters reports that, during a question-and-answer session, Issing said he did not think that an expanded ECB governing council — stemming from more countries becoming euro area members would pose a threat to its ability to make good decisions.

Currently, there are 18 members of the governing council, including six Executive Board members and governors of central banks from the 12 euro area countries, but that number will grow as more countries join.

"I rely on the process of reasonable people to deal with this problem," Issing said. "So I am not worried about that."

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For three weeks is being attended by key officials involved with trade negotiations in Ghana, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

"It is being organised with all the support of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)."

Nigeria, with 22 officials has the highest number of participants in the programme which is intended to build capacity within the region in trade negotiations.

Commercial bankers, who join the closed-door G10 meeting once a year, are expected to discuss barriers to consolidation and economic risks, one participant said.

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Market indicators

| Nigerian Inter-bank Offered Rate (NIBOR) | | |
|--|-------------|--|
| Other Rates | | |
| Quotes as of: | 07/01/2005. | |
| 7 Days | 13.0833 | |
| 30 Days | 15.3333 | |
| 60 Days | 15.6667 | |
| 90 Days | 16.5833 | |
| 180 Days | 17.0000 | |
| 270 Days | 0.0000 | |
| 365 Days | 17. | |

| Nigerian Inter-bank Foreign Exchange (NIFEX) Rates | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| Quotes as of: 07/01/2005 | | |
| | Bid(\$=N=) | Offer(\$=N=) |
| Spot Fixing | 132.8 | 133.1 |
| Forward Fixing | | |
| 30 | 1.4295 / 1.4328 | 134.2295 / 134.5328 |
| 60 | 2.8534 / 2.8598 | 135.6534 / 135.9598 |
| 90 | 4.2716 / 4.2813 | 137.0716 / 137.3813 |
| 180 | 8.4928 / 8.5120 | 141.2928 / 141.612 |

| Open Market Operations (OMO Auction) held on 06/01/2005 | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| Rates | | |
| Security | NTB | |
| Tenor | 21 Days | |
| Maturity Date | 26/01/2005 | |
| Total Amount of Bids received | N 150 Million | |
| Total Amount Sold | N 150 Million | |
| Range of bid Rates | 12.5000% | |
| Stop Rate | 12.5000% | |
| True Yield | 12.5903 % | |
| Weighted Average Rate | Nil | |

| Naira rate against World currencies as at 29/12/2004 | | | |
|--|----------|----------|-----------|
| N | Buying | Selling | Central |
| US DOLLAR | 131.85 | 132.85 | 132.35 |
| POUND STERLING | 255.433 | 257.303 | 256.40165 |
| EURO | 179.7116 | 181.0746 | 180.3931 |
| SWISS FRANCS | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| JAPANESE YEN | 1.2755 | 1.2852 | 1.28035 |
| CFA FRANCS | 0.2651 | 0.2751 | 0.2701 |
| WAUJA | 203.7152 | 205.2603 | 204.48775 |
| SAUDI RIYAL | 35.1638 | 35.4304 | 35.2971 |

| Bureau De Change rates as of: 04/01/2005 | | | | |
|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| Currency | Dollar | Pounds | | |
| Location | Buying | Selling | Buying | Selling |
| Lagos | 136.50 | 137.50 | 258.00 | 259.00 |
| Rejo | 136.00 | 137.00 | 257.50 | 258.50 |
| Airport | 137.00 | 138.00 | 259.00 | 260.00 |

| Minimum Rediscount Rate and Export Proceeds Rates | |
|---|-----------|
| Minimum Rediscount Rate | 13 0.00 % |
| Export Proceeds Per \$ | 1 0.00 |

| Dutch Auction held on: 20/12/2004 | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Amount Offered | US\$ 124,000,000 |
| Total Amount Demanded | US\$ 194,180,133.30 |
| Total Amount Sold | US\$ 162,059,985.16 |
| Lowest Successful Bid Rate | N 132.85 / 1 US\$ |
| Highest Successful Bid Rate | N 133.3 / 1 US\$ |
| No. of Successful Applicants | 866 |
| No. of Unsuccessful Applicants | 110 |
| Source: | MMAN |

Business Trust

Motoring

2005 Altima: An entertaining performance

The third-generation Altima has become one of the most popular Nissans since its debut in 2002, due to some unique qualities it possesses. It's not bland, boring, and uninteresting. It stands out from its competitors in the heart of the mid-size sedan class, offering a fine combination of pace, comfort, and unique style, with entertaining performance as well.

By Hamisu Muhammed, Reporter (Business)
makes it look even more substantial.

While there are new color choices for the 2005 Altima, and the mostly subtle exterior revisions could be seen as trim changes, the interior gets a major revamping. Underneath, the V6 engine used in the upscale models gets a touch more power, and the rear suspension has been redesigned.

The Nissan Motors, car manufacture said Altima is a conservative design for a Nissan - which means that compared to other mid-size, mid-level sedans it's anything but conservative. Rounded and voluptuous, it's at the large end of the midsize spectrum, and its styling

"The new grille and bumper fascia add slightly under an inch to length. Although it, like most cars in its class, has front-wheel drive, the Altima has sporty-looking long-hood, short deck proportions, and a curving character line on each side adds to that by suggesting a rakish wedge shape."

The long passenger cabin dominates the side view of the car, promising interior space. The most noticeable styling changes for 2005 are at the front. More angular smoked headlight covers, twin character lines inscribed into center of the hood, a reshaped grille with textured dark metallic crossbars, and a revised bumper fascia with inset fog lamps balance the Altima's rounded shape.

The interior space promised by the exterior styling is delivered. And the interior's design makes efficient use of all that space. It's been freshened with new

materials for the seats and headliner, and a new instrument panel and console.

The backlit, easily-visible instruments are in a restyled pod that features individual chrome bezels. A three-spoke steering wheel replaces last year's four-spoke wheel; it can be adjusted to a wide degree for both tilt and reach.

The new console adds storage space, with a large covered compartment at the front and a two-layer box/armrest at the rear that has a power point useful for recharging a cell phone or other electronic device.

The 2005 Nissan Altima has front and rear crumple zones. Dual-stage front airbags that sense seatbelt use and collision severity and deploy accordingly. Front seat side-impact airbags and ceiling-mounted side-curtain airbags are available.



2005 Nissan Altima 3.5 SE

Auto-makers optimistic on environment, technology

The major automakers at the North American International Auto Show were emphasizing their environmental as well as technological efforts.

Ford Motor Company, chairman Bill Ford said his company, which won the coveted North American Truck of the Year award with its hybrid Ford Escape SUV, expects to have five hybrid gasoline-electric vehicles on the market within three years.

"It's only the start and it's only one of the fuel efficient technologies we're working seriously on," the company chairman, great-grandson of founder Henry Ford.

Ford said the company is the only automaker with major efforts in four different fuel-saving technologies: hybrids, clean diesels, hydrogen powered internal combustion engines and fuel cells.

"my great-grandfather's vision was to provide affordable transportation for the world," he said. "I want to expand that vision for the 21st century and provide transportation that is affordable in every sense of the word - socially and environmentally, as well as

economically. That means vehicles that are safe, clear and energy efficient."

General Motors said it too is working on hybrid engines but sees this only as a step to even better fuel technology. Hybrids represent a bridge to the long-term solution of hydrogen fuel cells. GM chairman Rick Wagoner said in the opening presentation of the world's number one automaker at the show as the

company introduced its prototype hybrid SUV and a concept fuel cell vehicle.

Nonetheless, Wagoner said the automaker is working on new hybrid engines, including as part of a joint venture with DaimlerChrysler. Wagoner, who unveiled the company's prototype fuel cell vehicle called Sequel, noted that GM is introducing hybrid on its largest vehicles first,

including trucks and buses. The first large-scale consumer rollout of GM hybrids for the US consumer market will be in 2006. The show opens after a glum year for US automakers. The market share of the Big Three General Motors, Ford and the Chrysler Group of DaimlerChrysler fell to an unprecedented 58.7 percent in 2004, even while overall car sales edged up slightly.

Daimler Chrysler global car sales rise

DaimlerChrysler boosted global car sales 2.1 percent to 3.9 million units in 2004 as a strong showing by US arm Chrysler offset a dip at flagship Mercedes Car Group, the world's fifth-biggest carmaker said on Sunday. Chrysler Group sales rose 3.5 percent worldwide to 2.7 million units, paced by hot new models like the big-grilled Chrysler 300 and minivans with stow-flat seats. The premium Mercedes division saw sales ease 0.8 percent to 1.2 million units, hurt by disruptive but rejuvenating model changeovers at Mercedes-Benz. A 21.1 percent rise in deliveries of Smart compact cars to 139,600 units helped take up some of the slack from a 3.1 percent decline at Mercedes-Benz, which sold 1.06 million cars. Mercedes Car Group chief Eckhard Cordes told reporters at the

North American International Auto Show that his division's sales would rebound this year thanks to the renewed product lineup and four new model launches.

"Our sales volume will be up" in 2005, Cordes said on the sidelines of the show, but he declined to elaborate. He reaffirmed that operating profit at Mercedes traditionally the group's cash cow but now facing falling margins had declined in 2004, but was not more specific. Cordes said plans for new Smart model launches were "on hold" while the group reviewed options for boosting profits at a business that has lost money since the urban micro car brand made its debut in 1998. This freeze includes the For More SUV model that the group had seen as its entry model for the US market, he said.

Mazda targets more sales in 2005

Japan's Mazda Motor Corporation said on Sunday it expected its sales to grow again in 2005 on increased brand awareness and a stronger dealer base despite stagnant growth overall in the world's biggest car market.

For us, 2004 was a very strong year in terms of setting up the foundation for future growth," Jim O'Sullivan, chief executive of Mazda's North American operations, told Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. "Going into 2005, we're anticipating more growth," O'Sullivan said, adding that the scale of

growth depended on how much supply of the popular Mazda3 compact the region would be allocated from its headquarters in Hiroshima. Last year, Mazda - one-third owned by Ford Motor Company managed a 2-percent rise in US sales to 263,900 vehicles against initial projections of a 10 percent increase. O'Sullivan said a shortage in supply of the Mazda3, called the Axela in Japan, was responsible for much of the shortfall. A slight decline in fleet sales to less than 10 percent of the total was also a factor, he said.

But O'Sullivan said Mazda's sales of passenger cars, a shrinking segment accounting for less than half

of the overall US market, were up 14 percent in 2004 even as its spending on profit-eroding sales incentives fell for the year. That compared to a double-digit rise in average incentives offered in the industry. Mazda's share of the US market inched up a tenth of a percentage point to 1.6 percent in 2004.

Mazda sells 70 percent of its cars in the United States through exclusive dealers, but only 33 percent of the showrooms carry only Mazda. It aims to boost that ratio to 50 percent by the end of 2006. Mazda is also looking to beef up its product lineup by launching



Chrysler 300, the North American car of the year



The latest edition of Mazda Posh car (Mazda 6)

Business Trust

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE REPORT AS AT MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2005

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

| COMPANY NAME | NO OF DEALS | QUOTATION(S) | QUANTITY TRADED | VALUE OF SHARES |
|--|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED | | | | |
| OKTIPIPA OIL PALM PLC | 1 | 0.75 | 500 | 375.00 |
| THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC | 6 | 15.50 | 13,400 | 208,140.00 |
| PRESCO PLC | 10 | 17.78 | 157,601 | 1,359,563.14 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 2,065,078.34 |
| AUTOMOBILE & TYRE | | | | |
| DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC | 18 | 2.00 | 90,375 | 184,361.00 |
| F. T. BRISCOE PLC | 3 | 7.22 | 8,700 | 62,814.00 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 247,175.00 |
| BANKING | | | | |
| ACCESS BANK PLC | 9 | 3.42 | 107,050 | 366,111.00 |
| AFRI-BANK NIGERIA PLC | 12 | 6.63 | 69,440 | 460,287.20 |
| FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC | 29 | 3.41 | 766,325 | 2,611,168.25 |
| CHARTERED BANK PLC | 127 | 3.37 | 4,338,096 | 14,511,133.02 |
| COOPERATIVE BANK PLC | 10 | 1.23 | 143,725 | 176,781.75 |
| COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC | 7 | 0.73 | 993 | 693.50 |
| FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC | 440 | 25.00 | 1,114,255 | 27,828,263.29 |
| FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC | 32 | 1.50 | 752,430 | 1,125,099.02 |
| GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC | 43 | 11.40 | 404,621 | 4,730,619.42 |
| GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC | 49 | 0.96 | 12,917,509 | 12,458,423.73 |
| HALLMARK BANK PLC | 11 | 2.16 | 2,371,957 | 5,186,300.40 |
| INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC | 29 | 0.69 | 4,838,140 | 3,338,454.60 |
| INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC | 13 | 1.07 | 1,563,443 | 1,672,884.01 |
| INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC | 8 | 7.81 | 380,000 | 2,967,800.00 |
| LIBERTY MERCHANT BANK | 2 | 10.00 | 30,000 | 300,000.00 |
| MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC | 6 | 1.16 | 85,666 | 99,372.56 |
| NAL BANK PLC | 26 | 1.95 | 191,635 | 365,171.00 |
| OCEANIC BANK PLC | 2 | 6.30 | 15,093 | 95,079.60 |
| OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC | 11 | 1.53 | 38,782 | 61,206.46 |
| STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC | 2 | 7.41 | 3,500 | 25,935.00 |
| TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC | 10 | 1.42 | 448,344 | 639,454.35 |
| UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC | 143 | 9.50 | 4,199,560 | 40,266,349.50 |
| UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC | 294 | 20.70 | 1,555,431 | 32,387,404.66 |
| UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC | 36 | 0.87 | 44,393,280 | 41,491,641.60 |
| WEMA BANK PLC | 10 | 3.93 | 18,276,444 | 71,826,424.92 |
| ZENITH BANK PLC | 48 | 15.69 | 272,063 | 4,268,997.96 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 248,888,478.87 |
| BREWERS | | | | |
| GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC | 135 | 114.50 | 440,842 | 50,609,922.88 |
| INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC | 1 | 1 | 1 | 900.00 |
| NIGERIAN BREWERS PLC | 373 | 41.74 | 766,555 | 31,922,130.55 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 82,532,953.43 |
| BUILDING MATERIALS | | | | |
| ASIARA CEMENT PLC | 76 | 24.01 | 397,484 | 9,657,478.47 |
| CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC | 8 | 7.01 | 40,075 | 284,256.40 |
| NIGERIAN WIRE INDUSTRIES PLC | 1 | 2.24 | 100 | 224.00 |
| WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC | 30 | 11.99 | 121,006 | 1,431,487.40 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 11,373,446.81 |
| CHEMICAL & PAINTS | | | | |
| BERGER PAINTS PLC | 9 | 4.67 | 60,540 | 280,696.68 |
| CAP PLC | 4 | 7.15 | 24,918 | 178,162.70 |
| D. N. MEYER PLC | 10 | 5.60 | 57,050 | 360,935.33 |
| NIGERIA GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC | 4 | 4.05 | 50,226 | 200,796.26 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 1,029,591.97 |
| COMPUTER & OFFICE EQUIPMENT | | | | |
| THOMAS WYATT NIGERIA PLC | 1 | 0.40 | 168 | 67.20 |
| TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC | 2 | 1.00 | 2,930 | 2,930.00 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 3,098.20 |
| CONGLOMERATES | | | | |
| A. G. LEVENTIS NIGERIA PLC | 8 | 1.17 | 64,751 | 76,893.23 |
| C. F. A. O. NIGERIA PLC | 1 | 4.99 | 1 | 4.99 |
| CHIALLAMAS PLC | 1 | 1.71 | 4,192 | 7,168.32 |
| JOHN HOLT PLC | 1 | 0.99 | 3,487 | 3,453.12 |
| UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC | 218 | 16.39 | 1,235,943 | 20,033,257.88 |
| P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC | 82 | 12.35 | 417,628 | 5,139,302.64 |
| S. C. O. NIGERIA PLC | 8 | 1.19 | 7,870 | 9,376.01 |
| U.A.C. NIGERIA PLC | 76 | 14.17 | 814,942 | 12,964,728.14 |
| U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC | 6 | 1.26 | 72,874 | 91,721.24 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 38,404,045.64 |
| CONSTRUCTION | | | | |
| COSTAIN (N.A.) PLC | 5 | 0.96 | 3,300 | 3,168.00 |
| JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC | 13 | 15.58 | 62,147 | 969,295.26 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 971,418.26 |
| FOOD BEVERAGES & TOBACCO | | | | |
| F&P BOTTLING COMPANY PLC | 29 | 23.51 | 54,404 | 1,279,130.97 |
| CADBERY NIGERIA PLC | 147 | 60.00 | 1,82,771 | 11,065,668.69 |
| FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC | 43 | 16.61 | 187,659 | 3,117,015.99 |
| NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC | 67 | 59.00 | 198,443 | 11,687,040.22 |
| NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC | 25 | 150.00 | 121,107 | 18,556,283.72 |
| NORTHERN NIGERIA FLOUR MILLS PLC | 5 | 15.82 | 13,059 | 206,548.38 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 47,711,684.97 |
| HEALTHCARE | | | | |
| B. N. PLC | 2 | 0.61 | 36,657 | 22,360.77 |
| EVANS MEDICAL PLC | 13 | 3.41 | 44,800 | 152,673.60 |
| MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC | 5 | 25.00 | 5,000 | 131,250.00 |
| MORSON INDUSTRIES PLC | 3 | 1.13 | 84,107 | 95,040.91 |
| NEUMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC | 7 | 3.00 | 60,926 | 176,218.00 |
| PHARMA-BIEXO PLC | 6 | 4.75 | 6 | 28.50 |
| GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC | 31 | 8.87 | 484,820 | 4,117,404.35 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 4,689,972.13 |
| INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS | | | | |
| NIGERIA ENAMELWARE COMPANY PLC | 1 | 3.25 | 300 | 975.00 |
| FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC | 14 | 1.04 | 1,257,100 | 1,306,062.60 |
| B.O.C. GASES PLC | 1 | 3.00 | 786,109 | 498,277.00 |
| VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC | 11 | 3.85 | 109,845 | 422,303.25 |
| VONO PRODUCTS PLC | 3 | 1.90 | 400 | 760.00 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 1,533,954 |
| INSURANCE | | | | |
| AGEN INSURANCE COMPANY PLC | 1 | 0.62 | 10,000 | 6,200.00 |
| AICO INSURANCE PLC | 2 | 1.89 | 40,355 | 76,270.95 |
| CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC | 3 | 1.20 | 50,000 | 62,200.00 |
| LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC | 12 | 1.52 | 283,368 | 430,459.72 |
| MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC | 2 | 0.93 | 1,500 | 1,395.00 |
| N.E.M. INSURANCE CO. (NIG.) PLC | 1 | 0.83 | 40,000 | 33,200.00 |
| NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC | 1 | 4.24 | 2,000 | 8,480.00 |
| ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC | 1 | 1.90 | 15,000 | 58,500.00 |
| UNIC INSURANCE PLC | 3 | 1.05 | 52,100 | 52,325.00 |
| WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COV. PLC | 4 | 2.72 | 121,174 | 324,301.91 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 1,053,332.58 |
| MANAGED FUNDS | | | | |
| C & T LEASING PLC | 16 | 1.60 | 209,500 | 333,695.00 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 333,695.00 |
| PACKAGING | | | | |
| AVON CROWNCAPS & CONTAINERS PLC | 2 | 0.66 | 8,212 | 5,419.92 |
| BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC | 5 | 5.13 | 4,901,166 | 20,482,713.40 |
| POLY PRODUCTS (NIGERIA) PLC | 4 | 0.50 | 46,900 | 20,990.00 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 26,508,133.32 |
| PETROLEUM/MARKETING | | | | |
| AFRIDI PLC | 7 | 0.79 | 477,911 | 377,391.69 |
| AFRI-AN PETROLEUM PLC | 119 | 86.00 | 1,875,626 | 33,299,619.74 |
| ITTESA OIL & GAS PLC | 2 | 2.51 | 182,468 | 388,540.28 |
| MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC | 51 | 18.00 | 23,784 | 426,091.95 |
| COMBIL PLC | 68 | 6.88 | 7,28,338 | 6,143,922.65 |
| TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC | 31 | 16.00 | 18,837 | 3,113,124.19 |
| TOTAL NIGERIA PLC | 18 | 185.00 | 12,853 | 2,347,419.90 |
| DANDO PLC | 26 | 108.00 | 19,668 | 2,138,642.18 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 63,313,839.86 |
| PRINTING & PUBLISHING | | | | |
| ACADEMY PRESS PLC | 3 | 1.98 | 11,600 | 22,988.00 |
| LONGMAN NIGERIA PLC | 4 | 2.22 | 18,000 | 22,200.00 |
| UNIVERSITY PRESS PLC | 9 | 1.50 | 15,000 | 22,500.00 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 67,688.00 |
| REALTY | | | | |
| GLAC. PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC | 11 | 8.75 | 792,000 | 3,879,447.20 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 3,879,447.20 |
| TEXTILES | | | | |
| UNITED NIGERIA TEXTILES PLC | 7 | 2.28 | 116,986 | 263,123.48 |
| Sector Totals | | | | 263,123.48 |
| Other | | | | |
| Sector Totals | | | | 548,357,015.11 |

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

| SYMBOL | VOLUME | VALUE | TRADES |
|------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| UBN | 1,555,431.00 | 32,387,404.66 | 294 |
| INLANDBANK | 1,563,443.00 | 1,672,884.01 | 13 |
| HALLBANK | 2,371,957.00 | 5,186,300.40 | 11 |
| DELTA GLAS | 4,001,166.00 | 20,482,713.40 | 5 |
| UBA | 4,199,560.00 | 40,266,349.50 | 143 |
| CHARTERED | 4,338,096.00 | 14,451,133.02 | 127 |
| IMB | 4,838,340.00 | 3,338,454.60 | 25 |
| GULFBANK | 12,917,509.00 | 32,458,425.73 | 49 |
| WEMABANK | 18,276,444.00 | 71,826,424.92 | 10 |
| UTB | 44,393,280.00 | 41,451,641.60 | 36 |

TOP 10 GAINERS

| SYMBOL | LASTCLOSE | YESTERDAY'S | CLOSE |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------|
| CHANGE | 179.00 | 183.00 | +5.94 |
| TOTAL | 145.00 | 150.00 | +5.00 |
| AF | 66.05 | 68.00 | +1.95 |
| MOBIL | 178.15 | 180.00 | +1.85 |
| PRESCO | 11.22 | 11.78 | +0.56 |
| UBN | 20.25 | 20.70 | +0.45 |
| SKSBECHAM | 8.45 | 8.87 | +0.42 |
| EKOMOIL | 15.22 | 15.50 | +0.28 |
| LEVDROS | 16.12 | 16.39 | +0.27 |
| NH | 41.48 | 41.74 | +0.26 |

TOP 10 LOSERS

| SYMBOL | LASTCLOSE | YESTERDAY'S | CLOSE |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------|
| TEXACO | 173.00 | 169.00 | -4.00 |
| UNIPETROL | 109.50 | 108.06 | -1.44 |
| ASHAKACEM | 24.60 | 24.01 | -0.59 |
| GUINNESS | 115.00 | 114.50 | -0.50 |
| ROYALEN | 4.10 | 3.90 | -0.20 |
| OWINABANK | 1.60 | 1.53 | -0.07 |
| AGLEVER | 1.23 | 1.17 | -0.06 |
| CORNERST | 1.26 | 1.20 | -0.06 |
| GULFBANK | 1.01 | 0.96 | -0.05 |
| MORISON | 1.17 | 1.13 | -0.04 |

Crude oil prices climb amid OPEC worries

Crude oil prices rose yesterday, as rough weather slowed plans to return to full production from the North Sea and amid some worry that OPEC producers may cut output again later this month.

In the short term, however, analysts said they expected prices to stall barring major disruption and violence in the Middle East, particularly in pre-election Iraq.

While oil prices are well below the late October high of more than \$55 a barrel, traders remain wary about tight heating oil supplies in the United States, as well as possible supply disruptions in Iraq and terrorist activity in Saudi Arabia, the world's top supplier of crude oil.

Prices for crude oil were up 52 cents in afternoon trading in Europe, with a barrel fetching \$45.95 in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Heating oil prices rose more than 3 cents to \$1.3075.

Brent crude for February delivery was up 52 cents at \$43.70 on the International Petroleum Exchange.

Crude prices should hover within the \$45 range until OPEC's meeting at the end of this month, said Esa Ramsamy, oil editorial manager of energy reporting agency Platts.

Investors are getting skittish, Ramsamy said. OPEC members reduced production by 1 million barrels a day from the start of 2005 to bring the cartel closer to its official output ceiling of 27 million barrels. Oil ministers said then that they were ready to reduce output again if needed when they meet at their Vienna headquarters on Jan. 30.

The Saudis have already said they'd like to keep prices for their own crude above \$35, said Deutsche Bank oil price strategist Adam Sieminski in London. "It's now about \$38."

Sieminski said that gas-fueled winds reaching into Scandinavia were keeping about 350,000 barrels of North Sea oil from reaching the market each day.

On the plus side, he said he expected stalled oil production in Nigeria to resume soon.

On Wednesday, oil prices fell after a U.S. government report showed larger-than-expected increases in winter fuel supplies, sending heating oil prices lower. The increase was much higher than expected, although it still leaves inventories 11 percent below year ago levels, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Sieminski said traders were looking for direction to an International Energy Agency oil report due Tuesday.

US dollar drops slightly after gains

The dollar eaned back slightly yesterday after gains last week against euro, which rose to \$1.3116 as markets looked ahead to the midweek release of US trade data.

Concerns over the US trade and budget deficits are the main driving force behind the 12-nation currency's rise from \$1.29 since September.

But the dollar made gains last week on optimistic news about the US economy as the euro continued its new-year drop from an all-time high of \$1.3667 on Dec. 30.

In addition to the international trade report from Washington on Wednesday, a report Thursday of December retail sales and Friday's release of industrial production numbers and business inventories are expected to influence trading this week.

Traders were also watching for a signal from European Central Bank President Jean-Claude

Advertorial

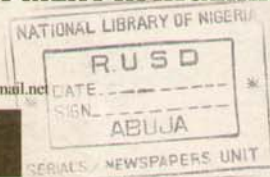
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BY

FOUNDATION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Secretariat
6 Lineker Close
Castlefield, Stafford

Staffordshire, ST16 1AL, UK Tel: +441785244636 E-mail: arabodigil@fsmail.net



Press Release

The Foundation for Good Governance and Development in Nigeria (FGDN), a UK based international organisation of Nigerian professionals has its fundamental objective as the pursuit and promotion of good governance in a democratic, virile and peaceful Nigeria. The foundation has been closely following political developments in Nigeria before, during and after the 2003 elections.

FGDN wishes to express its profound disappointment and shock by the majority judgment on Monday of December, 2004 issued by the Court of Appeal in Abuja, Nigeria, on the presidential election held on April 19 2003. This judgment at best appeared lopsided and at worst partisan.

The court has clearly accepted that there was widespread violence, intimidation, financial inducement and electoral irregularities. This is in line with the fears FGDN had expressed back in April 2003 on the elections. Similarly domestic and international independent monitoring teams who observed the elections, including the Transitional Monitoring Group (TMG) of Nigeria; the Commonwealth observer team, the European Union (EU) observer team and two US-based observer groups, the National Democratic Institute (NOI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI), among many others have also reported widespread cases of election irregularities. All these teams variously reported serious cases of malpractices, including vote fraud, ballot box stuffing, bribery, lack of ballot secrecy, disenfranchisement of voters, arrests of supporters of opposition parties and result declaration from areas where no elections took place. Furthermore, the court admitted that the petitioner was able to establish that the Resident Electoral Commissioner for Gombe State, Alhaji Gidado Abubakar was a PDP member together with eight other states; the party purported to have won the Election. This blatant abuse and use of security forces and INEC officials was what widely characterised the April 2003 elections.

An election conducted under such an atmosphere could not be held to be free and fair, and therefore the results of the polls should not be considered acceptable. If democracy, as it is generally assumed, is a government of the people, for the people and by the people then the people ought to be given the chance to choose their government freely and not through violence, intimidation and all manner of inducements. Moreover, where the politicians violate such citizens' right, the courts should come to their rescue not only as custodians of rule of law, but also as defenders of democracy. This judgment does not appear to do either. Justice should not only be done, but also be seen to be done. Justice has been delayed for an election that took place 21 months ago, and it has also been denied.

The condemnation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) by Justices F. Tabai, U. Abdullahi and M. Muhammad for its refusal to comply by the court order to produce the certified true copy of election results for the purpose of determination of the petition in court, does not add any value to the Judgment. If anything it portrays the court as being lenient or more seriously partisan to a body that shows its clear disregard to the rule of law and the Electoral Act 2002.

On the other hand, in the dissenting judgment by Justice S. Nsofor, it was clearly demonstrated that had INEC obeyed the court order, the statement of the results would have conclusively shown as alleged by the petitioners that the scores of the candidates were assigned and the petitioner's agent were not given the opportunity to certify the election papers thereby contravening sections 63 and 67 of the Electoral Act 2002. Such contravention renders the presidential election null and void, 38 asserted by Justice Nsofor.

The annulment of the results of the presidential election in Ogun State seems more like a symbolic gesture than a serious attempt to demonstrate a true sense of justice. The scale of electoral malpractices and violence that was widely reported to have taken place elsewhere in the country especially the South-South and South-East zones, where elections did not take place in some parts, were much worse than that reported in Ogun state. Relevant also is the fact that

the presidential election and the gubernatorial election are inseparably intertwined as they took place on the same day using the same polling booth nationwide. As such, the recent public written confession by president Obasanjo incriminating both Ngige, the declared governor of Anambra state and Audu Ogbah, the national chairman of PDP that the said elected governor of Anambra state did not win the April 2003 election, was quite a self indictment.

The major fear at this juncture is not merely on the fairness of this declaration important as it is, but more importantly the dangerous precedence that the court may set whereby democracy could be violently mutilated in this way and neither the bitter feelings of the electorate, civil societies, observer groups nor a constituted court of law, the last hope of the masses could challenge it. Among the three arms of government: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, the later is our last hope as the other two have undoubtedly badly failed us. This hope is not yet lost as the Supreme Court is poised to review this judgment. Democracy and good governance are the essential ingredients for sustained development in any country and must be allowed to take deep root in Nigeria in particular, and Africa in general. Only free, fair, peaceful and transparent elections can guarantee the attainment of these. A democratic Nigeria, with good governance and transparent leadership is a beacon of hope for Africa and the world over.

FGDN commends the courage, patience, persistence and principled pursuit of justice by the presidential candidate of ANPP Major General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) as well as his team of lawyers led by Chief Mike Ahamba (SAN), for tenaciously following the matter this far. This is a history in the making as no such petition has ever reached this stage. We also welcome the decision of the petitioner to appeal to the Supreme Court. In any situation, more so in Nigeria, the truth would not be allowed to see the day of light unless people of integrity are ready to sustain its pursuit to logical conclusion.

Similarly falsehood may only have a temporary respite where people of sound principles remain in the arena and squarely face the challenge, even in Nigeria. Failing to secure a fair judgment at this point is not the end of the effort but part of perfecting the effort. Moreover, freedom is not free, and wherever it is achieved a high price is usually paid for it. What is at stake is the bigger picture, the future of democracy and good governance in Nigeria.

We hereby call upon all patriotic Nigerians and friends of Nigeria, who believe in good governance and rule of law to rally round and support this struggle for the establishment of true democracy in Nigeria.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Long Live the Foundation for Good Governance and Development in Nigeria!!

For and on behalf of the Foundation

Mallam Garba Sani
Chairman
(Tel: +4479 6880 6992)

Dr. Arabo Bayo
General Secretary
(Tel: +4479 00588384)

Dr. Usman Ahmed
Publicity Secretary
(Tel: +4477 88827289)



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P.M.B. 12544, Lagos, Nigeria. Telephone: 01-2611262, 2612088, 2616682, 7744619. Telefax: 01-2612945, 2611083.



LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

NLC condemns police attack on journalists

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has indicted the men of the Nigeria Police Force for manhandling some journalists while carrying out their professional duties at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Emergency National Executive Council (NEC) meeting in Abuja last week.

Speaking to the newsmen over what he called police brutality on the Nigerian Journalists, Head of Information (NLC), comrade Owei Lakamfa, called on the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun to try the

Stories by AbdulWahab Deji Ajiokobi, Stringer (Abuja)

commissioner of police, federal Operations, Mr. Lawrence Alobi, Assistant Inspector General of Police Zone 7, Mr. Jimoh Yekini and other police officers that were involved in the manhandling of the journalists at PDP national secretariat.

Comrade Lakamfa said that it was more painful that the journalists were subjected to attacks in the course of covering what turned out to be a circuit show where a 30-

day suspension was handed over to a criminal that destroyed property in Anambra State.

According to him, the NLC was not surprised by the attack of policemen on the journalists covering the PDP National Executive Council (NEC) meeting because it had been their stock in trade right from colonial times to brutalise Nigerians, especially defenceless ones.

"You will recall that such attacks had been carried out on the NLC just for disagreeing with the government. You

will recall also that last year, policemen attached to Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, almost killed a journalist in Lagos for carrying out his professional duty. While it is true that journalism has its professional hazard, it does not and should not include policemen pointing guns on

the heads of journalists, breaking their ankles and damaging their equipment," he said.

He said that the NLC expressed disappointment on the part of the Nigeria Police that for three days, allowed hoodlums to take over

Anambra State, to destroy the public property.

He urged the Inspector General of Police to ensure that the said two high ranking officers and other police officers who assaulted the journalists were brought to book so as to serve as a lesson to other officers.

... NUJ demands justice

Following the Nigeria Police brutality on the journalists at the national secretariat of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) recently, the National governing council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), national secretariat, Abuja, has requested the Nigeria police force to replace damaged equipment, settle hospital bills of the injured journalists and requested that the police officers involved in the ugly act be brought to book before the union can honour any apology.

In a letter signed by NUJ Deputy National Secretary, Olu Akinboyeewa and addressed to the Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, the union said it has had enough apologies from the Nigeria Police as a result of incessant attacks on its members in the hands of overzealous policemen in the last few years.

According to the letter, the union requires the police hierarchy to adopt a pragmatic and sincere approach, which will require punitive measures against the perpetrators of what it described as inhuman, degrading, unprovoked and uncharitable, acts as against the usual mere tendering of apologies.

The union which said that the reverse is the case in Nigeria as far as police/journalists relationship is concerned said "if really the Nigeria Police believe in the dictum: 'police are friends of the people,' journalists as professionals who report events for the citizenry to know should be seen as partners in progress to policemen who have a duty to ensure the security of lives and property."

The union told the Inspector General of Police that no fewer than nine journalists had been assaulted physically by the men of the Nigeria Police Force while carrying out their official duties during the PDP Emergency National

Executive Council (NEC) meeting, held at the party secretariat, Abuja.

According to the union, the victims include Messrs Gbenga Abiodun of *Daily Independent*, Francis Ojo of *The Champion*, Yomi Fayose of *The Guardian*, Ibrahim Samaila of *The Punch*, Kennedy Egbonodija of *Daily Trust*, Akin Orimolade of *Tell Magazine*, Segun Jacob of *The Tribune*, Monday Emoni of *The Comet*, Messrs Innocent Okafor of *This Day*, and George Edemevughe of *Channels Television*.

"We have confirmed that two high ranking officers, one assistant Inspector General (AIG), Yekini Jimoh and Commissioner of Police (CP), Lawrence Alobi led the unfortunate onslaught on the gentle men of the press while carrying out their legitimate duties at the venue," the union said.

The letter also pointed out that the union and its membership are yet to recover from the sad memory of the unwarranted physical assault on another photojournalist by the policemen at the coronation of the Oba of Lagos, few years ago.

The union opined that policemen need to understand and appreciate the difficult nature of the practice of the journalism profession and accord same due recognition and courtesy, especially in a crisis situation.

Meanwhile, the Abuja council of NUJ, last week, condemned the police action, describing it as not only barbaric, inhuman and criminal but also a gross violation of the fundamental human rights of the affected journalists.

Abuja NUJ secretary, Iyobosa Uwugiaren, in a statement, gave the Nigeria Police Force seven days ultimatum within which to replace smashed cameras of the affected journalists and settle their medical bills.

The union warned that if the demands were not met

"NUJ Abuja Council will drag the Nigeria Police force before a competent court of law and human right commission for necessary legal action."

However, Benue State police commissioner, Mr. Johnson Uzuegbena, has assured family members of deceased journalist and broadcaster who was shot dead last year, that everything would be done to arrest those behind the killing.

Family members of retired journalist and broadcaster late Gwaza Bur, shot dead in Adikpo, in trouble Kwande local government area of Benue State has petitioned the Benue State Commissioner of police over the inability of the command to effect arrest on those behind the killing.

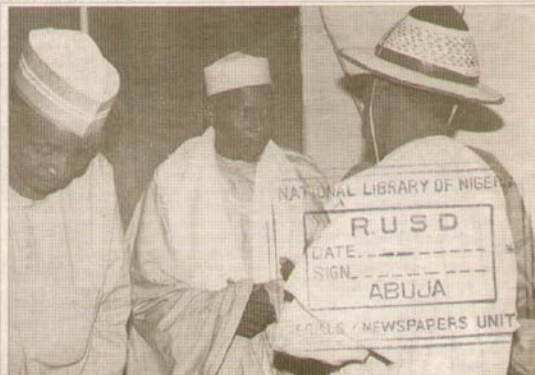
The family members joined by members of the deceased community had stormed the commissioner's office where they protested the seeming inability of the command to effect any arrest, about one-month after the former staff of the state owned radio state "Radio Benue" was shot dead in broad day light, by gun men suspected to be members of a militia group.

The community members said they decided to launch the complaint following concern that unless those behind the attack were arrested.

FRSC organises workshop for PR officers

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) is organising a one-day national workshop for its public education officers in its bid to expose them to emerging trends in corporate image building and management as well as contemporary challenges in public relations and mobilisation practices.

This was contained in a press release signed by Mr. Yakubu O. Attah, head of public education department and made available to *Labour*



Kaduna State commissioner for local government, Alhaji Mohammed Bello Kagarko, being presented with the staff of office as the Grand Patron of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association by the chairman of Miyetti Allah, Alhaji Ahmadu Kasuwari Magani (centre), during visit to the commissioner's office in Kaduna... Tuesday.

NPC staff get paid after protest

Following a protest by the workers of the National Population Commission (NPC), Abuja over the delayed payment of their outstanding accommodation allowances on Thursday, the Action Director of Public Affairs Department of the commission, Hajia Fati Kadiri has said that the commission later paid the workers after the protest.

Hajia Kadiri who disclosed this to *Labour Trust* said the commission had delayed the payment following a cheque written in a wrong name which was later rectified by putting an appropriate name before the Citizen Bank Plc cleared the cheque and paid cash to the commission.

According to her, the federal government had released N100 million for the

By AbdulWahab Deji Ajiokobi, Stringer (Abuja) with Agency Reports

part payment of 40 percent of the allowances owed about 6,500 NPC staff nationwide since 2001.

She also revealed that the payment exercise began immediately after the cheque was rectified from the bank and workers had been collecting their money till 10.00 p.m. that Thursday.

Some NPC workers who spoke to *Labour Trust* said that they got their money after the officials of NPC labour union perfected a protest action.

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) correspondent who witnessed the drama Thursday reports that visitors got trapped for more than an hour from 3 p.m. when

officials of NPC labour union locked the only gate into the premises.

The officials insisted that the gate would not be opened until the cheque was signed. It was not possible to know how much was on the cheque.

Businessmen, journalists and other visitors who were trapped pleaded to be left off the hook, but such pleas fell on deaf ears, as the workers maintained their stance.

Investigation showed that nerves got frayed when the decision of the workers to be paid cash was turned down by the officials of NPC labour union who allegedly delayed signing the cheque.

Some of the workers who spoke said that the officer did not find the idea of paying cash tidy as it could lead to fraud.

He said that the officer was also not comfortable that the cheque meant to pay all staff at the headquarters should be cashed because of the risks involved.

NAN learnt that the officer had preferred a situation where the workers' accounts would be credited individually instead of being paid cash.

However, the drama which dragged up to 80 minutes ended, when the workers trooped to the second floor office of the man they felt was denying them the chance of taking home some cash.

Following the signing of the cheque, the gate was reopened for visitors to leave, while the workers waited behind for those sent to cash the cheque to return.

By Benjamin Auta, Crime Reporter

The release said that the special forum, which is slated for today January 11, 2003 at the Jos zonal command is an effort aimed at repositioning the commission's public enlightenment machinery.

The release further said that the commission's officers from the 36 states of the federation, including the FCT and 12 zonal commands in addition to the national headquarters will participate

in the workshop.

The workshop which is to be chaired by the chief executive of the FRSC, Major General Haladu A. Hananiya while Mr. Yakubu Datti, the honourable commissioner of information, Plateau State is expected to be the special guest of honour.

The workshop, which is organised at the instance of the public education department, will feature PR and media experts while a communiqué is expected to be issued at the end of the special workshop.

The sleeping dams of

The three federal government dams in Katsina state have virtually been dormant since their construction between 1980 and 2000 as facilities for food and water security, deflating the mainly agrarian communities of zeal and hope, Uthman Abubakar reports.

The suspended canals, called concrete parabolic canals, disperse far into the vast fields, distributing, not irrigation water, but mockery and despair to the surrounding communities which have yearned for about two decades now to grow the bulk of their economy by irrigating the fields. All irrigation activities undertaken around the dam by the communities since it was constructed over two decades ago have not been according to its designed irrigation project and are also too negligible for any assessment on the scale of the project design and purpose. Only its drinking water supply to the neighboring Niger Republic and the surrounding communities, which is not even substantial enough according to the project design capacity, sustains its usefulness in accordance with its construction purpose.

Jibiya dam is one of the three federal government dams in Katsina state constructed, along with many others across the country, to boost agricultural production for the attainment of utmost food security through irrigation, and supply sufficient drinking water to their various communities of location. Zobe and Sabke are the other two. Jibiya and Zobe were built along with the facilities for their water supply and irrigation schemes in the early 1980s. Sabke's construction, which has reached the stage of substantial utilization for the dual schemes, began in the mid 1990s.

The purpose of their construction as facilities for the

dual projects may have been substantially blunted by the emerging policies of their owning government over the years, or the government may have completely changed that purpose with any other while guarantees more reliability and achievability on agricultural production and water supply according to its perception of emerging needs of the country. Assessed on the scale of their dual schemes of purpose and their various times of completion for the implementation of the schemes at any satisfactory stage according to their design capacity, the three federal government dams in Katsina state are virtually lying waste, telling a pathetic tale of their decades of existence as facilities for food and water security.

Their state of location, Katsina state, itself has had a high build up of concern over the years with their situation. It is startled by the zeal the construction of the three dams had created among its numerous communities for irrigation activities, which have to be sustained and harnessed for its agricultural programmes. The state has already realized vast potentials for successful irrigation programmes as a most feasible approach to achieving economic strength and reduce its dependence on statutory earnings. This concern has culminated in the state government's resolve to design its own irrigation scheme sustainable over time, much in the fashion of the Egyptian scheme.

The S-shaped Jibiya dam, about 365km long, was con-

structed across River Gada in Katsina state. It is 20m high and formed out of a homogeneous method of sand embankment. It has a 143m concrete spillway designed to safely access flood flow to the quantity of 2170 cubic meters. The reservoir was designed with a storage capacity of 142 million cubic meters. It has three components—the main dam, irrigation area and water supply. The main dam is of 21.3m maximum height, 3170m long, with 140m length of spillway and a storage capacity at maximum flood of 266.0 million cubic meters.

The irrigation area is made up of 2066Ha for irrigation by gravity, 3266Ha for irrigation by pumping, totaling 3474 for the entire dam's irrigation scheme, while the water supply scheme was designed to serve a total of 24 villages and towns with 4.6 million cubic meters of treated water at the rate of 12,000 cubic meters daily. However, according to the Katsina state Water Board sources, the Jibiya water supply system has a design capacity to produce six million liters of the treated water per day, but produces only 1.6 million liters because of the breakdown of a larger section of the pumping equipment. This apparently excludes the quantity served to the neighboring Niger republic, which is 432,000 cubic meters or 432 million liters of treated water daily for three months from 1st March to 31st May every year, adding up to 39,744,000 cubic meters for the three months, a period deliberately chosen by the benefiting country because it forms the heart of the dry season when



The power house of one of the dams, the difficulty in getting drinking water from other sources is usually at its peak there. The water is served that country under a bilateral agreement with Nigeria.

The irrigation and water supply projects are located at Jibiya town 43km north of Katsina and very close to the Nigeria/Niger republic border. They are designed for land water resources and irrigation development aimed at enhancing agricultural production, not only to Jibiya and its surrounding communities, but also Katsina state and the entire country. Although the net irrigable area of the dam is 3474 hectares the gross is 3450 hectares. The canal network is approximately 192km comprising 17km concrete lined trapezoidal main canal and 175km precast concrete parabolic canals. The pumping station capacity was designed for 1.86 million litres per day. Two compensation reservoirs, R1, with a 35,500 cubic meter capacity and R2, having 45,000 cubic meter capacity, which are served by six pumps, are incorporated in the irrigation system.

The Jibiya irrigation system has virtually been in lethargy since the completion of the dam and the installation of all other required facilities for the implementation of the dual projects, even if the cultivation of the 2,500Ha between 2000 and 2001 claimed by the Sokoto Rima River Basin Development Authority (SRRBDA) is considered.

"The situation of these dams is pathetic," an official of the Katsina area office of the SRRBDA, confirmed on condition of anonymity, revealing, "for three years now we have not received any funds in the form of subhead to service and maintain the entire systems in

the dams, so our machines can not pump any water for irrigation however much the Jibiya communities, for instance, want to practice dry season farming". His lamentation borders more on what he described as the fact that the current federal government has since 1999 virtually abandoned the dams "and only goes about digging boreholes among communities for drinking water."

According to elderly Musa Sule, a resident of Jibiya, who has been growing various food crops and vegetables at the bank of the dam for "many" years, "water has not been pumped into the fields for any irrigation activity for either five or seven years now, I can't remember how long, but it is a long time that any sign of serious irrigation activity as we expect has taken place here." Sule lamented further, "we have been complaining in group as farmers to the dam management, begging them to pump out water into the farms, and sometimes we even send our community leaders to them, but every year they only promise that they will do so and they don't. They have again promised to release the water this year, but we are only waiting because we are not sure."

For younger Rabiu Sale of Sabongarin matso-matso, one of the communities around the dam, most farmers grow their crops at the bank of the dam whether the water is released for irrigation or not. They have devised their own methods of irrigating their fields. "We are no more bothered about the failure of the dam management to release water whether they promise to do so or not, I, for instance, grow my sweet potato without any water pumped out through the canals." He

also hoped that the management would fulfill its promise of releasing water this year. It is evident the management of the dam perform a yearly ritual of promising the farming communities of clearing the fields and pumping water for the commencement of the designed irrigation project or, at least, for some level of irrigation activity. Less than 150Ha out of the about 3500Ha is now irrigated in the Jibiya scheme in the form of gravity irrigation, which does not require any power to pump the water into the fields.

Before the facilities for the two schemes are serviced and improved, or overhauled, where necessary, for the full implementation of the schemes according to design capacity, some impeccable sources have observed, the Jibiya irrigation project may be very slow and skeletal in implementation. The water supply project seems more important. This could mainly be due to the fact that



A compensation reservoir of Jibiya dam.



Piles of concrete parabolic canals and pipes for Sabke dam

sufficient amount in important... republic from the afflicting... desert of commun... Zobe across R... state, was planed at 23rd July, designed of its int... 5,200Ha water for to Katsina govern... including... area of 1... other at... awarded 120 mill... 30-month... the Katsina... A job... in 1983... contains... SRRBDA... the area... of the... ceasat... comm... plus sch... season... oped by... locant's... main a... The pen... the sc... counse... past the... January... coring... records.

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of Katsina

sufficient water has to be conserved in the reservoir to, very importantly, enable Nigeria to fulfil its part of the bilateral agreement of serving Niger republic with treated water from the Jibiya point without affecting the sufficiency of the commodity supplied to the desert-prone surrounding communities.

Zobe dam, constructed across River Zobe in Katsina state, was substantially completed and commissioned on 23rd July, 1983. It was initially designed to cater for 8,400Ha of its irrigation scheme, but, currently, it is to cater for 5,200Ha to conserve sufficient water for treatment and supply to Katsina and five other local government areas en-route, including Dutsin-ma, its local area of location, and Kankia.

However, according to other sources, the turkey contract of the dam was awarded in 1991 at the cost of 120 million US Dollars with a 30-month completion period with the hope that it would end Katsina's water problem. It is still staring at the problem.

Although the dam was completed ahead of schedule in 1983, irrigation activities could not immediately take-off due to the lack of funds. Nevertheless, according to SRRBDA records, the need for the immediate commencement of the utilization of the dam necessitated the authority to commence work on a 10,000Ha pilot scheme in the 1984/85 dry season. The land was developed by the SRRBDA and allocated to 25 farmers who grew maize and assorted vegetables. The perceived success of that pilot scheme operation "encouraged" the authority to expand the scheme to 100Ha undertaken by direct labour in January, 1986. Thereafter, according to the SRRBDA records, the scheme continued

with the irrigation of 80Ha in which cowpeas and some assorted vegetables were grown.

The dam was designed with the catchment area of 2,309square km, mean annual run off of 172 million cubic meters, dead storage capacity of 7 million cubic meters and gross storage capacity of 177 million cubic meters. Maximum height of the dam from river bottom to dam crest is 18.90m, length at dam crest is 2,750m.

Zobe dam is the homogeneous earth-filled type with granite as its subsoil. It has a width at crest of 3m, downstream slope of 1:2:3 with a wide berme 9m below the dam crest, upstream slope of 1:3:3 with a 5.0m wide berme 10m at dead storage level. Its maximum discharge of spillway based on flood with 5000 year return period and lake retention is 1,087 cubic meters per second. Its spillway is 110m long, maximum height of river overflow, 2.74m and freeboard above maximum flood level, 1.46m.

The dam's reservoir was designed to provide 170.26 million cubic meters of water supply annually to be allocated to meet the various needs in order to facilitate the achievement of its design purpose. Out of that bulk, irrigation is allocated 55.53 million cubic meters as evaporation losses consume 49.43 million cubic meters, other losses, mainly percolation, 3.60 million cubic meters and flow surplus or uncontrolled releases; 60.70 million cubic meters. The design water supply proposal to the intended locations is said to be 32 million cubic meters.

The 5,200Ha project design irrigation scheme has been in lethargy ever since. Not even the 100Ha pilot scheme or the actual 80Ha pilot scheme operation of the mid 1980s is visible anywhere in the market

locations for the scheme. Apart from the sparse dots of very negligible irrigation activities undertaken by some of the communities around the dam, no preparation for the cultivation of any portion of the initial bulk of project hectares is traceable.

"We don't even remember whether there was any such cultivation since the dam was completed", a farmer called Muhammadu said of the scheme while passing by the virtually desolate Zobe River course beside the dam. "We only pray for the take-off of the scheme as promised us, that is all I can say," he concluded.

The water supply scheme is still not fully operational according to the project design meant to cater for Katsina town and five local areas en-route there. There has not been any allocation of funds by the opening government of the dam in the last three years for the maintenance of services and equipment.

Sabke dam was constructed by the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund between 1998 and 1999. However, it is not yet fully completed. It is located across the non-perennial Sabke River in Daura zone of Katsina state, which generally flows during a short period of about four months during the rainy season, precisely between July and October. The flow of the river is characteristic of flash floods common in the far northern part of the country. The riverbed remains dry for most part of the year.

The 782m long zoned earth filled dam has a maximum height of 12m and incorporating an ogee type mass concrete spillway of 100m. The total volume of earthwork involved is about 210,000 cubic meters. The headwork of the dam comprises an intake tower, valve chamber, connecting pipes that include control valves. A steel scour pipe of 100mm diameter is also provided to facilitate removal of silt from the impounding reservoir and to also release water to downstream users. The dam also has low lift pump house in its downstream side to transit water to the treatment plant and compensation reservoir.

A stilling basin is also provided in downstream of the dam's spillway to facilitate the dissipation of the energy of the flowing water and prevent erosion downstream. The dam is structured in the form that requires about 15,000 cubic meters of concrete for the spillway, stilling basin and intake works. Among the features of the dam are chimney and car-



One of the concrete parabolic canals running into the field at Jibiya dam irrigation project.

pet drains with toe fillers incorporated in the earth embankment to drain any seepage water and prevent buildup of static pressure inside. Also provided is a rip-rap for the upstream and downstream slopes of the embankment as protection from wind and erosion. A main feature of the dam is that its foundation would be treated to reduce loss of water through underground seepage.

The dam's reservoir, when completed according to its capacity design, is to impound 31.6 million cubic meters of water. The water spread was designed to cover about 7,700Ha, which is to be cleared to minimize pollution of the water. According to the design, the fetch of the water is to be 9.0km.

The contract for the construction of the reservoir was handled by CGC Nig. Limited at about N1.3 billion. The contract, awarded in 1998, was to be completed by October, 1999.

The multi-faceted Sabke dam project was designed with the purpose of harnessing the scarce water resources in the area for the development of land, irrigated agriculture and drinking water supply to eight communities with an initial estimated population of 225,000 spread over four local government areas of Katsina state.

In addition to the development of a gross area 1400Ha of land for irrigated agriculture, the water supply component of the project was designed to also provide potable water to Daura town 80km east of Katsina. The water supply component comprises a comprehensive treatment plant near the dam site with a rated capacity of 6,000 cubic meters per day. The earth dam, including its head works, water treatment plant and irrigation area, are located near Tsabu village, 23km from Daura town.

The irrigation component of the project envisaged the development of a net area 1200Ha of land for irrigation

activities. The system installed for this purpose comprises the construction of an earthen compensation reservoir with a 15,000 cubic meter storage capacity, service center, network of irrigation canals, all of them, suspended concrete parabolic, apart from the main trapezoidal canals, drainage system, service roads, crossing and hydraulic structures and raw water transmission pipeline. A 6.9km long, 600mm diameter ductile iron pipeline was designed to convey water from the intake pumping station to the compensation reservoir. Water to the irrigation area is to gravitate from the compensation reservoir. The drainage network consists of collector drains, field drains with hydraulic and crossing structures.

The installation and preparation of most of these necessary facilities in the project design for the implementation of the sabke dual projects seems still at the "wishful thinking" stages. Measured on the scale of its design and construction purpose, the dam is actually not utilized for any substantial activity. Some of the vital facilities for the irrigation of the fields, for instance, especially the network of canals, still cover only a very negligible area. No machines and other necessary water service facilities to pump water for even a small pilot scheme. The water supply component is still inactive.

"As far as we are concerned the dam has not been completed," observed, Abubakar Maijirgi, a farmer at the dam-site community of Tsabu, explaining "no efficient pumping system and machines, nobody is yet talking about any clearing of the fields for allocation to the farmers according to what the project promises, and I can't see how any serious irrigation activity can take place here without these." Abubakar, who said he realizes "N40,000 or N50,000 or N60,000" every year by irrigating the plot of land leased to

him by the original owner of a large farmland by the dam at N2,000, also complained that the dam reservoir does not collect sufficient water, pleading, "we want the dam to be completed so that the reservoir collects sufficient rain water for us to irrigate our farms." He grows assorted vegetables and sugar beats on his plot.

"I make at least N100,000 by growing vegetables and tomatoes every year," Sale Maidoya, who cultivates a plot leased to him at N5,000, offered, complaining, "I can't grow other crops because of shortage of plots," as he called for the immediate completion of the dam "so that the government or any authorized person clears the fields and allocates sufficient plots to us."

Misbahu Mamma Bakin Kasuwa Daura also cultivates a plot by the reservoir. "I started last year, but I benefited a lot because I made about N20,000," he offered delightedly, pleading, "we want government to complete the dam and assist us with larger capacity pumping machines to enable us pump water up into the farther plots, other agricultural implements, fertilizer and pesticides." His fellow farmer, Hamisu Maikanwa Arewawa Daura, made the same plea "for large pumping machines to provide sufficient water to far away plots to help us grow more crops."

According to Audu Yusuf Mai'anguwa, who started irrigation farming six years ago "and I benefited a lot", before the government commences the designed irrigation project it should assist the farmers with pesticides and fertilizer. The common call among the farmers is for the completion of the dam with the installation of all the necessary facilities for the take-off of the project according to design.

For now, the three federal government dams in Katsina state are virtually sleeping on the prodigious amounts of money spent on their construction.



Spillway for the irrigation and water supply schemes waiting to be laid at

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

Union makes case for ambulances on roads

The Motorcycle Transport Union of Nigeria (MTUN), Abuja branch has called on the Federal Ministry of Transport to station emergency ambulance vans at various strategic places across the nation to rescue the accident victims.

The FCT chairman of the MTUN, Comrade Obi Nwaogwugwu who made this call said the union is bothered with the way Okada riders

By Abdulwahab Deji Ajikobi, Sringer (Abuja)

and other road users had accidents without getting first aid vans on time to convey them to the hospital.

Comrade Nwaogwugwu told *Labour Trust* that the union had signed an agreement with one safety management consultant called "Home-Plus Medicare" under the chairmanship of Dr. Olajide

Joseph Awolola, on the safety of the Okada riders in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The Safety Management Consultant, he said, renders ambulance services to accident victims who are bonafide members of the union.

According to him, the federal government needs to complement the efforts made by the union by making ambulance buses available to

the road users in case of any eventuality.

Comrade Nwaogwugwu who said that the members of the union engaged in the cautionary measures with Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Vehicle Inspection Officers (VIO) and the Nigeria Police said the union, last year, spent the

sum of N600,000 on about 100 accidents victims with some dead and some sustained serious injuries.

He also revealed that President Olusegun Obasanjo presented some unions that manage Okada business in the FCT some helmets for the safety of their members but despite the union's

commendation of Mr. President for that kind gesture, it also lamented that the helmets could not circulate the entire members.

Comrade Nwaogwugwu who said that the provision of ambulance buses have become necessary, urged the federal government subsidise the cost of the helmets in the markets.

NURTW tasks AEPB

on parks cleanliness

The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Abuja branch has called on the Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Mallam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufai to draw the attention of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) to what it described as 'deplorable conditions' in the FCT motor parks.

Some of the NURTW officials at Karu Motor Park who made this call said that most of the FCT parks have

become a refuse dumping grounds following to non-extension of service by the men of the AEPB.

They also indicted most of the park stakeholders especially food vendors who litter the parks with variety of wastes.

They revealed that the programme initiated by the Abuja Municipal Area council called "Doty de kill" to complement the efforts of the AEPB at the local level, failed to achieve the set objectives in Karu park.

According to them, the FCT minister, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai is supposed to draw attention of the authorities concerned to what they called environmental hazard in the FCT. "The three parks designated by the FCT administration lack water, electricity supply and good road network," they said.

One of the NURTW officials, one Comrade Abdullahi Gudi urged the FCT administration to set a standard in the motor parks by providing FCT parks essential commodities and social infrastructures.



Minister of Labour and Productivity, Alhaji Hassan Lawal Mohammed, International Labour Organisation representative, Mr. Cornelius Dzakupasu (middle) and ILO senior labour law specialist, Mrs. Jane Hogdes during the public hearing on anti Labour Bill held at the National Assembly complex, Abuja... recently. Pic: Felix Onigbinde.

DWCN spends N.5m on accident victims

The national president of the Drivers Welfare Club of Nigeria (DWCN), Comrade Monday Elimigbe, has said that the club had spent N.5 million on accident victims across the nation.

Speaking at the Gwagwalada Specialist Hospital, Abuja when the Club paid a visit to some accident victims, Comrade Elimigbe who said that the club is after the welfare of drivers said the branches of the club across the nation usually ensure that

their members involved in an accident were given welfare packages.

He said that the club recorded about 53 members who had accidents last year and the Club, apart from the relief materials, paid the medical bills of some of them.

Speaking on the importance of the life insurance scheme, Comrade Elimigbe who said that the Club compelled the members to insure their lives through NICON Insurance Plc following the rampancy of

accident on the road said the accident victims would be compensated in case of eventuality.

He urged the drivers to register the scheme with recognised insurance companies so as to avoid patronising quacks.

Meanwhile, some of the accident victims admitted at the specialist hospital Gwagwalada, having received welfare packages from the club, thanked the president and the members of the Club for their kind gestures towards them.



Mrs. Dupe Ajayi-Gbadebo, publisher, *Investment Journal* (right) and Dr. Rueben Abati chairman *Guardian* editorial board at a dialogue on media practitioners enhancement bill at NUJ secretariat, Alausa, Ikeja... recently. Pic: Oladipupo Odunewu.

Kaduna NUJ ratifies members' suspension, dismissal

The Kaduna Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has ratified the expulsion and suspension of its erring members so as to instil discipline in them.

The affected members are; Gabriel Idibia who was expelled for what it called "unethical conduct," Kenny Ashaka of *The Sun*, Stanley

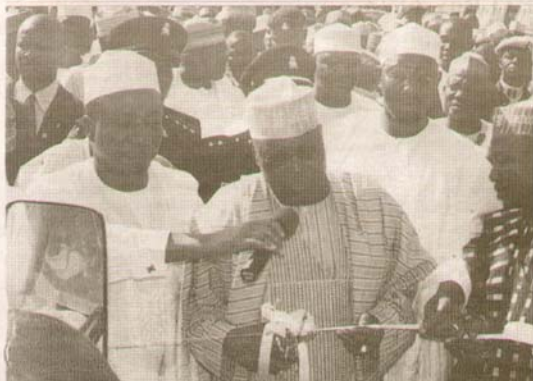
Yakubu of *The Punch*, John Shiklam of *The Champion* and Emeka Mamah of *vanguard* were suspended for "acts of disrespect to the council."

A communiqué issued at the end of the council's congress held in Kaduna also stressed the need for the Kaduna State commissioner, Alhaji Mohammed A. Yesufu

to take action on its earlier letter of complaint against the four erring members, urging him to expedite action on the matter.

The congress also mandated the NUJ executive committee to dissolve its committees, which are unproductive.

The congress however commended the executive committee for its resolve to instil discipline among all practising journalists.



Vice President Atiku Abubakar commissioning local government mass transit buses in Birnin Kebbi, flanked by Governor Adamu Aliero (left) and Deputy Governor, Suleiman Muhammad Argungu (right).

News

All set for census area demarcation in Bauchi

It is now set for the commencement of this month's enumeration area demarcation in Bauchi State, ahead of the 2005 national census.

Alhaji Yarima Giade, the National Population Commission (NPC) Commissioner in charge of the state, told newsmen in Bauchi at the weekend that some 400 workers had already been trained for the exercise.

Giade explained that 305 of the figure were recruited by the commission, while the rest were sponsored by local governments in the state.

He said the NPC was in touch with the executive councils of all the 20 local governments to sensitise and mobilise the people for the programme, which will last for about six months.

Giade said the exercise

would start in four local governments of Ningi, Toro, Warji and Ganjawa because of their "difficult terrain".

"We want to start with the most difficult areas so that we can concentrate on other areas later."

Kebbi procures grains for pastoralists

In an effort to curtail the rampant cattle rearsers and farmers clash, the Kebbi State government has procured over 600 thousand metric tonnes of feed for distribution to pastoralists.

Governor Adamu Aliero, who made the disclosure recently, said the action became necessary in view of reported cases of farmers/Fulani clash in different parts of the state.

as later.

"An official has been dispatched to Abuja to collect writing materials, camping beds and other things needed for the exercise," the commissioner said.

From Kabir Dogon Daji, Correspondent (Birnin-Kebbi)

He said in addition to the 600 thousand metric tonnes of assorted feeds to be imported from a Burkina Faso based feeds company, government had drilled over 100 number boreholes and water drinking points for the herdsmen.

Aliero, further added that already, plans have been mapped out to construct earth dams in the Fulani concentrated areas, in areas like Bagudu and Kaoje.

According to him, the gesture will in no small measure reduce the clash usually encountered by the cattle rearsers, while farmers will sleep with their two eyes closed, fearless to damage to their crops.

He stressed that state and local governments will be fully involved in the sensitisation and campaign on peace, unity and understanding among the farmers and Fulani's across the states.

Katsina urged to construct LG rural link roads

The chairman of Kurfi local government area, Alhaji Rabi'u Aliyu Kurfi, has urged the Katsina State government to construct Zakka-Wurma-Bichi-Rawayan road to connect the four local government areas of Charanchi, Jibia Batsari and Kurfi local government areas.

Speaking at a news conference in his office, the chairman who hailed the state government for the construction of Inter local government linkages roads, said the construction of the said rural linkages road will further solidify rural network and interconnectivity with all the people within the four local government areas.

The chairman said that the people in the areas, being predominantly farmers, will find it easier to transport their farm produce to various markets across the state as well as enhancing economic activities of the area with the completion of the linkage roads embarked upon by the state in the four local government.

He also said the linking of



Gov. Umar Yar'Adua

From Lawal Ibrahim, Correspondent (Katsina)

Batsari, Jibia, Charanchi and Kurfi will not only ease transportation problems, but will make easier for complementary administrative decisions.

He affirmed that being a people with long standing historical affiliation and social interconnectivity of marriages and other contract, the people have been yearning for such projects long ago to further enhance their homogeneity.

Senate assures Sokoto of burnt market reconstruction

The Senate Committee on Commerce has assured the Sokoto State government that the federal government will assist in the reconstruction and re-building of the Sokoto State central market that was razed by fire some weeks ago.

Speaking during a courtesy visit led by the Chairman Senate Committee on Commerce, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, who told the Executive Governor of Sokoto State, Alhaji Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa, that the senate mandated them to visit the state to commiserate with the good people of the state over the recent fire disaster in which property worth N3 billion was estimated to have been lost.

The senate committee chairman said they were at the state to see things by themselves, noting that the senate has passed a resolution concerning the market and that the National Emergency Management Agency

From Abdulfatai Abdulsalami, Freelancer (Sokoto)

(NEMA), will soon be in Sokoto to assess the damage and commence reconstruction work.

The committee assured the state government of the federal government readiness to assist through NEMA in the re-building of the market and work out modalities to prevent re-occurrence in future, adding that relief would also be given to the affected victims.

Responding the state governor thanked them for their concern saying, "I thank both the senate and the House of Representatives for taking this bold decision," and therefore, appeal to them to use their position in urging the federal government to expedite action on the repair process. And called on NEMA to urgently come down to commence work and provide relief materials to the affected victims.

VACANCIES

Our organization, one of the leading media organizations in the country, based in Abuja is seeking for immediate employment the following categories of staff at its editorial department.

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NB: Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

YOUR HEALTH

Health interactive

With Dr Aminu Magashi

British government scholarships and public health

The time I was developing this write-up two days ago, an ardent supporter of this column who always accepts any prescription dishes out hook, line and sinker walked into my office and his quizzical eye discovered the topic of this discourse on the screen of my lap top computer and other few scattered papers on my desk. He asked why I was taking the trouble of advocating an issue based on my perceived partnership with the British Council in some projects I can easily make a personal appeal to secure a scholarship to study Masters in Public Health in the UK.

I took my time to lecture him that issues regarding scholarships from the UK government are based on merit and structured application and my writing has nothing to do with my personal ambition and desire, but the generality of the populace. If my advocacy contributes in changing certain policies which I believe are archaic and positively affects the thinking of the subject in question, such is the projection of all the discourses on this page. In most instances, I may not even be aware of the changes, not to talk of benefiting as a person.

Coming back to the issue under discussion, the British government, from available information obtained, is providing three categories of scholarship in Nigeria. The most popular one is *Chevening Scholarship Programme*, a prestigious award scheme that funds international post-graduates who want to study in the UK. Funded by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and administered by the British Council, one of the main aims of the scheme is to assist successful candidates in playing leading roles in the future of their countries. Currently in Nigeria, the available courses are Economics, Finance, Banking, Law, Human Rights, Public Administration, Management, Project Planning, Media, Political Science, International Relations, Diplomatic Training and Environmental Studies, although applicants for other courses may be considered.

Another one is the *DFID Shared Scholarship Scheme*. It awards scholarships to students who are likely to work in economic, social or technological fields when they return to Nigeria after studies. Therefore, awards are granted to students in these areas. The last but not the least is the *Commonwealth Scholarship* which enables students from common wealth countries to study in other Commonwealth countries. The plan funds most courses at Masters or PhD levels and available in all subjects. I am not too sure if the funding is solely from the UK alone or other Commonwealth of Nations. Another angle is that while the two formers are managed and administered by the UK High Commission and the British Council, the latter is to some extent influenced by the Nigerian government through federal and states scholarship boards which distribute the application forms, collate and submit them to the appropriate authorities.

Before the ushering in of democracy in 1999, *Chevening Scholarship Scheme* has Masters in Public Health (MPH) as one of its priorities. Quite regrettably, from 1999 to date, courtesy of democracy and withdrawal of military from governance, MPH is no longer among the priority courses; as such, applicants for other courses may be considered. The simple reason for any body who cares to ask is that a lot of MPHs were given during the military era. I often ponder what the relationship between health and military regimes is. Another worrisome development is the drastic disappearance of anything health from the British Council offices across the country (Lagos, Kano, Abuja, and Port Harcourt), name them: *books, journals and magazines, CD ROMs* and the recent available remote E-sources, a.k.a *ATH-ENS*. I wonder whether also the disappearance of health

information and materials from the British Council libraries in the country is linked to military era.

I want to believe that we cannot separate health and development no matter the kind of system we are operating in Nigeria. Without healthy people, the better administration we are envisaging would not be possible. Even with the change of priority and shifting to social sciences, I found a paradox in the approach and policy implementation. We are all aware of the commitment of the British government towards achieving millennium development goals globally and of course in Nigeria. If there is any international development institution in Nigeria that is passionate about helping Nigeria to achieve the desired goals, it is no other than the Department for International Development (DFID) UK.

All DFID programmes are structured towards achieving the MDGs, particularly its PATH Project (Partnership for Transforming Health Systems). Looking at the MDGs, one will confidently say that half of what is expected to achieve by 2015 is linked to health care delivery systems; 3 MDGs are talking directly about health, MDGs 4, 5 and 6 focus on reducing child mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases respectively. MDG 4 is aiming at reducing the child mortality by about 66 per cent and MDG 5 is looking at reducing maternal mortality rate by 75 per cent and MDG 6 is looking at combating HIV/AIDS and reducing its prevalence among youths by 25 per cent and halting the effect of malaria and other diseases.

One would have assumed that with the commitment of DFID to help Nigeria achieve the MDGs, it would not only be centered on a matter of funding or financial support, but also assisting the country towards capacity building and having skilled health personnel and experts who will serve as the local partners that will lead programmes and projects towards realisations of such goals. A better way to have more local partners is to provide MPH to Nigerians and available information on health at the various British Council libraries, which for now are lacking.

The British government should be seen to be implementing what they are preaching in the country. Recently in September and November, 2004, the British Secretary for State for Development, Rt. Hon Hillary Benn, and the Director General, DFID headquarters, Dr. Neimat, were in Nigeria. In the two visits of the august visitors of which I was opportuned to interact with them, topical issues that were discussed are the MDGs, and health related goals. I can vividly remember that we discussed the polio eradication, HIV/AIDS, and the reduction of maternal mortality rate, amongst others. I want to believe that a better way of helping Nigeria is not only funding, but capacity building through MPH courses and locally available health information.

Looking at Nigerian universities, very few offer MPH. I am of course aware of the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos, ABU Zaria and Sokoto. In conclusion, I am strongly of the belief that the yardstick for offering foreign courses should be local needs and above all, the attainment of millennium development goals which the British government, through its DFID, is passionate about.

Vaginal thrush

Please what is vaginal thrush and what are its symptoms and effects?

Hamdiyya B

Vaginal thrush is caused by a fungus agent called *Candida albicans*. It is a commonly found among women. And it presents with vaginal itch, pain during sexual intercourse and whitish discharge that stains underwear. It is normally contracted from toilets, basins, swimming pools, sharing of cloths and towels.

The remedy is to sink all used clothes and underwear in warm water and wash with strong detergent;

avoid sharing clothes and use of anti-fungal agents, such as Nystatin pessary which is inserted high up in the private part twice a day (morning and night) for about 5 to 7 days or ointment can also be applied.

Pregnancy and intercourse

Please is it safe to have intercourse with one's spouse when one is pregnant? If yes, up to what period of the pregnancy and kindly mention some do's and don'ts of pregnancy.

M I Abuja

During the first part of pregnancy (first trimester), a lot of women fall sick - morning sickness, excessive vomiting, fever and lethargy. If your spouse falls under that category, it is better to temporarily abstain from intercourse. Also, as pregnancy approaches, it is advisable to abstain due to fear of causing infection to the unborn child (fetus). Also roughness is discouraged and as pregnancy progresses, intercourse position should be in a way that the pregnant woman will not be in discomfort.

During pregnancy, issues to consider are the need for the pregnant mother not to engage in self-medication and avoid going to quacks to take drugs. Also, antenatals should be adhered to till term and to be exercising and eating adequate nutrient and creating time to rest.

Still on ARV drugs

I read your response to a question on Anti-Retro Viral drugs with respect to HIV. Do you mean that when a person's CD4 cell count returns to a tolerable level, one can do without the ARV drugs?

IP

I will like to tell you that one can even survive HIV infection throughout life without taking anti-retroviral drugs. All that is needed of that person is to live positively: meaning responding to illnesses at the right time, treating opportunistic infections, eating a well balanced diet, having a good rest and above all, preventing sexually transmitted diseases through abstinence and protection during intercourse.

On herpes simplex infection

I have herpes simplex infection with painless sores all over my body and waist pain; and with movement and small sharp pain in my genitals sometimes. Please what is the chance of my wife giving birth to a normal baby and does the problem have a permanent cure? I have tried many medications.

KK

I will like to know how you are able to diagnose that you have Herpes simplex infection. Is it through a lab test? Herpes infection is of viral origin and sexually transmitted infection. A lot of problems and STIs can give you what you have described, not only Herpes Simplex.

Some STIs, if contracted by a lady, can pass it on or it can affect her unborn child. Examples of such are HIV infection, syphilis and gonorrhoea. The chances of your wife giving birth to a healthy baby are based on whether she has been affected by the disease. The best cure for STIs is to ensure you don't get it again after receiving medication. No amount of medication will ensure free of STIs other than protecting oneself; avoiding having numerous partners and unprotected sexual intercourse.

Write in confidence to healthinteractive@hoimail.com or send text message to 08023810589 or P.O. Box 14807, Kano, Nigeria.

YOUR HEALTH

AWHI assembles health experts for its inauguration

Experts in the health sector will as from today converge in Abuja for a three-day inaugural consultative meeting of the African Women's Health Initiative (AWHI), a non-governmental organisation that develops and promotes better health care for African women.

Addressing a press conference over the weekend, the organisation's national president and coordinator, Chief (Mrs) Rita Chris-Garuba said the organisation is out to complement government's efforts in health care delivery in the country, especially as it affects Nigerian woman adding that things will continue to deteriorate if Nigerians wait for government to provide every thing.

Stories by Sunday Ejike Benjamin Health Reporter

The African Women's Health Initiative (AWHI) she noted, is a subsidiary of the African Women Development Initiative (AWDI) noting that the consultative meeting with experts in the health sector is designed to, "establish our wealth in health approach to women and children health concern in Africa," pointing out that the outcome of the meeting will help in putting forward a unique intervention agenda in the promotion of better health care for African women.

According to Chief (Mrs) Chris-Garuba, the organisation's consultative meeting will be chaired by an eminent elder, Professor Emeritus Umaru Shehu with the minister of state for health, Princes Olufunke Adedoyin (mni) as the special guest of honour at the occasion.

During the three-day inaugural consultative meeting, papers will be presented by the likes of the founder and chairperson of the Better Life Programme for the African Woman, Dr. (Mrs) Maryam Babangida, National Coordinator of the Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN), Hajija Salamat Garba and Mrs Kathryn Hoomkwap of the Catholic Women Organisation.

While Dr. Ibrahim Wada, a consultant obstetrics and gynaecologist, and chairman, medical. Advisory committee, National Hospital Abuja will address the meeting on, "the state of women's health, women's lives in Nigeria," Dr. (Mrs) Remi Aribi Sala, deputy executive secretary, integration programmes, ECOWAS will present a paper on, "the state of women's health, women's lives in the West African region."



Justice (Mrs) Mary Odihi Wife of Rivers State Governor, Administering the polio vaccine drug on a baby at Oyoiba, near Port Harcourt, during the flag-off of the national programme on immunisation in River State

Stakeholders fine-tune smooth take-off of NHIS

Stakeholders in the health sector, weekend met at the NICON Hilton Hotel, Abuja for a two-day interactive session to fine-tune the smooth take off of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in the country.

The interactive session, according to the minister of state for health, Princes Olufunke Adedoyin (mni) in her opening remarks was designed to provide stakeholders the opportunity to x-ray all the programmes, processes and guidelines of the scheme in order to position it for smooth and sustainable take off in May 2005.

Addressing the interactive session put together by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) on the theme, "restoring stakeholders' confidence towards the successful implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme," the minister of health, Professor Fyitayo Lambo expressed government readiness to entertain and incorporate stakeholders' views so as to collectively fashion out what is in the best national interest in the provision of a financial risk protection against the ill-effects of illness.

The minister told the stakeholders at the meeting that his ministry has developed "tools" that are necessary to institutionalise and sustain efforts aimed at strengthening the national health system and improving the health status of Nigerians. These tools, he said include, the revision of the national health policy, drafting of a national health bill, the development of the strategic plan for accelerating the implementation of the health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a blue print for the revitalisation of primary health care.

He also pointed out that a blue print for the revitalisation of the NHIS which had been endorsed by the national council on health has been developed, adding that the blue prints will be among other things to be fine-tuned by the meeting before presenting it to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) for approval.

According to Prof. Lambo, the National Health Insurance Scheme would ensure access to good health care without financial hardship to families, maintaining standard of health care delivery services, improving and

harnessing private sector participation in the provision of health care services, promotion of equity in the distribution of health services, as well as increased patronage of institutions at different levels of health care delivery system.

The minister who highlighted some advantages of the scheme further explained that NHIS decree specifies that public and organised private sector employers and employees make compulsory contributions to the scheme.

He said government recent decisions on the management of the NHIS was aimed at reforming the scheme and repositioning it for final push to the realisation of a successful and sustainable launching of its programmes, and commended what he described as, "the new spirit of openness" at the NHIS - in bringing together all key stakeholders to brainstorm on issues relating to effective healthcare delivery system in the country so as to understand the policy and work out guidelines for its implementation.

In a paper entitled, "repositioning the NHIS for effective take off: issues and challenges," the scheme's executive secretary, Dr. M. Lecky

pointed out that a national health insurance scheme is one major approach that can contribute to the achievement of the national health policy goals and objectives in the country.

Dr. Lecky who said the ultimate goal of the NHIS is to work towards the achievement of universal health insurance coverage for all Nigerians also pointed out that one of the many challenges before the scheme is in the aspect of fund management. This, the executive secretary noted would be manned by the National Health Insurance fund (NHIF) to take care of public funds being set aside from the public sector.

According to Dr. Lecky, NHIS will soon establish NHIS desk officers in all the ministries, agencies, parastatals, military and paramilitary institutions of government, in order to achieve 100% registration for all federal government staff by the end of February 2005. The NHIS officers Dr. Lecky noted will serve as liaison and first points of contact for public servant's enquiries on their claims and benefits, including enrolment related matters.



With Zainab Usad Shariff

The occurrence of piles is unique to human beings. It presents with varicose veins in the rectum and around the anus causing possible protrusion, which is very painful and may bleed. Various factors have been attributed to it, such as long time sitting or standing, genetic weakness, obesity, lack of exercise, food allergy, liver damage, pregnancy and poor diet. Symptoms include itching, burning pain, inflammation, swelling, soreness and bright red bleeding.

Treatment

1. Buckwheat/Saracem con: Infusion of 3-10 grams dried or fresh herbs is taken three times daily.
2. Leaves of basil, peppermint and stinging nettle (*Kakayi komu kan mashekyu* [Hausa]): Infusion of any of these herbs is taken as one teaspoon three times daily.
3. Hamamelis ointment (Witch hazel) - This should be applied externally to the affected part.
4. Calendula (*Marigold*): The poultice of the herb is applied. This is prepared by taking one desertspoon of dried herb and moistening with boiling water. When cooled to a tolerable temperature, apply to the affected area externally.
5. Aloe vera gel: Applied directly for at least seven days promotes healing. A solution of the gel can be taken three times daily.
6. Common club moss taken as tea is recommendable.
7. Infusions of the seeds of sweet basil and hairy basil are taken three times daily.
8. Garlic segments prepared by the removal of the dry outer skin from garlic bulb is scraped to allow juice to exude, inserted into rectum as suppository on retiring to bed, and allowed to remain in the body all night. It will be expelled the next day. Repeat as needed.
9. Parsley/red grape/boysberry leaves: Tea of any of these when taken two to three times daily is beneficial.
10. Red raspberry is a good tonic and astringent and it promotes healing because of its iron-citrate content especially in prolapsed haemorrhoids.
11. A plain water enema is fast acting and relieves discomfort.
12. Potatoes: Uncooked potatoes cut into cone shapes, exude fluid which heal and relieve pain from pile when inserted into the rectum.
13. Castor/olive oil: Apply any of these to the anal area to relieve and soothe the area. Use 1-2 teaspoonfuls twice daily.

It is advisable to combine herbal treatment with diet rich in fibre fruits and vegetables.

ORAL CAVITY CARE (TEETH AND GUMS)

Good oral hygiene is necessary for healthy teeth, gum and fresh breath.

Treatment

1. Licorice root: The root of licorice plant can be used as a good brush for the teeth while the extract produces pleasant taste with anti-inflammatory effects that soothe inflamed gums.
2. Cashew nut tree (*Kaji* [Yoruba], *Awe-ola* [Ibo], *Kanjo* [Hausa]): The bark of this plant is chewed slowly to cure toothache and sore gums.
3. Velvet/black (*Tamarind* (*umiyu* [Hausa], *Ana* [Yoruba]): The roots are used as chewing sticks and produce *sare* effects as (2) and (1) above.
4. Neem tree (*Dogonyaru* [Hausa], *Eke-Oya* [Yoruba]): The young stem is chewed as toothbrush for healthy teeth.
5. Cardamom/dill/cloves: Since infection of the teeth can cause toothache, inflammation of the gum and bad breath, these are obtained from cardamom, dill and cloves when chewed and left in the mouth for a while, aid relief. Also of note is the clove solution as a mouthwash/refreshener while the oil drops directly in the cavities relieves aches.
6. Soursop (*Gwanda shafi* [Hausa], *Acho* [Ibo], *Aho* [Yoruba]): The infusion of stem bark of soursop plant is used as a mouthwash to relieve toothache.
7. Lime leaves: Simple chewing of lime leaves cures bad breath. The leaves of eucalyptus plant is also effective.
8. Bitter kola/Henna leaves: The powder of bitter kola is suitable for toothache and tooth clean. The infusion of bitter kola is used as a mouthwash, while the infusion from henna leaves, *Lalle* (Hausa) is used as an astringent mouthwash.
9. Stinging nettle/wing of a dove/horseadish/locust bean: Mouth ulcers (soreness of gums, tongue and throat) are healed by the use of stinging nettle water infusion held in the mouth at regular intervals as needed. The bark and leaves of mango tree infusion is used for soothing the tongue because of its astringent property. The juice of the root of horseadish tree used as frequently as possible is suitable for care of dental caries. The powdered bark of West African locust bean (*Dorawa* [Hausa], *Igba* [Yoruba], *Oyinbo* [Ibo]) is used by filling the caries with the powder to effect healing.
10. Toothbrush tree (*Aiwaki* [Hausa]) is good for strengthening the gums which used routinely.
11. Ginger/ginger: A piece of ginger applied directly relieves toothache while mulling causes sweet breath if chewed and held in the mouth.

In 1636, Gerard's herbal referred to the fact that gingivitis can be treated with gurgles of oak bark and sage. He further confirmed the effectiveness of onion and lime juices in various preparations for mouth gurgling to relieve gingivitis, toothache and or any form of mouth-infection. Also confirmed is the use of nutmeg for sweet breath and masking bad breath, if chewed and held in the mouth.

Other additional factors that will aid the above mentioned use of herbal treatment include proper chewing of food, wearing of loose fitted clothes and not eating late in the night.

Hajija Zainab Shariff writes from Zee's Herbal Pharmacy, Suite 17, Angels Plaza, Garki II, Abuja. E-mail: zeeherbal@yahoo.com

YOUR HEALTH

Experts brainstorm on safe motherhood in Nigeria

A 33 year old woman was recently reported dead from childbirth complications which could have been avoided if the husband had reasoned along with her and heeded medical advice. The woman a question died two weeks after sitting to bed her 8th child in a marriage of about 15 years.

The woman, it was learnt was advised by medical experts against further delivery after her 8th child, that any attempt to get pregnant again would be dangerous to her health. In spite of the fear of losing her life in an attempt to give birth to more children, the husband refused to reason with her and insisted on having more children. The woman yielded to her husband's demand to keep her marriage since she was threatened to go if she refused to bear more children.

Similarly, there was also a report that an 18 year old SSS II student had her intestines removed through her private part in the process of an abortion by a quack. It took the prompt intervention of gynecologists at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) to save the girl's life but not without destruction to her body. As a result of the unsafe abortion, the girl's womb may not be able to carry a baby any longer.

Evidences abound that about 600 Nigerians women died daily of pregnancy and childbirth related cases while no fewer than 400 children under one year old die between the age of one to four die on a daily basis from diseases that could have been prevented if proper attention is given to this vulnerable group.

It is also worth mentioning that several millions of women and children suffer one form of leprosy or disease as a result of problems and actions that could have been avoided if they were exposed to relevant information and medication.

It is in view of this ugly development resulting in the loss of Nigerian women/children without anybody showing concern that an organisation, save motherhood, in collaboration with the ministry of health recently had a hectic day at the Nida Hotel, Abuja with members of the fourth estate of the realm, to fashion out ways of championing the course of this vulnerable group who's interest lot of people don't want to protect in government.

The seminar which had several papers presented by medical experts in one form of non-governmental organisation or the other had the theme: "zero tolerance to women dying from pregnancy related causes."

It was designed to among other things enlighten health correspondents on the issue of safe motherhood, solicit media support and understanding towards achieving the shared vision of zero tolerance to women dying from pregnancy related causes as well as providing relevant technical materials which will be shiable resources for effective behavioural change communication on safe motherhood.

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin Health Reporter

A close look at the global maternal and child health situation showed that about 10.8 million of no fewer than five children die annually with 60% of these deaths preventable. Records also showed that 3.9m of the deaths occur in the first 28 days of life with Nigerian, India, China, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia accounting for 50% of these deaths.

Diseases that lead to such deaths included neonatal which accounts for 33% of the deaths, diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria, measles, AIDS and other causes. Like Dr. Esther Obinya of United Nations Children and Education Fund (UNICEF) said factors like poverty, unhygienic, and unsafe water, inadequate birth spacing/mother's health, not breastfed and if done not exclusive and micronutrient deficiency are some of the risk factors responsible for child deaths in the country.

Women, she said die of bleeding, infection, unsafe abortion hypertension in pregnancy, malaria and prolonged labour which she noted had claimed and is still claiming the lives of several thousands of Nigerian women.

Worrisome of these deaths, is the fact that people don't either recognise danger signs of the complications nor are prepared mentally or financially to go for medication in the face of poor roads, poor communication, lack of transports and fund experienced in the country.

Dr. Esther Obinya, in her paper entitled, "women and children friendly health services, what is it?" identified a number of factors impeding the receipt of help when the needs arise. Lack of trained health workers to attend to sick children/women, poor attitude of health workers to work, lack of adequate medical equipment and poor referral system were some of the factors she identified as banes to effective health care delivery to the most vulnerable group of the country.

Way out of this problem according to the expert, is that women and children friendly health services should be located close to where women live. These moves were said to have been adopted at a stakeholders conference in Abuja and as such the draft has become a working document for the strategy.

Making funds available for skilled health personnel to set up clinics, maternity homes in rural areas, she said would help in changing the trend of things just as she stressed the need for the motivation of skilled attendants to practice in their locality as well as an official and active commitment in tracking down quacks and closing them down. Their actions (quacks) have no doubt led to the deaths of many Nigerian women/children.

New partnership in this regard, he noted are needed to strengthen and support these ac-



President Olusegun Obasanjo

tions, put structures in place, train policy formulators, maintain standards, sensitising and creating understanding of issues relating to the health of women and children.

IPAS country director, Dr Ejike Oji, who spoke on, "improving women's lives through a focus on women's reproductive health and rights," viewed abortion as the discontinuation of a pregnancy before the attainment of viability while unsafe abortion, which he noted had killed several Nigerian women is a procedure for terminating unwanted pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards or both.

The medical expert opined that 19 million unsafe abortions are performed every year worldwide with 95% of them occurring in developing countries which Nigeria is among. Dr Oji said from hospital studies, it can be estimated that unsafe abortion is the cause of 13-14% of maternal deaths in Nigeria which translates to about 20,000 maternal deaths annually.

Abortion has no doubt become a public health matter in view of its social and medical effects on the people and the country. Millions of abortions are carried out annually in Nigeria. It is so bad that with every female age between 18-40 years has probably had an abortion or knows another in the age bracket that has had an abortion.

These negative consequences of unsafe abortion were no doubt part of the reason why some medical experts are championing the course for the legitimisation of abortion. According to this school of thoughts, legalising abortion would prevent the patronage of quacks by women.

In the view of IPAS country director, public enlightenment on health seeking behaviour, rights to healthcare and enabling modifications to laws, strengthening provider capacity on information and attitude, training and monitoring, and the modifications of existing restrictive laws relating

to abortion by way of sensitising stakeholders, expanding indications for legalising abortion and educating the general public on the issue.

IPAS, he noted provide universal access to women for high quality post abortion care and other Reproduction Health (RH) services through training and service delivery improvement. The organisation which operates within the confinement of the law also advocate for increased deployment of funds to reproductive health, support Nigeria media in the advocacy and education of the public on women's right to health and life, work with communities to get their participation in RH issues and services and advocate for the respect of women by ensuring the protection of their sexual and reproduction health and rights.

The issue of maternal and morbidity deaths now assuming an active involvement of non governmental organisations, international partnerships and the government. It is obvious that people don't talk of about the women/children dying everyday due to diseases that could be prevented but when there was any political imbroglio, it becomes a talk of the time because the men are the major players.

In the words of Mahmud Fathalla, "in terms of numbers, the total number of maternal deaths have been increasing rather than decreasing. These women are not dying because of diseases we cannot treat. They are dying because societies are yet to make decision that their lives are worth saving." His words capture the country's scenario on its stands on the alarming maternal and morbidity deaths.

It was because of all these things that are happening to the women folk that a global movement was launched in Nairobi in 1987 to reduce maternal mortality ratio globally, the World Health Organisation (WHO) in responding to this, launched the making pregnancy safe approach



Prof. Eyiuyo Lambo, Minister of Health

appropriate services and every thing that would ensure adequate health care delivery to our women and children.

Dr. Moji Odeku who gave an over view of safe motherhood in his paper defined safe motherhood as a concerted collective effort by a pregnant woman herself, her immediate and extended family members, her community and health personnel at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels to ensure safety of a pregnant woman and her baby during pregnancy delivery and after delivery."

Dr Odeku pointed out some of the challenges of maternal mortality data collection which he said make the estimate of maternal mortality difficult. These reasons are that most deaths occur outside the hospital and often not reported, incomplete reports, impossibility to calculate denominator which is actually "number of pregnant women" and absence of reliable data on vital registration, health services and census. These, he noted are banes to accurate data on maternal mortality rate in Nigeria.

What every Nigerian woman needs is to have access to a full range of high quality, affordable sexual and reproductive health services, especially maternal care and treatment of obstetric emergencies to reduce deaths and disabilities. The 2001 national reproductive health policy stipulates that Nigeria should be a nation where every girl and boy is able to read and write, woman and man are capable of earning livelihood, where every woman can freely choose who and when to marry, couple will have freedom to choose when and how many children to have, where health information is readily available and where high quality services are available for the mother and child within her neighbourhood.

The RH policy, according to Dr. Jerome Mafeni, also stipulates that the country should be a place where Nigerian woman would have the support of her family and community to reach

appropriate services and every thing that would ensure adequate health care delivery to our women and children.

Safe motherhood according to Dr. Jerome can be improved in Nigeria by building political commitment, developing and implementing national policies on reproductive health, changing social norms and involving men at each stage of pregnancy, labour and delivery. It can also be improved by providing access to quality information and services, improving financial coverage for the poor as well as continuous advocacy in this regard.

He solicited the support of the media in the struggle for safe motherhood in the country, adding that the mass media should build popular understanding and support on the issue and to also put pressure on policy makers and called on health correspondents especially, to among other things galvanise debate among policy makers and influential people, motivate health care providers, reach out to woman and their families, generate public dialogue and mobilise the community for positive action to reproductive health.

One thing was however common with the speeches of the speakers at the seminar. The common feature in all the papers presented by the experts was the call on the government at all levels and the society to take health issues serious and accord desired priority to illnesses peculiar to the vulnerable groups of the country.

Unless something urgent and concrete is done about the complications arising from childbirth and other pregnancy related sicknesses, Nigerian women will continue dying without anybody showing concern. As the saying goes, when you protect the mothers, you are protecting the nation. This then implies that Nigerian women also play very important roles in the socio-economic transformation of the country and as such, their health should be taken serious.

Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

| Airline | Route | Time |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|
| Albarka Air | Lagos - Abuja | 07:20 |
| | | 10:30 |
| | | 15:15 |
| | | 13:00 |
| Abuja - Lagos | | 8:45a.m. |
| | | 11:00 |
| Maiduguri - Abuja | | 06:50 |
| | | 17:00 |
| Abuja - Maid | | 17:00 |
| | | 9:00a.m. |
| PHC - Abuja | | 11:00a.m. |
| | | 1:00 p.m. |
| Lagos - Yola | | 14:30 |
| | | 15:30 |
| Yola - Abuja | | 4:00 p.m. |
| | | 4:45p.m. |
| Chanchangi Airlines | Lagos - Abuja | 8:15a.m. |
| | | 11:00a.m. |
| Kaduna - Lagos | | 8:30a.m. |
| | | 9:00a.m. |
| PH - Lagos | | 9:00a.m. |
| | | 4:30p.m. |
| Abuja - Kaduna | | 2:30p.m. |
| | | 1:30p.m. |
| Kaduna - Abuja | | 1:30p.m. |
| | | 11:15a.m. |
| Lagos - Abu/MM | | 11:00a.m. |
| | | 2:30p.m. |
| Abuja - MM | | 1:45p.m. |
| | | 3:45p.m. |
| MM - Abuja | | 3:45p.m. |
| | | 5:15p.m. |
| Kano - Abuja | | 1:15p.m. |
| | | 1:15p.m. |
| Abuja - Kano | | 2:30p.m. |
| | | 3:45p.m. |
| Kano - Lagos | | 3:45p.m. |
| | | 6:00p.m. |
| EAS Airlines | Lagos - Abuja | 8:15p.m. |
| | | 11:45a.m. |
| Abuja - Lagos | | 5:45p.m. |
| | | 10:15a.m. |
| Lagos - Jos | | 7:15p.m. |
| | | 11:45a.m. |
| Jos - Lagos | | 2:30p.m. |
| | | 2:30p.m. |
| Dasab Airlines | Auja - Lagos | 8:30 a.m. |
| | | 10:30 a.m. |
| Lagos - PHC | | 10:30 a.m. |
| | | 12:30 p.m. |
| PHC - Lagos | | 12:30 p.m. |
| | | 7:30 p.m. |
| Lagos - Kano | | 2:30 p.m. |
| | | 4:30 p.m. |
| Kano - Lagos | | 4:30 p.m. |
| | | 6:30p.m. |
| ADC Airline | Lagos - Abuja | 7:15 a.m. |
| | | 12:45 p.m. |
| Abuja - Lagos | | 8:55 a.m. |
| | | 11:15 a.m. |
| Lagos - Calabar | | 7:20 a.m. |
| | | 9:45 a.m. |

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

Central bankers, joined by commercial counterparts and financial regulators from around the globe, on Sunday discussed ways to ensure smooth economic growth amid worries over widening United States' deficits.

The two-day meeting, held at the Bank for International Settlements, examines co-operation among bankers and watchdogs as cross-border ties strengthen, meaning that sparks in one corner of the globe could provoke fire in another.

"The first topic was the world economy and its implications for financial institutions," Hirofumi Gomi, head of Japan's watchdog Financial Services Agency, told reporters.

According to Reuters, for the global economy, signs are emerging that the expansion is losing steam after a robust 2004. Japan's recovery is looking shaky, Britain is slowing and domestic

Niger farmers access N107m credit from CBN

From Kashim Sale, Stringer, Minna

The Minna branch of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had guaranteed a total of 1,828 loans valued at N107.42m under Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme to farmers in the year 2004.

Announcing the disbursement at the end of the year dinner at clearing house committee at Shiroro Hotel, Minna, the branched controller, Alhaji M.A.K. Dala said it represent an increase of 127percent in volume and 105percent in value above the year 2003.

The branched controller stated that factors responsible for this favourable financial deal were due to the dedication of the Minna clearing zone to duty.

Data further disclosed that in year 2004, a total of 100,872 instruments valued at N65.93billion were cleared compared to 88,044 instruments valued at 51.67-billion cleared in the year 2003.

Again, the controller attributed this development to the peaceful and enabling economic climate in the state which has attracted more branches in the state.

Later, announcing the best performing bank in the areas of development finance responsible for facilitating agro-loan to farmers (DFG) and currency processing unit responsible for processing deposits by the banks, the Union Bank of Minna emerged best, while the Bank of the North came second, while Zenith International Bank plc emerged third.

Central bankers review World economy

demand has failed to revive in the euro zone.

This leaves the United States as the biggest driver of the world economy along with emerging Asia heading into 2005.

Earlier on Sunday, the head of the International Monetary Fund warned the US budget deficit was "truly excessive" and that the world's leading economy must resolve the problem.

"America must resolve the problems linked to its budget deficit, which is now truly excessive," wrote IMF chief, Rodrigo Rato in Italy's La Stampa newspaper.

World growth topped 4.6 percent in 2004, its most robust in over 30 years. Growth is expected to exceed 4 percent this year despite risks of a further fall in the US dollar and rising energy costs.

Entering the meeting, Belgian central bank governor Guy Quaden said: "As usual, (we will have) an exchange of views on the financial and economic outlook for the world."

Bank of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui said the meeting would discuss a wide range of issues including the outlook for the global economy.

For Japan, the world's second largest economy, he painted an optimistic picture.

"I think the outlook (for Japan's economy) is not so bad. I am always cautiously optimistic," Fukui said.

"Including foreign exchange, there is a risk

The programme which will

expectations is considered, credibility is essential."

Issing said a central bank also must explain the limits of its mandate, noting "monetary policy can control inflation only in the medium to longer term," and it is important that the public knows it cannot control short-term inflation risks.

Reuters reports that, during a question-and-answer session, Issing said he did not think that an expanded ECB governing council — stemming from more countries becoming euro area members

would pose a threat to its ability to make good decisions.

Currently, there are 18 members of the governing council, including six Executive Board members and governors of central banks from the 12 euro area countries, but that number will grow as more countries join.

"I rely on the process of reasonable people to deal with this problem," Issing said. "So I am not worried about that."

By Ahmed I. Shekarau, Group Business Editor, with agency report

central bankers have discussed currency moves, with some officials warning that a further dollar fall would encourage central banks to diversify their foreign exchange reserves away from dollar assets.

Analysts say more weakness in the dollar which

markets overall could move in an irregular manner at any time. So in that regard foreign exchange movements could be a risk and we are watching them carefully."

In past meetings in Basel, ECOWAS trains stakeholders on trade agreements

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, yesterday kicked off a training programme on multi-lateral trade negotiations for stakeholders in the West Africa region.

The permanent secretary of the ministry of commerce, Ama Pepple, declared the programme open and welcomed the development in West Africa's trade industry.

She said that programmes on trade negotiations would go a long way in enhancing understandings on multi-lateral issues and negotiations, thereby enhancing the region position in global trade.

She reiterated the importance of the training programme, adding that the review of trade issues and sensitisation of appropriate ideals in international trade negotiations will help in giving negotiations an edge in World trade transactions.

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How interest-rate policy can control inflation

-Euro Bank's chief economist

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Market Indicators

| Nigerian Inter-Bank Offered Rate (NIBOR) | |
|--|------------|
| Other Rates | |
| Quotes as of: | 07/01/2005 |
| 7 Days | 13.0833 |
| 30 Days | 15.3333 |
| 60 Days | 15.6667 |
| 90 Days | 16.5833 |
| 180 Days | 17.0000 |
| 270 Days | 0.0000 |
| 365 Days | 17 |

| Nigerian Inter Bank Foreign Exchange (NIFEX) Rates | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Quotes as of: | 07/01/2005 |
| Bid(\$=N=) | Offer(\$=N=) |
| Spot Fixing | 132.8 133.1 |
| Swap Points | |
| Forward Fixing | |
| 30 | 1.4295 / 1.4328 134.2295 / 134.3328 |
| 60 | 2.8534 / 2.8598 135.6534 / 135.9598 |
| 90 | 4.2716 / 4.2813 137.0716 / 137.3813 |
| 180 | 8.4928 / 8.5120 141.2928 / 141.612 |

| Open Market Operations (OMO) Auction held on 05/01/2005 | |
|---|---------------|
| Rates | NTB |
| Security | 21 DAYS |
| Tenor | 26/01/2005 |
| Maturity Date | N 150 Million |
| Total Amount of Bids received | N 150 Million |
| Total Amount Sold | 12.5000% |
| Range of bid Rates | 12.5000% |
| Stop Rate | 12.5003 % |
| True Yield | Nil |
| Weighted Average Rate | |

| Naira rate against World currencies as at 29/12/2004 | | | |
|--|----------|----------|-----------|
| N | Buying | Selling | Central |
| Currency | | | |
| US DOLLAR | 131.85 | 132.85 | 132.35 |
| POUND STERLING | 255.432 | 257.3703 | 256.40165 |
| EURO | 179.7116 | 181.0746 | 180.3931 |
| SWISS FRANCS | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| JAPANESE YEN | 1.2755 | 1.2852 | 1.28035 |
| CFA FRANCS | 0.2651 | 0.2751 | 0.2701 |
| WAGA | 203.7152 | 205.2603 | 204.48775 |
| SAUDI RIYAL | 35.1638 | 35.4304 | 35.2971 |

| Bureau De Change rates as of: 04/01/2005 | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Currency | Dollar | Pounds | Buying | Selling |
| Location | | | | |
| Lagos | 136.50 | 137.50 | 258.00 | 259.00 |
| Ikeja | 136.00 | 137.00 | 257.50 | 258.50 |
| Airport | 137.00 | 138.00 | 259.00 | 260.00 |

| Minimum Rediscount Rate and Export Proceeds Rates | |
|---|---------|
| Rate | Change |
| Minimum Rediscount Rate | 15 0.00 |
| Export Proceeds Per \$ | 1 0.00 |

| Dutch Auction held on 20/12/2004 | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Total Amount Offered | US\$ 125000000 |
| Total Amount Demanded | US\$ 19418015.39 |
| Total Amount Sold | US\$ 162099985.10 |
| Lowest Successful Bid Rate | N 132.85 / 1 US\$ |
| Highest Successful Bid Rate | N 133.3 / 1 US\$ |
| No. of Successful Applicants | 266 |
| No. of Unsuccessful Applicants | 110 |

Source: MMAN

APPRECIATION

The entire members of the family of late Alhaji Usman Al-Mustapha Alkali Kontagora who died on Saturday 18th of December, 2004 want to use this medium to acknowledge with appreciation the concern of all those who sympathized with us during our moment of grief.

We sincerely wish to extend our appreciation to His Excellency, Mr. President Federal Republic of Nigeria Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Vice President Alh. Atiku Abubakar, former Head of State Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and Gen. A.A Abubakar, Gen. Garba Duba, former Works & FCT Minister Gen. M.T. Kontagora, Gen. M. Maigoro (Galadiman Zuru), Gen. T.Y Danjuma, H.E Niger State Governor Engr. A.A Kure, Gen. M.I Wushishi, HRH the Emir of Kano Alh. Ado Bayero, HRH Emir of Minna Alh. Dr. U.F Bahago, HRH Emir of Borgu Alh. H Dantoro, HRH Etsu Nupe, HRH S/Sudan Alh. Sa'idu Namaska, Head of Civil Service, Alh. Yayale Ahmed, Hon. Minister of Commerce Amb. A.D Idris Waziri, Hon. Minister of Industry Amb. Magaji Muhammad Tanko, Hon. Minister of Information and National Orientation Chief Emeka Chikelu, Hon. Minister of State, Foreign Affairs Alh. Abubakar Tanko, Hon. Minister of State, Transport, Hon. Minister of State, Finance Mrs. Nenadi Usman, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Alh. Sani Zangon Daura (Dan masanin Daura), Former Minister of Water Resources Col. Bello Khalil, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Alh. Sule Lamido, Former Minister of Defence-Army Alh. Lawal Batagarawa, Former Minister of Defence, Navy & Solid Minerals Dev. Mrs. Modupe Adelaja, Former Minister of Finance Mallam Adamu Chiroma, Former Minister FCT Arc. Ibrahim Bunu, Former Minister of Finance Alh. Ahmed A. Muye (Walin Muye), All Former Ministers (1999-2003), Inspector General of Police Alh. Tafa Balogun, H.E Executive Governors of Kano, Bauchi, Nasarawa, Gombe, Benue, Sen. Sanusi Daggash, Sen. Daisy T. Y Danjuma, Sen. Iyola Omisore, Sen. D.I.G Nuhu Aliyu, Sen. Isah Muhammad and Sen. Dangana Ndayako. It is also worth extending our profound gratitude to Former Niger State Governor, Dr. Musa Inuwa, Deputy Governor Niger State, SSG, Niger State, All Executive Members Niger State, Hon. Speaker Niger State House of Assembly, Alh. Hassan Jikan Toro, All Members Niger State House of Assembly, All Hon. Commissioners Niger State, All Special Advisers, Niger State, All Special Assistants to the Niger State Governor, All Local Government Chairmen, Niger State, Party Chairmen & Executive Members (PDP) Niger State, Party Chairmen & Executive Members (PDP) Kwantagora L.G, Niger State Wushishi L.G, Niger State, Chairman & 12 others Mashegu L.G, Niger State, Chairman & 6 others Mariga L.G, Niger State, PRP Chairmen Zone 'A' Niger State, PRP Chairmen, Executives & Councilors, Salka & Zone 'B', Gen. Manager Niger State Housing Corporation, Gen. Manager Niger State Rural Electrification Board, G.M Niger State water Board and Director Min. For L.G Niger State.

Also the same appreciation goes to Alh. Halliru Jibrin Me Mai, Kano, Special Adviser to President on Manufacturing & Private Sector, Mal. Ahmed Abdulkadir, Former Speaker House of Representative, Alh. Gali Umar Na-Abba, Former S.A to Mr. President, Alh. Adamu Maina Waziri, Former Deputy Speaker House of Reps. Hon. Chibudom Nwoche, Compt. Gen. Nigerian Custom, Mr. Jacob G. Buba, Hon. Wakil Aliyu, Hon. Muhammed Bello, Hon. Habu Bawa Bwari, Former Military Administrators, Niger, Benue, Kaduna, Bauchi and Sokoto States, Amb. Bawa Salka, Former VC BUK Prof. Musa Abdullahi, Prov. FCE Kontagora, Mr. Makoju, Former Speaker Kano State House of Assembly, Alh. Abdullahi Yanshana, Deputy Chairman Tofa L.G, Kano, Vice Chairman PDP North Central Zone, Alh. Abubakar Magaji, Zonal Vice Chairman (NW-PDP) Dr. Bello Muhd, Vice Chairman PDP Alh. Bala Ahmed, Alh. Tijjani Hashim (Galadiman Kano), Mal. Bello I. Gwandu (Turakin Gwandu), Alh.

Munur Ja'afaru (Yariman Zazzau), Alh. Muhd. Hassan Tildin Fulani (Danmadamin Toro), Engr. A.A Lapai (Yariman Lapai), Alh. Abdulmalik Ndayako (Kpotun Nupe), Alh. H. Adamu Maishanu Suleja (Jarman Zazzau), Mal. Abdulrahman Hamza (S/Malami Zuru), Shiek Ahmad Lemu, Sheik Dr. Aminudeen Abubakar, Kano, District Head of Durbi (Bobi) & 6 others, Executive Sec. FCDA Abuja, Engr. M.S Alhassan, Chairman Nigeria railway Corporation, Alh. Waziri Kyari Muhammad, P.S Gombe State, P.S National Planning, Dr. Mu'azu B. Aliyu, P.S Ministry of Commerce, Mrs. Ama Pepple, P.S Petroleum Ministry and Governor (Opec), Mrs. Ammuna Jawan Ali, Air Commander Peter Gana (Rtd), Engr. Inuwa Zakari, Alh. Auwalu Rabiu Garo, Abuja, Alh. Shehu Makoda K/Kwari Mkt, Kano, Alh. Muhammad Bawa Rijau (Turakin Bandu), Alh. Jameel Halliru Jibrin, Alh. Idi Gambo (Chairman Kalam-Wahid), Alh. Aminu Roller (Soccer Talamiz, Lagos), Alh. Audu Bindawa (Al-amanat Bureau Dechange Wapa, Kano), Alh. Ibrahim Zango Kano, Alh. Abdulrahman Isa, Kano, Alh. Babu shu'abu Total, Kano, CEO MTN, Chairman Intercellular Nig. Ltd, Alh. Ibrahim Aliyu, Mr. Sifiso, Former D.G SEC. Dr. Suleman Ndamusa, Alh. Muhammad Bashir Suleja, Alh. Sunusi Kuki (JAMB), Alh. Muhd. Wake Bena, Mr. James Jatau Salka, Alh. Tukur Bobi, Dauca Garba kura and Danmasanin Misau.

Similarly, we are conveying our deep appreciation to Mr. Azzan Faiza (Turkish), Zain Abideen (Saudi Arabia), R. Bora (India), Mr. Assaf (France), Lebanese Amb. To Nigeria, S. Khaled, Iranian Amb. To Nigeria, Lebanese Consulate, Kano, Muhammad Fadhallallah, Former Sultant of Damagaram of Niger Republic, Sultan Abubakar, Former Jigawa State Governor, Alh. Ali Sa'adu B/Kudu, Alh. Dan'azumi Gwarzo, Alh. Sani Abdullahi K/Mata, Chairman Tofa L.G., Kano, Chairman Nassarawa, L.G., Kano Hon. H. Suraj Ya'u Bichi, Former Chairman Nassarawa L.G., Kano, Alh. Sulaiman Usman (Ariyano of Oshogbo), M.D. Restann Nig. Ltd., M.D. Nexim Bank, Alh. Baba Yusuf Ahmad, Chief Felix Ohiwerei (Chairman NIPC, Uniliver) & All Council Members, Executive Sec. Alh. Yusuf H. Abubakar, MG. Karami, Maikan. Nig. Ltd, M.D. Broad Bank, M.D. Systemspecs Mr. John Tani O'aro, G.M. Bank of the North, M.D. FAA, Former M.D. FHA, P. gr. I. Mustapha, Alh. M. Gambo, M.D. Drake & Scull Nig. Ltd., Engr. Ahmed Ibrahim, M.D. ACE Audit Control & Expertise, Chairman Dura Clean Services Nig. Chief F.M. Emeya, President Dangote Group, Alh. Aliko Dangote, President Igbo Y.D. Association of Nig. (Suleja) Chief Sunday, Executive Chairmen & Members Jeweleries Association Abuja & Kaduna, Group Chairman, Int. Risk Mgt. Group Ltd, P. Claver Obinna, President Chrome Oil Plc, Chief Emeka Ofor, Alh. Abdullahi Sani Brothers Kano, Alh. A.G. Abdullahi, Alh. Shehu Azare, Michelin Tyre, E.D., Dangote Group Lagos, Alh. Abba Dantata., E.D. Zuma Complex Lagos and Kano, Haj. Dr. Zulfu' u Sadik, Taiwan Trade Representatives in Nig. Mr John Liu, E.D VISA Travel Kano, Alh. Aminu & Family, E.D. Gongoni Nig. Ltd., Alh. Sulaiman Halilu, Alh. Nuhu Indabo (S/ Kasuwa) S/G Market, Haj. Bebi Abba Kano, Matasan S/G Mkt. Kano, Alh. Sani Yakasai, Treasurer K/Kwari Mkt. Kano, Alh. Ubale J. Kiru, Alh. Abdulkarim Arah, Alh. Muhd Aminu (Mai Keke), Alh. Sale (Mai Suminti), Alh. Garba Madengen, Mal. Isiyaka Mai-mai (Nda), Alh. Hassan Safiyau Ibetu, Alh. Garba Kolo, Alh. Abdullahi S.S., Alh. Muhd Godabe, Dr. S. Lawani, Alh. Muhd Ankarah Bature, Alh. Abdullahi Kura, Alh. Hassan Hadi (Kano), Alh. Babangida Lamido (KACCIMA), Alh. Musa Kura, Ibrahim & Mustapha-Rogo as well as those who sent their representatives, E-mail, and or text messages too numerous to mention in this write-up.

It is our prayer that you all return to your various destinations safely and may the Almighty Allah reward you abundantly. Amin.

Signed
Tijjani Usman (Son)
For the Family

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KANO TRUST

KNSG introduces Ramadan, Ram bonus to civil servants

Kano State government has introduced a Ramadan and ram bonus for its civil servants.

With the introduction of the bonus, the civil servants are to receive 50 per cent of their basic salary free during each Ramadan fast and the Eid-il-Kabir festival.

Kano State House of Assembly Speaker Sa'idu Gani, who announced this shortly after a closed-door

session of the House in Kano on Tuesday, said the introduction of the bonus followed the amendment and passage of the Ramadan/Ram Bonus Law 2005.

He explained that under the law, public servants in the state would be paid 50 per cent of their basic salary as bonus on or before the 27th of each Ramadan month and five days to each Eid-il-Kabir festival.

The speaker said the bo-

nus would enable Muslim public servants in the state and their relations to celebrate the two religious occasions with ease.

Earlier, the Majority Leader of the House, Alhaji Ahmed Dawanau, had said the legislation arose from the concern of the House over

the commitment of public servants in the state to their duties.

Dawanau explained that the law had to be amended

with the ram advance substituted for bonus to reflect the unanimous views of the three arms of the government on the matter.

Gwale LG to provide transformers to 13 wards

No fewer than 13 wards in Gwale local government area will soon smile as the council has completed arrangements to provide them with electricity transformers,

the council chairman Alhaji Sani Jibrin disclosed this.

Speaking while receiving the councillor of Dorayi ward in his office, Alhaji Jibrin stated that the gesture was facilitated to enhance uninterrupted elec-

tricity supply to the entire area.

According to him, the council will not hesitate to employ all possible measures to ensure that people get sufficient power supply saying failure to quell the persistent problem of electricity will halt the socio economic activities in the area.

The local government boss observed that he presently awaits approval from the ministry for local governments for the release of the funds meant for the project for onward procurement and distribution of the equipment.

Alhaji Jibrin conceded that though the council's revenue resources are limited, it still went ahead to supply the transformers, which signifies its dire need and concern on the general overhaul of people's welfare.

The council chairman however implored the people to expedite prompt action towards supporting the area so as to actualise its dream for the execution of developmental projects.

Responding, the spokesman of the ward, Malam Arma Ya'u reminded the chairman for his earlier pledged to provide 33,000 KVA transformers to the area.

He pointed out that the affected community have been confronting incessant power outage arguing that the problem could only be quelled if the transformer is provided.

The ward spokesman added his voice for the council's rapid intervention into the problem, adding however that the situation has brought their activities to a standstill.

Incessant school fees increase irks ministry

The Ministry of education Kano will not hesitate to bring to order any private school observed to be in the habit of incessant increase of their school fees in Kano State.

The director, private schools, Ministry of education, Alhaji Tajudeen Gambo disclosed that it has been observed by the state ministry of education

that some unscrupulous private schools in the state increase their fees according to their wishes and desires.

Alhaji Tajudeen Gambo also said that from the over 1,000 private schools existing in the state, only about 350 are duly registered with the state ministry of education. He added that the ministry will fish out erring schools and ad-

equate measures will be used against them.

Alhaji Gambo also revealed that all female students in Kano State, private schools inclusive will as from January next year comply with the Sharia standard code of dressing since the federal government has concluded arrangement to integrate Islamic education alongside western education in schools.

He also reiterated the determination of the ministry to re-organise the pri-

private schools according to grade levels and school fees may only vary from the schools grade level and not the usual dramatic upsurge in school fees by most schools.

The director also pledged the determination of his ministry to check problems that necessitates children staying in nursery schools longer than necessary whereas in some cases children finish primary school at primary four instead of six.

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EKO TRUST

Lagos to standardise vans for transporting meat

Butchers in Lagos state who are in the habit of transporting meat from the abattoirs in unhygienic manners would be barred from doing so as from January 17, 2005.

The president of the Lagos state Abattoir United Transporters Cooperative, Thrift and Credit Society (LSAUTCOTS), Mr Waidi Fujai, handed down the ultimatum at a press conference in Lagos.

Fujai explained that only standard sanitary vans would be allowed to transport meat from the abattoirs to the markets as from January 17.

He added that the decision of the cooperative was in compliance with the directive of the state government that meat should be transported in sanitary meat vans in line with international standard.

Fujai stressed that the poor handling of meat, including its being transported in

open trucks, the booth of cars and even on motorcycles, would expose it to pollutants like dust, fumes and lead and also flies that would contaminate it with germs.

He noted that the consumption of such unhygienically transported meat by the public could lead to illnesses.

"Those transporters that had been in the business should either modify their vans or purchase new ones in order to meet the standard required and remain in the business," he said.

Fujai urged the Organised Private Sector (OPS) to invest in the sector and contribute to the attainment of its objective of ensuring the delivery of safe and hygienic meat to Nigerians.

He also advised the government to equip the sanitary inspectors to carry out tests in a bid to ensure that the meat consumed by the public was safe for consumption.



Members of the association of Nigerian physicians in America (right) offering free medical service to Lagosians.

Pic: Oladipupo Odunewa

Operator wants FG to reduce ferry operation charges

A private ferry operator, Mr Sunny Akinyemi, has appealed to the federal government to reduce charges paid by ferry operators to create a good working environment for them.

Speaking with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the weekend in Lagos, Akinyemi said the federal government could also encourage ferry operators by clearing the dirt along waterways.

He urged the government to build more jetties close to the people and dredge the existing ones.

Akinyemi said owing to the high cost of fuel and the competition between ferry operators and commercial vehicle drivers, the tariff charged by the National Inland Waterways (NIWA) was a disincentive to ferry operators.

Describing the operating environment, Akinyemi, the Managing Director of Texas Connection Ferries in Lagos, said: "The current situation is so tough that without government assistance, ferry operators in Nigeria are doomed."

"NIWA, the agency in charge of water transportation in Nigeria, is not making efforts to encourage water transport," Akinyemi did not explain how.

He, however, said this year, his company planned to develop the tourism aspect of its operations as well as ply international routes to other African countries.

Pipeline explosion: residents demand security along NNPC pipelines

Residents of Abule-Ado in Amiwu Odofin Local Government area of Lagos State who were jolted by the devastating fuel explosion last Friday have called on the government concerned and the management of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation NNPC to beef up security along the pipelines in the state.

Last Friday's explosion was allegedly caused by pipeline vandals who had come to tap fuel from the NNPC pipeline that passed through the community.

Eyewitness said the explosion started around 2.00pm on the fateful day

By Olumide Bajulaye, Correspondent (Lagos)

when two tankers already loaded with the stolen products suddenly went up in flames.

It was gathered that immediately after the explosion, the vandals disappeared into thin air leaving the residents at the mercy of the ravaging inferno, which caused stampede leading to the death of five persons.

The residents who were jolted by the illicit act and the danger it poses to their lives and property are of the opinion that since illegal bunkering has become a phenom-

enon that keeps on rearing its ugly head in almost all the NNPC pipeline points in the state, the onus is on the authorities concerned to intensify their security patrol of the facilities.

According to them, there is not enough security guarding the pipelines, "that is why it is easy for vandals to carry out their illicit business without qualm. The best thing is for the government to engage more security agents to police the pipeline", they said.

Some of the community members who spoke with *Eko Trust* averred that if possible government should engage the services of the local

communities where the pipelines pass through.

They explained that community vigilantes so employed would not like to compromise the security of their community by allowing such dangerous and life-threatening business to take place.

Besides, the people said the involvement of local community vigilantes would make it easy to know where to apportion blame in case of security lapses.

The community people pointed out that adequate security would definitely discourage the perpetrators of the illicit act of vandalism as nobody would like to be caught in the act knowing fully well the gravity of the punishment that awaits offenders caught.

'LASG spends N.7million on demolition daily'

The Lagos State Government has warned that with about N.7 million being expended on demolition exercises daily along coastlines in the state, it is ready to prosecute residents that continue to mount the illegal structures.

The General Manager of the Lagos State Physical and Urban Regional Board, Mr. Layi Raheem has said that the demolition exercise which commenced in the area on December 28 and has covered less than a kilometer has cost the state government millions of naira so far.

Raheem said that the huge amount of money being expended daily at the demolition site along Ilubirin by the government could have

been deployed to the provision of other social amenities to benefit the citizens of the state and make life better for the grassroots.

He said no government in any country across the world would watch while illegal dwellers turned it coastlines in a column of shanties, noting that the demolition exercise became necessary in view of the recent Tsunami experience in South Asia.

He said that five fishing villages had been developed in the state by the government to accommodate the fishing community, regretting however that the fishermen refused to move in opting rather to stay near the coastlines and markets in the

cities, constituting a menace.

"It (Tsunami) would have been worse if it had happened here, just because we tend to take laws for granted.

"As an individual, this is about the 10th time I would be coming to this particular place for an exercise like this, this is not good enough", he said.

According to him, adequate notices had been served the residents occupying the illegal shanties severally, while on December 14th last year, they were served the demolition notice but the residents did not comply.

Raheem hinted that the area when cleared may be used by the state government as a recreation or tourism site.



Naval officers at Alausa secretariat during a visit by the senate committee on Navy to Ger Tinubu...recently. Pic: Oladipupo Odunewa

News

Emir of Argungu urged to wade into royal conflict in Kebbi

The protracted conflict over the membership of the traditional ruling families of Arewa Gabas in Argungu Emirate, Kebbi State, between the *Mayanan Kabi*, Musa Maina Jantullu, and the three ruling families in the district has deepened with the families urging the state and the Emir of Argungu to wade in decisively.

They specifically want the two authorities to warn Jantullu to desist from parading himself as a bonafide member of the Arewa ruling houses forthwith.

In a statement signed by the Chairman of their joint committee, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Yeldu, the three

By Utman Abubakar, Senior Reporter (features)

ruling houses debunked what they alleged as the claims of the *mayanan Kabi* of their membership by submitting a recent report on the matter to the Argungu Emirate Council to authenticate their position.

The 12-member committee gave the historical background of Arewa Gabas and its three ruling families of Maidoki, Abarsih and Durumbu, as well as that of Maina Jantullu with supporting documents against his claim, describing him as an intruder among them which, according to it, dated back to the early 1980s.

The ruling houses alleged that as a staff of the old Sokoto State history bureau then, Jantullu "tampered with historical records" by including his family on the original list of the Arewa Gabas genealogical table.

They recalled the justification and protest letter by the late district head, Mai Arewa Hassan, in 1978 and 1979 respectively to both the Emirate Council and the then Argungu local government against the inclusion of the contestants to the district leadership of Yeldu as well as a petition by the Durumbu family in 1984 allegedly stating that Jantullu is not its member.

The National Inland Waterways Authority and the Benue State Marine Police have risen up in arms against illegal operators of transport and work boats at the Buruku crossing point of River Katsina-Ala.

Waterways authority, police fight illegal boat operators in Buruku

The agency which embarked on mass impounding of boats, considered no river worthy or owned by unlicensed operators last week, said the exercise was part of the swift effort to respond to the recurrent boat mishap along the water ways in the state.

Last year alone, statistics showed that not less than 50 persons lost their lives or goods along Benue water ways following recklessness or overloading by operators of transport boats. The latest of the mishaps occurred late days of December 2004 when

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent, (Makurdi)

a transport capsized as a result of over loading, killing 10 persons and goods worth thousands of naira drowned.

The agency's Area Manager for Benue, Kogi, Taraba and Adamawa, Alijaji Kabiu Abubakar Abba, who spoke to *Daily Trust* in his Makurdi office yesterday, said the inspection visit paid to the Buruku crossing point last week brought two illegal operators namely Ageve and Godwin Trouble arrested for prosecution with the help of a team of marine police

personnel.

Alhaji Abubakar Abba who disclosed that the operators are working under the umbrella of Tombo Maritime Nigerian Workers (TMNW), has majority of members operating illegally as most of them are either underaged or operating both without operational survey certificates.

"Not only that, we have a limit for load line which operators must not exceed, but Buruku boatmen often go against our regulations," Alhaji Abba added that his agency's aim is to regulate activities at waterways.

Bachama youths decry presence of soldiers in Numan

Bachama youths from all over the country have said the continued presence of soldiers in Numan and some parts of Bachama land in Adamawa State poses great threat to the peace and security of the people, calling for the immediate withdrawal of the soldiers.

The youths who made the call in a communique issued at the end of their two-day summit in Jos, urged the federal government to institute a full scale fact finding

From Rakiya A. Muhammad, correspondent (Jos)

panel into the Numan crisis.

The communique signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Bachama Youths, Mr. Garba Yedimakudon and Barrister Kwamoti Loari respectively asserted "the soldiers who have been in Numan for several months now, killing and maiming our people should be withdrawn without any further delay."

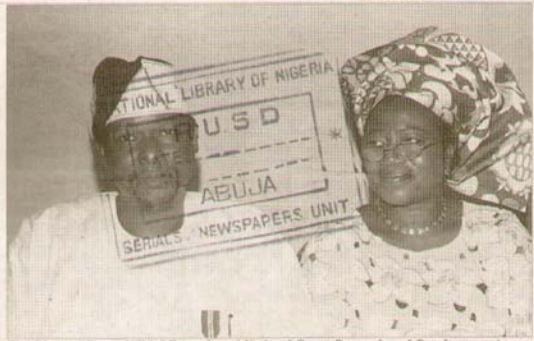
The youths said their patience has been over stretched by the Adamawa State government through

persistent molestation, harassment, intimidation, detention and threat to their lives, and said they would no longer tolerate any further acts of intimidation under any guise.

The summit reiterated that the recent Tri Centenary celebration of the Bachama Kingdom and presentation of first class staff of office was a deliberate attempt to ridicule the Bachama tradition, even as it alleged that many Bachama civil servants especially those perceived to be opposed to government action on the chieftaincy issue were being victimised or threatened with sack.

It demanded an apology from Vice-President Atiku Abubakar to the Bachama people for allegedly fuelling the Numan crisis, by attending the Tri Century celebration and supporting "the illegal handing of the staff of office to Asaph Zadok even when the case is before a Law Court."

The Bachama youths condemned what they noted as the attempted abduction by armed soldiers of Mhanto Nelice Bongo's wife and deposed Bachama Chief Freddy Bongo.



The Director-General/Chief Executive of National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) Professor Robert Ajayi Boroffice, was recently conferred with National Award of Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON) by President Obasanjo. Picture shows the DG with his wife, Prof. Olasimbo Boroffice at a dinner organised in his honour following the award

Eight suspects arrested over murder

Eight persons have been arrested by the Kano Zonal Police Command in connection with the murder of a 28 year old man, Sani Rabiu Gambo Hamman.

A final year Student of the Geology Department of Unimaid, Babagana Hamidu is a prime suspect in the murder case.

The AIG Zone I, Sir K.Z Dudari, disclosed in an interview with pressmen in his office said seven of the suspects were from Maiduguri, while the other one was from Niger state and that they were mainly students.

Though the AIG said that investigations have so far revealed that it was a case of armed robbery since the car of the victim was stolen, he was quick to add that cultism may not be ruled out.

K.Z Dudari said "There is more to it than meets the eyes or else why did the students all covered in Kano". Stating that it is a case of conspiracy. He added that the police will continue in its investigations to determine whether it is a case of cultism or not.

He stated however that contrary to earlier reports, the action was committed in a

From Jamillah Nuhu Musa, correspondent (Kano)

guest house, No. 2B Suleiman Crescent in Kano, rather than at Abbas road.

He also debunked allegations that the head of the victim was severed from his body.

The AIG also disclosed that the car has been discovered as well as the instrument used for the killing, together with some blood stain clothes and document.

Akume demands identity of his assailants

Gov. George Akume of Benue has demanded to know those who attacked his motorcade, killing his friend, Mr. Andrew Agom, in April last year.

He made the demand, when the Director-General, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Dr Sunday Ochoche, visited him in Makurdi yesterday.

Gunmen attacked Akume's motorcade and killed his bosom friend, Chief Agom, and a police corporal on their way home from Abuja last year.

"I want to know those who attacked me; up till now, nobody has told me who they are," he said, adding, "There are so many

questions, which have not been answered from that attack."

"Why was I attacked? What are my sins and crimes and could that be the price I have to pay for my struggles for democracy?" he queried.

The governor said democracy was all about security; "It is unfortunate that there is no security in the land," he said.

On the present efforts of the federal government on peace and security, Akume advised the Presidency to be sincere with its programmes and policies to ensure fairness and justice in the land.

He, however, said: "Let us continue to manage democracy, it is better than military rule."

UK cleric counsels Muslims on unity

From Zakariyya Adaramola, stringer (Lagos)

A United Kingdom (UK) based Islamic Scholar, Shaykh Abu Usaamah At-thahabi, has said that Muslims all over the world could only be united if "we all recognise the oneness of Allah."

Speaking in Lagos recently during a lecture jointly organised by Nasru-Lahi-Il-Fathi (NASFAT) and Deen Communications Limited (DCL), Abu Usaamah, said many Muslims only proclaimed oneness of Allah.

The American born cleric, who spoke on "towards a single nation", said apart from recognising the oneness of Allah, Muslims could also be united if they love one another.

Said he "We talk so much on unity without recognising the oneness of Allah, many Muslims still believed that Allah is every where, many others believed Allah dwells in human beings. All these heretic beliefs will always disunite the Muslims. We can be united if we all correct our belief in Allah. We should

UK cleric counsels Muslims

correct our Taulhid."

The Imam of the Bradford UK mosque said Muslims should also love one another as themselves as this could also unite them.

Warning against forming societies and organisations, Abu Usaamah said.

"Forming ourselves into societies and organisations would always disunite the Muslims as each society will always feel good and above the rest."

The Islamic religion, he said could be practiced without forming society.

It will be recalled that Abu Usaamah At-Thahabi delivered lecture in major Nigerian cities recently.

Appeal Tribunal upholds LG Chairman's election

The Taraba Local Government Election petition Appeal tribunal has upheld the election of Alhaji Abdulazeez Abwage (PDP) as the duly elected chairman of Donga Local Government Area.

The decision followed a majority judgment reached by three out of the four members of the tribunal, sitting in Jalingo, in which they set aside the ruling of the lower tribunal.

However, a dissenting judgment by the chairman of the tribunal, Justice Mohammed Danjuma, nullified the election of Abwage and ordered Alhaji Waziri Mamman of the ANPP should be declared as winner of the election.

The Local Government Election Petition Tribunal had on July 19, 2004 nullified the election of Abwage as Chairman of the council and ordered for a bye-election.

Violence had erupted in Donga town after the the election in March when the returning officer first declared the ANPP candidate as the winner before later reversing his decision in favour of the PDP candidate.

The crisis deteriorated and the state government ordered the relocation of the headquarters of council from Donga town to Mararaba, for security reasons.

News

Police quiz seven over N3m theft

Abuja, Jan. 10, 2005 (NAN) Seven people are currently helping the police in investigating the removal of about N3 million from the office of NITEL's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr Rein Zwolsman.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) learnt that the suspects included staff of NITEL, an international communication firm as well as an Internet service provider.

The suspects were arrested last week for allegedly breaking into the office safe of the CEO to remove some foreign currencies.

A staff of NITEL said the technicians of the firm and the service provider had gone to the office during the Christmas break to fix the phones in that office and to install equipment for a wireless Internet connection.

NAN investigations revealed that the management of NITEL recently concluded plans to recruit a private security

outfit to complement the NITEL guards and eight mobile policemen that guarded the building.

Sources in the CEO's office, however, said the management was still to decide on the outfit to hire as most of those that tendered for the job asked for exorbitant fees. "One of the outfits asked for N51 million every month to provide about 20 guards," a source said.

Meanwhile, NAN learnt that the suspects were released on bail at the weekend, with a condition that they report everyday at the station.

A NAN correspondent who visited the office of the CEO observed that the first compartment of the safe was sealed with a masking tape while other compartments were intact.

Zwolsman told NAN that he used the top compartment as a private safe, adding that the doors and windows to the office were intact when he returned, except for the

compartment where the money was kept.

"A significant amount of my money was removed from the safe and I kept the money there in case there is an emergency," he said. Zwolsman refused to disclose the exact amount of money removed, explaining that the matter was already with the police.

A staff in his office, however, said, "It is close to N3 million and we suspect that it is an inside job."

When contacted, the Deputy General Manager in charge of Corporate Communications, Mr Tayo Ekundayo, said he was just resuming from leave and had not been properly briefed on the matter.

His deputies said that they had not been officially briefed on the theft and so could not comment on the issue as the money removed "is the personal money of Zwolsman which he kept there while away in Netherlands".

Prisons require better funding to cope with HIV/AIDS — Labo

The Problem of HIV/AIDS in the country's prisons will require better funding to check the spread of the scourge, according to Dr Hassan Labo, Chairman, Nigeria Para-Military HIV/AIDS Sector Committee.

Labo told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) today in Abuja that the committee was finding it difficult to cope with the

increasing number of prisoners who required retroviral drugs.

"The fatalistic nature of the disease and the cost of retroviral drugs for medication vis-a-vis the meager allocation to relevant sub-heads has not been comforting," he said.

He, however, said that the committee was engaged in an advocacy for the inclusion of HIV/AIDS

budget in the service budget submission to enable it have enough funds at its disposal for the infected prisoners.

Other problems faced by the committee include lack of qualified personnel for counselling of inmates.

According to him, proper training is very important because caring for such category of inmates should not be handled without proper training.

"It is not everybody that talks about HIV/AIDS that can cope with the prison inmates because of their peculiar environment," he added. Labo said that there were many facilities lacking in the prisons and noted that absence of such facilities posed difficulties in efforts to check the spread of HIV/AIDS in the prisons.

According to him, screening centres for the screening of new inmates are lacking.

"If you don't screen them at that point, you have a problem because you may not be able to monitor them properly after admission," he said.

Another problem, according to him, is the mobile nature of imprisonment whereby treatment could be disrupted before the completion of their sentence.

He further said that those under treatment might not continue with their treatment when released from prison while their condition could get worse.

The chairman also said that irregular supply and delay in the supply of drugs was a major

problem as it led to drug resistance which might the health of the infected to deteriorate

JDZ set to announce winners of licensing round

Nigeria-Sao Tome and Principe Joint Development Zone (JDZ) is to announce the successful companies that won the five blocks put on offer in December 2004, before the end of this month.

The Presidential Adviser on Petroleum and Energy, Dr Edmund Daukoru, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja that the move would kick start the exploration of hydrocarbon resources in the zone.

"I believe that before the end of this month we will get the necessary high level approvals and we will announce the winners immediately," he said.

NAN recalls that the JDZ promised to announce the winners on December 31, 2004, after receiving 26 bids from 23 companies but that did not happen.

The bidding round will fetch the JDZ 433 million dollars as signature bonus.

Daukoru said the Christmas and new year holidays actually slow down activities at the JDA.

He said the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) of the JDA was currently analysing the bids received aimed at ensuring accountability and transparency.

"We have to weigh the signature bonus benefits versus the competence and technological know-how of the bidding companies to be able to arrive at a fair decision," he said.

The presidential aide also said the JMC was looking at the potential of oil in each of the blocks before which would soon be rounded-off.

Although, he said, Nigerian companies that participated in bidding

round don't have deep water experience, the JDZ would consider them seriously.

He said the move would further domicile local content in the upstream sector of the oil industry.

The NAN quoted him as saying that Production Sharing Contract (PSC) would be signed with the successful companies immediately the licenses were awarded. NAN reports that studies revealed the presence of between 6 billion barrels to 12 billion barrels of crude at the zone.

The JDZ was established in February 2002 to explore and manage hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon resources in the zone on 60/40 basis in favour of Nigeria.



N30 million worth of fake drugs and other regulated products recently destroyed by NAFDAC in Kano

EFCC arraigns five over N2 million theft

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) yesterday arraigned five suspects including three Nigerians before an Ikeja High Court, Lagos, on charges of defrauding an American, George Blide, the sum of N2 million.

From Mohammed Shosanya

The accused persons are, Harrison Odinwa (Alias Abu Belgore), Dr. Tunde Oni, Desmond Okoro and Mr. Bayo M. Andrew and others still on the run.

They were preferred with 54 count charges of conspiracy, false pretence, forgery and altering of documents.

According to the charges, the accused persons conspired to obtain the said sum of money by false pretences from George Blide of Quest Exploration and Development, Virginia, United States of America (USA) between March 4, 2003 and August 2004.

They were also alleged to have knowingly and fraudulently forged corporate Affairs Commission Certificate of Incorporation of George Blide with registration number: 069796 purported to have been issued on 5th January, 1996.

The prosecutor further told the court that all the accused persons forged a registration of supplies in November 16, 1996, the Roy Owen Incorporation of Northern Carolina, USA, purported to have been issued by Federal Ministry of Health.

When the charges were read, they pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Woman sends armed robbers after husband over divorce

From Isa Umar Gusau, Maiduguri.

A woman, Halima Bukar, allegedly organised a group of armed robbers who attacked her former husband in Maiduguri for divorcing her.

The Borno State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Adewale Ajakayi, disclosed this to journalists at a press conference held at the state's police headquarters in Maiduguri.

"On the 27/11/2004 at about 1.00 hrs a complaint was received from one Jibrin Mohammed of Railway Quarters about a group of armed bandit who stormed his house at about 0130hrs. They inflicted severe injuries on him and his wife and carted away valuable items. Upon receipt of information, a team of police detectives swung into action and subsequently,

Abba Bukar (male), Luka Sule (male) and Halima Bukar (female) were arrested. Interrogation however revealed that they were contracted for the operation by the victim's former wife (Halima Bukar) to serve as a punishment to the enraged husband for daring to divorce her. They all confessed to the crime," the police commissioner said.

However, while speaking to *Daily Trust*, the suspect, Halima Bukar, denied any involvement with the armed robbers.

She said that she had no contact at all with the bandits, saying that she had been in police net over one month.



Gov. Adamu Alero of Kebbi State briefing the State House Journalists, with him is the deputy Gov. of Borno State, Ab. Adamu Yuguda during their visit to the State House, Abuja — recently

R.U.S.D News

NAFDAC introduces new drug control policy July 1st

Strict regulatory and control policy measure which will ensure that patients obtain ethical drugs only on prescription by medical practitioners would come into effect on July 1, 2005, as the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) takes decisive steps to check the current chaotic drug distribution system in the country.

The Director General of NAFDAC, Dr. Don Akunyili, dropped the hint in Abuja while declaring open a national health care providers stakeholders' meeting convened by the agency to fashion out modalities for sanitising the present disorderly drug distribution network across the nation.

Dr. Akunyili said the new policy measure had become necessary because the sale and dispensing of ethical drugs without prescription were mostly responsible for the serious health problems associated with underdose, overdose, and usage of wrong drugs, therapeutic failure and untimely death of innocent patients.

According to her, the healthcare providers stake-

holders' meeting was convened by NAFDAC to ensure that everybody in the health sector was involved right from the planning stage to effective implementation of the proposed orderly drug distribution system.

The director general maintained that strict compliance with the new policy measure by all stakeholders in the

health care delivery system would greatly promote rational user of drugs and ensure that patients get the right quality drugs.

Responding on behalf of other stakeholders, the PSN President, Mr. Uzo Uwaga, commended the bold initiative of NAFDAC, which he described as long overdue.

Ex NBA chairman faults suspension of Ngige, Uba

The former Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) Chairman, Onitsha branch and the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) Chairman, Anambra State, Mr. Chukka Obele Chuka, and Mr. Emeka Umeaghalasi, respectively, faulted Tuesday's decision of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) suspending Governor Chris Ngige and his estranged godfather, Chief Chris Uba, from the party.

Reacting separately to the decision, the former Onitsha NBA boss and his CLO counterpart said the two actors should have been expelled from the party instead of the mere 30 days' suspension.

Chukka, in his reaction, said: "Unless the stolen man-

date is returned to the owner, there will be no peace in Anambra State. We did not vote for the PDP; President Obasanjo made it clear that it was a case of two criminals struggling over their loot."

He said the party should have handed over the two actors and the INEC officials who supervised the conduct of the election to the police, not just suspending them, adding that by the party's decision to suspend them, it had aided and abated in the rigging, thereby being guilty of compounding felony.

In his own reaction, the state's CLO Chairman, Mr.

The government of Chad has said that it has constructed a 120 kilometre road from N'gama to Baga Sula in Chad and that only 20 kilometres of the road, which terminates on the Chad side of Lake Chad is outstanding.

A press release from the works ministry, signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Minister, Mr. Lawrence Ojabo, said the Chadian Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, Ousman Kalibou Bella, who made the revelation on Monday, when he paid a courtesy call on the minister of works in his office,

Chad completes 120km road construction to Nigeria

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

said that Baga Sula is separated from Nigeria by about 100 kilometres of the lake.

The ambassador thanked the federal government for the role it is playing in the sub-region, including brokering peace in troubled countries, hosting refugees and peace keeping.

Ousman Kalibou Bella further said that many countries in not only West Africa but also the entire continent, including Chad, have benefited immensely from the leadership role Nigeria is playing on the continent.

He averred that providing a road link between Nigeria and Chad would benefit many countries in the region, including Chad, Niger, Sudan and Libya.

Responding, the Minister of Works, Senator Adeseye Ogunlewe, reaffirmed the commitment of the federal government to providing a direct road link between Nigeria and many countries on the continent, including Chad, as means of enhancing trading relations among member countries of the African Union (AU) and in the spirit of NEPAD.

According to the minister, President Obasanjo has instructed the ministry to work with all development partners involved in road develop-

ment in the region, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank (ADB), which are providing assistance, as well as the bi-national commissions between Nigeria and Benin, Niger and Cameroon to close ranks in facilitating linking roads with other countries in the sub-region.

Senator Ogunlewe informed the delegation that a technical sub-committee has been set up to determine appropriate route to be selected as a priority among the existing roads linking the two countries.

He said that the Maiduguri-Monguno-Baga road linking Nigeria through Lake Chad is being rehabilitated and that the project would be completed this year, and advised the Chadian government to consider the idea of establishing a Nigeria-Chad national commission on road between the two countries.

The minister also said that the six-nation multi-lateral commission on the trans-Saharan highway to which Chad belongs is considering a wide range of issues in the road sector and urged the government of Chad to be more closely involved in that forum, which is a veritable platform for bringing up such projects as the Nigeria-Chad road.

ADVERTORIAL

The House of Representatives Committees on Sports and Social Development and Judiciary Cordially invite the General Public to the Public Hearing on the Act to provide for the National Lottery Regulation Commission and the National Lottery Trust Fund and for Matters connected therewith.

Date: Wednesday 12th January, 2005

Venue: House Hearing Room 3

Time: 11am.

**Sports Committee Secretary
Announcer**

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, January 24, 2005.**

For participation and further enquiries, please contact the **Special Projects Department** on any of the following nos: **08037038663, 08042145839, 08023262061, 08028494170 or 09-6720346, 5235787 extensions 124 or 117.**

Inside Politics

APGA factions summon separate NEC meetings

The leadership crisis rocking the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has deepened at the weekend, as the two rival factions summoned parallel meetings of the party's National Executive Committee (NEC). APGA is currently factionalised along those behind the national Chairman, Chekwas Okorie and a group under the party's national Treasurer, Victor Umeh.

...as caucus stands

by Okorie

The northern caucus of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) has disowned the splinter group that suspended the party's national chairman, Chekwas Okorie.

The caucus said it was solidly behind Okorie and that the faction backed by the party's national Secretary, Sani Shinkafi, was on its own.

Making the position of the caucus known to newsmen at the APGA secretariat in Abuja yesterday, the Secretary of the north's caucus, Hajiya Rabi Cengiz, said the allegations against Okorie were unfounded, and therefore there was no basis for his purported suspension.

Nassarawa ANPP boss remains put

In spite of the recent mass decamping of ANPP top shots to the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Nassarawa State Chairman of the ANPP, Joseph Umaru, has vowed to remain put with the opposition party.

In a chat with *Daily Trust* Saturday in Lafia, the party chief maintained that principles will not warrant him to resign from the party, even as he wished the

By Habeeb I Pindiga
Political Reporter (Senate)

Two separate notices of meeting circulated by the rival factions on Friday slated different NEC meetings for tomorrow and Wednesday respectively.

Okorie's group scheduled its parley for Wednesday at Chida International Hotel, Abuja, while the Umeh faction put its own NEC meeting at Arcade Clud Suits tomorrow.

According to the notice of Okorie's side, signed by its

"We the northern caucus of the party wish to clean the air and make our stand abundantly clear to all: we totally dissociate ourselves with such an abnorma move, devoid of undue constitutional process.

"We have carefully investigated all the allegations against the national Chairman and we are fully convinced that all the allegations are unfounded, vexatious and a total blatant lie, fabricated by the dissidents to suit their selfish interest", Cengiz said.

Saying that Okorie was a man of integrity and honesty, Cengiz added that Shinkafi "has no mandate of the northern caucus to act the way he did. He should therefore stop using or parading himself in any way or manner as a member of the northern caucus.

From Godwin Tyunango
Reporter, in Lafia

decampes well in their new tent.

Umaru said that those who decamped from ANPP were exercising their franchise, observing however that a one-party state is not the best for a complex society like Nigeria and that there can only be vibrant politicking through vibrant

Director of Publicity, Okorie Orji, those expected at the NEC meeting include the party's national officers, state chairmen, National Assembly members, board of trustees members, delegates from Europe, the United States and Canada, and observers from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

On its part, the Umeh group announced its NEC meeting through a notice signed by its Organising Secretary, Innocent Ekwu, and the Publicity Secretary, Ogometu Uke Metu.

The APGA crisis broke mid-last month when Umeh and the party's national secretary Sani Shinkafi, alongside six others, announced the suspension of Okorie on allegations of financial impropriety.

But the Okorie side responded by suspending those they called dissidents, and formed a disciplinary panel to try them. The panel is due to present its report to The National Working Committee today.



From left are, Alhaji Saleh Shehu Minister of state works, Senator Ogunlewe Minister of works, Minister of state water resources, Alhaji Bashir Awoturebo and the information Minister, Dr. Chukwuemeka Chikelu during the FEC meeting held at the state House Abuja...recently

2007: Marwa's posters bury Atiku's in Makurdi

In a style reminiscent of 2003 elections period, posters of Brig. General Muhammadu Buba Marwa (rtd) have flooded Makurdi, the Benue State capital, so much so that posters posted earlier, including those of Vice President Atiku

From Hir Joseph,
Correspondent (Makurdi)

Abubakar have been completely buried.

Posted on strategically located public stands, including bill boards and statues at all ring roads within the town, the posters which read: "Marwa for 2007" have covered those of Atiku which

were posted between October and November of 2007.

Although the people behind the act have all the while remained unknown, inquiries from strong supporters of the presidential hopeful revealed that the generality of Benue people are daily yearning for the candidature of Marwa for presidency come 2007.

North urged to immortalise Wada Nas

A civil rights activist, Comrade Shehu Sani, has called on state governments and civil societies in northern Nigeria to enlodge the late Minister of Special Duties, Alhaji

From Aliyu Haruna,
Correspondent, Kaduna

Wada Nas, by establishing monuments and name streets after him.

Speaking to *Daily Trust* exclusively in Kaduna, Comrade Shehu stressed the need for the region to appreciate whom Alhaji Wada Nas is, in order to ensure that people have a glimpse of what he struggled for, while he was alive.

According to him, the north, as a region should not wait for the people in the southern part of Nigeria to name street and monument after him, pointing out that something must be done for

him to be remembered.

Comrade Shehu, who is also the President of Civil Rights Congress (CSC), a non-governmental organisation based in Kaduna, said that the late minister was a consistent and courageous man, saying that he lived a very simple and exemplary in life.

The civil right activist disclosed that although there are lots of issues which differed with the late minister in terms of principle and ideology, he however reserved a very strong respect for his kind of consistency in what he believed.

Comrade Shehu Sani, who was privileged to meet the late minister at the eve his death, said that his last statement to him was that his fight and struggle were basically to bring about changes and proper democracy in the country, pointing out that his struggles were not about money.

He declared that the north and the country in general will lose him in his proactive position, agitation and his own peculiar kind of activism, saying that this part of the country is known to be docile and fantastic.

He also said that the kind of views, suggestions and politics of the late minister had made him more of an individual force within himself.

On the late minister's strong opposition against President Olusegun Obasanjo's regime, the activist said that Alhaji Wada Nas had said it severally that he did not dislike Obasanjo personally, but rather the policies of his government, adding that there are cases when he openly supported the government, citing the case of declaration of state of emergency in Plateau State.

He disclosed that the late minister may not have thousands of followers, saying that there are millions of people that shared his principles, views, ideas and all that he stood for.

On some sections of the country that feel that all he was doing was just a noise, the civil activist berated their beliefs, saying that noise is very important in democracy as democracy is all about freedom of speech, expression and irritating people in the position of leadership, which could bring about necessary changes.

IBB campaign groups merge

As part of efforts to harmonise the positions of all the groups clamming for the return of President Ibrahim Babangida, the north central branch of the "Nigeria Project" has successfully brought together more than 30 groups and individuals under one platform.

The groups which met in Abuja, Saturday, reserved that to work together would be more beneficial to the cause of drafting the former

president into the 2007 presidential race, rather than having a divided house.

The newly appointed Chairman of the harmonised group, Alhaji Abdul Malik Salawu, who briefed the press alongside the secretary and the publicity secretary of the harmonised body said henceforth, all the groups in the north central trying to draft IBB into the presidential race have agreed to work under one platform. He said it was not difficult

bringing the groups together because they all have a common interest which is to ensure that the former military president runs for the 2007 elections.

So far according to Salawu, the groups have decided to set aside party other in order to work together for the common goal.

To strengthen the new structure, the chairman of the north central group of the "Nigeria Project" disclosed that all the 30 positions

within the structure have been divided equally among the states from the middle belt.

He said all the groups are unanimous on their decision on IBB to join the race because according to Salawu, the former military president is a detribalised Nigerian who has done much for the growth of the country.

This he said was evident in the quality of life Nigerians were living in the period IBB was in government.

Inside Politics

Adamawa supports Atiku's presidential bid



Vice President Atiku

The Deputy Governor, Alhaji Bello Tukur, has said that the people of the state would support the candidature of Vice-President Atiku Abubakar in the 2007 presidential elections.

Fielding questions from journalists in Yola at the weekend, Tukur said that the aspiration of the Vice-President was a collective resolution of the people of the state.

He said Abubakar had demonstrated high degree of loyalty to President Olusegun Obasanjo and all the policies and programmes of the administration.

"To ensure continuity of these laudable programmes, the Vice-President, who has been part of the government, should be the successor of President Obasanjo," he said.

PDP wants fresh LG polls in Lagos

The ruling party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has approached a Federal High Court in Abuja for an order directing conduct of fresh elections into the 20 constitutionally recognised councils in Lagos.

The party is also seeking a preservative order of the court directing payment of the funds.

standing to the credit of the councils to the court or an interest yielding account in either Union Bank or First Bank.

The suit, which came up before Justice Binta Murtala-Nyako today in Abuja, has been adjourned to Feb. 7, for hearing of the application on the preservative order.

It will be recalled that the Supreme Court had on Dec. 10, last year directed the immediate payment of statutory allocations due to Lagos State for the benefits of only the 20 councils recognised by Section 3 (6) of the first schedule of the constitution.

The allocations were hitherto withheld on the order of President Olusegun Obasanjo on the ground that Lagos State created 37 additional councils to the 20 existing ones.

The order was also based on the fact that elections into the councils were conducted without allowing the National Assembly to pass the necessary Act under section 8 (3) of the constitution. In the suit, filed by the Lagos State PDP Chairman,

Alhaji Murtala Ashorobi and 10 others, the party claimed that when the state government announced its intention to conduct election into the 57 newly created councils they protested against it.

The plaintiffs said that they boycotted the council elections at the end of which only members of Alliance for Democracy (AD) were returned unopposed.

They contended that if fresh elections were held into

the 20 councils, their candidates had great chance of success and when elected they would be the appropriate persons to manage the fund to be disbursed.

Cleric advises soldiers to stay clear from politics,

The Methodist Bishop of Abakaliki Diocese, the Rt. Rev. Geoffrey Agupusi, has asked the armed forces "to focus on their professional service, rather than get involved in politics".

Agupusi gave the advice in a sermon to mark this year's Armed Forces Remembrance Day at the Cathedral of Holy Trinity in Abakaliki.

As professionals, Nigerian soldiers should be guided by the tenets of their job, which entails selfless service, obedience and sacrifice of their lives to their nation," he stressed.

According to Agupusi, "a situation whereby soldiers now turn to contractors lifting oil, engaging in active politics and other businesses reserved for civilians is wrong."

"As soldiers, God will certainly demand to know how you performed your duties."

"You have clearly defined duties of protecting your nation's territorial boundaries from all forms of attack, obeying constituted authorities and ensuring the

peaceful co-existence of various groups."

The bishop also noted that "even as retirees, soldiers should not get involved in politics, as their training and that of civilians are completely different."

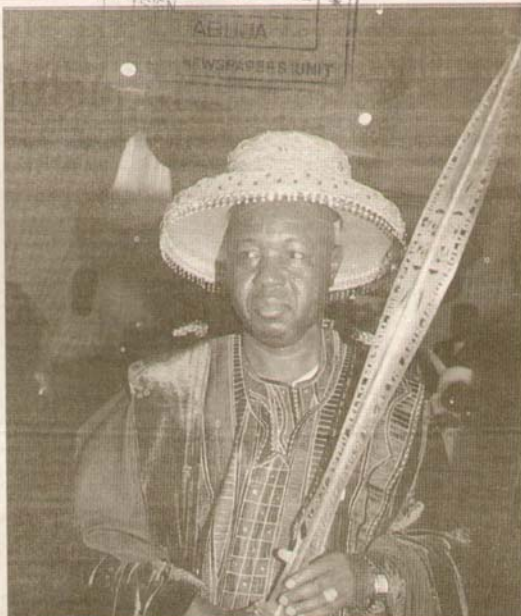
"As 2007 draws nearer, you will be hearing of one former military man or the other nursing ambition to clinch one political position or another."

"But it is quite wrong for that to befall a nation like Nigeria," he stressed. Agupusi made a strong case for the prompt payment of the salaries and pensions of both state and the local government where they are created. "It is an additional burden, as you have to build palaces for the new emirs, buy limousines for them and cater for their routine staff; it is sheer unnecessary burden for the government to carry in the face of developmental projects."

The governor said he would rather support the creation of additional local government areas, "as they will bring development closer to the people".



Some PDP state chairmen and top members of the party trying to verify their names on the list of qualified members before entering the National Secretariat of the party NEC meeting held in Abuja recently



Speaker Masari Akinjagunmolu of the source shortly after his installation by the Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijunade recently

Gov. Aliero against more emirates in Kebbi

Gov. Adamu Aliero of Kebbi has reiterated his opposition to the creation of new emirates in the state. He told newsmen in Birnin Kebbi at the weekend that "it is not the priority of my administration now and in the future."

Aliero has distanced himself from the state House of Assembly which intends to create new emirates and the Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji al-Mustapha Jokolo, has absolved him from any blame over the passage of the bill on the issue.

However, the Assembly has vowed to override the governor if the bill is not assented to 30 days after its passage.

The proposed emirates are those of Jega and Aliero

Kano assembly passes 2005 budget

The Kano state House of Assembly has appropriated N46.136 billion for the 2005 fiscal year. The amount showed an increased more than N4 billion on the budgetary proposal earlier presented to the assembly by the state governor, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau.

Shekarau had earlier presented a proposal of N41.69 billion to the assembly for consideration.

The Speaker of the House, Alhaji Sa'idu Gani, told journalists after a closed door session of the House that the assembly approved the amount after endorsing the reports of its appropriation committee.

He said that with the increment, N21.035 billion was earmarked for recurrent expenditure while N25.1 billion was allocated for capital projects.

Gani directed the 44 local government councils in the state to submit their budget estimates to the House on or before the Feb. 14.

He also reminded the councils to give priority to youth empowerment

PDP seeks fresh LG polls in Lagos

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directing conduct of fresh elections into the 20 constitutionally recognised councils in Lagos.

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Sports

Charitable Moya downs Paradorn to retain title

Spain's Carlos Moya rallied to defeat Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan and retain his Chennai Open title on Sunday, then donated his winning purse to tsunami relief efforts.

The top-seed battled back from 5-2 down in the deciding set to prevail 3-6-6-7-6 in a final lasting over two-and-a-half hours.

Around 200 people died in the southern Madras city alone, a short drive away from the tennis stadium, when the devastating tsunami waves struck south and east Asia two weeks ago.

"I'm very concerned about what happened a week

before I came here and want to donate all the prizemoney to tsunami victims," Moya said.

Paradorn, Asia's top player and winner in 2003, appeared set to avenge last year's final defeat before Moya reeled off four games in a row.

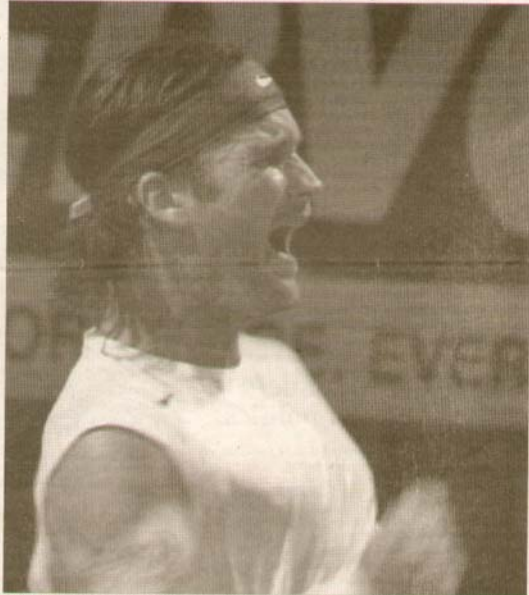
The disheartened Paradorn saved three match points, two in the tiebreak, before Moya clinched it 7-5 to secure his 18th career ATP title.

Paradorn had dominated the first set, the 25-year-old Thai hitting deep and moving to the net to finish.

Moya, the 1998 French Open winner, however, showed better control over his trademark forehand shots to claim a see-saw second set which featured five breaks of serve.

"I felt I was not controlling the match and he was playing too well," Moya said. "But I never gave up, I played my best tennis."

"Carlos deserved to win," said Paradorn. "We played a great match."



Spain's Carlos Moya celebrates after winning the ATP Chennai Open in Madras, India on Sunday. Moya retained the title by defeating Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan in a repeat of last year's final encounter.

Elber future at Lyon in doubt

Brazilian striker Giovane Elber's future at Lyon is in doubt after he walked out on the French champions.

Elber, 32, underwent surgery on an ankle injury without consulting the club's medical team.

Although a lengthy absence is on the cards, Elber's situation could alert Premiership clubs.

Lyon President Jean-Michel Aulas said: "His status as the highest-paid player at the club implies responsibilities which have not been respected."

The French champions do not expect Elber to return to the club this month and Lyon acted quickly by signing his compatriot Nilmar to boost their attack.

Aulas said: "Elber used the press to make critical and probably libellous comments on Lyons medical services."

"But that's not to say there's been a split with Elber."

The Brazilian striker revealed in December that he had held talks with Borussia Mönchengladbach about a possible return to the Bundesliga.

Lyon paid Bayern Munich £2.7m for Elber last season.

Tszyu agrees to Hatton showdown

IBF light welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu says he has agreed to fight Ricky Hatton in Manchester on 5 June.

The Russian-born Australian told his website that he expected the bout to take place at the MEN Arena at 0400 BST for the benefit of viewers in America.

"I'll train at 1pm here [Australia] and when I go here I'll train at four in the morning, which means my time clock won't change," said Tszyu.

"I am going to sleep during the day. I don't care what the media say."

But Hatton's promoter Frank Warren has indicated here are still details to sort out before the fight is confirmed, and admitted he will talk to the UK's Sky TV company, who would prefer an earlier slot.

Manchester's MEN arena has been provisionally booked for the contest but Warren has not ruled out switching to an outdoor venue.

Tszyu will reportedly earn at least \$5m (£2.7m) for the bout, which would be one of the boxing highlights of 2005.

He re-asserted himself as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world when returning from a 22-month injury lay-off to overpower Shamba Mitchell inside three rounds in Phoenix in November.

He has a record of 31 wins against just one defeat, a 0th-round loss to Vince Phillips in 1997.

And he insisted his skills are in no way diminishing, even at the age of 35.

"The reason people who've got success start losing because of a drop in their focus on training," Tszyu told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"I have people behind me like my father who will make sure I will train very hard all

the time and I am happy with this, I expect this.

"The last chapter in my book has not been written and I don't know what kind of chapter it is going to be, but I am excited."

"I will be hungry to train and hungry to fight and prove to all the Pommies I respect the guy a lot, but he is still a contender."

Hatton has won all 38 of his professional bouts, with 28 of those victories inside the distance. The 26-year-old has successfully defended his lightly-regarded WBU title 15 times.

Federer's class all in the mind

Roger Federer's reactions are showing curious hints of uncertainty. As the world's greatest tennis player flew to Australia yesterday for the defence of the first of his three Grand Slam titles in a week's time, he did not always sound like a man who has won 14 finals and 21 matches in a row, has won 44 of his last 46 encounters, and has started the new

year as emphatically as he finished the last.

Federer did not drop his serve, let alone a set, in his five matches to win the \$1,000,000 Qatar Exxon Mobil Open. Yet despite overwhelming Ivan Ljubicic 6-3, 6-1 in a final which lasted little over an hour, he declared the outcome "a relief".

This was the same unexpected word which the triple-

grand slam title holder used when announcing that Tony Roche had agreed, after almost a year's deliberation, to become his part-time coach.

Federer had the best year of his career without a coach. But the explanation is probably simple. The Swiss is unsure about setting new goals after a season like the last. Winning four grand

slams in one year is frequently described as impossible in the modern game and, if 2005 is not to become a year of let-downs, this particular Australian Open assumes even greater importance for him.

"The mental challenge is going to be hard," Federer admitted earlier in the week. Which may provide context to his remark that he had been "surprised, in a way" to have

won the 23rd title of his career.

"In the first tournament of the year you never know what will happen," he explained. "There is a lot on my shoulders. I felt the pressure coming into this."

If Federer felt that here, he is likely to feel it more next week. This week may be a little less stressful because the Kooyong tournament which he will grace, rather than either Sydney or Auckland, is merely an exhibition. But there are still important tasks to perform.

He played only eight matches in Qatar, mostly in unusually cool conditions. "I will need to get used to the heat," he said. "That will make the bounce different. We will see whether it was the right decision to come here when we see how I do at the Aussie Open."

Federer was able to coach himself through the intricacies of the final, when Ljubicic had him at love-40 in the seventh game and love-30 when serving for the first set, hitting with rhythm rather than power. "After that I think I broke his belief and that was exactly what I wanted," he said. In Melbourne, the resistance will last longer and Roche's presence may be much more than merely relief.

Grieving Bekele misses Edinburgh

Olympic 10,000m champion Kenenisa Bekele has pulled out of the Great Edinburgh Cross Country following the death of his fiancée last Tuesday.

Alem Tachale, who was due to marry Bekele in May, collapsed while on a training run with him on the outskirts of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

"He's still in no shape to race," said Bekele's manager Jos Hermens.

"But he will be back and I thank the race organisers for their understanding and compassion in these circumstances."

Bekele, a two-time winner when the event was staged in



Bekele, Newcastle, was scheduled to be the star attraction at the new Holyrood Park venue next Saturday.

Tachale, 18, made her

debut for Ethiopia in the 1500m at the 2002 World Youth Championships.

The cause of death is still unknown and her funeral was held in Assela, 150 miles east of Addis Ababa, on Wednesday.

Bekele is scheduled to run in the Boston Indoor Games on 29 January, the Norwich Union Grand Prix in Birmingham in February and the World Cross Country Championships at the end of March.

Matthew Turnbull, athletics director of the Edinburgh meeting, said: "Everyone involved in organising the event understands the trauma he must be going through."

"We offer our deepest condolences in this very sad

moment of grief.

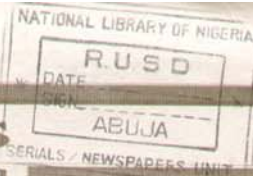
"We said from the very beginning that the decision about Bekele's participation was one we would leave personally to the athlete and totally respect his decision."

Bekele was beaten only once in 2004, when he finished runner-up to Moroccan Hicham El Guerrouj in the Olympic 5,000m final.

But he relieved Haile Gebrselassie of his Olympic 10,000m crown and his 5,000m and 10,000m world records.

He also completed a third straight long-course and short-course double at the World Cross Country Championships.

Sports



Luxemburgo injects passion into Real

Just two matches into his reign and already a quickfire promise by new coach Wanderley Luxemburgo looks to be coming true at Real Madrid. A day after taking over from stopgap Mariano Garcia Remon on December 30 Luxemburgo said that Real, struggling to impress on both the domestic and European fronts this season, would adopt more of a Brazilian approach. And in the space of 10 days Real have been galvanised as they look to rein in a Barcelona side which looked as good as invincible in the first half of the campaign. So far, the Luxemburgo record after Sunday's albeit less-than-clinical 3-0 derby

win over Atletico Madrid reads minutes played 97, goals four, goals conceded none and, more importantly, six points in the bag. And with Barca losing 3-0 at Villarreal, the mountain to climb that was a 12-point deficit three games ago has been trimmed to a more hill-like seven points. The Brazilian approach is certainly rubbing off on Ronaldo, who slammed in two goals against Atletico and who looks back to his sharpest after an indifferent period during which it was England's Michael Owen who was left to supply the goods - when given the chance. The seven minutes worth of football which constituted

Luxemburgo's first game was enough to secure a win against Real Sociedad courtesy of Zinedine Zidane's penalty, the "replay" coming a month after a hoax bomb threat from armed Basque separatist group ETA forced the game to be abandoned. Luxemburgo, Real's fifth coach in 18 months, is a mixture of realist - two years in charge of the Brazilian national side from 1998 to 2000 ended in the sack despite a Copa America success - and a romanticist who would like to win in samba style. After seeing off Atletico by a margin of victory which flattered the nine-times European champions it was the realist who was on view. "We had three chances and

we scored three goals. I am happy with the result, though not so much with the performance." The performance issue has refused to go away all season with the side scrapping for wins and rarely living up to its "galactic" billing. "In the second half our rivals put us under pressure and could have leveled," Luxemburgo admitted. But on the positive side, with five weeks to oil the machine before the arrival of Juventus on February 22 in the Champions League, Real now have 35 points from 18 games as they beat down on Barca, who were well beaten at Villarreal to stay stuck on 42. And also in the credit ledger is that Ronaldo is clearly thriving under Luxemburgo, having taken his season goal tally Sunday to 10. "He's highly motivated and is on top of his game," enthused Luxemburgo. Ronaldo had the final word, telling reporters: "You can already see a touch of the influence of Luxemburgo. Under him Real Madrid are more organised. He is a great coach."



Luxemburgo

Germany loses show jumping gold after doping verdict

Germany will lose the Athens Olympics team show jumping gold medal after the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) said it had disqualified Gold fever and rider Ludger Beerbaum for doping. "The Judicial Committee has agreed that the horse Gold fever and the (rider) must be disqualified from the event and that all prizes and prize money won at the event must be forfeited," a statement on the FEI website said. "The FEI will modify the team results at the Olympic Games." Ornament containing the banned substance Betamethasone, a type of steroid, was used to treat eczema on the horse before the Games. Although independent vets said there would have been no impact on the

animal's performance, the FEI has applied the rules of strict liability. The United States will now take the gold and Sweden the silver with Germany dropping down to third after the horse's results were removed from the record books. Beerbaum can appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) within a month. Germany had already been stripped of their team and Bettina Hoy's individual eventing golds during the Olympics because of a time infraction. Ringwood Cockatoo, Hoy's mount in Athens, also tested positive for the sedative Diphenhydramine during the Games but the FEI said it would make no finding against Hoy.

Waterford Crystal, the showjumper Cian O'Connor rode to win Ireland's only gold medal in Athens, also failed a dope test and the FEI said a date for that hearing would be decided soon.

Capello defends decision to withdraw Del Piero

Juventus coach Fabio Capello has defended his decision to substitute Alessandro Del Piero after the 30-year-old Italy international produced another lacklustre display for the Serie A leaders. Del Piero scored Juve's first goal in their 4-2 win at home to Livorno on Sunday but then faded into obscurity. He was substituted by Capello in the 67th minute, provoking many whistles

from the crowd who felt the striker should have stayed on the pitch. It was the second time in a row that Del Piero has been replaced, having been substituted in the 1-1 draw away to Parma on Thursday. Capello insisted he withdrew Del Piero for the benefit of the team and warned that no player in his squad can be

guaranteed a place in the starting line-up. "I am here for the good of Juventus and to make sure we get three points, for which I have to make certain choices," Capello snarled Monday when asked why he

took off Del Piero, who is in his 12th season with the Turin club. "What do I think about the fans whistling? I take that on board, but nobody is indisputable. What is important is the result." Del Piero, who struggled in the early part of the season with tendinitis, has scored six league goals, but has been criticised for his overall contribution to the team. And with Sweden international Zlatan Ibrahimovic playing superbly in attack and France striker David Trezeguet close to full fitness after surgery on his right shoulder, Del Piero could be in danger of losing his place which for so long has been secure. Second-placed AC Milan's 0-0 draw away to Palermo enabled Juventus to open up a four-point lead over the defending champions at the top of the table.



Capello



Rogge, IOC President

Europe's refereeing chief rules out video replays

Europe's refereeing chief is opposed to the use of video replays for goal-line decisions but he does see potential in a new idea to put a microchip sensor in the ball. "I look positively at new aids if they help us along - if, for example, we could send a signal to a referee's wrist

watch," Ulfar Rash, chairman of UEFA's referees committee, told the German Football Association website on Monday. "But I don't like instant video replays. Football is a fast-flowing game, which should not be chopped up or constantly interrupted." Football's lawmakers will be

given a presentation of a new ball containing a microchip sensor when the International Board meets in Cardiff next month. However, there is no proposal on their agenda to consider the use of video or microchip technology. Debate over the use of technology has intensified since officials failed to notice that the ball had crossed the line by about a metre last Tuesday's Premier League game between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur at Old Trafford which ended in a 0-0 draw. Tottenham were denied a last-minute winner when both the referee and linesman failed to signal a legitimate goal after a 50-metre shot from Spurs' Pedro Mendez was fumbled by United goalkeeper Ray Carroll and clearly bounced well over the line.

Spanish FA set to act on racism

The Spanish Football Federation is likely to investigate the racist chanting during Sunday's derby between Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid. Real Madrid's Brazilian full-back Roberto Carlos was particularly singled out by the crowd for the abuse. And referee Alfonso Perez Barral has mentioned the abuse in his report. He said: "I asked the match delegate to ask the fans, via the public address system, to stop making monkey noises. But as a result they grew

louder." Real eventually won the game 3-0 thanks to two goals from Ronaldo and another from Santiago Solari. England's Shaun Wright-Phillips and Ashley Cole were abused during a friendly against Spain at Real Madrid's Bernabeu stadium in November. And Spain's national coach Luis Aragonés is being investigated by the Spanish FA over racist comments he made about Arsenal and France striker Thierry Henry.

FA Cup windfall for Exeter

Non-League Exeter have made nearly a million pounds from their 0-0 draw with Manchester United at Old Trafford in the FA Cup after the BBC confirmed it would screen their replay live. The tie has been put back to Wednesday, January 19, with a 7.45pm kick-off, allowing the country a chance to see whether the non-League minnows can dump Sir Alex Ferguson's side out of the

competition. The extra 150,000 pound BBC TV payments Exeter will have generated nearly a million pounds through their two meetings with United, enough to wipe out their entire debt, through broadcast rights, gate receipts and sponsorship money. "We've had a difficult time, dropping out of the league two years ago. But we aren't dead," said managing direc-

tor Ian Huxham. Exeter know their 9,000-capacity ground cannot even accommodate the number of visiting fans who travelled to Manchester to cheer on their team at the weekend. But club officials have vowed not to increase prices above normal Conference levels, meaning those lucky enough to get in will have the chance to watch a far stronger United side at the cost of just 11 pounds.

Sports

Wheelchair tennis debuts at Aces tourney

About 40 players will compete in the first Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, being staged as part of the 2nd Aces National Junior U-16 tennis championship.

The players made up of 32 men and eight ladies would feature in the event, which opened yesterday in Lagos.

Frank Tarmena, Head Coach (Wheelchair Tennis) with the Nigeria Tennis Federation (NTF), told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos, that the federation organised a week-long intensive training course for the players ahead of the tournament.

According to him, the NTF organised coaching clinics as well as staged exhibition matches in various parts of the country as part of initiatives to create awareness for the event.

"We plan to hold exhibition matches in clubs and special homes in various parts of the country, to fish out talents."

Tarmena noted that kids in special homes who have wheelchairs would be much easier to train in the sport.

"We may just start-off with training them on how to throw and catch balls as well as pulling the wheelchair with rackets in hand," he explained.

The coach added that wheelchair tennis would now be integrated into all local tournaments organised by the NTF.

"Wheelchair tennis in Nigeria is now recognised and affiliated to the International

Wheelchair Tennis Federation (IWTF) and we are already planning to compete in the next All Africa Games, the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and the 2008 Beijing Olympics".

On how special athletes were taking the new sport, Tarmena said some of the

players have welcomed the addition.

"You see, tennis gives you a distinct personality because it is an individual sport that has a dress code and some distinct pattern of behaviour. Even as new as the game is in Nigeria, the players are learning fast to adapt."

Tarmena, then pleaded with sports philanthropists and corporate organisations to donate toward the promotion of the event.

"The IWTF would be supporting us with equipment while the NTF will purchase some, just as we also expect donations from individuals

and corporate organisations," added the coach.

Abel Ubieli, coordinator of the 2nd Aces National Junior U-16 championship added that wheelchair tennis was introduced into the on-going championship as part of initiatives to create for sport.



Barcelona's Brazilian striker Ronaldinho, centre, is tackled by Villarreal's Gonzalo Rodriguez during a Spanish League match at the Madrigal Stadium in Villarreal, Spain on Sunday. Villarreal won the match 3-0.

Siasia names Flying Eagles squad

Samson Siasia has named a final squad of 18 players including three foreign-based stars for the African Youth Championship which kicks off in Cotonou, Benin Republic, this weekend.

"I hope with this quality 18 players, Flying Eagles will not only win a World Youth Championship (WYC) ticket to Holland, but go ahead to win the African Youth Championship (AYC) in Benin Republic," said the former international striker.

The three foreign-based stars are Hertha Berlin striker, Solomon Okoronkwo; Maccabi Tel Aviv right wing star, Bernard Okoronwanta and surprise inclusion, Adeyemi Olubayo of Hapoel FC, Israel. Siasia told *KICK OFF* that he opted for two goalkeepers, six defenders, five midfielders and five attackers.

He, however, admitted: "It is not going to be easy in Benin because the other countries will do everything possible to stop us. But my boys are desperate to make names for themselves and the country. They have promised to be at the World Youth Championship in Holland this year."

"We have prepared so hard for this championship and it took us time and hard work to come out with this list of determined players. We only need luck on our side and the prayers of soccer loving Nigerians to achieve our goals in Benin."

Speaking on Okoronkwo who has yet to score for his team since he resumed training with the team after being down with chicken pox, Siasia assured, "Solomon will start scoring again when the chips are down in Benin."

The team will travel to Benin on Wednesday, three days to the commencement of the AYC.

The players are: **Goalkeepers:** Ambrose Vanzeikin (Insurance) and Daniel Akpeyi (Gabros).

Defenders: Chinwo Kennedy (Dolphin), Taye Taiwo (Lobi Stars), Amam Onyekachi (Rangers), Monday James (Nasoye Babes, Lagos), Dele Adeleye (SSC) and Edeki Johnbull (Insurance).

Midfielders: Bernard Okoronwanta (Maccabi Tel Aviv, Israel), Kola Anobi (Insurance), Bazuaye Daddy (Insurance), Adeyemi Olubayo (Hapoel FC, Israel) and Yinka Adediji (Pepsi Football Academy, Lagos).

Forward: Promise Isaac (captain), Solomon Okoronkwo (Hertha Berlin, Germany), Obinna Nsofor (Kwara United), Solomon David (Enyimba) and Heanyi Obediah (Gabros).

Marseilles splash cash on Lobi star

Newly-capped Super Eagles defender Taye Taiwo returned to Nigeria on Sunday night after signing a lucrative two and

a half year deal with French Ligue 1 side Olympique Marseille, who have agreed a transfer fee of 100,000 US dollars (about 14 million naira) for the player.

A representative of US-based Sports Management Company Go-Score based in Nigeria confirmed to *KICK OFF* that the 19-year-old left wing back is happy about the deal, and would be teaming up with the former European champions after playing for Nigeria at the African Youth Championship starting in Benin this weekend.

It was previously reported that Marseille will be signing the budding Lobi Stars ace

for three years but further negotiations saw both parties agreeing on a two and a half year contract.

A left-sided player endowed with a terrific shot,

Taiwo shot into international reckoning after turning out for Nigeria against South Africa at the Nelson Mandela Challenge contest in Johannesburg last November.

Also a key member of the Nigeria U-20s, he helped the Flying Eagles secure a ticket to Benin when he blasted the winner for Nigeria's 3-2 victory over Burkina Faso.

Eagles set for African fiesta

Flying Eagles continued their impressive form in their build up towards the African Youth Championship starting in Benin Republic this weekend by holding both double champions Dolphin FC and Insurance to draws in warm-up ties.

The team's head coach, Samson Siasia, told *KICK OFF* on Sunday, "The team played a 1-1 draw against Insurance in another tough friendly where team captain,

Promise Isaac, scored for the national Under-20 team."

The erstwhile Super Eagles forward showered praises on his team. "The team played well against Dolphin and today in Benin, they have shown their preparedness to win a World Cup ticket for Nigeria when action begins in the AYC", Siasia told *KICK OFF*.

The team will leave for Benin Republic on Wednes-

day via Lagos and the head coach has promised to take to the competition only on form and fit players.

He also revealed: "Taye Taiwo could not feature in the

two friendlies against Dolphin and Insurance because he had to be away to sort out a personal issue. He will join us in Lagos before we travel to Cotonou on Wednesday".



Siasia



Taiwo

NRA holds badging ceremony for referees

Nigerian soccer referees recently elevated to the international rank will receive their FIFA badges on Saturday in Ilorin, the Nigeria Referees Association (NRA) said yesterday in a statement in Lagos.

The statement signed by NRA's publicity secretary, Fatat Yusuf, said all the ref-

erees including assistant referees, should arrive in Ilorin on Jan. 14.

The ceremony, Yusuf, said, would be preceded by the NRA executive meeting on Jan. 14, adding that all the national officers, zonal coordinators, elders and members of the board of trustees were expected in attendance at the meeting.

Sports

Pompey battle to keep Aiyegbeni

Desperate Portsmouth played Yakubu Aiyegbeni in an FA Cup game Saturday so as to cup-tie him and make him less attractive to potential buyers. And as it would be 'The Yak' went on to score a second-half winner against Gillingham and propel Pompey to the fourth round of the cup competition.

New Pompey boss Veltimir Zajec has made it clear he means to keep striker Aiyegbeni Yakubu for at least the rest of the season.

The Nigerian marksman scored his 11th goal of the season and 15th in as many home starts since last February to knock Championship strugglers Gillingham out of the FA Cup at a time when his future, with the January transfer window open, is under scrutiny.

But it was a major lift for Pompey fans when Yakubu, who has had a £12m price tag put on him by chairman Milan Mandaric, started Saturday's third-round tie in which Zajec rested several key performers. It means his attraction to potential buyers is now reduced to potential buyers this season as he is cup-tied.

And a smiling Zajec said: "That is why we put him on there. Yakubu is a big talent and a big player. For sure, he's one of the best attackers there is, and this team needs to keep things interesting for him."

"I think he's a big investment for the club and he is very important for the club, but if the price is good the

club comes first in our thinking.

"But we will not sell a player out of our price. We are not in that sort of a hurry."

And he has been in discussion this week with chairman Mandaric over a likely replacement for Yakubu if the striker goes during the January window. And it looks as though they have decided there is no-one.

"Hopefully we can keep Yak until the summer at least," said team-mate Steve Stone, who came on as a second-half substitute on Saturday, "but his record and the form he's been in here shows why even the big clubs like Chelsea, Manchester United and Arsenal are interested in him."

"It would be great if he's still here after the end of the month because that means he's here for the rest of the season."

Pompey need to raise big money for the Nigerian international as his previous club, Israeli team Maccabi Haifa, still own a piece of him and would demand consultancy and eventually a percentage payment of any transfer business.



Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o of Cameroon protests to the referee during a Spanish league match against Villarreal at the Madrigral Stadium in Villarreal, Spain on Sunday.

Hearts challenge Enyimba

Accra Hearts of Oak have thrown down the gauntlet to African champions Enyimba following their 8-7 penalty win over long-time rival Ashanti Kotoko on Sunday in the first ever CAF Confederations Cup Final.

"We were the better team over two legs," Atuquayefio said after the game. "Now our focus is one Enyimba. They are big team but we want to prove that we are better."

The two teams are expected to clash in the CAF Super Cup.

Enyimba won the last one, beating Cup Winners Cup champions Etiole du Sahel of Tunisia 1-0 last year.

Both legs of the Final finished 1-1 and the game went to and Hearts, African champions in 2000, triumphed over their bitter rivals.

Former Hearts player Charles Taylor had shot Kotoko into the lead eight minutes into the second half. But with Kotoko fans getting ready to celebrate, Lawrence Adjehi Tetteh found a late equaliser with just nine minutes of play left to tie the aggregate score at 2-2.

Eaglets beat Angola

The Golden Eaglets are only a match away from qualifying for the African Junior Championship in Gambia after they defeated hosts Angola 3-1 in Luanda on Sunday.

No immediate details of the match are known but the scoreline suggest the national Under-17 team under the tutelage of experienced coach Godwin Izein clearly dominated the encounter.

The Angolans, who defeated a local team 5-1 preparatory to this game, were apprehensive of the physical superiority of their Nigerian opponents.

The comfortable win should also boost the Super Eaglets chances of qualifying for the 2006 World Cup in Germany as the Angolan seniors lead their group by point.

The return leg match is slated for Abeokuta in two weeks with the overall winner booking a place in the continental finals in May in Gambia.

Ogunjobi knows fate today as NFA board meets

The attention of Nigeria's sporting public will shift to today's NFA board meeting in Abuja, as the football authorities articulate their next line of action following last week's acrimony and melodrama.

The football buffs are expected to take a firm position on the re-instated

By Ismaila Umaru Lere, Group Sports Editor

Secretary-General Taiwo Ogunjobi and other management staff affected by the shake-up in the secretariat.

Already, there are strong indications that the board, is under intense pressure from the Sports Ministry, would



Galadima

accept the resignation of the embattled Ogunjobi as FA scribe.

Trustsports gathered that Sports Minister Col. Musa Mohammed is bent on getting the board to okay Ogunjobi's resignation to ensure former Green Eagles captain Segun Odegbami is returned in his place.

During last week's press conference when he rescinded his decision to sack the Glass House management, Mohammed stepped up the ante in the move to keep Ogunjobi out of the football house. He said the ministry had noted the resignation of the scribe and remarked that he expected the "appropriate authorities to investigate the corruption charges levelled against Ogunjobi and take necessary action."

This is a clear indication that government would frown at having a top FA official with corruption charges hanging over his head stay in office.

NFA Chairman Ibrahim



Ogunjobi

Galadima has assured that a firm position would be taken on the issue in today's meeting.

"All the stakeholders are being consulted so that the decision that would be taken would be one that would be in the best interest of the country, not one that will polarise the Nigerian football family," he said.

Galadima also revealed that the next step of action for the board would be to seek financial autonomy through government subvention and corporate Nigeria.

Eagles star faces two year ban

There seems to be no end to the troubles of Super Eagles midfielder Ifeanyi Ekwueme. After a protracted transfer wrangle with former club Wisla Plock, Ekwueme appears to have got himself into hot water that might lead to a two-year FIFA ban.

Sources from both Poland and Greece say the player signed two contracts for two different clubs in the two countries. After untying himself from his previous contract with Plock, Ekwueme signed for Lech Poznan in December last year.

The player later crossed over to Greece, where he put pen to paper on another deal for Aris Salonika. Officials of Aris later discovered that the player had signed a deal with Poznan and confronted him with the fact, but Ekwueme insisted that his contract with Poznan had a get-out clause.

He left for Poland soon after, telling Aris officials that he was going to get his personal effects and has not

been seen in Greece since. A reliable source from Poland informed Kickoff Nigeria.com that Ekwueme took money from Lech Poznan and the clubs are threatening to take the case to FIFA. If found guilty? Ekwueme will face a two-

year ban from football. "Ekwueme is finished in Poland!" Kickoff Nigeria.com's Poland source disclosed. The same also appears to be the case in Greece as Aris officials are also said to be considering a trip to Zurich over the matter.



Ekwueme, right, in action for his Polish club Wisla Plock. He faces a two-year ban from football.

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DAILY TRUST

TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, January 11, 2004

Theses on Obasanjo

By Adagho Onoja

Nothing could be more urgent during the Christmas break than going back to read President Obasanjo again, no matter how familiar one might have been with his works. For, as the philosopher said, reading makes a man but writing, the exact man. In reading the writings of a particular person, you can deconstruct him or her better. This is something we should all be interested in. For, clearly Nigeria is in crisis, a lot of which have been rightly associated with the President's leadership. Such a tragic reality. For, if OBJ could not become a hero in leadership, then he should worry who else can. In other words, I am rejecting the clever hindsight going on now, that there were signs from day-one that he would be a disaster. What did he need again to be a landmark leader beyond such critical experiences in life as military career, war commander, former head of state, some statesmanship, an international personality and membership of a body of personages like Nyerere, for example, who have unarguably written their names into history. And then his jail experience.

If these do not humble any person to be a nuanced manager of power, then nothing else would. More so in the case of Obasanjo to whom power was offered by a nation that did not bother to detest him after his jail life. This is not to mention the grace in making him President in spite of objections by his own ethnic group in an ethnically-minded country. This is also not to talk of the balance between the human agency and the social context in 1999 particularly the collapse of the hegemony of the oligarchy that has been blamed for keeping Nigeria a rentier state, the unification of dominant political tendencies into a constitutive political platform like the PDP and the graceful and orderly departure of the military. These provided a credible social context for a leap forward.

In other words, the great expectations about OBJ making the hero score in leadership by transcending the street wisdom about Nigerian politics was not borne of speculation. The mystery is how he came about being a very typical African President, so dry of iconic high-mindedness, sermonizing a lot on principles but lost in their practices. Above all, he is a practitioner of the variant of Stalinism that has no qualms in imposing "severe hardships and huge human sacrifices on a generation" in the interests of building some future utopia. These are his leadership failures. Nigeria needs to answer the poser that Dr Doyin Okupe once raised: where did we go wrong? Or, what happened to OBJ? A conclusive answer to this will remain a difficult exercise yet but a number of hypotheses have been advanced. My order of presentation has no gradation.

One is that the President has been afflicted by what a Professor of Political Science has called messianic arrogance and residual militarism based on an extinct adversarial and conquering instinct, reflected by the full name and meaning of late President Mobutu which is *Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Waza Banga*, which translates to "the all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexibility, will-to-win, will go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake". Two, that he had a genuine conversion from his native nationalism of the late 1970s to market economy, and that the problems he faces are the typical contradictions of market transition in developing countries. Three is the thesis that the kinds of human beings around him are not a qualitative or elevated bunch but people with boomerang mentality, blissfully ignorant of anything called transformation and the security implications of lack of it in any society. Four, that the big man himself, is intellectually and ideologically too presumptuous to play the philosopher king. Five, that he came to power with so much anger that neither the people nor the leaders, particularly of northern extraction tried to step Abacha from humiliating him and almost killing him but for the pressures from abroad and that this has impaired his judgmental prism.

Six, that lack of membership of any political tendency with strong internal democratic culture and a group idea of where to take Nigeria to in terms of progress has become a problem for Mister President's leadership. This is something the President seems quite aware of but which his own way of coming round is the notion of creating his own political base. Once he created his own, whether of the YCE or the young emergent Yoruba oligarchy, his role in none of these is that of any other member who is to be tutored in organizational discipline but that of a father figure, a modernization of *Rabiyasi*. The meeting of this core would certainly contrast with that of any other established one in, say, within the ANC in South Africa, where an argument could get so hot to the point that a party mandarin could tell President Mbeki to shut up or withdraw a particular statement or apologize over a certain remark and Mbeki would do so without seeing it as challenge to his person or office. Here, our man says he, not the party chairman, is the leader of the PDP, the party that tendency leaders skillfully negotiated when he was still in jail.

The point about a President and his political tendency is that it is such a base that can mobilize and conscientize the citizenry about the key programme of a regime. It is this caucus that will know when a dramatic climb down on any policy is inevitable or otherwise, not a cautious amalgam of ministers and assistants who have no qualms opening their mouth to tell the people that the policies of this government are not open to debate.

Seventh, is the analogy that the President is driven to implementing privatization as a way of undermining patronage capacity of the Nigerian state in future, thereby undermining its attraction for political power seekers and dictators, as has been the case in the recent past.

This is said to be a goal, which he is convinced, is worth sacrificing people's welfare.

Eight is the angle that Obasanjo's failure is a manifestation of western imperialist agenda on Nigeria. There is some consensus that important as leadership is, the African crisis is beyond the capacity of the most well intentioned presidents, that African leaders "come face to face with this reality when they assume office and soon realise that their policies, in the minutest detail, will be fashioned in or sanctioned by the corridors of power NOT located at their State Houses". Which is why people like Nyerere said that African leaders appoint ministers of Finance who quickly become ministers of begging, respected by no one. In the end, there is a vicious cycle in which "the good leaders are those waiting to get into the same very position that turn them into bad rulers". It is said that there is therefore, a danger in trying to understand the Nigerian crisis, even in its immediate dimensions, without locating it in previous and current imperialist manoeuvres.

Thus on the eve of the post Cold War came the warning that, although the West may not bother with the poorer Third World countries in terms of heavily investing in them after co-opting some of them such as Brazil and Mexico into the club of the prosperous nations, it was not going to leave these poor countries alone to identify and direct long term accumulation and social targets. Rather, the West was still going to try to subordinate them completely, denationalise them and ensure they do not become a threat to the existing international order. SAP/NEEDS was seen, in this context, as a neo-colonial, counter-revolutionary strategy developed by the West to firmly integrate the third world countries to world capitalism and for effective domination of strategic resources and their exploitation globally. And the reminder was that any arrangement to counter the plan in the interest of the majority of the population would be regarded as anti-West and would be appropriately met with political and military sanctions.

The conclusion is that in the case of Africa, the neo-imperialist control is deeper and more direct than for the rest of the Third World, and that *Heteronomy* - government by external agencies - is the new African reality.

Ninth is the contrary theory that rather than Western imperialism, it is the President's desire to succeed himself or ensure that only certain people succeed him that made him go out of his way to ingratiate himself with the Western world with a ridiculous market reform programme. This theory questions the genuineness of his conversion from native nationalism of the mid to late 70s to market ideology in 1999.

There is yet the tenth analysis that Obasanjo is a victim of a global trend in leadership. A sampler of this is a story that TIME Magazine came up with in 1993 on leadership in which it concluded that the world was suffering from scarcity of leaders. Its survey of the leaders of the world's most powerful nations on the eve of that year's G-7 found leaders who they trade mark was lack of vision. So much so that French historian and biographer of Charles De Gaulle, Lacouture who was quoted in the story posited that he could not think of a period where there were so few great leaders. The historian doubted that such leaders were around but probably not noticed. The magazine went along with him, declaring that the philosophers may be waiting in the wings somewhere but that for now, the non-heroes were in charge. The answer, in the words of one other person interviewed therein, was that the world needed another Karl Marx. So, the West too has lost its generation of leaders with any traces of the humanism invoked in the French Revolution or brilliant European politicians such as Lenin, his declaration that Africa is outside of the theatre of history notwithstanding. But the West has not stopped tumbling in the right direction, to borrow a recent Clinton expression.

The eleventh argument is that it is the Nigerian society that explains Obasanjo's leadership crisis. This is illustrated as follows. President Mbeki or any President of South Africa for now is many times more powerful than President Obasanjo. This is because the South African economy is not only one of the ten biggest emerging markets in the world, it accounts for about 40 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's total GDP, controlling about 80 per cent of U.S. trade with Africa and has the most powerful force in intra-African investment. These statistics might be obsolete now. By implication, the President of South Africa has a better negotiating advantage in the international system than a President of Nigeria who is not organized. But President Mbeki cannot even contemplate a quarter of some of Obasanjo's arbitrariness in Nigeria, much of which he has gotten away with, including refusing to implement appropriation bills. So, the problem must be in the nature of the society. The only reason President Mbeki would not contemplate self-succession is because he would be stopped in his track the moment he starts manifesting such unwholy thoughts. The party would tell him not to carry the joke beyond the contemplation of it. But in Nigeria, President Obasanjo would go far in a self-succession bid if he puts his money and political skills into it.

A twelfth analogy is the one that says that Obasanjo is compelled by some cabal of retired gentlemen farmers and bread sellers (like IBIB). Analysts in this school say that Obasanjo may annoy an individual member of this cabal but can never move against their constitutive interest. It is also said that after breaking rank and going against

them to contest the 2003 election contrary to the assignment they gave him in 1998 to come and stabilize the polity and return to Ota, he would be over-stretching his luck to go against their choices for Nigeria in the other areas like who succeeds him. Former lecturer at the University of Port Harcourt, Terisa Turner has reported about this in a journal network as early as 1983 while others like Professor Adedokun have given scholarly dimension to this influence in Nigerian politics already manifesting in the fierce struggle for control of the PDP.

Whichever of these hypotheses or a combination of them appeals most to you about the Obasanjo puzzle, the Nigerian society is on its knees and there is no doubt that leadership is part of the explanation. But in all semi-industrial societies like Nigeria, the journey from primitivity to modernity is a task for Sages, Prophets and Messiahs.

Which was why it was such a terrible ooper cut for the Abiola claim to power when Obasanjo declared in the late Chief was not the messiah the country was looking for. The tragedy for Obasanjo is that he lived thereafter to return to power but only to subtract from his own messianic possibilities. One of the foundations of that possibility was what appeared a culture of brutal frankness. The press calls it Obasanjo's crudity but it is an attribute of the leader in all semi-industrial societies, typologised by the image of Jesus rebuking the clever and cynical Pharisees and Sadducees in the Bible. The problem is that while Jesus was as straight as the pin, Obasanjo is "do as I say but not as I do". Of course, it is an unfair comparison to talk of Jesus and Obasanjo but not such an outrageous comparison within the typology. Not when you read anything he has written, the self-referent nature of Obasanjo's books notwithstanding. And certainly not when you read the work that can be considered the most powerful of all that OBJ has written. At the time and the audience to which it was delivered, I don't think anybody had a better, most measured, very courageous and most punchy statement on Nigeria than the Keynote Address General Obasanjo delivered to the Workshop on the State of the Nation organized by Arewa House in February 1994.

That is the address believed to have set in motion his convulsions in 1995 from which it can be argued now that Obasanjo has not recovered. This is even more so if one cannot certain analogy in a particular interview, I think, THE NEWS magazine quoted by Lawan Owadabe sometimes in late 1998 to the Arewa press.

But what is most interesting now is the fact that the speech would fit very neatly the current Obasanjo re-act if the names of Babangida and Abacha were removed and Obasanjo's name inserted as the object of attack. This is why that Kaduna piece is most interesting because it is such epic that is the stuff of habit.

Without going into the text of the address which a Nigerian newspaper should kindly and urgently publish in full, I make bold to say that the address alone was a sufficient basis of the great expectation about Obasanjo's second coming in 1999. But now, it is a settled reality that contrary to the great expectation that OBJ would use the golden opportunity of a second time in power to transcend the street wisdom about Nigerian politics and make a difference, he has relied rather exactly on those categories. Dried of the high-mindedness of icons, he has compounded the crisis. And with that has come the frustration that we as a country are again farther from a qualitative Nigerian leader in a resolution of the social impasse in the country.

The intensions about rigging in certain states in the recent judgment on the 2003 presidential election, the economic stagnation of the country under Obasanjo's leadership and the culture of personalization of power as well as the many arbitrariness of the President himself have all proved that Obasanjo is not bothered by the morale that "the glory of great men should be measured by the means they have used to acquire it". For someone who said in his Kaduna address under reference that "to say that morality does not matter in politics is to say that nothing matters in politics", the gaps between what he says and what he does is too glaring and worrisome a contradiction. Every Nigerian should read most paragraphs seven of the address because no summary can do justice to the way Obasanjo linked morality, politics and public power there in a very solid analogy.

There too, he expounded, along with General Duhari, with whom there is a basic agreement on this, a theory of national recovery in moments when there is a slide to disintegration like it virtually is now. Both believe that it is incumbent on certain category of Nigerians to speak up when the nation is breaking down. In Obasanjo's words, "if some half a dozen serious, responsible, principled and respected voices all over the country had joined to raise an alarm publicly, we would not be in the situation we are today. The alarm might have been heeded, and harrowing experience avoided". The harrowing experience he is referring to is the 1993 breakdown. At the last count, Obasanjo's regime has been criticized by very many prominent citizens too numerous to count. There are beside consistent press criticism coming across region and tendencies. But what does the President do in response? He declares them enemies and proceeds on a full stretch combat, which he must win.

The conclusion from the quantum of President Obasanjo's leadership is that although he has no chance of making history in transformative leadership, resourceful and objective analysts must advance to examine the personality, the domestic, professional and external context of leadership failures in Nigeria as a way of deepening democracy. That would be the other side of what Professor Francis Macchabe Foundation is doing on "The Political Economy of Policy Failure in Nigeria".

Onoja is a member of Daily Trust Editorial Board.